

# The influence of Nizami Ganjavi's heritage on the shaping of the coherent cultural tradition in Oriental literature

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## Introduction

The great Azerbaijani poet and philosopher Nizami Ganjavi has towered across the borders of his nation as well as his works have valued beyond the wealth of a single nation and belongs to spiritual treasure of humanity.

One of the definitions of Ganja, the city in historical Arran (the second city of the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan), where Nizami was born (1141) and died (1209), which he has not basically abandoned according to medieval sources, is "treasure". In the world literature treasury Nizami's heritage stands on the top of wealth and eternal value.

In his lifetime, Nizami Ganjavi believed that his works would live for a long time and wrote the following:

*If you wonder after 100 years where he is,  
Its every couplet will respond: "He is here".<sup>1</sup>*

Not 100, but 800 years have passed, and Nizami's longevity has surpassed his own prediction, and his path leads to eternity.

A genius German poet paid a tribute to high modesty of Persian-speaking classical tradition, which selected and elevated to the highest rank only seven great poets – Firdawsi, Anvari, Nizami, Sa'di, Rumi, Hafiz and Jami: "*If the East preferred only seven of all poets, there are many people who are much better than me among those remaining.*"<sup>2</sup>

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پس از صد سال اگر گویی کجا او <sup>1</sup>  
ز هر بیتتی ندا خیزد که ها او (Kolliyat-e Khamse-ye Nezami. P. 361)

<sup>2</sup> Krimskiy A.Y. P. 2

Since Nizami was not just a poet, but also a mature scientist and was ahead of scientists of his time, he was called a “hakim” – a wise person. Although there were quite a few genius persons at the time, only two people, apart from Nizami, had this title: Abu Ali ibn Sina and Omar Khayyam.

Sometimes Nizami affectionately mentioned his son Muhammad, who was born in 1174, in his poems. Today no-one knows how Muhammad’s family extended and whether Nizami had grandchildren or great-grandchildren. However, children of Nizami’s creativity – his poems – are still fresh, living and known to everyone as they were eight centuries ago. This is the great power of the word. Nizami has a couplet in which he gives his son an advice:

*I see that someone wants to guide you  
I see poetic habits in you  
But don't hang on to poetry and poetic art  
Because its most beautiful thing is the most deceitful  
Do not seek glory in this art (poetry)  
Because this art ends with Nizami  
Even if poetry has a higher position  
You'd better take up a useful science*<sup>3</sup>

Of course, Nizami, who was a wise person, understood very well that poetry did not start or end with him. But why did he try to discourage his son in whom he clearly saw signs of a poet? Because he was highly professional, and if his son were to become a poet, he wanted to see him at least as good as Nizami himself. Perhaps he also sensed that being Nizami is a miracle and not a fate of everyone. That's why he encouraged his son, who did not seem able to surpass him in poetry, to engage in a science which was more in need. Nizami also offered another formula of the same thought:

*Good pack-saddle making is  
Better than being a bad hat-maker*<sup>4</sup>

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گرچه سر سروریت بینم<sup>3</sup>  
و آیین سخنوریت بینم  
در شعر مپیچ و در فن او  
چون اکذب اوست احسن او  
زین فن مطلب بلند نامی  
کان ختم شده ست بر نظامی  
نظم ارچه به مرتبت بلند است  
آن علم طلب که سود مند است  
پالان گری به غیبت حد<sup>4</sup>

(Kolliyat-e Khamse-ye Nezami (Leyli va Majnun). P.462)

Nizami is famous with his "Khamsa", which consisted of five masnavis – poems: "Makhzan al-Asrar" – "Treasury of Secrets" written in 1178, "Khosrow and Shirin" written in 1180, "Layla and Majnun" completed in 1189, "Haft Peykar" – "Seven Beauties" – created in 1197 and "Iskandarnamah", which was completed in 1201 and consisted of two parts – "Iqbalnameh" and "Sharafnameh". In fact, Nizami combined his five works under common title "Khamsa" (the Five).

Had Nizami lived longer, he would have written several more poems and his series of poems might consist of 7, 8 or 9 pieces. However, his life sufficed to write only five poems. and after Nizami's death, researches who sensed an organic link between these five poems and saw that the poet's concept began from the Treasury of Secrets and ended with "Iskandarnamah", initially united these five works under the title of "Panj Ganj" – five treasures. Later, these two words were replaced with the Arab word "Khamsa", which means "Five".

Nizami Ganjavi enormously influenced the development of literature and cultural life of the period coming after him. The themes and ideas of his works have been further followed and elucidated during eight centuries after him. Hundreds of poets in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Near and Middle East and even in India located further away from Nizami's homeland reiterated and adapted his thoughtful heritage to local conditions in various languages One can hardly find a poet with similar influence in world literature.

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The spread of Nizami's influence over long distances and in such a short time span in the era of slow communication speed and handwritten manuscripts is amazing. If the comparatively quick spread of this influence in Caucasus, Central Asia, Iran and Anatolia is understandable regarding the closeness of distance, then the emergence of responses to Nizami in India earlier than in the places neighboring to his homeland is quite paradoxical. The connection generated via Nizami between India and Azerbaijan is to be considered one of the major factors facilitating the formation of the common cultural environment between Caucasus and India, as

well as Central Asia and India. It is worth to briefly describe the scope of his influence in far away India.

The prose and the poetry written in Persian are inseparable parts of the Indian literature developed over eight centuries in about twenty other local languages. Meanwhile, Indian Persian literature is an important and organic part of the common literature created in Persian in 9-20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the huge territory from Central Asia to South Caucasus, from Iran to India. While developing over centuries, common Persian literature acquired a number of shared features. The greatest word-wizards which were considered a pride of their national literatures have enabled their nations to value this international Persian language literature as their own national classics.

The creation and formation of Indian Persian literature coincides with 10-11<sup>th</sup> centuries. The ruler of Gaznavid Empire Sultan Mahmud (998-1030) beginning from year 1000 launched its assaults to India. Having launched 17 assaults, he occupied the big part of North India and included it into his large empire covering such territories as Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Although Sultan Mahmud was Turk by origin, Persian was an official language in Gaznavid realm and the king was fond of this literature. Already in 11-12 centuries such magnificent poets as Abulfaj Runi Datta, Ali Hajviri Lahori, Ata ibn Yagub and Masud Sad Salman gained popularity in Indian Persian Literature of 11-12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The person who was the first to write his response to the poems by Nizami thus laying the foundations of Nizami literary school was Amir Khosrow Dehlavi (1253-1325), great Indian poet and musician. His chain of poems entitled “Matla al-anvar” (“Source of lights”), “Shirin and Khosrow”, “Majnun and Leyli”, “Ayine-yi Iskandari” (“Mirror of Iskandar”), “Hasht behisht” (“Eight paradises”) comprised two thousand couplets to which he wrote five *naziras*. His poems became the outset of the literary tradition having no equivalent in world literature. Not counting tiny additions and amendments with no principal feature, Amir Khosrow Dehlavi preserved the structural peculiarities, plot lines, set of characters within the frames put by the genius from Ganja. Amir Khosrow who have put a skillful response to this highest standard of Nizami actually founded a test system and the examine formula for the future Persian literature. In the following centuries writing responses to Nizami has been perceived in the Middle East as one of the unwritten rules for joining the cohort of the great poets.

Despite the fact that in Persian literature there are such types of benefiting by poets one from the other as “*nazira*”, “*taglid*”, “*tatabbu*”, “*istikbal*”, “*javab*” as well as innumerable examples written in this style, the sense and essence of writing responses to Nizami are outstanding. Previously, this experience was formed as a genre with

peculiar qualities and signs. Secondly, this process is not merely an issue of literature and art, but also a problem of reflection of world outlook, esthetic ideals and the concepts of national development in art work which transforms into peculiar thinking system.

“Khamasa” by Nizami Ganjavi and the school established by Amir Khosrow Dehlavi on that foundation rendered invaluable credits in the cause of uniting the humans under the humanist ideals, bringing together various nations on to the supreme moral values, promoting mutual understanding, collaboration and amity between nations and countries.

The first attempt in writing a comprehensive response to “Khamasa” after Amir Khosrow in Indian Persian literature was made by Sheikh Abul Feyz Fayzi (1547-1595), the poet from Agra. In response to Nizami he planned to write his *masnavis* like “Marakiz-advar” (Conjunction of seasons), “Suleiman and Bilgeyis”, “Horse shoe and Lap”, “Haft kishvar” (“Seven lands”), “Akbarnameh”, however he has done only three of them, others were left incompletd<sup>5</sup>.

Muhsin Fani, Kashmiri poet of the middle 17<sup>th</sup> century (died in 1670), succeeded in completing his four *masnavis* envisaged with regard to “Khamasa” of Nizami. In skillfully written poems like “Meykhaneh”, “Masdar al-Asar” (“Source of influence”), “Naz o niyaz” (“Coquetry and entreaty”), “Haft akhtar” (“Seven stars”) Fani managed to add certain innovations to the tradition of “Khamasa”<sup>6</sup>.

“Khamasa” writing tradition including in Indian Persian literature provided for the followers of Nizami a freedom of writing responses not precisely to all five *masnavis*. For instance, Panjabi poet Sadig wrote his work “Shovgnameh” completed in 1763 to praise the love between Mirza and Sahiba in the mode and style of Nizami as a *nazira* to his master.

Concerning the speedy development of Azerbaijani-Indian relations, 16<sup>th</sup> century is more abundant. Muhammad Bayram khan (murdered in 1561), who was by origin from Azerbaijani Turkic tribe *Baharli*, was among the influential personalities of Moghul Empire. He was one of the closest associates of Humayun (1530-1556) and the patron of the future emperor Akbar Shah. Muhammad Bayram khan wrote wonderful verses in Turkic and Persian along with serving as supreme commander and grand vizier. He promoted the formation of various literary collections, and the people of art, poets and scholars from Iran, Central Asia and Caucasus were invited

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<sup>5</sup> Aliyev G.Y. *Tem i syujeti Nizami*. P. 213-217

<sup>6</sup> Aliyev G.Y. *Persoyazichnaya literatura Indii*. P. 136-139

to India in his period<sup>7</sup>. The *tazkira*, anthology entitled “Magalat as-shuara” (“The conversations of poets”) and edited by Mir Alishir Kani (1727-1789), provides an information about almost 700 Indian poets leading literary activities till the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and considerable part of them has been writing within the area of influence of Nizami literary school<sup>8</sup>.

Among the personas being a bridge between Indian and Azerbaijani literatures Saib Tabrizi (1601-1676) enjoys distinguished position. Being among the founders of literary line named “Indian style” Saib along with gaining too much popularity in India at that time, was known as one of the vehement agitators and spreaders of Indian Persian literature in Near and Middle East.

The Nizami influence to Indian Persian literature continued from 12-13<sup>th</sup> centuries continues till the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Celebrated

Indian poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal (1847-1938) praises utopist town of Maragdin identifiable with city of liberty, equality and welfare described in “Iskandarnamah” by Nizami.

Asaf Jafari (died in 1612), who remarkably contributed to Indian Persian literature, Malik Muhammad Kummī and Hakim Ruknaddin Masud Kashani (conducted literary activities in 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries), Agha Muhammad Tahir Razi Vasli, Laig Jaunpuri, Sheyda Mehdi bin Muhammad, Tabi Golkondavi, Muhammad Gulu Salim, Sai (17<sup>th</sup> century), Arshi and Hajji Rabi Anjab Maghrebi (18<sup>th</sup> century), Moulavi Muhammad Abdurrauf Vahid and Abul Asim Abd al-Halim (19<sup>th</sup> century), Muhammad Hadi Mirza Rusva (1857-1931) the final great founder of Urdu realistic prose in India, Kartar Singh Duggal<sup>9</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian play writer – all have successfully continued Nizami literary school through the responses written to the *masnavis* of “Khamasa”.

Heritage of Nizami Ganjavi has always enjoyed indispensable position in the system of Indian-Azerbaijani relations which continued in terms of regular reciprocal impact thus acting as one of the major directions of those positive relations. In India, Amir

<sup>7</sup> Guseynov R. P. 571-610

<sup>8</sup> Aliyev G.Y. Persoyazichnaya literature Indii. P. 185

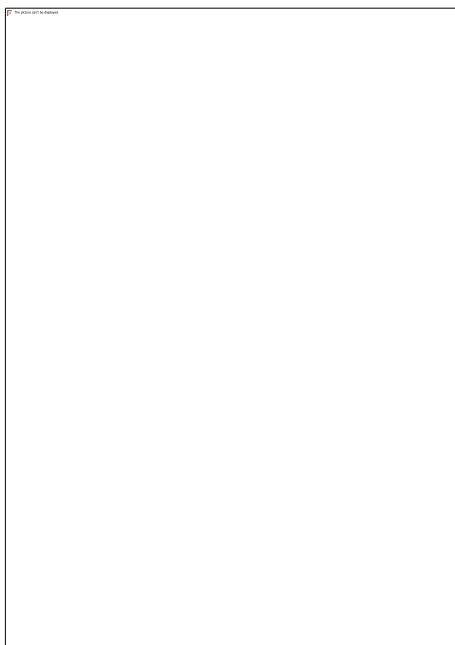
<sup>9</sup> Serebryakov I. P. 153

Khosrow Dehlavi created the first five, which was a response to Nizami's poems, laying the foundation of following Nizami's tradition and of the Nizami's school. That's to say with the *Khamsa* he created, Amir Khosrow defined the formula of writing a response to Nizami: preservation of the plot, characters and basic principles - the person who responds should demonstrate his skills in the manner of expression, literary proficiency and polishing the words.

To comprehend the essence of school of Nizami and closely notice the reasons of the sphere of its influence and its power we should focus on one of the poet's poems. All poems of Nizami have been read with love, many efforts towards writing replies to each of them have been undertaken, and however the attractiveness of one of them has appeared much more. The poem about the sorrowful love between Leyli and Majnun has been accepted closer to hearts and the replies written on this topic are more numerous.

*For never was a story of more woe*

*Than this of Juliet and her Romeo*<sup>10</sup>



William Shakespeare was characterizing the famous love tragedy of Europe in such way. He was definitely right, as every story of failed love in itself is an unrepeatable sea of sorrow with invisible coasts. Nevertheless, centuries before the literary creation of "Romeo and Juliet" by Shakespeare, a girl called Leyli and a boy called Qais who had turned to Majnun due to his passionate love existed in real life.<sup>11</sup> The sources confirm their historical personalities<sup>12</sup>. Prior to 12<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. in Nizami era there were fables in folk literature about the ill-fated love between Leyli and Majnun, so a part of those hearsays had been reflected in three written sources. Naturally, when writing his very popular poem Nizami had benefitted both from the Leyli and Majnun fables in folklore and evidence from three important sources.

An author of the oldest one among these sources is Ibn Quteyba who was born in Merv, taught in Baghdad and died there in 890. In his book "Kitab al-shiir va-l-

<sup>10</sup> Boston Public Library. *Romeo and Juliet*. P. 91

<sup>11</sup> See for comparison: Krachkovskiy I.Y. P. 183

<sup>12</sup> Asadullayev S. P. 16-18.

shuara” (“Book about verse and poets”) in accordance with the previous sources he makes words on the young fellow called Qais ibn Muwallah stating that he has obtained the level of insanity due to love<sup>13</sup>.

The fables put forward by Ibn Quteyba describe two children grazing two camel cubs. Majnun, an intelligent and handsome fellow who knows a lot of verses by heart, falls in love with this girl. His love reaches such a degree that he begins running away from people and wandering in desert among the animals. Even when someone told him something on coming across him, he did not hear, or understand, or reply to those words. Only when hearing the name of Leyli, he revived and communicated with his interlocutor.

In his book Ibn Quteyba puts in row the fables of Leyli and Majnun collected from the oral and written sources of 7-8 centuries as well as the verses of Majnun like sparse pieces<sup>14</sup>.

Abu-l-Faraj Isfahani who has lived a bit later Ibn Quteyba, in his work “Kitab al-aghani” (“Book of songs”) not only repeats the main fables and verses that the latter owned but also going a little further speaks in detail about the gift of poet of Majnun in addition to his love. Abu-l-Faraj has conducted genuine research on this issue as well as accurately pointed out the majority of the authors and sources he had been benefitting from<sup>15</sup>. He informs that although many girls had confessed their love to Majnun, the latter never became close to anyone thus cherishing love solely to Leyli. Meanwhile, Abu-l-Faraj informs of the poetic nature of Leyli along with Majnun and writes about their correspondence through verses. In the opinion of Abu-l-Faraj there was nobody or nothing in the world nicer than Leyli in Majnun’s eyes. He demonstrated special kindness only towards gazelles in deserts due to their reminding him of Leyli. In line with one fable in “Book of songs”, on coming across the hunters who had hunted gazelles through spreading nets, Majnun set free these animals having given the hunters the sheep in exchange of their hunt<sup>16</sup>.

The third collection of the stories and verses relating to Majnun which emerged in the Middle Age is entitled “Divan-i Majnun” and it was composed by Abu Bakr al-Valibi (12<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>17</sup>. One of the most interesting stories in this collection is related with introduction of Majnun to Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (685-705) and his recitation of one of his popular odes. Caliph admires the verse and his desire to

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<sup>13</sup> M.J. de Goeje. Ibn Qotaiba. P. 355

<sup>14</sup> Bertels Y.E. P. 242-245

<sup>15</sup> Abu-l-Faraj al-Isfahani. Kniga pesen. P. 12-13

<sup>16</sup> Abu-l-Faraj Isfahani. Rassказы o Kayse ibn Mulavvakhe. P.198

<sup>17</sup> Krachkovskiy I.Y. P.188-189



reward Majnun with valuable gifts encounters poet's refusal and Majnun leaves away. After a while the caliph's messengers riding after him deliver Majnun the caliph's order of not going towards the tribe of Leyli. Majnun informs them of the death of caliph who has given that order. In reply to the messengers' question "Why do you think so?" Majnun says: "Birds let me know". The messengers do not take seriously these words and perceive them as another delirium of the maddened young man. However, when hearing the real death of caliph on their return, they get amazed. And meanwhile Majnun meets two riders who inform the lover of the death of his beloved. Majnun requests the riders to take him to the grave of Leyli. They meet this request and as soon as Majnun reaches the grave of Leyli he dies there on hugging the ground<sup>18</sup>.

Prior to Nizami the names of Leyli and Majnun are cursorily mentioned in the verses of several Azerbaijani poets. The 11<sup>th</sup> century poets like Baba Kuhu Bakuvi, Qatran Tabrizi, Baba Tahir Uryan recall these doves of love as a symbol of the purest love. That Nizami Ganjavi was the first to choose the most impressive and proper ones among the scattered fables arranging them like the beads along the single plot line and giving birth to the perfect love story, demonstrates the literary audacity of poet.

That Nizami Ganjavi did not depend on any palace and lived his simple life in liberty is an aspect distinguishing him from most of his predecessors and contemporaries. On the contrary, when the necessity appeared, palace came to him and Nizami did not display indifference towards the orders on certain universal themes coming from palace. So "Leyli and Majnun" also was written on the order of Shirvanshah Akhsitan<sup>19</sup>. In the meantime, Shirvanshah had not requested the creation of the work with a love story, but concretely on the indicated theme. Therefore, to some extent, the role of Akhsitan in upraising the theme of "Leyli and Majnun" into the great literature piece should not be undervalued.

Azerbaijan of 12<sup>th</sup> century did not lack the mighty poets, prosaists and scholars. Ganja was dwelling place of Qasym Ganjavi, Nizami's brother Qivami Mutarrizi, poet's friend of school years Abu Bakr ibn al-Ustad<sup>20</sup>, five female *rubai*-masters coming together in the poetesses' assembly headed by Mahsati. In Shirvan such poets as Abu-l-ula, Khagani, Falaki, Qiyasaddin, Izzaddin lived. There were also Mujiradin in Beylagan, Nizam and other powerful word-masters in Tabriz. This was among the most striking periods of Azerbaijani literature and actually each of those

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<sup>18</sup> Bertels Y.E. P. 248

<sup>19</sup> Kolliyat-e Khamse-ye Nezami (Leyli va Majnun). P. 454-457

<sup>20</sup> Meredith-Owens G.M. P. 435-441

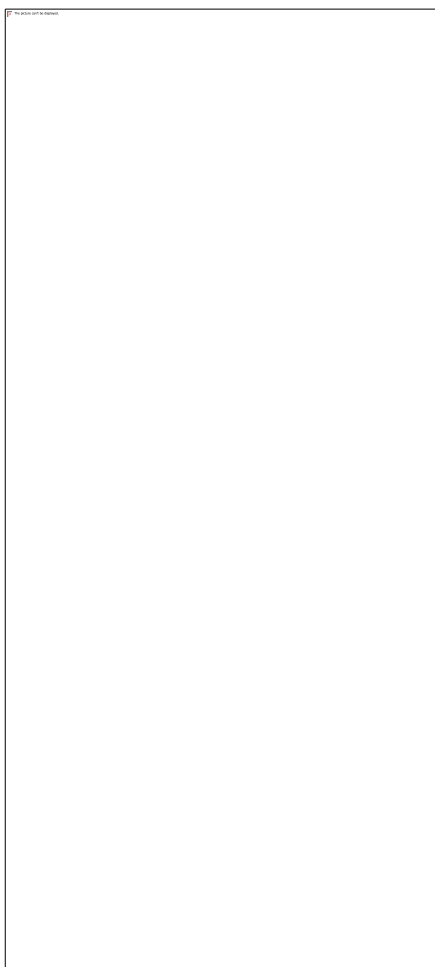
poets deserved to be the genius of their century via the power of the art. Nonetheless, they were unlucky in one moment that they were contemporaries of Nizami.

In the same poetic atmosphere with Nizami they were like stars surrounding the sun. As if the bright light of the sun made their rays invisible thus shadowing willy-nilly their essentially great creativity. But on the other hand, the performing in the same literary circle with Nizami was a significant factor which always mobilized them thus encouraging these persons to write more and more skillfully. In existence of Nizami, ordering such a monumental theme as “Leyli and Majnun” which had not been so far elucidated in comprehensively in literature was another acknowledgement of the greatness of the poet.

“Leyli and Majnun” was reborn in the pen of Nizami, this love gained immortality in the true sense of the word. “Khamsa” and “Leyli and Majnun” poems by Nizami currently have numerous copies in book-storages, manuscript holdings and archives in various countries of the world, so one cannot find the entirely similar two copies. As usual, the number of chapters in these diverse copies of “Leyli and Majnun” varies between 67 and 70. In the printed copies the number of chapters sometimes is reduced, with no prejudice to the impact power of the work.

Majnun’s father takes the last measure in order to put his son to the right path and make him forget this love. So, he takes his son to Kaaba, the holiest Moslem sanctuary in Mecca. Here he tells Majnun to repent and pray to God for forgetting Leyli who made him lose his mind.

However, instead of repenting and giving up Leyli, Majnun begs God to exite this love even much more. And God heard his prayer. Time was passing, and this love did not cool down but seethed thus teaching the new generations to love with devotion and fidelity.



Notwithstanding Indian poet of 13<sup>th</sup> century Amir Khosrow Dehlavi who was the first to write a reply to "Leyli and Majnun" by Nizami thus creating the second similar poem on this topic, the cognominal distich of Azerbaijani poet Muhammad Fuzuli (1494-1556) has been awarded the highest praise among the dozens of "Leyli and Majnun" written in Persian, Azerbaijani, Old Uzbek (Chagatai), Ottoman, Kurdish and other languages. The above-mentioned poem of Fuzuli overshadows other "Leyli and Majnun" s with its particular lyricism. It is no coincidence that in 1908 the founder of the contemporary Azerbaijani professional music Uzeyir Hajibekov composed "Leyli and Majnun", the first opera of his nation and in the East based namely on the indicated poem of Fuzuli.

Nevertheless, the distichs with the same plot written in Persian by Ali ibn Nasir Tabrizi, Muhammad Qasym Movji, Hossein Zamiri, Shah Jahan Hindu, Mirza Muhammad Khan Kirmanshahi as well as in Turkic by Alishir Navai, Hamdi, Khalifa, Sevdai, Khayali, Chakari each have a unique value in the row of "Leyli and Majnun" theme in the Oriental poetry. Although the doors of all palaces were open to Nizami during his lifetime, he stayed away from palaces. He preferred to live a quiet and independent life. However, his door was open to anyone and he invited everyone to enter this door and benefit from it. In fact, this invitation, which Nizami made eight centuries ago, is still valid, and anyone who opens that door still benefits from it:

*Do not close my door to anyone  
Because it is no good to close the door  
Since the word names us a "sea"  
Our door should be open like the sea  
Let those who seek come  
And see the door of the king of poets*<sup>21</sup>

Although the time destroyed the most magnificent palaces of shahs, Nizami's palace of words, despite its age, is becoming fresher, more splendid and more attractive instead of becoming dilapidated.

One of the main reasons for this is probably the fact that Nizami created his poems totally in the name of humanity, respect for people and love.

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<sup>21</sup> در مابه روی کسی در میند

که در بستن در بود ناپسند

چو ما را سخن نام دریا نهاد

در ما چو دریا بیاید گشاد

رها کن که آیند جوینگان

ببینند در شاه گوینگان (Kolliyat-e Khamse-ye Nezami (Sharafnameh). P. 1094)

*How can a person who creates a human (monument) from stone  
Not admire people!*<sup>22</sup>

He seems to be saying these words to himself. Since Nizami always admired people and worshiped their highest qualities, he managed to create human monuments from words.

*If you are human, mix with humans,  
Because people go well with each other*<sup>23</sup>

This idea – the principle of humanism – is the core of Nizami’s art. Nizami carried this high idea from his first to his last rhyme and continued it from his first to his last poem. In terms of reading and understanding, Nizami is one of the most difficult medieval authors. The reason is not that Nizami’s language is complicated. No, although Nizami wrote his poems eight centuries ago, his language has little difference from modern Persian except for some archaic words. What makes Nizami difficult to understand is that he worked on every line and couplet with extremely high precision, was able to include several meanings of one word inside one line and one couplet and combined several meanings in every line. For this reason, it is impossible to just read and forget about him. It is necessary to read every word and word combination in every line and couplet again and again, try to find new meanings and try to understand the general idea of the couplet and fragment in accordance with the new meaning<sup>24</sup>.

Nizami’s poems are a kind of encyclopedia of the 12<sup>th</sup> century – the time when the poet lived. “Khamse” can be regarded as the most reliable source for studying the way of thinking of that period, its public-political environment, architecture, art and economic life<sup>25</sup>.

Since Nizami himself knew better than anyone else what sort of deep heritage he left to the reader, he did not omit to warn that these pieces cannot be regarded and be read just for entertainment:

*I said this and left, but the story remained  
This story cannot be read just for fun*<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> کسی در بند مردم چون نباشد

که او از سنگ مردم می تراشد (Kolliyyat-e Khamse-ye Nezami (Khosrov va Shirin). P.250)

<sup>23</sup> به مردم در آمیز اگر مردمی

که با آدمی خوگرست آدمی (Kolliyyat-e Khamse-ye Nezami (Sharafnameh). P.1032)

<sup>24</sup> See: A key to the treasure of the Hakim.

<sup>25</sup> Ocherki istorii rasprostraneniya islamskoy tsivilizatsii. PP.451, 454

<sup>26</sup> من این گفتم و رفتم و قصه ماند

Even the best experts on Nizami have not been able to fully discover all the meanings of Nizami's couplets and have acknowledged that. The meanings of Nizami's words are countless, and if commentaries were to be written, it would be necessary to write whole Khamsas for every couplet of the Khamsa. Therefore, Nizami rightfully says:

*The commentary on the word is greater than the word itself*<sup>27</sup>

What makes Nizami a poet of global significance is, of course, not just his outstanding ability to manage words with magic and change their forms and meanings. This is just one of the conditions that make Nizami Ganjavi a genius. Nizami was a person who had read a lot. He did not read only Turkic, Persian and Arab sources. As he said himself, he was aware of various Christian and Jewish sources. If not his knowledge of several languages gave him the ability to read those books, it is possible that he familiarized himself with sources in other languages through third party. Such diverse knowledge and world outlook gave

him an opportunity to create a literary world that covered the entire cultural world. Nizami was a resident of the renaissance city of Ganja, and he was one of those who created and maintained the Oriental Renaissance with all his existence and works. Nizami was a genius who was far away from national boundaries and understood his belonging to humanity. The choice of the main characters of couplets is a graphic example of this. This character can be Persian, Arab or Greek. Nizami's goal was not to show what nation or country his character came from. His intention was to find a high literary solution to his idea or goal. But it is no accident that both the main characters and other people in his poems are representatives of dozens of

Kolliyyat-e Khamse-ye Nezami (Egbalnameh). P. 1453

شرح سخن بیشتر است از سخن<sup>27</sup> (Kolliyyat-e Khamse-ye Nezami (Makhzan al-asrar). P. 19)

nationalities. Nizami does this deliberately. He demonstrates once again that he writes about people and for people, and his poems should be read not just by one nation, but many nations. And this was the end result anyway.

Nizami is one of the classics whose poems have been translated into many other languages. But there is no doubt that in the course of time, more and more languages will join these languages.

With his works, Nizami created not just a literary model that will be repeated for centuries, but also a model of thinking, nationhood, spirituality and statehood. The ideals promoted by Nizami eight centuries ago are still in demand. Humanity is still struggling to promote even more the qualities that Nizami wanted to see in people and society eight centuries ago.

The city that Nizami described in his last poem – the part of “Iskandarnameh” called “Iqbalnameh” – was a society he saw in his dreams and wanted to become a reality. Whatever progress humanity has made on this path since the time of Nizami, Nizami Ganjavi also made an undeniable contribution to this together with other world geniuses. In this city, everyone is equal, and respect for human rights is the norm in this city and society. Money has already been abolished. There is no police because there is no need for that as there are no violations of the law in a conscious and disciplined society.

*We are peaceful and faithful people  
 We have not deviated from the truth even a hair's width  
 We have no dealings behind the curtain  
 We have nothing other than honest things to do  
 If a weak person asks us for help, we will extend our hand  
 If we are in trouble, we patiently wait  
 We don't have more property than anybody else  
 We have divided all our property equally  
 We all take each other equally  
 If someone else is sad, we don't rejoice  
 We are not afraid of thieves  
 We don't have supervisors in cities or guards in the streets  
 We have no key or lock in our homes  
 No-one guards our cattle  
 We don't count gold and silver  
 Because no-one needs them  
 We don't eat a lot like oxen or donkeys  
 Nor do we refuse the food that we like*

*None of us dies young  
Only old people who lived a long-life die*<sup>28</sup>

We still have not seen the day when everyone can benefit from the world and life Nizami wished. But humanity was longing for such a happy life for eight centuries, 1,000 years and millennia ago. Not only did Nizami urge next generations to wish such a life and society, he also showed them ways of establishing such a society. Therefore, the light of Nizami's word is still needed today and will be needed tomorrow. Nizami will always be one step ahead of us and will always invite us to a brighter future.

One of the most significant qualities that makes Nizami exceptional is an establishment by him the patterns which have been bringing closer as well as uniting the countries and nations through both his mode of life and his all works. Nizami via his knowledge, language skills and the books which he had read was a successor of science and culture that had been existing prior to him. Namely due to the rising based on such a reliable foundation he could have left after him as a keepsake such a wealth that the most people both in the East and the West accepted themselves to be a rightful heir of this heritage. And this tradition continues.

Cultures had mixed together in his literary activities and "Khamsa" of Nizami became some kind of invitation and appeal to the successive word-masters of the

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28 گروه ضعیفان دین پروریم  
سر موی از راستی نگذاریم  
نداریم بر پرده کج بسیج  
بجز راست بازی نداریم هیچ  
چو عاجز بود یار یاری کنیم  
چو سختی رسد برد باری کنیم  
ندارد ز ما کس ز کس مال پیش  
همه راست قسمیم در مال خویش  
شماریم خود را همه همسران  
نخندیم بر گریه دیگران  
ز دزدان نداریم هرگز هراس  
نه در شهر شحنه نه در کوی پاس  
نداریم در خانها قفل و بند  
نگهبان نه با گلو و با گوسفند  
فریب زر و سیم را در شمار  
نیاریم و ناید کسی را بکار  
نه بسیار خوریم چون گاه و خر  
نه لب نیز بر گشته از خشک وتر  
ز ما در جوانی نمی رد کسی  
مگر پیر کو عمر دارد بسی

(Kolliyyat-e Khamse-ye Nezami (Egbalnameh). P. 1427)

most various nations. That everlasting invitation and appeal which is gaining more and more urgency over time state that the genuine motherland of human being is a common environment generated by cultural and moral values of his inner world rather than the geography on the ground.

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