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MUNDARIJA

Lingvistika

Dilafruz Satimova

O'zbek adabiyotida substandart leksik birliklarning lingvokulturologik tadqiqi va ularning ingliz tiliga tarjimasi.....6

Umida Mahmudova

Raqamli texnologiyalar diskursi tarjimasida sun'iy intellekt ChatGPT va Google Translate tarjimon dasturlarining farqi.....23

Zilola Tillabayeva

Samarqand viloyati qarluq shevalariga doir leksemalarning shakl va ma'no munosabatiga ko'ra turlari.....37

Adabiyotshunoslik

Orzigul Hamroyeva

Abdurahmon Sa'diyning "Amaliy ham nazariy adabiyot darslari" darsligining tarkibiy tuzilishi.....49

Alimuhtor Muhtorov

Nizomiy Ganjaviy siymosining milliy o'zlikni anglashdagi roli.....63

Vəzufə Xudiyeva

Azərbaycanda mövcud bibliografik ehtiyatlar sisteminin inkişafı.....76

Kishin Xajiboyev

"Daryosini yo'qotgan qirg'oq" romani syujetida inson va tabiat konsepsiyasi ifodasi.....87

Tarix. Manbashunoslik

Kemal Yavuz Ataman

Ikki yetakchi sahoba: Qusam bin Abbos va Abu Ayyub al-Ansoriy va ikki muhim shahar: Samarqand va Istanbul.....101

Sotsiologiya. Psixologiya

Komil Kalanov

Diniy ramziy belgilar tizimining tarixiy va ijtimoiy-madaniy tavsifi.....120

CONTENT

Linguistics

Dilafruz Satimova

Linguoculturological Study of Substandard Lexical units in
Uzbek Literature and their Translation into English.....6

Umida Mahmudova

The Difference Between Artificial Intelligence ChatGPT and Google
Translate in the Discourse of Digital Technologies Translation.....23

Zilola Tillabaeva

Types of Lexemes in the Karluk Dialects of Samarkand Region
According to their form and meaning.....37

Literature

Orzigul Hamroeva

The Structure of Abdurahmon Sa'di's Textbook "Practical and
Theoretical Literature Lessons"49

Alimukhtor Mukhtarov

The Role of Nizami Ganjavi's Image in Understanding National
Identity.....63

Vazufa Khudieva

Development of the Existing Bibliographic Resources System in
Azerbaijan.....76

Kishin Khajiboev

The Expression of the Concept of man and nature in the plot of the
novel "The shore that lost its river"87

History. Source studies

Kemal Yavuz Ataman

Two Pioneer Companions, Two Important Cities in the Conquest
Qutham ibn Abbas & Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Samarkand & Istanbul.....101

Sociology. Psychology

Komil Kalanov

A Historical and Socio-Cultural Description of the System of
Religious Symbols.....120

The Role of Nizami Ganjavi's Image in Understanding National Identity

Alimukhtar Mukhtarov¹

Abstract

Nizami Ganjavi is one of the concepts of national identity of the Azerbaijani people. In all periods of history, the wise intellectuals of our people have been so sensitive to this concept of national identity that by giving the name of a great thinker to every concept, place, and object that is native and national to them, they have fulfilled the historical mission with honor both in ancient times and in our modern times. Nizami Ganjavi's native people gave the name "Shikh duzu" (Sheikh plain) to the area where he lived and was buried, and his mausoleum was visited as a holy place and shrine by his native people and people who visit our country for centuries. Consequently, these factors manifest and indicate the above-mentioned concept and approach.

Key words: *Azerbaijan, Nizami Ganjavi, Karabakh, Khankandi, science, school, education.*

Introduction

From that perspective, the fact that Nizami Ganjavi is an Azerbaijani poet is not only the presence of the Turkish system of thought, the Turkish spirit, the system of images loaded with national colors in his works, furthermore, it is possible to explain the fact that the Azerbaijani people, to which he belongs, gave his name to centers of science, education, culture, and literature all over the world and our country. Secondary school No. 4 named after Nizami Ganjavi, which started functioning in the 40`s of the last century in Khankandi, the ancient city of Azerbaijan, is one of the most significant fact of this thesis.

Nizami Ganjavi is one of the national identity concepts of the Azerbaijani people. In all periods of history, the wise Azerbaijani intellectuals have been so sensitive to this concept that nominating

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every concept, place, and object that is native and national to them with the name of a great thinker, they have fulfilled the historical mission with honor both in ancient times and in our modern times. Nizami Ganjavi's native people gave the name Shikh duzu (Shikh plain) to the area where he lived and was buried, and his mausoleum was visited as a holy place and shrine by his native people and people who visit our country for centuries and nowadays. Consequently, these factors manifest and indicate the above-mentioned concept and approach. It is no coincidence that Heydar Aliyev, the national leader of the Azerbaijani people, expressed based on such feeling that "It is our sacred duty to visit and protect the tomb of Nizami Ganjavi" [Əliyev 2022, 71]. Therefore, the person, the place, and the deed are holy and sacred.

From this point of view, the fact that Nizami Ganjavi is an Azerbaijani poet is not only the presence of the Turkish system of thought, the Turkish spirit, the system of images loaded with national colors in his works, but also it is possible to explain the fact that the Azerbaijani people, to which he belongs, entitled the centers of science, education, culture, and literature all over the world and our country with Nizami Ganjavi's name.

In the historic Decree signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev on declaring 2021 as "The year of Nizami Ganjavi" in Azerbaijan, this particular point is emphasized: "The thinker poet's mausoleum was built in Ganja, in his hometown, and his statues were in Baku, St. Petersburg and Rome. The Institute of Literature of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences and the National Museum of Azerbaijan Literature are named after Nizami Ganjavi. In Great Britain, Nizami Ganjavi Centre of Oxford University, is successfully operating" [<https://president.az/az/articles/view/49904> 5 yanvar 2021].

The magnificent Nizami Ganjavi Museum, built in 2014 in Ganja, in the homeland of the genius Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi, at the initiative of the First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Mehriban Aliyeva, as well as the monuments to the great thinker in Rome and in various cities and countries of the world, also go down in history, is one of the invaluable services aimed at further developing and continuing the mission from our ancestors.

According to Academician Rafael Huseynov, "Nizami Ganjavi is all over Azerbaijan, it is all over." If a specific list is made on the subject for the country, the number of people bearing the name

Nizami in Azerbaijan will be one of the main criteria proving the nationality of the great thinker, that he is an Azerbaijani Turk. Let's concentrate on Academician Rafael Huseynov's speech again: "Azerbaijan is the country with the most Nizami names in the world. It is true, that there are people who bear this name in close countries, but, perhaps, if we investigate, we will see that they are also of Azerbaijani origin, they did not leave Azerbaijan" [Hüseynov 2021, 327]. All this again comes from the national genetic and hereditary memory of our people, which is pure, without hypocrisy. Thereby, this is one of the most convincing answers to those who are trying to interfere the national identity of the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi.

Historically, the name of Nizami Ganjavi has become so integrated with Ganja that many tazkirists, thinkers, and followers of Nizami Ganjavi, without mentioning his name, remembered him with names such as the conqueror of Ganja, which is one of the significant and effective facts justifying the national affiliation of the genius thinker and his becoming an Azerbaijani poet.

Academician Isa Habibbayli highlighted based on older and reliable sources: "One of the most reliable sources about Nizami Ganjavi being an Azerbaijani poet is the treasure of poems "Khamsa" written by the genius poet himself. In accordance with the literary tradition of the time, Nizami Ganjavi clearly declared that he was proud of his Turkish identity in all the works included in the "Khamsa" set of poems, written in Persian language, using Azerbaijani proverbs, phraseological combinations, and words belonging to the native Azerbaijani people hundreds of times in his works. The Ganja earthquake and Kapaz mountain in the 12th century, and the city of Ganja, which is known as one of the ancient settlements of the ancestral home of the Oguzs, is glorified with inspiration in Nizami Ganjavi's poems. It is acknowledged that, the city of Ganja went down in history, as the capital of the Atabay state of Azerbaijan in the 12th century. Nizami Ganjavi's father, Yusif, and grandfather, Zaki Muayyeddin, were also Azerbaijanis. The graves of Nizami Ganjavi's father and mother are also in the cemetery where the poet's mausoleum is located in Ganja. The descendants of Nizami Ganjavi, who gained great fame under the name of Sheikh Nizami Ganjavi, lived in the city of Ganja in the following centuries. Nagy Bey Sheikhzamanli, who served as the Minister of National Security in the government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, is also a representative of the generation to which Sheikh Nizami Ganjavi

belongs. At present, there are Azerbaijani dynasties in different countries of the world who continue to live with the surnames of Sheykhzamanov and Sheykhzamanli, who are of the same genealogy as Nizami Ganjavi are bright truths that shed light on history in this direction” [Həbibbəyli 2023].

Nizami Ganjavi himself was one of those who kept the name of Ganja alive as his code of national belonging. He presents and declares the most effective points related to his nationality in the context of Ganja, on the level of Turkism, in every masnavi included in his “Khamsa”.

The episode “Sultan Sanjar and Gari” in the “Treasure of Secrets” script, the character of Shirin in “Khosrov and Shirin”, Leyli in “Leyli and Majnun”, Fitna in “Yeddi Gozal”, “These places are full of Turks” in “Iskandername” with his innumerable expressions and episodes, he shed light on his nationality, being an Azerbaijani poet, and substantiated it with very deep, irrefutable facts.

Nizami Ganjavi protects his Turkishness, his being from Ganja above all others. With the verses he wrote 880 years ago and the ingenious ideas he expressed, he declares to the world that he is an Azerbaijani by cutting off the alien, biased hands that were extended to him and will be extended to him both during his time and later.

The genius poet defined not only the road map of his life, but also his soul, the place where he lived, and his personality in the times after his death.

نهان مرا آشکارا برند
برند بخارا تا است گنجہ ز

They openly steal my confidential matters.

Although, they took them to Bukhara, they are from Ganja... [Gəncəvi]. This verse, which is included in the “Sherefname”, (“Name of Honor”) part of the “Iskandername” poem, was written 8 centuries ago, but it is a slap to the ignorant and blind people ignoring the truth.

All these spirited verses once again prove that Nizami Ganjavi, by expressing “Ganja” in a loud voice, also determined the identifier of his nationality and the road map.

Within the framework of these concepts, the people of Azerbaijan kept their great son alive for centuries in their native land, place, and bosom, and throughout the country, throughout Azerbaijan, and even outside of Azerbaijan and propagated it until today.

It is no coincidence that the oldest and most prestigious centers of education, science, culture and literature in Azerbaijan are also named after the genius of Azerbaijan, Nizami Ganjavi, which is a clear example of the love of his native people for their dear son. The number of science, education, culture, city, district, village, settlement, and precinct, avenue, underground and surface places named after the genius Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi in our homeland, including Western Azerbaijan that clearly express appreciation of the Azerbaijani people for Nizami Ganjavi.

One of the first educational institutions where the name of Nizami Ganjavi was kept alive by our people is Khankendi City School No. 4 named after Nizami Ganjavi, which is the unity of two national concepts in a divine order.

Nizami Ganjavi is an Azerbaijani poet, and Khankendi is an ancient city of Azerbaijan, without resorting to the oldest written sources, historical documents, and artistic works to identify him. Just as the spirit of Nizami Ganjavi and the national and human values declared in his works are rooted in the Turkish spirit, the fact that Khankendi is a sacred, ancient Turkish homeland, founded by the Karabakh khans, and essentially, that it nurtured, brought up and presented to humanity the children of Azerbaijani Turks in all periods of history, this sacred origin is the most obvious manifestation of the role played by the place in the history of Azerbaijan.

Both Nizami Ganjavi and Khankendi are the brightest examples of the national self-awareness of the Azerbaijani people. Just as Nizami Ganjavi is the great-grandfather of the Azerbaijani people to whom he belongs, a set of national and moral values, inner memory, homeland, nation and borders, the city of Khankendi also expresses the same concepts.

The fact that the oldest educational institution in the city of Khankendi is named after Nizami Ganjavi is the embodiment of divine and historical justice and order. The justice in this divine order lies in the fact that the people of Azerbaijan at all times approached every concept that was national for them from the context of nationality, and the Almighty Creator never misled this noble, heroic people in this regard. At the time, in 1945, the wise people of our people defined the contours and road map of the national approach to both Nizami Ganjavi and the city of Khankendi by giving the name of Nizami Ganjavi to the secondary school No.4 is also a celebration of the concept of justice that crosses the red line in his creativity.

Do not rule the world, tyranny, disgrace,
The conqueror of the earth is justice, justice... [Babayev 2021].
The conqueror of the earth is justice, justice...

In the 21st century, these dreams of the genius thinker were fulfilled by the victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, the brave Azerbaijani army, our martyrs and veterans.

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, said: "During the occupation, many of us – both former internally displaced persons and the entire Azerbaijani people, including myself, have thought many times that there is no justice in the world. Since, if there was justice, we would not be in this situation. I was also of the same opinion. But life has shown that there is justice, you just need to be tolerant, you need to be patient, you need to believe in justice and you need to work to achieve justice, you need to go towards the goal" – these ideas deriving from our ancestors, Nizami Ganjavi, are the greatest manifestation and declaration of national moral qualities.

The Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, believing in justice and working as hard as he believed, achieved the peak of his achievements in 20 years, for the sake of the destiny of our people and our state, the victory in Karabakh in 2020 in the 44-Day Patriotic War and the anti-terrorist measures in September 2023, which lasted less than a day, in addition to ensuring our territorial integrity and sovereignty, he also protected our national spiritual values, history, literature, poets, thinkers, culture, cuisine, which were tried to be assimilated by foreigners in this time period and in previous times, with the same concept of justice, and the foreign hands extended to them turned into nothingness of history.

At different periods of history, both Nizami Ganjavi and the city of Khankendi tried to separate from Azerbaijan. At some point, foreigners tried to achieve this to a certain extent, nevertheless, Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, and Ilham Aliyev, the victorious Commander-in-Chief, declared at the international level that these two concepts, which are very national for our people, belong entirely to Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani people.

Azerbaijan and its President Ilham Aliyev, who are always the representative of peace, reconciliation, justice and coexistence at the highest level, raising the tricolor flag of the Republic of Azerbaijan on October 15, 2024 in the center of Khankandi, at the expense of the Azerbaijani budget, shed the light to the

history accordingly: "At that time, it was the building of the party committee of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Province and was called as "a partcom" building. Many people passed from this building. There was a time when Azerbaijanis and Armenians lived here in friendly conditions, accordingly, not only in Khankendi, Karabakh, as well as in Baku, Ganja, Yerevan, Goycha, Zangezur, Daralayaz, Basarkecher. I remember those years, and especially after Heydar Aliyev came to power in Soviet Azerbaijan, some nationalist forces that had been in Karabakh until that time were completely withdrawn. Exactly 18 years, from 1969 to 1982, there was not a single unpleasant incident. I remember I was here with my father. I remember that atmosphere. Here, in the truest sense of the word, there were contacts in a friendly atmosphere, joint work was done. Nowadays we raised the Azerbaijani flag over the Sarsang reservoir. On the initiative of Heydar Aliyev, Sarsang reservoir and Sugovushan reservoir were built in 1976 for the development of the region and agriculture. Big investments were made at that time. A railway was built from Aghdam to Khankandi, a higher school was established here, and most of the buildings you see in Khankendi were built in those years. Agriculture was developing. At that time, only the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Province supplied more than 100,000 tons of grapes" [2023].

But the Armenian character still remained in its Armenianness...

In the issue of "Azerbaijan" newspaper published on December 10, 2022 author Kanan Guliyev writes based on the memoirs of Colonel Huseyn Isgandarov, one of the closest national cadres of Great Leader Heydar Aliyev during the Soviet era: "In 1973, Heydar Aliyev participated in the jubilee events on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region is invited to Khankendi (then Stepanakert) to do it. "Welcome to the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Province, Comrade Heydar Aliyev" was written on the big poster at the entrance of the city. Heydar Aliyev stopped his car next to this poster and summoned Boris Kevorkov, the first secretary of the provincial party committee, and ordered him to take down the poster. He stated in front of everyone that we are in Azerbaijan, not in another republic, there should be no such writings. Although many did not understand the meaning of this action at that time, the reason for Heydar Aliyev's visionary step became known much later" [Quliyev 2022].

Following the progress and continuation of the events in

the memoirs of the Great Leader, we read: "I have met many times with the people of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Province, I have visited all regions of the province, and I have talked a lot with Armenians... I remembered one fact. It was the 50th anniversary of The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), the province was awarded with the "Friendship of Peoples" order. Armenian nationalists still cannot forgive me for some points in my speech there. Sensing some moods, I said that the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast is an integral part of Azerbaijan and will remain an integral part..." [Səmədzadə 2021].

Of course, Armenians did not expect that Heydar Aliyev's congratulatory speech at the holiday event would focus on this topic. And after this setback, they were once again convinced that the land dream during Heydar Aliyev's rule is a meaningless thing. Time confirmed it again.

In the article prepared by İlham Jamiloglu in the "Azerbaijani teacher" newspaper in 2018, we read: "In the late 1980^s, the most important task of the Armenians in their insidious plans regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, first of all, was to clear Khankendi from Azerbaijanis. Of course, putting an end to the activities of the educational institutions operating in the city, where Azerbaijanis are educated, was put forward as a part of this plan. Khankendi city Secondary School named after Nizami Ganjavi No. 4 was in the first place. The depraved Armenians chose this educational institution as a target... [Cəmioloğlu 2018].

Khankendi city Secondary School named after Nizami Ganjavi No. 4 has been operating since 1945, but in fact, this educational institution was founded at the end of the 19th century, in the early years of the Soviet regime, a secondary school was organized on its base, and Armenians living (settled) in Khankendi made every effort to prevent it from functioning as an Azerbaijani school.

This educational institution, operating as an independent Azerbaijani school since 1945, has gone through hard and difficult paths.

It started its activity in the basement, and after some time, it was moved to a one-story building with no facilities.

Since those years, Armenian nationalists have resorted to all means to create obstacles to the activity of this school.

The director of the school, Nazim Khudiyev, writes in the memorial section of the article: "From the first days of its

establishment and operation, this educational institution was subjected to the pressure of Armenian nationalists in various forms. The Armenians, who could not accept the functioning of the Azerbaijani school in the city of Khankendi, which was Armeni-anized in all directions, finally managed to stop the independent functioning of the only Azerbaijani-speaking secondary school in this ancient land of Azerbaijan” [Bayramlı 2023].

Thus, in 1964, the activity of the only independent Azerbaijani-speaking educational institution – Khankendi city secondary school No. 4 named after Nizami Ganjavi, was stopped by purposefully creating an international school on the basis of schools No. 4 named after Nizami Ganjavi and No. 5, which teaches Russian language. A non-Azerbaijani director was appointed to the newly established school. Despite all the difficulties and artificially created obstacles, the teaching team of Khankendi City Secondary School No. 4 named after Nizami Ganjavi managed to preserve the ideas of Azerbaijaniism in the “international school”, mobilized all their forces and did their best to educate Azerbaijani children in Khankendi. Finally, with the arrival of Heydar Aliyev to the political leadership of our republic in 1969, the independent functionality of Khankendi City Secondary School No. 4 named after Nizami Ganjavi was restored.

In accordance with the on the subject of Karabakh, the school director shares his thoughts as follows: “The history of our school, the crimes committed against its teachers and students, parents, is not just a tragic history of an educational institution - it is a tragedy of the Azerbaijani people, of humanity as a whole. Although this educational institution was subjected to political and ideological pressures from nationalist Armenian circles since its establishment, it selflessly continued its activities as a worthy bearer of Azerbaijani ideas until 1988, and the pedagogical collective showed perseverance, despite the step relations of chauvinist Armenians. Unfortunately, in September 1988, Armenian nationalists attempted to end the school’s activities. The school with more than 700 students and more than 60 teachers had to stop its activities. Despite the serious efforts of the helpless Azerbaijanis living in Khankandi, it was not possible to restore the operation of the school. “After a 25-year break, the wish of the people of Khankandi, the wish to restore the activities of their native school, has come true” [Bayramlı 2023].

Nazim Khudiyev says that the services of this educational

institution, which has contributed to the development of Azerbaijani education and experienced a unique history, are highly appreciated by President Ilham Aliyev: "By the order of the head of state dated December 30, 2012, the school's activities were resumed. As stated in order, a school according to modern standards was built in Ramani settlement of Sabunchu district of Baku.

Khankendi City Secondary School No. 4 named after Nizami Ganjavi was a national, as well as an honorable educational institution from where graduated state and public figures that played a significant role in the life of our nation and state. Colonel-General Ramil Usubov, National hero Shirin Mirzayev and his wife Flora Gasimova, National hero Nizami Mammadov, Member of the Milli Majlis, Elman Mammadov, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor Mubariz Allahverdiyev, International Energy Academy member, doctor of physics-mathematical sciences Vidadi Aliyev, doctor of sciences in philology Ilhami Jafarsoy, People's Artist Fakhreddin Manafov, doctor of philosophy in philology Shafaq Jabbarova, doctor of philosophy in history, Honored journalist Hikmet Khudiyev, doctor of philosophy in medical sciences Saida Zeynalova, Honored engineer Kamil Khudiyev, valuable researcher Aydin Karabagli, member of Azerbaijan Writers' Union, talented journalist and publisher Vasif Guliyev, Honored engineer Ziyaddin Guliyev, Firudin Ahmadov, who was one of the leading specialists in the construction and commissioning of the Baku Metro for the first time, Ilham Jamiloglu, author of the book "Near, Far Khankandi" and others are Azerbaijanis who graduated from this glorious school.

More than 100 graduates of the school rose to the peak of martyrdom in the battles for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

With the joint efforts of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Ilham Aliyev, our dear martyrs, veterans, our brave army and our wise people, today every inch of Karabakh, including the city of Khankandi, has entered its renaissance period. The state programs signed by the President of Azerbaijan regarding "the Great Return" are being successfully implemented. With the special attention of the Commander-in-Chief, Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur are being turned into a center of science, industry, culture, art, and literature, hosting national and international events, symposia and platforms, which in turn demonstrate Azerbaijan's power and influence to the world.

Karabakh University, which started operating in Khankendi

city with Decree No. 4182 signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on November 28, 2023, is in turn the most successful component of “the Great Return”.

Karabakh University, established by the Decree of the President, Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, is the most successful, the most national name, and a national memory. Karabakh University will not remain just a university, but at the same time it will be a center of science, education and culture of Karabakh and East Zangazur.

Conclusion

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and First Vice President Mehriban Aliyeva stated during their visit to the Karabakh region on May 28, 2023: “You should go and see those places. Consequently, the migration to Khankendi starts in September. Students and their teachers will be the first to move. Karabakh University begins its activities. Therefore, one side will be Khankandi, the other side will be Aghdam. People will return to Aghdam city next year” was the good news that every citizen of Azerbaijan has been waiting for the years.

Just as Karabakh University started its activities with the order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, Khankendi city secondary school No. 4 named after Nizami Ganjavi welcomed its students and parents in their native place. So, with the participation of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, his son Heydar Aliyev, with the participation of representatives of the educational community, opened the doors of Khankendi City Secondary School No. 4 named after Nizami Ganjavi, on September 19, 2024, and Karabakh University on September 20, 2024 to the students, pupils, and our native people.

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Nizomiy Ganjaviy siymosining milliy o'zlikni anglashdagi roli

Alimuhtor Muhtorov¹

Abstrakt

Nizomiy Ganjaviy ozarbayjon xalqining milliy o'ziga xosligini anglatadigan tushunchalaridan biridir. Tarixning barcha davrlarida xalqimizning donishmand ziyolilari ushbu milliy o'zlikni anglash tushunchasiga shu qadar nozik munosabatda bo'lganlarki, o'ziga xos va milliy bo'lgan har bir tushuncha, joy, buyumga buyuk mutafakkir nomini berish orqali qadim zamonlarda ham, hozirgi zamonamizda ham tarixiy missiyani sharaf bilan bajarganlar. Nizomiy Ganjaviy tug'ilib o'sgan, o'zi yashab, dafn etilgan hududga "Shix duzu" (Shayx tekisligi) nomi berilgan, Shoirning maqbarasini ona xalqi, asrlar davomida yurtimizga tashrif buyurgan mehmonlar ham muqaddas qadamjo, ziyoratgoh sifatida ziyorat qilgan. Binobarin, bu omillar yuqorida qayd etilgan milliy o'zlik tushunchasini namoyon qilishi bilam e'tiborga molik.

Kalit so'zlar: *Ozarbayjon, Nizomiy Ganjaviy, Qorabog', Xonqand, ilm-fan, maktab, maorif.*

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