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## Artistic and ideological features in the epic story “Leyli and Majnun”: based on the versions by Nizami and Shahkarim

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**Abstract.** The epic story of “Leyli and Majnun” is a prominent work of Eastern literature, renowned as a symbol of love and tragedy. This article provides a comparative analysis of the epic story of “Leyli and Majnun” according to the versions by Nizami and Shahkarim, focusing on their artistic and ideological characteristics. The study explores the different approaches to the theme of love in the works of both poets, the depiction of social constraints and human freedom, as well as the interplay between Eastern literary traditions and the Kazakh worldview. Special attention is given to the poetic language of Nizami’s version and the national coloration added in Shahkarim’s translation, alongside the philosophical depth of thought. The purpose of this research is to explore the creative harmony between Eastern and Kazakh literature through the two versions of the epic “Leyli and Majnun.” The objectives include uncovering the main ideas, philosophical, and moral values of the poem as seen in Nizami’s and Shahkarim’s interpretations; comparing the concepts and perspectives on love across different eras and cultures; analyzing the poetic style and structural features in the works of the two poets; studying the origin of the poem and its connection to the cultural and social conditions of its time.

**Keywords:** Leyli and Majnun, Nizami, Shahkarim, Eastern literature, Kazakh literature, artistic feature.

### Introduction

In the 11th century, the epic story of ‘Leyli and Majnun’ by Nizami celebrates the purity of the lovers' souls and the profound depth of true love, guiding the reader toward spiritual enrichment. The work reflects on themes such as love, loyalty, solitude, freedom, tragedy, and spiritual quests, offering deep reflections on understanding love on a new level. Majnun's love for Leyli is often used in Sufi literature as a metaphor for the spiritual connection, search, and

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infinite love between the human being and the Creator. The depth of Majnun's love for Leyli is so profound that his actions are portrayed as part of a spiritual journey, a striving to know the Creator. In the Sufi path, the pursuit of God is seen as possible not only through reason but also through inner feeling and spiritual experience. The idea that "reason is the enemy of love" holds special significance in Sufism, as it suggests that on the path of love, when a person loses their individual ego and reaches the level of "union with God," there is no room left for rational thought.

The epic story of 'Leyli and Majnun' sparked the interest of poets after Nizami, who developed the style, imagery, and symbolic system of the work, incorporating Sufi meanings and adapting it to the specific contexts of their own eras and national traditions. One of them was poet Shakarim. Iranian scholars have compared and analyzed the poets who have written versions of 'Leyli and Majnun', juxtaposing their works with Nizami's original. This comparison is significant because the epic holds a central place in Persian literature and culture, and is considered one of the finest examples of Eastern poetry. The epic story of 'Leyli and Majnun' also holds a unique place in Kazakh literature.

Kazakh readers became acquainted with the story of Leyli and Majnun through the works of the poet Shahkarim, who is considered one of the most significant figures in Kazakh literature during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (1858-1931).

Shahkarim published his version of the Leyli and Majnun story in 1922-1923 in Sholpan Magazine in Tashkent (Uzbekistan), under the title "Shahkarim's Leyli and Majnun." Sh. Satpayeva, a researcher of Shahkarim, notes that "the story of Leyli and Majnun is one of the literary treasures of the world, and Shahkarim's rendition is a magnificent example of its re-composition in Kazakhstan" (Satpaeva, 1982).

While the Kazakh people were familiar with Majnun's name, they lacked a comprehensive understanding of the deeper significance of the narrative. To address this gap, Shahkarim elucidated the central themes of the Leyli and Majnun love story for his readers, presenting it in a "simile" style. He emphasizes the profound idea that love fully absorbs the individual. In the narrative, the concept of "fire" serves as a metaphor for love. In a moment of anguish, instead of beseeching God for relief from his suffering, he prays, "Do not erase the name of 'Leyli' from my heart; do not relieve my body from the fire of love; let me dwell in the flames of love and burn, for then I will know that all my dreams have come true" (Kudaiberdiuly, 1989).

## Literature review

Iranian and foreign literary scholars who have engaged with the history of Iranian literature have not overlooked Nizami's epic story of 'Leyli and Majnun'. A number of research studies and scholarly articles have been written on Nizami's life and his works. Iranian scholar Vahid Dastgari conducted a textological analysis of the 'Leyli and Majnun' manuscript version, written in the 14th century (the oldest known manuscript versions). Additionally, another Iranian scholar, Barat Zenjani, analyzed the orthographic differences, meanings of words and expressions, and reorganized the verses based on their content in the 15th-century manuscript of the epic.

Jalal Sattari, in his book 'Majnun's Mad Love', analyzes Nizami's love poetry, while also comparing it with the early Arabic versions of the epic. Sattari further investigates works by Amir Khusrow Dehlevi and Motaqi Shirazi, who, following Nizami, wrote on the 'Leyli and

Majnun' theme based on the tradition of *nazira*. Sattari describes Majnun's love as the highest form of love.

The *nazira* tradition, which emerged in Eastern poetry during the 13th to 15th centuries, involves later poets reworking or reinterpreting the epics composed by earlier poets. This tradition allowed poets to showcase their linguistic skills, compete artistically, and engage in poetic contests. Persian-language works such as 'Yusuf and Zuleikha', 'Leyli and Majnun', 'Khosrow and Shirin', and 'Gulistan' were later reinterpreted in the *nazira* tradition by poets from Central Asia (the Golden Horde), including Alisher Navoi, Fuzuli, Jami, Saif Sarai, Durbek, Qutb, and Shakarim, thus becoming integral to the literary heritage of the region.

Iranian scholars have also compared 'Leyli and Majnun', written in the *nazira* tradition. For example, Jalil Tajlili (1996) compared Nizami and Fuzuli's versions, Mariam Sadeghi Givi (2003) compared Nizami and Jami's, and Farhad Dorudgarian (2008) compared Nizami and Abdi Beg Shirazi's versions, analyzing their writing styles, imagery, and ideas.

Russian Orientalist Bertels analyzed Nizami's work from a Sufi perspective, emphasizing the impossibility of a happy ending in the epic. According to Bertels, the flame of love transforms Majnun's being completely, and his feelings become spiritual, acquiring new meanings. Majnun no longer needs physical Leyli; through his spiritual passion, he has already united with her... (Bertels, 1962). Thus, Bertels limited his analysis to the Sufi elements of the epic.

Shakarim's version of 'Leyli and Majnun', written in the *nazira* tradition, has been studied by Kazakh scholar Sh. Satbaeva, who remarked that "If the epic story of 'Leyli and Majnun' is a treasure of world literature, then the version by Shakarim, written in the Kazakh language, is a remarkable example of its reinterpretation in our land." However, Satbaeva did not conduct a comparative study with versions written by poets such as Nizami, Fuzuli, Navoi, and Jami in Persian and Turkic languages.

As we can see, through comparative analysis of the poets who have written on the 'Leyli and Majnun' theme, the innovative aspects of their poetic narratives (such as the abundance of monologues and dialogues, compositional methods of unifying episodes, the relationship between the introduction and the main body of the poem, and the balance between narration and description) have not been fully identified. Bertels himself referred to this as "the most unexplored issue" (Kudaibergenova, 2024). So, in this paper, the author attempts to fill this gap by covering poetic peculiarities used in Nizami's and Shahkarim's versions in a comparative way.

## **Methodology and materials**

According to the research question, the following tasks were determined to reach the goal of the paper:

1. To explore the main ideas, philosophical, and moral values in the epic story of 'Leyli and Majnun' according to the versions of Nizami and Shakarim, and to compare the concepts of love and related perspectives across different eras and cultures.

2. To analyze the poetic style and structural features in the works of both poets.

3. To investigate the origin of the epic story and its connection to the cultural, social, and philosophical context of the era.

4. To examine the impact of the epic story of 'Leyli and Majnun' on Kazakh literature, culture, and folklore, as well as to analyze Shakarim's perspective on this theme and how the epic evolved and transformed in Kazakh literature.

It should be noted that the love story of "Leyli and Majnun" has been transmitted to us through three primary sources:

1. Kitab al-Shir wa-al-Shuara by Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawari (276 hijri) Kitab al-Shir wa-al-Shuara.
  2. Kitab al-Aghani (Kitab al-Aghani) by Abu al-Faraj Isfahani (359 hijri).
  3. Abu Bakr al-Walibi Divan Leyli and Majnui book Abu Bakr al-Walibi Divan Leyli and Majnui.
- Among these, Abu al-Faraj Isfahani's work is considered the most significant regarding the theme of Majnun's madness-driven love for Leyli. As noted by the renowned Russian orientalist R.K. Krachkovsky, in his book "Aghani," Abu al-Faraj Isfahani extensively elaborates on the narrative, cites various authors and poets, and emphasizes the differentiation of sources. Without this source, tracing the historical roots of the story would have been considerably challenging (Krachkovsky, 1956).

It is also important to recognize that in Persian literature, Nizami Ganjavi is acknowledged as the principal author of the Majnun saga. He skillfully compiled disparate fragments from Arabic sources to create a cohesive love saga.

In addressing the research question, both Nizami's and Shahkarim's versions were subjected to a theoretical analysis of literary sources. This was followed by the application of philological, comparative historical, and comparative typological methods. In this study, Nizami's version of the 'Leyli and Majnun', written in the 14th century (based on the revisions and commentary by V. Dastgar), was used.

## Discussion and results

1.1. Nezami Ganjavi's Leyli and Majnun, based on the poet's claim, is more than 4000 stanzas.

*"These four thousand stanzas, by most,  
Were all composed in less than four months".*

Each chapter of this system (lyric) is divided into different subjects. The first two chapters contain a single subject; that is, both chapters start by worshiping God and His messenger. In addition, in the issue of limitations of the human mind in understanding the secrets of God, it is composed as:

*"Mind lights the vision only via you  
It will burn if it puts feet in" (Ganjvani, 2010).*

**The main theme of chapter two:** This part is a praise of the Prophet of Islam and description of his ascendance (Meraj) of Prophet Mohammad as the only man who went beyond the borders of the universe, became close to the creator of being, and could hear the "secret of truth by word".

*"You both see the Lord of Glory  
And, heard the secret of God's word" (Ganjvani, 2010).*

In both chapters, the limitations of man's power are introduced: It is only by the help of God and the good word given in favor of the Poet by the Prophet of Islam that the poet will be able to create new and suitable ideas and thoughts:

*"Everything I could do is for You  
The strength in Nezami's heart is of You" (Ganjvani, 2010).*

**Chapter three** discusses the constraints in human abilities; however, the addressee changes. After specific attention to God and the Prophet, he turns to the readers of his work in the world, and especially addresses his beloved son:

*"I pour this nectar to the whole world;  
My dear son will listen to this by heart" (Ganjvani, 2010).*

It seems that in this chapter, the poet is talking such as a wise man, a philosopher, and a great lecturer. He discusses his thoughts and opinions on the universe and suggests the matter that everything on land has the limitation of ascendance, and there is no creature on earth that could put his foot out of this circle. The most important point in this chapter is that this world is not created futile.

*"Seeing the effect of any matter,  
The wise man knows the cause of its creation" (Ganjvani, 2010).*

The word "cause" is seen in chapter four as well. However, here, it means the creator of the book. After describing the poet's notion on how God created the world, the second thought, that is, the quality of composing this story by Nezami, is introduced.

In this part, attractive images take shape in the addressee's eyes. Passing from an individual who is in love with God and a philosopher who thinks about the world, Nezami suddenly appears as a poet with a specific subject standing before his eyes. This subject is in the template of a series of life problems and conditions that change chapter four into a social discussion.

On his creativity, that is, the procedure of writing Leyli and Majnun's tragic story, the poet describes the artistic and literary issues and problems, the Arabic version of this story, and the quality of translating it into the Persian language.

Chapters five and six follow the tradition and convention of worshipping the court of God. In this chapter, the poet appears as a brilliant worshipper, the addressee of whose praises is the king of Shervan. From an ideal reader, introduced in chapter four, the king (Shah Shervan) turns into becoming an ideal governor. He is praised as a great warrior and a generous sponsor who, on the one hand, captures a castle in battle and hardship, and at the same time, might give away a country as a gift for an ode:

*"He takes over a territory by his will  
He bestows a land to an ode" (Ganjvani, 2010).*

Nezami also expresses another enthusiasm of the Shah, and it is his affection to literature and poems; and introduces him as the "king of words". Shervan Shah is sometimes portrayed as the owner of a long sword and sometimes, the owner of a delicate pen (penmanship):

*The king of word, Ekhtesan whose name  
Is a compassion, making kindness his slave (Ganjvani, 2010).*

In chapter seven, the King's son and his successor, Manoochehr is praised:

*The nobility of you, the prince  
Has kept the eyes of Ekhtesan, the King, open by joy. (Ganjvani, 2010).*

Here, Nezami, who had appeared as a mere admirer in chapter six, changes into Nezami the father, and Shervan Shah is also a father like Nezami; the happiness of both is tied to the prosperity of their sons.

In chapter eight, another figure of the poet's life is shown; that is, the poet is introduced to his contemporary men. The main theme in this chapter is an intensive competition among poets who have reached the peak of skills and techniques.

*The field of word belongs to me today  
Where can you find a better eloquence than this? (Ganjvani, 2010).*

Nezami has portrayed other poets of this period as imitators, literary thieves (who use other people's ideas and imprint their own name) pretenders due to their lack of literary skills. Of course, this image can not be accepted without taking other poets into account; for the literary schools of this period in the 12th century AD contain great names such as Kaghani, Falaki Shervani, etc., who are capable of being named. Nevertheless, the self-praise seen by the poet was a common practice among ode composers. As Khaghani, too, has said:

*There is no greater king in the territory of literature than me*

*In the world of speech, the domination is proved to be mine. (Badeolzaman, 2015).*

Nezami, too, calls himself the magician of words and believes his eloquence is so high that it is equal to gaining the secrets in the Jesus Christ's miracle.

*I am so complete in the magic of words*

*That my name has been repeated in [Azarbaijan]*

*The eloquence of my tongue*

*Is as miraculous of the Jesus Christ's miracle (Ganjvani, 2010).*

**In chapter nine**, the poet turns his attention to his son and addresses him. If before this (chapter 3) he was looking at his son like a master to his pupil, in this section, he changes into a concerned father. The poet preaches about the untrustworthy nature of this world in his beautiful poems and his advice envisages in his deeds:

*Do not sit in ignorance; there is no time for games*

*It is the time of art and earning pride. (Ganjvani, 2010).*

Here, the theme of "poetic skills" flows in another shape. "Self-praise," which was one of the 'commands' to be observed by any ode composers, changes into preaching and speaking about ethics:

*Do not engage yourself in the poetry and its techniques*

*As the worst of it is still the best of it (Ganjvani, 2010).*

Thus, the self-glorifying which was defined in the previous chapter was not merely a part of the ode-composer's code of practice; rather, it was following a practical aim; there is, to push his son away from seeking poetry as a profession. Nezami says:

*Do not seek a great name in this technique*

*As it has finished with the name of Nezami (Ganjvani, 2010).*

The last chapter (chapter ten) of the introduction to this poetry book is very interesting. In this chapter, the poet recalls a number of his deceased acquaintances and relatives. In this chapter, a new genre is seen; that is, Saghiname, which is composed in the template of Mathnavi in symmetric meter. In chapter 10, the poet speaks to the Saqi -wine cup filler (Saqi is an allegory of a full guru and spiritual leader). In this dialogue, the poet discusses the topics of death, unreliability of the world, words of wisdom, and spiritual advice. In this part, the mystic subject is more evident.

The principles of teachings in chapter ten are essentially different from guiding the son and giving him advice and instructions to live. In this part, the context approaches piety concepts. The poet appears in different figures before his reader. Here he is no longer a self-praised person who expresses views on his superiority over his contemporary peers, nor, he is a caring father who gives advice to his son, rather, he is an old man who has suffered from the pains of life (this has been discussed in chapters 1 and 4) and is a man that in glancing back to his life, he just remembers the sorrows.

In this chapter, the poet frequently remarks how everything is on the verge of perishing in the world. Of course, the poet's view is that one should work hard in life but one should not forget that there are limits to man's abilities (Kokeyeva, 2024).

1.2. Shahkarim's *Leyli and Majnun* was composed in 962 stanzas, and in comparison with Nezami's version, it is very short. In addition, unlike Nezami's story, Shahkarim's poem does not have a preface divided into a number of sections. It is noteworthy that some translators usually would not translate prefaces with several sections and/or, they would simply translate only a part of the sections. In their view, the subject of the preface has no connection with the story; however, a number of researchers did not accept the translators' views. As an example, J. Meisami, the European expert in oriental literature, emphasizes that the preface of a story is the notes and instructions of the author on how to read his/her story" (Meisami, 1987).

Thus, the story preface follows several important goals: to explain the reasons for writing the story, to show the viewpoints and beliefs of the author, and more importantly, it tries to present a better clue to the reader to understand the story better. Shahkarim might have accepted the view of the translator and ignored the preface and has directly shifted to the main story. Nevertheless, Shahkarim writes a preface before composing *Leyli and Majnun* in 16 stanzas.

**Concept of Shahkarim's preface:** "I composed this story and made it a tale for Kazakh people to know another real and eternal myths of love, with the hope of being able to reveal the secrets of this heavenly love and shed light on its actual concept for the purpose of better understanding; for this reason, I tried to compose it like Iranian poets such as Ferdowsi, Sa'di, Molavi, Khaje Hafiz and Fuzuli who had an eloquent and sweet language and my goal was to write the poems to be understandable by ordinary people. *Leyli and Majnun* succeeded in ascending love to a heavenly rank. Now, I claim with confidence only a poet in whose horizon of being love has risen like a sun will be able to create this love story with an eloquent language" (Kudaiberdiuly, 1989).

It seems that Shahkarim first invites his people to know about *Leyli and Majnun's* love story and tries to direct people, especially youth, to learn loyalty, purity and eternal love of *Leyli and Majnun*. The poet calls *Leyli and Majnun's* love a "rare love" and describes it as precious and genuine. He continues by saying that a precious and genuine affection is not easily found. Thus, it seems the last interpretation is a direct implication of the story.

*Majnun's* story is a valuable epic. It should be noted that Shahkarim's first encounter with *Leyli and Majnun's* story was in Istanbul Library in Turkey. According to the poet, there were many versions available of *Leyli and Majnun*, and he chose Fuzuli's version, and in his introduction, too, he mentions his name. Apart from Fuzuli, Shahkarim names other great Iranian poets such as Ferdowsi, Sa'di, Hafiz, and Navaei, and calls them significant and famous poets. It gives the notion that Shahkarim has actually recalled those great poets in seeking spiritual help in writing *Leyli and Majnun*.

### 2.1. Meeting of *Leyli and Majnun*

In Nezami's work, *Leyli and Majnun* first met each other when they were in school and the two children fell deeply in love with each other. Nezami describes them as:

*The peers read their lessons for the sake of knowledge*

*They read for the sake of love*

*The peers wrote down the words for vocabularies*

*They wrote other words (Ganjvani, 2010).*

2.2. Shahkairm; however, starts the story from the birth of Leyli and Majnun. The two newborns fall in love with each other from the day they are born. Forty days after their birth, they start crying. Shahkarim adds a nationalist flavor to the event of Leyli and Majnun's first meeting. Based on Kazakhs' traditions, the fortieth day of a newborn's life is known as "the first birthday," and they believe it to be a highly important matter. According to the national beliefs of Kazakhs, the spirit enters into man's body for the first time on this day. This scene is not found in Nezami's version.

Shahkarim remarks that Leyli and Majnun's love is not physical, but it is a love endorsed by God, too. They are born in love. God created them as such. The motive of "plutonic love," which has a mystic meaning, could be seen in other works of Shahkarim as well. The poet says, "I am in love with my beloved and this is not surprising. For, before calming to the world of materials, in the world of meaning, I was a single divine light (beloved). When should was blown in me, love entered in me with that spirit" (Kudaiberdiuly, 1988).

There is another mystic interpretation in Shahkarim's story as well. The story goes as follows: An old woman comes across the two children by accident and hears the nannies of Leyli and Majnun's words. Being childless, the old woman begs to give Qeys (Majnun) to her to raise him. When the old woman keeps Qeys in her arms, she notices milk growing in her breasts. The old woman says, "O' great God! There is no doubt on your power, you revived the rock".

However, when she takes Leyli in her arms, her milk stops and she notices that her milk should be the share of Qeys.

The scene of the old woman's presence in Shahkarim's version is not an accident. The old woman's figure evidently has a symbolic meaning. Annemarie Schimmel, the famous German authority in knowing Islam, East, and Molavi says, "In the process of classic Sufism, medieval Christianity compares the world with an old woman. The old woman is the symbol of the world (the old Mother Nature); the old and disabled world is revived and meaningful again when the actual and real love shows its face" (Schimmel, 2012).

### **3.1. Majnun's condition**

Nezami has portrayed Majnun with his miraculous wording. When Qeys notices that he is no longer able to see Leyli, he goes to the desert from the school. According to Dr. Zarrinkoub: "The story of the love between the two children was a topic on every alley and Qeys, as the beloved son of the chief of Amerian was named 'Majnun', and he, not denying this possession, never denied it and accepted his name" (Zarrinkoub, 2014).

Why was Qeys called "Majnun" or "Possessed"? Qeys had done something unheard of in his community. He had revealed his love to Leyli in front of all people, feelings such as fleeing his home, dwelling in the desert, crying, singing love songs, sighing loudly, going near Leyli's house and not uttering any other word than 'Leyli'. Such acts had earned him the name "Majnun" (Baitenova, 2022).

A Russian researcher discussing "Majnun" [possession] of Qeys by Leyli's love says, "Majnun is not crazy, he is not a psycho either. This is just a-sociality; that is, going beyond the line which is drawn by society, leaving and not showing any interest in participating in social activities. Thus, Qeys, as the beloved son of the chief of Amerian cline, changes into a wandering boy in the desert, without shelter and relatives" (Chalisova & Rusanov, 2008).

3.2. Majnun's tragic condition in Shahkarim's version also starts with his going unconscious. Leyli no longer comes to school. When Qeys notices that he is no longer going to see Leyli, he



falls unconscious. Shahkarim pictures this scene as "Love burned his heart and possessed him. In his sorrow and suffering, he lost his human shape. His parents tried to take him to a doctor, but Qeys has no such will and says, 'I have no one to turn to than God and no one can ever save me from this sadness and sorrow than God'" (Kudaiberdiuly, 1989).

Qeys, who is no longer able to endure the torment of being away from Leyli, heads to the desert and finds shelter in a narrow and deep valley. His only thought during day and night is Leyli. The pain of love burns his soul and he only utters Leyli's name. His situation becomes worse day by day. When people see Qeys's actions and reflection, come to the conclusion that he has gone mad. Qeys's family and relatives gather and decide to go to Leyli's house and ask for her hand from her father. Shahkarim portrays this scene as they say to Leyli's father, "God has created these two to be in love. If you do not give Leyli to Majnun, they both will die". Leyli's father, but answers, "I am not going to marry my daughter to a mad man" (Kudaiberdiuly, 1989). It seems that here, a concept is intentionally concealed; that is, whoever follows an actual love will become wondrous. One shall take hardship. For this reason, people saw Qeys's situation but could not understand his love and it seemed to them that Qeys had become mad.

The next subject in Shahkarim's story continues like Nezami's version. Majnun's love grows bigger day by day. Again, Qeys's family seeks a solution and decides to take Majnun to Mecca with the hope that he might find cure there.

Pilgrimage to Ka'ba does not cure him either. Majnun runs away from home and seeks shelter in the desert and mountains, and finds friendship among wild animals. In Shahkarim's version, the father's advice is given implicitly; that is, the entire American clan is sad and worried for Majnun and tries to find solutions to return him to ordinary life. In Nezami's version, Nofel sees Majnun in the desert and promises to help him join his beloved. Shahkarim's version, it is Majnun's clan who go to Nofel and request him to help Majnun. Nofel accepts their request and goes to Majnun.

#### **4. The union of Leyli and Majnun**

In both stories, Nezami and Shahkarim, Leyli and Majnun find union in their graves. The torment of love first kills Leyli. When Majnun receives the news of the death of his beloved, he goes to the cemetery, embraces the graveyard and dies.

In Nezami Ganjavi's version, when Majnun hears about Leyli's death, he goes to the graveyard and asks Him to take his soul. Thus, he hugs the grave and dies. The wild animals stay in the graveyard for some time to protect them and therefore, people are unable to approach the graves. After some time, the wild animals leave the graves and people enter the graveyard. Majnun is buried with Leyli and the two lovers stay in one grave for eternity.

In Shahkarim's version, Majnun goes to Leyli's burial place in tears and cries. Upon his reaching the grave, it is split in two and Majnun falls into the grave and the grave is closed again. The lovers join in a grave.

#### **Conclusion**

Leyli and Majnun is a tragic story that ends with death. The two lovers suffer great sorrows and pains in their lives and die without reaching each other. In addition, in this story, Majnun's parents and Leyli's husband also die in sadness. In general, it could be said that the story ends with death. People of the two clans, that is, those who shared their suffering, could do nothing

for them; that is, they did not have the ability to change the path of Leyli and Majnun's lives. The poet has created a picture that the characters of his story had no other option than enduring suffering, pain, and sorrow. Neither people nor destiny could be held responsible.

Nizami characterizes Majnun's love for his beloved not as a sensory or physical attraction to beauty, but as a spiritual love, presenting Majnun's emotions from a Sufi perspective. Analyzing the terms *reason* and *love*, which are commonly used in Sufi teachings, Nizami asserts that when the feeling of *love* takes precedence, there is no room left for *reason*. He affirms that the path to the goal, to truth, can only be reached through love. Acknowledging that there are many obstacles on the path to truth, he argues that only true lovers can overcome them. In this way, Nizami equates Majnun's love with "Divine" love (*Ilaahi*). Through his narrative, Nizami powerfully conveys Majnun's mad love to the readers, and where straightforward narration would fail, he uses numerous metaphors and vivid imagery to express those aspects that cannot be captured in simple words.

In Shahkarim's version, the poet makes no objection to the old traditions and customs; he does not protest destiny either. Based on the laws and regulations, his mystic work created two categories of meaning: If the first meaning (apparent) message of the story (the events in the lives of lovers, their sufferings, sorrows and death) could attract any reader or listener, the second meaning (inner) and the mystic meanings of the story reveal themselves to the reader who is familiar with mysticism.

Therefore, Shahkarim's version of Leyli and Majnun was not merely a retelling of the famous story in his mother tongue, but he seeks mystic and spiritual meanings in this story and sometimes, he adds his own mystic views to the story. At the end of the story, the poet also talks about "the perfect person". The poet compares his own feelings with Majnun's and assimilates his own feelings and experiences with Majnun's feelings. At the end of the story, Shahkarim says, "I am lost, like Majnun, I am seeking my lost one and that is love, justice, honesty, freedom and knowledge". However, he can not find the true values he was searching for in his time, and he suffers from the loss of spirituality and the fall of human treasures in his people's lives.

### Conflict of interest

The article contains no conflict of interest.

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#### **«Ләйлі мен Мәжнүн» дастанындағы көркемдік және идеялық ерекшеліктер: Низами мен Шәкәрім нұсқаларында**

**Аңдатпа.** «Ләйлі мен Мәжнүн» дастаны – шығыс әдебиетінің көрнекті туындысы, махаббат пен трагедияның символы ретінде танымал болған шығарма. Мақалада Низами мен Шәкәрім нұсқасындағы «Ләйлі мен Мәжнүн» дастаны идеялық және көркемдік ерекшеліктері тұрғысынан салыстырмалы талданады. Зерттеу барысында екі ақынның шығармаларындағы махаббат тақырыбының берілу тәсілдері, әлеуметтік шектеулер мен адам еркіндігі мәселелерінің көрінісі, сондай-ақ шығыстық әдеби дәстүр мен қазақы дүниетанымның өзара сабақтастығы қарастырылады. Низами нұсқасының поэтикалық тілі мен Шәкәрімнің аударма-адаптациясында қосылған ұлттық бояу, философиялық ой тереңдігіне баса назар аударылады. Екі нұсқаның ұқсастықтары мен айырмашылықтары, олардың тарихи және мәдени контекстегі мәні жан-жақты ашылады. Сонымен қатар, Шәкәрімнің шығармашылық әдісінің ерекшеліктері мен оның қазақ әдебиетіндегі орнына баға беріледі. Бұл зерттеу "Ләйлі мен Мәжнүн" дастанының екі нұсқасы арқылы шығыстық және қазақ әдебиеті арасындағы шығармашылық үндестікті түсінуге бағытталған. Тақырыпты таңдаудағы мақсат Низами мен Шәкәрім нұсқасындағы Ләйлі мен Мәжнүн дастанының негізгі идеялары мен философиялық, моральдық құндылықтарын ашу. Өртүрлі дәуір мен мәдениеттегі махаббаттың ұғымы мен оған қатысты көзқарастарды салыстыру. Екі ақын шығармашылығындағы поэтикалық стиль мен құрылымдық ерекшеліктерді талдау. Дастанның шығу кезеңін және оның сол дәуірдің мәдени және әлеуметтік жағдайларымен байланысын зерттеу. Ләйлі мен Мәжнүн дастанының қазақ әдебиетіне, мәдениетіне және фольклорына әсері және Шәкәрімнің бұл тақырыпқа деген көзқарасын, дастанның қазақ әдебиетінде қалай жаңғырып, өзгергенін талдау.

**Түйін сөздер:** Ләйлі мен Мәжнүн, Низами, Шәкәрім, шығыс әдебиеті, қазақ әдебиеті, көркемдік ерекшелік.

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**Художественные и идейные особенности эпоса «Лейли и Меджнун»:  
на основе версий Низами и Шакарима**

**Аннотация.** Эпическая история «Лейли и Меджнун» является выдающимся произведением восточной литературы, известным как символ любви и трагедии. В статье дается сравнительный анализ эпической истории «Лейли и Меджнун» в версиях Низами и Шакарима, с акцентом на их художественные и идеологические характеристики. В исследовании изучаются различные подходы к теме любви в творчестве обоих поэтов, отражение социальных ограничений и человеческой свободы, а также взаимодействие между восточными литературными традициями и казахским мировоззрением. Особое внимание уделяется поэтическому языку версии Низами и национальному колориту, добавленному в переводе Шакарима, наряду с философской глубиной мысли. Всесторонне рассматриваются сходства и различия между двумя версиями, а также их значимость в соответствующих исторических и культурных контекстах. Цель выбора темы - раскрыть основные идеи и философские, моральные ценности поэмы Лейли и Меджнуна в версии Низами и Шакарима. Сравнение понятия любви и ее взглядов в разные эпохи и культуры. Анализ поэтического стиля и структурных особенностей в творчестве двух поэтов. Изучение периода зарождения поэмы и ее связи с культурными и социальными условиями эпохи. Влияние рассказа о Лейли и Меджнуне на казахскую литературу, культуру и фольклор и отношение Шакарима к этой теме, анализ того, как поэма возродилась и изменилась в казахской литературе.

**Ключевые слова:** Лейли и Меджнун, Низами, Шакарим, восточная литература, казахская литература, художественная особенность.

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