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**ETHNIC IDENTITY OF
NIZAMI GANJAVI**

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**Decree of the President
of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Declaring the Year of 2021
the “Nizami Ganjavi Year”
in the Republic of Azerbaijan**

One of the giants of the world literary tradition, the brilliant Azerbaijani poet and thinker Nizami Ganjavi, was a poet that who opened a new page in the annals of the artistic thought of the human race. The bright legacy of the great master, which has become an integral part of the spirituality of the Azerbaijani people, has for many centuries occupied a significant place in the treasury of unique cultural values. Throughout his life, Nizami Ganjavi lived and worked in the ancient Azerbaijani city of Ganja, which was one of the important cultural centres of that time and where Nizami created delightful pearls of verbal art that enriched the history of philosophical, social, artistic, and aesthetic thought of the Near and Middle East. Nizami Ganjavi's *Khamsa* (Quintet) which won wide fame is at the top of the world's poetic and philosophical thought. The poet-thinker laid the foundation for a larger literary school, which consisted of his many followers. Nizami's works which adorn

famous libraries and museums gave impetus to the development of the art of oriental miniatures.

The genius of Nizami has always been in the center of attention of world oriental studies. A lot of work has been done in our country in the field of studying and popularizing Nizami's literary legacy; a scientific-critical text of his works has been prepared, which has been highly appreciated in the Nizami studies, and his books have been published in an elegant design and in mass circulation. A memorable image of Nizami has been created in the literature and art. A mausoleum was erected in the poet's hometown - Ganja, monuments to the poet-thinker were built in Baku, St. Petersburg, and Rome. The Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan and the National Museum of Azerbaijani Literature bear the name of Nizami Ganjavi. The Nizami Ganjavi Center at Oxford University in the UK is successfully functioning.

Nizami Ganjavi's anniversaries have always been solemnly celebrated in our country. The 800th anniversary of the brilliant poet created a radical turn in the study and promotion of his legacy. The national leader Heydar Aliyev who always approached the classical Azerbaijani literary and cultural heritage from a position of national commitment and patriotism

devoted close attention to the legacy of Nizami. The resolution “On measures to further improve the study, publication and promotion of the heritage of the great poet and thinker of Azerbaijan Nizami Ganjavi,” adopted in 1979 with the initiative of Heydar Aliyev, opened up new prospects for the study and promotion of Nizami’s work. The ceremonies on the occasion of the 840th anniversary of the immortal master, held in 1981 on the direct initiative and with the participation of the great leader, became a significant event in the cultural life of the country. In 2011, the 870th anniversary of Nizami Ganjavi was celebrated with various ceremonies at the state level.

2021 marks the 880th anniversary of the birth of the brilliant poet and thinker Nizami Ganjavi. Guided by paragraph 32 of Article 109 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, considering the exceptional significance of the rich creativity of the mighty master of word and thought, who constantly called people to moral perfection and instilled in them high-moral qualities, as an achievement of universal culture, I decide:

1. To declare the year of 2021 in the Republic of Azerbaijan as the “Nizami Ganjavi Year”.

*Ethnic identity of Nizami Ganjavi*_____

2. The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan to prepare and implement an action plan related to the “Nizami Ganjavi Year”.

Ilham Aliyev
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Baku city, January 5, 2021.

**ETHNIC IDENTITY OF
NIZAMI GANJAVI**

“Nizami is not a Persian poet, he lived and worked in the Azerbaijani environment, and his poems are incomprehensible to Persians”

Said Nafisi¹

On April 20, 2015, a conference dedicated to the great Azerbaijani poet and thinker Nizami Ganjavi was held at the Library of Alexandria, in Egypt. The conference was attended by Governor of Alexandria Hani al-Masiri, the library's director Dr. Ismail Serageldin, ex-presidents of Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Colombia, former Director General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Azerbaijani Ambassador to Egypt Shahin Abdullayev, Egyptian scientists, public and political figures, and students. Speaking at the plenary session, Dr. I. Serageldin informed the conference participants about the legacy of the great Nizami, and his contribution to world culture. I was representing the Azerbaijani scientific community at the conference. In my report, I touched upon the universal value of

¹ See: Ю.Н.Март. Статьи и сообщения. Собр. Соч., т II, стр. 266.

Nizami's work, his contribution to Eastern and world literature. Throughout my speech, I repeatedly emphasized the ethnic identity of Nizami Ganjavi as an Azerbaijani Turk, and the undeniable predominance of Turkic self-consciousness in his poems. The poet continued the traditions of his native poetry, reflected in his work the socio-political and cultural life of the medieval Azerbaijan, the problems, events and personalities of his native environment.

After the plenary session, the presentation of Nizami's bust, donated to the Library of Alexandria by the Azerbaijani embassy in Egypt, occurred. Then, a press conference was held, after which the conference continued with speeches and discussions with the participation of scientists from various Egyptian universities.

There was also a presentation of the book written by a professor of the Egyptian University Ain Shams, a specialist in the Persian language and literature, Dr. Abd al-Naim Mohammed Hasanin, *Nizami Ganjavi: A Poet of Perfection. Epoch, Environment and Poetry* (Nizami al-Ganjavi: Shair al-fadyl. Asruhu, biatuhu va shiruhu.)

The reports presented at the conference by Egyptian scientists, lecturers and students covered various aspects of the poet's work. They reflected great

love for and deep interest in the work of Nizami. The only upsetting thing was that the speakers considered Nizami a "Persian poet" and attributed his poetry to the "Persian cultural heritage". Of course, we immediately spoke again and clarified this matter.

I became acquainted with the Abd al-Naim M. Hasanin's monograph only after my arrival in Baku. And this acquaintance, I must say, added certain regret to my initial impression of the days spent in Alexandria.

The book comprises of two parts, ten chapters and a list of references. The author dedicated the book to the memory of his father. As an epigraph to the book, the first verse from Nizami's *Treasury of Mysteries* is given:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
هست کلید در گنج حکیم^۱

Bismillahi-r-Rahmani-r-Rahim!
This is the key to Hakim's treasure.

Topics such as Nizami's time, the state of the Saljuqids, the great Saljuqids, the Iraqi Saljuqids, the

^۱ نظامی گنجوی. مخزن الاسرار. متن علمی و انتقادی به سعی و اهتمام عبدالکریم علی اوغلی علیزاده. باکو ۱۹۶۰، ص. ۱.

Saljuqids of Asia Minor, the rulers of Azerbaijan, the Atabeys of Azerbaijan, the rulers of Maragha and Shirvan, and the Abbasids are all covered in the first part of the book. The second chapter of the book, 'Nizami's Environment', reproduces the geographical environment in which the poet was born, the socio-political and cultural life of Ganja during that time, and provides information about the poet's family. The next chapter analyses the name, nickname, pseudonym of the poet, his date of birth, life, moral qualities, death, and the probable location of his grave.

The second part of the book deals with the ideological, thematic, artistic and aesthetic characteristics of Nizami's poetry. Here, the author examines the existing views on Masnavi art in general, as well as the preserved manuscripts of the *Khamsa* and their content. Then, the poems included in the *Khamsa* are being discussed in detail. At the same time, drawing attention to the poet's use of Arabic sources in the composition of his long poem *Layli and Majnun*, the poem is compared in detail with the Arabic version of the plot. Finally, the author examines Nizami's poetic divan and his artistic skills.

A review of the research bibliography shows that of the 166 pieces of scientific literature used by the author, 86 are written in Persian, 45 in Arabic, 19 in

English, 2 in German, 3 in French and 1 in Italian. But sources in the Azerbaijani language are not referred at all, and in the Turkish language there are only two books in the list of references, and even then about the history of the Seljuk state. The author also makes reference to 8 Russian sources; however, for some reason, he ignores the main idea of those eight books, including *The Great Azerbaijani Poet Nizami* by the distinguished scholar Y.E. Bertels, that Nizami was an Azerbaijani poet. As a connoisseur of the Persian language and literature, the author made extensive use of scientific literature written in Persian and wrote a book based on the concept of Nizami's Persian origin, classifying the works of all poets and writers who wrote in Persian as "Persian heritage" (at-turas al-farisi), regardless of their ethnicity.

Despite all this, Dr. I. Serageldin writes in the introduction to the book, "One of the most prominent of them (poets - G.B.) is the great hakim (in the sense of a wise man, thinker) Nizami Ganjavi. He is the son of the modern Azerbaijan, one of the greatest thinkers of his time and one of the most prominent poets of the entire Islamic world, and his great poetry retains

universal value.¹” And then he adds, “His name is Jamal al-Din Abu Muhammad Ilyas bin Yusuf al-Ganjavi (known as Hakim Nizami Ganjavi), one of the great Persian epic poets. He was born in Ganja in 535 AH. (1140). It is the second largest city in Azerbaijan, where he spent most of his life. His mother is Kurdish, but his father is from Qom.”²

Then, Dr. I. Serageldin expresses his admiration for Nizami’s poetry and briefly presents all the poems of the *Khamsa*. Emphasizing the deep spiritual, humanistic, Sufi and cognitive essence of the poet’s work the author concludes, “Here, in the Library of Alexandria, we consider Nizami Ganjavi one of the greatest Muslim poets, taking their place in the world.”³

I am writing all this not to belittle the degree of significance of the work done by our Egyptian colleagues, but to show that Egyptian specialists do not draw a line at all between the Persian cultural heritage and the Persian-speaking cultural heritage, which was created by different nations of the East. Unfortunately, our esteemed colleagues are completely under the

¹ عبد النعيم محمد الحسين. نظامي الكنجوي شاعر الفضيلة: عصره، بيئته، شعره. القاهرة ٢٠١٥، ص. ١٩.

² Ibid., p. 20.

³ Ibid., p. 28.

influence of Iranian literary science, do not take into account other views that exist in world science in this area, and do not comment on them. If we follow their logic, we must attribute to the "Persian heritage" samples of a good deal of literature created in the Middle Ages on a vast territory from Asia Minor to India. At the same time, Mevlana Jalaladdin Rumi (Turkey), Navoi (Uzbekistan), Shovket Bukharai (Uzbekistan), Amir Khosrov Dehlavi (India), Hassan Dehlavi (India), Fani Kashmiri (India) and many others will turn out to be "Persian poets". And how many more works of other outstanding masters of the word, writing in Persian, will be considered "Persian heritage"? Adherents of this concept forget that until the 17th century, many peoples of the East created poetry in Persian because the Persian language had long been considered the language of high poetry. As is known, Persian poetry flourished in India in the 16th and 17th centuries, during the Mughal Empire. Even when Shah Ismail Khatai created beautiful examples of poetry in his native Azerbaijani, the Ottoman Sultan Salim Yavuz composed poetry in Persian.

From a scientific perspective, Y.E. Bertels, in our opinion, approaches the issue very competently. "Until now, Persian literature is usually understood as everything that is written in the Persian language,

regardless of where and under what conditions this literature has been developed. Then, this whole complex is attributed to Iran, meaning by this is the political unit that bears this name at the present time. However, transferring such concepts of the 20th century to a millennium ago, of course, methodologically grossly wrong. If we try to limit Persian literature only to the names of those authors who lived on the territory of present-day Iran, then all this abundance will crumble with us and almost nothing will remain in our hands,"¹ the scientist writes. And then he adds that just as it is impossible to consider the Seljuk state as Iran only because it included, among other things, the territory of modern Iran, it is wrong to connect Persian literature with this territory, to turn it into the literature of Iran.²

So what to do, how to restore historical justice, how to protect the poetic heritage of the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi and a whole galaxy of other magnificent poets who wrote in Persian following the poetic tradition of their time? How to save the centuries-old cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani and that of many other nations from persinization.

¹ Бертельс Е.Э. Великий азербайджанский поэт Низами. Эпоха-жизнь-творчество. Баку 1940, стр. 17.

² Ibid.

In our opinion, the achievements of the Azerbaijani, Russian and Soviet Nizami studies should be widely covered. Research works should be translated into the world's leading languages, primarily English, and widely disseminated. In this context, the initiative of the rector of the Baku branch of Moscow State University named after M. Lomonosov, full member of ANAS Nargiz Pashayeva - the organization of the world-famous Oxford University of the scientific centre for the study of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus named after Nizami Ganjavi and the translation into English of the work of the famous Soviet orientalist Y.E. Bertels *The Great Azerbaijani Poet Nizami*- is significant and extremely necessary, and I believe that our scientists should keep working in this field. Today, this is the most important task in front of the Azerbaijani Nizami scholarship.

The Appropriation of the Azerbaijani Cultural Heritage by the Neighbouring Nations. Ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani People

For years of visiting the most famous museums in the world, especially European ones (the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum, the Louvre, etc.), I noted with pain in my heart that the unique works of art made by magnificent craftsmen (ethnic Azerbaijanis, as evidenced by their names which reflect their place of origin) and taken out from historical Azerbaijani cities are displayed as works of Persian art. It is enough to visit the halls in the Victoria and Albert Museum, where magnificent examples of oriental carpets are exhibited under the sign "Persian carpet, made in Tabriz." Or let us remember the Gulistan Palace, amazing in its beauty and grace - the palace of the Turkic Qajar dynasty in Tehran - now the Golestan Museum.

The palace was built during the reign of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp I, but it underwent continuous construction in the 18th-19th centuries. Agha Mohammed Khan Qajar, who made Tehran his capital, and Nasreddin Shah Qajar, who was buried here, on

the veranda of the main palace, made a great contribution to the improvement of the palace complex, and both were ethnic Azeri Turks. The palace is a magnificent synthesis of eastern and western architecture. The exposition of the museum, which is an integral part of the cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people, presents ceramics of various eras, works on stone and metal, fabrics and tapestries, musical instruments, weapons, clothes, etc. All this today is presented as Persian cultural examples, although their creators were indisputable genius Azerbaijani people. There are hundreds of such examples.

The appropriation of the cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people continues, unfortunately, even today. The poetic creativity of dozens of Azerbaijani masters of the artistic word is appropriated by the neighboring country under the pretext that they wrote in Persian. At the same time, it is based on the fact that allegedly back in the 12th century, Azerbaijan, including ancient Ganja, was mainly inhabited by the Iranian-speaking population, and Azerbaijanis as an ethnic group formed much later. Therefore, the work of such masters of the pen as Nizami, Mehseti Ganjavi, Efzeleddin Khagani Shirvani, Badr Shirvani, Qatran Tabrizi, Abu al-Ula Ganjavi, Mujiraddin Beylagani,

and others is part of the Persian cultural heritage. Such statements do not stand up to any serious scrutiny.

Apologists of Persian origin Nizami argue that in the 12th century the territory of present-day Azerbaijan, including Ganja, was inhabited by Iranian-speaking tribes. Historical science, based on numerous written sources, proved that the settlement of these places by Turkic-speaking tribes, penetrating here from the north and south, began even before our era and gradually increased, which is also confirmed by archaeological excavations. A quote from the book *Kitab at-Tijan fi muluk Himyar* by Ibn Hisham is widely known. When caliph Muawiyah asks a man called Ubeyd ibn Shariy, an expert on ancient history, about Azerbaijan, he replies, "This is the land of the Turks. Having accumulated there, they mixed with each other and improved."¹ The Seljuk Turks, who came here from the 11th century, merged here with various Turkic-speaking tribes (Kipchaks, Khazars, Huns, Bulgars, Avars, etc.), who for centuries inhabited this territory, not to mention the fact that the ethnic composition of ancient Albania was heterogeneous among those who settled its tribes included Turkic rebels, Gargars, and others. Thus, by the 12th century,

¹ Azərbaycan Milli Ensiklopediyası. Bakı 2007, səh. 101.

the process of formation of the Azerbaijani Turks was completed.

Academician Z. Bunyadov, in the monograph *Azerbaijan in the 7th-9th Centuries* writes, "It would be erroneous to accept that the Turkization (of Azerbaijan - G.B.) occurred in the 11th-12th centuries, as some researchers do. It is also incorrect to consider the Turks as some alien, foreign element on the territory of Azerbaijan, because in this case large compact local Turkic tribal formations are ignored.

Only through the merger of the native Turks with the newcomers – Oghuz from the south and Kypchaks from the north - after the assimilation of the latter began an increasingly accelerated and ended by the 11th-12th centuries Turkization process and led to the formation of a special Turkic-speaking Azerbaijani people on the territory of Azerbaijan and Aran, which constituted the modern Azerbaijani nation."¹

Furthermore, the academician, relying on the messages of medieval sources, cites irrefutable facts proving the correctness of his statements. From Byzantine sources, we learn that in 576 the Huns-Sabirs were resettled in the region of Ganja (in the

¹ Буниятов З.М. Азербайджан в VII-IX вв. - Избранные сочинения в трех томах, т. I, Баку 1999, стр. 203-207.

source-Sakashen). Before this, in the 5th century the Huns settled on Mugan, called Turks in the sources. According to Z.M. Bunyadov, another proof of the settlement of the Turks in the territory of Azerbaijan is that they came here during the invasion of the Khazars, the majority of whom were Turkic-speaking tribes. Thus, the prominent historian writes, Turkization in this geography began long before the arrival of the Arabs. During the conquest of Azerbaijan and Aran, the Arabs clashed here with the Turkic tribes, as evidenced quite clearly by medieval Arabic and Persian sources, such as Ibn Hisham in *Kitab at-tijan* or *Majmal at-tawarikh va-l-kysas*¹. In the three-volume work *Kitab al-Futuh* by the medieval Arab historian Ibn Asam al-Kufi, information is given that the Turkic language was widespread in the Araks valley, in the zone of Beylagan and Varsan. A lot of information of a similar nature can also be found in the article by J.M. Mamedov.²

After the conquest of Azerbaijan by the Arabs, schools (madradas) were opened in the mosques of

¹ Буниятов З.М. Указ. сочинение, стр. 203-205.

² Мамедов Дж.М. О некоторых спорных вопросах относительно Родины и национальности Низами Гянджеви.- Вестник СПбГУ. Сер. 13, 2010, вып 1, стр. 106-116.

large cities, where teaching was conducted in Arabic. "The appearance of the Arabs in Azerbaijan and its colonization initially delayed this process (the process of Turkization - G.B.), but the assimilation of the Arabs with the Turks, which began soon, accelerated it and after some hundreds of years it acquired a very wide scope," writes Z.M. Bunyadov.¹ It is appropriate to recall here the quote of the outstanding historian Z.V. Togan, who wrote in the article 'Azerbaijan' in the Islamic Encyclopedia: "Azraq notes in his work that in 1170 Ganja was considered a large Turkic city."² Let us add that Ibn Azraq (g) al-Fariqi (1117 - not earlier than 1181) is a famous medieval historian, an older contemporary of Nizami, the author of a work containing unique information about the relationship of the Saljukids with the Abbasid caliphs.

The epos *The Book of My Grandfather Gorgud* testifies to the settlement of Azerbaijan by the Turks in the 12th century, the heroes of which live in the geography of historical Azerbaijan and speak the Azerbaijani language.

From the 10th century, teaching in Azerbaijan and Aran began to be conducted in the Persian language.

¹ Буниятов З.М. Указ. сочинение, стр. 206.

² Rəsulzadə M.Ə. Azərbaycan şairi Nizami. Bakı 1991, səh. 23.

From about that time, among the noble strata of society, along with Arabic, the New Persian court language (Dari) began to be used, they began composing poetry and write scientific works in it. This was the reason why the widely used general Turkic language acquired a written poetic tradition somewhat later. Although, apparently, there were exceptions, as evidenced by the insistent demand of the Shirvanshah Akhsitan I to write *Layli and Majnun* in Persian or Arabic, and not in the Turkic language. Here it is appropriate, in our opinion, to note that the tradition of Turkic writing based on Arabic graphics had long existed by that time. It is enough to recall *Divan lugat at-Turki* - a dictionary-reference book of various Turkic languages, a kind of Turkic encyclopedia of the famous philologist and lexicographer Mahmud Kashgari and *Kudatka-Bilik* - the famous masnavi of the outstanding Turkic poet and thinker of the 11th century Yusuf Balasaguni.

The issue of the Turkization of Azerbaijan is also considered in the works of the scientist historian and ethnographer G. Geybullayev. The author comes to a quite logical conclusion: "In the 11th-12th centuries, the Oguz Seljuks did not Turkize anyone either in the south or in the north. The Azerbaijani (Turkic) language is not alien, it goes back to the previous

centuries. The Seljuk-Oguz in both parts of Azerbaijan increased the number of Turks and multiplied the specific features inherent in the Oguz group of Turkic languages in the Azerbaijani language.¹

¹ Qeybullayev Q. Azərbaycan türklərinin təşəkkülü tarixindən. Bakı 1994, səh. 30-31.

The History of Nizami Studies

A distinguished Russian Soviet orientalist Y.E. Bertels, perfectly aware of all the greatness, versatility and monumentality of Nizami Ganjavi's work, writes in the preface to the book *The Great Azerbaijani Poet Nizami. Epoch-Life-Creativity*, published on the eve of the 800th anniversary of the great poet and thinker by the Azerbaijani branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1940, "I am fully aware that I managed to capture only a small fraction of the wealth that is hidden in Nizami's poems. Full coverage is yet to come and will be done not by one person, but by a large team of researchers. More than one research institute in our country will take part in this work."¹ Eighty years have passed since then, and now the scientific community is already celebrating the 880th anniversary of the great poet. Over the years, a lot of work has been done in Azerbaijan as well as in other countries around the world; dozens of studies of the poet's work have been carried out, numerous monographs have been published covering various aspects of the work of the

¹ Бертельс Е.Э. Великий азербайджанский поэт Низами. Эпоха-жизнь-творчество, стр. 7.

poet and his contemporaries, scientific-critical texts of all the poems included in the *Khamisa* have been published, their poetic translations into Azerbaijani and Russian, etc.

Nevertheless, interest in the work and personality of one of the greatest creators of the cultural heritage of all humanity does not dry out, but, in contrast, is increasing, gaining new momentum. The creator of the poetic canon of the epic poetry of the entire Near East, Nizami Ganjavi reached such heights with his creativity that his creations are considered the greatest treasury of human genius. *Khamisa*, harmoniously reflects Nizami's system of ideas, his brightest individuality, masterfully concentrated humanism, breadth and depth of knowledge, and simplicity and clarity of the poet's artistic thinking. Therefore, researchers consider Nizami "one of the most attractive among the major figures of both the Western and Eastern Renaissance."¹

Information about Nizami Ganjavi is found in oriental anthologies (*tazkira*) starting from the 13th century. The first of them is the anthology *Lubab al-albab* by a philologist and historian from Bukhara,

¹ Шагинян М.С. Этюды о Низами. 1947-1956. Баку 1981, стр. 24.

Mohammed Afi (13th century). The second is the anthology of Dovlet Shah Samarqandi (15th century), which covers the history of Persian poetry from the 11th to the 15th centuries. The anthology of Sam-Mirza, the son of Shah Ismail I, *Tazkire-ye Sami* covers the history of Persian poetry up to the 16th century.

In Europe, for the first time, the German orientalist Hammer turned to these sources.¹ The English scientist N. Bland already knew more than forty similar biographies of poets. However, when studying them, it turned out that the primary source for all of them is the anthology of Muhammad Afi, already known to science. Then, the anthologies of Dovlet Shah and others follow. It appears that the most ancient source related to the era of Nizami is the anthology of Afi.² Dovlet Shah, who relied on the work of Afi, calls Ganja the birthplace of the poet. M. Shaginyan writes, "At the beginning of the 19th century, there was not any writer who disputed this point, with which Hammer also agrees. But later on, attempts began to be made to connect the origin of Nizami with the Persian city of Qom."³ Supporters of

¹ Hammer. *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, Wien, 1818. See.: Шагинян М.С. Указ. сочинение, стр. 11.

² Шагинян М.С. Указ. сочинение, стр. 12.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

this claim, in support of their statements, cited lines from *Iskandarnamah*, where the poet allegedly speaks of his origin from the mountainous places in Qom. Literary science easily dismissed such statements, proving that these lines are not in the earlier manuscripts of the poem known to science, therefore they were unequivocally recognized as a later interpolation. Regarding this issue Y.E.Bertels writes, "In the best and oldest manuscript of Nizami known to me, which belongs to the National Library in Paris and is dated 763 AH. (1360 AD), this line is not available."¹ The scientist raises the question of how, based on later interpolation in *Iskandarnamah*, some researchers tried attributing the origin of Nizami to the Persian city of Qom. This attempt was resolutely refuted by the orientalist C. Riyo, and it was very reasonably proved that the bayt, on which the supporters of the poet's Persian origin rely, is nothing more than a later insert.

M. Shaginyan, going forward, quite logically explains the reason for such interpolations: "There is not the slightest doubt that a later struggle followed the Nizami and that it may manifested itself practically

¹ Бертельс Е.Э. Великий азербайджанский поэт Низами. Эпоха-жизнь-творчество, стр. 26.

through the addition of passages, and alteration of geographical and chronological dates, and in interpolations - later insertions, - and many other forgeries.¹

The author writes about the strange fate of Nizami's manuscripts, which speaks of a sharp struggle for him, that the copyists of the manuscripts were people living with their own ideology and their attitude to the material they copied.

And then the words of the famous Persian poet Malik al-Shuara Bahar, once said to the Soviet Iranian scholar Yu.N.Marry about the absence of well-written manuscripts of the *Khamsa* which were copied from the very beginning with errors.

A certain role of European scholars and publishers, who translated and printed individual passages from Nizami's works starting from the 19th century, is known. In his *Divan Occidental-Oriental*, the outstanding German writer and thinker J.W. Goethe assigned a considerable place to Nizami. Having familiarized himself in detail with the work of the great Azerbaijani poet, Goethe experienced his considerable influence, about which M. Shahinyan says that "It can be said without exaggeration that the spirit of Nizami

¹ Шагинян М.С. Указ. сочинение, стр. 21.

blows over the entire Divan of Goethe and determines it in almost everything.”¹

J.W. Goethe writes, “A subtle, highly gifted spirit who has chosen - since Firdawsi has exhausted all heroic legends - the most sincere interactions of the deepest love (die lieblichsten Wechselwirkungen Innigster Liebe)² as the material for his poems”, - this is how Goethe begins his chapter under the heading ‘Nizami’ . “He brings out Majnun and Layli, Khosrov and Shirin - loving couples, they are destined for each other through a premonition, fate, nature, habit, inclination, passion; separated by whim, stubbornness, chance, coercion, and violence: miraculously brought together again and in the end again torn apart and separated in one way or another. Out of this content and its processing arises an ideal striving (Ideale Sehnsucht), which finds no satisfaction anywhere. The charm of the poems is great, the variety is infinite. Also in his other poems, directly dedicated to the moral task, the same sweet (kind to the heart) clarity (liebenswürdige Klarheit) breathes.”³

¹ Шагинян М.С. Указ. сочинение, стр. 46.

² Ibid., p. 47.

³ Ibid., p. 48.

Goethe got acquainted with Nizami's poems from Hammer's book. Goethe found reflection in an article called 'General' and a parable from the *Treasury of Mysteries* associated with Jesus. The author notes that "from the carrion of a decomposing dog, Nizami is able to squeeze out such a moral observation that astonishes and instructs people."¹ Summarizing the above, the author notes the huge canvases created by Nizami and the abundance of material contained in them, the study of which should involve not only philologists but also ethnographers, historians, medievalists and representatives of other specialities.

Goethe described Nizami's work very deeply and specifically, while expressing his feelings about the poet's life and his burial place in Ganja. Emphasizing on this specific fact from Nizami's biography, Goethe substantiates that it was the poet's life in Ganja, in specific geography where Europe and Asia intersect, that contributed to the formation of the spiritual independence of the great poet, the vastness of his views and the acquisition of the broadest knowledge by him. It also contributed to the formation of a kind of religious tolerance which was unusual for those times. Evidence for this can be found by comparing the

¹ Шагинян М.С. Указ. сочинение, стр. 48.

work of Nizami and other medieval Persian poets. For the external attractiveness of the latter's works, they are limited only by the facts of Eastern life and comparisons inherent in Eastern poetry, they draw their inspiration from the realities of the East that surround them. Nevertheless, in Nizami's works, along with oriental features, those of Western realm are also used, the achievements of both cultures are intricately intertwined and synthesized, and the characters representing both the West and the East live and interact very harmoniously. From all that has been said, it follows that Goethe was one of those scientists and researchers who correctly interpreted the work of the great Nizami.

In 1871, in Leipzig, the first monograph on Nizami by the Hungarian researcher Wilhelm Bacher was published in German.¹ M. Shaginyan writes that Bacher's book was the first genuine study of the poet's manuscript heritage, with which Nizami studies received a fundamentally new setting.² It was in the work of Bacher that a good deal of personal information about Nizami was discovered: about his

¹ Wilhelm B., *Nizamis Leben und Werke und der zweire Theil des Nizamischen Alekanderbushes*, Leipzig 1871.

² Шагинян М.С. Указ. сочинение, стр. 52.

relatives, his wife Afaq, son, dates of birth and death, and etc. The book also reconstructs Nizami's ideological and social image and offers the groundwork for a reliable historical analysis of his character and poetry. Bacher's book was followed by the works of C. Riyo, J. Ripka, H. Ritter and others.

Another scholar who is of significant contribution to Nizami scholarship is the French orientalist Francois Bernard Charmoy. Francois Bernard Charmoy worked for many years at St. Petersburg University as the head of the Persian language department, and he was the first person who laid the foundation of the Russian Nizami studies as a cultural phenomenon in Transcaucasia. "... Charmoy was the first to note the features of his vocabulary, some differences between his language and the language of the Persian classics and showed us the way to the correct, critical development of the great Azerbaijani poet, and in this he was not only many decades ahead of Western science and W. Bacher, but also went to a completely different path than Western scientists,"¹ writes M. Shaginyan.

The work that Charmoy did in studying Nizami is enormous and is of a methodological nature. While Western European scholars considered Nizami's work

¹ Шагинян М.С. Указ. сочинение, стр. 66.

isolated from his origin and cultural environment, Charmoy first drew attention to Nizami as the Azerbaijani poet and to the difference between him and other Persian poets who lived in Azerbaijan in the 12th century.

Already in Soviet times, a great contribution to the study and translation of Nizami's creative heritage was made by Y.E. Bertels, A.A. Romaskevich, M. Shaginyan, N.V. Dyakonov, A. Krymsky.

A lot of work on the study and translation of Nizami has been done in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani Nizami researchers and Orientalists - M.E.Rasulzade, G.Arasli, R.Azade, R.Aliyev, N.Arasli, T.Karimli and many others made an undeniable contribution to the study of numerous aspects of the poet's work and his era.

I would especially like to emphasize the books of academician R.E. Mehdiyev, *Nizami Ganjavi. The Legacy of a Thinker in the Context of World Culture and National Identity* (Baku, 2021), academician T. Karimli *Nizami and History in Azerbaijani* (Baku, 2021), corresponding member of ANAS N. Arasli *Nizami Ganjavi and Turkish Literature* (Baku , 2021) and the book of the young talented researcher E. Amirov *Thinker, Eclipsed by the Glory of the Poet. On the Scientific Outlook of Nizami Ganjavi* (Baku, 2021).

**Review of the Literature on the
Turkic Origin of Nizami.
Connection with Native Azerbaijan**

As already mentioned, from the 10th century the Persian language, for certain reasons, acquired the status of the language of high poetry in the medieval East. From Asia Minor to India, inclusive, in a vast area, not only ethnic Persians but also many other peoples living in this vast region composed poems in this language. With regard to this matter Y.E. Bertels writes, "It was under the Seljuks that the Persian language became the main literary language of 'a vast territory from India to Asia Minor...'"¹

The 10th-12th centuries were a very difficult but, on the other hand, a fascinating period in the history of the countries of the Muslim East. And it was this age that Nizami (1141-1209) lived and worked, whose poetry vividly reflects the realities of urban life of its maker's epoch. Y.E. Bertels says that "Only in the conditions of the city of that time, even more fully, the

¹ Бертельс Е.Э. Великий азербайджанский поэт Низами. Эпоха-жизнь-творчество, стр. 16.

Transcaucasia city, could this exceptional talent flourish, like the architects of the Seljuk time, uniting both the traditions of the Muslim world and the artistic wealth of the Christian Caucasus. In it, as in a focus, all the contradictions of the era merge, with his bold pen he shows us the pictures of that time, painted with paints that are not afraid of the hands of time.”¹

M. Shaginyan notes that Nizami wrote in Persian - “this ‘Latin’ of almost the entire Front and Central Asia”² and continues that he was considered a Persian poet for a long time, “not taking into account the place of his birth, life and death (Ganja), neither his fundamental connection with the Azerbaijani environment, which is evidenced by the very literary heritage of the poet, nor his sharp divergence from many purely Persian literary traditions.”³ And then the author cites the words of the outstanding scientist Yu.N.Marra about the careless, not that hostile attitude of the representatives of the Iranian intelligentsia to the work of Khagani and Nizami, since they do not and cannot consider “natives and residents of Caucasian

¹ Бертельс Е.Э. Великий азербайджанский поэт Низами. Эпоха-жизнь-творчество, стр. 19.

² Шагинян М.С. Указ. сочинение, стр. 5.

³ Ibid.

Azerbaijan as their national poets."¹ Marr cites the words of a young poet at that time, and later a well-known literary critic Said Nafisi, "Nizami is not a Persian poet, he lived and worked in an Azerbaijani environment, and his poems are incomprehensible to a Persian."²

Nizami's connection with his native environment is clearly seen through all of his work. Y.E. Bertels, referring to how Nizami in his poems gives a decisive answer to the arrogance and excessive pride of the Iranian nobility with his so-called "high-origin," quite reasonably shows the true attitude of the poet toward this nobility, whose impotence and helplessness were completely clear to the poet. Therefore, the poet considered it completely unnecessary to support and strengthen the position of the Iranian tribal nobility with his work. The scholar writes, "His attitude to language follows from here quite consistently. If the conditions of the era forced him to use the Persian literary language, then to archaize it, to strive for imaginary purity, it was, of course, completely useless for him. He boldly uses Arabic words when they allow him to enrich the language, to enhance its

¹ Шагинян М.С. Указ. сочинение, стр. 6.

² Ibid., p. 7

expressiveness.”¹ It should be noted that the poet boldly uses, if necessary, not only Arabic, but also Turkic words, which will be discussed in detail below.

Many researchers have written about the inextricable connection between Nizami and his native Azerbaijan. The well-known Azerbaijani literary scholar, academician G. Arasli noted: “Although Nizami wrote his works in Persian, he always thought like an Azerbaijani, borrowing his figurative expressions from the people, the living folk language.”² Furthermore, the scientist proves the use of Turkic proverbs and sayings by Nizami on specific examples.

M.A. Rasulzade also states that the poet's writing is profoundly influenced by the environment in which it was formed, both in terms of sensation, feelings, thoughts and subconscious characteristics.³ The following statement of the author logically follows from this idea “Studying the works of Nizami, it becomes quite clear that he is far from Persian nationalism, filled with love for the Turks, connected with the environment and life of Transcaucasia, the

¹ Бертельс Е.Э. Великий азербайджанский поэт Низами. Эпоха-жизнь-творчество, стр. 129.

² Arasli H. «Azərbaycan ədəbiyyatı: tarixi və problemləri». Bakı 1985.

³ Rəsulzadə M.Ə. Azərbaycan şairi Nizami. Bakı 1991, səh. 28.

poet is constantly worried about the historical fate and future of his land, in a word, he, of course, an Azerbaijani poet.¹ Y.E. Bertels also notes the unbreakable connection between Nizam's works and his native Azerbaijan, "I use this name here, and not the term Aran, which was included in the 12th century Ganja, because we saw that Nizami covers the narrow borders of Aran, he embraces, in essence, not even Azerbaijan, but the whole of Transcaucasia. This circumstance is extremely important. Because it clearly shows that, despite the language of his works, Nizami clearly felt a connection with his native country. It is characteristic that even Nizami tried relocating Alexander's activities to the Azerbaijani land. When it comes to describe the splendour of the local environment, he does it with great love. It is possible to say that the most vivid descriptions of nature in Nizami are those where Barda, Tiflis and other cities of Transcaucasia are mentioned.² And further, the outstanding scientist voices a very important thought, "...Nizami does not look at Azerbaijan as a part

¹ Rəsulzadə M.Ə. Azərbaycan şairi Nizami. Bakı 1991, səh. 28.

² Бертельс Е.Э. Великий азербайджанский поэт Низами. Эпоха-жизнь-творчество, стр. 136.

of Iran, he resolutely insists on his self-strength and independence".¹

The connection of the poet with his native land and ethnic group is also studied in the book by M.A. Rasulzade. The author writes that nowhere and in none of the works written in Persian is the concept of "Turk" used with such love and logical consistency as is in Nizami's.² And further, he adds that in the poet's *Khamisa* he studied, he found more than 80 different confirmations and justifications for this statement.³ Everything beautiful, proud, heroic, positive, pure, truthful in Nizami is Turkic; fighter, hero, commander, expert in his field, husband, leader, head are identified by the poet as a Turk. As a result, M.A. Rasulzade states that although Nizami's works are written in Persian, they are entirely national in their spirit as well as content.

¹ Бертельс Е.Э. Великий азербайджанский поэт Низами. Эпоха-жизнь-творчество, стр. 137.

² Rəsulzadə M.Ə. Azərbaycan şairi Nizami. Bakı 1991, səh. 141.

³ Ibid., p. 142.

The Reflection of the Azerbaijani Realities in Nizami's Poetry

This issue is widely reflected in Nizami's all poetry. Here we will consider, first of all, the poet's famous long poem *Layli and Majnun*. It is well known that the Arabic origin stories about two lovers, narrated in the books by Ibn Kutayba ad-Dinavari *Kitab al-shi'r va al-shu'ara*, Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani *Kitab al-Aghani* (two chapters about the Arab poet Qays ibn Mulawwah from the Banu Amir tribe), as well as the book by Abu Bakr al-Walibi *Akhbar al-Majnun va ash'arihi*.

Carefully getting acquainted with the primary sources and, above all, with the work of Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, Nizami creatively approached his source, with great skill, inherent only in his pen, he processed the invariant, while which changed some episodes, supplemented them, and sometimes discarded some altogether. Thus, the poet adapted the plot to the Azerbaijani realities existed in the 12th century. "Differences are characteristic, the appearance of

which is sometimes, perhaps, not difficult to explain,"¹ writes Y.E. Bertels. For example, in the book by Abu al-Faraj, three episodes of lovers meeting are given: in childhood, they grazed the lambs (camels) of their families together, the poet, having heard about the beauty of the girl, went to meet her, and the lovers accidentally met during the episode with the Bedouin Karima. While in Nizami's poem Majnun and Layli meet at school, they study together - a technique used by Nizami to enhance the authenticity of the narration, a detail that is very common in the social life of the eastern society of the 12th century, when there were numerous madrasas where girls and boys were studying together. If in the Arab legend the action takes place in the camps of the Bedouins, tents, in the steppe and desert, then in Nizami's poem, the place of action, along with the desert and steppe, is a medieval city with streets and quarters.

In Nizami's poem Layli composes ghazals about her feelings and suffering, and leaves them in public places that passers-by deliver them to Majnun. In the Arabic legend, Layli sends her poems to Majnun through an intermediary in oral transmission - a detail

¹ Бертельс Е.Э. Низами. Монография. – Избранные труды. Низами и Физули. Москва 1962, стр. 279.

that reflects the lack of widespread writing in Arabia in the second half of the 7th century and its presence in Azerbaijan in the 12th century. Nizami says that Majnun with two or three friends every morning "went on a pilgrimage to the house of that moon."¹ In Abu al-Faraj, two cousins of Majnun act as "two or three friends", with whom he goes to the abandoned camp of Layli to admire her traces: "They went with him and reached the dwelling of Layli. Majnun stood near him for a long time, looking for her traces and, finding something, wept ...".²

In the Arabic source, there are two episodes regarding Layli's marriage: according to one of them, she marries Warda ibn al-Ukayli against her own will, forced by relatives, on the other - voluntarily for a handsome, young sakifit. Both episodes are presented extremely concisely, in just a few sentences. Nizami's poem, however, describes Ibn Salam's meeting with Layli, his courtship and the consent of Layli's parents in detail. There are three occasions in the Arabic source where Majnun meets Nofal. However, here, as in Nizami, there is not any military clash between Nofal's

¹ Низами. Лейли и Меджнун. Перевод вступительная статья и примечания Р.Алиева. Баку 1981, стр. 99.

² كتاب الاغانى تأليف أبى الفرج الأصفهانى. الجزء الاول - الجزء الرابع و العشرون. بيروت - لبنان ١٩٩٤، ج ٣، ص. ٢٨.

warriors and Layli's tribe. In Nizami, Nofal twice demands the extradition of Layli through messengers but is denied. So the battle begins. The introduction of the battle scenes enhances the emotional impact of the poem on the reader of the 12th century, whose aesthetic taste is not alien to heroic narratives. Y.E. Bertels wrote about this: "There is no military clash in the Arab story, but it is completely clear that from the viewpoint of the poet of the 12th century, description of battle was one of the most winning topics in which, on the basis of the already existing vast experience of the predecessors, was possible to show all your skills. It is also obvious that for the reader from the circles of the feudal aristocracy, this topic should have seemed especially interesting" ¹ However, this does not exhaust the need to introduce a battle scene. The episode regarding the military clash in Nizami's poem has a multifunctional character. During the battle, Majnun does not hide his sympathy for the warriors of the Layli's tribe and prays for their victory, helps them - by this the great poet demonstrates even greater power of Majnun's extraordinary love.

¹ Бертельс Е.Э. Низами. Монография. - Избранные труды. Москва 1962, стр. 268.

Nizami excludes the episodes such as "Majnun slaughters a camel on the grave of his father," "episode with fire," "episode with oil," "episode with a bottle of musk," "address to a dove (dove)," "address to turtle doves," "address to the mountain", or "appeal to the Yemenis," and etc., that is, episodes that are side and do not play a substantial role in the development of the plot. These episodes, with rare exceptions, reflect the realities of Bedouin life and are alien to the conditions of Azerbaijan in the 12th century. For example, slaughtering a camel at the grave, according to Arab belief, puts the restless spirit of the deceased to rest, and it is clear that such an Arab custom was alien and incomprehensible to the readers in Nizami's homeland, and therefore was not reflected in his narrative.

Unlike the Arab legend, where Majnun had many brothers, in Nizami's poem, Majnun's father does not have an heir, and only after long prayers and numerous donations does he have a son - a motif that goes back to the Azerbaijani folk tales. Additionally, this situation is quite realistic, it could arise quite often, and therefore understandable and closer to the reader. In Nizami's poem, there is no episode of Majnun's weeping at the abandoned camp of Layli. It is known that the episode of weeping at the abandoned camp of

the beloved was an obligatory part of the Arab pre-Islamic qasida, it was widely used in Umayyad and Abbasid poetry. This episode, understandable and common in the conditions of the nomadic life of the Arabian Bedouins, was strange to the social life of Ganja in the 12th century.

Nizami does not have the episode that Abu al-Faraj has, when Majnun, in the absence of Layli's father and her husband, visits her during night. Nizami does not have an episode where the news comes to Majnun that Layli's husband slandered him, an episode in which Majnun's father asks a tribesman to slander Layli, and also a story from the words of the sheikhs of the Murra tribe, how a man from the tribe, having fallen under rain entered the tent where he met a woman, and the woman who was in the tent turned out to be Layli.¹

There is no episode in the *Book of Songs* in which the old woman, at the request of Majnun, puts him on a chain, drives him everywhere and finally leads him to Layli. This episode was obviously borrowed by Nizami from the work of al-Walibi. *The Book of Songs* also lacks a description of the scene of Layli's

¹ كتاب الاغاني تأليف أبي الفرج الأصفهاني. الجزء الاول - الجزء الرابع و العشرون. بيروت - لبنان ١٩٩٤، ج ٣، ص. ٧٢، ٧٥، ٨٥-٨٧.

engagement and her subsequent stay in her husband's house.

In addition, in the *Book of Songs* the conversations of Majnun with the stars that are in Nizami's poem - Zuhra, Mushtari, a prayer to the Lord's chamber, a meeting between Majnun and his mother, an episode in which Majnun learns about the death of his mother are absent. The episodes of the death of Leila's husband, the approach of autumn and the death of Layli, the weeping of Majnun at the Layli's grave, and the death of Majnun at the grave of her beloved are also absent from the Arabic source. It is easy to see that the introduction of these episodes by Nizami also serves to further idealize the love of Layli and Majnun and adapt the story to the social life of the 12th century's Ganja.

Nizami did not, initially, set himself the task of accurately recounting the story of Layli and Majnun, as it is narrated in Arab sources, but wanted to create a completely new, original romance about the love of two unfortunate lovers. Using separate, fragmentary episodes from the Arab source, the poet created a poem, the entire narrative of which is united around a single plot. "From the elements of an extremely uncomplicated Arab legend, Nizami managed to compose a harmonious poem, which attracted with its

harmony and almost organic solidarity,”¹ writes Y.E. Bertels. Although the geographical and national boundaries are clearly outlined in the poem - the events occur in Arabia, and the characters are Arabs, the entire narrative is closely connected with the Azerbaijani environment native to the author. The story, reflecting the life of the heroes in the conditions of the tribal system of Arabia in the second half of the 7th century, was harmoniously adapted by a brilliant master to the conditions of the medieval Azerbaijan.

That image of the ideal lover, which appeared before subsequent readers and listeners, went through a certain path of ideological and artistic rethinking and functional idealization, until it was cleared of everything that could even in the slightest degree, damage the established image of the ideal lover.

Nizami's Majnun is a very handsome, talented, and passionate young man who had been marked since childhood by a highly sensitive disposition of the soul, and loves his earthly beloved devotedly and selflessly. This love inspires Majnun, gives him strength and makes him steadfast in cruel trials.

¹ Бертельс Е.Э. Низами. Монография. - Избранные труды. Москва 1962, стр. 268.

Nizami constantly mentions the composition of poems by Majnun about his beloved:

می خواند نشید مهربانی
بر شوق ستارهٔ یمانی

هر بیت که آمد از زبانش
بر یاد گرفت این و آنش^۱

He sang love songs
In honor of the Yemeni star.

Every couplet that escaped his tongue
Remembered by certain people.

In the *Book of Songs*, throughout the two chapters which are about Majnun, there are numerous verses devoted to Layli by Majnun, in which the poet recalls his beloved, happy days spent with her and constantly sings his poems.

Qays, in Nizami's portrayal, is a man who challenges his environment and due to the deviation from the traditional norms of morality receives, in return, the nickname "the distracted lover" –Majnun.

^۱ لیلی و مجنون حکیم نظامی گنجه ای. با تصحیح و حواشی حسن وحید دستگردی. تهران ۱۳۷۶، ص. ۷۴.

He is not understood by the society in which he lives, which leads him to break all the ties that bind him to this society.

Nizami's Majnun differs from the static hero of the Arab story. Nizami individualized the image of Majnun, endowed it with many new qualities, found bright and original details that emphasize the poetic talent of the hero. Unlike Abu al-Faraj, Nizami, in the first place, in the portrait of Majnun brought out not a poet in love, but a handsome, intelligent young man, whose heart is overflowing with high humane feelings and whose extraordinary love translates into beautiful lyrical verses.

Like Majnun, the character of Layli in Nizami's poem undergoes a kind of evolution, too. With the commonality of individual features that make her related to the Arabic invariant (beauty, extraordinary love for Majnun, marriage against her will, writing poetry, etc.), Nizami developed a characteristic Layli image, individualized his heroine, gave her new features. The common thing that distinguishes Layli in the poem from the heroine of the Arab legend is that in the latter she appears episodically, while in Nizami Layli is the main character. The poet, down to the smallest detail, developed the image of the immortal beloved Majnun, recreated the full-blooded image of a

medieval Azerbaijani woman. In Nizami's poem, the Layli's character is overgrown with many new traits and character traits, first introduced by the great poet. The late prof. R.M. Aliyev writes: "Layli's character is one of the best creations of Nizami's pen. This character is written out vividly, in relief, with love. Along with the traditional features of description, characteristic of oriental beauties, here we also see clearly marked individual features, with the help of which Nizami creates a memorable image."¹ The author describes in detail the appearance of the heroine, her school years, the process of the birth of love for Majnun, and deeply reveals the inner world of the heroine. At the same time, the details mentioned by Abu al-Faraj are sometimes developed into large epic canvases and lyrical digressions. At the same time, Nizami's Layli is alien to the duality inherent in the heroine of Abu al-Faraj. Nizami's Layli, like his Majnun, is the bearer of the idea of sublime love, the embodiment of sincerity and devotion, the owner of the best human qualities and high morality. If Abu al-Faraj's thought about the social conditionality of

¹ Алиев Р.М. Низами и его поэма. «Лейли и Меджнун». Предисловии к кн.: Низами Гянджеви. Лейли и Меджнун. Пер., предисловие и комментарии Рустам Алиева. Баку, стр. 16.

Layla's fate is only in its infancy, Nizami develops this idea deeply and vitally. In the society where Layli lives, in the conditions of a medieval city, a woman's love is seen as a terrible crime against relatives and friends. Here, a woman is deprived of the right to vote, she does not dare to have her own opinion and express it, here she is only an object of purchase and sale. Layli is a prisoner of both the rules of public morality and love. A fierce internal struggle takes place in her soul - a struggle between a sense of duty to her parents and husband, and her love for Majnun.

From the very beginning, the legend of Majnun in Azerbaijani poetry developed in two ways - the plane of secular and divine love. In each poem, both elements coexisted side by side, the share of which in the ideological content of the poem was different. Depending on the nature of the socio-cultural environment in which the poem was created and the ideological setting of the author, either a loving-romantic, or a mystical-Sufi interpretation of the love of Layli and Majnun came to the fore. The poets who turned to this plot studied the legends and creatively used the experience of their predecessors, which helped them find their own original solution to the topic, and create an original work.

Surprisingly, subtly feeling the ideological orientation of the Arabic source about Layli and Majnun, the idea of extraordinary, sublime, selfless love and creatively assimilating the teachings about love created by the entire course of the previous development of human thought, Nizami created his famous ethical teaching about sublime love. Revealing love on a secular level, the poet developed the story of two lovers to the level of a deep socio-psychological drama. In Nizami's understanding, love is a pure, unsullied feeling, devoid of any selfish interests. According to Nizami, kindness, humanity, humanism, sympathy for the weak and disadvantaged, dissatisfaction with the surrounding injustice are the natural qualities of a lover. Therefore, love in the image of the great poet is primarily a moral category: a truly loving source of his happiness seems only in the happiness of his beloved. According to Nizami, love is a feeling that awakens initiation in a person, directing him to action and struggle. The poet considers love as the highest state of the human soul, the highest spiritual state, and deifies it.

The poet, to be familiar with the Arabic invariant, used some episodes and details while he discarded others, and those he used were enriched by the author's understanding of reality, the ideological and

social processes occurring in it, which ultimately led to the creation of characters and plots that are much richer and more complex than they were in the invariant.

Borrowing from the *Book of Songs* the ideological and thematic material that corresponded to his ideological orientation and consistent with general aesthetic principles, Nizami for the first time created an integral work of art based on the disparate fragments of an Arab legend. Around a single plot, all parts of which are harmoniously linked to each other. At the same time, the poet enriched the plot with new episodes and surprisingly subtle descriptions from observations of natural phenomena and the social life of his native land. Narrating the tragic love story of the two unfortunate lovers, Nizami simultaneously pursued a didactic goal - to educate the reader. Preaching the principles of humanism, justice, freedom of the human being, the poet seeks to overcome the social ills of society through enlightenment. And if the ideological basis of the Arabic story is entirely reduced to the idea of pure sublime love of the two unfortunate lovers who are not destined to find happiness in this world, then the ideological basis of Nizami's poem is incomparably deeper and more multifaceted. The poet succeeded

from a simple story of two lovers create a deep social drama full of tragic collisions, show the conflict between the natural feelings of the characters and the laws of the society in which they live.

Thus, in Nizami's poem, the processing of the Arab story went in the following direction: the Arabic story about two lovers was adapted to the conditions of Azerbaijan in the 12th century. The heroes of Nizami live, act and feel as they would be if they lived in his time and in his homeland.

Traces of Nizami's Turkic Origin in His Own Writings

A lot has been written about the Azerbaijani origin of Nizami to date. In this respect we can mention the works of Y.E. Bertels *The Great Azerbaijani Poet Nizami* (Baku, 1940), A.E. Krymsky *Nizami and His Contemporaries* (Baku, 1984), M.S. Shaginyan *Etudes About Nizami* (Baku, 1981), actually written in 1947-1956, as well as numerous other works by Azerbaijani researchers - M.A. Rasulzade, G. Arasly, R. M. Aliyev, R. Azade, N. G. Arasly, M. Yu. Hajiyev, M. Jafar, M. Arif, M. Rafili, T. Karimli, M. D. Kazimov, H. Yusifli, G. Begdeli, Ch. Sasani, A. Abbasov and others.

Nizami's writings are incredibly infused with the author's sympathy for everything Turkic. For example, in *The Seven Beauties* the poet calls both the princesses themselves and the beauties in the parables he tells "Turkish women". Describing the beauty of a Kurdish woman, the poet likens her eyes to the eyes of a Turkic woman. Depicting Arab beauties, the poet compares them to Turkic women, calling them "Turkish women in an Arab body." The poet's qasida devoted to the prophet contains the same image too:

ترکیست تازی اندام وز بهر دلستانی
بر عارض سپیدش خال سیه ز عنبر^۱

He is a Turk in an Arab body and to win hearts
On his white face is a black amber mole.

The poet likens all beauties to Turkic women, whether it be an Indian beauty or a Chinese beauty, or some other. And this is how he describes them:

تنگ دل از خنده ترکان شکر
سرمه براز چشم غزالان نظر^۲

From the laughter of the Turkic (beauties), the
heart of sugar shrinks,
(Their) glance takes away the antimony from the
eyes of gazelles.

Or:

ماه عربی به رخ نمودن
ترک عجمی به دل ربودن^۳

^۱ دیوان قصائد و غزلیات نظامی گنجوی. به کوشش استاد سعید نفیسی. تهران ۱۳۶۲، ص. ۲۳۲.

^۲ نظامی گنجوی. مخزن الاسرار. متن علمی و انتقادی به سعی و اهتمام عبدالکریم علی اوغلی علیزاده. باکو ۱۹۶۰، ص. ۷۵.

^۳ لیلی و مجنون حکیم نظامی گنجه ای. با تصحیح و حواشی حسن وحید دستگردی. تهران ۱۳۷۶، ص. ۶۱.

When she showed her face she was like the
Arabian moon
And when (won) hearts, she was an Ajam Turk.

In the poetic style of Nizami, which is distinguished by an abundance of skillful metaphors, Turkism is a symbol of strength and heroism.

In Sharafnamah we read:

غلامان ترکم چو گیرند شست
ز تیری رسد لشگری را شکست^۱

If the Turkic gulyams aim (stretch the bow),
From each arrow (released) by them, a whole
army will be subdued.

In the same poem there are the following lines, glorifying the quantitative superiority of the Turks and their fighting qualities:

ز کوه خزر تا به دریای چین
همه ترک بر ترک بینم زمین

اگر چه نشد ترک با روم خویش
هم از رومشان کینه با روس بیش

^۱ حکیم نظامی گنجوی. شرفنامه. به تصحیح استاد وحید دستگردی. تهران ۱۳۳۰، ص. ۳۷۸.

به پیکان ترکان این مرحله
توان ریخت بر پای روس آبله^۱

From Mount Khazar to the China Sea,
I see a land full of Turks.

Although the Turks are not close (related) to the
Romans,
Their anger (hatred) towards the Rus is greater
than that of the Romans.

With the arrows of the Turks on this land
You can stuff calluses (injure) on the legs of the Rus.

According to Nizami, the state of the Turks has
always been distinguished by its justice:

دولت ترکان که بلندی گرفت
مملکت از داد پسندی گرفت^۲

When the state of the Turks rose,
Justice (welcomed by all) triumphed in the country.

^۱ حکیم نظامی گنجوی. شرفنامه. به تصحیح استاد وحید دستگردی. تهران ۱۳۳۰، ص. ۴۳۴.
^۲ نظامی گنجوی. مخزن الاسرار. متن علمی و انتقادی به سعی و اهتمام عبدالکریم علی
اوغلی علیزاده. باکو ۱۹۶۰، ص. ۱۱۳.

Confirmation of the Turkic origin of Nizami is also a bayt, when the poet, referring to his untimely deceased wife, the Kypchak Turkic woman Afaq, writes:

اگر شد ترکم از خرگه نهانی
خدایا ترک زادم را تو دانی¹

If (that) my Turkish woman disappeared,
leaving the tent,
Oh Lord, save my little Turk yourself!

In our opinion, this bayt is of paramount importance in terms of Nizami's ethnic identity. The word Turk - in the original "Turkzad" - means precisely the ethnicity of the father "Turk", that is, origin from the father (back), and not from the mother, as some Nizami researchers believe.

Another episode is when Shirvanshah Akhsitan I, ordering a poem about the immortal love of heroes that was widespread throughout the East, including Azerbaijan at that time, a story about Layli and Majnun, specifically writes:

¹ نظامی گنجوی. خسرو و شیرین. ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی له و الکساندر ویچ خه تاقوروف. باکو، ۱۹۶۰، ص. ۷۴۵.

در زیور پارسی و تازی
این تازه عروس را طرازی^۱

Persian and Arabic ornaments,
Decorate this newly-wed.

And then the Shirvanshah continues:

ترکی صفت وفای ما نیست
ترکانه سخن سزای ما نیست

آن کز نسب بلند زاید
او را سخن بلند باید^۲

Turkic features do not suit us,
The word in Turkic is unworthy of us.

With one who is of noble birth,
It is necessary (to speak) in a high style.

The poet is put into a stupor by the words of the
Shirvanshah:

چون حلقه شاه یافت گویشم
از دل به دماغ رفت هوشم

^۱ لیلی و مجنون حکیم نظامی گنجه ای. با تصحیح و حواشی حسن وحید دستگردی. تهران ۱۳۷۶، ص. ۲۵.

^۲ لیلی و مجنون حکیم نظامی گنجه ای. با تصحیح و حواشی حسن وحید دستگردی. تهران ۱۳۷۶، ص. ۲۶.

نه زهره که سر ز خط بتابم
نه دیده که ره به گنج یابم^۱

Since the Shah's ring was put into my ear,
My consciousness rebelled (jumped from my
heart to my head).

I did not dare to disobey the letter (decree),
But my eyes (did not see) the way to the treasury.

As you can see, Nizami was outraged by the words of the Shirvanshah, who considered the Turkic language unworthy of its "high origin". In our opinion, two very important conclusions can be drawn from this:

1. The Turkic language was Nizami's mother tongue and that is why the high-flown words of the Shirvanshah aroused such deep indignation in him;

2. If the Shirvanshah orders to "decorate" the poem with Persian and Arabic words, that is, to write it in Persian or Arabic, but in no case in the Turkic language, this means that writing in the Turkic language was common in those days, it was used, they wrote in it and that Nizami knew this language and

^۱ لیلی و مجنون حکیم نظامی گنجه ای. با تصحیح و حواشی حسن وحید دستگردی. تهران ۱۳۷۶، ص. ۲۶.

even wrote in it, which was widely known to his contemporaries and even Shirvanshah Akhsitan I.

In the long poem *The Seven Beauties*, the poet expresses his bitterness over the fact that his Turkic language is not in demand in high palaces:

ترکیم را در این حبش نخرند^۱

My Turkism (Turkic language) is not in demand
in this Abyssinia...

Some researchers, touching on the ethnic origin of Nizami, stubbornly refer to the bayt in *Layli and Majnun*, where the poet, recalling his relatives who left this world, writes about his mother:

گر مادر من رئیسه گرد
مادر صفتانه پیش من مرد^۲

My mother is the head of the group
My mother died in front of me.

^۱ هفت پیکر نظامی گنجوی. متن علمی و انتقادی. به تصحیح دکتر برات زنجانی. تهران ۱۳۸۰، ص. ۴۱.

^۲ لیلی و مجنون حکیم نظامی گنجه ای. با تصحیح و حواشی حسن وحید دستگردی. تهران ۱۳۷۶، ص. ۴۹.

In early manuscripts in Persian, the word "گرد" "proud" - "brave" was erroneously read as "کرد" "Kurdish woman":

گر مادر من رئیسه کرد
مادر صفتانه پیش من مرد

In this regard, a corresponding unfortunate distortion of the meaning of the text was made in the translation, with the ensuing consequences that Nizami's mother was supposedly a Kurdish woman.

In fact, the bait should be translated as follows:

Though my mother was a brave woman
She died with all motherly tenderness in my presence.

Thus, there can be no talk of any "Kurdish woman Raisa" as Nizami's mother. It should be noted, by the way, that the well-known Nizami scholar, the late Professor Rustam Aliyev, wrote about this for the first time in Nizami studies in the 80s of the last century.

It would be appropriate here, in our opinion, to comment on another bayt of Nizami, which is linked by some researchers with the ethnic origin of the poet.

نظامی یکدشی خلوت نشین است
که نیمی سرکه نیمی انگبین است^۱

^۱ نظامی گنجوی. خسرو و شیرین. ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی له و الکساندروویچ
خه تاقرروف. باکو، ۱۹۶۰، ص. ۴۴.

Nizami - ikdish, sitting in seclusion,
Half vinegar, half honey.

The word "ikdish" has many meanings. Dekhoda "Lugat-name" indicates that along with the meaning "mestizo", this word also means "a mixture of two contradictory properties." In our opinion, the verse means just the second, figurative meaning of the word "ikdish". That is, the poet emphasizes here just the presence in his character of two contradictory properties - caustic like vinegar and pleasant, sweet like honey. If we take into account the context in which this bayt is given, it becomes quite obvious that Nizami used the word "ikdish" in the second meaning:

نباشد بر ملک پوشیده رازم
که من جز با دعا با کس نسازم...

ز طبع تر گشاده چشمه نوش
بزهد خشک بسته بار بر دوش

دهان ز هدم ارچه خشک خانیست
لسان رطیم آب زندگانیست

چو مشک از ناف خلوت برگرفتم
به تنهایی چو عنقا خو گرفتم

گل بزم از چو من خاری نیاید
ز من بیش از دعا کاری نیاید^۱

My secret is not hidden from the ruler
Except through prayer, I will not get along with
anyone ...

From my fresh nature comes a pleasant spring,
With one asceticism I carry my burden on my
shoulders.

Even if my mouth of an ascetic is a dry pool,
My sweet tongue is living water.

Receiving musk from severe seclusion,
I'm used to being alone like a phoenix.

A thorn like me will not produce a majlis flower,
I'm good for nothing but prayer.

Apparently, the poet explains by his contradictory character and habit of loneliness and seclusion that he cannot appear before the shah and participate in his majlis. The opposite words used in the text: fresh-dry, pinch-flower act as a means of reinforcing the meaning

^۱ نظامی گنجوی. خسرو و شیرین. ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی له و الکساندروویچ
خه تاقرروف. باکو، ۱۹۶۰، ص. ۴۴.

of what was said and clarify why Nizami calls himself "ikdish".

The superiority of the Turkic origin for Nizami is clearly indicated by the words of Mehin-banu addressed to Shirin in the poem *Khosrov and Shirin*:

گر او ماهست ما نیز آفتابیم
و گر کیخسرو است افراسیابیم¹

If he is the moon, then we are the sun,
If (he) is Kay-Khosrow, (then we) are Afrasiyabs.

As you know, Kay-Khosrow is the mythical hero of the epic Firdawsi *Shahnamah*, the legendary king of Iran, who is considered the ancestor of the Persians. Afrasiyab is the legendary king of Turan, the hero of Firdawsi's *Shahnamah*, who is considered the ancestor of the Turks. The quoted bayt is ambiguous: comparing Kay-Khosrov with the Moon, and Afrasiyab with the Sun, the poet emphasizes the greatness of the descendants of Afrasiyab, that is, the Turks, who are in no way inferior to the descendants of Kay-Khosrov, that is, the Persians.

¹ نظامی گنجوی. خسرو و شیرین. ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی له و الکساندروویچ
خه تاقوروف. باکو، ۱۹۶۰، ص. ۲۱۹.

Secondly, this bayt clearly contains the author's opinion about the eternal struggle between Iran and Turan, which is widely reflected in Firdaws's *Shahnamah*. The author puts the Turkic origin, heritage, descendants of the Turkic Afrasiyab above the Iranian origin, heritage and descendants of Kay-Khosrov.

Thirdly, in our opinion, this bayt puts an end to the issue of the ethnicity of the main character of the poem Shirin and her aunt Mehin-Banu, identifying them unequivocally as a Turkic princess and a Turkic ruler. It is known that some researchers, based on the fact that Shirin lived in Arman (with Nizami), identify her with the Armenian princess, and some consider her to be Aramaic. The answer to this misunderstanding can again be found in the work of Nizami himself. Thus, describing the return of Shirin to the Mehin-Banu palace after a long absence, the author writes:

چو دیدندش زمین را بوسه دادند
زمین گشتند و در پایش فتادند

بسی شکر و بسی شکرانه کردند
جهانی وقف آتش خانه کردند^۱

انظامی گنجوی. خسرو و شیرین. ترتیب دهنده متن علمی و انتقادی له و الکساندروویچ
خه تاقرروف. باکو، ۱۹۶۰، ص. ۲۰۳-۲۰۴.

Seeing her (Shirin), they kissed the ground,
They fell to the ground at her feet.

Thanks many times gave alms,
Many sacrifices were given to the fire temple.

From the above two bayts it also clearly follows that Shirin, Mehin-Banu and all who served in her palace were fire worshipers, that is, Zoroastrians, and in the country where they lived, there were many temples of fire. That is, the country where the heroines of the poem lived professed Zoroastrianism. Thus, from what has been said, we can confidently conclude that Shirin was a Turkic woman who professed fire worship.

The idea that Arman in those days was the land of fire worshipers is evident in Nizami's writings and there one can find many examples attesting this fact. Let us just give one:

بریدی در آمد چو آزادگان
ز فرمانده آذرآبادگان

که شاه جهان چون جهان رام کرد
ستم را ز عالم تهی نام کرد

چرا کار ارمن فرو هشت سست
نکرد آن بر و بوم را باز جست

Ethnic identity of Nizami Ganjavi_____

بروز نو این بوم نزدیک تر
چرا ماند از شام تاریک تر

به ارمن در آتش پرستی کنند
دگر شاه را زیر دستی کنند^۱

From the ruler of Azerabadagan (Azerbaijan),
One messenger came from the freemen.

And he (said): The Shah of the universe conquered the
whole world,
Erased the concept of oppression from around the
world.

Why did Arman show inertia towards him?
Not interested in that land?

This country close to you at dawn (with the beginning
of the day)

Why must it be blacker than the night?

Fire is worshiped in Arman,
Serve another Shah.

^۱ حکیم نظامی گنجوی. شرفنامه. به تصحیح استاد وحید دستگردی. تهران ۱۳۳۰، ص. ۲۷۳.

Another confirmation of the Turkic origin of Nizami is his numerous usage of Turkic words. M.A. Rasulzade gives some samples: alachug (yurt, felt tent), amaj (goal, target), beyrag (flag), bilek (wrist), bisrak (breed of camels), tutug (canopy, umbrella), tutmaj (dish), chok (a lot), chalysh (offensive), chavush (sergeant), chirkin (dirty, ugly), dag (brand), iylag (mountain plateau, cool place), galavuz (guide), gyrgyzy (red), Kur (river Kur), nay-i Turki (military horn), ushag (child, slave boy), ustag (room), ezek (walking in front) and many others.¹

¹ Rəsulzadə M.Ə. Azərbaycan şairi Nizami. Bakı 1991. səh. 224-228.

Sabki Azerbaijani (Azerbaijani Style)

In the 12th century, the so-called Azerbaijani poetic school was formed in Persian-language poetry, headed by such powerful masters of the pen as Khagani Shirvani and Nizami Ganjavi. The new poetic style they created, which received the name “sabk of Azerbaijan” (Azerbaijani way/style) in literary criticism, was distinguished by such high artistry and imagery that it had an undeniable influence on the further development of all Persian-language and Turkic-language poetry. Representatives of this school, in addition to Nizami and Khagani, were also a whole galaxy of outstanding Azerbaijani poets such as Mahsati Ganjavi, Abu al-Ula Ganjavi, Falaki Shirvani, Mujiraddin Baylaqani, Givami Mutarrizi, and others. This style was due to certain ethnic, geographical, historical, political, and socio-cultural factors of the era and had its own specific features inherent only to it. The poetry of the representatives of this school differed significantly from the previous Persian-language poetry. This was expressed both in the thematic diversity and in the high artistry of the poetic language.

The madh genre has given way to elegant lyrical ghazals. The artistic skill of the created poetry increased, personifications, comparisons and metaphors began to be used more often. But the introduction of sarcasm into poetry, hard-to-perceived images, various information and interpretations borrowed from the scientific knowledge of the time made it difficult to understand. Poets began to use words and expressions that have a new artistic connotations. Means of creative expression began to be used more frequently to accentuate verses' beauty.

Difficult poetic rhymes and refrains, Arabic, Turkic words and expressions, translations of Turkic idiomatic expressions, scientific terms and concepts began to be used more often. To understand this poetry, deep education and certain scientific knowledge, characteristic of the era, were necessary. Often words were used not in a direct, but in a figurative sense, they acquired a scientific, philosophical, metaphorical meaning. All this was a unique phenomenon in the history of Persian literature. The poets were definitely influenced by the language environment in which they lived - the Turkic language. Hence, the abundance of Turkic words in the language of these poets, the use of folklore motifs, images, consonant scenes. Another feature of the

Azerbaijani style in Persian-language poetry was the acquisition of concrete, real meanings by the intellectual, imaginary content. This style was also characterized by a great interest in the inner world of a person, the use of difficult rhymes, euphony, and musicality of the verse. All this at the same time enriched the style and gave it solemnity.

The emergence of the Azerbaijani style in the Persian-language literature of the 12th century was because the poets who utilized this style lived in a single geographical and cultural environment, and shared a common socio-political climate. However, despite the commonality of style, the work of these poets, of course, also had individual characteristics, determined by the specific worldview, spiritual world, personal qualities and poetic talent of the author.¹

It should be added that the issue of different poetic styles in Persian-language literature was first raised in Iran itself at the end of the 19th century by the famous Iranian poet Melik al-Shuara Bahar in the book *Stylistics or the History of the Evolution of Persian Prose*. The author for the first time narrates about three styles in Persian-language poetry - Khorasan, Iraqi and

¹ Mətləbi A.B. Farsdilli poeziyada Azərbaycan üslubu (təşəkkül, təkamül və ədəbi təsir məsələləri). Aftoreferat. Bakı 2012.

Indian and considers the Azerbaijani style (sabki Azerbaijani) within the framework of the Iraqi poetic style. A similar classification was subsequently adopted in the scientific literature. Several articles of such authors as Sirius Shamisan, Mukhtar Ibrahimi, Said Nafisi, Muhammad Ghulamriza and others were devoted to the Azerbaijani style in Persian-language poetry.¹

¹ Mətləbi A.B. Farsdilli poeziyada Azərbaycan üslubu (təşəkkül, təkamül və ədəbi təsir məsələləri). Dissertasiya. Bakı 2012, səh. 6.

Conclusion

Concluding our short study, I would like to point out that Nizami's great, unique, comprehensive, and diverse work is truly individual and, despite some conventional features, captures the best, brightest side of the poet's own personality. According to Y.E. Bertels, "Nizami broke the tradition that fettered the language of the epic, revived and enriched it, in a word, brought it closer to modernity. But after all, from this step, the next logical step could be only one - if necessary, the rejection of the Persian language as the only means of communication. I believe that although we do not yet have Nizami's works in any language other than Persian, nevertheless, it was he who prepared the ground for the rejection of this language".¹

These lines perfectly demonstrate the national identity of the poet, who, under the most difficult conditions of medieval obscurantism, managed to break the dominant poetic canon, give his work a pronounced Turkic-centric character and pave the way for the future development and prosperity of his native Turkic-speaking poetry.

¹ Бертельс Е.Э. Великий азербайджанский поэт Низами. Эпоха-жизнь-творчество, стр. 143.

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