



The Continuation of the Predecessor Tradition in Sheikh Galib's Divan Şeyh Galib'in Divanında Edebî Seleflik Geleneğinin Sürdürülmesi

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Abstract

This study explores the deep-rooted literary and philosophical connections between Sheikh Galib and his prominent predecessors, particularly Fuzuli and Nizami Ganjavi. The research highlights how Sheikh Galib, within his divan and especially in his celebrated mesnevi *Husn u Ashk* (Beauty and Love), not only reveres his literary forerunners but also internalizes and reinterprets their poetic and mystical ideologies. Fuzuli's concept of divine love and symbolic interpretation of sorrow and longing deeply influence Galib's own Sufi worldview. The study also discusses how Galib uses allegorical characters, such as "Suhan (Word)", to reflect the sacredness of poetic speech and its transformative power. Galib, like Fuzuli, views poetry as a divine gift that transcends worldly existence, emphasizing the supremacy of meaning over form.

Furthermore, the paper reveals Galib's admiration for Nizami's poetic authority, especially his treatment of love as a path to metaphysical Truth. By preserving the predecessor tradition, Galib makes a significant contribution to the continuation and renewal of classical Ottoman-Turkish Sufi poetry. His references to symbolic motifs, literary heritage, and Mevlevi values mark him as a conscious inheritor and innovator of the tradition. Through comparative analysis, this article underscores Galib's poetic philosophy, rooted in reverence, originality, and a mystic vision that binds him to his predecessors while affirming his unique voice.

Keywords: Sheikh Galib, Fuzuli, Nizami Ganjavi, Husn u Ashk, Divine love, Sufi poetry, Poetic tradition, Allegory, Literary heritage

Özet

Bu çalışma, Şeyh Galib'in divanında ve özellikle ünlü mesnevisi *Hüsni ü Aşkta* Fuzuli ve Nizami Gencevi gibi edebi öncülleriyle olan derin ilişkisini ele almaktadır. Şeyh Galib, kendinden önceki büyük şairleri yalnızca anmakla kalmaz, onların tasavvufi düşüncelerini ve şiir felsefelerini içselleştirerek yeniden yorumlar. Özellikle Fuzuli'nin ilahi aşk anlayışı ve ıstırap, hicran gibi kavramları sembolik düzeyde işleme Galib'in şiir dünyasında önemli izler bırakmıştır. Galib'in "Sühan" gibi alegorik karakterler üzerinden sözün kutsallığını, dönüştürücü gücünü anlatması bu etkilenmenin somut bir göstergesidir. Nitekim o da Fuzuli gibi şiiri Allah vergisi olarak görür ve biçimden ziyade anlamı esas alır. Galib'in Nizami'ye olan hayranlığı da barizdir; özellikle aşkın metafizik hakikate ulaşma yolu olarak işlenmesi yönüyle Nizami'den etkilenmiştir. Edebi seleflerine vefa borcu duyan Galib, klasik Osmanlı-Türk tasavvufi şiir geleneğini hem yaşatır hem de özgün üslubuyla yeniler. Semboller, Mevlevi değerleri ve alegorik anlatım Galib'in hem bilinçli bir mirasçı hem de yenilikçi bir şair olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu makalede, Şeyh Galib'in şiir felsefesi ve seleflik geleneği içindeki yeri karşılaştırmalı biçimde analiz edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şeyh Galib, Fuzuli, Nizami Gencevi, Hüsni ü Aşk, İlahi aşk, Tasavvufi şiir, Edebi miras, Alegori, Klasik şiir

Introduction

Among the distinguished philosophers and poets of classical literature, Jalal al-Din Rumi occupies a

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particularly prominent and enduring position. The spiritual depth and philosophical richness of his poetry have retained their relevance across centuries, and in the context of the contemporary world's increasing existential and spiritual uncertainties, interest in his teachings has grown considerably. Rumi's profound influence extended beyond his lifetime, inspiring a broad intellectual and artistic circle that continued to flourish in subsequent centuries (Baitenova, Baizhuma, Meirbayev, Abzhalov, 2025). His legacy was institutionalized through the establishment of the Mevlevi order, which played a significant role in preserving, interpreting, and transmitting his thought and poetic philosophy.

One of the most eminent figures who perpetuated this legacy in the context of 18th-century Turkish Sufi poetry was Sheikh Galib (1757–1799). Recognized as the last great classical poet of the Ottoman divan tradition, Galib demonstrated profound spiritual and poetic devotion to Rumi. This reverence was initially instilled in him by his father and further deepened through his service as the sheikh of a Mevlevi lodge. He frequently referenced Rumi in his poetry, notably declaring that "the guide of his heart is His Excellency Rumi," and proudly recounting that he had read the *Masnavi* eleven times.

Galib's literary corpus reflects not only his veneration for Rumi and his family, including Sultan Walad and Salah al-Din Zarkubi, but also his engagement with a broader canon of classical poets and mystics. He acknowledged the influence of Shams Tabrizi, Nizami Ganjavi, Farid al-Din Attar, Alisher Navoi, Muhammad Fuzuli, Saib Tabrizi, Sururi, and Ibrahim Gulshani, as well as Ottoman poets such as Asrar Dede, Mehmed Hayali, Mustafa Chalabi Naili, Yusuf Shaykhi, and Hoca Suleyman Nashati. In his *Divan*, Galib commemorates Salah al-Din Zarkubi's collaboration with Rumi in the composition of the *Masnavi* and reflects on their spiritual companionship through lyrical references. Despite the misperceptions of some contemporaries, historical sources confirm Zarkubi's intellectual merit and spiritual maturity – qualities that underpinned his deep and lasting bond with Rumi.

Sheikh Galib and Nizami Ganjavi

Among the Azerbaijani poets whose names are mentioned with love in Sheikh Galib's *Divan* is also Nizami Ganjavi. It is well known that during the Middle Ages, Nizami's *Khamsa* became famous throughout the Turkic world. Despite writing his works in Persian, Nizami brought global fame to Azerbaijan through these masterpieces. Naturally, Galib, like the rest of the Turkic world, was familiar with Nizami's *Khamsa*. At the beginning of his work *Husn u Ashk*, Galib acknowledges that the tale of love he is about to tell was previously written on the same theme by the Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi.

Bulmakla bu iki hoşça ta'bîr,
Erlik midir izdivaca tasvîr.

Dersen ki, Nizâmî giryâmı,
Etmîş o dâhî bu iltizâmı.

Ol tarz-ı Acemdir, olmaz icâb,
Rindân-ı Acem gözetmez âbâd (Okay, Ayan, 2005)

(You think that finding these two sweet words is enough – is that what you call manhood, describing marriage in flowery terms? Do you believe Nizami, the great master, wept over such things and bound himself to marriage like that? That was the Persian way – but it doesn't suit us. A true Persian libertine doesn't concern himself with such formalities or look to build comfort through marriage.)

From the excerpt taken from Sheikh Galib's *Husn u Ashk*, we see that the poet openly acknowledges that the love story he wishes to recount had already been told by the great Nizami Ganjavi – in his own words, "if the great Nizami Ganjavi has already accomplished this work in such a way." By saying this, Galib declares that he intends to continue the tradition of writing a *masnavi* on the theme of love in the same spirit. Setting out to follow the path opened by Nizami Ganjavi, the poet ultimately succeeds in passing through this treasury of wisdom with great skill. Elsewhere in the *masnavi*, Galib again mentions Nizami Ganjavi with deep affection, saying:

Tarz-ı selef tekaddüm etdim
Bir başka lügat tekellüm etdim



Ben olamadım o gurûha perver
Oymuş bile Genceviye Hüsrev (Okay, Ayan, 2005).

(He said he had gone ahead of his predecessors in style, that he had spoken in a different, perhaps new, vocabulary. But he also admitted: "I could not become one of that noble group. It turns out that Khosrow was meant for Nizami Ganjavi alone.")

Throughout various parts of Galib's *Divan*, we see that he mentions the name of Nizami Ganjavi with deep respect. This reflects the immense admiration and reverence he held for the Azerbaijani poet. All of this demonstrates that Nizami's talent and creative power were not limited to the boundaries of Azerbaijan, but had spread to many countries worldwide.

In another part of his *Husn u Ashk masnavi*, Sheikh Galib once again mentions Nizami's name with affection, stating that the character of Khosrow is known from Ferdowsi's work, thus referring to both literary figures with love.

Bulmuş sühani bülend nâmı
Firdavsiyi Husrev ü Nizâmî

‘Ayni Navâ’îde Fuzulî
Bulmuş sühane rah-i vusûlî

İstanbulumuzda Nevîzâde
Etmiş teki piyi veli piyâde

Olsun mı Nizâmî’ye hemâheng
Kur’ân’a uyar mı nağme-yi ceng (Doğan, 2008).

(Firdawsi, Khusraw, and Nizami earned their high reputation through eloquent speech. Fuzuli, like Navayi, found his path to the art of poetry.

In Istanbul, Nevîzâde also followed the path – though only as a pedestrian behind a saint on horseback.

*But can anyone truly match Nizami?
Would battle songs ever suit the Qur'an?)*

In the couplets we presented as examples, the poet states that Khosrow – a character from Ferdowsi's epic – found his rightful place in Nizami's renowned literary art. He then mentions that both Navoi and Fuzuli followed in Nizami's footsteps. In a later verse of the *masnavi*, the poet refers to Nevîzâde from Istanbul, stating that although he tried to follow Nizami's path, he could not achieve the same level of fame.

Nevîzâde Atayi was one of the prominent poets of his time. His work *Heft Ahter* (Seven Flowers) was written as a response to Nizami's *Makhzan al-Asrar* (*The Treasury of Mysteries*). In this work, the poet addresses social issues of his time, calling on rulers to be just and criticizing injustice. Nevertheless, Galib poetically conveys to the reader that Atayi could not attain the same renown as Nizami.

Continuing his poem, Galib asks: *"Can any of these be equal in value or weight to Nizami? Just as the sound and battle song cannot be compared to the voice of the Qur'an."* Here, Sheikh Galib compares the power of Nizami's words to the Qur'an itself. Just as the majesty of the Qur'an resonates throughout the universe, Galib asserts that the grandeur of Nizami's poetry has also spread across the world, captivating hearts and minds.

In one of his ghazals dedicated to Sâkîb Dede, one of the Mevlevi sheikhs, Sheikh Galib once again mentions Nizami's name. It is known that Galib deeply respected Sâkîb Dede, whom he regarded as a man of profound spiritual insight, and that he also drew inspiration from him in his creative work.

Bağî inşasında bergi huşku meğzi Nergizi,
Mahzeni nezminde bir derbani tabı Gencevi.

...Menbai esrari Mevlanadır ol zati güzin,
Hak bu kim eslafın olmuşdu tamamen peyrevi (Okucu, 2011).

*(In the construction of the garden, he is the leaf of consciousness and the essence of the narcissus;
In the treasury of poetry, he is like a doorkeeper shaped by Ganjavi.
...That distinguished person is the source of Rumi's secrets.
Truly, he had completely followed in the footsteps of his predecessors.)*

The tradition of writing a *Khamsa* continued in Turkish literature both in verse and in prose. Some poets attempted to compose a *Khamsa* in prose and succeeded in doing so. One such figure, mentioned in the ghazal, is Nergisi (d. 1635). Unlike other poets, Nergisi's *Khamsa*, although composed of five parts, was unified by a single storyline and central idea. In his ghazal dedicated to Sâkīb Dede, Galib states that compared to the garden of wisdom and perfection planted by Sâkīb, Nergisi's intellect resembles a withered leaf.

In his work *Nafahāt al-Uns*, Abdurrahman Jami writes the following about Nizami: "He had his share in outward sciences and formal terminology. However, he abandoned them all and turned his face toward the Divine. Although these *masnavis* may appear as legends in form, in Truth, they serve as a means for the discovery of spiritual realities and the expression of divine knowledge" (Hummatova, 2015).

When Abdurrahman Jami refers to the "form" of the *masnavis*, he means the external and formal aspects of these poems from both philosophical and poetic perspectives. He considers the resemblance of Nizami's works to legends as *external* from a philosophical standpoint and *formal* from the standpoint of poetics. The main point here is that Jami likens *masnavis* to legends in terms of their external and formal characteristics. However, by the term "legend," Jami does not solely refer to the epic genre of oral folk literature. In his approach, "legend" encompasses not only traditional folklore narratives but also refers more broadly to artistic creativity, imaginative invention, poetic imagination, and the artist's ability to construct a reality within their art.

In other words, Jami approaches Nizami's creativity through the lens of reality and artistic expression, arguing that artistic form serves as an outer shell that conceals the inner content—the more profound meaning. Thus, even though Nizami outwardly created artistic works – or "legends" as Jami puts it – in their essence, these are not mere literary fictions but reflections of more profound truths.

In Jami's "reality-art" model, reality is the manifestation of the concept of "Truth." In his view – as well as within the entire framework of religious-mystical thought – Truth (*al-Haqq*) is God. That is, only God is the actual existence, while all other beings – everything perceived as real – are manifestations of God's ultimate Truth in the material world. Therefore, Jami's assertion that "these *masnavis* are a means to the discovery of truths" implies that Nizami's *Khamsa* is, in terms of its ideas and content, an expression of divine and spiritual truths. (Hummatova, 2020)

Before Nizami Ganjavi, no poet in written literature had ever versified love stories drawn from folk traditions. Therefore, when Sheikh Galib refers to the "district of verse" (*mahalle-yi nazm*), he is alluding to this very idea. Of course, entering this realm of verse requires immense talent from any poet who wishes to do so. Such poets must possess the ability to speak powerful words, and the wisdom in their poetry must captivate and enchant the hearts of their audience. Only then can they hope to pass through the gates of the poetic garden that Nizami opened. Those who strive to enter the garden of verse, where Nizami stands as the gatekeeper, often face significant challenges. All of this reflects the enchanting wisdom and power of Nizami's poetry.

Not every talented individual can grasp the secrets of Nizami's knowledge and poetic mastery. Aware of this, Galib considered himself one of the "fruits" of Nizami's garden of skill. That is why he intensely studied Nizami's work and found within himself the strength to pass through the gates of that treasure of wisdom. Galib's immortal work *Husn u Ashk* is a clear testament to his profound understanding of Nizami's poetic legacy. Seeing himself as one of Nizami's disciples, Sheikh Galib also earned fame in the poetic world, just like his great predecessor.

In *Husn u Ashk*, Galib lovingly mentions Nizami Ganjavi as the one who first brought this love story into written literature. While composing his work, Galib emphasizes that entering Nizami's garden of verse is a significant trial and that not every poet who writes verse is capable of stepping into that sacred garden.



In Galib's *Divan*, there are numerous ghazals and poetic verses of various forms dedicated to Shams Tabrizi, many of which reflect his deep friendship with Rumi. In a *tarciband* (a form of poem), the poet likens the bond between Rumi and Shams to the friendship between the Prophet Muhammad and Ali. In some of his poems, Galib describes Shams as the "source of the sun of Tecella."

Galib also portrays Rumi's family with deep affection. He poetically describes Sultan Walad as a being "who set foot upon the heavens and was nourished with the milk of wisdom," stating:

Oldu perverde-yi cenâb-ı Hünkâr,
Bastı eflâka kadem Hazret-i Sultan Veled (Okucu, 2011)

(The great Hünkar nurtured him, his Excellency Sultan Walad, stepped upon the skies)

Another notable figure mentioned in Galib's *Divan* is Mehmet Chelebi, who is connected to Rumi's lineage through a chain of spiritual succession. Rumi is said to have foretold Mehmet Chelebi's arrival with the words:

"A sultan from our lineage will appear, his name shall be Muhammad. We have conveyed the states of love in a summarized form. This coming saint will joyfully elaborate in detail what we have outlined."
(6)

Mehmet Chelebi received an excellent education from a young age. He began reading the Qur'an at the age of five and became a devoted follower of the Mevlevi order. He was also a poet with a delicate soul. This is evident from the verses he composed in honor of Mevlevi saints.

Ol cemâlin nûruna pervâneyim,
Gece gündüz yanarım, dîvâneyim.

*(I am a moth to the light of your beauty,
I burn day and night, mad with love.)*

During the Timurid invasion, Mehmet Chelebi dreamed of Rumi's *Divan-i Kabir* being taken to Samarkand by the invaders and later to Tabriz by Shah Ismail. In this dream, prompted by a sign from Rumi, he traveled to Tabriz and retrieved the work. His act of bringing the manuscript back from Iran and establishing new Mevlevi lodges became one of his most significant historical contributions, earning him great fame in his time. Regarding his pen names, Nihat Azamat writes: "Mehmet Chelebi also wrote poems under the pseudonyms *Divane* and *Semai*." (Azamat, 1994)

Sheikh Galib and Fuzuli

What brings Sheikh Galib closer to Muhammad Fuzuli is, without a doubt, the theme of love, particularly its spiritual and divine dimensions. In this regard, it is clear from Galib's *Husn u Ashk* that he was deeply influenced by Fuzuli and felt a spiritual kinship with him. The essence of both poets' lyrical work is the celebration of divine love. What is especially notable is that beneath the surface meanings of their verses lies a deep layer of Sufi symbolism.

Therefore, interpreting the couplets of Sufi poets like Fuzuli and Sheikh Galib requires familiarity with Sufi symbols and concepts, as well as a deep understanding of the poetics of Divan literature. Although Fuzuli's poetry often appears to be about worldly, earthly love, its inner meaning reveals a profound expression of divine love. As has been observed, Sufism in Fuzuli's poetry tends to conceal itself in the esoteric layers rather than presenting itself overtly. This can be explained by the fact that Fuzuli – a poet of love and sorrow – saw the power and wisdom of God in every particle of the universe, regarded all existence as a reflection of God's unity, and perceived His attributes in all beings.

Just as Fuzuli's personality defied boundaries, so too did his love transcend the limits of the material world. That is why, in his couplets, divine and human love are intertwined (Qocayeva, 2010).

At the heart of Sufism lies the belief that God created man to be seen and loved. Therefore, according to Sufism, the human being — as God's vicegerent—is the most complete reflection of His attributes and actions. The beloved's face is a mirror, and in that mirror, to see the image of God is to enter into a state of spiritual awe and wonder.

Hayret ey büt, sûretin gördükçe lâl eyler beni,
Sûret-i hâlim gören sûret hayâl eyler beni (Füzuli, 2005).

*(O idol-like beauty, your face leaves me speechless with amazement;
Anyone who sees my condition takes me for an illusion, a phantom image.)*

In this context, the Word *surat* (form/image) is used in three distinct senses: as an appearance or face; as a condition or state; and as a depiction or image.

In the couplet, it is first understood that the beloved's beauty astonishes the lover, renders him speechless, and those who see the lover mistake him for a mere image due to his state. From a Sufi perspective, however, the interpretation of the verse reveals the essence of divine love. The *beloved* refers to God, and *love* signifies the longing and affection directed toward Him – divine love is being praised.

The central idea of the couplet is rooted in the Sufi belief that among all of creation, the most noble and perfect being is the human. Sheikh Galib, like Fuzuli, attributed great value to humanity, exalting it as the crown of creation (ashraf al-makhluqat), and celebrated the human being from this perspective in his poetry.

Hoşça bak zâtına kim zübde-i âlemsin sen,
Merdüm-i dîde-i ekvân olan âdemsin sen (Füzuli, 2005).

*(Pay close attention to your being, because you are the purest and most refined essence of the entire universe.
You are the human being — the most precious and central creation, like the pupil in the eye of the cosmos.)*

In the couplet, the poet is essentially saying: "Look closely at yourself and see that you are the essence of the world. You are Adam – the pupil of existence." That is, the entire world was created for the sake of the human being. Man is the most perfect of all God's creations.

Sheikh Galib, above all, is a Sufi poet whose heart burns with the love of God. He was raised in the Mevlevi tradition and eventually became a sheikh of the order. In his Sufi poetry, as in Fuzuli's, the face of the beloved is seen as a mirror (*mirat*) – the place where the divine manifests and reveals itself.

Sheikh Galib expresses this idea in the following couplet:

Hâb ü hayâl-i gafleti 'âlem sanır gören

Mir'ât içinde sûret-i âdem sanır gören (Okucu, 2011)

Those who see the illusion and dream of heedlessness mistake it for the world itself. What is reflected in the mirror of the world is, in fact, the image of God. Yet those who see it believe it to be merely *man*. God created the human in His image. The *Perfect Human (Insan-i Kamil)* is the reflection of the Divine. However, humans are often unaware that they carry the image of God within themselves.

What astonishes both Fuzuli and Sheikh Galib is the beauty of God. Both poets were Sufi mystics. According to the Sufis, sorrow and grief are, in Truth, the source of joy and delight for the true lover. The path to spiritual perfection leads through pain, hardship, and trials.

Var bir derdim ki, çok dermândan artıkdır bana,
Koy beni derdimle, derman eyleme, var ey hekim! (Füzuli, 2005)

*(I have a pain that is more precious to me than all remedies.
So, leave me with my pain; do not try to cure me, go away, O doctor.)*

Fuzuli's pain was the pain of love – the affliction of divine love and spiritual longing. A physician heals a person's illness through knowledge gained by reason. But the ailments of true lovers of the Divine cannot be cured by any physician. The poet goes so far as to describe conventional knowledge as mere gossip, implying that in this world, the only actual reality is *love* itself.

Aşk imiş her ne var âlemde,
İlim bir kıl ü kâl imiş ancak (Füzuli, 2005)



*(Whatever exists in the universe is love,
Knowledge is nothing but mere talk and argument.)*

Treating the spiritual illness of lovers means the lover's inner death. On the other hand, those afflicted with divine love do not wish to be cured; rather, they long for even more suffering. They desire to burn and mature in the fire of love – to reach spiritual perfection and grasp the secrets of Truth. As Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi once said: "I was raw, I cooked, I burned." And Yunus Emre, influenced by Rumi, gratefully declared: "Yunus the humble – we were raw, we cooked, praise be to God!"

In this sense, the suffering of Fuzuli and Sheikh Galib is more healing than any remedy. Like Fuzuli, Sheikh Galib views love as superior to reason. According to him, where there is love in the heart, there is no place for intellect.

Fuzuli also demonstrates that love has overpowered his reason, that he has become a captive of love, thus declaring that love is stronger and greater than reason.

Akl yâr olsaydı, terk-i 'ışk-i yâr etmez miydim?
İhtiyâr olsaydı, râhatı ihtiyâr etmez miydim? (Füzuli, 2005)

*(If reason were truly my companion, wouldn't I have abandoned the love of the beloved?
If I had free will, wouldn't I have chosen comfort instead?)*

Fuzuli constantly longed for the sorrow of love, because this sorrow distanced him from the pains of the transient world. The Sufis, who followed the path of divine love, were indifferent to the grief and sorrow of this world. Fuzuli wrote that there is no point in worry – the world is already filled like a wine cup. What the sorrowful lover needs is a cup so that he may forget the world's afflictions. Of course, this cup is symbolic – it is filled with the wine of unity, the wine of divine love.

Sâkîyâ, câm tut ol âşîka kim, kaygılıdır,
Kaygı çekmek ne için, câm ile âlem doludur (Füzuli, 2005).

*(O cupbearer, offer a cup to that lover who is full of sorrow.
Why should he suffer, when the world is overflowing with wine?)*

Such couplets reflecting Fuzuli's Sufi views are frequently encountered in Sheikh Galib's *Divan* as well. According to Galib, Sufis – who are true lovers of the Divine – are untouched by worldly sorrow. The lover constantly dwells within the pain of love, which, for him, is itself a kind of spiritual joy. He feels no grief tied to the material world and remains indifferent to its troubles. In the eyes of the lover, everything in existence becomes a goblet that proclaims love and inspires devotion.

The influence of Fuzuli is most evident in Sheikh Galib's *Husn-e-Ashk*. This masnavi, which defines divine love, shows the impact of Fuzuli's *Layla and Majnun* not only in terms of composition, characters, and motifs, but also ideologically. When we compare the two masnavis, it becomes clear that Galib, inspired by *Layla and Majnun*, set out with similar ideas but did not follow a repetitive path; instead, he created an original work. Kh. Hummatova writes: "The work is entirely built upon the idea that 'metaphor is the bridge to truth.' The author reflected the reality of his time through mystical symbols and allegories. When appropriate, he was able to reveal the essence of the contradictions between the ideal and the material world. At the heart of the poem lies the poet's creative subjectivity. Whether it is Sufi or other worldviews, all enter the poem through the creative lens of Sheikh Galib's thought." (Hummatova, 2012)

Unlike the characters in Fuzuli's *Layla and Majnun*, Sheikh Galib introduces an allegorical figure named *Sukhan* (Word/Speech) in *Husn u Ashk*, through which he expresses his philosophical reflections on the nature of language. The poet personifies *Sukhan* and, through this character, portrays the sanctity of speech, presenting it within the context of the creation narrative. He emphasizes that the *Word* existed before the world itself and that it is older and more exalted than the universe.

Nâm-ı sühan, azîz zâtı,
Mesbûk idi çarktan hayâtı (Okay, Ayan, 2005)

*(His name was renowned in the art of eloquence,
And his noble soul was ahead of the heavens in life itself.)*

Therefore, the attribution of such divine meaning to *the Word* can be found throughout almost all medieval poetry. This fact can also be observed in the poetry of Yunus Emre. He says:

Benüm degül bu killeci söz,
Kudret sensin, Yunus n'eci?! (Emre, 2009)

*(These words are not truly mine;
You are the power (O God), who is Yunus after all?)*

According to Sheikh Galib, *the Word* is like a "prophet sent by God" (*nebiyy-i mursal*).

Muhtâc an'a cümle halk-ı âlem,
Anınla bulur hayâtı Âdem (Okay, Ayan, 2005).

*(All the beings in the universe require it,
And humankind (Adam) finds life through it.)*

In *Husn u Ashk*, Sheikh Galib personifies the Word as a human figure and expresses its power by stating that, if it so wished, the Word – even without weapons (*bi-silah*) or armor (*cevshen*, chainmail) – could bring peace before the onset of war and prevent conflict altogether.

Kast eylese bî-silâh ü cevşen,
Eder idi sulhu cenge rehzen (Okay, Ayan, 2005)

*(Even if he attacked unarmed and without armor,
He would still turn peace into war like a bandit.)*

A single word is enough to change a person's entire state of mind. Just as bad news can drown someone in tears of sorrow, good news can bring tears of joy. According to the poet, *the Word* is like a magician – capable of bringing joy to mourners and making the sober drunk with delight.

Emriyle olur revân demâdem,
Gâh eşk-i sürûr u gâh mâtem.
Mesrûr ederdi sûk-vârı,
Mechmûr ederdi hûşyârı (Okay, Ayan, 2005).

*(By His command, time flows constantly,
Sometimes with tears of joy, sometimes with sorrow.
He would bring joy to the sorrowful,
And intoxicate even the sober-minded.)*

Sheikh Galib illustrates the beauty of *the Word* through symbolic meaning drawn from the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph). By comparing the Word to Yusuf, he highlights its power and grace. Yusuf was cast into a well by his brothers due to their deceitful words, and later imprisoned because of slander. Yet in the end, it was again through his words – by interpreting a dream – that he rose to become the ruler of Egypt.

Kast eyleyecek, eder ne minnet,
Bir anda zıddı zıdda illet.
Gâh olmuş esîr-i çâh-ı mihnet,
Gâh olmuş Azîz-i Mısr-ı devlet (Okay, Ayan, 2005).

*(When He intends to act, He shows no need for favor (from anyone).
In an instant, He can turn opposites into each other.
Sometimes, one becomes a prisoner in the pit of suffering,
Sometimes, a powerful Aziz of the Egyptian Throne.)*

Muhammad Fuzuli also attributed great value to the Word and regarded poetry as a divine gift. He always demanded a unity of content and form in poetry, as well as profound meaning. Fuzuli expressed his thoughts on the Word – as well as his literary-critical views on poetry and the art of the poet – in the prefaces of his *divans*, in his *Layla and Majnun* masnavi, and his lyrical poems.



The great Fuzuli, too, considered the Word to be of divine origin, declaring: "*The word is a treasure flowing from divine grace.*" At the end of *Layla and Majnun*, Fuzuli refers to the Word as the jewel of the heart's treasury and adds that it is only through the Word that a person's true nature is revealed. He also alludes to the idea that the world was created through the Word – that the world came into existence, and the soul was formed, by the Word. Through his work – his *Word* – the poet revived the dead and breathed new life into Layla and Majnun.

Sözdür güher-i hazine-i dil,
İzhâr-ı sıfat-ı zât-ı kâbil!
Can sözdür, eğer bilirse insan,
Sözdür ki, derler, özgedir cân (Füzuli, 2005).

*(Words are the jewels of the treasure of the heart,
The manifestation of the attributes of the essence.
The soul is words, if a person truly knows,
It is said that words are the soul's true self.)*

The poet dedicated a ghazal with a repeated refrain (*radif*) to the praise of the *Word*, valuing it as a divine blessing that, like the world itself, came into being from nothingness. In his ghazal titled "**Söz**" ("The Word"), Fuzuli says:

Halk'a ağzın sırrını her dem kılar izhâr söz,
Bu ne sırdır ki, olur her lahza yoktan var söz (Füzuli, 2005).

*(Your mouth constantly reveals its secret to the people through words,
What kind of secret is this that words come into existence from nothing at every moment?)*

In Sufism, the *mouth* symbolizes non-existence – it is a concept rather than a tangible object. We have our tongue, teeth, lips, and other organs of speech, but the "mouth" itself is not a distinct organ. The Word spreads the secret of the mouth to the world with every breath and utterance. The poet marvels at this mystery: how is it that something – the Word – emerges from nothing, from what does not physically exist? Just as God created the world from nothingness, so too is the Word born from absence.

In the preface to his Persian divan, Fuzuli regards the *Word* as a gift sent to us from the Divine Throne (*Arsh*) and interprets the revelation of the Holy Qur'an as a sign of the sacredness of the Word through divine speech.

One must never look down upon the Word; every Word is a gift that has come to us from the Throne.

Kalbimiz meyil eder hep ona,
Çünkü söz nazil oldu kalbimize (Füzuli, 2005).

*(Our heart always inclines toward Him,
Because the Word has been revealed to our hearts.)*

The modest poet, who admits he is not worthy of praising *the Word*, once again values it as a divine gift in his famous Persian qasida *Anīs al-Qalb* ("The Friend of the Heart"). He emphasizes that the essential difference between humans and animals lies in speech and language, and he points out that the Qur'an was revealed through words:

Eğer hayvan konuşmazsa, ona insan denmez,
Könül ehli dil ile eyler, bilmez teşhis insanı.
Sözün şanı o endaze büyüktür ki, müellimler,
Sözün mahsulü bilmişler dûâni, vahyi, Kur'âm (Füzuli, 2005).

*(If animals could not speak, they would not be called humans;
The people of the heart speak with the tongue, but cannot truly identify the human.
The grandeur of the Word is so great that the teachers.
It has recognized its fruits as prayers, revelation, and the Qur'an.)*

Although Sheikh Galib devoted an entire section in his *Husn u Ashk* masnavi to the praise of *the Word*, like his predecessor Fuzuli, he does not forget to humbly note at the end of the section that no praise can

truly do justice to the Word – that the Word is worthy of far greater glorification than he has been able to offer in writing.

Şân-ı sühâne bu paye dündür,
Evsâf-ı dürûğdan füzündür (Okay, Ayan, 2005)

*(The glory of eloquence is founded on this rank,
Its attributes surpass all falsehood.)*

Muhammad Fuzuli, in the preface to his *Divan of Qasidas*, likens the world to a shell and the human being to the precious pearl within it, thus considering man as the most honored of all creation. He then makes one of the most exalted praises of *the Word* by declaring that the essential core of this human pearl is, in fact, the Word itself:

"When I opened the eye of discernment to investigate the nature of things, when I set the foot of contemplation onto the field of witnessing the works of wisdom, I saw no pearl more precious than man in the shell of the universe, and within the pearl of man, I found no essence more honorable than the word."

Through this metaphor, Fuzuli emphasizes that just as the world gains its value through the presence of humanity, the true worth of humanity lies in its ability to speak – in *the Word* (Füzuli, 2005). If the world, like a shell, derives its value from the people within it, then the human, seen as its pearl, draws their true worth from the Word they speak. The poet regards the human being as the most noble of all creation, and speech as the defining essence of the human soul.

As Rumi beautifully put it:

"Each time you open your mouth, others glimpse into your heart." (Cəfərov, 2013). In his ghazal with the refrain "Söz" ("Word"), Fuzuli reiterates that a person's worth is determined by their words.

Artıran söz kadrini sıdk ile kadrin artırır,
Kim ne miktar olsa, ehlin eyler o miktar söz (Füzuli, 2005).

*(The one who increases the value of words with sincerity,
People respond with words in proportion to their worth.)*

In one of his *qit'as* (short poems), Fuzuli presents speech—the gift of language—as a divine blessing bestowed solely upon humankind. He writes that while a parrot can be trained to imitate human speech, it only mimics the act of speaking and still does not become human. As mentioned earlier, this idea is rooted in verse 31 of Surah Al-Baqarah – "And He taught Adam all the names" – which the poet interprets as evidence that human superiority lies in the God-given ability to speak and articulate words. Fuzuli writes:

Eylesen tutuya te'lim edâyı-kelîmât,
Nîtk-i insan olur, emma özü insan olmaz (Füzuli, 2005).

*(Even if you teach a parrot the manner of speech and words,
Its speech becomes human-like, but it does not become human.)*

It is no coincidence that in the preface to his Turkish *Divan*, Fuzuli quotes this very verse from the Qur'an in an Arabic *qit'a* (short poem). By referencing this verse– "And He taught Adam all the names"– Fuzuli emphasizes that the power of speech and naming is a divine gift uniquely bestowed upon humans.

Nukaddisu men levvel i'anete fazlıhı,
Lima ellemel-esmâ Âdeme küllehâ.

(We consider that one sacred whose merciful help made it possible for Adam to be taught all the names (words)) (Füzuli, 2005). Based on this verse, poets have regarded "the word"—and by extension, poetry itself—as a divine gift, an expression of God-given talent. In the preface to his *Divan of Qasidas*, Fuzuli writes about poets: *"Truly, among humankind, after the prophets and saints, there is no more sincere group than the poets."* (Füzuli, 2005)



This statement reflects Fuzuli's deep belief in the spiritual role of the poet as a truthful, divinely inspired voice, second only to the messengers and friends of God.

The above reflections make it clear that both poets, Fuzuli and Sheikh Galib, attached great importance to the meaning of the Word. Each emphasized that poets must strive to speak meaningful, original words. Fuzuli presents the union of Word and meaning as the union of body and soul, form and essence. He writes:

"Do not be content with sound and letters—seek the divine light in meaning."

In the preface to his Persian *Divan*, Fuzuli likens the Word to a delicate thread and meaning to pearls, writing:

"Speech is a fine thread upon which the pearls of meaning are strung so intricately that no meaning can take form without it: Word depends on meaning, meaning depends on Word, Just as body depends on soul, and soul on body." (Füzuli, 2005)

Similarly, Sheikh Galib illustrates the unity of Word and meaning with a vivid metaphor, comparing the poem to a wine jug (*surahi*) and meaning to the wine that fills it. Just as wine fills and gives essence to the jug, rich meanings "ignite" the Word, infusing it with life and intensity.

Niçin ma 'nâ-yı rengin lafzı ateşlendirir bilmem,
Sûrâhî-yi mey-i gül reng serkeşlendirir bilmem (Okucu, 2011)

*(I do not know why the word of meaning's color ignites like fire,
I do not know why the rose-colored cup of wine makes one rebellious.)*

In Sheikh Galib's view, *meaning must be delicate*—it should filter through like rays of light slipping from the fingers of the sun. This imagery beautifully suggests both the *radiance* of meaning and its *refined subtlety* – like a strand of hair passing through a comb. The metaphor implies that meaning should not be coarse or obvious; instead, it must be *gracefully crafted with deep thought and artistic finesse*.

Pençeyi hurşîd-i ma 'nâ olur târi şu 'â,
Mûylar ki şâne-i desti te 'emmül-den geçer (Okucu, 2011).

*(The meaning's sun's rays become the claws of the sun,
Like hairs that pass through the palm with contemplation.)*

In the idea that *"there can be no meaning without words, and no words without meaning,"* both Muhammad Füzuli and Sheikh Galib share a common philosophical perspective. Sheikh Galib illustrates this intrinsic bond between *Word* and *meaning* by drawing on the mythical belief that *fairies reside inside glass*. In one of his verses, he poetically states:

"The enlightened ones (maarif sahipleri) impress the fairy of meaning through the glass of words."

(Okucu, 2011)

According to Sheikh Galib, *meaning* is the essential element that completes a poem—it is what gives the Word its value and beauty, what makes it smile, so to speak. In his view, it is the meaning that breathes life into words, transforming them from mere sounds into vessels of wisdom and emotion. Without meaning, words are hollow; but when infused with meaning, they shine, gain charm, and fulfill their poetic purpose.

Thus, for Sheikh Galib, *it is not the Word alone, but the deep, insightful meaning behind it, that makes poetry truly radiant and enduring*.

Mefhumu çeşmü cân kimidir dinle,
Pertîvi, menâdır Esed'e sühânın güldüren yüzün (Okucu, 2011).

*(Listen: The concept (meaning) is like the eye of the soul,
Its radiance and essence are like the smiling face of Asad's eloquence.*

Both poets, Fuzuli and Sheikh Galib, valued not only the *meaning* of a word but also its *originality* and *novelty*. They believed that a poet's greatness lies in their ability to say something *new*, to express original thoughts in a unique and meaningful way.

Füzuli himself, in the preface to his Persian divan, shares the hardship of achieving this originality. He writes:

"There were times when I stayed awake all night, tasting the poison of sleeplessness, and with the blood of my heart, I composed a single meaningful expression. Yet, come morning, I would discover another poet had already used it—so I erased it and refused to claim it as mine."

"At other times, I would dive deep into the ocean of contemplation all day, piercing the pearl of meaning with the diamond of language. But as soon as someone said, 'This meaning is unclear, this word unfamiliar or unpleasant,' it would lose its appeal to me, and I would not even bother to transcribe it."

Füzuli then adds a profound observation:

"Strangely, a phrase that has already been spoken cannot be reused because it has already been said—and one that has never been spoken is avoided precisely because it hasn't been said before."

Dostlar gelip etti bizden evvel,
Menâ-yı sözü o kadri kârât,
Teng oldu bize fezası nezmim,
Feryad, neye bais oldu sibkât! (Füzuli, 2005).

*(Friends came before us,
And seized the value of the meaning and the Word.
The realm of poetry became narrow for us,
Alas, what caused this precedence (to be so)?)*

Sheikh Galib also occasionally confessed in his poetry that he faced great difficulty in finding and expressing new words or fresh ideas.

Bikr-i menâya tehasürle nevâyî-sühênim,
Sûri Leylâ'daki mersiyesi Mecnun kimidir (Okucu, 2011)

*(My melody of speech, with deep longing for the unique meaning,
Is like the elegy of Majnun at Layla's tomb.*

In this couplet, the poet declares that he yearns for a "bikr-i ma 'nâ" (virgin or original meaning) as deeply as Majnun mourned during the wedding of Leyla, where he recited elegies in despair. In another couplet, the poet proudly emphasizes his originality. Sheikh Galib likens his world of imagination to a church and the untouched meaning (*ebkâr-ı ma 'nâ*) to a Magian priest (*mughân*) who bows before it, boasting of his creative prowess.

In Sheikh Galib's *Divan*, profound respect for his literary predecessors, inspiration drawn from them, and numerous ghazals dedicated to praising them occupy a significant place. This can be seen as an expression of the poet's fidelity to the legacy of the great masters. One can observe the influence of both Turkish and Azerbaijani classical poets in Galib's poetic views. Among these influences, the literary impact of Muhammad Fuzuli stands out most prominently in Galib's oeuvre.

Like Fuzuli, Sheikh Galib regarded the *Word* (*söz*) as a sacred, divinely inspired gift and considered poetic ability as a blessing from God. Just as Fuzuli emphasized meaning and scholarly content over mere form, Sheikh Galib also expected poetry to reflect wisdom and meaningful expression.

The presence of polysemy – multiple layers of meaning – in both poets' works is one of the key features that brings their creative visions closer together. As in Fuzuli's ghazals, the verses of Sheikh Galib frequently convey mystical and Sufi meanings that transcend their surface interpretations. To fully grasp such layers, one must possess a deep understanding of Sufi concepts as well as the intricate principles of classical *Divan* poetics.

Conclusion

Sheikh Galib's *Divan* stands as a profound testament to the enduring legacy of classical Ottoman-Turkish Sufi poetry, deeply rooted in the literary and spiritual traditions established by his esteemed



predecessors such as Fuzuli and Nizami Ganjavi. Through his magnum opus *Husn u Ashk* and numerous lyrical compositions, Galib not only honors these giants of the poetic and mystical heritage but also reinterprets and revitalizes their themes, particularly the concept of divine love and the sacred power of the Word. His poetic voice, enriched by Mevlevi Sufism and a personal mystical vision, bridges the past with the present, affirming his role as both a devoted inheritor and an innovative contributor to the classical tradition. The comparative analysis in this study reveals how Galib's integration of allegory, symbolism, and spiritual philosophy solidifies his position within the lineage of great Sufi poets, ensuring the continuation and renewal of their artistic and intellectual legacy for future generations.

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