

An Investigation Of Concepts Related To The Term "Waqt" (Mystical Time/Moment) In Seven Prose Sufi Works (Translations Of Risalat Al-Qushayriyya, Kashf Al-Mahjub, Tamhidat, Tazkirat Al-Awliya', 'Awarif Al-Ma'arif, Mirsad Al-'Ibad, Misbah Al-Hidayah)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to investigate the concepts related to the term "waqt" (mystical time/moment) in seven prose Sufi works. The research method is descriptive-analytical using library resources. For the perfect Sufis, waqt has the status of a servant whom they can control and influence as they wish, while for the imperfect ones and those who have not reached the ultimate level of gnosis, waqt has the status of a sovereign who influences their being and subjects them to whatever state it desires. According to the Sufis' view, waqt can be either permanent or transient. This research also attends to another matter that previous researchers have not addressed separately, which is the factors that waste and disturb waqt; although this may seem simple and rudimentary, it is an important and original discussion. Another point highlighted in this research is the concepts that are somehow related to waqt, either directly or indirectly. In the books studied in this research, in addition to the well-known mystical meaning of waqt, it also has a lexical meaning referring to time, period, or era, and sometimes compound words are formed using this term.

Keywords: Irfan, Sufism, Time, The term waqt, Risalat al-Qushayriyya, Kashf al-Mahjub, Tazkirat al-Awliya', 'Awarif al-Ma'arif.

INTRODUCTION

For a long time in Islamic Sufism and mysticism, one of the matters that has been referred to is the concept of waqt (mystical moment/time), which has caused ecstatic Sufis to experience expansion or contraction, joy or sorrow, and various states, drawing them into a pleasant waqt. This issue has been so important that if we look at the early books written on Sufism, we find that the first and most rudimentary discussion on the definitions of the terminology of this sect is about waqt. However, despite the great importance and sensitivity that the Sufis attached to this matter, to the extent that they called the Sufi the "child of waqt," it is very surprising that the great researchers have neglected to investigate and examine this important subject, and no detailed and substantiated research has been carried out in this regard.

According to Hujwiri's view, waqt is when a servant, by means of a divine revelation to their heart, becomes detached from the past and future, and their essence becomes concentrated in that moment. In Qushayri's definition of waqt, another aspect is pointed out, which is that waqt is occasional, not constant and permanent. In Tamhidat, no comprehensive and scholarly definition of waqt is provided. The book Tazkirat al-Awliya' does not contain any information at the level of a scholarly definition of waqt, and only among the anecdotes and statements of the Sufis are there some points mentioned that will be discussed later. The only definition of waqt comes from Abu Ali Daqqaq, which is in the supplementary section of Tazkirat al-Awliya', and it is similar to what is mentioned in Risalat al-Qushayriyya.

The author of 'Awarif al-Ma'arif also considers waqt as a revelation upon the heart of the gnostic without his acquisition, which takes control of the gnostic's existence, and whatever it decrees, the gnostic is subject to its decree. At this station, there remains no existence or identity for the gnostic, no servanthood or self, and everything is the Presence of Might and Lordship, similar to the hadith of the "Closeness of Supererogatory Acts." In the book Mirsad al-'Ibad, no comprehensive and scholarly definition of waqt is provided. The author of Misbah al-Hidayah uses the term waqt in three meanings for the Sufis and explains and defines it for them.

In Sufi literature, waqt has been likened to certain things that we come across in these seven works, to the extent that sometimes the similes, in order to convey steadfastness and grandeur in the likeness and to show the abundance of the simile, turn into eloquent similes. All of the books studied and researched consider waqt as the principle upon which the state (hal) is a branch, and when the state attains steadfastness, constancy, and establishment, it becomes a station (maqam), and the self is a permanent state. As will be discussed, this permanence should be in the station of witnessing and is specific to the lovers, devoid of any interruption or pause, in contrast to waqt, which is subject to interruption and pausing, and is not only in the station of witnessing and not only specific to the station of lovers. However, initially, a comprehensive definition of the state (hal) will be presented, and then these books will be studied.

According to the author of *Misbah al-Hidayah* as well, waqt is a principle upon which the state (hal) becomes a branch, and according to the appropriateness of each waqt, it is obligatory upon the gnostic wayfarer to observe the rights and maintain the proper conduct of that waqt which entails a particular state. And every state inherently includes a certain conduct, and according to each waqt and in consideration of each station, it demands a specific conduct. For example, the state of satisfaction (riza)¹ whose specific conduct is the tranquility of the self and the calmness of the heart in submission to the divine decrees. And whenever this state increases due to the waqt, its conduct becomes gratitude (shukr), so that the way of satisfaction is not closed; and the way of leading the self on the path of poverty and brokenness, so that the attributes of rebellion, self-sufficiency, arrogance, and self-admiration do not become manifest in the self.

In *Risalat al-Qushayriyya*, waqt is considered the influence of the Truth, far from the wayfarer's acquisition, in which acquisition has no part. In 'Awarif al-Ma'arif, in the definition of waqt, it is stated to be a revelation that suddenly reaches the servant's heart without his acquisition, thus also negating acquisition. In Hujwiri's sayings, as can be observed, waqt is not acquired and does not come under the servant's contrived effort. Considering the mentioned points, the aim of this research is to investigate the concepts related to the term "waqt" in seven prose Sufi works (translations of *Risalat al-Qushayriyya*, *Kashf al-Mahjub*, *Tamhidat*, *Tazkirat al-Awliya'*, 'Awarif al-Ma'arif, *Mirsad al-'Ibad*, *Misbah al-Hidayah*).

Theoretical Foundations of the Research Knowledge and Its Relation to Waqt

In *Tazkirat al-Awliya'*, this statement is quoted from Abu Sa'id, narrating from Imam Shafi'i: "The knowledge of the scholar did not reach my knowledge, my knowledge did not reach the knowledge of the Sufis, and their knowledge did not reach the knowledge of one statement of their elder who said: 'al-waqtu sayfun qati'un' (Time is a sharp sword)."² So this statement itself, in defining waqt, is the greatest knowledge of the scholar. However, perhaps the reality of this statement is meant, not its outward appearance and the mentioning of words and forms; for truly reaching and comprehending "al-waqtu sayfun qati'un" is the greatest knowledge and wisdom. In the same book *Tazkirat*, in mentioning Junaid Baghdadi, it is quoted from him that the most virtuous action is to learn one science, and that science is the science of waqt, by means of which one becomes the preserver of the self, the heart, and the religion: "And he said: The most virtuous of actions is to learn the science of awqat (times), and that science is that by which you become the preserver of the self, the preserver of the heart, and the preserver of the religion."³

In another place in the book *Misbah al-Hidayah*, it considers the salvation and well-being of the people to lie in being occupied with the obligatory duty of waqt, which it interprets and explains as the science of perseverance and vigilance. And it deems this science as the most precious and beneficial of sciences;

¹ In the chapter on spiritual stations, the tenth chapter considers satisfaction (riza) as one of the highest stations, the station of those who have reached the goal, not the station of wayfarers. *Misbah al-Hidayah*, pp. 280-278.

² Fariduddin Attar Nishaburi, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, with an introduction by Qazvini, edited by Parvin Ghaemi (Paiman Publications, 2011), 305.

³ Attar Nishaburi, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, 515.

that is, the science of the obligatory duty of waqt, which is the science of vigilance and perseverance. So waqt itself has a specific science of its own that must be learned and acted upon. And of course, again, this relates to the Sufis' definition of waqt and to the waqt that arrives for the gnostic, and that a person should know which action to perform in each waqt, which itself requires knowledge, showing the relation between waqt and knowledge.

Regarding the hadith "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim man and woman", Misbah al-Hidayah mentions a knowledge that is obligatory upon all Muslims. The author of Misbah presents the views of different scholars on this matter. Among them, he considers this knowledge to be: the knowledge of sincerity, the knowledge of the detriments of sincerity, the knowledge of the state (hal) and its specific conduct, the knowledge of thoughts and distinguishing between them, and the knowledge of waqt. One of the interpretations given for this hadith is that it has been interpreted as the knowledge of waqt, and knowing what is more important and preferable to be occupied with in each waqt, from words to states.

"And some have said: It is the knowledge of waqt, meaning knowing what it is more important and preferable to be occupied with in each waqt, from words and actions."⁴ However, he notes that these sciences are virtues, not obligations and duties. For if they were obligations, neglecting them would not be permissible, and it is known that acquiring these sciences is impossible for all people, and not every nature is capable of these sciences, and anything impossible has not been made an obligation in the Shari'ah and is not permissible. Finally, he considers the most correct and comprehensive view to be that of Shaikh Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi, who deems that knowledge to be the knowledge of what is obligatory and prohibited: "Whatever the servant is commanded to do, or prohibited from, knowledge of that is obligatory upon him, so that action becomes obligatory upon him."⁵

Waqt and Sama'

Regarding the relationship between sama' (spiritual audition) and waqt, the most basic and first issue raised is the definition of these two concepts. One of the definitions given for these two equates them, considering them as one. In *Asrar al-Tawhid*, a question is asked of the master Abu 'Ali al-Daqqaq: "What is sama'?" And he considers sama' to be the same as waqt. Then he points out that whoever does not have sama' does not have hearing (sam'), and whoever does not have hearing does not have religion, for God the Exalted has said: "Indeed they, from the hearing, were outcast" (26:212), and "And they will say, 'If only we had listened or reasoned, we would not be among the companions of the Blaze'" (67:10). So sama' is a messenger from the Truth that carries the people of Truth to the Truth. Whoever listens to it with truth becomes realized, and whoever listens to it with natural disposition becomes a heretic.⁶

He goes so far as to narrate from Abu Sa'id that once 'A'isha came home from a wedding, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked her: "How was the wedding? Did you enjoy it and was the gathering pleasant? Was there anyone who recited poetry for you?" - We seek refuge in God from failure.

The passage states: "Our Sheykh said: One day 'A'isha the truthful, may God be pleased with her, came from a wedding. The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, said: 'How was it? Was it pleasant? Was there anyone who recited some verses for you?'"⁷

Another point raised in this regard is that sama' must conform to the waqt, meaning the waqt should move the gnostic and bring them to ecstasy. In *Kashf al-Mahjub*, in the chapter on the etiquettes of sama', waqt is considered a condition for sama'. The wayfarer must follow the incoming waqt - if the waqt moves them, they should move, and if it makes them still, they should be still. The wayfaring person must be able to distinguish between the self, whims, and ecstasy. Furthermore, they should not interfere with another's sama', lest this interference disturb their own waqt and that of others.

The Pleasant Waqt

In the Sufi books of this period and before and after, I see mention of such remarks as "that Sufi experienced a pleasant waqt" or "we experienced a pleasant waqt." And this expression of the pleasantness of waqt, as we observe, results from several states that arise for the Sufi due to hearing

⁴ Attar Nishaburi, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, 50.

⁵ Attar Nishaburi, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, 41.

⁶ Muhammad bin Manoor, *Asrār al-Tawhīd in the authority of Sheikh Abu Said*, Correction and comments by Dr.

Mohammad Reza Shafiei Kodakani (Aware publications. First edition, 1987), 264.

⁷ Muhammad bin Manoor, *Asrār al-Tawhīd in the authority of Sheikh Abu Said*, 264.

moving words or witnessing extraordinary actions of individuals. As a result of this, the gnostic whose waqt becomes pleasant manifests in several ways, which can be seen mostly in the book *Asrar al-Tawhid* by Muhammad ibn Munawwar, while in the books studied, it is especially emphasized in *Tazkirat al-Awliya'*. These manifestations are either bewilderment in the gnostic's being and countenance, or the arousal of tears and tenderness of heart, or the arousal of tenderness of heart leading to sama', or an opening that arises in the gnostic's being and inner self. Upon the occurrence of this waqt, certain effects follow for the gnostic, including the acceptance of supplications, the spiritual impact of ordinary words on the gnostic's soul from which they benefit gnostically, the refinement of the self, and the utterance of gnostic phrases by the Sufi. And if these phrases go so far as to render pleasant the waqt of another man of God, it can even lead to intercession.

This is an anecdote about Muzaffar Qarmisini, whose profuse spending had led to their poverty, due to which no one paid any attention to them. He considers this inattention to be the cause of his experiencing a pleasant waqt.

1. "I heard from Abu Abdullah Rudbarī that he said: Muzaffar Qirmīsīnī entered Ramlah along with a sayyid, and both had high status among the wealthy people of the city. They gave so much charity to the dervishes that nothing was left for them, and no one would take anything from them or give them anything or lend them anything. When they reached this state, their time became joyful."⁸

When the Sufis' time becomes joyful, statements are narrated from them that indicate a change in their state and an inner serenity at that time. One could even interpret some of their shathiyyat (ecstatic utterances) under this category that the mystic's joyful state leads to uttering shaths. Of course, one of the main reasons for this is the mystic's being filled with the presence of the Eternal Essence. Listen to what Shibli said: "It is narrated that one day when his time was joyful, he went out to the bazaar and bought a patched cloak - for a dang and a half - and a hat for half a dang, and he was shouting in the bazaar: 'Who will buy a Sufi for two dangs?'"⁹ In other words, with this phrase he wanted to say that nowadays Sufis are nothing but a hat and a patched cloak.

Or in a story narrated from Abu Sa'id, one day he sees a drunken man fallen at the door of the khanqah, and he tells him, "Give me your hand and get up." That drunken man, in his state of drunkenness, tells the sheikh: "Go away, assisting [people] is not your job, the Assistant of the poor is God" - and the sheikh's time becomes joyful upon hearing these words.¹⁰

In the joyful time that arises for the mystic, he must abandon and leave behind everything other than the remembrance of the Beloved or what brings him closer to Him. For in this state, even if the world and the hereafter are offered to the Sufi, he must look upon everything with disdain and turn his attention toward the real Object of desire and what brings him nearer to Him.

In 'Awārif al-Ma'ārif, for each group of Sufis based on their state and station, and even for the Prophet (peace be upon him), the author mentions specific litanies (awrād) which are either in the form of poetry, Arabic prose, supplications or remembrances.

In the second chapter, explaining the specification of the Sufis for listening beautifully, he introduces them as those who renounced the world and desired the Hereafter, and their litany of the time regarding the world was: "I see no comfort in your union."

Again, regarding the Sufis' obedience to the Book and the Sunnah and their conformity to these, he says: "The Sufis are the fruit of the tree of existence, the flowers of the garden of the worlds, the knights of the field of religion, and the servants of the Lord of the Worlds. And the litany of their state is this poem: We are the pearls of the mine of 'Be, and it is!' We are manifest to the eye of perception.

We are witnesses of the Majestic Presence; we are the eye and the light of intimacy and spirit.

We are the point of the center of the earth, we are the subtlety of the mystery of the heavens.

We are beyond the beginningless and endless, hidden from essence and non-existence.

Let me say one subtle point, if you understand - we are the world-displaying cup of spirit."

In the patched cloak of devotion, by returning to a spiritual master and submitting to his commands and instructions, the disciple reaches a station where his heart attains purity. The time comes when he places his heart before the Sheykh's heart, receiving light from him, and a unity is achieved between him and

⁸ Attar Nishaburi, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, 919.

⁹ Abulqasem Abdul Karim Qoshiri, *The translation of the treatise of Qashiriyah*, to correct Badi al-Zaman Forozaifar (Scientific and cultural publications. 1982), 228.

¹⁰ Qoshiri, *The translation of the treatise of Qashiriyah*, 704.

the Sheykh. At this point, having reached this station, he will not leave the Sheykh in any way, neither physical nor spiritual. He becomes enamored with the beauty of the Sheykh's states, and the Sheykh shows him affection and love by presenting spiritual perfections, states and inward realities. The litany of their time together then becomes:

"Now you and I have been colored by separation, perhaps we have not become remorseful in heart.

Your love and my soul are so united that now you and I have become the hardship of them both."

And when, by the blessing of the Sheykh's glance, he reaches the field of gnosis and awaits the glance of God, the disciple's litany of the time becomes:

"Wearied to the soul by separation, O Lord, it is I. Delivered from hardship and sorrow, O Lord, it is I.

Your vision did not become possible for me in sleep. Sitting joyfully with You, O Lord, it is I."

And whoever's poverty is sound, his beginninglessness is his endlessness, his endlessness is his beginninglessness, his first is his last, his last is his first, his manifest is his hidden, his hidden is his manifest. The nightingale of his time was singing these verses:

"At dawn when the beginningless becomes united with the endless, the hidden becomes manifest and the heaven becomes the earth.

The two worlds become a single ring, all their events becoming the engraving on that gemstone.

The breeze of intimacy blows from the sanctuary of the Holy, by seeking it all the horizons become fragrant."

The Sheykh must have a special retreat, where none of creation partners with him. His litany of the time should be this couplet:

With the sacred light of Unity, what need does reasoning have?

In the solitude of Christ, what do the monks need?

In the sanctuary of the lover, at the time of the true dawn,

How can the owner fit in, what does Paradise need?

When the King plays the game of love, Farhad charges forth madly,

When the Sultan holds a banquet, what does the doorkeeper need?¹¹

And the Sultan of the Gnostics, Bayazid (may God have mercy on him), said: The sign of awakening is five things: When one looks with the weakness of the self, the need for the Presence of Might become manifest. When one remembers sin, one seeks forgiveness. When one sees the afflicted, one takes a lesson. When one remembers God, one feels pride. And when one remembers the Hereafter, one becomes joyful. And his invocation at that time is this couplet:

"I will fling myself drunkenly into that place of tricks,

So, I may behold that Soul and Universe that exists there.

Either I will attain my goal and desire,

Or I will lose my head there, just as the heart loses control."¹²

The Sheikh (may God be pleased with him) said: The reality of gratitude is that one is thankful for whatever happens to one, be it ease, comfort, hardship or dislike. In fact, one's pleasure in the blows of affliction should be greater than in abundance and blessings. And his invocation at that time was this poem:

"Today my heart is preoccupied with your sorrow,

In the realm of the heart, the sermon is in the name of your sorrow.

My heart's joy and bliss would be if

It were free from joy and a slave to your sorrow."

And Dhu al-Nun (may God have mercy on him) said: Until fear matures the heart, the lover will not reach the love of the Presence of Might. So the fearful one is he whose invocation at that time is this couplet:

"You would say I will be one of those from the other world,

Or a wandering outcast from the caravan.

The Hindu fleeing on foot, who would reach the Master?

What would his state be? I will be like that."¹³

¹¹ Shahabuddin Suhrawardi, *Awarif al-Ararif*, translated by Abu Mansour Abdulmomen Esfahani. Due to Qasim Ansari (Scientific and Cultural Publications, 1985), 166.

¹² Suhrawardi, *Awarif al-Ararif*, 180.

¹³ Izzaldin Mahmoud Kashani, *Misbah al-Hidayah and Miftah al-Kafaya*. with correction and introduction and comments: Jalaluddin Homai (Homa Publications, 1997), 186.

And among the attributes of the Messenger (peace be upon him) were weakness, humility and neediness. His invocation at that time was: "Do not leave me to myself for the blink of an eye, protect me as you protect the newborn child..." Meaning out of utter neediness he made this supplication: "O Great Lord, O Perfect Omnipotent One, do not leave me to myself even for the blink of an eye, and protect me always in the shelter of Your grace, just as You care for and protect Your child from harm."¹⁴

Other Themes

In various Sufi texts, etiquette (adab) has been discussed, that the Sufi person must observe the proper etiquette of each station. And regarding time, it has been said that each time has its specific etiquette, and the gnostic must observe the etiquette of each time, otherwise that time becomes an affliction for him. Qushayri narrates in the forty-third chapter from Nuri who said: "Whoever does not observe the etiquette of the time, that time becomes an affliction for him."¹⁵ The *Kashf al-Mahjub* in the chapter on dealings cites a statement from Abu Hafs al-Haddad al-Nayshaburi that Sufism is all about observing proper etiquettes, for each time there is an etiquette, for each state and station there is an etiquette, and if one does not observe its etiquette, one becomes distanced from nearness, acceptance and the Divine Court.

Regarding the miraculous graces (karamat) manifested by the awliya (friends of God), the *Risalat al-Qushayriyah* mentions two instances related to "time". In one case, it speaks of a grace manifested during a time of negligence by the gnostic. In another narrative, it specifies a miraculous grace for the time when they want to assess the state and condition of the gnostic. Although other books like *Tazkirah*, *Mirsad* etc. discuss the miraculous graces of the gnostics, they do not directly reference them being specific to a particular time as the *Risalat al-Qushayriyah* does.¹⁶

On the topic of fear (khawf) and hope (raja), Qushayri in the chapter on the Imams from the *Tabi'een*, cites a statement from Abu Sulayman 'Abd al-Rahman al-Darani (*Awarif al-Ma'arif*, p.180) that when hope overcomes the spiritual state of the seeker, the seeker's time is wasted. The reasoning is that time is for observing one's state, and the servant observes as long as there is some fear overshadowing him. When that fear is lifted, the person abandons being observant. And conversely, if fear dominates the servant and overtakes hope, then the person's *Tawhid* (divine unity) becomes invalid, because the dominance of fear stems from despair of God's mercy, and despair of the Truth is a form of shirk (associating partners with God).

The *Tazkirat al-Awliya'* (p.557), citing Ibn 'Ata', divides the monotheists into four categories, each focused on something - one is focused on the present time and state, one on the ultimate outcome, one contemplates the realities of the world, and one reflects on past precedent and pre-eternity. "He said: The monotheists are of four levels: the first level observes the present time and state; the second observes the ultimate end; the third contemplates the realities; the fourth contemplates what has preceded."

The *Kashf al-Mahjub* (p.733) divides the times of the monotheists into two - the time of separation (faqd) and the time of presence (wujud) - one sitting at the destination of union and the other at the abode of separation. In both cases, since there is no choice, in both states the monotheist's time is subjugated to the Divine Will and falls short of self-acquisition. He becomes connected or disconnected from the Truth, and whatever he sees, hears, says and does is all from the Truth, and no fault or deficiency can be attributed to him.

Time is also influential in writing books. As mentioned in the *Tazkirat al-Awliya'* (p.6), one of the reasons for writing the book was that perhaps someone's time would be blessed by this book and they would pray for the author, causing him to receive mercy.

The basis and condition of the forty-day spiritual retreat (chillah nishinee) is remembrance (dhikr) and observance of the times. In the *'Awarif al-Ma'arif* (p.127), in the twenty-sixth chapter explaining the particulars of the forty-day retreats, Suhrawardi says: "And its condition is that the basis of these forty days should be on remembrance and observance of the times." And elsewhere (p.99) he speaks of inhabiting the times, that one should regulate one's states for forty days and inhabit the times, as has been explained.

¹⁴ Mahmoud Kashani, *Misbah al-Hidayah and Miftah al-Kafaya*, 22.

¹⁵ Qoshiri, *The translation of the treatise of Qashiriyah*, 484.

¹⁶ *Kashf al-Mahjub*, p.733 Ali Ibn Othman Hajwayri, *Kashf al-Mahjub Introduction*, correction and comments: Dr.

Nafs, which is one of the levels of gnosis for the Sufis, is compared with state (hal) and time (waqt). The possessor of Nafs is the ultimate in gnosis, the one focused on time is the beginner on the path, and the possessor of states is in the middle stage (Awarif al-Ma'arif, p.106). "Nafs is giving the heart ease with the subtleties of Divine Jealousy. The possessor of Nafs is more delicate than the possessor of states. The one focused on time is like a beginner, while the possessor of Nafs is the ultimate, and the possessor of states is between the two. States are an intermediary stage, while Nafs is the highest level, times belong to the people of the heart, states to the masters of the spirit, and Nafs to the people of the secret." The seeker must relinquish hopes and aspirations, for the Sufi and dervish is ibn al-waqt, bound to the present moment (Awarif al-Ma'arif, p.748). "It is the work of the seeker to have short aspirations, for the dervish is bound by the present time. When one makes plans for the future or other than the time one is in, then one has aspirations, but nothing will come of them."

Conclusion

In the Risalat al-Qushayriyah (p.88), Qushayri presents three philosophical views on the concept of "time" (waqt):

1) Time is an accidental phenomenon arising from another accidental occurrence. This is Qushayri's own view.

2) Time is the state/condition that a person is in, whether worldly or otherworldly, joyful or sorrowful (Risalat al-Qushayriyah, p.88). This is Abu Ali Daqqaq's view.

3) Time is the period between the past and present (Risalat al-Qushayriyah, p.89).

However, in the Misbah al-Hidayah (pp.97-99), the lowest level of "time" is defined as a state that overcomes the servant, like constriction, expansion, sadness or joy. At this level, the gnostic judges others' times against his own state.

The second meaning, specific to wayfarers, is a state that suddenly descends from the Unseen Presence and overcomes the gnostic's being, freeing him from his current state.

The third and highest level is the time/period of the gnostic's current state, free from past and future. Here the gnostic possesses and utilizes time as befits, so he is called "father of time" (abul-waqt), unlike the second level where he is "son of time" (ibnal-waqt).

Regarding whether time is acquisitive (kasbi) or bestowed (wahbi), most sources view it as wahbi since it is an internal arrival, but also kasbi since it results from the gnostic's spiritual struggles (mujahadat).

Only the third Misbah al-Hidayah (p.99) definition hints at acquisition, not in attaining time itself, but in the gnostic's utilization of that bestowed time in priorities.

On time being eternal/endless (sarmadi), differing views are cited, but they essentially point to one idea - that time becomes eternal/endless for the gnostic who is in the state of annihilation (fana).

The Misbah al-Hidayah states that in the first two definitions, time is subject to occurrence/non-occurrence. But in the third, where the gnostic is "father of time", the issue of time being continuous or discontinuous arises based on whether the gnostic is a perpetual wayfarer or has attained stability - the unstable wayfarer may lose that state of time after a while.

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