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## AZERBAIJANI VIEW

OF NIZAMI GANJAVI STUDIES.

**VISIÓN AZERBAIYANA DE LOS ESTUDIOS DE NIZAMI GANJAVI.**

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### ABSTRACT

Nizami Ganjavi is one of Azerbaijan's most renowned poets/philosophers; his ideas have transcended his time and are still astonishing today due to his sense of justice as well as for the love for his country. This fame has caused his work to be analyzed and interpreted by academics from all over the world, and from multiple perspectives. However, in this sense it is appropriate, and it is the main objective of this work, to highlight the vision of the different studies of his countrymen, among which the outstanding academician Isa Habibbayli, member of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, stands out. The points of view in the studies on the Nizami legacy provided by his countrymen are relevant for their valuable ideas and original scientific-theoretical contributions, which make them highly valued on the international scene.

**Keywords:** Nizami Ganjavi, Isa Habibbayli, Azerbaijan literature

### RESUMEN

Nizami Ganjavi es uno de los poetas/filósofos más reconocidos de Azerbaiyán; sus ideas han trascendido su tiempo y todavía en nuestros días asombran por su sentido de justicia como por el amor a su patria. Esta fama ha sido artífice de que su obra sea analizada e interpretada por académicos de todo el mundo, y desde múltiples perspectivas. Sin embargo, en ese sentido resulta apropiado, y es el principal objetivo de este trabajo, destacar la visión de los diferentes estudios de sus coterráneos entre los que sobresale el destacado académico Isa Habibbayli, miembro de la Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Azerbaiyán. Los puntos de vistas en los estudios sobre el legado de Nizami aportados por sus coterráneos son relevantes por sus valiosas ideas y aportes científico-teóricos originales siendo altamente valorados en el escenario internacional.

**Palabras clave:** Nizami Ganjavi, Isa Habibbayli, literatura de Azerbaiyán

## INTRODUCTION

Nizami Ganjavi was an Azerbaijani philosopher who made unrivaled contribution to the history of world spiritual culture. Despite the pass of time his words and foresights did not lose their significance even nowadays. His entire ideological heritage is run through by the care of the man of labor, belief in inevitability of the triumph of justice and social equality society (Nuriyeva, 2021), and in liberation of a man from all forms of exploitation and oppression. His work is known far beyond the borders of Azerbaijan and the Islamic world, and because of that we consider him a poet of planetary scale (Begalinova et al., 2021).

According to Talatoff and Clinton (2000) Nizami brought about a comparable expansion of the language of poetry. He was among the first poets in Iran to wed the lyric style of court poetry, with its rhetorical intricacy and metaphoric density, to narrative form, and his language is as much a presence on the narrative stage as are the characters and events it depicts. For him, discourse or eloquent speech (sokhan), or more particularly, the precise, beautiful, and signifying language of the poet, is his main or principal concern.

His work has been analyzed from multiple angles such as: the characteristics of spiritual and moral teaching (Begalinova et al., 2021), historical facts and geographical locations (Apoev, 2019, 2020; Suleymanova, 2021), phenomeno-semiotic analysis of superstition in Ganjavi's work (Ahangari, 2015), among many others. It seems that everyone has something to say or investigate about Nizami's, which is valid given the greatness of this author, although it is important to clearly point out the facts because greatness can lead to myth and in this process the information becomes fuzzy. For this reason, it is convenient to point out the works of scholars such as Isa Habibbayli who, researching Nizami, not only praise the author but also objectify him to shed light on some historical facts.

In this sense, Isa Habibbayli has a rich scientific and theoretical heritage, the main theme of which is Azerbaijani literary criticism. His scientific-theoretical ideas, which are the subject of great analysis and research, reflect all periods of the history of Azerbaijani literature, the rich scientific, literary-artistic, publicist activity of Azerbaijani thinkers who lived and worked in different periods. In his researches, Academician Isa Habibbayli expresses his attitude to different stages of Azerbaijan's scientific-theoretical thought, to the creativity of individual great artists in the light of the new thinking of the independence period, through the prism of constantly evolving imaginations. It is noteworthy that in his researches, time and objectivity are evaluated with scientific and theoretical ideas. Due

to the above, the objective of this work is to analyze the Azerbaijani vision of Nizami's studies highlighting the research of Isa Habibbayli.

## DEVELOPMENT

### Isa Habibbayli

One of the main lines of scholar Isa Habibbayli's work is to study Azerbaijani rich literature in terms of subject and genre, its stages of development, different layers of artistic thinking of powerful writers who lived in different periods to consider artistic possibilities, spiritual beauty, humanistic qualities and human feelings. His purpose has been to determine the peculiarities of each classic of literary samples combining national values, to reconsider the concept of national Azerbaijani ideology, the chronology of events, and as Azerbaijani literary critic to reveal the achievements of the literary process of the independence period.

Due to extensive and comprehensive scientific-theoretical research, it can be concluded that Isa Habibbayli is one of the most prolific Azerbaijani literary critics of all times. He is a great literary scholar, historian of Azerbaijani literature, literary theorist, who has attracted attention with his interesting analysis and research. His studies of different authors like Nizami Ganjavi, Maragali Avhadi, Shamsi Tabrizi, Imadeddin Nasimi, Mahammad Fuzuli, Mirza Fatali Akhundzade, Jalil Mammadguluzade, Huseyn Javid, Alibey Huseynzade, Mahammadhajar Vahazar Shahriyar, Mirhajun Mirzahir, Shahramiyar Saha and others are quite accurate and profound and have shed light on a different and enlightening vision.

### Nizami studies from Azerbaijani point of view

As we know, Azerbaijan, located in a geographical area suitable for establishing relations with many countries around the world; is also a country where cultures and literatures can unite. The people of Azerbaijan, who have a high artistic thinking, have created beautiful examples of Arabic literature since the 7<sup>th</sup> century. "The tradition of writing works of art in Arabic continued among Azerbaijani poets until the 11th century, ie until the beginning of Qatran Tabrizi's work. In the X-XII centuries, this poetry was represented in the Azerbaijani literature by such poets as Barakaveyh Zanjani, Iskafi Zanjani, Khatat Nizami Tabrizi, Abu Nasr Mansur Tabrizi, Khatib Tabrizi, Masud ibn Namdar, Omar Ganji. However, these Azerbaijani poets in addition to using a system of metaphors typical of classical Arabic poetry, as well as the colorful nature of their native lands developed their own style that gradually crystallized into a national identity.

Beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Azerbaijan endowed the Middle East with great literary figures. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, such powerful artists as Qatran Tabrizi, Mahsati Ganjavi, Khagani Shirvani, Felaki Shirvani, Mujiraddin Beylagani, Nizami Ganjavi were born. Artists who were acquainted with the rich oral folk literature, Near and Middle Eastern literature, and the subtleties of ancient literature in general, who grew up in the native language of thousands of years, managed to create a school of poetry based on this literature and its great traditions.

With the work of Qatran Tabrizi, the Azerbaijani school of poetry entered a “new stage of development”, which took place in the history of literature as the first creator of beautiful examples of Persian literature. Persian-language Azerbaijani poetry is “not a literary event limited to geographical boundaries, but an independent, original literary school distinguished by its ideological, aesthetic basis and unique features. There is a great truth in the opinions of our researchers, who believe that the specific features of the poetry of Qatran Tabrizi, who “thought” and wrote in Azerbaijani in Persian, are “typical for Persian-speaking Azerbaijani poetry in general. Thus, great figures of Azerbaijani literature Abul-Ula Ganjavi, Afzaladdin Khagani, Izzeddin Shirvani, Falaki Shirvani, Mujiraddin Beylagani, Mehseti Ganjavi and finally, and the great artist Nizami Ganjavi created unique examples of Persian literature, demonstrated the power and strength of Azerbaijani artistic thinking. However, of the above, perhaps the best known and most famous is Nizami Ganjavi.

M. A. Rasulzadeh(1991) H. Arasli (1942) and A. Sultanli (1947) conducted valuable research on Nizami's legacy. Every research work carried out in connection with Nizami's work serves to enrich the science of regularity. Today, Nizami's life and works are one of the themes of literary criticism is a manifestation of special care for Azerbaijani science, literature and culture. Considered the peak of the Eastern Renaissance, rooted in “humanist, universal” ideas, glorifying socio-political, social and moral ideals, N. Ganjavi's work has been widely studied, researched and is still being studied today. Being a poet of mankind, he wrote Turkish, Persian, Arabic, Chinese, Indian, Greek, Georgian and so on.

Because of that academician Isa Habibbayli appreciates the genius poet of classical literature N. Ganjavi as an immortal artist of all mankind at the side of Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Balzac, V. Hugo, and others. The scholar recalls a very interesting fact: “One day in one of the Eastern countries, two lovers of literature were arguing over who the prophets of poetry were. One of the sides mentions the names of such powerful poets as Fuzuli, Navai, Dahlavi, Jami, Sadi, Hafiz. Opposition: - Why didn't

you name Nizami Ganjavi? He asks. The answer is: “You asked for the prophets of poetry, not God!” (Habibbayli, 2007, p. 9).

Isa Habibbayli, who recognize Nizami Ganjavi as the “God of Poetry”, is rightly of the opinion that no matter from which pole or point of view of the world he looks, he shines like the sun in the sky of poetry and art. He is called “a great poet”, “a powerful artist”, “a thinker with a human mind”, “a great hero of the art of speech.” The images in his works touch on the issue of humanity of the plots, he calls his “Khamasa” “Literary encyclopedia of the West and the East”.

He compares Nizami with Alexander the Great. Isa Habibbayli said that Nizami brought fame to the Azerbaijani literature, in this sense, N. Ganjavi is the first greatest guide in the East and West, and in the world in general. In addition to describing Nizami as a human artist, he regrets that there are those who try to own him, especially when it comes to what nation he belongs to. About his representation in Persian-Tajik literature, Isa Habibbayli, tries to clarify the idea that he is a poet of Muslim nations in general, explains that the language factor is the main factor in such opinions. He says that in the East, Persian is the language of poetry, Arabic is the language of science, and Turkish is the “military language”.

He writes that it had many advantages at that time: “First of all, by writing scientific and literary works in Arabic-Persian languages, prominent artists gained the opportunity to be read and recognized in a broad sense in the Eastern space. Second, Since the peoples who spoke these languages had long been known to Europeans, the Arabic-Persian language also created favorable conditions for the performances of artists in the West. Third, by knowing the Arabic-Persian languages, the Nizamis were able to study the history, literature, and culture of the peoples of the East, and to obtain the themes, plots, and heroes of their works from a wide range of socio-historical environments. Thus, the geography covered by fiction naturally covered a wide area” (Habibbayli, 2007, p. 9). In this sense, Nizami is considered a powerful artist of the East. The fact that all the peoples of the world see their destiny in Nizami's works, as well as the fact that he is an artist belonging to the Azerbaijani people, is emphasized. Because of that he is studied not only as a poet but also as a thinker of the Azerbaijani people.

According to the historical facts, N. Ganjavi was born in 1141 in Ganja. A lot of attention is paid to the researches on Hamdunyan village, where the poet once left Ganja. With the village donated to him by the Golden Lion, draws attention to the facts and considerations of their meeting

place. Professor Rustam Aliyev notes that their meeting took place around the village of Sheki in the Zangazur district of Nakhchivan, and that researcher Ajdar Farzali determined the route of the meeting (Ganja-Istisu-Nakhchivan). According to Isa Habibbayli both of them met in the territory of Azerbaijan and did not go beyond the geographical area. It is even possible the meeting of Nizami with Ajami Abubakr, the founder of the Oriental School of Architecture. *“For many reasons, the speculation about the meeting of these two great artists is logical. The meeting of Ajami Nakhchivani, the creator of the stone “Khamsa” of architecture, with the mighty creator of the “Khamsa” of the art of speech would be an expression of mutual respect and esteem of these two great geniuses. It is impossible that so many great artists living in a single country, in the same century, do not get to know each other. The fact that both of them are close to the Atabey state also determines their meeting”* (Farzali, 1994, p. 9).

To the question that arises here (when and where can this historic meeting take place?) there is a probable answer. According to the scientist, their meeting could have been possible in Nakhchivan. He believes that their meeting could take place at least after he wrote the poem “Khosrov and Shirin”. At the time of writing, he says that he built the tomb of Ajami Yusif-Kuseyir oglu towards 1180 and is already known as an architect. In the following years, he noted that he was engaged in the construction of the mausoleum of the Mother of God. Isa Habibbayli points out that Russian artist A. Bondarenko’s painting about Nizami’s meeting with Abu Bakr revived images from Nakhchivan mausoleum, and N. Hasanzadeh’s description of this meeting in Nakhchivan in the historical drama “Atabeylar”. Notice that cities, such as Hamdunyan and Sheki villages, are connected with the territories and settlements belonging to the geography of Azerbaijan.

Moving on to other facts that prove his connection with Azerbaijan, he states that the fact that Afaq was sent from Derbent, one of the historical territories of the country, also confirms the fact that the poet is Azerbaijani. Nizami confirms that he glorified the Derbent fortress in his poem “Iskandername” with a quote from the poem. Afaq was sent to Nizami by Muzaffar ibn Muhammad Arslan ibn Khalaf az Sultan, the ruler of Derbent. They had a son named Muhammad, Nizami remembered him with love in all his works. These profound admonitions are still “new” to contribute to the growth and formation of the poet’s research on Afaq and his children. At the same time, to confirm the idea that the Azerbaijani theme is a “special place” in Nizami’s works, he says that we have witnessed the poet’s “native patriotism” in “Definition of Barda”, Kapaz Mountain in “Khosrov and Shirin” and

Derbent Fortress in “Iskandername”. The poet’s “native-ness” in his attitude to the ruler of Barda, Nushaba, is a clear proof that the image of the ideal ruler he created in his face matched a world-famous ruler like Alexander and created a “true just ruler” in the person of the Azerbaijani ruler Nushaba. At the same time, in Akhsita’s letters, which suggested that Leyli and Majnun be written in Persian, he recalled Nizami’s verses, such as “Turkish language is not suitable for our descendants, Turkish language brings us deficiencies.”

Academician Isa Habibbayli draws attention to the facts stated by researchers that the poet’s parents, who wrote in Persian, were Turks: “The poet’s father Yusif Zaki and his mother Raisa khanum were Turks. In Nizami’s works, the word “Raiseye-gord” written in Persian means a brave, or arrogant, proud Raisa. Yusif Zaki was engaged in crafts in Ganja. The master in the “Epic of the Bricklayer” assumes that the image of the builder is “a prototype of his father” (Habibbayli, 2017, p. 17). His repeated use of the Turkish word in his poems (torke-delstan, torke tannaz, torke seyah cheshm, etc.) confirms this. At the same time, he draws attention to the mourning of Khagani, one of the most powerful poets of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, the poet wrote:

*Hey, I was saying that Khagani should be my mourner,  
Unfortunately, now I am Khagani’s mourner*

The presence of Nizami’s grave in Ganja also confirmed that he was an Azerbaijani poet; the mausoleum built on his grave, and the fact that Alexander Griboyedov allocated 100 thousand manats for the repair of the poet’s grave, has been widespread in Azerbaijan for centuries. He recalls that S. A. Shirvani presented a perfect manuscript “Khamseyi-Nizami” to his student M. A. Sabir. In this sense Isa Habibbayli has collected all the relevant evidence and facts to confirm that the people who gave the poet to the world are Azerbaijan.

He explains that the poet’s legacy has been studied, analyzed and researched both in the country of his birth and in the world, that Nizami studies has become a “special direction” of world oriental studies, and that the world is interested in his rich heritage. It is possible to create a huge library of works translated into different languages. However, regardless of the language in which it is written, in which country it is studied and read, Nizami Ganjavi’s works are a high artistic expression of the Azerbaijani spirit. Nizami Ganjavi is a powerful representative of Azerbaijan in world literature, a great ambassador” (Habibbayli, 2017, p. 15). In the article “A word about Nizami Ganjavi” he analyzes and researches the poet’s “Khamsa”, which has a special place among the world classics.

The title of the great poet “Sheikh Nizami” is mentioned, according to the philosophical teachings of ancient and medieval times. The name Sheikh was given to a person who was either a tribal leader or a spiritual father. The word “sheikh” in Nizami’s work means that Nizami, who has conquered more spiritual heights, is like “the sultan of the realm of the heart” in his own words. According to his contemporaries, it is difficult to find an artist who speaks of “intelligence and perfection” as Nizami:

*Man is behind him,*

*The mind is everyone’s state, property.*

*Who is not mad enough,*

*Similar to human dragons. (Nizami)*

Academician Isa Habibbayli noted that Firdovsi was called a “poet of war and peace” and Fuzuli a “poet of the heart” and continued that “Nizami is the peak of the mind between a fight, war literature, action and the heart.” He sees his poetry as different from his successors and contemporaries, noting that there were those who called him a “Punch poet” and that these words also applied to his “Khamsa”: Or Nizami Ganjavi’s works are always as young as his “Khamsa” (Habibbayli, 2017, p. 18).

Isa Habibbayli, noting the comparisons of European literary critics from the Eastern context of his great artistic potential, is of the opinion that it seems that European orientalist were afraid to compare Nizami Ganjavi with Western poets and thinkers. Because from that comparison, prominent Western artists can lose a lot. Commenting on Homer’s “blind poet”, Shakespeare’s “master of tragedy” and Pushkin’s “sun of Russian poetry” in scientific and literary thought, Isa Habibbayli said that, figuratively speaking, “Nizami is a teacher of teachers, who has unimaginably great heights.” The teacher in art, and the “working student” who is always learning and searching for himself, calls the whole collection of Nizami’s “Khamsa” a “collection of aphorisms”.

Then, although his work has been approached by scientists and scholars from all over the world, it is necessary to point out some that have been of great value such as the works of A. Bakikhanov, Edward Bra, A.Y. Krimsky, AY Krimsky, YE Bertels, YN Marr, H. Arasli, M. Rafili, A. Alizade, M. Guluzade, AN .Boldyrev, A. Mubariz, R. Aliyev, J. Mustafayev, R. Azade and of course Isa Habibbayli.

It should be noted that the Nizami Ganjavi Center for Azerbaijan and Caucasus Studies, established in 2013 at Oxford University, one of the world’s most prestigious universities, under the leadership of academician Nargiz Pashayeva, spoke about the great literary and cultural

heritage of Azerbaijan, as well as how Nizami’s life and legacy will play a major role in delivering more objective information. Nizami’s recognition in the world, his life, heritage, humanistic ideological views are true and not only inform the world, but also, as academician Nargiz Pashayeva said, “... through the Nizami Ganjavi Center at Oxford University, we will be able to find answers to all questions of interest to the world scientific community about Azerbaijan and its region.”

## CONCLUSION

Every new idea that is said about Nizami contributes to praise this great artist who gives the “key” to the rich mysteries of Azerbaijan’s scientific-literary and philosophical worldview. Isa Habibbayli is correct in his view that “the world’s literature and public opinion will lose their order without Nizami.” The research that each literary critic does on Nizami’s work is of great interest in general because it allows an escalation of knowledge, new ideas, as well as a strengthening of theoretical thought. In this sense, Isa Habibbayli’s new insights into Nizami’s legacy in the period of independence are highly relevant. Research carried out by this scholar demonstrates the role of Nizami in the history of poetry, highlighting among other things how despite belonging to the entire Arab world, he came to the world in the land of Azerbaijan.

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