A Key to the Treasure of the Hakim

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11 Nizāmī Ganjavi, the Wordsmith: The Concept of sak hun in Classical Persian Poetry

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The word sakhun or suk hun (سخن), contemporarily pronounced sak hun, abounds in the pages of Nizāmī Ganjavi’s five mathnavīs, known collectively as the Panj Ganj (Five Treasures), as well as in his collection of odes and lyric poems. سخن literally means “parole”, “speech”, “words”, or “حرف”. Sakhun guftan (سخن گفت) means “to speak” and sak hun rānī kardan (سخنرایی کردن) means “to lecture.” Elsewhere, I have argued that for Nizāmī the term sakhun refers to a more significant concept beyond its literal meaning: it has a rather broader meaning and implication, that might be understood in terms of eloquent rhetoric, a quality he has demonstrated in his poetry, and that became synonymous with poetry and literature itself. Indeed, I have shown that because of this centrality of sak hun, Nizāmī offers a consistent concept of love and a favorable characterization of women, derived by literary exigencies rather than ideological prejudice. In substantiating my arguments, I demonstrated how different Nizāmī is from Firdawsi and Jāmī in their portrayal of the female.

In this essay, I will elaborate on Nizāmī’s concept of sak hun for whom, I maintain, the term is synonymous with “literature”, “literary work”, and “poetry”. Comparing the Nizamian concept of sak hun with the use of the word in the works of Rūmī (d. 1273), Sa’dī (d. 1291), and Hāfiz (d. 1389/90) who have also used the word frequently, I further maintain that for these latter poets, sak hun is closer to its contemporary usage, meaning “parole”, “speech” or “talk”, or simply harf. I will also try to explain why Nizāmī holds a high opinion of the concept of sak hun, particularly its poetic forms to the extent that it becomes an independent, discernable theme in his work, and a connecting motif that holds his poetry together. Realizing the centrality of the role of sak hun in Nizāmī’s work enables a better understanding of his use of so many different themes including scientific, philosophical, romantic, and religious motifs and thereby his literary representation.

Scholars have tried to explain the significance of words in the realm of human intellectual activities on the basis of the religious significance that the act of articulation has earned. Dabashi stresses the importance of
language and the concept of *sukhan* in Nizāmī's work believing that these provided Nizāmī with an identity. He states that, for Nizāmī, “being” is conceived by *sukhan* and it is used “not only to convey meaning but also create,” as they did in *Genesis*. Meskub makes a similar attempt as he explains the role of *sukhan* in the *Shāh Nāma*. He starts his analysis by citing the creation story of *Genesis* and the first verse of the *Book of John* that reads “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” and finding similar concepts in the *Qur’ān* and in the words of Zoroaster in the *Avesta*. The latter, he believes created a tradition which Firdawsī adopted. Meskub believes that *sukhan* for Firdawsī is similar to the concept of the spoken word presented in the religious books and it is the embodiment of ideas and above all, the idea of creation, man, and the truth of his transcendental world. However, the author sheds a more pertinent light on the topic when he states that Firdawsī, like other poets such as Hāfiz, perceived *sukhan* as a structure, a design that resulted in the writing of the *Shāh Nāma*. I should first mention that the *Shāh Nāma* presents epic and love stories based on material from mythical, heroic, and historical periods of Iranian history, versified in lucid language that uses nearly exclusively Persian vocabulary. Firdawsī remains quite faithful to his historical sources and to the logic of the epic stories he versifies. The genre rather than the holiness of the words carries out the labor.

Moreover, to explain in terms of biblical exegeses the significance of certain terms in Persian poetry is moot, if only because it cannot fully demonstrate the variety of meanings contained in the concept of *sakhun* in different authors' works. Indeed, a comparative study of classical Persian poetry reveals that each of these poets takes a different position in the realm of language philosophy, that may go beyond the biblical notion, the Platonic *doxa* (“opinion”), the Augustan concept of “fleshly” speech (words produced by the mouth for the ears), the Aristotelian concept of the mimetic nature of language and the Aristotelian *logos*-like discourse. For example, while the opposition between living speech and writing does not play out in the works of these classical Persian poets to any significant extent, Nizāmī seems to prefer the written form. In addition, unlike Augustine who advanced writing over speech because of its visual and stable qualities and its similarity to the divine *logos*, Nizāmī prefers the written form that provides more opportunities for embellishment. Furthermore, references to fauna and flora in the works of some Persian poets, often acknowledged as part of *sakhun*, have been influenced by mystical schools of thought, in which, the believer is encouraged to come to peace with all creatures. At times, these references serve as reminder to man that he should keep his priority by behaving more peacefully. All these of course may create the opportunity to speak of God. However, as the findings on the use of *sakhun* in Persian poetry show, poets have different, multiple, and even contradictory understandings of the word.
To be sure, in applying the concept of the divine *logos* to Persian poets, one must be careful since such a concept is more in line with the ideology of scholasticism in which a sweeping distinction between medieval Christian philosophers and theologians, and their philosophical exposé and theological writings did not exist. Unlike the great scholastic authors, the Persian poets did not all use their entire rhetoric to justify and elaborate on faith. The closest ideological influence one might detect in Persian poetry are mystical elocutions (more accurately, Sufi poetry by which virtue, familiarity with Islamic ideology was no doubt a prerequisite) for the expression of which, the poet’s language demonstrates significant difference from the author of a theological exposé. In mystic poetry, the poet feels much freer in his inward expression, imagination and depiction. For example, even in a highly imaginative, surrealist description of the ascension (میراج *mi‘raj*), and after amazing portrayals of the angelic boundaries, Nizāmī refuses to narrate the words that the Prophet hears from the One. Without such a freedom and imaginative aspiration, the poet would produce a more established and structured form of work, a prayer, or a *munajāt*, as did Ansarī.

It might therefore be more productive to look for the actual meanings covered by the term *sakhun* in the Persian poets’ verses. The works of Rūmī, Sa’dī, and Hāfiz combined, contain hundreds of occurrences of the word *sakhun* whereas Nizāmī’s *mathnâvîs* alone contain more than seven hundred occurrences. While the works of Rūmī, Sa’dī, and Hāfiz together contain one hundred *misrâ’s* that start with the term, there are two-hundred and ten of such half verses in the work of Nizāmī. Moreover, there are very few occurrences of the plural or derivative forms of *sakhun* in the works of Rūmī, Sa’dī and Hāfiz, whereas Nizāmī’s works are replete with these, many creative derivatives combined with a suffix, a prefix, or with another word.

Beyond these approximate statistics, it is important to illustrate the way these poets have used the term. What does each poet mean by the word, how does he vary in his use of the term? Beyond the similarities in the works of Rūmī, Hāfiz, and Sa’dī in their use of the word (and while they all differ from Nizāmī in his treatment of the word), each one of these poets shows creativity with *sakhun*. Even a study limited to this one single concept requires extensive reading and rendering. However, I hope that this introductory effort will help promote similar studies, especially in regard to the first three poets whom I am only examining for the sake of comparison and as an introduction to the more elaborate study of Nizāmī’s notion of *sakhun*. 
Sakhun in Rūmī’s Work

In both Mathnavī-yi Ma’navī (Spiritual Couplets) and Divān-i Shams, Rūmī’s best-known works, the term sakhun occurs in hundreds of verses, and occasionally more than once in the same verse:

speech (sakhun) is exalted for the speech-knower (sakhun-dān)/ It descended from the sky, it is not inferior.\textsuperscript{11}

The use of the word is a way of expressing ideas and feelings. Knowing Rūmī’s discourse, the word often refers to the expressions of the amorous, the drunken, and the unusual, those who often speak best. Thus, drink improves speech:

Give me that stoic wine to advance, Oh Cupbearer!/ Once drunk, I will speak of you frankly.\textsuperscript{12}

Moreover, sakhun can be the subject of unusual verbs and the theme of strange circumstances. For example, it can have a taste or a bitter consequence (which causes the death of a parrot upon hearing a bad news):

If you want to talk sweet as sugar/ be patient, avoid greed, and do not eat this sweet yet.\textsuperscript{13}

It may be eaten:

This sakhun is milk in the breast of the soul./ If no-one is suckling, it does not flow well.\textsuperscript{14}

It can function like an arrow:

Man’s body is like a bow, words its arrow / Once the arrow is gone, the bow's act is done.\textsuperscript{15}
It may even represent the sound of a fly’s wing:

هله می گو که سخن پر زدن آن مگس است

*Beware keep quiet, word is that fly's flapping / Flapping is no more once things settle down.*

It may also be uttered in sleep:

در خواب سخن نه بی بیان گویند

*In sleep, they don’t speak without their tongue / In wakefulness, I speak in that manner.*

It can express a miracle or a sublime religious moment:

آن نیاز مرمی بودست و درد

*That was Mary's need and ache / That such a child began to speak.*

It is also the speech of madmen:

بیگانه شوی ز صحبت بیگانه
سنخ راست تو از مردم دیوانه شنو

*A stranger you will become by hearing a stranger's words/ The truth, you hear from this madman.// The truth, you should hear from the madman/ As long as we are not dead, don’t consider us men.*

It may be the word of a drunken man, as in the famous Moses and the Shepherd story:

ْگفت او را محضب هین آهن کن

*"The Muhtasib said to him, “Come! Say, ‘Ah!’ / The drunkard uttered ‘Hu-Hu!’ when he spoke."*

Even dead ones can understand *sakhun*:

پیش او مردن بهر دم از شکر شیرین تر است
مرده داند این سخن را تو میرس از زندگان
Before him, dying is sweeter than sugar/ The dead knows this meaning, do not ask [it] of the living ones.21

Stones can even express it:

 económ جون شنید از سنگها پیر این سخن

When the old man heard this from the stone/ The old master threw his cane.22

It can be associated with greenery:

در نرگس در ماحرا چشمک زد سبزه را

Narcissus winked at the meadow in that affair/ The meadow perceived it and said “I am at your command”.23

Sometimes, however, the word is a mode of communication that is less effective than connections through feelings, love or the heart:

 در خفسی به سخن جان افزا

Since in silence my love for you grew/ words now fail me. (...) I shall stop talking and be silent/ In silence, better words invigorate.24

It refers to a mode of communication that is less effective than eye contact:

 در نرگس در ماحرا چشمک زد سبزه را

Shut the mouth, away from speech and imbibe the lips with wine/ So that drunken eyes can tell the tale through their gaze.25

One at times should avoid speech:

 وصل شنگان از سخن بگریز

Run far, sixty farsakhs away from this speech/ Since the speech has trapped you in this garment.26

Nevertheless, sakhun must be pronounced by one and heard by another:

 جان بیش تو هر ساعت می رزد و می روید از بهر یکی جان کس جون با تو سخن گوید
Before thee the soul is hourly decaying and growing/ And for one soul’s sake how should anyone plead with thee?  \(^{27}\)

Occasionally, Rūmī distorts this convention and the speaker-listener dichotomy:

من بر دریچه دل بس گوش جان نهادم

I laid the spiritual ear at the window of the heart/ I heard much discourse, but the lips I did not see.  \(^{28}\)

Sometimes sakhun has a religious function; the praise of God or even the words of God:

که او صفات خداوند کرگذار بود

Speech once appeared from behind the curtain. You will see/ that it defines the God Almighty.  \(^{29}\)

Sometimes it has a dramatic effect:

خون می چک از چشم خمارش به سخن

From words, his face turns red like fire/ from words, he sheds tears as blood from his drunken eyes.  \(^{30}\)

It can be endless, as expressed in more than forty-five verses starting with این سخن پایان ندارد (“This sakhun has no end”). For example:

باز گوییم آن تمامی قصه را

There is no end to this talk, however we/ shall recite the entire story.  \(^{31}\)

Nevertheless, there are passages in which Rūmī seems to prefer silence to sakhun. In Dīvān-i Shams, he writes:

اکنون بیند دو چشم بر گشا

هر کس هوش سخن فروشی داند

Close your lips and open those eyes / Say no more if there is unity.

(...) Everyone desires to sell speech/ I am a slave to the one who knows silence.  \(^{32}\)
It is indeed a manly habit to be silent:

طفلیست سخن گفتن مردن مهربان نش بدن / تو رستم چالاکی نی کودک چالیکی

It is childish to speak, manly to be silent / Be agile like Rustam not playful like an infant.\(^{33}\)

Thus, Rūmī displays tremendous ability, creativity and philosophical effort in the use of the term. At times, his repetition of the word is a rhetorical device. The term refers to nothing more than a mode of expression that is often subject or even victim of its circumstances, as for example, in the verses where he decrees silence.

### Sakhun in Sa’dī’s Poetry

Sa’dī uses the term more than three hundred times. His use of the term as “talk” is more formal than Rūmī’s sakhun (or Hāfīz’s, as we shall see). In the Gulistān, he writes:

سخن گفت و دامن گوهر فشان

He spoke, and expanded his skirt of jewels [of speech]/ With such a grace, that the king extended his sleeve [in rapture].\(^ {34}\)

In this verse, سخن is equated with نقط, meaning “speech”; it is official, and it will be rewarded if it is good. While there is vagueness in the verse about the content of that rewarding speech, the following verse that stand among the contemporary sayings and proverbs, reveal more about the nature of Sa’dī’s sakhun:

تا مرد سخن گفتگو یابند

Until a man hath spoken, his defects and his skills are concealed.\(^ {35}\)

In the section entitled “On Being Silent.”, Sa’dī’s prose indicates that the terms also means “parole”, “talk”, “discussion”, “harf”:

گروهی حکما یه جذورت کسی در به مصلحتی سخن همی گفتند. بزرگ‌همه هم پسر

ایشن بود خاموش. وقتی‌چه چرا با ما در این بحث سخن نگویی. گفت: وزیران بر مثال اطبا بند و طبيب دارو نده چه جز سپیم را. پس چو بینم که را شما بر صواب است مرا بر سر سخن گفت چرا حکمت نباشد.
At the court of Kisra a number of wise men were debating on some affair. When Buzurgmihr who was the best amongst them, remained silent, they asked him why in this debate he did not say anything. He answered, ‘Ministers are like physicians, and the physician administers medicine to the sick only; there when I see that your opinions are judicious, it would not be consistent with wisdom for me to add speech.’

In a further reference we find:

I said to one of my friends ‘I have myself determined to observe silence because in conversation there frequently happens both good and evil, and the eye of an enemy observes only that which is bad.’ He replied, ‘O brother, an enemy does not deserve to see the good.’

Both anecdotes preach the avoidance of unnecessary speech. Sa‘dī also advises thoughtful speech:

When unsure, one cannot quickly speak/ So long as I was uncertain, I spoke not, (...) One should not speak when unprepared/ What’s not spread out cannot be cut, Words you’ve not said are still within your hand/ But what’s been said may get the upper-hand of you.

In opposition to Rūmī and Hāfīz, for whom sak hun comes from all possible sources, often the heart, Sa‘dī’s sak hun often comes from the head:

I’ve heard that once by the Tigris stream/ A head addressed a devotee. (...) Of propriety I speak, good management and character/ Not of horses and playing-fields or polo-sticks and balls!
The qualities of good management and character are attainable, and will enhance the speaking ability which, according to the first verse of the Būstān, was given to man by God:

بِه نَام خِذاب لِكَ جَان أَفْرِیذ

In the name of the God who created life! / The One who created speech-creating for the tongue.\(^{40}\)

Sa’dī stresses that sakhun is a good quality to possess; it fosters admiration and respect:

نَکو سِیرْتَش دید و رُوْشْنِ قِباس

[S]The king] saw his good way of life, and illuminated judgment/ his considerate speech, and capability of man-appraising.\(^{41}\)

However, possessing this ability does not entitle one to talk in front of a superior:

کَه مَن بَعْد بَیِّ اَپَرَاوی مَکِن

They would say: ‘Henceforth behave not so disgracefully/ It is not mannerly to speak before the great!’\(^{42}\)

Indeed, gender and class play a role in Sa’dī’s conceptualization of sakhun:

چُو بِبچَاره گُفت این سحْن نزد جِفت

Helplessly he uttered this speech to his partner (his wife)/ Behold how like a man she spoke to him! (…) How fair to the ignorant yeoman spoke his wife/ Speak knowledgeably or do not breathe a word!\(^{43}\)

Like any other utterance or conversation, Sa’dī’s sakhun can be negative:

شَنیذ اَین سخْن بِخت بر گُشت دیو

Shaytan of overturned fortune heard this speech / In lament, he raised a shout and cry; (…)
The prudent and devout man heard these words / Then said, incensed: O king! Have sense; (...) 
If the word of rulers be hard to thee / Exercise not harshness towards thy inferiors. (...) 
When from the enemy's speech, it comes hard to thee/ See! What defect he takes up, that do not.44

The term is used in the realm of fighting and conflict:

Does he not know we have no mind to warfare? / Else, is the scope for utterance not confined? (...) 
I too can draw the sword-blade of the tongue/ Or through all mundane utterance draw the pen. 
Hostility between two people is like fire/ and the evil fated backbiter supplies fuel.45

Elsewhere, Sa'dī writes:

My friend heard these words, was displeased, looked angry, and began to speak with a degree of asperity saying, ‘In all this what is there of wisdom, propriety, intelligence, or penetration? And the words of the sages are verified, namely ‘That friends are serviceable in prison, for at a table [all] enemies assume the appearance of friends.

He concludes that:

The evil-fated backbiter in one breath/ creates hostility between two people.46

Sa’dī very effectively uses the term سخنچین (today sukhanchīn). It is not present in Nizāmī’s poetry as a prominent concept. In any case, whether it is positive or negative, whether it is valuable advice or a source of
antagonism, *sakhun* can only be heard through the ears. A number of verses convey this:

No sooner had the traveler heard these words/ Than, going out, he was never seen again within that place. (...

The man of many words has stuffed-up ears/ counsel will not take except in silence.

The man of pure disposition heard these words/ And answered: Say not such things to me. (...

Hearing such words, that goodly natured man/ Smiling said: Colleague, of a line illustrious.47

To be sure, the term is often juxtaposed with or accompanied by the word دهان (dihan, dihan mouth). For example:

The words once spoken do not come back to the mouth// Man would think first if he wishes to be wise.48

Sa’dī begins many of his anecdotes with the phrase “I heard,” as exemplified above. Then of course his *sakhun* also requires an audience:

Although a discourse be captivating and sweet/ commanding belief and admiration.

When the hearer does not understand the discourse/ expect not any effect of genius from the orator.

Until you are persuaded that the discourse is strictly proper, speak not;/ and whatever you know will not obtain a favorable answer, ask not.49

*Sakhun* ceases when two people in argument choose to stop all communication:

"چه جرم رفت که با ما سخن نمی‌گویی"
What crime have I committed that you speak no more/ What acts have I done that I deserve your separation?

The speaker of *sakhun* should not be interrupted:

I heard a sage say, that no one confesses his own ignorance, excepting he who begins speaking, whilst another is talking; and before the discourse is ended.

And:

*O wise man, a discourse hath a commencement and a conclusion.
Confound not one discourse with another.*

Like many other classical poets, Sa’dī also uses *sakhun* to describe his own orating ability:

*Restrain your tongue, if you possess intelligence, good-sense /
Speak as does Sa’dī, or silent remain.*

And he follows this up with the mother of self-compliments!

*I will write no more poetry because the flies/ trouble me for the sweetness of my words!*

In all these compliments, the term refers to his wise sayings rather than to his poetic craft. In the final analysis, *sakhun* may be the oral expression of an idea, a feeling. It is most often praise for a beloved or for himself. But in all of those cases, *sakhun* has a didactic mission: Sa’dī maintains that he is conveying useful *sakhun* and asks his readers to listen carefully.
**Sakhun in Hafiz’s Poetry**

In the *Divan* of Hafiz, portraying the life and historical events in his birth-town Shiraz, I have come across the word *sakhun* more than eighty times. Given the relative small size of Hafiz’s work compared to that of the other poets analyzed here, this is a high incidence of the term. For Hafiz also, the term often means “*harf*”; even when used in an allegorical sense, for him “*sakhun guftan*” means “*harf zadan* (to speak)”. For example:

The rose laughed and said: *"I don't mind hearing the truth, but/ no lover speaks harshly to his beloved."*53

*Tale-bearers caused a lot of vexation. However/ If any abuse happened among the companions, let it be.*54

Do not try to argue. *A fortunate slave [of love]/ accepts with all his heart whatever his beloved says.*55

*I said: “Wine casts my name and fame to the wind”/ He said: “Accept the word and let be whatever will be.”*56

*I do not speak about the friend's pain except to the friend/ For only a friend keeps the words of a friend.*57

And he has also written:
Bring wine and hand to Hāfiz first/ provided that the word does not leave the assembly.\textsuperscript{58}

In the first half verse of the first line, راست rāst is an adjective for the word sakhun, even though this latter term itself is missing. It implies that sakhun can be truthful or false, straightforward or vague. The truth or straightforward sakhun is harsh and that is why in the second misra’, Hāfiz advises lovers not to say anything harsh to their beloved. Sakhun therefore becomes the subject of human conditions and circumstances. This very concept is creatively portrayed in the verses that follow. The word has the same meaning in the following verse, part of which has become a saying:

Do not boast of miraculous powers with tavern-dwellers/ Every word has a time and every remark a place.\textsuperscript{59}

And:

Old people speak from experience, I am telling you. Hey, sonny, until you have become old, listen to advice!\textsuperscript{60}

At other times, Hāfiz uses the word to refer to his own speech:

The carol of your assembly will bring the sky to dancing/ now that the verse of Hāfiz, sweet of speech, is your song.\textsuperscript{61}

Hāfiz, who taught you the prayer / that caused Fortune to make an amulet of your poem and wrap it in gold?\textsuperscript{62}

I am that magician poet who, with the magic of words / makes the pen of reed pour out sugar and comfit.
Hāfiz’s Dīvān suffices for me, because except in this sea / I do not see any bounty of fascinating speech.⁶⁴

And:

ز شعر دلکش حافظ کمی بود آگاه که لطف طبع و سخن گفتگون دری داند

Hāfiz’s charming poetry is appreciated by the one/ who knows the grace of the verse and prose of Dari.⁶⁵

Hāfiz’s sakhun comes from the heart:

چو بشنوی سخن اهل دل مگر که خطاست سخن شناس نی جان من خطا انجاست

When you hear the speech of men of heart, don’t say it is wrong / The problem is, my dear, you are not an expert in speech.⁶⁶

بيان شوق چه حاجت که سوز آتش دل توان شناخت ز سوزی که در سخن باشد

What need is there to express yearning? For the quality of the heart’s fire / can be known from the blaze of words.⁶⁷

ایتش سزا نبود دل حق گزار من کز غمگسار خود سخن ناسزا شنید

My grateful heart did not deserve to hear abusive words / from the one who used to remove my sorrow.⁶⁸

And:

سخن دررده میگویم جوگل از غنچه بیرون آی که بیش از یاف حکم روزی نیست حکم میرنوروز ی

I utter these words in veil: Emerge from the bud like the rose!/ For the reign of the king of Nawruz is a mere five days away.⁶⁹

The term also appears in contexts referring to discussion and conversation, making a single conceptualization of Hāfiz’s use difficult. Occasionally he refers to his poetry, and to the fact that it is written in Persian. But we can conclude that for Hāfiz, it seems that sakhun is a complex issue belonging to the realm of human relations. His speech is often critical of the established social norms.

Thus far, I may conclude that there are similarities in Rūmī’s, Sa’dī’s, and Hāfiz’s use of the term sakhun. They understand it to mean “uttered words”, “parole”, or “harf,” which may occasionally be expressed in a poetic form. They also use it to refer to wise sayings that come from either
one’s soul, mind, or heart when they strive to explain the content of their *sakhun*. They distinguish between good *sakhun* and bad *sakhun*. Finally, they all use it to refer to their own didactical sayings as an example of good *sakhun*. Other poets beside the three above, have dealt with the *sakhun* in an extensive manner, not only quantitatively but also in terms of the significant place they have given the term in their works. For example, in the poetry of Naṣīr Khusraw (1004-ca. 1088), especially in his *qasā‘id*, the term occurs frequently to conceptualize a variety of philosophical, didactic, and religious statements. He is amongst those who have been influenced in his metaphysics by Aristotle, through the works of Avicenna and al-Fārābī.

Examples are numerous and a separate study would be needed in order to cover all the nuances in his work. However, the word *sakhun* is mostly used in the ways discussed above.

### Sakhun in Nizāmī’s Work

Ilyas Yūsūf Nizāmī Ganjavī (d. c. 1204) appears to have received an excellent education in several branches of science and learning that informs his portrayals of women, love, and relations between men and women. He brings a progressive and humanistic approach to the portrayals of his female characters such as Shīrīn, Laylī and those ladies in *Haft Paykar*. The term *sakhun* appears more often in his work than in those discussed above. This might be related to the fact that for him, *sakhun* is an art, which he repeatedly claims to possess. Often, and contrary to other poets discussed, Nizāmī uses the term to present the particularities of this art. He determines its boundaries and its different shapes. Poetry is a form of *sakhun* art and he of course considers poets to be creative artists with an almost divine status. *Makhzan al-Asrār* starts with a section entitled “The Beginning of *sakhun*”, followed by another subsection entitled “Discourse on the Virtue of *sakhun*”. These indicate the relation between his book of poetry and the word *sakhun*, leaving the possibility that to him they are synonyms. Indeed, he continues to equate the two in many other places. In the “Discourse on the Virtue of *sakhun*”, the term appears thirty-two times. He is not referring to the act of speech, or the act of conversation between two individuals, nor is he making a mystical reference to the holy text. Here, he talks about *sakhun* as the most essential element in existence:
The first movement of the Pen produced the first letter of the Word.
When they drew back the curtain of non-existence, the first manifestation was the word.
Until the voice of the Heart spoke, the soul did not submit its free self to the clay.
When the Pen began to move, it opened the eyes of the world by means of the Word.
Without speech, the world has no voice; much has been spoken, but Word has not diminished.
In the language of love, speech is our soul. We are speech; these ruins are our palaces.
The line of every thought which is written, is bound to the wings of the birds of speech.
In this ever changing old world, there is no subtlety finer than speech.
The beginning of thought and the final reckoning is speech; remember this word.
Kings have thought it worthy of a crown, and others have called it by other names.
At times, the voice of speech is raised by banners, at other times it is written with the pen.
It wins more victories than banners, and it conquers more empires than the pen.
Though speech does not show its beauty to the worshippers of imagination,
We have looked upon speech, are its lovers, and by it we live. (…)
To such a degree that where the Word raises its banner, language and voice are both silent. (…)
Saying: "Tell me, which is better, the new speech, or the old gold?
He answered: "The new speech." (…)
So long as the Word exists, may its fame continue; may the name of Nizami be kept fresh by his words.\textsuperscript{74}

In these verses, the poet asserts that the world begins and ends with sakhn (which could have been translated as “discourse”, “speech”, “poetry”, or “book”, in addition to “word”). Moreover, words have not only created the world but also the soul. The passage also indicates that the poet wants to establish a relationship between himself, his art, his world, his philosophy, and his career.

In the following subsection, entitled برتراى سخن منظوم از منثور (“The Advantages of Poetic [linked or versified] sakhn over Prose [dispersed] sakhn”), Nizāmī provides a short comparison of the two forms, while elaborating on specifications of sakhn:

(Inc.

Since the ordinary unrhymed speech is as a gem to the jewelers, Remember this subtle point, see what a weighed subtlety would be when it is measured. Poets who raise their voices, gain the treasure of both worlds by their poetry. Especially as the key of the treasury lies under the tongue of the poet. He, who made the balance of speech, educated the fortunate ones by his words. The poets are the nightingales of heaven; how do they resemble others?\textsuperscript{75}

Thus, sakhn is an art that can be expressed in poetic or prose form. Can then sakhn mean literature? If sakhn with قافیه (qāfiya “rhyme”) means “poetry”, and قافیه سنجان (qāfiya-sanjān “the appraisers of rhythm”) means “poets” (he uses the term شعر (shi’r “poetry”), several times in the same passage almost as a synonym for sakhn), and if سخن منثور sakhn-i manthur means “prose”, then what can sakhn mean, but “literature” which can be written in the form of poetry as well as prose? Is this then the word that has been missing from the Persian language to mean ادبیات? When did the words ادب adabiyat and ادب abe become prevalent? Was it when improvisation, i.e. the recitation of literature by authors or
rhapsodists became less practiced? At such a time, prose and poetry should have possessed approximately the same written value.

Nizāmī assigns the poet a high status in Layāli u Majnūn where he once again elaborates on his sakhn or literary discourse. He ranks his own verses with the Qurʾan, a very ambitious aspiration for his time, not to mention that such a claim stands against the religious belief that the Qurʾan could not and cannot be written or imitated by a human being. On the other hand, he praises the Book as a high form of sakhn, literature. Finally, he describes sakhn as an immortal art, and correctly so:

(HP6,7-8)

*Look round: of all that God has made/ What else, save discourse, does not fade?*  
The sole memorial of mankind/ is discourse; all the rest is wind.76

(HP25,53)

*When words had followed words, speech passed/ to one most eloquent.*77

(HP6,1)

*That which at once is new and old/ is discourse; let its tale be told.*78

And of course, he is aware of literature in other languages when he mentions Greek, Pahlavi, and Persian.

(IN8,6)

From the manner in which he talks about this art, it appears that he is aware of the great literary classics, whether religious or not, but also of the fact that he himself will become immortal through his sakhn. In a more worldly sense, he compares himself with kings in the Sharaf Nāma (The Book of Honor), considering himself a great poet who is imitated by others. In the Makhzan al-Asrār, he makes the wish:
So long as sakhun exists – and may its eminence continue –; may the name of Nizāmī be kept alive by his words.79

He uses the term in varied contexts, often presenting criteria against which the art of sakhun may be appraised:

If thou acquirest a pearl, do not wear it immediately/ seek a better one than thou hast (…) It is better to accept words slowly – so that thou mayest receive them from a sublime hand.80

In Khusraw u Shīrīn, he writes:

Shorten your work if you have plenty to say, don’t make a hundred words out of one, reduce a hundred to one.81

Here the poet is talking about the difficulty of creating original works, expressing ideas in succinct ways, knowing the old stories, being able to give the work some epigrammatic quality, and finally, of acquiring fame. In the same book, Nizāmī continues his deliberations on his art:

Words must be written based on criteria/ without which, they are loads for donkeys.82

He returns to this topic in the Iqbāl Nāma:

Peaceful speech indicates wisdom, rough sakhun, madness.83

And he embodies the art in the story of Shīrīn:
He poured sugar generously as he began to narrate the story of Khusraw and Shīrīn / With the story, constructing a jewel foundation, and in it, making sakhun famous.

In this section, Nizāmī praises Shīrīn, his favorite character, for her power of speech. Nizāmī’s women are almost all portrayed favorably and similar qualities are attributed to Laylī.

Laylī, with matchless elegance/ was also blessed with equal eloquence. With her fluency and savor refined/ she composed her fond-est original verse.84

In continuation to this passage, Nizāmī states that the two lovers exchange their feelings through poetry, for which he uses the word sakhun. He expresses similar ideas in the same mathnavī, in the section on the occasion of the compilation of the book, saying that sakhun reigns high and art is scripted in the jewel box. He continues to refer to himself as the one capable of magic speech:

In his description of Laylī, he writes that a message from court requested he compose a poem in memory of Majnūn; the composition had to be as unique as the character of Laylī. The king also mentioned in his message that he was a connoisseur of good writing. This is the section in which Nizāmī expresses his hesitation about composing the poem since the story did not provide much material for creativity:
The word \( \text{بکر} \) (bikr “virgin” or “original”), not only refers to Laylī’s body, but also to the creativeness of her poems. In order to achieve this, one should be a literary expert and a savant of \( \text{sakhun} \); just like Nizāmī who claims to be able to distinguish between old and new poetry, between repetitive and genuine poetry. Nevertheless, he continues to compose the poem and in a section on the complaints of those who are jealous of him, he writes that he is so perfect in the magic art of \( \text{sakhun} \) that he is nicknamed the Invisible, or Mysterious Mirror. He claims that his speech is like fire, the way it shines. If you were to lay a critical finger on it, your finger would burn.

(\text{LM8,6 and 9})

There is no doubt that Nizāmī mostly talks about the written word:

(\text{LM11, 76})

Friends created \text{sakhun} out of words [لغت lughat can mean “language”]/ they wrote a different word [language].

(\text{MA9,32 and 11,29})

\text{Without a pen, you read what is not written on parchment / without words you know the innermost thoughts of the mind.}
\text{Bring discipline to generosity/ inspire the candle of speech.}

The word \( \text{قام} \) (qalam “pen”) and the verb \( \text{nوشت} \) (nivishtan “to write”) indicate the nature of the \( \text{sakhun} \) genre. That is, \( \text{sakhun} \) might be read aloud or recited, but it is always created by the might of the pen. The juxtaposition of \( \text{ادب adab} \) and \( \text{sakhun} \) in the last line of this passage is also curious, as \( \text{ادب adab} \) here does not mean “literature”. Indeed, the word \( \text{ادب adab} \) appears in the \text{Makhzan al-Asrār} more than twenty-five times and not once does it refer to literature per se.

In the \text{Sharaf Nāma}, he presents and reemphasizes some of the principles, ideas, and theories that in his opinion shape the art of \text{sakhun}:

(\text{LM8,6 and 9})

(\text{LM11, 76})

Friends created \text{sakhun} out of words [لغت lughat can mean “language”]/ they wrote a different word [language].
When I was preparing this work (the Sharaf Nāma)/ speech was straight-moving (fluent) but the road (of information) ambient. (...) To circulate much about a wonderful matter/ Draws the rein of speech into foolish talking. And if thou should utter speech without some wonder (the subtlety of verse)/ the old books (void of the imagery of verse) would have no freshness. Of speech, keep watch to this extent/ that in imagination one can believe it. Although speech (verse) produces (in the orator’s opinion) the splendor of the jewel/ When it is not believed it seems the lie.\(^85\)

Here, he believes that the art of sakhn requires a certain element of surprise by saying that the existence of a certain level of شگفتی (shigifti “wonder”, “surprise”) makes the work original. Judging by his writing, his portrayal of his characters, and the intricate stories of the Haft Paykar, one may conclude that شگفتی is something similar to the notion of the sublime. This makes sense, considering his advice that one should not remain in a sublime mode too long because that will give sakhn an element of exaggeration. He delves into this topic again in the Iqbāl Nāma, saying that it is not easy to be creative all the time, and that one needs to be versed in knowledge and prosody, in order to be at ease in the creation of sakhn.

These passages, which represent a small portion of Nizāmī’s writing on the theories of sakhn, indicate the importance of literary creativity to him. There is no limit to the themes and topics of Nizamī sakhn, which covers such diverse subjects as logic, philosophy, Islam and Islamic jurisprudence, Ash’āri doctrine, Zoroastrianism, culture, nation, love, women’s portrayals, kalam (speculative theology), geometry, astronomy, geography, history, music, and architecture.\(^87\) In his own words, in the Iqbāl Nāma, sakhn should indeed have different themes ranging from the divine to nature:

\(^85\) IN4,6;15 and 78
\(^87\) IN15,8
Knowing several languages enabled him to enrich his ideas and knowledge with the borrowings from foreign sources. And, he often points out that to be knowledgeable in these fields is helpful in the creation of *sakhun*, helpful in the enrichment of rhetoric. This makes him a wordsmith. In his own words,

Having collected a grain (of information) from every door (of history)/ I adorned (the Sharaf-Nāma) like an idol-house.

This means that *sakhun* should contain ideas, new ideas, and that it is not all about form. Nevertheless, because of the significance of form, which he also discusses extensively, he offers another theory about the issue of the translation of *sakhun*. He treats *sakhun* as a literary art again when he brings up the question of translation. As a literary critic, he argues that poetry is hardly translatable at all.

Speaking of form, Nizāmī believes that in the art of *sakhun*, as a genre, there is a distinction between form and content; a notion with which present-day literary critics would agree. By including all the above branches of knowledge, he has supposedly taken care of the content, but he also acknowledges the effort and work it takes to write good poetry by pointing out the issues of editing and proofreading. In the *Makhzan al-Asrār*, he writes:

Erase any word which lacks courtesy and eloquence/ because this is my wish.
Draw the pen through whatsoever raises its banner against knowledge/ even though it were myself.
If in it I have not done justice to speech/ I would not have it sent from city to city.
Eloquence has shackled me in this place, but all places are under my hand.

He repeats this point in *Sharaf Nāma*:
Best, – that with lord of the crown and the throne, – speech –
Weighed (soft) they should utter; hard, they should not utter.

But the fact is that Nizāmī makes manifest this idea about literary form and content as he creates his works. With regard to the issue of form in the Haft Paykar, Meisami writes that both the story’s character Bahrām, and Nizāmī’s reader learn about the nature of the human design through the medium of “discourse – specifically, structured discourse.” She refers to Nizāmī’s verses where he “calls attention to the importance of his poem’s design,” observing that “design is a recurrent motif throughout the poem, reiterated in the references to building (the palace of Khavarnaq and of the Seven Domes, ultimately transformed into fire-temples (51: 17-52: 10), exemplifying building of this world and building for the next) and to astrology and astronomy, and expressed in terms of number and geometry. Design and number are, indeed, the principles upon which the poem is based.”

Khaleghi-Motlagh also emphasizes the importance of form in Nizāmī’s work, noting that his art is not limited to discursive and conceptual design. It includes the creation of the desired structure for his stories. A prime example of such artistic effort, as Ghanoonparvar points out, is the “Story of the Black Dome” in Haft Paykar, where Nizāmī presents a very complex design for his poem. His aesthetic games are not limited to his preoccupation with form but are demonstrated in verses as well. The following lines exemplify his artistic ability in that regard:

He who weighs the scale of words / Makes the hard workers harder with words.

He skillfully conveys several meanings with only one word. Because he does not place any dots on the first letters of [-]akhtvarān and [-]akhta, these words can be read in eight different ways. Thus, the verse implies that a man of speech can characterize someone as good or bad just by changing a dot. He also often uses words with more than one possible meaning to create multiple readings. Nadirpur aptly states, “Nizami throws his arrows to the neighboring meanings of words instead of targeting the most direct meaning.” I believe this is not aphasia or a shortcoming in the poet's work. It is a deliberate, creative aspect of his work. Nizāmī does all of this in the name of sakhun. This passion for sakhun, for words, this adroitness in rhetoric runs through his diverse poetic utterances like an ornamental chain, connecting them all together inter-textually and stylistically.
Such an understanding of the word \textit{sakhun} is consistent with Nizāmī’s many compound and derivative forms of the word. In addition to the plural \textit{sakhun-hā}, such forms include \textit{sakhundān} or \textit{sakhunvar} (سخن sakhun-var دان، سخنور sakhun-dān), meaning a person who demonstrates an oratorical, eloquent, and poetic manner when writing or speaking. Other compound words with similar meanings also appear, such as:

سخن آفرين، سخن پرور، سخنر ان روان، سخن شناس، سخن گستر، و سخن سنج

This creativity points to an eloquent rhetorician who knows the value of words, an excellent writer, or orator who has made a career of this art. Can we translate some of these words into contemporary Persian terminology as follows?

If so, then each of these words refers to the terms “poet”, “writer”, or “creative writer”. In addition, there are a great number of verbs compounded with \textit{sakhun}, from the simple 

\textit{سنخ گفت} sakhun guftan to the complex 

\textit{ماجح-ی سکان سکّان} maghz-i sukhan sākhān. The following cases are from the \textit{Makhzan al-Asrār} alone:

Can we translate these verbs to contemporary Persian as well?

If so, their meanings refer to creative and poetic writing. In any case, by the virtue of the above verbs, we have ascertained that \textit{sakhun} is certainly not simply \textit{harf} or “parole”. If it were, there would be no need for so many compound verbs.

Finally, like many other poets, Nizāmī mentions the word \textit{sakhun} when he praises his own work. Contrary to the belief that for Nizāmī the art is a purely religious matter,99 these flattering references show that he looks at his art of \textit{sakhun} as a means of achieving prosperity, a means of living, and a life challenge. In his \textit{Divān}, he states:

به سخن گنج سعادت به کف آر که سخن

که ثابت که ب رسنگ نه ني از گرد
Through words gain the treasure of happiness because they/ are alchemy able to turn rocks to gold.”

In *Khusraw u Shīrīn* he writes:

بدین سکه درم را سکه می‌بر

(SN11,7)

Make your words as strong as steel just like Alexander/ I did so, and through such coinage, I gained coins.

In the *Sharaf Nāma*, he writes:

چو هاروت و زره به افسونگری ... سخن گفتگو انگه بود سومدن

ز چندین سخن گو سخن باد دار گه گه از هر سخن بر تراشتم گلی

بر آن گل زنال، جوون بلبلی ... بدین دل فربی بسخن های بکر

به سختی توان زد از راه فکر سخن گفتگن بکر بان سخن است

نه هر کس سرای سخن گفتگن است ... سخنگوی بیشینه دانای طسو

که اراست روی سخن چون عروس بسمی فتنه‌های نا گفت به ماند

سبیل و راهبی با نا گفت به ماند ... زبان بر گماده به دریا

جمه سخن نو کن اسمه ای نهادم زهر شیوه هره‌گامی.

(SN5,25; SN7,8; SN7,29; SN7,63; SN7,91-2; SN7,118-9; SN8,38-9)

My hearth engaged with the tongue, in word-cherishing/ like (the angel) Harut and (the woman) Zuhra, in sorcery. (...

It is profitable to utter speech, at that time/ when, from the uttering of it, reputation becomes lofty. (...

Of so many eloquent ones (ancient poets)—remember (this my) speech/ I am the remembrancer of (their) speech in the world. (...

Save that, with speech, I should chant the rose (utter a modulated melody)/ should express, over that rose, a (joyous) cry like a nightingale. (...

Virgin (lustrous) words with this heart-enchantingness/ One can only with difficulty bring forth by the path of thought.

To utter virgin (lustrous) words is to pierce the soul/ Not everyone is fit to utter (virgin) speech. (...

The former poet, the sage of Tūs (Firdawsī)/ who (with verse) adorned the face of speech, like the bride. (...

In that book (the Shāh Nāma) in which he urged pierced jewels (previously uttered subtleties of verse)/ fit to be uttered (of Sikandar), much that he left un-uttered. (...
When this counseling took hold on (affected) me,/ I opened my tongue with a pearl of the Dari language.
I established a great crowd of every subtlety (of verse),/ perhaps, in speech, I may make a new book.  

And, he advocates valuing one’s work:

\[
\text{اگر از شعر خود خود باشید،}
\]

Since thy poetry is as sweet as honey, do not cheapen it; do not let flies contaminate the sweetness of thy poetry.

Finally, he ends the Sharaf Nāma and the Iqbāl Nāma by saying:

\[
\text{بنا به شعر خود، نمی‌توانید به دلایل نادرستی می‌پردازید}
\]

Here, I bring my discourse to end/ You know what to do, do what you want.

... If the king bestows upon me / My works will be accepted soon.
Nizāmī who made himself your servant/ Coined his work in your name.

Without these references in the context of his career, his sakhun discourse would have not been complete. Through them, he further emphasizes and theorizes the art of book writing, the question of publishing, the challenges of creating a long-lasting work, and the sublime.

It should also be mentioned that while Nizāmī in his conceptualization of sakhun might be considered as an anomaly, the proximity of the meanings of sakhun and literature is not foreign to the Persian literary tradition. This notion used by Nizāmī is only unique in the sense that it becomes a constitutive element in his work. Others have occasionally come close to such understanding of the word. Firdawsī for example, as discussed earlier, writes in the beginning of the Shāh Nāma that whatever he is about to write has already been uttered by others who have entered the garden of knowledge.

Classical authors of literary criticism also discussed this notion of sakhun. For example, the eleventh-century author Muhammad ibn Umar al-
Radūyānī talks about the interpretation of eloquence and he offers a notion of the proper structure of sak hun, which to him too means poetry and literary prose.104 For some of these authors, the issue has additional significance as they relate it to the Islamic tradition of knowledge. In the Qur’an, for example, on many occasions both knowledge and speech are revered.

To be sure, Nizāmī’s description of sak hun complies with the description of Nizāmī Arūzī’s definition of the art of poetry in which the poet arranges “imaginary propositions, and adapts the deductions” and the artist “must be of tender temperament, profound in thought, sound in genius, clear of vision, and quick of insight. He must be well versed in many diverse sciences, and quick to extract what is best from his environment; for poetry is of advantage in every science, so is every science of advantage in poetry.” About the notion of the social qualities of a poet, Arūzī continues: “And the poet must be of pleasing conversation in social gatherings, of cheerful countenance on festive occasions; and his verse must have attained to such a level that it is written on the page of Time and celebrated on the lips and tongues of the noble, and be such that they transcribe it in books and recite it in cities.”

Nizāmī Ganjavī’s description of sak hun also complies with Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī’s four conditions for the art of poetry: “Now it should be kept in mind that a poet who fulfils four conditions will be regarded as an absolute master by the far-sighted. First, he should implant the banner of poetry in such a manner that its magnificence impresses others. Second, having the essence of what is important, the style of his verse should be sweet and simple like the (ancient) poets and not like the preachers and Sufis. Third, the components of his writing should be free of errors. Fourth, like the stitcher of leather, he should not prepare a gown of a thousand patches with the rags of (different) people.”105

All this explains why, of Nizāmī’s approximately thirty-thousand verses, more than two thousand five-hundred deal with issues of language, aesthetics, and rhetoric, representing his effort to explain and elaborate on the concept of sak hun. Furthermore, these dealings are expressed in passages and not in sporadic single verses. Contrary to examples from other poets where references to sak hun are limited to a verse or two, in Nizāmī, the deliberations on the topic can span a dozen consecutive verses.

This conceptualization of sak hun helps us understand how in Nizāmī’s work all philosophical as well as religious issues are framed in the language for the sake of the superior goal of creativity. Existence, religious beliefs, holy books, Greek philosophy, and all branches of science are means through which Nizāmī practices his artistic language, and his understanding of the art and the world, and his cherished art of sak hun. He is, in a sense, a philologist, in its broad meaning, rather than, as many traditional analyses have portrayed him, a philosopher or even a theologian. That is why, in order to understand Nizamian sak hun, one hardly needs outside
referent. His poetic discourse is, in that regard, to a great extent, self-sufficient as he is constructing a notion the subject of which is itself. No other poet of the classical period has ever engaged so extensively in the explanation of the process of sakhn creation, sakhn structures, sakhn forms, and the epitome of sakhn thoughts, as has Nizāmī, the wordsmith.

Notes

1 For the translation of poems and passages, when accessible, I have used existing translations and provided the bibliographical information. Some of these I have adapted. For those poems and passages for which I could not find published translations, I present my own literal renditions.

2 The Pahlavi pronunciation of the word is sukhwān. It was also pronounced as sakhan, or in Pahlavi, as sukhwān or sakhwān (See Dīhkhudā (1372-73)).

3 Talattof (2000).


5 This approach might of course be different from those who cast a descriptive light on the poets' works. For example, Meisami (1989) aptly acknowledges the importance of sakhan in Nizāmī's work. She points to the poet's reference to sakhan discourse as a “flawless soul,” one that holds “the key to unseen treasure.”


7 Meskub (2004).

8 Like other terminology, the word sakhn also has additional connotations in Sufi thought. It is safe to assume that when a devout Sufi uses the word in a certain context, he might be referring to God’s words.

9 See Rypka (1968) 235.

10 I collected these figures and verses during my graduate studies. Since then, electronic versions of Persian poetry (both on CD ROMs and online versions) have made keyword search much faster. However, results from such searches differ and I am hesitant to include here my findings on the exact numbers. Generally speaking, other poets in whose work the word sakhn appears frequently are: Firdawsī: 843; Naṣīr Khusrāw: 413; Awhād Maraghī: 322; ‘Attār: 238; Khāqānī: 189; Anvarī: 184; Vahshī: 157; Jāmī: 145; Dīhlavī: 115; Sanā‘ī: 144; Kāshānī: 141; Khwāju Kirmānī: 106. According to these approximate calculations, the combined works of Rūmī, Nizāmī, Sa’dī, and Hāfiz contain more than one thousand four hundred occurrences of the term.


24 Rumi (1996) 90 and 142.


27 Rumi-Nicholson (1898) 75.
29 Rumi (1996) 378. The longer passage attributes sakhum to God and yet it is the medium through which God can be described.
34 Based on Sa’di-Clarke (1985) 42; Sa’di-Yusofi (1996) 46.
35 Based on Sa’di-Anderson (1985) 8.
37 Based on Sa’di-Anderson (1985) 325; Sa’di-Foroughi (1986) 121.
40 Sa’di-Yusofi (1996) 34.
70 More than four hundred times.
71 Rypka (1968) 189.
72 Nizâmi’s Iskandar Nâma is essential in the study of Platonic and Aristotelian influence. See Arberry (1958) 126: “One of the chief topics is the role of philosopher-minister assigned to Aristotle; in treating this motive Nizâmi underlines, as throughout his writings, the need of the just ruler for sound advisers. This was a point to be made again and again by Persian poets, successors to Plato; we are also reminded of the part played in the royal
circle by the vizier, and the control of imperial patronage that he exercised, so that no poet aspiring to the ruler's favour dared neglect to win the sympathy of his chosen minister:"

73 These examples include: It is "parole, or harf" that requires an audience:

In terms of its religious connotation being God's word, he writes,

74 Nizami-Darab (1945) 120-2; Nizami-Sarvatyan (1984) 78.
75 Nizami-Darab (1945) 122-3.
84 Nizami-Atkinson (1915) vii.
85 Nizami-Clarke (1881) 111 and 123-4.
86 with an alternative reading in Nizami-Dastgirdi (1372).
88 He knew Persian, Arabic, Azari, and very likely Pahlavi.
89 Nizami-Clarke (1881) 110.
90 He writes:

Occasionally, however, he denies he is concerned with any of them at all: “I know nothing of meaning or am I aware of form / for meaning and form have left my heart and my eyes.”

91 Chubāz, 121, and also in a different presentation in Nizami-Dastgirdi (1988) 117.
100 Nizami (1983) 226.
102 Nizami-Clarke (1881) 48; 64; 67; 72; 76; 77; 81 and 88-9.
104 Raduyani (1960) 201-12.
105 Ansari (1975) 171.