



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.09.28>

## MANSUR AL-HALLAJ: THE INTOXICATED VOTARY OF SUFISM

**Dr. Azizul Hoque**

Assistant Professor, Rupahi College  
Rupahi Town, Assam, India

### Abstract

The intoxicated votary of Arabic Sufi poetry, Abu al-Mughith Hussain bin Mansur al-Hallaj, a cotton carder was born in Persia. His grandfather was a Zoroastrian. He wrote very illuminating works and his discourses were so illuminating that he was styled 'the master of secret knowledge'. The controversial utterance led him to a long trail, and subsequently imprisoned for a period of nine years in Baghdad Jail.

His well-known work Kitab al-Tawasin is a treatise on the argumentation of Iblis. Hallaj describes his two role models in mysticism between Iblis (devil) and Pharaoh. Both suffered condemnation at the hand of God. Iblis was the chief of angels and most dedicated monotheist. He was commanded by God to bow before newly created Adam. Iblis refused to do so despite God's threat to curse on him. Due to his ardent love to God, he saw none there, but God. Because, Iblis lost his own self and lived in God. Like Iblis, Hallaj also wanted to become a martyr of love.

His Diwan of Arabic mystical Poetry is consisting of many voluminous poems dealing with various elements of Divine Love and states of mystics. He confidently describes the yearning of his soul for his Divine beloved in his poem.

**Keywords:** Hallaj, Sufism, Divine Love, Arabic Poetry etc.

### Introduction

Mansur Hallaj was one the most ardent lover of God. His ecstasy became a source of colorful Arabic love poem with various aspects of divine issues and inspirations. Regarding the secret of the dhikr 'truth, truth, I am truth' (حق انا الحق), it is narrated that he spent whole night in contemplation of God. Even a little slumber caused to him still the remembrance of God continued with his breathing. One night he was engaged in prayer, meanwhile a little slumber (بينته) overpowered him and he saw an illumination of God in dream. Then he asked the 'light', who are you? There came response انا الحق (I am the truth). Even after awaking, the scene of dream permanently stained in his mind and he became insane for the grief of separation from his Lord. Then he began to recite the speech انا الحق to extinguish his spiritual flame.

The orthodox groups lodged complain against Hallaj before caliph, and then he was declared heresy. His contemporary Sufi unit accompanied him in prison and requested him to stop the dhikr of I am truth! (انا الحق) but he rejected the advice saying that the dhikr which gives him spiritual solace, how he can stop it and immediately he recited—

Zejon nadir jole diyese shatar  
Kemne thakibe deho shukno tahar<sup>i</sup>  
He who swims in the water of the river  
How his body will remain dry.

The controversial utterance led him to a long trail, and subsequently imprisoned for a period of nine years in Baghdad Jail. At last, he was publicly crucified on 26 March 922, A.D. by the order of Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir.

**Objective:** objective of the research paper is to analyze the Divine love and emotion absorbed in his poems.

### Works and Contribution of al-Hallaj

Hallaj did not claim divinity for himself, though the utterance which led to his execution I am the truth (أنا الحق) seemed to his Judges to have the implications. The context of this startling paradox occurs in his Kitab al-Tawasin. "If you don't recognize God, at least recognize His signs. I am the sign, I am the creative truth, and I am truth eternally".<sup>ii</sup>

Hallaj was a spiritual leader as well as a poet of his time. He had a strong ecstasy and a lofty spirit. He is author of brilliant compositions and allegories and polish sayings in theology and Jurisprudence. He had composed almost fifty works at Baghdad and in the neighboring districts, and some in Khuzistan, Faras and Khurasan. All his sayings are like the first vision of novices; some of them are stranger, some weaker, some easier and some more unseemly than others. The credibility of Hallaj's work is reflected perhaps most striking in his ingenious use of the science of opposites.



Cover Page



His well-known work *Kitab al-Tawasin* is a treatise on the argumentation of Iblis. Hallaj describes his two role models in mysticism between Iblis (devil) and Pharaoh. Both suffered condemnation at the hand of God. Iblis was the chief of angels and most dedicated monotheist. He was commanded by God to bow before newly created Adam. Iblis refused to do so despite God's threat to curse him. Due to his ardent love to God, he saw none there, but God. Because, Iblis lost his own self and lived in God. Like Iblis, Hallaj also wanted to become a martyr of love, as he stated—

“My refusal is the cry, Holy are you,  
My reason is madness, madness for you.  
What is Adam, other than you!  
And who is Iblis to set apart one from the other?”<sup>iii</sup>

Hallaj's *satanology* entitled '*Kitab al-Tawasin*' which is divided into following eleven chapters:

1. The Ta-sin of the Prophetic Lamp.
2. The Ta-sin of understanding.
3. The Ta-sin of purity.
4. The Ta-sin of the circle
5. The Ta-sin of the point
6. The Ta-sin of before endless time and equivocation.
7. The Ta-sin of the Divine Will.
8. The Ta-sin of Declaration of unity.
9. The Ta-sin of Self-awareness in Tawhid.
10. The Ta-sin of Disconnection from form.
11. The garden of gnosis.

Hallaj's another work, is a discourse on the *Mi'raj* (ascension) of the holy Prophet. He expressed that, due to the spiritual experiences of the Holy Prophet, it is possible for man to be merged with Allah.

His *Diwan of Arabic mystical Poetry* is consisting of many voluminous poems dealing with various elements on Divine Love and states (احوال) of mystics. He confidently describes the yearning of his soul for his beloved in his poem. Rabi'a's love lyric is distinct from al-Hallaj. Rabi'a loved God considering that God is other than a being, who created her; but Hallaj interpreted as, loving God who is identical with him. He is inspired by Qur'anic verse: “The Qur'an for a law will surely bring thee back home again” (Q: 28:85). Hallaj expresses his absolute identity with God in the following verse-

“I have become the one I love,  
And the one I love has become me!  
We are two spirits infused in a (single) body.”<sup>iv</sup>

This sense of Tawhid of a complete unification of the lover and the beloved, led Hallaj to speak of God in very amorous terms. He consummated Divine union in the amorous attitude in which creator ultimately rejoins His creature. In view of the above quoted verse, he may be called a pantheistic mystic.

His *Diwan of Arabic mystical poetry* is considered to be the valuable piece of Arabic poetry literature. His devotional experiences are fabricated in sweet melody giving them deep mystical colour. His poems may be categorized into three dimensions as per the three phases of mystic life formulated by Hasan al-Basri and Ibrahim bin Adham—

1. Ascetic phase consisting of patience and general contribution.
2. passive purification and
3. Life of union.

Hallaj also elaborated the three phases of asceticism with a little addition:

1. Renounce this world, and this is the asceticism of senses.
2. Renounce the other world as well, and this is the asceticism of heart.
3. Renouncing one's own self is the asceticism of the spirit.

Hallaj frequently used some mystical terms in his poems to express the three phases of mystical life which are shown respectively below:

1. Asceticism: تهذيب (correction), تقريب (nearness), تفرید (uniqueness).



Cover Page



DOI: http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.09.28

2. Passive purification: بلاء (test), إدرار (bestow lavishly), خلاء (empty), فناء الاوصاف البشرية (mortification of human attributes), استهلاك النسيوتيه (consumption of forgetfulness). The purified one is the morad, one desired by God; the wahdani al-dhat, one whose essence is unified by God; the siddiq.
3. Life and union: عين الجمع (exist in union), رف الانية (glittering in I ness), القائم بالحق (consist in truth), and the two reciprocal qiyams: قيام بحقيقة (existence with reality) قيامك بحق (accomplishment with truth): the mota.<sup>v</sup>

The technical terms of union denote some signs of God's omnipresence which are the breezes of piety made to flow throughout the hearts of His lovers. The inner meanings of these terms instigated the mystics to unfold the veils of reality. When a mystic drink the dose of remembrance of God, he loses his own self and almighty God blows His grace over him and vivifies him with God's own qualities. Separate living does not require to open the fold of Divine secrets until he sees all the essence as single essence and until to avoid the perishable things and until to grasp the everlasting One.

In the state of union, all the actions of mystics are entirely sanctified and divinized. The Divine unity is the result of perfection, which Mansur al-Hallaj realized in the ultimate point of ecstasy. As such, creator joins the creature and embraces him, as Hallaj expresses his experience of union in the amorous melody breathing a touch of ardent love without use of symbol of profane love:

حاضر غائب عن اللحظات	لى حبيب ازور في الخلوات
كى اعى ما يقول من كلمات	ما ترانى اصغى اليه بسمع
و لا مثل نغمة الاصوات	كلمات من غير شكل و لا نطق
على خاطرى بذاتى لذاتى	فكانى مخاطب كنت اياه
و هو لم تحوه رسوم الصفات	حاضر غائب قريب بعيد
و اخفى من لائح لخطرات	وهو ادنى من الضمير الى الوهم

I have a beloved, whom I visited in solitude, always present although invisible to the sights.

You don't see me lending an ear to Him, to listen to the words He speaks.

His words are not without form and elocutions, nor do they resemble any melody of voices.

As if, I have become my own interlocutor and communicator through my own inspirations, with my own essence in my own essence.

He is present, absent, near and far, the description of qualities cannot encompass him.

He is nearer than conscience for the imagination, and more intimate than the flashes of inspiration.<sup>vi</sup>

Here, Hallaj expresses the yearning of his soul for his beloved in a lonely and silent place wherein he talks to his beloved with speechless speech, feeling Him nearer to than his heart. The last three verses of Hallaj asserted a pantheistic tendency regarding the immanence of God in everywhere. Hallaj combines transcendence of God with His immanence, though the immanence in strict sense is not pantheism. Nevertheless, pantheism is not the doctrine that all is God, this is a doctrine that all is in God; who is above all. He is everywhere. He encompasses all and none can encompass Him.

Hallaj said, in the chapter 'Garden of gnosis' (بستان المعرفة) of his book 'Kitab al-Tawasin' that Allah is Allah and creation is creation and it does not matter (الحق حق و الخلق خلق و لا بأس). But it does not mean God's separation from man. He is inalienably united with the saint. Thus, the unification may be divided into three kinds:

1. God's unification of God, i.e., His knowledge is of His unity;
2. God's unification of His creatures, i.e., His decree that a man shall pronounce Him to be one, and the creation of unification in his heart;
3. Man's unification of God, i.e., their knowledge of the unity of God.<sup>vii</sup>

So, man can't have Ma'rifat simply with the force of his will, neither can he reach this stage by renunciation or self-negation. This is possible only through a supernatural communication as a result of Divine grace.<sup>viii</sup> The true gnosis is something experimental and amorous. It is a spontaneous transformation by Divine intervention. Yearning of the soul of mystic made him to seem that God is calling him without speech and he is responding to His call, as Hallaj breathed in a sweet melody—

لىبك لبيك يا سرى ونجوانى	لىبك لبيك يا قصى ومعناى
أدعوك بل انت تدعونى اليك	فهل ناديت اياك أم ناجيت ايناى
يا عين عين وجودى يا مدى هممى	يا منطقى و عبارتى وايناى
يا كل كلى يا سمعى ويا بصرى	يا جملى وتباعضى وأجزائى

I am at your service, O my secret, my whispered name.

I am your servant, O meaning of my life, my purpose.



Cover Page



I call you and you call me; did I say I am you? Or did you speak through me?

O essence of my being, my search, my limit;

O my speech, my sign my significance.

O reality of my existence, my perception, my sense,

O my creation, my design, my physical life.<sup>ix</sup>

The above quoted verses of Hallaj provide sublime mystical knowledge regarding the essence of God that essence of God is the essence of all existence and creatures are within the creator. So, this relation may only be realized through love. Therefore, Hallaj became infatuated lover of God. Hallaj's doctrine of Divine union depends upon the grace of God and comes close to expanding al-Jonayd's doctrine of fana (passing away) and baqa (continuance) and it has the close affinity with his contemporary Abu al-Hussain Ahmed bin Mohammed al-Nuri (d. 907, A.D.). He was a pupil of Sari al-Saqati and Mohasibi, whose doctrine of love he preached with utmost zeal. His ascetic practice is motivated by selfless love. During the time of highest mystical state of fana, he breathes a touch of emotional love for the nearness of the beloved, as he stated—

و هيهات الا منك و عنك التقرب	ارانى جمعى فى فنائى تقربا
و لا منك لى بد و لا عنك مهرب	فما عنك لى صبر و لا فيك حيلة
فما لى بعيدا منك و الكل تعطب	تقرب قوم بالرجا فوصلتهم

I had supposed that, having passed away  
From self in concentration, I should blaze  
A path to Thee; but ah! No creature may  
Draw nigh Thee, save on Thy appointed ways.  
I can't longer live, Lord without Thee;  
Thy hand is everywhere: I may not flee.<sup>x</sup>

Garden of gnosis embellished with colorful imaginations, dreams and visions of mystics, who lose their consciousness in the consciousness of God. The ecstasy (نشوة) of love wipes out the distinction between the creator, creature and the created one. In the supreme mystical state, Hallaj is convinced of his essential identity with the Ultimate Being:

نحن روحان حللنا بدنا	انا من اهوى و من اهوى انا
و اذا ابصرته ابصرتنا	فاذا ابصرتنى ابصرته
تمزج الخمرة بالماء الزلال	زجت روحك فى روى كما
فاذا انت انا فى كل حال	فاذا مسك شئ مسنى

I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I  
We are two spirits dwelling in one body.  
If thou seest me, thou seest Him.  
And thou seest Him, thou seest us both.  
Thy spirit is mingled in my spirit  
Even as wine is mingled with pure water;  
When anything touches Thee, it touches me.  
So, in every case Thou art I.<sup>xi</sup>

The above quoted poem of Hallaj placed him as a perfect intoxicated votary of Sufi poetry. The state of union with his Beloved keeps no difference between his love and the loved one as if, both the same entity breathing by same heart. In actual sense, the poet aims to express the taste of his love, in which state revelation of Divine name 'wadud' (ودود) fully manifested in his heart and his heart is completely illuminated by such love. In such state, the poet disappears himself in the love for Beloved like the water mingled in pure wine.

'Incarnation of God in human being' is a major thesis of Christianity and Hallaj was alleged to preach the doctrine of huluwi (incarnation), which he depicted in a poem:

سرى سنا لاهوته الثاقب	سبحان من اظهر ناسوته
فى صورة الاكل والشارب	ثم بدا فى خلقه ظاهرا



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.09.28>

لقد عاينة خلقه حتى  
كلحظة الحاجب بالحاجب  
Glory to Him who created His humanity  
As, the secret of the secrets of the light of radiant Divinity.  
Then he appeared for His creation  
In the form of one who eats and drinks.  
Until His creature saw Him  
With a glance which goes from one eye brow to another.<sup>xii</sup>

Here the poet describes that this universe is outward manifestation of God's essence and God himself manifested in His creature. It is true that Hallaj was pantheistic Sufi, he may feel the identity with God; but he did not confine the God in him like the Christianity.

The poet feels presence of God in his heart and he saw Him by his spiritual eyes in the state of annihilation. God is encompassing the universe with His creation; but the created being can't encompass Him. The universe is like a mirror in which God sees Himself; universe can't see Him. On the other hand, God is everywhere and exists in everything, but it does not mean that everything is God. He is absolute and real and everything is under His control. It is not proper to confine Him to heaven. Hallaj declares the existence of God in everywhere in the following poem:

و اى الارض تخلو منك حتى      تعالوا يطلبونك فى السماء  
تراهم ينظرون اليك جهرا      و هم لا ينظرون من العماء

What place is devoid of Thee  
That people seek Thee in the sky?  
Thou seest them apparently looking at Thee  
While, they don't see Thee due to their blindness.<sup>xiii</sup>

Hallaj uttered for social reformation. His motto of preaching was to eliminate the social injustice by purifying the morals of the masses. The preaching of true spirit of religion among the people made as a duty for him. He did not hesitate to die for the sack of true beloved (God). He expressed the unique intimacy of Beloved in the time of his crucifixion quoting the following verse—

أقتلوني يا ثقاتي      ان فى قتلى حياتي  
و مماتي فى حياتي      و حياتي فى مماتي  
ان عندى محو ذاتي      من اجل المكرمات  
و بقاى فى صفاتي      من قبيح السيئات

Kill me, o my trusted friends, for in my death is my life.  
And my death is my life, and my life is in my death.  
To destroy all trace of my existence is the highest goal of my life.  
And to dwell in my ego is an up repented sin.<sup>xiv</sup>

Here, the poet describes his death as his reward. He feels that the real life will start after death. For him, life and death is same; because death occurs in body and it releases the soul from its cage and death is not prejudice for soul. Hallaj did not fear the death and he accepted it as a martyrdom of love. He declared that his death will remain as an example among the mankind for realization of Divine Love.

Hallaj advocated for universal brotherhood. According to him, the inner spirit of all religion is the same. It is stated in the Hadith-e-qudsi "God is beautiful and He loves beauty".<sup>xv</sup> Every religious seeker is longing to reach the original source of beauty. There may be the various ways leading to God; but He is one. Apart from the experience of ecstatic union with God Hallaj exclaimed:

تفكرت فى الاديان جد تحقيق      فالفيتها اصلا له شعبا جما  
فلا تطلبين للمرء دينا فانه      يصد عن الاصل الوثيق و انما  
يطالبه اصل يعبر عنده      جميع المعالى و المعانى فيهما



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.09.28>

I have deeply reflected over all religion  
And found them to be one root with many branches.  
Don't ask a man to adopt a particular religion  
For, he will be separated from the firm root.  
Verily it is the root which seeks the man and elucidates;  
All meanings and grandeurs for his comprehension.<sup>xvi</sup>

### Conclusion

According to Massignon, Hallaj's writings are represented a marked distinction from other non-religious poetry of the time. The ideal of Baghdadian high society at the time he states, was the search for ecstasy, often inspired by what he terms femmes deluxe, women who were "professional idols of beauty" who functioned "to stimulate people's desire for ascetic diversion". The presence of human beauty could be used to inspire an awareness of Divine beauty, as if one's attraction to the human object could intentionally be shunted to, or transmitted into, an attraction to the Divine object or God<sup>xvii</sup>. Likewise, Hallaj interprets the love relationship of God and mystic is like that of between earthly lover and beloved. Hallaj portrays 'God' as if He is playing some kinds of lovers' game, in which God presents the mystic with a series of veils that must be lifted, one by one.<sup>xviii</sup> The mystery of living union emanated in his heart which he celebrated in verses and which is free from any trace of the symbolism of profane love.

### References

- i Ahmed, Maulana Mazhar Uddin, Asheqe-e-Rabbani Hazrat Mansur Hallaj, p. 25, Salauddin book stall, Dhaka-2008
- ii Bijli, S. M.: Early Muslim Mystics and Philosophers, p-20, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 2000
- iii Bijli, S. M.: Early Muslim Mystics and Philosophers, p-20, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, 2000
- iv [http://bahai-library.com/witness themes erotic Sufism](http://bahai-library.com/witness_themes_erotic_sufism)
- v Nadeem, S.H.: A Critical appreciation of Arabic Mystical Poetry, p.58, Adam Pub.& Dist., new Delhi-2003
- vi Ibid, p.59, quoted from Divan, Massignon, p. 47
- vii Nicholson, R.A. (translated): The kashful Mahjub, written by, Ali bin Uthman al-Hujwiri p.278, Adam pub. & dist. New Delhi-2009
- viii Nadeem, S.H.: A Critical appreciation of Arabic Mystical Poetry, p.61, Adam Pub.& Dist., new Delhi-2003
- ix Jamal, Mahmood (edited with trans. and introduction): Islamic Mystical poetry, Sufi verse from the early Mystics to Rumi, p.14, first published in Penguin Classics, London 2009, and Arabic version is taken from Dewan of Mansur al-Hallaj.
- x Nadeem, S.H.: A Critical appreciation of Arabic Mystical Poetry, p.45, Adam Pub.& Dist., new Delhi-2003, quoted from Kalabandi: Ta'arruf, Op. Cit., p. 78 (trans by Arbery)
- xi Ibid, p.63
- xii Ibid, p.66, quoted from Divan, Massignon, p.41
- xiii Nadeem, S.H.: A Critical appreciation of Arabic Mystical Poetry, p.67, Adam Pub.& Dist., new Delhi-2003
- xiv Jamal, Mahmood (edited with trans. and introduction): Islamic Mystical poetry, Sufi verse from the early Mystics to Rumi, p.19, first published in Penguin Classics, London 2009, Arabic version is taken from Diwan of Mansur al-Hallaj
- xv Stoddart, W. & Nicholson, R. A.: The masterpiece of Sufism-1, The Mystical Doctrines and The Idea of personality, p. 151, Adam Pub, & Dist. New Delhi-2009
- xvi Nadeem, S.H.: A Critical appreciation of Arabic Mystical Poetry, p.70, Adam Pub.& Dist., new Delhi-2003, quoted from Divan of Hallaj, Op. Cit., p. 84
- xvii Ibid
- xviii Ibid