THE LOVES OF LAILÍ AND MAJNÚN: A POEM FROM THE ORIGINAL PERSIAN OF NIZÁMI

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The loves of Lailí and Majnún: a poem from the original Persian of Nizámi by James Atkinson

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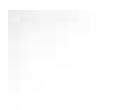
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JAMES ATKINSON

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Trieste



THE LOVES OF LAILÍ AND MAJNÚN





The course of true love never did run smooth.

Covers and maximum have each settlying brains. Such shaping families, that apprehend More than your remon congrediends. Shakesarkark.

THE LOVES OF LAILÍ AND MAJNÚN a poem from the original persian of nizâmi: by JAMES ATKINSON, ESQ. of the honourable east india company's medical service Edited by THE REV. J. A. ATKINSON MA, IKCL, VICAR OF BOLTON HONORARY CANON OF

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

My father's translation of Nizimi's poem, *Laili* and *Majnun*, was published by the Oriental Translation Fund in 1836.

Nizāmi, Nizām-ud-din-Abu Muhammad Ilyas B. Yūsuf, is said to have been born in the year of the Hegira 535, either at Tafnish, in the province of Kum, or at Ganjah, a town of Arran, now Elisabetpol. The greater part of his life was spent at Ganjah, where he died in A.E. 599 – A.D. 1202, in his 64th year,

His writings are called the 'Panj Ganj,' 'The Five Treasures : '

- Makhan-ul-Asrar = The Storehouse of Mysteries. Moral and religious maxims, illustrated by anecdotes, written about A.H. 570.
- 2. Khosrá and Shīrīn, A.H. 576.
- 3. Laili and Majada, his masterpiece, written

vi THE LOVES OF LAILÍ AND MAJNÚN

at the request of the Shirvun Shah, Akhsatan, son of Minuchehr, A.H. 584 =A.D. 1188, consisting of four thousand couplets, which were completed in four months.

- Hoft Paikar=The Seven Images. Seven tales told by the seven favourites of the king, Bahräm Gut. A.B. 593.
- Islandar Nameh = The Book of Alexander, In two parts: the career of Alexander (1) as Conqueror, (2) as sage and prophet. A.H. 597.

Sir William Jones says : 'The beautiful poem on the loves of Laili and Majnan by the immortal Nizámi (to say nothing of other poems on the same subject) is indisputably built on true history, yet avowedly allegorical and mysterious; for the introduction to it is a continued rapture on Divine Love; and the name of Laili seems to be used in the *Masnari* and the Odes of Hafia for the Omnipresent Spirit of God.'

The late Sanserit Professor at Oxford (Horace Hayman Wilson) referred to my father's translation as a 'poetical version of the celebrated poem of Nizimi on the loves of Laili and Majnún,

EDITOR'S PREFACE

mystified as the reciprocal affection of body and soul. This is perhaps the most carefully finished of Mr. Atkinson's translations, and conveys a pleasing and sufficiently faithful representation of the original.'

The fame of Nizimi's poem in the East, and my father's version being a 'sufficiently faithful representation of the original,' has induced me to prepare a new edition, with a view of introducing it to the general reader, the publications of the Oriental Translation Fund having had only a limited circulation.

The MS. of Laili and Majain used by my father is in my possession. Dr. Charles Rieu, of the British Museum, says: 'The text is evidently due to the pen of an accomplished Persian caligrapher; it cannot be later than A.H. 971= A.D. 1563, for that date appears on a seal facing the first miniature. The miniatures are in the most highly finished Indian style. The subjects are :--1. The father of Majnún takes him to the Kába. 2. Laili going to the palm-grove. 3. Noufal stacking Laili's tribe; Majnún throwing stones at Noufal's troops. 4. Majnún redeeming the deer from the huntsman. 5. Ibn Salám in

vii.