



H. ARASLI

IMADADDIN
NESIMI



Painted by M. Abdullajev

A-12724

HAMID ARASLI

**IMADADDIN
NESIMI**

(LIFE AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY)

М. Ф. Ахундов админа
Азербайжан Республика
Довлет КИТАБХАНАСИ



AZERBAIJAN STATE PUBLISHING HOUSE
Baku • 1973

Translated by *Anvar Rza*

Edited by *Vagif Aslanov*

*The both worlds would go in me,
I wouldn't go in the Universe.
I am the omnipresent essence,
I would not go in this world;*

In the literature of the near. East humanism, the approval of human dignity and singing of the happiness of mankind have an ancient history. Thus in the XII century such great masters of word as: Nizami, Khagani thought of the lot of mankind and describing Man as a mighty and glorious existence they called Man the noblest of all creatures. In their poems they sang of the ability of Man capable of making miracles and of revealing the mysteries of the Universe, as well as, of the might of science and skill.

The poet-thinkers of the East-Jala-

laddin Rumi and Mahmud Shabustary, while propagating Vahdati-Vijud, i. e. pantheism, called upon Man to cognize his being. These poets considered Man and Life as fractions of the Creator whom they called vijudi-kull (absolute essence). They advised Man to perfect himself morally so that he might revert to that "kull". Islamic, as well as other religions regarded Man to be the slave of God and connected all his skills and abilities with Allah, instigated him to be satisfied with his fate. This religion tempted Man to give up all pleasures of this world and win the next one.

Considering Man to be the primordial and eternal creature, Nesimi appealed to him to free himself from slavery and cognize his dignity. Nesimi is a master of word who raised the Azerbaijanian poetic and literary language to a high level and expressed in his works the most progressive ideas of the age. He continued and developed the humanist ideas introduced by great Nizami into the Eastern literature. He fought tirelessly for his ideas and met his death bravely. Unlimited is also his merit in developing of the Azerbaijanian literary language.

Nesimi raised his voice against feudal yoke and oppression, he attempted to awaken progressive ideas. By his works Nesimi exposed votaries of Islam. He called upon the people to

estimate the existing religion properly so that they might discover the mysteries of the Universe and Life.

By their progressive features Nesimi's works played an important role in the formation of the national poetry in the Azerbaijanian language. Being a poet, who had gone through poetic activity marked for many complexities and contradictions, he laid the foundation of the philosophic poetry coming into existence in the Azerbaijanian literature.



Until very recently the real name of the poet was not known exactly. While speaking of him the ancient literary historians mentioned his name both as "Imadaddin", and "Nassimaddin". There is no doubt that these are not his real but pen-names. In the sources, dealing with the history of Aleppo his name has been given as Ali and this fact may be really true, for we often encounter this name in the "Vassiyatnama" of Fazl-ullat Naimi. In his "Vassiyatnama" written on the eve of his death penalty he also mentions the name of Ali-Seidali among his friends. This very fact confirms once more the information given by his contemporary Arabian historians.

Nesimi was born in Shamakhi in the middle of the XIV century and got his first education in this very city.

Shamakhi was the capital of the Shirvanshahs and played an important role in the Azerbaijanian people's history.

In the Middle Ages this city was visited by commercial caravans from a great many countries of the world. Shirvanian silk was praised to the skies. Charming palaces, madrasas and caravanserais rose in every corner of the city. This centre of culture, which gave birth to a lot of poets and scientists, became especially popular in the XII century. Though the Mongolian invasion was harmful for the culture of this city, as well as, for many others, it never ceased progressing which was observed as far as the XIV century.

In spite of the fact that the sway of Shirvan, being exposed to endless attacks, had lost its former might and glory, the state still kept on developing its culture. Baku that submitted to it, played an important role in the political life of the country as a seaport and an oil-source. The poet got his early education at the madrasa of Shamakhi. Besides his native language he mastered the Arabian and Persian languages to such an extent that he was able of creating perfect literary works. He had a good knowledge of all

the sciences of his time and especially dealt with the religious and philosophic works and sects. It is clearly seen in his poems that Nesimi knew perfectly well the works of sectarian scientists of the Near East and that besides the activity of Azerbaijanian poets, he was interested in the creations of Arabian, Persian and Tajic poets too.

While mentioning in his works the names of Jalaladdin Rumi, Shams Tabrizi, Sadi, Faridad-din Attar he was never heedless to such great philosophers and poets of the East as: Ibn Sina, Muhiyaddin Arabi, Shibli and Charkhi. He must have known in his youth the works of Safiaddin, who was the founder of the Safavis and was very popular in Ardabil at that time.

It becomes clear from his works that Nesimi was fond of the sect of Hussein Mansur Hallaj, sentenced to death by hanging in Baghdad in the X century for supporting and spreading the idea of "Analhag"—"I am God." Being brought up in the spirit of the poetry of such giants as: Khagani, Falaki, Zulfugar Shirvani, Maragali Avhadi, Sheik Mahmud Shabustari, Arif Ardabili and others, Nesimi displayed a special interest in poetry already in his green years and wrote poems under the pen-name "Husseini". This very fact is to be explained by his love for the sect of Mansur Hallaj and by his Shia views, the traces

of which we meet in his early activity. Nesimi also wrote some poems under the pen-name of "Seyyid.."

In Nesimi's youth Azerbaijan was occupied by the Timurids. Invading Iran and Azerbaijan in 1385 Timur's troops turned the country into a war-ground. Having occupied the Southern part of Azerbaijan and bringing much ruin and destruction to the country they wanted to intrude into the land of Shirvanshahs. But the sovereign of Shirvan, who was a man of great intellect, could escape this disaster. He entered into alliance with Timur and kept this part of Azerbaijan in his own power.

At that time in the cities, occupied by the invaders, the most well-known architects, artists, musicians, even masons, smiths, carpenters and others were mobilized by force and sent to work in Samargand—the capital of Timur. Naming each housing estate of Samargand after the largest cities of the East, Timur intended to turn it into a grandiose capital.

At a time like this a new sect—the sect of hurufiism rose to feet as an expression of protesting city handicrafts and as a call to struggle against foreign invasion. Fazl-ullah Naimi—the founder of this sect, made travels from Tabris to a number of Eastern cities. To spread his ideas he visited Shirvan and Baku. The histori-

cal sources inform us that during these years Baku became the centre of hurufiism. The supporters of this sect founded a secret hurufi organization in Baku and to spread their views they sent special messengers to some Eastern countries. At that time the poet got closely acquainted with the ideas of Fazl-ullah Naimi. He met this great man, recognized his theses and as a sign of respect he wrote his works under the pen-name of "Nesimi". It is also known that he accepted this pseudonym after his meetings with Fazl-ullah.

Abulhassan Ali-ul-Ala, an Azerbaijanian by nationality, recognized hurufiism together with Nesimi. Proceeding from the fact that Fazl-ullah lived in Baku, Ali-ul-Ala called Baku the Kaba of hurufiism. To spread hurufiism Fazl-ullah sent his best disciples to different cities of the Near East. He gave thorough explanation of the theoretical basis of hurufiism in such works as: "Noumnama", "Javidannama", and "Muhabbatnama".

During his stay in Shirvan in 1394 Fazl-ullah was arrested together with his supporters by Timur. They were savagely executed by the order of Miranshah—Timur's son. The execution was held in the ancient city of Alinja, not far from Nakhichevan.

In the prison Naimi wrote his "Vassiyatna-

ma" and sent it to Baku. He warned all his adherents and his family to leave Baku in a short time and suggested that his youngest daughter should marry Seidali and live in a remote place.

The last beyt—distich of a ghazel written in Persian by Nesimi says: "Oh! Nesimi, leave Baku, since Allah says that the Earth is boundless, I don't authorize you to stay here". There is a close coincidence in some lines of "Vassiyatnama" and this beyt. In "Vassiyatnama" Fazl-ullah insisted on his daughter's leaving Baku. At the same time, as we have already mentioned, he advised his youngest daughter to marry Seidali. It may be supposed, after reading "Vassiyatnama" Nesimi married Fazl-ullah's daughter and left Shirvan for Asia Minor.

While reading the works of the poet, it also becomes clear that for some period he lived in Baghdad, visited Irag stayed in Tokat, Bursa and in other cities of Anadoli. For his propagating hurufiism in these places the poet was repeatedly flung into different prisons. At that time the rulers in Asia Minor were the Zulghadar becks, the dynasties of the Aggoinlies and Gargoinlies who did not submit to the Sultan of Turkey. Nesimi could find common language with Alibeck—the sovereign of Zulghadar and his brother Nassiraddin. He even came to an agreement with Aggoinli Osman Barayoluck, then

the poet came to Aleppo, submitted to the Mamelukes of Egypt. At that time there lived Turkic-speaking tribes in Aleppo. Here the poet found supporters for himself and began intensively spreading his ideas among the people. It is very likely that some of the hurufis exposed to persecution also left Baku and Shamakhi for this city. Having settled in Aleppo the poet lived there for a long time together with his family. But the votaries of Islam in this city and Muayyaddin—the Sultan of Egypt always haunted Nesimi. In 1417 the poet was put to trial and executed in Aleppo.

In an Arabian source, called "Kunuz-uz-Zahab", it is informed that the poet was executed during the reign of Yashbeck. The man, who raised this question in the presence of the Islamic votaries of the city, was Ibn Al Shangash Alhassanin.

On retelling his "kalmei shahadatname," Nesimi denied everything he was reproached of. Then Sheikh Shabahaddin Ibn Hilal appeared, took an upper seat and calling Nesimi an apostate he insisted that he should be killed.

This fact enables us to suppose that the poet was killed not only for his new credo. His death should be explained by some political reasons too. It proves once more that a special discussion on the story of Nesimi's life, held by Islamic

votaries of Aleppo was not a mere chance. This gathering must have been arranged intentionally in accordance with instructions of Sultan Muayyaddin, head of the state of the Mamelukes, the centre of which was Egypt. To study the question more comprehensively, Sultan Muayyaddin demanded the papers from the court while the poet was kept in prison.

And finally passing a death sentence and sending Nesimi's cut-off hands to his political enemies Sultan wanted to inform them that the coup, prepared against him had failed.

• We have got different rumours concerning Nesimi's death. Some of them say that one day a young hurufi was reciting a poem by Nesimi in Aleppo. The idea of the poem worried the votaries of Islam and they arrested the young hurufi. He insisted that the ghazel was his own writing. He didn't want to betray the poet. By the votaries fetwa the fellow was sentenced to death by hanging. At that moment Nesimi was sitting by the shoe-maker to have his shoes repaired. Being aware of this incident he hurried to the place of the execution and confessed that the poem was written by him. So, he set the fellow free. Having found out that Nesimi was a hurufi "murshud" the votaries of Islam condemned him to be flayed alive. Nesimi met his death bravely, insisted on his ideas and cried out aloud "Analhag"—"I am

God." Being shocked by this staunchness of the poet they asked him ironically:

— You say that you are God, if so, why are you turning pale?

The ready-witted poet answered:

— I am the Sun of Love, shining in the horizon of eternity. And the Sun turns pale when he sets.

Some other rumours tell us that among those present to witness the execution was the Mufti of Aleppo by whose fetwa the poet was condemned. Pointing to the poet he cried: "Unclean is he! Did but one drop of his blood touch any limb that limb must needs be cut off!" Just then a drop of Nesimi's blood spirting forward, fell upon the Mufti's finger. The people who observed this demanded that it became needful that his finger be cut off! "It fell on me while I was exemplifying," replied the Mufti. The poet spirting blood saw what had passed and uttered this couplet:

So thou'd cut the zealot's finger, from the truth
he hurnes and flees!
Lo, this hapless Lover weeps not though they flay
him head to foot.

Here the poet raised his rebellious voice against injustice and won a moral victory over his enemies.

It is said in another story that Nesimi was very intimate with the vicegerent in Antab. To

create hostility between him and the vicegerent the enemies placed a copy of "Yasin" text from the Koran in his shoes. In the vicegerent's presence he was asked to tell his opinion of a person who carried a text of the Koran in his shoes. Nesimi said that such a person was worthy to be flayed and exposed in public. Here he was told that he himself had already given fetwa on his death. They took the "Yasin" text from his shoes and flayed him alive. It is said that he took his own skin and came to Aleppo and fell there.

From the history of the people of the East we know many of those strong-willed persons; who sacrificed themselves for their convictions; and never renounced their ideas at death's menace. We know Babak who stood with fortitude in front of the executioner of Caliph and reddened his pale face with his own blood to conceal it from the enemies; or Mansur Hallaj, hung in Baghdad in the X century for crying "I am God". Einul-Guzzat, set on fire for blasphemy; Fazl-ullah Naimi, hung in the fortress of Alinja by the order of Miranshah—Timur's son and whose corpse was tied to a horsetail. All of them were such courageous people.

But their executions had not been so tragic and agonizing as the death of Imadaddin Nesimi—the victim to great ideas. Just because of it for more than five centuries his glorious name-

is being mentioned with respect as a symbol of courage, self-sacrifice and devotion in the Near East; stories and artistic works are being devoted to him. For centuries many great men of pen, dealing with the description of his credo and his faithfulness in love, emphasise his tenacity to life, indomitable will and tragic life.

The main factor that makes Nesimi's name immortal even for his enemies is not only the poet's courageous death but it is also his ability to express his ideas in a most emotional language.

Nesimi left for us a rich literary heritage. His literary works consist of three Diwans: Azerbaijani, Persian and Arabic. Besides, he is the author of a number of gassidas, mesnevis. Only a little part of his Diwan in Arabic is known in the history of literature.

Comparing various manuscripts of his Diwan in Azerbaijani, preserved in different libraries, it becomes clear that the poet went through a very complicated and contradictory way while creating his works. Nesimi beginning his literary power with love verses, created wonderful works devoted to the political, social and didactic problems of his time and became the founder of the philosophic poetry coming into existence in the history of the Azerbaijani literature.

A real human love and its glorification have

a special place in his early poems. Here the poet sings of human beauty with all its shades, depicting Man with all his inner and external charm. In such poems the poet's Beloved one is introduced in comparison with the Moon and the Sun illuminating the Universe:

When thy hyacinth-blossom hair falls out,
The Moon is overclouded, the Sun is overshadowed.

Here the poet means to say that the Sun and the Moon get their light from his Beloved. That is why when her hair falls out the Moon is overclouded and the Sun is over shaded.

As an indispensable poet Nesimi created the first perfect patterns of love-lyrics in the Azerbaijani language. In his further activity side by side with his love-lyrics the poet began writing verses on didactic themes too. He attempted to criticize such unbecoming features in Man as: evil, avidity, envy and selfishness.

In a poem devoted purely to a didactic theme the poet on the one hand calls upon the people to be generous, courteous and chaste; on the other hand by naming the vices that could trouble and torment mankind he appeals to his readers to give them up. Here the poet also expresses his hatred to falsity, gossip and envy.

His other poems of this kind, written on the educational subject, are first charming patterns of didactic poetry in the history of the Azerbai-

janian literature. This firm call of Nesimi—"Look not down on anyone!" specially proves that he began his creative activity as a poet-humanist even in his youth.

On the one hand Nesimi hailed those, who devoted their energy to common interests, on the other hand he never underestimated the existence of those who caused damage to the people and sought fortune in their injury. The poet firmly criticized such men and called upon his contemporaries to give no quarter to them.

Upon closer examination the poet sees the evils of the social life still more clearly.

Facing life as it is, he gets aware of the shortcomings of the feudal society and criticizes them severely.

We consider it necessary to emphasize the fact that in the history of the poetry developing in the Middle East the authors expressed their critical ideas and speculations on life and society within their couplets using as a new poetic device. Fearing to express some of their ideas undisguisedly they rendered the main one casually within a couplet which might be considered as unfit in the love lines and descriptions of landscape.

Making the best use of this method Nesimi skilfully expresses his critical views on life and society in some of his poems. By way of illustra-

A-13734

М. Ф. Хундов
Азербайжан Республикасы
КИТАБХАНАСИ 17

tion we give below the main contents of one of the poet's ghazel:

In the morning drops of sweat like gulab (rose-water) are seen on the face of Beauty. Impressed by this the Sun awakes with joy. The Beloved is so attractive and pure that she makes even the veil, covering her face, dance. The gathering is set up in order; they are playing chank, nei and canoon; the minstrel is singing, wine is being passed from hand to hand. After this description hinting at the fact that at his time people of courage were flung into prisons while those unworthy and mean were given high posts, the poet tells us that "God does everything in the wrong way, that is why parrots and turtle-doves are in cages but crows dance and enjoy themselves in the meadows".

The poet must have written this ghazel as a protest against the injustice of his time.

Such pithy lines, used by Nesimi within his beyts, expressed, on the one hand the yoke and oppression of the poor by the ruling classes, on the other hand the fraud and hypocrisy used by the votaries in their treatment of the people. These lines also demonstrate the injustice and evils of the society.

Later on this idea is generalized in Nesimi's poems written purely on the social and philosophic themes.

Criticizing the drawbacks of his time Nesimi calls upon his contemporaries to struggle. In a ghazel having the radif of "Bulunmaz" the poet mentions the insidiousness of those who falter in friendship. At the same time he tells us that the country is ruled by dull and untalented men but people of courage are ignored. Nesimi also criticizes the fact that no science and courage are valued in his country. He mentions sorrowfully that his people are in somnolency and for this reason the predatory invaders treat them as they like.

The poet, who instigates his contemporaries to awaken and unite, considers the struggle devoted to the interests of the people to be full of fortitude. As to him, panders are those who never think of the lot of their people and their country but only of their daily income.

Nesimi calls upon his contemporaries to be courageous. The poet's view upon the world and the Universe, his searchings take a special stand in his activity. Nesimi attempts to discover the mysteries of life and of the Universe. In some of his ghazels Nesimi tried to find scientific answers to these questions at a time when natural sciences had not developed, but failed. The ideas of the sectarian theorists, of the votaries of Islam couldn't satisfy the poet.

Insisting on these ideas of his he treats religious sciences with suspicion.

The poet looks for answers to social questions, longs to solve the contradictions of life. Finally mastering theoretical views of the hurufiism he finds answers to them but not to the full. Nesimi admits the views of the hurufis propagating that the entire Universe has embodied in Man; and that he, who knows himself, knows the Universe.

Hurufiism was a sect based on the sanctity of letters and taught that the letters were metamorphoses of the mysteries of the Universe. The history of the sanctity of the letters and of the conception of their symbolic character is very old. But the hurufis attempted to explain the mysteries of the world and of the Universe through letters; they took these letters in connection with the lines on Man's face. As to the hurufis all the mysteries of life lay in the letters of the Koran and the traces of these letters could be found on the face of Man. These mysteries were apprehended by Fazl-ullah and they said that he rose to the rank of God. The hurufis insisted on the idea that any man being capable of cognizing himself could occupy such a high post.

Following Fazl-ullah's views Nesimi in his original way sang of Man as of the creator of

life and embodiment of Beauty. The glorification of Man's beauty and might has an important place in his activity. The poet wanted to inspire Man with high spiritual qualities as: Love, Knowledge, Devotion, Faith and so on. As to the poet those craving only for wealth and never valuing the beauty of life are but ignorames. He laughs at them in his ghazels.

The poet repeatedly speaks of the intellect of Man capable of making miracles.

In Nesimi's creative activity "I" is the symbol of Life, Beauty, the Universe and of the Fate of Mankind.

His literary power is a poetical world and all the mysteries of the Universe are concealed beneath it. He is unique and eternal. When he recognizes himself he becomes divine.

In Nesimi's poems the best quality of Man is to be sought in cognizing oneself. While thinking of the life and the Universe the poet accepts the idea of his predecessors—the pantheist poets. They taught that the Spirit was passed to Man through vegetations, animals.

In one of his poems Nesimi tells us that the basis of life consists of soil; minerals arise from soil, vegetations from minerals, animals from vegetations and human-being from animals. It throws light on the fact that Nesimi always perceived life in perpetual evolution. He says that

the main feature of the Spirit differing Man from other living-beings lies in its acquiring divine forms. As the minute particles set detached from the Sun the Spirit separates from his divine source too. That is why for a long period of time the Spirit is to cognize his existence in Man. Man can cognize himself and become perfect only after the joining of Spirit with Soul. Being perfected in this way Man lives on in the shape of an immortal creature.

At the same time Nesimi assumes that Matter is never lost but merely changes its forms. After his death Man returns to life in a form of vegetations.

In this poem Nesimi explains Life following his pantheist conception and considers it to be unique and eternal. But differing from the other pantheists he asserts this idea from the hurried point of view.

Nesimi's poetic activity is virtually optimistic. He recognizes the beauty of life and calls upon his readers to feel it.

Criticizing the hypocrisy and the ascetic views of muftis, zealots, and mystics, in short of all those making use of the religion as a means of profit, Nesimi opposes the beauty of life to their views.

Though the poet now and then complains of

the injustice of his time, he also advises to live a life full of enjoyment.

In his poems on Nature the poet, unlike his contemporaries, values Beauty and feels it deeply. Glorifying the awakening of nature with the coming of spring, the poet makes us love it with all its charms.

Reminding of the fact that life is perishable, Nesimi advises those believing in the other world to take delight in all pleasures of earthly life.

This unbounded optimism of Nesimi's poetry is deeply rooted in his love of life and of the Universe which is to be met in the folk-lore. It entirely denies the religious views of the Middle Ages.

In the poet's activity we sometimes meet motives of deep sorrow, complaint and resentment. At times he feels depressed by the difficulties he encounters in life. At other times the violence of the ruling circles and the failures in his struggle make him lose his confidence in the triumph of Truth. All the passing motives of pessimism are expressed profoundly by the fluent pen of the poet, but they are not typical of Nesimi's militant poetry. They merely render the rich variety of the poet's concussions and emotions.

Before his tragic death, even at his hard times when he was in dungeon the poet never

lost his hope. He wrote pessimistic ghazels only on hearing of the news of Fazl-ullah's execution.

But even in these very poems we feel a kind of staunchness and an appeal for endurance.

While propagating his progressive ideas Nesimi had to come face to face with the resistance of the votaries—the bulwarks of the ruling circles. He wrote couplets in which he exposed the hypocrisy and falseness of the religion. In them he expressed his hatred for their betrayal. The poet called them grafters and swindlers.

In the Middle Ages it was not so easy to expose the Islamic propagandists explaining to the people from the minarets' height how to obey the religious doctrines.

At that time the fackgihs—the reviewers of the Islamic religion supporting its established rules and theoretical principles, interfered in the judicial affairs too. Nesimi calls them "blind bats" hiding themselves from the Sun and unaware of the truth.

With the same feeling of rage Nesimi turns his face to the Sheikhs the reliable leaders of the Islamic religion.

Very frequently does the poet use the word "zahid" (zealot) which generalizes all the votaries of Islam. In the Middle Ages those looking upon the religion as a means of profit were called zealots. Nesimi refers them as to ignorant,

ill-bred and cunning individuals. He advises his readers to disbelieve them.

The poet is also hostile to the sheikhs, ascetics and cadis. In some poems he addresses them by their names. Such poems of Nesimi have kept their significance up to nowadays. The poet severely unmasks those who swindle the people, think only of their own interests and consider themselves as men mastering the Truth. He calls such people "Khar" (asses).

Nesimi opposes the image of "arif" (Sage) to all of them. Here the Sage is depicted as a courageous and strong-willed person who cognizes himself, enjoys the beauty of Man and seeks the pleasures of life in this world believing in Man's power. He looks upon him as the creator of life. He clearly sees and analyses the contradictions existing in the world. The poet is fully confident that the highly-praised houris and paradise exist in this world, but not in heavens. So, man is destined to enjoy the beauties of life.

Nesimi's "Bahr-ul-Asrar" -a philosophic gassida in Persian, deserves a special research too. "Daryai-ibrar" by the prominent Indian poet named Amir Khosrow Dehlavi who was the first, to write a nazira to Nizami's "Quintuple" and responded to Khagani's gassidas by a poem, was very popular in the Middle East. And the first poet, responding to this gassida of the great

Indian poet in the Middle East was Nesimi. It should also be noted that such outstanding poets as: Abdurrahman Jami and Alishir Navai mentioned this gassida later than Nesimi. However Nesimi's answer essentially differs from those above-mentioned.

At the first sight the poet seems to disapprove glorifying the pleasures of life, but in reality he calls upon Man to cognize himself, to think over life and death, to view the world in a Khayyam-like way, that is to appreciate it both with its sufferings and joy. The poet warns Man that those striving for wealth will meet nothing but suffering.

Nesimi prefers poverty to reign. As to him, the unjust wars aim only at obtaining wealth, Man must aspire to valour and real valour, as the poet thinks, lies in knowledge and appreciating the Truth. The soul of Man is a talisman possessing thousands of mysteries. One who understands this Truth and these mysteries is worthy of respect.

So, in this work the poet calls upon Man to be spiritually pure. With the words: "Tread upon this land with a profound respect, since this earth keeps in itself the skulls of the rulers turned into ashes" the poet advises his readers to follow his views on life.

In "Bahr-ul Asrar" Nesimi grieves over the

fate of his people and urges them to think of it, whilest in the gassida, the radif of which is "gham yema" (regret not), love of life and optimistic spirit are expressed much more deeply. This gassida goes with the ghazel, having the same radif, composed by Haliz, the prominent Persian poet. Nesimi addresses his heart saying: "Regret not parting with your Beloved, the day will come for you to join Her and be happy; not forever the meadow will be flowerless. Winter will pass away, the buds will break into blossom, the world will turn into a flower garden; you may taste all bitterness whatever but the wheel of your fortune will change and find remedies for your grief".

In this gassida the poet dwells upon the obstacles one encounters in life. He calls Timurian invasion "the Deluge". As to the poet, one should do his best to escape from this deluge as Noah did. While speaking of Fazl-ullah's might and divinity Nesimi says that he is happy to endure and enjoy all his sufferings for the sake of Fazl-ullah. Nesimi's Diwan contains a number of verses devoted to his own tragic death. They deal with the execution of the poet and inform us how he was flayed. It might seem to the readers that some unknown person has written these verses on behalf of Nesimi. From the above-mentioned sources it becomes clear that after

Nesimi's trial the votaries of Islam gave a fetwa to flay him alive. But the sentence was not executed at once as the ruler of Aleppo sent the papers concerning the trial and the fetwa to the Sultan, head of the State of the Mamelukes, the centre of which was Egypt. The poet was kept in prison until they got the order from the Sultan. In prison Nesimi wrote a number of verses depicting his last days. They reveal the emotions of a courageous Man struggling against his ideological opponents at the door of death.

In these poems, called "Prison Poems" one can hear the proud voice of a fearless poet meeting death with dignity. He seems to foresee his future tragedy. Nesimi tells his readers that he fears no sufferings and is ready to bear any torture.

Among these poems are also some addressed to unknown individuals. They are written in the form of ghazal and must have been composed with the purpose of receiving a powerful backing from the rulers he was in close touch with. In one of these ghazels the poet describes the trial and expects help from a friend of his.

Nesimi's struggle against his ideological opponents occupies an important place in his creative activity. The progressive ideas of the poet met first with the severe resistance of the Islamic votaries. At the same time the mystics

and the leaders of different sects of that time looked upon his views as godless and considered him to be a blasphemous man. Making a wide use of the dogmas of the Islamic religion and of some suras from the Koran, Nesimi exposes his enemies in a logical way and reproaches them with their misunderstanding the Koran.

While propagating his pantheist ideas the poet tries to make his readers love hurufiism and Fazl-ullah, the founder of it. In Nesimi's works Fazl-ullah is idealized as an individual who correctly apprehends the truth, the mysteries of which even such prophets as: Jesus, Moses and Mohammad failed to disclose. Nesimi believes that Fazl-ullah has already risen to the rank of God, since he is aware of the mysteries of the Koran. The poet sings of Fazl-ullah's divinity and of the truths he revealed. From Nesimi's point of view Fazl-ullah is "the Truth", i.e. God. He is valued as the creator of life, as a man possessing a deep knowledge of all mysteries, and finally, as a person who lightens life. Alongside with this, Nesimi propagates "Javidanna" by Fazl-ullah giving full understanding of his hurufi views.

At times Nesimi expresses his hurufi views in a legal way. In such cases he never enters into polemics. He hints at those who fail to understand hurufiism.

O He, whose face is "the Seven Verses of Repetition,
"He who hath sent down Al Furkan,"
"The Absolute Light", "the Divine Word," "Kaf" and
"the Koran"¹

We can easily find out specimens taken from four different Suras of the Koran. "Fatiha"—the Opening of the Book is called "Sab-ul Massani". "Nazzalal Furgan", "Kaf" "Al-Koran" are also taken from different parts of the Koran. As to Nesimi, all these are expressed on the Face of Man. Just for this reason, he calls Man God.

Nesimi's views upon leading struggle are still more colourful. Their targets are the clergymen and mystics. In his struggle he pays a special attention to propagating his pantheist ideas and spreading his hurufi views.

The poet severely criticizes the ecclesiastics sowing religious discrimination among the nations. As to him, the essence of all the religions is one and the same and people should be never discriminated according to their faiths.

The poet, who watches the struggle between the supporters of Kaba and Temple and even

¹ "The Seven Verses of Repetition"—the first Sura of the Koran
"He who hath sent Al Furkan" is the beginning verse of the 25th Sura
"Al Furkan" i.e. "The Illumination"
"Kaf" is the 50th Sura.

contradictions among different sects of the same religion, knows that they cause bloody wars and unceasing intrigues among nations. Nesimi calls upon them to unite within a new religion, that is hurufiism. It is no mere chance that the poet devoted a special poem to an Armenian beauty. Likening her to the houris of Paradise, he expresses his admiration for her charms. There is no doubt that in a city like Shamakhi where Armenians and Mussulmans lived in sincere neighbourly relations, such a fact is not so strange. This poem is only a simple memory of the friendship of our peoples. It is universally known that Khagani, Seid Azim Shirvani also devoted poems to Armenian beauties. Molla Panah Vagif's famous mukhammas (a verse consisting of five lines), devoted to a Georgian beauty, is also the continuation of this tradition.

Nesimi never imagines the beauty of Life to be isolated from music. Very frequently he mocks at those ecclesiastics who declared music illicit.

It is noteworthy that the Islamic religion also declares music illicit and according to its doctrine, he who listens to music is but antichrist. We see the same attitude of some other sects towards music. But the pantheists were not heedless to the divine harmony of music and performed their rites to the accompaniment of mu-

sic, especially to the sounds of nei. As a convinced pantheist, Nesimi divinized music.

Nesimi penned all his progressive ideas in a language extremely sincere and convincing. He created unfading patterns of the poetry coming into existence in the Azerbaijanian language, wrote marvellous poems in all the literary genres of the Middle Ages. His poetic devices are colourful and his vocabulary is very rich. The poet on the one hand, makes the best use of the opportunities of the popular speech rich in idiomatic expressions, on the other hand, he utilizes the most popular devices of the classic poetry. By borrowing some devices of Arabian and Persian versification, as translating loan words, he enriches our poetic language.

Nesimi's vocabulary is richer than that of his contemporaries. This acquires a special significance from the scientific point of view. His poems are of exceptional importance for investigating the historical development of our language too.

Nesimi's verses are image-bearing. While propagating his philosophic ideas he sings mostly of such corporal features of the Beauty as: her eyes, eyebrows, eyelashes, cheeks, lips, teeth, etc.:

Since from yonder lunar Visage now the veil is cast aside,
Lo! the glorious Sun is risen and the gloom is past
the tide.

Yea! inebriate are all things from the wine-cup of thy lip;
Bravo! O pure-hearted skinker, be thy potion sanctified!

Thou for longing for whose cheek in Heaven's heart there
burns a flame!
Thou for sherbet of whose lip in Kevser's eye doth water
bide!

Thou for whose bright cheek's red rose the tulip's cup
with wine is filled!
Thou the wine of yearning for whose eye with sleep the
narcisse plied!

That thy Form,—it is the comment on the world of God
Most High:
Thou whose Face is "We have opened", yea, a door by God
oped wide.

Thou, thine Eyebrows, Hair and Lashes are the Book of
God to him
Who doth know that Book "with him is knowledge of the
Book's applied

Whoso knoweth not the characts writ upon that Form
o'thine,
Knoweth not the tale of prayer or fast or of the Reckon-
ing tide.

That thy lip is e'en Life's Fountain, that thy breath the
Holy Spright,
That thy Visage is God's Image; "and God knoweth best"
beside.

Sure, thy lip into the Lover Granter of all Needs must be,
Seeing to whate'er he prayeth, "I will answer" is replied.

On the road to reach the Loved One is duality the veil;
Ne'er till "I-ness" is uprooted is the curtain drawn aside.

I'm Moses, for with God alway I parley and hold converse
My heart's Epiphany's Sinai, so I'm Sinai in verity

I've won th' Ascention of yon Eyebrows twain the which
Behold me upon Union's night, from head to foot a radi-
ancy.

I quaffed the Wine of Unity long since at the Primeval
And drunken with that draught grew I thenceforth to all
eternity.

O Sun, thy Face is "By the light" and thy black Hair is
Thy lip hath healed my sickened spirit, — and that the
doulour that I dreel

What way soe'er I turn my face, I see the Loved One in
That I have grieved of grief for thee is all of my felicity.

That Beauty Unbeheld am I, for I am One with all that is;
That Word of Divine am I, for in the heart they hyn to
me.

In that my being is the glass where show the eighteen
I am the Image of the Lord, veiled "fore the base pleheity",

To express the idea of the primordiality and eternity of Man Nesimi appeals to the text of the Koran. It is said in the Koran that while Moses was journeying to Egypt with his family he perceived a fire on the mountain side. He

said to his family; "Wait ye, for I perceive a Fire. Haply I may bring you tidinds from it, or a brand from the fire to warm you" And when he came up to it, a Voice cried to him out of the bush from the right side of the valley in the sacred hollow," O Moses, I truly am God, the Lord of the Worlds" Then Moses went on the slope of Sinai at a set time and his Lord spake with him, he said," O Lord, show thyself to me, that I may look upon thee" He said, "Thou shalt not see me; but look towards the mount, and if it abide firm in its place, then shalt thou see Me". And when God Manifested Himself to the mountain he turned it to dust! And Moses fell in a swoon. In the above-mentioned ghazel the poet says: "The creator of this event described in the Koran is me. I am Mount Sinai. I am the verse "Verily I am God".

All these historical religious rumours are connected not only with the Universe, but also with Man. Using "I" Nesimi doesn't mean himself. His "I" is the symbol of Mankind.

While expressing the manifestation of the historical events in Man Nesimi denies their religious essence and looks upon them as realities created by the intellect of Mankind.

His lyrics are not limited by the description of Man's beauty. His emotions and trembles, his joy and griefs, his attitude towards the above-

mentioned beauty also found their reflection in the ghazels of the poet. In such poems the poetic images of Nesimi are very picturesque.

Of great value are Nesimi's works devoted to the beauty of nature. The poet frequently describes the nature rejoicing at the coming spring and flourishing flowers, at the carol of nightingales.

Nesimi is a poet who created works in three languages widely spread in the Near and Middle East: Arabian, Persian and Azerbaijanian, he has Diwans written in these languages. His being good at the languages gave him a chance to propagate his progressive ideas widely. At the same time this fact played an important role in the establishment of cultural relations and unity of views among the nations. It is no mere chance that an Arabian writer has devoted to him a particular work entitled "Magamati Nesimi". Persian intellectual have always mentioned his name with a high respect.

Some literary research workers suppose that Nesimi wrote a prosework entitled "Mugaddimat-ul Hagaig" and dealing with hurufiism in his native language. But it hasn't been proved scientifically that this work being only in different manuscripts, was written by him.

Nesimi's poems were widely spread in the Near East even before his death. While he lived

in Azerbaijan, Irag, Asia Minor and Syria his works were enthusiastically read in these countries. In a short period of time they brought fame to the poet even in central Asia and among the Uigurians.



Nesimi's poems are of high artistic value. That is why they promoted the further development of poetry in the Azerbaijanian language. Such great persons of figure as: Shah Ismail Khatai, Habibi, Fizuli, Vagif and others couldn't help falling under the influence of Nesimi. Especially at the beginning of the XV century Jahanshah Hagigi was always in close touch with his activity. He availed himself of the poetic manner of Nesimi. Nesimi's literary traditions developed in two directions in our literature: the hurufian poets—Sururi, Tufeili and others accepting his views, that is hurufiism, turned repeatedly to the themes of Nesimi; and the symbolic expressions penned by them, were used in their hurufi senses. But the non-hurufian poets availed themselves of the mastering of Nesimi's literary heritage; they used his poetic lexis connected with his views, not in their symbolic but real senses.

The traces of Nesimi's heritage are seen very plainly in Shah Ismail Khatai's poems.

In his verses devoted to Ali and his offsprings, Khatai widely uses Nesimi's similes and expressions in their hurufi meanings. He repeatedly spoke of the poet's tragic life identifying him with Mansur Hallaj. That is why later on the clerks mixed up the poems of these two poets.

We see the same influence of Nesimi in Habibi's and Fizuli's works. In their early period of activity they learned much from Nesimi, enriched their works with the poetic devices that were introduced into our poetry for the first time by Nesimi.

Deep traces of Nesimi's literary heritage can be also found in the works of the Turkish poets Sheikhi, Zati, Najati and others. The prominent Uzbek poets Lutfi and Alishir Navai always mentioned Nesimi's name with a feeling of high respect. It is not a mere chance that the work "Majalus-ul Ushshag" gives a detailed information concerning Nesimi's tragic death. Alishir Navai spoke for many times of Nesimi calling him a poet of rare talent.

While describing his talk with Pahlavan Mohammad, Navai writes: "Mohammad asked me who was the greatest among the Turkic poets. In reply to it I gave Lutfi's name. He asked again: "Why not Nesimi?"

The widely spreading fame of Nesimi's Di-

wans in the Central Asia proves once more that he was a poet of renown.

The rich literary activity of Nesimi attracted the attention of the literary—historians of the East. In the tazkiras written in the Arabian, Persian and Turkic languages deal with the poet's tragic life; they include specimens and analyses of Nesimi's poetry. The orientologists of Russia and Europe have done much to investigate his literary heritage.

Nesimi's poetic world has been and is being investigated very objectively by the Soviet scientists. The progressive ideas introduced by him into the literature of the Near East and his humanism are of the utmost important even nowadays. That is why the Azerbaijanian people are going to celebrate the 6th centenary of their beloved poet in 1973. The jubilee celebrations will open a new road for investigating the literary heritage of the great poet.

Гэмид Араслы

ИМАДЭДДИН НӘСИМИ

(Ичкилик дилиндә)

Художник *А. Кадыров*

Художественный редактор *Н. Насиров*

Технический редактор *С. Ахмедов*

Сдано в набор 2/11-1973 г. Подписано к печати 8/V-1973 г. Формат бумаги 60×90^{1/32}. Бум. № 1. Физ. п. л. и условн. п. л. 1,375+¹/₁₆ вкл. Учетн.-изд. л. 1,5. Заказ № 156. Тираж 5000. Цена 13 коп.

Государственный Комитет Совета Министров Азербайджанской ССР по делам издательства, полиграфии и книжной торговли.

Азербайджанское государственное издательство. Баку, ул. Гуси Гаджиева, № 4.

Типография им. 26 бакинских комиссаров Баку, ул. Али-Байрамова, № 3.

a

