

Nezami Ganjavi

A good video about Nezami Ganjavi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qXdXQHm4Q>

Nezami Ganjavi

(The Great 12th Century Iranian Persian Poet) A Project by Kamran Talattof

An excerpt from: *The Poetry of Nizami Ganjavi: Knowledge, Love, and Rhetoric*, edited, introduction, and major contributions by K. Talattof and J. Clinton. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.

The poet Nizami Ganjavi (1140–1202) is one of the giants of the Persian literary tradition. As a narrative poet, he stands between Abolqasem Firdawsi (ca. 940–ca. 1020), the poet of Iran's heroic tradition and the author of *Shahnamah* (Book of Kings), and Jalaluddin Rumi (1207–1273), whose *Divan-i kabir* (Great Divan) and *Kitab-i Masnavi Ma'navi* (Spiritual Couplets) virtually define the forms of mystical lyric and mystical narrative poetry, respectively. Nizami's narrative poetry is more comprehensive than that of either Firdawsi or Rumi, in that it includes the romantic dimensions of human relations as well the heroic, and plumbs the human psyche with an unprecedented depth and understanding. To be sure, a profound spiritual consciousness pervades his poetry, and to suggest otherwise would be to do him a disservice, but he does not, as does Rumi, make the whole focus of his work the evocation and articulation of the transcendent dimension of existence.

Nizami brought about a comparable expansion of the language of poetry, as well. He was among the first poets in Iran to wed the lyric style of court poetry, with its rhetorical intricacy and metaphoric density, to narrative form, and his language is as much a presence on the narrative stage as are the characters and events it depicts. For him, discourse or eloquent speech (*sokhan*), or more particularly, the precise, beautiful, and signifying language of the poet, is his dominant concern. For Nizami, poets have a status nearly divine. He repeatedly draws attention to the shaping and educative function of *sokhan* in his books, and goes so far as to liken his poetry to the *Qur'an* itself as a source of clear moral guidance, a bold assertion for his time.^[1] In *The Treasure House of Mysteries*, he writes, "The first manifestation of existence was speech...Without speech the world has no voice."

The five long poems, known collectively as the *Khamsa* (Quintet) or *Panj Ganj* (Five Treasures), composed by Nizami in the late twelfth century, set new standards in their own time for elegance of expression, richness of characterization, and narrative sophistication. They were widely imitated for centuries by poets writing in Persian, as well as in languages deeply influenced by Persian, like Urdu and Ottoman Turkish.^[2]

1 The word *sokhan* and its derivative and compound forms such as *sokhandan*, *sokhanvar*, *sokhan afarin*, *sokhan parvar*, *sokhan ravan*, *sokhan shinas*, and *sokhan gostar*, all meaning referring to poets are abundant in Nizami's work. On the subject of the importance of *sokhan* in Nizami's work, see Hamid Dabashi, "*Harf-i nakhostin: mafhum-i sokhan dar nazd-i hakim Nizami Ganjavi*," *Iranshenasi*, volume 3, number 4 (Winter 1992), 723-40 and Kamran Talattof's article in this volume.

2.No exhaustive reckoning has ever been made of the poets in Persian, Turkish, Pashto, Kurdish, and Ordu (and other languages of the Persianate tradition) who emulated Nizami's example by imitation, but by all indications the figure must be staggering. The extraordinary dissemination of Nizami's *panj ganj* throughout Persian and Persianate literature is a remarkable and largely unexplored phenomenon (cf. Jalal Sattari, note 22 below, page 18). In the present volume J. S. Meisami opens up a new approach to this question by examining the impact of Nizami's poetry on the Iranian historian Rāvandī.

On Leili and Majnoun

THE story of the loves of Lailī and Majnūn is one of the most popular in the East. There are several poems on the same subject by different authors, but that by Nizāmi is considered the best; and I believe this is the first time it has appeared in the European language.

Every nation has its favourite tales of love as well as chivalry. France and Italy have their Abelard and Eloisa, their Petrarch and Laura; and Arabia has its Lailī and Majnūn, the beautiful record of whose sorrows is constantly referred to, throughout the East, as an immortal example of the most faithful love. The reader will, I think, be pleased with the manner in which the Persian poet has depicted the character of a frantic lover, and also the tender affections of his Lailī. The sentiments will be found to differ very little from those of the Western world. Human nature is every where the same.

Nizāmi is said to be a native of Ganja, or Kenja, near Tefflis, and flourished in the twelfth century, or sixth of the Mohammedan era. He died about the 597th year of the Hijrah; but no mention is made where he was buried.

Besides Lailī and Majnūn, he wrote the story of Khosrú and Shirín, the Treasury of Secrets, and some other works. His last and most considerable poem was the Sekandar-Nama, an epic, celebrating the career of Alexander the Great. At the period it was finished, he is reported to have been more than sixty years of age.

Nizāmi was eminently distinguished through life for his rigid sanctity, which formed indeed the peculiarity of his character, cherishing, as he did at the same time, the amatory or metaphysical sentiments which pervade his romantic poem of Lailī and Majnūn. But he may have been a Súfi, and aimed at describing the passions of the soul in its progress to eternity. The Odes of Hafiz have been supposed to have a similar spiritual object!

In honour of Nizámi, it is related that Ata Beg was desirous of forming and cultivating an acquaintance with him, and with that view ordered one of his courtiers to request his attendance. But it was replied, that Nizámi, being an austere recluse, studiously avoided all intercourse with princes. Ata Beg, on hearing this, and suspecting that the extreme piety and abstinence of Nizámi were affected, waited upon him in great pomp for the purpose of tempting and seducing him from his obscure retreat; but the result was highly favourable to the poet; and the prince ever afterwards looked upon him as a truly holy man, frequently visiting him, and treating him with the most profound respect and veneration. Nizámi also received many substantial proofs of the admiration in which his genius and learning were held. On one occasion, five thousand *dinars* were sent to him, and on another he was presented with an estate consisting of fourteen villages. The brief notice in Dowlat Shah's account of the Poets of Persia represents him as the finest writer of the age in which he lived. Hafiz thus speaks of him:—

Not all the treasured store of ancient days
Can boast the sweetness of Nizami's lays.
BARRACKPORE,
December 20th, 1835.

Poetry from *LAILÎ AND MAJNÛN*

Links:

<http://persianpoetry.arizona.edu/content/layli-and-majnun-english>

<http://persian.packhum.org/persian/main?url=pf%3Ffile%3D17604010%26ct%3D0>

1. Saki, thou know'st I worship wine

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:
SÂKI*, thou know'st I worship wine;
Let that delicious cup be mine.
Wine! pure and limpid as my tears,
Dispeller of a lover's fears;
With thee inspired, with thee made bold,
'Midst combat fierce my post I hold;
With thee inspired, I touch the string,
And, rapt, of love and pleasures sing.
Thou art a lion, seeking prey,
Along the glades where wild deer stray;
And like a lion I would roam,
To bring the joys I seek for home;
With wine, life's dearest, sweetest treasure,

I feel the thrill of every pleasure:
 —Bring, Saki, bring the ruby now;
 Its lustre sparkles on thy brow,
 And, flashing with a tremulous light,
 Has made thy laughing eyes more bright:
 Bring, bring the liquid gem, and see
 Its power, its wond'rous power, in me.
 —No ancestors have I to boast;
 The trace of my descent is lost.
 From Adam what do I inherit?
 What but a sad and troubled spirit?
 For human life, from oldest time,
 Is ever mark'd with guilt and crime;
 And man, betrayer and betray'd,
 Lurks like a spider in the shade;
 But wine still plays a magic part,
 Exalting high the drooping heart.
 Then, Saki, linger not, but give
 The blissful balm on which I live.
 Come, bring the juice of the purple vine,
 Bring, bring, the musky-scented wine;
 A draught of wine the memory clears,
 And wakens thoughts of other years.—
 When blushing dawn illumes the sky,
 Fill up a bumper, fill it high!
 That wine,* which to the fever'd lip,
 With anguish parch'd, when given to sip,
 Imparts a rapturous smile, and throws
 A veil o'er all distracting woes:
 That wine, the lamp which, night and day,
 Lights us along our weary way;
 Which strews the path with fruits and flowers,
 And gilds with joy our fleeting hours;
 And lifts the mind, now grown elate,
 To Jamshid's glory, Jamshid's state.* —
 But of the kingly race beware;
 'Tis not for thee their smiles to share:
 Smiles are deceitful, fire looks bright,
 And sheds a lucid dazzling light;
 But, though attractive, it is known
 That safety dwells in flight alone.
 The moth the taper's radiance tries,
 But 'midst the flame in torment dies:
 And none lament that foolish pride
 Which seeks to be with kings allied.—

Bring, bring the musky-scented wine!
'Tis the key of mirth, and must be mine;
The key which opens wide the door
Of rapture's rich and varied store;
Which makes the mounting spirits glad,
And feel the pomp of Kai-Kobâd.
Wine o'er the temper casts a spell
Of kindness indescribable:
Then, since I'm in the drinking vein,
Bring, bring the luscious wine again!
From the vintner another fresh supply,
And let not the reveller's lips be dry.—
Come, Saki, thou'rt not old, nor lame;
Thou'dst not incur from a minstrel blame;
Let him wash from his heart the dust of sorrow;
Let him riot in social bliss till the morrow;
Let the sound of the goblet delight his ear,
Like the music that breathes from Heaven's own sphere.

II. Mark, where instruction pours upon the mind

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Mark, where instruction pours upon the mind
The light of knowledge, simple or refined;
Shaikhs of each tribe have children there, and each
Studies whate'er the bearded sage can teach.
Thence his attainments Kais* assiduous drew,
And scatter'd pearls from lips of ruby hue;
And there, of different tribe and gentle mien,
A lovely maid of tender years was seen:
Her mental powers an early bloom display'd;
Her peaceful form in simple garb array'd:
Bright as the morn, her cypress shape, and eyes
Dark as the stag's, were view'd with fond surprise;
And when her cheek this Arab moon reveal'd,
A thousand hearts were won; no pride, no shield,
Could check her beauty's power, resistless grown,
Given to enthral and charm—but chiefly one.
Her richly flowing locks were black as night,
And Lailî* she was call'd—that heart's delight:
One single glance the nerves to frenzy wrought,
One single glance bewilder'd every thought;
And, when o'er Kais affection's blushing rose
Diffused its sweetness, from him fled repose:

Tumultuous passion danced upon his brow;
He sought to woo her, but he knew not how:
He gazed upon her cheek, and, as he gazed,
Love's flaming taper more intensely blazed.
Soon mutual pleasure warm'd each other's heart;
Love conquer'd both—they never dreamt to part;
And, while the rest were poring o'er their books,
They pensive mused, and read each other's looks:
While other schoolmates for distinction strove,
And thought of fame, they only thought of love:
While others various climes in books explored,
Both idly sat—adorer and adored:
Science for them had now no charms to boast;
Learning for them had all its virtue lost:
Their only taste was love, and love's sweet ties,
And writing *ghazels* to each other's eyes.

Yes, love triumphant came, engrossing all
The fond luxuriant thoughts of youth and maid;
And, whilst subdued in that delicious thrall,
Smiles and bright tears upon their features play'd.
Then in soft converse did they pass the hours,—
Their passion, like the season, fresh and fair;
Their opening path seem'd deck'd with balmiest flowers,
Their melting words as soft as summer air.

Immersed in love so deep,
They hoped suspicion would be lull'd asleep,
And none be conscious of their amorous state;
They hoped that none with prying eye,
And gossip tongue invidiously,
Might to the busy world its truth relate:
And, thus possess'd they anxious thought
Their passion would be kept unknown;
Wishing to seem what they were not,
Though all observed their hearts were one.

By worldly prudence uncontroll'd,
Their every glance their feelings told;
For true love never yet had skill
To veil impassion'd looks at will.
When ringlets of a thousand curls,
And ruby lips, and teeth of pearls,
And dark eyes flashing quick and bright,
Like lightning on the brow of night—
When charms like these their power display,
And steal the wilder'd heart away—

Can man, dissembling, coldly seem
 Unmoved as by an idle dream?
 Kais saw her beauty, saw her grace,
 The soft expression of her face;
 And, as he gazed, and gazed again,
 Distraction stung his burning brain:
 No rest he found by day or night—
 Lailî for ever in his sight.
 But, oh! when separation came,
 More brightly glow'd his ardent flame;
 And she, with equal sorrow fraught,
 Bewail'd the fate upon them brought.
 —He wander'd wild through lane and street,
 With frantic step, as if to meet
 Something which still his search defied,
 Reckless of all that might betide.
 His bosom heaved with groans and sighs,
 Tears ever gushing from his eyes;
 And still he struggled to conceal
 The anguish he was doom'd to feel;
 And, madden'd with excessive grief,
 In the lone desert sought relief.
 Thither, as morning dawn'd, he flew;
 His head and feet no covering knew;
 And every night, with growing pain,
 The woes of absence mark'd his strain.
 The secret path he eager chose
 Where Lailî's distant mansion rose
 And kiss'd the door, and in that kiss
 Fancied he quaff'd the cup of bliss.
 How fleet his steps to that sweet place!
 A thousand wings increased his place;
 But thence, his fond devotions paid,
 A thousand thorns his course delay'd.

III. The lover from his mistress parted

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The lover from his mistress parted,
 Lingered, oppress'd, and broken-hearted,
 Sank, like the sun all rayless, down—
 Khuşro,* without his throne or crown.
 With matted locks and bosom bare,

Unshielded from the scorching air,
This hapless youth, absorb'd in grief,
Hoped with his friends to find relief;
The few, by strong affection bound,
And, 'midst his woes, still faithful found.
But vain the refuge—friendship's smile
Could not his love-lorn heart beguile:
Again he hasten'd to that place remote,
Where all he loved in life had gone:
He call'd her magic name, but she was not,
Nor of her kindred, one, not one,
In that sequestered, lonely spot:
He call'd a thousand times, but call'd in vain;
None heeded, for none heard the strain;
And thence no fond reply that hapless youth could gain.

Lailî had, with her kindred, been removed
Among the Najd mountains, where
She cherish'd still the thoughts of him she loved,
And her affection thus more deeply proved
Amid that wild retreat. Kais sought her there;
Sought her in rosy bower and silent glade,
Where the tall palm-trees flung refreshing shade.
He call'd upon her name again;
Again he call'd alas! in vain;
His voice unheard, though raised on every side;
Echo alone to his lament replied;
And Lailî! Lailî! rang around,
As if enamour'd of that magic sound.*
Dejected and forlorn, fast-falling dew
Glisten'd upon his cheeks of pallid hue;
Through grove and frowning glen he lonely stray'd,
And with his griefs the rocks were vocal made.

Beautiful Lailî! had she gone for ever?—
Could he that thought support? oh, never, never!
Whilst deep emotion agonised his breast,
He to the morning-breeze these words address'd:—

“Breeze of the morn! so fresh and sweet,
Wilt thou my blooming mistress greet;
And, nestling in her glossy hair,
My tenderest thoughts, my love, declare?
Wilt thou, while 'mid her tresses sporting,
Their odorous balm, their perfume courting,
Say to that soul-seducing maid,
In grief how prostrate I am laid!

And gently whisper in her ear
 This message, with an accent clear:—
 ‘Thy form is ever in my sight,
 In thought by day, in dreams by night;
 For one, in spirits sad and broken,
 That mole would be the happiest token;
 That mole* which adds to every look
 A magic spell I cannot brook;
 For he who sees thy melting charms,
 And does not feel his soul in arms,
 Bursting with passion, rapture, all
 That speak love's deepest, wildest thrall,
 Must be, as Kâf's* ice-summit, cold,
 And, haply, scarce of human mould.
 Let him, unmoved by charms like thine,
 His worthless life at once resign—
 Those lips are sugar, heavenly sweet;
 O let but mine their pouting meet!
 The balsam of delight they shed;
 Their radiant colour ruby-red.
 The Evil eye has struck my heart,*
 But thine in beauty sped the dart:
 Thus many a flower, of richest hue,
 Hath fall'n and perish'd where it grew
 Thy beauty is the sun in brightness,
 Thy form a Peri's self in lightness;
 A treasure thou, which, poets say,
 The heavens would gladly steal away—
 Too good, too pure, on earth to stay!’”

V. Sweet Lailî's kinsmen now describe

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Sweet Lailî's kinsmen now describe
 To the haughty chieftain of their tribe,
 A youth amidst the desert seen,
 In strange attire, of frantic mien;
 His arms outstretch'd, his head all bare,
 And floating loose his clustering hair:
 “In a distracted mood,” they say—
 “He wanders hither every day;
 And often, with fantastic bound,
 Dances, or prostrate hugs the ground;

Or, in a voice the soul to move,
Warbles the melting songs of love;
Songs which, when breathed in tones so true,
A thousand hearts at once subdue.
He speaks—and all who listen hear
Words which they hold in memory dear;
And we and thine endure the shame,
And Lailî blushes at his name.”
And now the chieftain, roused to wrath,
Threatens to cross the maniac's path.
But, haply, to prevent that barbarous deed,
To Omri's palmy groves the tidings flew,
And soon the father sends a chosen few,
To seek the lost one. Promptly they proceed
O'er open plain and thicket deep,
Embowering glen and rocky steep,
Exploring with un wearied eye
Wherever man might pass or lie,
O'ercome by grief or death. In vain
Their sight on every side they strain,
No Majnûn's voice, nor form, to cheer
Their anxious hearts; but far and near
The yell of prowling beasts they hear.
Mournful they deem him lost or dead,
And tears of bitterest anguish shed.
But he, the wanderer from his home,
Found not from beasts a living tomb;
His passion's pure and holy flame
Their native fierceness seem'd to tame
Tiger and ravenous wolf pass'd by him,
The fell hyena came not nigh him;
As if, ferocious spirits to quell,
His form had been invisible,
Or bore a life-protecting spell.
Upon a fountain emerald brink
Majnûn had stoop'd its lucid wave to drink;
And his despairing friends descried
Him laid along that murmuring fountain's side,
Wailing his sorrows still; his feeble voice
Dwelt, ever dwelt, upon his heart's sole choice.
A wild emotion trembled in his eye,
His bosom wrung with many a deep-drawn sigh;
And groans, and tears, and music's softest lay,
Successive mark'd his melancholy day.
—Now he is stretch'd along the burning sand,

A stone his pillow—now, upraised his hand,
He breathes a prayer for Lailî, and again
The desert echoes with some mournful strain.

As wine deprives us of the sense we boast,
So reason in love's maddening draughts is lost.

Restored to home again, he dreads to meet
His father's frowns, and bends to kiss his feet;
Then, gazing wildly, rises up, and speaks,
And in a piteous tone forgiveness seeks:—

“Sad is my fate, o'ercast my youthful morn,
My rose's leaves, my life's sweet buds are torn;
I sit in darkness, ashes o'er my head,
To all the world's alluring pleasures dead;
For me what poor excuse can soothe thy mind?
But thou'rt my father still—O still be kind!”
Syd Omri his unchanged affection proved,
And, folding to his breast the child he loved,
Exclaimed:—“My boy! I grieve to mark
Thy reason erring still, and dark;
A fire consuming every thread
Of which thy thrilling nerves are made.

Sit down, and from thy eyesight tear
The poisonous thorn that rankles there:
'Tis best we should to mirth incline,
But let it not be raised by wine:
'Tis well desire should fill the breast;
Not such desire as breaks our rest.
Remain not under grief's control,
Nor taunt of foe which stings the soul;
Let wisdom every movement guide;
Error but swells affliction's tide;
Though love hath set thee all on fire,
And thy heart burns with still unquench'd desire,
Despair not of a remedy;
From seedlings spring the shady tree;
From hope continued follows gladness;
Which dull despair had lost in sadness;
Associate with the wealthy, they
Will show to glittering wealth the way;
A wanderer never gathers store,
Be thou a wanderer now no more.

Wealth opens every door, and gives
Command, and homage still receives:

Be patient then, and patience will
By slow degrees thy coffers fill.
That river rolling deep and broad,
Once but a narrow streamlet flow'd;
That lofty mountain, now in view,
Its height from small beginnings drew.
He who impatient hurries on,
Hoping for gems, obtains a stone;
Shrewdness and cunning gain the prize,
While wisdom's self unprosperous lies:
The fox of crafty subtle mind
Leaves the wolf's dulness far behind;
Be thou discreet, thy thoughts employ,
The world's inviting pomp enjoy.—
In search of wealth from day to day
Love's useless passion dies away;
The sensual make disease their guest,
And nourish scorpions in their breast.

And is thy heart so worthless grown,
To be the cruel sport of one?
Keep it from woman's scathe, and still
Obedient to thy own free will,
And mindful of a parent's voice,
Make him, and not thy foes, rejoice.”

Majnûn replied:—“My father!—father still!—
My power is gone; I cannot change my will:
The moral counsel thou hast given to me,
(To one who cannot from his bondage flee,)
A vails me nothing. 'Tis no choice of mine,
But Fate's decree, that I should thus repine:
Stand I alone? Look round, on every side
Are broken hearts, by sternest fortune tried:
Shadows are not self-made—the silver moon
Is not self-station'd, but the Almighty's boon.

From the huge elephant's stupendous form,
To that of the poor ant, the smallest worm,
Through every grade of life, all power is given,
All joy or anguish by the Lord of Heaven.

I sought not, I, misfortune—but it came—
I sought not fire, yet is my heart all flame:
They ask me why I never laugh nor smile,
Though laughter be no sign of sense the while.
If I should laugh in merry mood, a-gape,
Amidst my mirth some secret might escape.

—A partridge seized an ant, resolved to kill
The feeble creature with his horny bill;
When, laughing loud, the ant exclaimed—‘Alas!
A partridge thou! and art thou such an ass?
I’m but a gnat, and dost thou think to float
A gnat’s slight filmy texture down thy throat?’
The partridge laugh’d at this unusual sound,
And, laughing, dropp’d the ant upon the ground.

Thus he who idly laughs will always find
Some grief succeed—’tis so with all mankind.
The stupid partridge, laughing, droop’d his crest,
And by that folly lost what he possess’d.

—This poor old drudge, which bears its heavy load,
Must all life long endure the same rough road;
No joy for him, in mortal aid no trust,
No rest till death consigns him to the dust.”
Here paused the youth, and wept; and now
The household smooth his frown’d brow,
And with unceasing eagerness
Seek to remove his soul’s distress.
But grief, corroding grief, allows no space
For quiet thoughts; his wounds breaks out anew;
His kindred every change of feature trace,
And unavailing tears their cheeks bedew;
A deeper, keener anguish marks his face;
His faded form so haggard to the view;
Useless the task his sorrows to remove,
For who can free the heart from love, unchanging love?
Few days had pass’d, when, frantic grown,
He burst from his domestic prison,
And in the desert wild, alone,
Pour’d, like the morning bird, new risen,
His ardent lay of love. Not long
The mountains echoed with his song,
Ere, drawn by sounds so sweet and clear,
A crowd of listeners hover’d near:
They saw him, tall as cypress, stand
A rocky fragment in his hand;
A purple sash his waist around,
His legs with links of iron bound;
Yet, unencumber’d was his gait;
They only show’d his maniac state.

* * * * *

Wandering he reach’d a spot of ground,
With palmy groves and poplars crown’d;

A lively scene it was to view,
 Where flowers too bloom'd, of every hue;
 Starting, he saw the axe applied
 To a cypress-tree—and thus he cried:—
 “Gardener! did ever love thy heart control?
 Was ever woman mistress of thy soul?
 When joy has thrill'd through every glowing nerve,
 Hadst thou no wish that feeling to preserve?
 Does not a woman's love delight, entrance,
 And every blessing fortune yields enhance?
 Then stop that lifted hand, the stroke suspend,
 Spare, spare the cypress-tree, and be my friend!
 And why? Look there, and be forewarn'd by me,
 'Tis Laili's form, all grace and majesty;
 Wouldst thou root up resemblance so complete,
 And lay its branches withering at thy feet?
 What! Laili's form? no; spare the cypress-tree;
 Let it remain, still beautiful and free;
 Yes, let my prayers thy kindest feelings move,
 And save the graceful shape of her I love!”
 –The gardener dropp'd his axe, o'ercome with shame,
 And left the tree to bloom, and speak of Laili's fame.

XII. The Arab poets who rehearse

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The Arab poets who rehearse
 Their legends in imperishable verse,
 Say, when Majnûn these tidings knew,
 More wild, more moody wild, he grew;
 Raving through wood and mountain glen;
 Flying still more the haunts of men.
 Sudden a perfume, grateful to the soul,
 O'er his awaken'd senses stole.
 He thought from Laili's fragrant couch it came,
 And fill'd with joy his wearied frame.
 Ecstatic with the unexpected pleasure,
 The fond memorial of his dearest treasure,
 He sank upon the ground, beneath the shade
 Of a broad palm, in senseless torpor laid.
 A stranger, quickly passing by,
 Observed the love-lorn wanderer lie
 Sleeping, or dead, and check'd his camel's pace
 To mark the features of his face.

Loud roaring, like a demon, he awoke
 The maniac from his trance, and gaily spoke:—
 “Up, up, thou sluggard! up and see,
 What thy heart's-ease has done for thee!
 Better drive feeling from thy mind,
 Since there's no faith in womankind:
 Better be idle, than employ'd
 In fruitless toil; better avoid
 A mistress, though of form divine,
 If she be fair and false as thine!
 They've given her charms to one as young—
 The bird-veil o'er her brow is flung:
 Close, side by side, from morn till night,
 Kissing and dalliance their delight;*
 Whilst thou from human solace flying,
 With unrequited love art dying.
 —Distant from her adorer's view,
 One in a thousand may be true:
 The pen which writes, as if it knew
 A woman's promise, splits in two.
 While in another's warm embrace,
 No witness to thy own disgrace,
 Faithless, she wastes no thought on thee,
 Wrapp'd in her own felicity.
 Woman's desire is more intense
 Than man's—more exquisite her sense;
 But, never blinded by her flame,
 Gain and fruition are her aim.
 A woman's love is selfish all;
 Possessions, wealth, secure her fall.
 How many false and cruel prove,
 And not one faithful in her love!
 A contradiction is her life;
 Without, all peace; within, all strife;
 A dangerous friend, a fatal foe,
 Prime breeder of a world of woe.*
 When we are joyous, she is sad;
 When deep in sorrow, she is glad.
 Such is the life a woman leads,
 And in her sorcery still succeeds.”
 These words confused the lover's brain;
 Fire ran through every swelling vein:
 Frantic he dash'd his forehead on the ground,
 And blood flow'd trickling from the ghastly wound.

“What added curse is this?” he groaning said,—
“Another tempest, roaring round my head!”

When ever did a bleeding heart
Betray no sign of blighted reason?
Can the most skilful gardener's art
Still keep his flowers or fruit in season?
No; hearts dissolved in grief give birth
To madness, as the teeming earth
Yields herbs; and yet bewilder'd mind,
To all but one bright object blind,
Suffers no censure from the seer
Who guides the faithful Moslem here.
Love sanctifies the erring thought,
And Heaven forgives the deed by frenzy wrought.
“A rose, a lovely rose, I found,
With thorns and briers encompass'd round;
And, struggling to possess that prize,
The gardener in his wrath denies,
Behold my heart, all torn and bleeding,
Its pangs all other pangs exceeding:
I see the leaves expand and bloom,
I smell its exquisite perfume;
Its colour, blushing in the light,
Gives to my raptured soul delight:
I weep beneath the cypress-tree,
And still the rose is not for me.
Alas! none hear, nor mark my moan;
Pride of my soul, my rose, is gone!
Another has, in open day,
Borne the heart-winning prize away.
Though wrapp'd in sweetest innocence,
The fell oppressor snatch'd her thence.
But who deserves the curse that's sped
Upon the foul betrayer's head?
The gardener, in his lust for gold,
That rose—the boast of Irem—sold.

“Poor wretch! if worlds of wealth were mine,
“Full willingly I'd make them thine;
But not a dirhem for that rose,
The fatal cause of all my woes.
I would not play a villian's part,
And buy with gold a woman's heart;
'Tis not gold to purchase love,
Above all wealth, all price above;
For I would rather die than see

A smile on lips that are not free.
Give me the boundless swell of bliss,
The heart upspringing to the kiss,
When life, and soul, and breath combine
To tell me, she is only mine;
The flood of joy o'erwhelming quite
My glowing senses with delight.
—Base wretch! and thou that rose hast sold:
A demon's curse upon thy gold.”

The traveller witness'd with surprise
How he the maniac's heart had wrung—
What remedy could he devise?
He from his camel sprung;
And when the sufferer seem'd to be restored,
Forgiveness anxiously implored:—
“’Twas wrong, and I deserve the blame;
I mark'd with infamy her name:
My fault is of the darkest hue,—
My crime—for Lailî still is true!
What! though in nuptial band united,
Her faith, to thee so often plighted,
Spotless remains, still firm, unbroken,
As proved by many a mournful token.
For every moment's space can claim
A thousand recollections of thy name:
Thus ever present to her memory,
She lives, and only lives for thee.
One year has pass'd since she was made a bride;
But what of years? whatever may betide,
Were it a thousand, still her heart's the same,
Unchanged, unchangeable her earliest cherish'd flame.”

Now Majnûn, desolate, his fate perceived,
As in a glass, the misery of his lot,
And, from the first impression scarce relieved,
Felt his abandonment, and only not forgot.
Wasted and wan, he flutter'd where he lay;
And, turning to that magic point which led
To where his angel-face was wont to stay,
Thus, in a melancholy tone, he said:—
“Alas! my passion glow'd in every part;
Thine in thy tongue, but never in thy heart;
With thy new love hast thou so amorous grown?
And am I worthless as a desert-stone?
What is a word, a promise, oath, or pledge?

Mockery, which never can the heart engage.
What was my garden's wealth but fruit and flowers?
And all that wealth a raven now devours;
And what has been my constant care and toil,
But for another to prepare the spoil?
When first my soul was destined to be thine,
I little thought that treasure to resign;
Think of thy broken vows, to what they tend;
Think of thy falsehood, and lament its end.
My doom is fix'd; my choice no longer free;
My martyr-life devoted still to thee!"

XIX: How beautifully blue

<http://persian.packhum.org/persian/main?url=pf%3Ffile%3D17604010%26ct%3D0>

How beautifully blue
The firmament! how bright
The noon is sailing through
The vast expanse, to-night!
And at this lovely hour
The lonely Lailî weeps
Within her prison-tower,
And her sad record keeps—
How many days, how many years,
Her sorrows she has borne!
A lingering age of sighs and tears;
A night that has no morn:
Yet in that guarded tower she lays her head,
Shut like a gem within its stony bed.
And who the warder of that place of sighs?
Her husband!—he the dragon-watch supplies.
What words are those which meet her anxious ear?
Unusual sounds, unusual sights appear;
Lamps flickering round, and wailings sad and low,
Seem to proclaim some sudden burst of woe.
Beneath her casement rings a wild lament;
Death-notes disturb the night; the air is rent
With clamorous voices; every hope is fled;
He breathes no longer—Ibn Salim is dead!
The fever's rage had nipp'd him in his bloom;
He sank unloved, unpitied, to the tomb.
And Lailî marks the moon; a cloud
Had stain'd its lucid face;
The mournful token of a shroud,

End of the humble and the proud,
The grave their resting-place.
And now to her the tale is told,
Her husband's hand and heart are cold:
And must she mourn the death of one
Whom she had loathed to look upon?
In customary garb array'd,
The pomp of grief must be display'd—
Dishevell'd tresses, streaming eyes,
The heart remaining in disguise—
She seem'd, distraction in her mien,
To feel her loss, if loss had been;
But all the burning tears she shed
Were for her own Majnûn, and not the dead!
The rose that hail'd the purple morn,
All glistening with the balmy dew,
Look'd still more lonely when the thorn
Had been removed from where it grew.
But Arab laws had still their claim
Upon a virtuous widow's fame.

And what destroy'd all chance of blame?
Two years to droop behind the screen;
Two years unseeing, and unseen!
No, not a glance in all that time,
Blooming in life's luxurious prime,
Was e'er allow'd to womankind;
Since, but to household faces blind,
She must at home her vigils keep,
Her business still to groan and weep.

And Lailî weeps; but who can tell
What secrets may her bosom swell?
The beauteous eyes in tears may swim,
The heart may throb, but not for him
Who in the grave unconcious sleeps—

Alone for Majnûn Lailî weeps!
Accustom'd hourly to rehearse
Her distant lover's glowing verse,
Framed like a spell to charm and bless,
And soothe her heart's extreme distress.

* * * * *

“O what a night! a long and dreary night!
It is not night, but darkness without end;
Awful extinction of ethereal light,
Companionless, I sit, without one friend.

Is the immortal source of light congeal'd?
Or has the dreadful day of judgment come?
Nature's fair form beneath a pall conceal'd;
Oh! what a night of soul-destroying gloom!
Can the shrill waker of the morn be dead?
Is the Mowazzin heedless of his trust?
Has the lone warder from his watch-tower fled,

Or, weary of his task, returned to dust?
O God! restore to me the joyous light
Which first illumed my heart—the golden ray
Of youthful love—that from this prison, night,
I may escape and feel the bliss of day!”

Years, days, how slowly roll they on!
And yet, how quickly life is gone!
The future soon becomes the past—
Ceaseless the course of time. At last
The morning came; the king of day
Arose in festival array,
And Laili's night had pass'd away:
Her morn of beauty o'er her face,
Shining, resumed its wonted grace;
And with soft step of fairy lightness
She moved, a glittering moon in brightness.
And what was now her highest aim?
The impulse quivering through her frame?
Her secret love, so long conceal'd,
She now without a blush reveal'd.
And first she call'd her faithful Zyd,
On many a tender mission tried,
In whom her heart could best confide:—
“To-day is not the day of hope,
Which only gives to fancy scope;
It is the day our hopes completing,
It is the lover's day of meeting!
Rise up! the world is full of joy;
Rise up! and serve thy mistress, boy;
Together, where the cypress grows,
Place the red tulip and the rose;
And let the long-dissever'd meet—
Two lovers, in communion sweet.”

* * * * *

They met; but how? hearts long to joy unknown
Know not what 'tis to be, except alone;
Feeling intense had check'd the power to speak;
Silent confusion sat upon each cheek;

Speechless with love unutterable, they
Stood gazing at each other all the day.
Thus, when a chamber holds no golden store,
No lock protects the ever-open door;
But when rich hoards of gold become a lure,
A lock is placed to keep that wealth secure;
So when the heart is full, the voice is bound—
For ready speech with grief is rarely found.
Lailî, with looks of love, was first who caught
The soft expression of her bursting thought:
“Alas!” she said, as over him she hung,
“What wond'rous grief is this that chains the tongue?
The bulbul, famed for his mellifluous note,
Without the rose can swell his tuneful throat,
And when in fragrant bowers the rose he sees,
He warbles sweeter still his ecstasies.

Thou art the bulbul of the bright parterre,
And I the rose—why not thy love declare?
Why, being absent, whilst unseen by thee,
Arose to heaven thy voice and minstrelsy?
And now, at length, when we are met, alone,
Thy love has vanish'd, and thy voice is gone!”

A gush of tears to Majnûn gave relief:
Words came:—“The misery mine, and mine the grief:
The memory of those lips, so balmy sweet,
Bound up my tongue, which would their charms repeat.
When I, a falcon, through the woodlands flew,
The spotted partridge never met my view;
And now, when I'm unequal to the flight,
The long-sought beauteous bird has come in sight:
The substance thou, in angel charms array'd,
And what am I? I know not—but a shade;
Without thee nothing. Fancy would enthrone
Us both together, melted into one;
And thus, united to each other, we
Are equal—equal in our constancy:
Two bodies with one heart and spirit the same;
Two tapers with one pure celestial flame;
Of the same essence form'd, together join'd,
Two drops in one, each soul to each resign'd.”
He paused, and, with ineffable delight,
Lailî gazed on his glowing countenance,
So long estranged and hidden from her sight.
Now throbs his heart at every fondling glance:
The fragrance of her ringlets which enwreath

Her smooth round neck, her jasmine-scented breath,
The sweet confession of her tremulous eyes,
The ardent love which time and chance defies,
The chin of dimpled sweetness, the soft cheek,
The open ruby lips prepared to speak,
Madden his finer feelings, and again
A sudden tempest rushes through his brain;
Furious he gazes round him for a while,
Then looks at Lailî with a ghastly smile;
Rends off his Jama-dress in frantic mood,
Starts, as with more than human force endued,
And, shouting, hurries to the desert plain,
Follow'd by all his savage vassal-train.

* * * * *

His love was chaste and pure as heaven:
But by excess to madness driven,
Visions of rapture fill'd his soul;
His thoughts sublime despised control;
A joy allied to joys above
Was mingled with his dreamy love:
O Majnûn! lost, for ever gone;
The world is full of love, but none,
None ever bow'd at beauty's shrine
With such a sinless soul as thine.

* * * * *

In summer all is bright and gay;
In autumn verdure fades away,
The trees assume a sickly hue,
Unnourish'd by the fragrant dew;
The genial sap, through numerous rills,
From root and branch and leaf distils;
But, drying in the chilly air,
The groves become despoil'd and bare;
Sapless, the garden's flowery pride
The winds disperse on every side,
And all that sight and smell delighted
Is by the ruthless season blighted.

So Lailî's summer hours have pass'd;
And now she feels the autumnal blast;
Her bowers, her blooming bowers, assail'd,
The perfume of the rose exhaled,
Its wither'd leaves bestrew the ground,
And desolation reigns around:
For, from the moment she beheld
Her lover's mental state unveil'd,

Her heart no consolation knew,
 Deprived of hope's refreshing dew.
 Ere that o'erwhelming misery came,
 Thoughts of new life upheld her frame:
 Amidst her bitterest weeping and distress,
 'Mid the dark broodings of her loneliness,
 Though crush'd her feelings, and the man she loved
 A wanderer of the forest, strangely moved,
 Still was there hope, still was her mental gaze
 Fix'd on the expected joys of after-days.
 But now all hope had perish'd!—she had seen
 The frenzied workings of that noble mien:
 The fit delirious, the appalling start,
 And grief and terror seized her trembling heart.
 No tears she sheds, but pines away
 In deep entire despair;*
 The worm has seized its destined prey,
 The blight is on that face so fair,
 And fearful symptoms of a swift decay
 Come o'er her delicate frame, that in the strife
 She almost sinks beneath the load of life.
 Feeling the ebbing of the vital tide,
 She calls her weeping mother to her side.
 “Mother! my hour is come, thou needest no longer chide;
 For now no longer can my heart conceal
 What once 'twas useless to reveal;
 Yet, spite of thy affection, thou
 Mayst blame my fatal passion now.
 But I have in my rapture quaff'd
 Poison in love's delicious draught;
 And feel the agony which sears
 The soul, and dries the source of tears.
 O mother! mother! all I crave,
 When I am pillow'd in my grave,
 Is that the anguish-stricken youth,
 Whose wonderous constancy and truth
 Blended our souls in one, may come
 And weep upon his Laili's tomb.
 Forbid him not; but let him there
 Pour forth the flood of his despair,
 And no unhallow'd step intrude
 Upon his sacred solitude.
 For he to me, my life, my stay,
 Was precious as the light of day.
 Amazing was his love, sublime,

Which mock'd the wonted power of time;
And when thou seest him grovelling near,
Wildly lamenting o'er my bier,
Frown not, but kindly, soothingly relate
Whate'er thou know'st of my disastrous fate.

Say to that woe-worn wanderer,—“All is o'er;
Lailî, thy own sad friend, is now no more;
From this world's heavy chains for ever free,
To thee her heart was given—she died for thee!
With love so blended was her life, so true
That glowing love, no other joy she knew.

No worldly cares her thoughts had e'er oppress'd;
The love of thee alone disturb'd her rest;
And in that love her gentle spirit pass'd,
Breathing on thee her blessing to the last.”

The mournful mother gazed upon her child,
Now voiceless—though her lips imploring smiled;
Saw the dread change, the sudden pause of breath—
Her beauty settled in the trance of death;*
And, in the frenzy of her anguish, tore
Her hoary locks, the 'broider'd dress she wore;
Dissolved in tears, her wild and sorrowing cries
Brought down compassion from the weeping skies;
And so intense her grief, she shivering fell
Prostrate upon the corse, insensible,
And never, never rose again—the thread
Of life was broke—both, clasp'd together, dead!

* * * * *

O world! how treacherous thou art!
With angel-form and demon's heart;
A rosary of beads in hand,
And, covertly, a trenchant brand.

The rolling heavens with azure glow,
But storms o'erwhelm our hopes below;
The ship is toss'd upon the shore,
The wanderer meets his friends no more;
On flowery field, or boisterous wave,
Alike is found a yawning grave;
For formless, riding through the air,
Devouring death is everywhere;
Khusro, and Kai-kobâd, and Jam,
Have all descended to the tomb;
And who, composed of mortal clay,
The universal doom can stay?

For this, in vain, have youth and age
Ponder'd o'er learning's mystic page;
No human power can penetrate
The mysteries of all-ruling fate;
Frail life is but a moment's breath;
The world, alas! is full of death.

How many wept that fair one, gone so soon!
How many wept o'er that departed moon!—
How many mourn'd with broken hearts for her!
How many bathed with tears her sepulchre!
Round her pure dust assembled old and young,
And on the sod their fragrant offerings flung;
Hallow'd the spot where amorous youth and maid
In after-times their duteous homage paid.

Again it was the task of faithful Zyd,
Through far-extending plain and forest wide,
To seek the man of many woes, and tell
The fate of her, alas! he loved so well.

Loved, doated on, until his mind, o'erwrought,
Was crush'd beneath intolerable thought.

—With bleeding heart he found his lone abode,
Watering with tears the path on which he rode,
And beating his sad breast, Majnûn perceived
His friend approach, and ask'd him why he grieved;
What withering sorrow on his cheek had prey'd.

And why in melancholy black array'd.*
“Alas!” he cried, “the hail has crush'd my bowers;
A sudden storm has blighted all my flowers;
Thy cypress-tree o'erthrown, the leaves are sear;
The moon has fallen from her lucid sphere;
Lailî is dead!” No sooner was the word
Utter'd, no sooner the dread tidings heard,
Than Majnûn, sudden as the lightning's stroke
Sank on the ground, unconscious, with the shock,
And there lay motionless, as if his life
Had been extinguish'd in that mortal strife.

But, soon recovering, he prepared to rise,
Rewaken'd frenzy glaring in his eyes,
And, starting on his feet, a hollow groan
Burst from his heart. “Now, now, I *am* alone!
Why hast thou harrowing words like these express'd?
Why hast thou plunged a dagger in my breast?
Away! away!” The savage beasts around

In a wide circle couch'd upon the ground,
Wondering look'd on, whilst furiously he rent
His tatter'd garments, and his loud lament
Rang through the echoing forest. Now he threads
The mazes of the shadowy wood, which spreads
Perpetual gloom, and now emerges where
Nor bower nor grove obstructs the fiery air;
Climbs to the mountain's brow, o'er hill and plain
Urged quicker onwards by his burning brain,
Across the desert's arid boundary hies;
Zyd, like his shadow, following where he flies;
And when the tomb of Lailî meets his view,
Prostrate he falls, the ground his tears bedew;
Rolling distraught, he spreads his arms to clasp
The sacred temple, writhing like an asp:
Despair and horror swell his ceaseless moan,
And still he clasps the monumental stone.

“Alas!” he cries—“No more shall I behold
That angel-face, that form of heavenly mould.
She was the rose I cherish'd—but a gust
Of blighting wind has laid her in the dust.

She was my favourite cypress, full of grace,
But death has snatch'd her from her bidding-place.
The tyrant has deprived me of the flower
I planted in my own sequester'd bower;
The Basil sweet, the choicest ever seen,
Cruelly torn and scatter'd o'er the green.
O beauteous flower! nipp'd by the winter's cold,
Gone from a world thou never didst behold.
O bower of joy! with blossoms fresh and fair,
But doom'd, alas! no ripen'd fruit to bear.

Where shall I find thee now, in darkness shrouded!
Those eyes of liquid light for ever clouded!
Where those carnation lips, that musky mole
Upon thy cheek, that treasure of the soul!
Though hidden from my view those charms of thine,
Still do they bloom in this fond heart of mine;
Though far removed from all I held so dear,
Though all I loved on earth be buried here,
Remembrance to the past enchantment gives,
Memory, blest memory, in my heart still lives.

Yes! thou hast quitted this contentious life,
This scene of endless treachery and strife;
And I like thee shall soon my fetters burst,

And quench in draughts of heavenly love my thirst:
There, where angelic bliss can never cloy,
We soon shall meet in everlasting joy;
The taper of our souls, more clear and bright,
Will then be lustrous with immortal light!"

He ceased, and from the tomb to which he clung
Suddenly to a distance wildly sprung,
And, seated on his camel, took the way
Leading to where his father's mansion lay;
His troop of vassal-beasts, as usual, near,
With still unchanged devotion, front and rear;
Yet, all unconscious, reckless where he went;
The sport of passion, on no purpose bent,
He sped along, or stopp'd; the woods and plains
Resounding with his melancholy strains;
Such strains as from a broken spirit flow,
The wailings of unmitigable woe;
But the same frenzy which had fired his mind
Strangely to leave his Laili's grave behind,
Now drove him back, and with augmented grief,
All sighs and tears, and hopeless of relief,
He flings himself upon the tomb again,
As if he there for ever would remain
Fatally mingled with the dust beneath,
The young, the pure, the beautiful in death.
Closely he strain'd the marble to his breast,
A thousand kisses eagerly impress'd,
And knock'd his forehead in such desperate mood,
The place around him was distain'd with blood.

Alone, unseen: his vassals keep remote
Curious intruders from that sacred spot;
Alone, with wasted form and sombre eyes,
Groaning in anguish he exhausted lies;
No more life's joys or miseries will he meet,
Nothing to rouse him from this last retreat;
Upon a sinking gravestone he is laid,
The gates already opening for the dead!
Selim, the generous, who had twice before
Sought his romantic refuge, to implore
The wanderer to renounce the life he led,
And shun the ruin bursting o'er his head,
Again explored the wilderness, again
Cross'd craggy rock, deep glen, and dusty plain,
To find his new abode. A month had pass'd
Mid mountain wild, when, turning back, at last

He spied the wretched sufferer alone,
Stretch'd on the ground, his head upon a stone.

Majnûn, up-gazing, recognised his face,
And bade his growling followers give him place;
Then said,—“Why art thou here again, since thou
Left me in wrath? What are thy wishes now?
I am a wretch bow'd down with bitterest woe,
Doom'd the extremes of misery to know,
Whilst thou, in affluence born, in pleasure nursed,
Stranger to ills the direst and the worst,
Can never join, unless in mockery,
With one so lost to all the world as me!”
Selim replied:—“Fain would I change thy will,
And bear thee hence,—be thy companion still:
Wealth shall be thine, and peace and social joy,
And tranquil days, no sorrow to annoy;
And she for whom thy soul has yearn'd so long
May yet be gain'd, and none shall do thee wrong.”

—Deeply he groan'd, and wept:—“No more, no more!
Speak not of her whose memory I adore;
She whom I loved, than life itself more dear,
My friend, my angel-bride, is buried here!
Dead!—but her spirit is now in heaven, whilst I
Live, and am dead with grief—yet do not die.
This is the fatal spot, my Lailî's tomb,—
This the lamented place of martyrdom.
Here lies my life's sole treasure, life's sole trust;
All that was bright in beauty gone to dust!”
Selim before him in amazement stood,
Stricken with anguish, weeping tears of blood;
And consolation blandly tried to give.
What consolation? Make his Lailî live?
His gentle words and looks were only found
To aggravate the agonising wound;
And weeks in fruitless sympathy had pass'd,
But, patient still, he linger'd to the last;
Then, with an anxious heart, of hope bereft,
The melancholy spot, reluctant, left.
The life of Majnûn had received its blight;
His troubled day was closing fast in night.
Still weeping, bitter, bitter tears he shed,
As grovelling in the dust his hands he spread
In holy prayer. “O God! thy servant hear?
And in thy gracious mercy set him free
From the afflictions which oppress him here,

That, in the Prophet's name, he may return to Thee!"
Thus murmuring, on the tomb he laid his head,
And with a sigh his wearied spirit fled.

* * * * *

And he, too, has perform'd his pilgrimage.
And who, existing on this earthly stage,
But follows the same path? whate'er his claim
To virtue, honour—worthy praise, or blame;
So will he answer at the judgment-throne,
Where secrets are unveil'd, and all things known;
Where felon-deeds of darkness meet the light,
And goodness wears its crown with glory bright.
Majnûn, removed from this tumultuous scene,
Which had to him unceasing misery been,
At length slept on the couch his bride possess'd,
And, wakening, saw her mingled with the bless'd.
There still lay stretch'd his body many a day,
Protected by his faithful beasts of prey;
Whose presence fill'd with terror all around,
Who sought to know where Majnûn might be found
Listening they heard low murmurs on the breeze;
Now loud and mournful, like the hum of bees;
But still supposed him seated in his place,
Watch'd by those sentinels of the savage race.
—A year had pass'd, and still their watch they kept,
As if their sovereign was not dead, but slept;
Some had been call'd away, and some had died—
At last the mouldering relics were descried;
And when the truth had caught the breath of fame,
Assembled friends from every quarter came;
Weeping, they wash'd his bones, now silvery white,
With ceaseless tears perform'd the funeral rite,
And, opening the incumbent tablet wide,
Mournfully laid him by his Lailî's side.
One promise bound their faithful hearts—one bed
Of cold, cold earth united them when dead.
Sever'd in life, how cruel was their doom!
Ne'er to be join'd but in the silent tomb!

THE minstrel's legend-chronicle
Which on their woes delights to dwell,
Their matchless purity and faith,
And how their dust was mix'd in death,
Tells how the sorrow-stricken Zyd
Saw, in a dream, the beauteous bride,

With Majnûn seated side by side.
 In meditation deep, one night,
 The other world flush'd on his sight
 With endless vistas of delight—
 The world of spirits;—as he lay
 Angels appear'd in bright array,
 Circles of glory round them gleaming,
 Their eyes with holy rapture beaming;
 He saw the ever-verdant bowers,
 With gloden fruit and blooming flowers;
 The bulbul heard, their sweets among,
 Warbling his rich mellifluous song;
 The ring-dove's murmuring, and the swell
 Of melody from harp and shell:
 He saw within a rosy glade,
 Beneath a palm's extensive shade,
 A throne, amazing to behold,
 Studded with glittering gems and gold;
 Celestial carpets near it spread
 Close where a lucid streamlet stray'd;
 Upon that throne, in blissful state,
 The long-divided lovers sate,
 Resplendent with seraphic light:—
 They held a cap, with diamonds bright;
 Their lips, by turns, with nectar wet,
 In pure ambrosial kisses met;
 Sometimes to each their thoughts revealing,
 Each clasping each with tenderest feeling.
 —The dreamer who this vision saw
 Demanded, with becoming awe,
 What sacred names the happy pair
 In Irem-bowers were wont to bear.

A voice replied:—“That sparkling moon
 Is Lailî still—her friend, Majnûn;
 Deprived in your frail world of bliss,
 They reap their great reward in this!”
 Zyd, wakening from his wonderous dream,
 Now dwelt upon the mystic theme,
 And told to all how faithful love
 Receives its recompense above.

O ye, who thoughtlessly repose
 On what this flattering world bestows,
 Reflect how transient is your stay!
 How soon e'en sorrow fades away!
 The pangs of grief the heart may wring

In life, but Heaven removes the sting;
The world to come makes bliss secure,—
The world to come, eternal, pure.
What other solace for the human soul,
But everlasting rest—virtue's unvarying goal!
SAKI! Nizámi's strain is sung;
The Persian poet's pearls are strung;
Then fill again the goblet high!
Thou wouldst not ask the reveller why?
Fill to the love that changes never!
Fill to the love that lives for ever!
That, purified by earthly woes,
At last with bliss seraphic glows.

**Excerpts from the book *Layli and Majnun: Love, Madness and Mystic Longing*
in *Nizami's Epic Romance* by Ali Ashar Seyed-Gohrab**

Connected to the theme of union, the narrator pauses a while to ponder on the reason for Majnum's avoidance of fulfilling his desire with Layli in in chapter 55:

He was not without desire;

He put his desire in a sheath like a sword.

He did not fulfil his desire, through that pari-born (fairy-like)

So that he house of love remains thriving.

To support his opinion on the wisdom of abstinence, the narrator asks for advice from an outsider, an anonymous 'wise mater'

I asked the wise master

About the state of the potent lover

That although he had a way to his desire,

What wisdom was it to postpone it?

A desire, which could be fulfilled at that state,

Why did he not fulfil it in thirty years?

The wise master answers:

He said: “By fulfilling instantly his desire
His body would be emptied of desire.
By being so slow in satisfying it,
He searched for his delight for thirty year.
I will set my desire beyond the two worlds
If I find a cup from the wine.”

Submit yourself to the sanctuary of love
So that your instantly released from yourself.
In [matters of] love, run like an arrow
So that you do not remain far from the target.
The arrow is suited to the bow of the king
Because it goes right to the target.

Love is the opener of the knot of existence,
The deliverer from the vortex of self-worship.
Any sherbet of sorrow that the soul may taste
Is the soul’s relish when it is offered by love.
Many a bitter wine that is like poison,
Tastes excellent because of love.
Although you state was to endure exertion,

It was delightful since it was by the way of love.

A shining night bright as day,

Through which heaven was fresh like the green of Paradise.

The golden necklaces being suspended,

The image of the Wheel had turned into gold.

Giving the hands of loveliness to each other, the planets

Were dancing upon the spread of the horizon.

The meteor was throwing a javelin to the demon

Singing from a distance: 'There is no power.

The air was perfumed with the musk-bag of night,

And the earth was illuminated by the jewel of the moon.

By this jewel and that bag, the six storied Wheel

Had made the horizons full of ornaments and fragrance. /p.316

Link to a reading of Leila and Majnoun in Farsi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eh6WKSyzdnE>