

# The role of music and Sufi whirling in the spiritual education of the seeker

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**Abstract:** The power of music is as long as human life. Mystical systems have used these tools to develop human spirituality and cultivate the spiritual abilities of the seeker. This use of music finds full expression in the subject of Sufi whirling. In such a way, even some mystics consider the necessity of using music to reach mystical authorities as an undeniable thing. Sufi whirling tradition helps disciples gain spiritual enrichment through Sufi whirling. There has been much debate about what and how to listen to achieve spiritual growth. Mystics and Sufis valued the pleasant voice and Sufi whirling it; Some welcomed the use of music as one of the spiritual augmentations, and some called it a mystical tool. This approach was gradually recognized in many Sufi practices, as music's spiritual use has become commonplace today. Therefore, due to the importance of the subject, the author in the present study has tried to investigate the nature and causes of the effect of music and Sufi whirling on the spiritual development of the seeker by analytical-descriptive method and citing library sources. The research results indicate that although it is undeniable that music and Sufi whirling can cause calm and emotional states in the audience. Still, this state cannot always be interpreted as a spiritual and mystical state. However, in some cases, it can be considered a ground for creating tenderness in the heart and its readiness to accept spiritual states.

**Keywords:** Music, Sufi whirling, Mysticism, Spiritual Education

## Introduction

Music is as old as human presence. Rhythmic indexes and echoes have always been significant in human life. Music is sacred, and many people in the heart consider it transcendental and belong to the heavens. Music is one of the arts that can be said to have the highest ability among all branches of art in expressing human emotions and feelings. Like Schopenhauer claims, all the skills strive to reach the music stage in the quality of the expression of emotions. (Edward Reid, 1: 2007) Therefore, such a phenomenon with such a high capacity and talent for expression has never been hidden from the subtle view of Mysticism; Because the nature of Mysticism and mystical behavior has often been accompanied by expressing the pure emotions and feelings of the mystic. In describing these emotions,

perhaps music can be efficient and effective. Due to its unique characteristics, this phenomenon is one of the tools that human beings have used for a long time in spiritual affairs.

Therefore, in the view of many musicians, there is a close and inseparable link between Mysticism and some types of music. (Safwat, 170: 1389). Beyond this, in the eyes of many researchers, there is no way to penetrate hearts other than using music. One of the critical issues in the discussion of music is the study of Sufi whirling (dance, song, and mystical music) in the Sufi school. In this school, which is a mixture of seemingly Islamic Mysticism and teachings from non-Islamic cultural centers, Sufi whirling is of great value. Junaid Baghdadi, a famous Sufi and mystic, considers Sama the airport of God's mercy. Shams Tabrizi, Rumi's mentor, calls it the Persian Qur'an. Rumi and Abu Sa'id Abu al-Khair introduce it as the equivalent of prayer. The multitude of many such claims can indicate the existence of such a connection, albeit ambiguous, between music and the mystic's spiritual Sufi whirling and education. Curiosity about the relationship between these two issues and their ambiguity leads us to provide a clear explanation of the role and place of music and Sufi whirling in Mysticism. Before explaining any connection between music and Sufi whirling with the spiritual development of the seeker, it is necessary to recognize their nature from a certain angle. This cognition is essential because there must be a connection between the nature of the two phenomena that are somehow connected. Especially when it comes to the intensity of this bond and its inseparability, it means that the power of the degree of similarity between the two is emphasized. Therefore, it is necessary to adequately explain the nature of Mysticism, and music. Thus, in the first part of the research, the nature of Mysticism and music has been studied. In the second part, since the subject of mystical music has a complete crystallization in the subject of Sufi whirling, for greater clarity of the subject, before dealing with music and Mysticism, we will have a brief passage on the story of Sufi whirling in the spiritual education of the seeker. Finally, the nature and causes of the effect of music on spiritual growth have been studied. In examining the grounds of the impact of music on spiritual growth, first, we talk about epistemic selection and the knowledge that the listener experiences and grows with awakening music; After that, the spiritual effect of music is interrupted; This research is organized to answer the fundamental question of whether music can lead to the spiritual education of the seeker? In simpler terms, can mystical music and the tendency towards musical Mysticism, as a tool for esoteric behavior, provide the ground for mystical intuitions for the seeker?

### **Research background**

This research has been prepared by the analytical-descriptive method and concerning library sources. No similar study has been done on the effects of music and Sufi whirling on the spiritual development of the seeker, and it is impossible to introduce independent and unified research. However, the following studies are related to the subject of this article:

Gilani and Zamani (1400), in a study entitled "The place of music and Sufi whirling with Suhrawardi," have examined the nature and place of music and Sufi whirling in Suhrawardi thought and stated that Suhrawardi considered Sufi whirling and music as a means to achieve perfection.

Teh and Khosropanah (2014), in the study "Study of the instrumental role of music in acquiring mystical knowledge from the perspective of Islamic mysticism" have tried to examine the role of music in mystical behavior and intuition and have come to the conclusion that Sufism requires the use of music to achieve. They consider mystical authorities to be an undeniable thing. But such an application by the Sufis themselves is absolutely not acceptable. At the same time, the role of music for the intuition of the sublime truths of the sky of knowledge, except in exceptional cases and for special people, is somewhat worth considering.

"Study of the effect of the principles of Islamic mysticism on the form and content of music" by Shayesteh and Khosropanah (2013) Explains clearly.

Nabi Lou and Joharchi (1399), in the study "Study of the etiquette of the seeker from the perspective of the Kabruyeh dynasty," state that the etiquette and training in each field have specific principles and methods that educators, seekers, and learners should be aware of these principles So that the ways to reach the primary destination and goal for the seeker and the disciple are quickly paved. The importance of Sufi whirling is spoken in these principles.

#### **1. Background of mystical use of music**

The most famous and, of course, the oldest recorded example of a spiritual view of music throughout history is that of the followers of Pythagoras. The Pythagoreans had religious tendencies and ascetic tendencies. Since the focus of their thoughts and actions was thought, cultivation, and purification, in addition to practicing silence and studying

mathematics, they also attached great importance to the effect of music on self-care. (Copleston, 1388: 41) He considered music as creating harmony between opposites, unity between opposing subjects, and agreement on conflicting elements. In their view, music was unifying and cohesive, the basis for the union of phenomena in nature and the highest foundation of the world order. The effect of music in the universe is in the form of harmony; in the country, it is in the form of law, and at home, it is a wise way of life. (Stor, 1388: 76) This Pythagorean opinion on music gradually led to the belief in the divine nature of music and its sanctity, an idea that attracted not only many Western thinkers but, even centuries later, some Muslim thinkers such as Sadr al-Muta'allehin. This belief even went so far in the Islamic world that some Muslim musicians considered the truth of music the highest of the heavens and the knowledge of music to be the Ashraf of industry and science. This belief in music naturally permeated Islamic Mysticism as well, In a way that, according to many Sufis, the human soul is thirsty to hear the call of the Covenant of Truth. Mystical music of the Sufi whirling of the Sufis is a response to this call and an answer to this address. (Haidar Khani, 1995: 119)

## **2. The nature of Mysticism**

Mysticism, in a simple definition, means human behavior through the interior. And it is called cardiac and inner cognition, which is obtained through discovery, intuition, or esoteric perceptions. Mysticism is a transcendent and profound school of thought and philosophy to know the truth and know the truths of matters and problems and the mysteries of science. (Sajjadi, 1993: 8) Mysticism as science is divided into two branches practical and theoretical Mysticism. Practical Mysticism is a set of necessary religious orders to fight against the air of the soul and reach the spiritual authorities of God's presence and intuitive knowledge. Theoretical Mysticism consists of a system of esoteric perceptions through discovery and intuition about the design of the universe, which are perceived by qualified individuals. The mystic expresses those perceptions in the language of reasoning and argument.

In other words, practical Mysticism refers to those teachings that include the manner of conduct and ritual of behavior. Still, theoretical Mysticism is based on concepts and, as a science, has a problem and argument. What is certain is that everything that is presented in mystical texts, whether in theoretical Mysticism, which is presented in the form of ontological discussions, or in practical Mysticism, which is presented as a program of conduct, all somehow seek the seeker from the concentration of multiplicities ruling the world. Matter and its functions lead to the world of the unseen unity of the unseen. Hence, unity is the most fundamental and pivotal basis of Islamic Mysticism. Mystical education is: laying the groundwork for the exaltation and flourishing of the needs and spiritual capacities of the educator within the framework of the Shari'a and preparing him to go through the stages of conduct and intuition of the truth. Therefore, in mystical and spiritual education, one should first seek to inform the educator about his need and spiritual capacity and then guide him to use the ways of cultivating his inner abilities by avoiding the veils of the soul and the lower levels of the world of sense and matter, and liberation from the grip of the soul. It was a matter of strengthening faith and sincerity within religious standards and achieving God's love. In the end, the educator tries to find spiritual states, passions, passions, and states while walking through the houses and to reach perdition in the sight of God and survival.

## **3. The nature of music**

Music in scientific language has specific and, of course, various definitions. Regardless of the variety and diversity of existing reports, which are sometimes not comprehensive and obstructive, music can be read, in a nutshell, as the art of expressing human emotions and feelings through sounds. (Kamal Portrab, 1390: 17) According to scholars, the origin of the melody is instinctual instincts in human beings. Like the talent of a poem that is human instinct. (Farabi, 1375: 23) The type of music perception takes place on two levels: first, the sensory perception of the listener, then, after that, the present perception of the emotional interactions achieved in the soul. Of course, after this face-to-face perception, the human soul imagines forms of the soul's dynamic interactions, all of which are sexually illusory. The sensory and imaginary dimension of the music is of the type of productive perceptions, and the emotional size is of the kind of face perceptions. (Fannie, 1375: 71) Of course

The presence dimension completely dominates the sensory size. In such a way, they often consider the perception of music without considering the sensory perception, emotional perception, and presence. Therefore, we can say with a bit of carelessness. Without considering the sensory dimension of this perception, music perception is of the type of face perceptions, of course, of its partial class, and has the characteristics of face science based on infallibility. Music inherently has no effect other than evoking emotions, and the primary audience of music is the human sense of feeling. The language of music is not naturally high enough to convey the kidneys' meanings to address the intellect and the super-intellect of man. Because every melody and tone within the human body has unique and emotional content, it

indicates a specific direction of his emotional feelings and not a general intellectual perception. However, these human feelings may also reflect his rational and super-rational perceptions, which, of course, do not make an epistemological difference like his feelings and emotions. The difference here is only in terms of the origin of these feelings. Whether this origin is intellectual, illusory, imaginary, or sensory. The sound of music merely reflects a person's emotions, causes the human soul to be passive, and arouses his emotional feelings in others. As a result of this arousal of emotions, expressive illusory forms may appear in the human soul. Since there is a close connection between human delusion and fantasy (Farabi, 1381, 139), after Sufi whirling to each piece of music, in addition to arousing homogeneous emotions, his imagination also flies the sky of his vision.

Another point is that the content of music is strongly influenced by the accompanying phenomena; The feelings evoked by the music are dramatically in the same direction as the concurrent poetic meanings, the images being displayed, or the circumstances of the music being performed. For example, suppose a poem with high mystical meanings is combined with a piece of music. In that case, the emotional atmosphere drawn by the music is entirely accompanied by the imaginary forms resulting from that poem. Also, suppose a poem with anti-sports or anti-moral concepts is combined with the same piece of music. In that case, the emotional atmosphere created by the music will still be in harmony with the imaginary forms of that poem. Meditation on the theme, like other categories of philosophy and Mysticism, has a long history dating back several thousand years. As Plato considers one of the principles of children's education to be learning music. Music has a mysterious and complex nature; As Aristotle puts it: "It is not easy to express the nature of music and to explain the necessity of knowing it." Music has such a high status that Rumi considers it a divine voice: "Testing that blowing is not the head of God," and Nietzsche says: "Without music, life is wrong." It has been human. Especially in the spiritual culture, folklore, and mythological beliefs of the Iranian people, music has had a special place.

#### **4. Samaa**

##### **4.1. The nature of Sufi whirling**

Sufi whirling in the term Sufism means a unique experience that the listener gets from Sufi whirling to the recitation of the Qur'an, with singing and hymns and music. Also, as a dance in Sufi dance and as a result, the state and spirituality that a Sufi feels through these actions. . (Anousheh, 1997: 99). With the growth of Mysticism, Sufi whirling has replaced the word dance and play and has been in opposition to it. In general, Sufi whirling represents one of the main aspects of Islamic art in terms of its relationship with spirituality, which in its original meaning is the call of God that man can return to the source of his existence. Only one deserves to step into it, if necessary, discipline. Accept. (Nasr, 1389: 157). With these descriptions, it can be said that Sufi whirling in the tradition of Sufism generally has a high status. Sama, which literally means "Sufi whirling," in the Sufi tradition, means Sufi whirling with the ear of the soul, which is actually a kind of meditation. It is a kind of full attention to the melodies to reach the truth beyond them. The fact is that Sufi whirling to mystics and Sufis was a spiritual passion. The companions, under the influence of poetry and music, became impatient or impatient with the excitement of excitement and searched, clapped, and danced. In the conditions in which the mystics traveled, Sufi whirling was not considered negligence; it was austerity and heart care.

Sufi whirling is the most original fruit of Mysticism and music that mystics and jurists each look at it from a different perspective; So some, such as Shams Tabrizi, call Sufi whirling obligatory for the people of the present and consider it mandatory for the people of the heart, like the five promises of prayer and fasting during the month of Ramadan. (Shams Tabrizi, 251: 1385) According to Shams, Sufi whirling is the feast of the universe. "The seven heavens and the earth, and the creatures, all come to dance." Others have called it the spiritual food of the soul. (Qashiri, 1995: 373) Roozbehan Baqli Shirazi believed that in Sufi whirling, there are one hundred thousand pleasures, one of which is a thousand years of knowledge that no mystic can attain through any worship. (Bali Shirazi, 1973: 50) Even al-Ghazali, who had a long history in the religious sciences, believed that the best way to arouse the jewel inside a person is to listen, which is enough. Al-Ghazali, of course, forbade Sufi whirling in certain circumstances: It was forbidden for men to be young and neglected to be dominated by lust; At this time, Sama will sharpen the fire of passion on both sides, and everyone will not turn to desire, and the heart will be hung and that many seeds of corruption will be corrupted. Such Sufi whirling should never be done." (Al-Ghazali, 1382: 457) To further explain the meaning of Sufi whirling, we quote the words of some Sufis:

And Sufi whirling is the entrance of God, who arouses hearts with it and is greedy for it. Whoever hears it with the truth will find the way to the fact, and whoever hears it with the soul will fall into the abyss and elsewhere: "A good voice motivates the heart to seek God and becomes a means of perceiving the truth." Abu Nasr Siraj: "The people of Sama 'are of three types: First, they are a tribe whose reference is with the addressees of the Almighty; Second,

they be a group that refers to the situation, officials, and times in the audience. He is a pack of knowledge and seeks truth in allusions; "Thirdly, they are the single poor who have performed worthy services and made the necessary efforts to reside and deserve Sunni disgrace, artificial connections, and are worthy of Sufi whirling, ecstasy, and state." Hallaj: "Sufi whirling is that which is forbidden to the common people due to the survival of their population; It is permissible for the ascetic to have them; "And it is recommended for the mystic because of his liveliness." Shebli: "Sufi whirling, its appearance is sedition, and its interior is a lesson."

Sama in the school of Sufism consists of four elements: poetry, song, music, and rhythmic body movement (Dervish dance). The instrument used in Sama circles is sometimes straightforward, like a reed, and occasionally various such as drums, rababs, and circles. In the "Sufi whirling," the singer is said to be a musician, musician, or a musician.

#### **4.2. The importance of Sufi whirling in the spiritual education of the seeker**

Sufi whirling may not be seen directly as an educational axis. Still, because it prepares the seeker audience for other levels of knowledge, it has a valuable role. Najmuddin Kobra considers the dominance of the expansion state over the seeker to be the result of Sufi whirling; Because the seeker in this state becomes so fascinated that he loses his authority; But this does not happen to the sheik; Because he has magical power and with all his might, he supervises the actions of the seeker and brings him under his provincial control. In proof of this statement, he mentioned the participation of Junaid and Abolhassan Nouri in the Sama Majlis. Because Junaid did not participate in the Sufi whirling of the seekers present, they thought that he considered Sufi whirling forbidden. Still, he refers to his esoteric movement by quoting the verse "وَنَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسِبُهَا جَامِدًا" (Nahl: 88). (Najmuddin Kobra, 1368: 156) Magdalen also considers Sufi whirling permissible for his family. He has devoted part of the gift book to Sufi whirling and its truth. He first deals with the connection of the external ear with the heart and considers it more connected with nature than the outer eye; Because the ear, by Sufi whirling good songs with a memorable melody, makes a person sober and sober absorbed. The natural ear also sometimes attracts the servant and hears the sound of things with the heart's ear. Because the outward sense is accompanied by the inward sense (the right ear), it brings a feeling of satisfaction and peace to man. Sufi whirling with the real (esoteric) ear is more valuable, and the seeker in this state hears the glorification of all things and is taken care of by the Almighty; Therefore, the highest and best Sufi whirling is the Sufi whirling of the Almighty, which is never interrupted. (Magdaldin Baghdadi, 1368: 259) According to the Egyptian Dhu al-Nun, Magdalen considers Sufi whirling to be an entrance from the truth that leads the hearts of the listeners to the fact. If one hears Sufi whirling as it should be, one will enjoy the truth, and if one hears it according to the desire of the flesh, one will fall into irreligion. (Ibid: 266) Najm Razi has also referred to the subject of Sufi whirling when expressing the characteristics of the affluent and inspired souls. The soul becomes lawful for him in the position of inspiration which distinguishes truth from falsehood and follows the fact, and avoids misconception; For with the destruction of the ugly attributes, the time of his happiness arrives (marriage), and because he is married to the meanings of the unseen and is married to the good qualities, he listens to the congratulations of his heart; In this case, whatever he hears with the right ear is an unseen inspiration and leads him to the truth. In this case, every sound he hears from the singer, in beautiful and harmonious clothes, is addressed to the right, and the desire to fly to the leading destination is created in him. (Najm Razi, 1997: 365) In fact, Sufi whirling in this direction by injecting positive energy and raising the seeker's spirit prepares him for other stages of the journey.

In the words of mystics who believe in Sufi whirling, any kind of music is not referred to as Sufi whirling. Rather, he also expressed his disgust with the music in which he appeared or was associated with a forbidden act, in addition to Lehvi and Tarab. He only paid attention to music that had a medium format and content. Hence, the circle of Sufi whirling is particular and narrow concerning the absolute of music, which has a general meaning. Due to the critical role of Sufi whirling in the training of seekers, Sufis attributed various educational effects to Sufi whirling; These include:

- Create vitality to get out of lethargy
- Influence the listener and arouse his emotions
- Bringing the seeker closer to the world of Quds

#### **5. The effect of music on the spiritual development of the seeker**

Emotional perception of music is similar to mystical intuitive perceptions, which causes a similarity and closeness between the two. The main similarity of these two perceptions is that music perception and mystical intuitive perceptions are both the type of esoteric perceptions of presence. In both, the human soul encounters a phenomenon directly, not in its scientific form. Hence, there is no error in these two perceptions; Because infallibility is one of the

characteristics of presence science. (Fanaei, 1375: 126) Therefore, perhaps this esoteric and internal nature of observation can be considered the most essential nature of the two. Another similarity is the language of expression between the two; Because music expresses the inner human being well with the language of feeling. The mystic language is also the language of taste, emotion, and inspiration. (Zarrinkoob, 140: 1994) And he tries to express his inner self, which is the result of connection passion or the pain of embarrassment, in any language. Perhaps music can be an expressive language in this direction. Enchant because music is narrative and associative

Ten, he can well evoke the pure and pure feelings of the mystic from the intuitions of the divine manifestations. Since the mystic's gaze is a gaze from cause to effect, he also sees the melodies of music as narrators of heavenly melodies due to which the mystical pure senses are associated with him. Sometimes it may even provide him with an intuitive introduction. Hence, music can create a mystical state with relative calmness and moderation in the mystic soul.

In this section, the effect of music on spiritual growth is studied from the two aspects of epistemological and epistemological selection that the listener experiences and grows with awakening music, and the spiritual effect of music is interrupted.

### **5.1. The effect of music on an epistemological selection**

According to some mystics, the soul in the holy world has been a constant listener of the eternal music of the world. Now that he is in captivity in this prison, he listens to some traditional Iranian music - in memory of his real homeland in that world. falls down. (Nasr, 1389: 175) and be delighted with its pleasure. He considers Iranian traditional music a means to reach perfection and one of the strongest ways of awakening a gifted person from neglect. Any pain and suffering turn into joy and ecstasy. (Ibid: 176) As they have said: "Iranian traditional music rises from silence and manifests the peace and tranquility of the eternal truth that is eternal and beyond any determination, in the form of sounds that belong to the world of images and manifestations." (Ibid: 173) Such a belief can be seen in the views of others, including Schopenhauer. Anthony Store quotes him in his book *Music and Mind*: "The close connection that music has with the true nature of things can explain the fact that when a piece of music is played to fit any scene, activity, environment and event, The most hidden meaning of that aspect, is revealed to us. "Music everywhere expresses the core and essence of life and its events." (Store, 230: 1388)

### **5.2. The effect of music on discontinuity**

Discontinuation means complete and comprehensive attention to God Almighty and not paying attention to anyone other than Him. Proponents of mystical music and its spiritual application have always argued that music has the potential to free the human soul from the realm of animal instincts and limitations to the infinity and the infinite worlds of existence. Of course, from the point of view of these claimants, such a capability indeed does not exist in all types of music; Because, in his view, only that kind of music can be considered a candidate for such competence in terms of form and content has a sort of calmness, confidence, and moderation to bring a type of relative balance to the listener soul. Therefore, in this field, many types and styles of music that do not have a dignified and sublime form and content are excluded from this selection. The necessity of esoteric behavior in Mysticism is the severance of belonging from the material world, the journey in the supermaterial worlds, and the passage through houses and authorities. The tool the seeker uses in this way must have the ability - both scientifically and practically - to guide him from the darkness of the material world to the light of the abstract world. Therefore, many types of music that have nothing to do with mystical confidence and charisma cannot be composed of civilized people and people with high metaphysical thoughts. For example, styles that have a violent and exciting form and content, such as styles that generally convey a message to the audience based on sexual and erotic themes, such as rap and rock, as well as many lyrical types of music that achieve nothing but lightness and intoxication and use in dance parties Do not have. While such cases conflict with the precepts of the Holy Shari'a, none of them is commensurate with the spiritual world and our supernatural Mysticism and can in no way be a reflection of mystical ideas.

In contrast, dignified genres such as some works of classical music as well as some pieces of traditional Iranian music and even some noble and decadent works of Iranian pop, which in addition to having rich content, also have a glorious form, have features that can be accepted. Emotions are based on and reflect high mystical thoughts. Of course, this does not mean that the music mentioned above can express mystical and divine feelings absolutely and without restrictions. Instead, compliance with the teachings of the Holy Shari'a will be its central and undeniable condition. Therefore, it can be concluded that: "Every piece of music that is influenced by high mystical knowledge and concepts, composed by civilized and self-made people, will definitely have a form with confidence, dignity, and glory, as well as rich and sublime content."

And in the end, in Sharia, Sufi whirling to music is not permissible except in exceptional cases. Because the rules of Shari'a deal with religious commands, prohibitions, and divine justice. But music is acceptable in Sufism, which is related to the journey and behavior. In some ways, such as the way of Rumi and Cheshtia, it is essential. (Nasr, 179: 1389)

### Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the role of music and Sufi whirling in the spiritual education of seekers. Etiquette and teaching are among the most critical issues for which the followers of different schools consider it very important and explain its principles and methods for receiving seekers. In Mysticism, there are principles and practices for the conduct, such as the art of music and Sufi whirling, which have been among the most controversial topics in the history of Islam. The pleasure that comes to a Sufi through Sufi whirling to music and Sufi whirling affects his soul and takes him out of this world. As if his soul is the music and Sufi whirling in the world

He hears beyond the ordinary world. Although mystical systems have used this tool for the spiritual growth of human beings and the development of the spiritual and spiritual abilities of the seeker, It is from the biography of the Infallibles (peace be upon them). On the other hand, there is no evidence from these sources that indicates the permission to use music in mystical behavior and acquiring the knowledge of the sky of truth. The use of music in such a way will not be a hoax of Islamic Mysticism. Hence, the placement of mystical music next to other mystical houses will be questioned. The idea that the prophets and imams did not like or did not recommend music is not a reason for the ineffectiveness of music and should not be blamed and can have a unique and spiritual effect on each person according to different natures. That was mentioned.

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