



Reviewing didactic literature in Makhzan al-Asrar and Iskandarnameh

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Abstract

In this article, the primary focus is on analyzing the educational literature present in two significant works by Hakim NizamiGanjavi, namely Makhzan al-Asrar, and Iskandarnameh. Initially, we delve into the book of literary types to explore the four main branches of educational literature: religious, philosophical, moral, and scientific. Subsequently, our objective is to determine the predominant branch of didactic literature employed by Hakim Nizami in these valuable writings. This will be achieved by thoroughly examining the meanings and concepts found within Makhzan al-Asrar and Iskandarnameh.

Keywords:Nezami, Iskandarnameh, Makhzan al-Asrar, didactic literature

DOI Number: 10.48047/nq.2023.21.7.nq23033

NeuroQuantology2023;21(7):359-369

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Introduction

Jamal al-Din Abu Muhammad Ilyas bin Yusuf bin Zaki, renowned as Nizami was born in the city of Ganja in 535 AH. He is an Iranian poet and storyteller from the 6th century of the Islamic calendar (12th century AD), widely acknowledged as a trailblazer in Persian literature for his storytelling prowess. In the composition of his works, Hakim NizamiGanjavi incorporated prevalent knowledge and sciences of his era, encompassing Islamic studies. The poet's remarkable creative output stands as evidence of his comprehensive education. From a young age, he displayed a keen interest in poetry, and through his exceptional talent and dedicated efforts, he captivated the attention of people. Notably, he had interactions, friendships, and correspondence with KhaqaniShervani, one of the esteemed poets of the same period.

Hakim NizamiGanjavi is widely regarded as one of the most influential poets in the annals of Persian literature. His esteemed masterpiece, known as Khamsa or Panj Ganj, left a profound impact on the poets and writers of his era and continued to resonate across subsequent ages and centuries. Consequently, it can be said that no other poet has wielded as much influence as Nizami. This explains why there exist countless imitators who

have sought to emulate his style and themes. Throughout the history of the Persian language and literature, we come across numerous poets who have endeavored to mimic the essence of KhamsehNizami.

Nizami is an eminent poet who rightfully deserves recognition as one of the pillars of Persian poetry and a definitive master of the language. Similar to Ferdowsi and Saadi, he belongs to the category of orators capable of establishing and refining a distinct style and approach. While Nizami did not initiate storytelling in the Persian language, he stands as the sole poet who elevated allegorical poetry to its pinnacle by the end of the 6th century. Among his remarkable qualities are his apt word choices, innovative combinations, and the creation of fresh and captivating meanings and themes. Additionally, he exhibits a vivid imagination and precision in depicting landscapes, describing nature and people. Nizami's employment of delightful and novel similes and metaphors further distinguishes him from his contemporaries. Even among subsequent poets, he remains unmatched. The most significant work attributed to Hakim NizamiGanjavi is "Panjganj" or "Khamsa," comprising approximately 20,000 verses. This anthology encompasses the following masnavis:



Makhzan al-Asrar, Laili and Majnoon, Khosrow and Shirin, Haft Peykar, and Iskandarnameh. Notably, all these masnavis are composed in the Iraqi style.

This treatise endeavors to meticulously examine and analyze didactic poems present in Nizami's works, namely Makhzan al-Asrar and IskanderNameh. It aims to establish a precise framework of didactic literature, offering a comprehensive definition while also providing a means of delineation. The thesis seeks to scrutinize and evaluate these two works, Makhzan al-Asrar and Iskandarnameh, through the lens of educational literature. Specifically, it aims to ascertain the presence of moral, religious, philosophical, and theological teachings, as well as practical and theoretical lessons within them. Poetry serves as one of the avenues through which words acquire significance. Shams Qais Razi defines poetry as a purposeful, spiritually organized, rhythmic, repetitive, and balanced form of speech. He suggests that poetry represents an ordered form of speech, obviating any disparity between poetry and incoherent utterances devoid of meaning (Razi, 1984: 188).

In the past, literary critics primarily assessed poems based on their outward characteristics such as form, meter, rhyme, and structure. However, contemporary literary criticism, influenced by European practices, now emphasizes a classification based on substance and essence. In this categorization, cultural critics drawing from Greek philosophical traditions distinguish literary works not solely based on external form and metrical patterns, but also concerning their spiritual context, emotional impact, and conscientious depth. This classification is not limited to a particular timeframe and is applicable to literary works across nations, although there may be variations in specific details. It holds significance throughout different periods of literary history for all nations (Shafi'iKodkani, 1983: 6). It is evident that the purpose of categorizing literature, including poetry, into various types is to facilitate discourse and analysis. Without logical criteria, such categorization would lack coherence (Rootgar,

1952: 45).

Within the realm of literary genres, the didactic form holds a significant position as one of the expansive categories in Persian literature. Aside from its distinctive presence as moralistic works, it coexists alongside other literary types such as epic, mystical, and lyrical compositions. This recognition stems primarily from the ancient belief that literature serves a purpose greater than mere entertainment or the expression of emotions and sentiments. In contemporary times, numerous discussions and evaluations have taken place regarding literary genres, leading to poetry being classified into four primary types:

1- Epic poem 2- Dramatic poem 3- Lyrical poem 4- Educational poem

Each of these categories encompasses various subtypes. For instance, within lyrical poetry, we find branches such as ghazal, satire, and elegies. Each of these subdivisions comprises works that differ from one another in specific details (Shafi'iKadkani, 1983: 8).

The primary objective of didactic literature is education. To arrive at an accurate definition of didactic literature, it is necessary to first define education itself and then comprehend the fundamental principles and components of education. By doing so, we can establish a precise characterization of didactic poetry.

Didactic poetry can be described as "a literary work that elucidates practical or theoretical knowledge for the reader and addresses moral, religious, or philosophical themes in a literary manner."

During the 6th century, as didactic poetry continued to evolve in Iran, Hakim NizamiGanjavi incorporated religious concepts, moral guidance, sermons, theological and philosophical themes, as well as theoretical and practical knowledge into his works such as Makhzan al-Asrar. This contribution played a significant role in the advancement of educational literature within Iran. Numerous scholars and researchers who have examined NizamiGanjavi's writings have acknowledged the spiritual sensitivity and ethical principles evident in his words and deeds. They



have highlighted the consistency between his speech and behavior, noting that "Nizami led a life characterized by asceticism and piety, demonstrating self-discipline and abstaining from gambling and drinking. The harmony between his words and actions further reinforces the coherence and integrity of the content found in his works" (Ahmed Nejad, 1970: 15). Additionally, Nizami's portrayal during this period reflects an idealistic thinker, with his seclusion seemingly stemming from his inherent independence and his inclination toward asceticism as a response to the prevalent hypocrisy of the era and his surroundings (Zarin Koob, 2014: 20). The Repository of Secrets serves as a treasury of advice, abundant with moral truths, and presents the most profound moral lessons conveyed through eloquent language and expression.

The anecdotes found in Makhzan al-Asrar emphasize the significance of conciseness in language. Nizami skillfully incorporates moral advice within the narratives of captivating stories using the fewest words possible, sometimes even condensing them into a single verse. The precision and integrity of these passages are such that removing even a single word would seem unthinkable and disrupt the entire composition. Consequently, within the depths of the reservoir of secrets, readers encounter a myriad of moral teachings and guidance that encompass a wide range of human concerns. As illustrations, we can now highlight a few examples of these moral lessons and advice:

Seeking the pleasure of others:

Give life to the satisfaction of the hearts, so that it will be pleased with you, Lord.

(Nizami, 2005: 40)

Chivalry:

Be warm from the seal and be cold like the mist and the sun, be brave (Nizami, 2014: 40)

Advice to avoid greed and gluttony:

He eats less and many are easy-going, he eats more and he doesn't care too much

What did your intellect have to do with your greed? (Nizami, 2014: 55-56)

Truth:

His birth was not only that he was a man from hot and cold, but he was also a man (Nizami, 2005: 71)

Shutdown, lack of food, and less harassment:

Because you are everyone, be honest, eat less, speak less, and be less annoying (Nizami, 2014: 51)

Through an examination of the Iskandarnameh, we discover that a soldier possesses undeniable qualities in various aspects of their personality. They can be both pious and strict, alternatively assuming the roles of a knowledgeable sage or a passionate lover. However, what remains constant is their asceticism and ethical nature. Hakim Ganje's presence permeates throughout Iskandarnameh, whether he openly discusses himself or seeks his narrative within the accounts of others. Within this book, Hakim NizamiGanjavi imparts advice and admonishes, expressing that Dara's cruelty led to disobedience from Iranian generals, resulting in his execution and the installation of a foreigner named Iskandar as the ruler of Iran.

that we are special people, and it is enough that there is no one more special than us (Nizami, 2005: 1001)

During Dara's meeting with the elders of Iran, Nizami brings up the topic of tyranny to confront Iskandar. Nizami explains that because Dara acted like a tyrant and was self-righteous, nobody sympathized with him and everyone remained silent. This portrayal by Hakim NizamiGanjavi in her works, "Makhsan al-Asrar" and "Iskandarnameh," illustrates the repulsiveness of tyranny and the failure to uphold moral principles.

Nowruz was the good news to the world that there was a world-burning frenzy

From him, the land and the country were fed up with oppression (Nizami, 2007: 986)

In the Iskandarnameh, Hakim NizamiGanjavi emphasizes the importance of upholding moral principles, such as justice, from a fresh perspective. He tackles the topics of social justice, expanding justice, and the effective implementation of justice in society. This



approach is distinct from his previous discussions on this significant matter in her Masnavis.

Wisdom said that it was a condo, the king, which is liked in every country

Jahanbakhsh was a master of arms, he was unparalleled

Give it to the moor, give it to the eater, give it to the old man as bait

No, because the raw work that makes you drunk starts to whip raw cream

The gift sent an ant to Pil, who give it to give the job to RatbJibreel.

All the works of the kings were ruined due to the rising water (ibid.: 1944-1945)

During the 6th century, as Sufism progressed beyond its initial phases of growth and popularity and entered a stage of organization and excellence, it is undeniable that Nizami, a poet with limited perspectives, was influenced by mysticism and Sufism. In tazkirahs, he was documented as one of the esteemed sheikhs of the monastery and held the attention of Ahl Del.

Furthermore, in various works like Makhzan al-Asr and other masnavis, one can observe the influence of both theoretical and practical Sufism. The poet is earnestly seeking knowledge, truth, and faith with utmost dedication, skill, and accomplishment. The poet's observations of the heart and mystical achievements are evident through solitude, self-discipline, obedience, and reproach. Qadr Muslim quenches his spiritual thirst from the wellspring of mysticism and Sufism. He upholds religious principles and Sharia while shunning hypocritical asceticism and ill-tempered behavior. He stands against those who lack discipline, purpose, and decency, rejecting the actions of insincere ascetics, indolent monastery sheikhs, and dishonorable Sufi practitioners (BarzabadiFarahani, 1987: 76).

Simultaneously, certain military analysts interpreted his seclusion and withdrawal as a consequence of his devoutness and desire to distance himself from the corruption prevalent during that era and among the people (Thorut, 1370: 38).

In various sections of Makhzan al-Asrar and

IskanderNamah, Hakim NizamiGanjavi imparts teachings on ethical, mystical, and religious principles. He touches upon several themes, including:

A: Emphasizing the significance of seeking advice and following a spiritual guide when implementing moral and mystical principles.

Hakim NizamiGanjavi regards the esteemed Prophet of Islam as the elderly sage and leader of those who seek enlightenment, the early morning mystics, and devout worshippers of God. He perceives the Prophet as a radiant moon illuminating the path through darkness and obscurity.

The magic corridors are nine months, and the foreigners are in the king (Nizami, 2005: 10)

B: Highlighting the significance of self-awareness as a fundamental ethical principle

As we are aware, self-awareness stands as one of the fundamental principles within ethics or the philosophical realm of ethics. Religious and moral teachings have consistently emphasized self-awareness as the cornerstone of theology. Consequently, teaching moral principles without imparting knowledge about oneself and the associated methodologies appears futile. Hakim Nizami also addresses this matter in "The Wisdom and Advice of Hakim Nizami" section, specifically within the narrative of Khosrow and Shirin.

Know yourself to know God through the meanings of yourself (Nizami, 2004: 340)

A: The verses written in the seventh article of Makhzan al-Asrar highlight the importance of recognizing the role of humans in creation and emphasizing the need to follow moral principles. This reflects the military's focus on addressing the spiritual and existential aspects of human life.

Oh, to the earth, above the sweet sky, you killed both the sky and the earth

From what you knew, your work turned out to be better than what you thought (Nizami, 2014: 51)

D: One of the moral principles emphasized in mystical insight is the teaching to decrease attachment to worldly matters and instead focus



more on God. The poet's cry often reflects this belief, expressing concern about the allure and distractions of an unstable world. This fear leads individuals to constantly search for worldly pleasures and beauty, which may prompt them to engage in risky behaviors and acts of aggression. This sentiment aligns with the teachings of various preachers, sages, and prophets who have emphasized the importance of maintaining a balanced earthly life. In the Honorable Mention, specifically in the section on Iskandar learning from Numamajs, the world is described in the following manner:

What is the world, pass through his tricks, get rid of his clutches

It is a tree with six sides and four spikes tied to four nails

One by one, our sheets fell under the saddle of the tree because of the strong wind

A resident should not see anyone watching in this garden, each one a breath (Nizami, 2005: 948)

E) The significance of religion from NizamiGanjavi's standpoint

During the period of military life, religious rigidity, suppression, warfare, and oppression are prevalent. This often leads the poet to express discontentment with the prevailing circumstances. The informal influence of rulers and disregard for societal norms are apparent in his poems. In his esteemed work, Makhzan al-Asrar, Nizami emphasizes the importance of wholeheartedly dedicating oneself to God as a timeless realm. He presents adherence to Sharia as a means to acquire knowledge beyond the material world.

All these hardships that are ahead of us, you are patient, who is the heart of our beard

The reason for this is religion, and that's the only solution for this, and that's it... (Nizami, 2014: 58)

In religious doctrine and instruction, the concept of the finality of the Prophet of Islam is recognized as a fundamental principle and core belief. This principle establishes that Islam is the most comprehensive and perfect religion

compared to other divine religions. By accepting the finality of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the last prophet, adherents of other faiths can attain spiritual fulfillment and adhere to the complete set of beliefs and practices outlined in Islamic teachings.

The ascension of the Prophet and its confirmation is a significant and essential topic in the Islamic faith. It has been discussed and explored from various perspectives across different disciplines. Hakim NizamiGanjavi, too, holds the belief that the ascension of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a physical event where both his body and soul ascended to the heavens simultaneously.

With a molded cage from this chicken farm, his heart has gone to the grave

His divine chicken, the cage is filled, and its shape is lighter than the heart

Step by step, he moved willingly to steal blessings (Ibid.: 7)

In the Repository of Secrets, he discusses the significance and prominence of the Prophet within Islamic religious teachings, emphasizing that his greatness and knowledge surpass that of all other creatures created by God.

"Shamsa is not inferior to the seven celestial bodies. She is the seal of messengers, the final prophet.

Ahmad, the messenger whose wisdom encompasses the earth,

Both worlds are under his control." (Ibid: 9)

F: In the Repository of Secrets, the religious teachings are conveyed through the utilization of verses from the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (known as hadiths).

When closely studying Nizami's poetry in the repository, what stands out the most is the incorporation of these Islamic sources. Many of the verses and poems found in Makhzon al-Asrar are translations and interpretations of Quranic verses and hadiths. Here are a few examples that highlight this practice:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

The key exists within the wise treasure.

Opening thought and concluding speech,

It is the name of God, seal it upon Him." (Nizami, 2005: 1).

In the military, religious, and educational teachings, there is a focus on providing education and highlighting the supreme importance of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In Makhzan al-Asrar, Hakim NizamiGanjavi aims to carry forward the mystical teachings to those who seek spiritual enlightenment and follow the path of tariqat. In his initial praise section, following the praise and glorification of God, he specifically addresses the preeminence of the Messenger of God in creation.

"First, the throne upon which the letter 'Alif' is engraved,

The concealed door where Ahmad (referring to Prophet Muhammad) sits.

It bestowed a realm to the circle of life, like the letter 'Qaf',

A necklace from 'Dal' and a belt made of 'Meem'." (Nizami, 2005: 5)

In Hakim NizamiGanjavi'sIskandernameh, particularly in the tale of the splendid city that Iskandar visits after constructing the dam, there are moral and mystical lessons. Nizami endeavors to depict these teachings through the portrayal of Iskandar's character, his actions, and his interactions with wise and thoughtful individuals. He also incorporates the experiences and issues he witnesses and hears about from people living in various parts of the world.

While writing this book, Nizami introduces mystical concepts. In the narrative of Iskandar's demise, he presents something along the lines of:

When the body dies, and the limbs turn to dust,
What benefit is there in perfumed shrouds and a silver coffin?

From the coffin, the king proclaimed,

That they should make him a clear path.

In that hand, empty soil was poured,

Crying out from every direction, it stirred.

For the commander of seven earthly kingdoms,

This mere body came from those very kings.

From all the treasures in the world's courts,

Nothing remains in his hands except for soil.

When you too pass away from this world,

Break free from this dark tomb of the earth
(Nizami, 2005: vol 2, 2018).

In Hakim NizamiGanjavi'sEskandernameh, one can observe mystical and moral teachings and ideas being expressed. An instance of this can be found in Nizami'sSharafnameh, where he recounts the tale of an individual on the verge of being executed by hanging. Surprisingly, instead of expressing sorrow or grief, the person bursts into laughter. Curious onlookers inquire about the cause behind his peculiar reaction, to which he responds:

I heard a package was sent to the door,

With freshness akin to the arrival of spring.

Someone asked him, from those who showed kindness,

"Why do you rejoice when your life is brief?"

He replied with such wisdom,

"How can I let sorrow consume this limited life?"

In that response lay his liberation,

And from that darkness, he found illumination
(Nizami, vol 2, 1639).

These verses contain moral lessons that emphasize the significance of appreciating even the smallest moments in life and cherishing every aspect of it. They advocate for avoiding sadness and, above all, nurturing a sense of hopefulness in life.

It is widely recognized that numerous ethical, mystical, and practical teachings of Hakim NizamiGanjavi are deeply rooted in a religious worldview, particularly the teachings of Islam. Iskandar Nizami, depicted in prophetic garments, embodies these religious teachings.

Hakim NizamiGanjavi portrays Iskandar, the main character and hero of his story Iskandernameh, as a prophet. He uses this fictional character to convey his religious thoughts and teachings throughout the events and plot of the story. In this section of Iskandarnameh, Hakim NizamiGanjavi expresses his religious beliefs, which are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, particularly the Holy Quran. He does so through the dialogue and interactions of the people and



residents of the city.

We do not take more than our share from others,
We are fair in distributing our wealth.
We consider ourselves as companions to all,
We do not laugh at the tears of others.
We do not steal from others,
Nor do others steal from us.
We sow seeds and work the land,
And entrust the harvest to the Creator.
From what is rightfully ours,
A single grain can yield seven hundred.
Whether we do one task or a hundred,
Our reliance is on God, not ourselves.
We do not envy if someone has more,
Nor do we seek to harm them with a blade.
We do not engage in deceit or traps,
Nor do we retaliate against their harm.
We avoid strife and conflict,
And do not cause trouble for others (ibid.: 2005-2006).

Makhzon al-Asrar and Iskandarnameh contain teachings beyond religious aspects, including philosophy and theology. In Hakim NizamiGanjavi's Iskandarnameh, we encounter diverse philosophical and theological viewpoints influenced by Islamic teachings, the wisdom of Greek philosophers like Socrates and Plato, and at times, the wisdom of ancient Iran. Nizami's philosophical and theological ideas amalgamate Islamic concepts with the wisdom inherited from ancient Iran and the Greek philosophers.

Iskandar Nizami in the clothes of a philosopher and his philosophical teachings

As an illustration, within the Book of Alexander, there is a philosophical dialogue between Alexander and the Greek sages. One such conversation is his encounter with Socrates. In this account, it is mentioned that in ancient Greece, there existed a group of ascetics who dedicated themselves to a life of abstinence, abstaining from worldly pleasures such as food, clothing, and relationships with women. They secluded themselves on a remote island, devoting their lives to piety, worship, and spiritual practices until their lineage and

existence eventually faded away.

They spilled their blood for their ideals,
They died without mingling with women.
Such was the foundation of their existence,
That their seed fell upon the path of righteousness (Nizami, 2005: 1980).

Utopia, one of the military philosophical opinions in Iskandarnameh

Hakim NizamiGanjavi presents another philosophical lesson through Alexander's journey in Iskandarnameh, wherein he introduces the concept of a utopia or urban utopia. As Alexander, the protagonist, travels and explores the world, he encounters this idealized society that is described and depicted to the readers.

A. Safety and comfort:

Even though the cities were fortified with seven walls, towers, ramparts, moats, and fortresses, in this particular city, one cannot see any locks, bars, doors, or gates.

When he arrived at the narrow gate of the city, He did not see any door made of iron, wood, or stone (Nizami, 2005: vol 2, 2004).

B. Refraining from lying and adhering to truthfulness and honesty,

After Alexander's encounter with the people of this city, he becomes amazed and incredulous. He inquires about the source of their prosperity, tranquility, and peace, seeking answers from them.

Ask them, why are you without fear?

You seek refuge but have no defense.

In this safety that exceeds a fortress,

For no one has a lock or chain at the door.

That garden of yours is not in anyone's garden,

Even a shepherd does not have a staff from behind.

No night and hundreds of herds,

They have herded on mountains and plains.

How is this lack of protection possible?

To whom do your walls entrust their guardianship? (ibid: 2005).

J. Justice and equality

The inhabitants of the perfect city depicted in



Iskandarnameh attribute another factor to the prosperity and moral as well as social accomplishments of their community. They believe that justice and equality are crucial for all members of society. In expressing this viewpoint to Iskandar, they explain that in their society, everyone is treated equally, and public resources are shared fairly among all individuals. They emphasize the presence of genuine brotherhood and true equality within their society.

They have no claim to our wealth,
All is rightfully divided among ourselves.
We consider each other as spouses,
We do not laugh at others' tears (Nizami, 2005: vol 2, 2005).

K. The rule of morality over society

The presence of ethical and moral values governing the conduct and expression of individuals, as well as the elimination of negative behaviors such as offensive words, gestures, anger, and dissent among the people of Nikan city or the city mentioned in Iskandarnameh, contribute to its transformation into a utopian society. In simpler terms, society experiences psychological comfort when everyone abides by these principles.

We did not engage in backbiting,
We covered the faults of others.
If someone seeks our judgment,
We guide them towards benevolence.
We do not mislead anyone on the wrong path,
We avoid causing chaos and shedding blood (ibid, 2006).

Teaching the beginning and how to create the universe in Nizami theological thought

In theological and religious beliefs, the process of creation typically begins with the heavens and concludes with the earth. However, there are instances where it starts with the opposite, beginning with the creation of the earth and concluding with the creation of the heavens.

Hakim NizamiGanjavi, in his work Makhzan al-Asrar, presents the concept of "creating from nothingness" based on his theological perspective regarding the origin of the universe and the

material world. For instance, in the introduction of the Repository of Secrets, he uses several verses to depict an image of "dystopia" and emphasizes this idea.

As long as His grace shone through the veil of light,
Thorns were distant, not sugar nor rose in sight.
With His generosity, kindness filled every space,
The chains of existence broke free from non-existence's embrace.

In the desire for this union, these ruins are consumed,
Heaven's work entangled in knots, thread after thread presumed.
Until the knot of illusion, burning thoughts unwound,
Night's tresses remain secure from daylight's bound.

Like a precious pearl encircling the celestial sphere,
Night's locks transformed from the void's swirling sheer.
These few threads that adorned the heavens' expanse,
Tied seven knots upon the earth's earthly dance.

The sun and moon donned majestic attire,
One white, the other black, crowning their attire.
Venus unfurled its sword from the heart of the sea,
The Fountain of Khizr sprang forth, flowing free (Nizami, 2005: 2).

In these verses, Nizami explains that creation occurs from nothingness, and it is a manifestation of God's presence and grace. He further states that before the unveiling of God's existence and grace, before His will was involved in creation, the earth and its inhabitants were not illuminated, and the process of creation had not begun. As a result, there was a distinct separation between thorns and flowers, and reeds and sugar, as there were no thorns, flowers, straws, or sugar present to come into proximity with one

another.

In another part of the Repository of Secrets, specifically in the eighth article, Hakim Nizami creatively presents vivid depictions and poetic descriptions of absolute emptiness and nothingness.

Beyond the furthest depths of existence,
They did not sip from the sea of abundance.
In this realm, there was no left or right,
No trace of dust on this earthly path's site.

Untouched by the promises of history's tale,
Unveiled from behind the curtain, a play still unnamed.
Day and night had no lowly sway,
No connection between soul and clay.

Struggles of tyranny persist in limbs,
Justice is yet to be revealed, its light is dim.
The grace of mercy showered upon its own,
A drop cast from its vast ocean.

Such is the state of that outwardly drop,
Causing the universe to flow, a watery backdrop.
Wandering through the channels it set ablaze,
Your essence mixed with that expanse's rays.

When you depart from this realm's abode,
You become free, transcending the road.
Oh, the fortunate night when the world lacked
your being,
Your form is formless, and your essence
unseeing.

The eye of the heavens no longer seeks,
The ear of the earth was freed from such speech.
Until you step upon this path's terrain,
Existence owes gratitude to non-existence's reign
(Nizami, 2005: 54).

The teaching of the order of creation from the creation of heaven to man in military theological thoughts

In the eighth article of the Repository of Secrets,

Hakim NizamiGanjavi discusses the progress in creating the heavens and the delay in creating human beings on Earth. He subtly and ironically alludes to the delayed creation of the earth.

His boundless generosity bestowed compassion upon those in need,

He cast forth a single drop from his vast ocean.

From that very drop emerged a condition,
And it became the flowing essence that shaped the heavens (Nizami, 2005: 54).

In the introductory section of the Repository of Secrets, Hakim NizamiGanjavi initiates the discussion concerning the sequence of the universe's creation, which proceeds from the sky to the earth.

Before the existence of all future generations
Lies the survival of all those who came before

The ruler of the world takes his steps through history

Sentenced to be bound by the throat of the pen's bond (Nizami, 2005: 1).

As you are aware, Hakim NizamiGanjavi is a prominent figure in the Azerbaijani style of writing. A notable characteristic of this style is its incorporation of diverse theoretical and practical sciences. The poets associated with this style possess knowledge in fields such as medicine, astronomy, wisdom, philosophy, and other commonly shared subjects within society.

Nizami's theoretical teachings about the creation of poetry, its nature, and function

Through the examination and exploration of Ganjavi's military writings, it becomes evident that within his language and discourse, the term "art" encompasses various aspects such as virtue, bravery, skill, martial arts, eloquence, poetry, sculpture, music, devotion, and even certain actions that may initially appear negative but ultimately lead to goodness. These words make it clear that in his military works, particularly in the Repository of Secrets, there is a comprehensive and traditional perspective on art, accompanied by a distinct attitude towards it. According to Nizami, art inherently exists within every individual, but the prerequisite for recognizing art lies in possessing the ability to perceive it amidst:



In everything, there is both art and flaw,
Turn a blind eye to the flaws, and art shall be
grasped (Nizami, 2005: 61).

Practical science education

Medical teachings in Makhsan al-Asrar

Hakim NizamiGanjavi imparts numerous teachings and references about medical matters within the Al-Asrar repository. Amidst the verses of the Repository of Secrets, alongside religious, spiritual, and mystical teachings, he occasionally incorporates medical terminology and alludes to the qualities of certain plants and their applications. As an illustration, in a particular section of the Reservoir of Secrets, he mentions the attributes and names of a plant called Tabashir.

The Kaaba, the prayer mat is your Takbeer,

Thirsty, the ultimate quencher is Tabashir.

Do not remain thirsty without a plan,

Like burnt chaff, be like Tabashir's fan (ibid: 55).

NizamiGanjavi also refers to this medicinal plant in the Mekhoz Al-Asrar, stating:

Poured as a drink from the breath of the cypress,
On the breath of this scorpion, a water lily
blooms (Nizami, 2005: 7).

Nizami's theological teachings in Iskandarnameh

As stated in the previous section, theological knowledge is a field of study aimed at substantiating religious convictions. Its purpose is to provide logical and rational arguments to establish the fundamental principles of Islamic beliefs. The development of theological knowledge arose as a result of social-religious demands and the pressing need for it among Muslims. This need coincided with the translation of philosophical texts and the rise and proliferation of religious and philosophical schools within the Islamic world.

Teaching theological and metaphysical theories in Iskandarnameh

According to theologians, the act of creation is carried out through the command of "doing," while philosophers interpret it as a result of "causality." Each specific group gives rise to the various entities categorized as beings or the

universe. The entirety of existence can be divided into two distinct aspects: the material or physical realm and the abstract or spiritual realm. Consequently, contemplation on existence can also be classified into two categories. The branch of philosophy and thinking that pertains to the material or physical aspect of existence is referred to as naturalistic or materialistic philosophy. Conversely, the category associated with the abstract or metaphysical dimension of existence is known as our understanding of the supernatural realm. Within the Masnavi of Iskandarnameh, Hakim NizamiGanjavi devotes a section to exploring the notions and ideas about our life after death, which align more closely with theological and religious concepts.

In Iskandarnameh, Ferfurius discusses the topic of the order of creation and its nature, which holds significant importance within the realm of theological science.

From that which preceded and brought forth this world,

A world-creating essence crafted it with grace.

Through the nurturing of the nurturing Creator,
That essence became a perpetually flowing
water.

The water was divided into two halves, distinct,
One below and the other above, finding their
place.

By nature, those two halves, like camphor and
musk,
One became moist and the other remained dry.

From the moisture, one half gained mobility,
From the dryness, the other found tranquility.

The mobile water became the unpredictable sky,
While the settled land became this earthly abode
(Ibid, 1985).

Conclusion

Based on the conducted investigations and studies, it can be inferred that the Al-Asrar



repository extensively incorporates various religious, mystical, philosophical, and theological teachings, as well as moral guidance and teachings related to theoretical and practical sciences. In Hakim NizamiGanjavi's Iskandarnameh, one can observe a significant presence of moral teachings rooted in religious and Islamic traditions, as well as philosophical and theological principles intertwined with religious concepts.

Indeed, both Makhzon al-Asrar and Iskandarnameh encompass all the essential concepts and branches of didactic literature and poetry, including religious teachings, philosophical and theological notions, moral guidance, and instruction in theoretical and practical sciences. However, through careful examination and research within this treatise, it becomes apparent that moral and religious concepts hold greater prominence in Makhzon al-Asrar compared to other primary branches of didactic poetry, and their recurrence is more frequent.

It is noteworthy that despite the noticeable structural disparities between Hakim NizamiGanjavi's works, Makhzon al-Asr and Iskandarnameh, they share striking similarities in terms of themes and content. In Iskandarnameh, similar to the Repository of Secrets, there is a utilization of religious, moral, philosophical, and theological teachings, as well as mystical

teachings, alongside the teachings of theoretical and practical sciences.

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