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ANALYZING OF SYMBOLICAL ASPECTS OF “WATER” IN MAULANA’S POEMS

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(ABSTRACT)
There is no doubt that one of the most important differences between a capable poet and non-poet, is their mode of viewing to nature and reality. As Quran has stated, we can reach the Truth by looking to natural creatures by contemplation, they all can be witnesses (ayah) of God’s qualities. Maulana is one of the poets who has adopted natural elements in his lyric poems in large-scale, like: sun, sea, wind, water, fire and so on. He has used each of them in particular meanings, singular or in metaphors and allegories to express his edge and thrill. In fact, for Maulana language is just an implement for indicating his occults and releasing his ecstasy. To this end, he euphemizes the natural realities with scrutinizing vision as a good symbol for his teachings. Between these symbols, water, has special position, because of amplitude of usage and creation of special aesthetics in his poems.

MEVLÂNĂ’NIN ŞİİRLERİNDEKİ “SU” KAVRAMLININ SEMBOLİK YÖNELERİNİN ANALİZİ

(ÖZET)

Preface
Extent of the poets’ world depends on the extent of their symbols; as much as a poet is more creative in making symbols and enriching the contents of them, his tongue deserves more admiration. Symbol in poetry, is the pretext by that the poet not only embellishes the form, but also indicates a reality for addressee more tangible and sensible; a reality that if corporeal and sensible signs don’t help for its expression, may remain hidden and inmost. Our environment is full of corporeal and natural elements which a finite look can not extract any thing else of them, but when they are in hands of a diver of meanings, convert to a precious pearl. As Maulana says:

Kayımlı gur kد گر زر شود

نافقد ار زر برد خاکستر شود

If a perfect man takes the soil, changes it to gold
But if an imperfect one takes the gold, changes it to ash.¹

Between poets and mystics of different cultures, Jalaleddin-e Rumi so-called Maulana is one of the most significant poets who is completely aware of mysteries of alchemy in literature and poem. He has subsumed several seas of meanings and truths in six verbal books of Masnavi much more skillfully than any other Persian poet. His purpose was not composing poems and verses, but he wanted to imply some realities and teach some punctilios. He intended to nourish others a lay of light from the sun (shams) he was drinking brimful and to quote of what just he himself could see. It’s true that he didn’t want to show his power in composing poems, but undoubtedly, Maulana has one of the most ecstatic and lyrical poems in Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi.

Symbols in Masnavi and Divan-e Shams
Symbols and allegories are used in Maulana’s poems very much. In Masnavi, different kinds of symbols, from natural phenomena like water, wind, soil, light, sea,... to men’s artifacts like shoe and candle, from names of cities and persons to animals like elephant, dog, parrot, cow, and etc. are used to transmit lessons and doctrines to addressee. Indeed, in Masnavi he intends to teach some realities by these symbols consciously. In Divan-e Shams, the situation is different. Maulana is in such an

¹ Masnavi, 1st book, 1612
intoxication and enchantment that is not able to compose consciously, he just wants to appeal to every verbal form that can relieve his inward. There he talks of sun and light, wine and bartender, water and fire but not for teaching, rather because of this reality that he doesn’t find any thing more similar to his love than fire, or for calling his beloved he can’t see any word better than sun, for explaining the fate overwhelming him, he can assimilate it to a wild vampire lion, and for describing the truths he comprehends, doesn’t find any symbol better than sugar and lump sugar.

In this article, we analyze a symbol has been used several times by Maulana in both Masnavi and Divan-e Shams for different meanings. Here we research water in Maulana’s poems to understand what did he mean by this word and symbolical use of it.

Symbolism of water

* First of all, we see water as a natural element besides other natural elements, like: wind, earth, and fire:

   هست و آگشته نهالی با خدا
   (6:2420)

   بلاکه سنگ و خاک و کوه و آب را

* Next, the most usual use of water is in the term “water and earth” or “water and mud” that is an inking of man’s structure and essence:

   زاب و گل نقش دل آدم زدی
   (2:696)

   نیست بر صورت که آب و گلست
   (3:2244)

   حق همی گوید: نظرمان در دلست

But in proceeding couplets, he himself emphasizes that like the murky mud which contains water in itself, the corporeal essence of man has signal of that water (=spiritual truth) too, even though the water is vanquished by the muddy part. Whenever water which is inking of heart became clean and pure of mud and could release itself of the mud’s jail and joined to the sea, then we can call that heart prophet’s heart or saint’s heart.

   دل فراؤ عرش پاشد نه به پست
   تو همی گویی مرا دل نیز هست

   لیک زان اینت نشاید آب دست
   در گل ترته قیقن هم آب هست

   پس دل خود را مگو کین هم دلست
   زانک گر اینت مغلوب گلست

   آن دل ابادل یا پیامبر است
   این دلی که آسمانها برتر است

   در فسوینی آمده وافق شده
   یاک گشته آن ز گل صلیبی شده

   رسته از زندان گل، بحری شده
   ترک گل کرده، سوی بحر آمده

   بحر رحمت جنب کن ما را ز تل
   آب ما محبوب گل مانده ست هین
   ( 3 : 2245 -2251)

*Maulana talks of Nile’s water too, the Nile’s water which is superior to “water of life”; but it results life and spirit just for believers and changes to blood for deniers and Copts and results death for them.² The water of Nile is symbol of martyrdom in a couplet³ and symbol of true statement in another couplet.⁴

² 2: 1067
³ 4: 3430
*Water, is symbol of the Reality of existence which has overwhelmed everything. Maulana uses a proverb here: a person, who is plunged in water up to his knee but is unaware, will stay unaware continuously although water has embraced him completely. He will stay unaware because fantasy and delusion have been thrown on his eyes like a veil. It is like a gem which lies in bottom of the sea, but it can not see the sea because of the wall of the cockleshell overwhelming it as the fantasy and delusion, and so the jewel asks where the sea is! The human being is so; as much as he lives inside the circle of his fantasies and imaginaries, he will be negligent of the Reality in which he is swamped, though "the water is nearer than the jugular vein"\(^5\), but he is unaware of the water because of overcoming the delusions.\(^6\)

اندر آب و بی چیره زبان روان
وآن خیال چون صدف دیوار او (1081)
چون گهر در بحر گودید بحر کو؟

*Water is symbol of consciousness; because like it, emanates from the superior world and when overcomes this world, can prevail over everything in this universe and change them; as water that when rains, revive dead lands too.

غالب آب یک در زمینه و چون آن
گهری یا در زمینه و وحی خیال (1:2068)

Maulana has used water in meaning of revelation. This "blessed water" which rains from heaven, is reviver of heart:

پس بدان کب مبارک ز أسمان
وحبی دلها باشند و صدق بیان (3:4317)

*Water is symbol of the people of God, or more commonly, God's creatures. All God's attributes are manifested in human being, like the moon which its picture reflects in the water of river.

خلق را چون آب دان، صاف و زلال
اندر آن نابان صفات ذوالجلال (2:3172)

On the other hand, like the water of river which experiences renovation continuously and is not any more the previous running water, people come and go during centuries and diverge forever; but just something is stable, that's the same moon's picture in water or the same God's attributes which again manifest in all beings.\(^7\)

"Water of life" (which is used as water of khezr scarcely\(^8\))

Maulana uses this term for different intentions:
1-Quran is water of life.\(^9\)
2-Statements of the saints are "Water of life" or "water of khezr", which every one who drinks of it, will become fruitful and can grow. If a person can not recognize this water and is not able to see it as a blind one, he should imitate others and brings his cruse and store it of water like them. When his curse overflows of water and becomes heavy, he can recognize water in his curse although he can not see it. Such is the man who is not able to recognize the saints himself for to be led by them and so he should become one of the saint's disciples by following others.\(^10\)
3-Repentance is "water of life", because it revives the heart.\(^11\)

\(^5\) 4: 3241
\(^6\) 5: 1075-1081
\(^7\) 6: 3175-3178
\(^8\) 3: 4032; 6: 3243
\(^9\) 3: 4289
\(^10\) 3: 4301
\(^11\) 5: 2222-2223
4-A caliph who was so generous and had vitalized Arabs and non-Arabs of his magnanimity, is assimilated in Maulana’s poem to sea of beneficence; so generosity is like the “water of life” in Maulana’s view that can revive people.12

5-In this category, Maulana makes a very interesting and significant term: “water of water of life” and “water of water”. He mentions that just “death- imbibing ones” who “are alive of His love” and “have disengaged their hearts from life and “water of life” can drink this special water. This “water of water of life” and “water of water”, is water of God’s love that if being drunken, nobody desires water of life anymore which can animate. Such a person, is “death- imbibing” and pursues a death in result of love. He likes to taste a death caused by love of his beloved, so that afterward he can experience a newer life. Reason fears of such a fate but love is so eager, aflame and thirsty to embrace such a death13, like a stone against the soil, never fears raining.14

Maulana has used the term “water of water” in the fifth book in some other couplets for denoting to “God”. In form of a story, he narrates so: water was at first so dean, but it accepted the pollution in itself to purify it, so water itself smudged. God removed it in the “right sea” generously; but again water addressed impurities so: O you all pollutions! God has returned me my power again. Come in me to accept your dirties and make you pure like an angel.15

Water is symbol of purification and God is “the origin of origin of purities”. So God himself is water of water. Maulana concludes here that water is symbol of “soul of saints” who are cleanser of men’s sins and when their souls are made somber by earthly affairs, they address God deeply so: “O king who endows property! Is there anymore to bestow on?” At that time they like to return toward “the origin of origin of purities”.

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12 1: 2251
13 Here we see composition of water and fire, love is so aflame to embrace the water of water.
14 5: 4217-4226
15 5: 204-206
16 5: 221-226
One of the most important features of water is its power in purgation and cleaning. Water has so magnanimity and generosity that in spite of its purity, accepts all pollutions and impurities in it and cleans them. This is the reason that whenever Maulana talks about this subject, his poems acquire a very special rousing and ecstatic tone. Here, water is symbol of beloved or God.

The other symbolism is a division between water of sea and water of chute. From Maulana’s view, the water rains from the clouds and accumulates in the sea, is real and purify, on the contrary of the water which flows from the chute. It has no originality and is borrowing. The revelation and intuition is real and self-sufficient like raining and sea, so can cause “the colorful garden”; but water in the chute is as the man’s reason and thought which is always in borrowing and like that, may cause hostility and enmity or increasing imaginaries.

Maulana talks of two different kinds of reason: first, the reason which is learned. It’s like the rivers flowing from mountains; if its way gets blocked, then there will be no water anymore. The second wisdom is bestowing from God which overflows as a spring from man’s soul. This water of knowledge neither gets stale, nor its color changes, nor smells badly, but it is always pellucid and liquid.

In other couplets, he proposes a sense similar to the latter. Maulana talks of dryness as symbol of human’ thought and mind. In opposite, he proposes water as symbol of the mystical annihilation, intoxication and self-extinction. One who always lives in dry land, never can swim in “water of life” or penetrate in deepness of the sea.

Maulana talks of two waters: sweet water and brine. The bird which has made its home in the brine, never can understand enjoyment of sweet water. This mortal residence is like the brine and mystical statues, revelation and intuition are sweet water. A person, who has used to the natural life, can never experience enjoyment of the other.

By symbol of water, Maulana points at Macro Anthropo. He says world is vat and man’s heart is river. What can be found in the vat that is not observable in river? The answer is clear, so is the world which is the smaller copy of man’s heart. Every thing which is in this world can be found in man’s heart potentially.

Thirsty

*From Maulana’s viewpoint, “Thirsty” itself is desirable. It is “Thirsty of seeking” that can lead man toward perfection. Man should not drink in draft, but should try to drink from sea, so that however he drinks more, not only he doesn’t feel waterlogged, but also he feels thirsty more, as much as water will overflows from his inward and “he is drunken by his God the purified wine”.

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17 5: 2489-2493
18 4: 1960
19 1: 570-576
20 1: 2724-2726
21 3: 3219
Thou gatherest up thy garment lest the water should wet it:
Needs must thou plunge a thousand times in the sea.22

أب جمده کردن گل تا از آب بترنشود
هزار غوطه تو را خوردنی است در دریا
تا بجوشد آب از بالا و پش (3:212)

آب کم جو، تشنجی آور بدنست

On the other side, as the thirsty person seeking water, the water which is symbol of beloved
and desirable, is in search of thirsty ones too.23

آب جوید هم به عالم تشنجگان (1:741)

تشنجگان گر آب جویدن از جهان

Other symbolism of water:

* God’s remembrance is like water:

آب ذکر حق و زبور این زمان
همست یاد آن فلکه وان فلان
دم بخور در آب ذکر و صبر کن
تارهی از فکر و وسوسه کهن (4:437)

*This world is dark as the murky water, and God is the limpid source.24

*Water is symbol of the truth of meaning and its vessel is signal of form and shape.25

*Water is symbol of prayer, because prayer has fruits and products like water:

هم دعا از من روان کردن چو آب
هم نبیش بخش و دارش مستجاب (5:162)

*Man’s soul, as water has been sent down from the supper world on this earthly body to revive
it:

ما رسد از غیب جون آب روان (۲۲۲:۱)
در وجود ادمی جان و روان

22 Nicholson, pp. 4-5
23 3:1441; 3:4398-4401
24 4:3212-3213
25 1:295