

The Mystical Characteristics of Abdurahmon Jami's Epic Layli And Majnun

Avezova Aziza Mavlonjonovna

Basic doctoral student at Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature named after Alisher Navoi, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The article analyzes the depiction of Majnun's state in various stages of the spiritual path in Abdurahmon Jami's epic Layli and Majnun.

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Introduction: According to the concept of love in Abdurahmon Jami's epic Layli and Majnun, Majnun was initially a representative of common, worldly love. Unlike Navoi's Majnun, Jami's Majnun did not possess innate poverty of spirit (*tug'ma faqirlik*). Therefore, he became a "*suluki majzub*," that is, one who experienced spiritual ecstasy (*jazba*) during the path of *suluk*. Thus, he was required to traverse the stations of *suluk*. Majnun experienced mystical states (*hol*) even before passing through the *maqomat* (stations). On the road toward Layli, Majnun faints.

Firstly, Sufi masters explained the seeker's spiritual and moral perfection with the terms *sayr* (journey) or *safar* (travel). These words were also used in their literal sense, since traveling was considered one form of ascetic discipline (*riyazat*). Many Sufis traveled the Muslim lands on foot, attaining the companionship of renowned sheikhs.

Secondly, the state of fainting in Majnun is associated with *Ibtido* (the beginning), specifically the stage of *Yaqzo* (wakefulness), in which this state produces joy and ecstasy. It is well known that *hal* (spiritual state) is linked to the soul. It brings with it feelings of joy, delight, bliss, and ecstasy, or conversely, sadness, constriction, and longing. In other words, a brief moment of spiritual upliftment and radiance brings joy and bliss, but once the radiance passes, sorrow arises. In the state of *hal*, there is no turning back; transformation only occurs forward.

In Majnun, too, such a short-lived ecstasy is followed by sadness. After seeing Layli again, he becomes joyful

once more. The gnostic (*arif*) attains ecstasy through perceiving with the open eye of the heart and being moved by what is transmitted in hadiths and spiritual works. There is always yearning for the Beloved when He is absent; once attained, the traces of ecstasy vanish. Ecstasy (*shavq*) is the yearning for what has not yet been attained. As mentioned above, in *hal* there is no return; change only proceeds forward.

That is why, in later sections, after Layli binds Majnun with a vow of loyalty and makes him swear an oath, we no longer see Majnun in a state of happiness. His condition steadily worsens. At the next stage, Majnun attains the station of repentance (*tawba*). In Sufism, the seeker (*salik*) not only purifies the soul (*tazkiya nafs*), but also strictly observes the etiquette of the spiritual path (*suluk*) in a passionate manner, avoiding blameworthy traits (*akhlaq-i zamima*) and firmly adopting praiseworthy ones (*akhlaq-i hamida*). This is seen when Majnun, despite the pleas of countless beauties, abandons Karima's tribe.

If accepted by God Almighty, in this way the seeker advances in *tariqat* and attains the appropriate spiritual ranks. It is known that the ranks attained by the seeker are metaphorically called *maqam* and *muqam*, and symbolically described as valleys, rivers, or seas. If the seeker firmly adheres to the practice of *suluk* without turning back, he remains in that station (*maqam*). For example, if he repents in accordance with *suluk* and does not break his repentance, he remains in the station of repentance. Majnun's act of repentance in Layli's presence testifies that he had entered this

station. A state (hal) is a condition that is not firmly established, unlike a maqam. Therefore, Majnun's repentance once again at the Kaaba was not without meaning.

When Majnun refused to marry his uncle's daughter, he demonstrated his attainment of the wara' (piety) station. At the station of zuhd (asceticism), when Majnun was a guest in someone's house, he did not extend his hand to the host's set table and declared that hunting animals and eating their cooked meat was forbidden for him. Majnun's address to the wind indicates the station of faqr (spiritual poverty). He saw that even Nawfal could not help him, so Majnun called upon the wind. This shows that Majnun now felt more deeply the power of God and realized his dependence upon His might. The Prophet himself said: "My poverty is my pride."

The next is the station of sabr (patience). Upon reaching this station, patience became Majnun's constant companion. Majnun freed the gazelle from the hunter's hand. The gazelle, like Layli, was without freedom, akin to prey in the hunter's grasp. At the station of khawf (fear), after Majnun spoke of his love in the Kaaba, we see him, out of fear that Layli might suffer harm, returning from the Kaaba not with Layli's caravan but with another group.

At the station of raja (hope), Majnun, wearing a fur coat, entered among Layli's sheep and, upon approaching her tent and seeing her, fainted in delight.

At the station of tawakkul (trust in God), Majnun realized that even after going on pilgrimage to Mecca he could not achieve his goal; the widow could not help him, Nawfal brought no benefit, and even crying to the wind did not ease his pain. Now his only reliance was upon God.

At the station of rida (contentment), the heart is cleansed of wickedness and impurities, submitting to the decree of fate, abandoning the approval of the ego, and entering into the approval of the Truth. It is the joy of a heart surrendered to divine command. Lahiji defines rida as the servant abandoning his own will to embrace the Beloved's will, showing not a trace of objection to divine destiny. At this stage, the seeker (salik) feels no anger, agitation, resentment, or grief. It suffices to recall Majnun's condition as he awaited Layli's return in the final parts of the poem. Thus, Majnun attained each of the spiritual stations in succession.

Overall, in Sufism the stations (maqamat) are classified differently by different mystics. There are many stations, but their seven comprehensive forms are presented in Lison ut-tayr under the names of valleys. In every station of the spiritual path, the pure lover

experiences a unique spiritual state. Analyzing the sequence of Abdurahmon Jami's epic, we see that the portrayal of Majnun's condition reflects the depiction of the pure lover's state at various stations of the tariqat. For example, Majnun's journey up to his first meeting with Layli indicates that he had passed into the station of talab (seeking). Here the seeker searches for the path of tariqat, struggling to escape worldliness, wealth-worship, ambition, vanity, and arrogance, purifying his soul and morals in accordance with the demands of suluk, and thereby becoming worthy of entering the next station.

Majnun's suffering and torment in the station of ishq (love) are described after his meeting with Layli. This love is at the highest degree, urging the lover to sacrifice his soul and yearn for the One who gave it.

When the seeker enters the state of hal, it is not his tongue but his heart that begins to speak, expressing experiences and inner states through gestures, behavior, and actions. Majnun's elevation from the station of love to the station of ma'rifat (gnosis) is depicted when he dons a fur coat and goes to Layli's tribe. This symbolizes the countless paths and methods of suluk: some straight, others crooked, yet all sharing the same ultimate goal. Some, blessed by the light of divine gnosis, attain their goal according to the suffering they endure; others stray from the path and perish.

When Layli broke the cup and Majnun rejoiced at it, the poet illustrated his elevation to the station of istighna (self-sufficiency, detachment). Layli too finally understood that Majnun desired nothing of this world's materiality and that his aim was utterly different. Istighna is non-neediness. God the Almighty is Mustaghni—in need of nothing, yet capable of everything. According to this divine attribute, seekers are tested with dreadful and merciless trials. Most cannot endure this test; only a very few succeed in surviving it.

In Sufism, the knowledge of recognizing God is called tawhid. In this state, the seeker (salik) becomes immersed in the Divine Light, so that only the Existence of the Truth (Haq) remains. This signifies that the entire universe consists solely of His unity and essence, and in theological terminology it is defined as belief in the Oneness of God. In Sufi doctrine, tawhid means faith in the eternal and unchanging unity of God. For scholars, tawhid pertains to doctrine ('aqida), whereas for Sufis it is the goal itself—an experience, a vision, and gnosis (ma'rifat). The first relies on knowledge and affirmation, while the second is grounded in spiritual perception and delight.

According to Imam Ghazali's definition, "Tawhid is such

a noble station that reliance on God (tawakkul), contentment (rida), and surrender to God's will are the fruits of this rank." In the epic, Jami depicts Majnun waiting for Layli, enveloped in the rays of the sun, a portrayal signifying that Majnun had reached the stage of tawhid. When Layli returns, Majnun does not recognize her and tells her to leave. Reaching the stage of hayrat (awe and bewilderment), Majnun becomes estranged from reason, turning into one like a madman.

But can the soul attain this station without separating from the body? The Sufis affirm that it can. If a person's perfection rises to the highest degree, whereby he attains union with the Truth, then he experiences absolute annihilation (fana)—becoming filled with divine gnosis, wisdom, and knowledge, forgetting material existence and transforming into a spiritual-divine being. The merging of the personal "I" with the cosmic "I," the soul taking on a universal form, is regarded as the highest degree of perfection. At this stage, man merges with the boundless realm called eternity and attains immortality.

Fana signifies that the human aspect of the seeker is completely annihilated within the divine aspect of God. In the final parts of the epic, after Majnun's death, the poet states that Majnun, abandoning the outward form (majaz), reached the meaning of Truth (haqiqat) and drank the wine of meaning from the goblet of form. The poet conveys the grace of God through Majnun's words:

"O you whose condition has been ruined, for thirty years you endured suffering. Why did death not claim your soul? What did the eternal Beloved do to you?"

He replied: "My God bestowed His grace upon me, raising me to the throne of dignity."

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, within the narrative sequence of Layli and Majnun, the philosophy of Sufism, life's reality, poetic imagination, and hyperbole are intricately interwoven.

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