# Comparison of the Use of History in the Texts of Mystical Ethics and Political Ethics in the Middle Centuries of Iranian History

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## Abstract

The science of ethics is expressed in three ways based on three sources of knowledge acquisition: Experimental ethics, religious ethics, and philosophical ethics. In contrast to the texts of religious ethics and philosophical ethics, historical evidence is widely used in the compilation of empirical ethics books. Political ethics texts are a group of empirical ethics texts, which the main concern of the authors of these texts is to improve governance. The authors of these texts have always referred to the past and used the stories and recommendations of the past in their desired drawing. In addition to the texts of political ethics, a part of mystical ethics in which the practical instructions of Sufism are also discussed together with the issues of belief, can be considered experimental ethics. Because the most important source of writers for the guidance of seekers is to cite the words and experiences of the greatest mystics in the path to Allah. The purpose of this manuscript is to compare the use of history in the texts of mystical ethics with the use of history in the texts of political ethics in the middle centuries of Iranian history.

The most efficient method to answer the following questions is discourse analysis method: What are the similarities and differences between the use of history in the texts of mystical ethics and political ethics? And what is the origin of this difference? Discourse analysis seeks to discover the meaning of texts, with the assumption that the social meaning of words and actions are all understood in relation to the general context

of which these components are part of this context. Each meaning is perceived in relation to the general behavior occurring and each behavior is understood in association with a specific discourse. Therefore, we can perceive, explain and evaluate a process or a trend or a thought if we are able to understand the behavior or discourse in which this process or trend or thought occurs. Discourse analysis, as a method for text analysis, is not only limited to text elements, but also it deals with factors outside the text, that is, the situational, cultural and social context. Discourse analysis examines the crystallization and formation of the meaning and message of linguistic units in relation to intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. The approach of discourse analysis examines the social and cultural conditions under which the text was produced, along with the text itself. Its purpose is to show how the political or cultural or historical or social contexts affect the content, meanings, structures or strategies of the text. In the middle centuries of Iran's history, four central discourses were powerful in the areas of politics, society and culture. These four discourses are the discourse of Sufism, the discourse of Sharia, the discourse of literati, and discourse of the sword.

In the texts of mystical ethics, history is used in the form of remarks and deeds of elders and in a narrative form. The obvious goal of mystical ethics' writers in using history was to teach the seekers, but the way they dealt with history indicates that the writers of mystical ethics also had a higher goal in mind, which is to keep alive the ideal of Sufism. The existence of such an ideal has caused that in the pen of the writers of mystical ethics, history is more than mentioning minor events in time limitation. Mystical sacred history is a past surrounded by the words and deeds of the chosen sheikhs, but without mentioning time, so that it can be used as a standard for worthy actions in all times.

In the discourse context, since the discourse of Sufism in the middle centuries was exposed to the accusation of heresy by the discourse of Sharia, drawing the mystical sacred past via the words and deeds of the predecessor sheikhs and connecting the line of sheikhs to the Prophet of Islam could be used to maintain the integrity of the ideal. Sufism and giving spiritual identity to the sheikhs should be effective, provided that

every Sufi sheikh can show himself in this chain and follower of the past sheikhs. The considerable point here is that the past elders and their thoughts and actions were not clearly defined in mystical texts. Past elders were mainly a practical term that was specifically related to the space of sacred and mystical history, so the issue of claiming to follow them and being on their path was easily possible.

In the texts of political ethics, history was narrated structurally through instructions and anecdotes. Historical anecdotes included the actions of historical figures, but their accuracy was not emphasized much, and they were often placed in the ranks of proverbs and verses of poetry. These anecdotes, which had a literary appearance rather than a historical burden, were the easiest way to inform and indirectly educate the rulers who were the main audience of the political ethics texts. In the texts of political ethics, scattered reflections of historiography were rarely expressed and strengthened with the help of historical anecdotes.

The force that moved the writers of political ethics works as actors of the discourse of literati in the context of discourse was their tensions with the discourse of the people of the sword. Since history simply showed the audience that no one's government lasts long and there are only names left of those who once lived on this earth, who are more capable than the literati, who in this transient course and continuous changes, record the name of the audience in among well-known people: An act that the sword lords were incapable of.

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