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## ROLE OF SUFISM IN SPREADING OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN AZERBAIJAN

In this work is investigated history of Azerbaijan in Islamic period. All historical sources about this article are given and their influence on Islamic culture to Azerbaijan is especially emphasized by analyzing through scientific methods. It is noted that there are ancient and wealthy history of Azerbaijan which is rooted with Islam, which had influenced to all spheres of Azerbaijan society. As a result, Azerbaijan linked unique identified and grandiose rich culture. We can show it in all cultural examples and ornaments. At the same time, authors investigate the religious structures, education, policy and historical facts in all periods of Islam in Azerbaijan. Also, it is indicated the new formulation of Islam in Azerbaijan society. Certainly, it is given information about influential Sufi movements, which acted in all towards of Azerbaijan. The Safavids, Hurufis, Suhrawardiya, Naqshbandi and Khalwati orders and their effect were especially emphasized, investigated as the research object which are spreaded in all Muslim World.

**Keywords:** Islam, Culture, Azerbaijan, Sufism, Education.

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### Әзірбайжанда ислам құндылықтарының таралуындағы сопылықтың рөлі

Мақалада Ислам өркениеті кезеңіндегі Әзірбайжан елінің тарихы зерттеледі. Көптеген тарихи дереккөздер келтіріле отырып, ғылыми зерттеу әдістері арқылы дәлелдене отырып, олардың Әзірбайжандағы ислам мәдениетіне әсері ерекше атап өтіледі. Әзірбайжанның өте көне және бай тарихы бар екені атап өтіледі. Көнеден келе жатқан әрі ислам дінімен біте қайнасқан, бай да сан қырлы Әзірбайжан қоғамының барлық салаларына дерлік және оның тарихына айтарлықтай әсер еткен-ді. Мұның нәтижесінде Әзірбайжан дара мәдени бірегейліктерге ие әрі сан алуан мәдениетті біріктіре алды. Бұған осы елдің мәдениетінің көрсеткіші болатын оюөрнектер мен бұйымдардан куә бола аламыз. Сонымен қатар, авторлар Әзірбайжандағы барлық исламдық кезеңдегі діни құрылымдар, білім, саясат және тарихи дәлелдерді зерттеу нысаны ретінде ала отырып, оның мән-маңызын мақаланың жаңалығы ретінде көрсетеді. Ислам дінінің Әзірбайжан қоғамындағы жаңа тұжырымы да көрсетілді әрі Әзірбайжан аумағында да әрекет еткен сопылық ағымдардың әсері туралы мәлімет қамтылады. Бүкіл мұсылман әлеміне кеңінен жайылған сопылық ілімдері, соның ішінде Сафауидтер, Хуруфия, Сұхривардия, Нақышбандия, Халватия тармақтары және олардың ықпалы ерекше атап өтіліп, зерттеу нысаны ретінде талданып, қорытындыланды.

**Түйін сөздер:** ислам, мәдениет, Әзірбайжан, сопылық, білім.

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### Роль суфизма в распространении исламских ценностей в Азербайджане

В статье рассматривается история Азербайджана в период исламской цивилизации. Ссылаясь на многочисленные исторические источники и на основании доказательства методами научных исследований, подчеркивается их влияние на исламскую культуру в Азербайджане. Отмечается, что Азербайджан имеет очень древнюю и богатую историю. И Ислам оказал значительное влияние практически на все сферы богатого и многогранного азербайджанского общества и его историю, которая имеет давнюю историю и полностью переплетена с исламской религией. В результате Азербайджан соединил уникальную и грандиозную культуру, что отражено во всех культурных памятниках и орнаментах. Кроме того, в качестве объекта исследования авторы берут религиозные структуры, образование, политику и исторические свидетельства всех исламских периодов в Азербайджане и раскрывают их сущность как новизну статьи. Также указывается новая формулировка ислама в азербайджанском обществе. Безусловно, в качестве объ-

екта исследования выделены, проанализированы и обобщены о суфийских течениях, которые действовали и в Азербайджане. В том числе особо подчеркиваются ветви Сафавидов, Хуруфия, Сухравардия, Накшибандия и Халватия, которые проникли во весь мусульманский мир.

**Ключевые слова:** ислам, культура, Азербайджан, суфизм, образование.

## Introduction

Azerbaijan was occupied by Semak b. Haris, Ismet b. Fagadand Bukeyr b. Abdullah in period of Caliph Omar. Then, Caliph Osman had sent troops to every corner of Azerbaijan and had chosen Ardabil center of these region. Even first mosque has been built by Caliph Ali in this region. Azerbaijan has been used as a strategic area by Ummayyads in the Caucasus. Azerbaijan lands were entered to Ummayyads, then to Abbasside in VII-VIII century. In this time, Khazars had occupied Dagestan, Derbend and Shirvan and they have killed 14000 people. Also, it is known that people of Dagestan returned again to their ancient religion. But, result of propaganda of Islam, they accepted Islam again. In this time, Hurrami movement had started under the leadership of Babek and his efforts to diffuse Mazdakism in southern Azerbaijan. Babek assembled around soldiers and occupied Hamadan and Isfahan as a result of this struggle. Finally, it was filled position Afshin who is original name Heydar b. Kavus with battle contrast to Babek (Bakihanov, 2001: 64-65). As a result of continued struggle was an armed rising of Babek in 837-838 years. And Babek was arrested by soldiers and carried to Bagdad. Babek has been killed by Abbasid king Muttasim (Said Nefisi, 1998: 135). Then, Azerbaijan overturned to part of Caliphate after this accident.

This period was very significant for Azerbaijan. Because this region has met with new religion, thought and culture. And Azerbaijan has overturned to part of Islamic history, geography and thought. There were many developed cities in Azerbaijan in VIII-X centuries. Ibn Havgal has said: "Berde is important and beautiful city, also Berde is mother of Aran (in Arabic sources historians as Taberi, Ibn Havqal and Yaqt el-Hamavidi and others emphasize these places as a Aran – Azerbaijan (Cemal Reshit Ahmet, 1998: 46) and this city the biggest city after Isfahan and Rey." Moreover, there were cultural, scientific and trade centers as a Derbend, Tabriz, Shamaki, Gabala and Ardabil. Even, Abu Dulef (Ebu Dulef: is known as Arabic traveler who lived in X ages. He has work called "Letter about travel". Look: Z. Bünyadov, History of Azerbaijan, p.236.) gave significant information about rivers, lakes, mountains, cities of Azerbaijan and again he

emphasized that these lands are very rich places, so there were produced gold, silver and other valuable metals in Dinavar and Shiz (Bünyadov, 1994: 237).

Moreover, education has not developed in the early period of Islam. Education started to revive after half century in Islamic world. We can observe this revival process in all regions of Islamic world. Mosques acted as education structures in Islam (Ebu'l Hasan Ali B. Muhammed, 1966: 57-58). Then were opened Kuttabs (Kuttab: "Mekteb", meaning is that place for writing and reading. Place for learning Kuran), and this educational centre was not wide and comfortable. Kuttabs were simple places for education. Also, in these places acted at private homes (Beytul-Ulama). Beytul-Ulama are not accepted as schools by societies, because in these homes, students could not be reasonable. Then, education has continued in Medrese, where were studied different subjects as theology, math, geometry, astronomy and others. These educational systems had acted all cities of Azerbaijan in period of Ummayyads. Moreover, Azerbaijani people visited Bagdad, Medina, Basra and Kufe for studying theology and science (Mahmudov, 1998: 56-60).

In period of Abbassids have been ended occupations of Azerbaijan lands. Lands of Azerbaijan overturned to one part of Islamic culture. Every place of Islamic world was opened Midrise. First religious school has opened in Nishapure and Qazvin. However, the biggest and famous midrise was "Nizamiyye" in Bagdad (Subki, h.1324: 6). Azerbaijanis had visited to Bagdad, Kufe, Sham, Kahira and other scientific and cultural centers of Islamic world for achieving experiences (Velixanli, 1993: 60).

In XV-XVI centuries, there were two big countries Shirvanshahs and Safavid in territories of Azerbaijan. Before Safavid there were Akkoyunlu and Karakoyunlu countries. However, Safavid occupied all these countries under control King Ismail. King Ismail has used political views of Shiite faith and they had called "Kizilbash". King Ismail was 14 years old when he became king and managed small country in year 1501. Then Ismail has linked all lands of Azerbaijan. Safavid Empire surrounded itself the Southern and Northern Azerbaijan, the Eastern Anatolia and Iraq, the Eastern Afghanistan and even the Southern Georgia.

In period of Sefevid Empire were active religious schools and Medreses. In these educational structures were studied Islamic law, math, logic, philosophy, astronomy and other religious and natural sciences (Bünyadov, 1994: 345). Moreover, it has increased the role of Turkish language in this time. For example, have been translated Koran to Turkish language during the time of Akkoyunlu Uzun Hasan (Nasibli, 2001).

Period of Khans is very significant for Azerbaijan history. This period surrounded approximately 150 years of history of Azerbaijan. This period is famous for its cultural centers as Baku, Shaky, Nakhchivan, Gange, Shusha, Shamaky, Tabriz, Ardabil, Lenkaran and Quba. At the same time, these cities were capitals of these small countries. These regions were wealthier with their agricultural and cultural diversity. For instance, in Karabakh were raised special kinds of horses, in Derbend, Guba and Baku saffron was grown. Shaky, Shirvan, Ganje and Nakhchivan were the centers of silk industry. In this period, oil-digging activity was observed in Baku and workers with their barehands have drilled oil wells. Handcraft works diffused in Baskal, Muci and Lahic villages. It is possible to say that carpet and pottery handcraft works diffused in every region of Azerbaijan (Bünyadov, 1994: 554-555)). It was possible to observe this development in all spheres. Poetry, literature and folklore had developed in period of Khans. There are cultural examples of this to nowadays.

In period of Khans, religious persons managed educational activities. As a being before, again children studied in religious schools what called Mek-teb or Medrese. Children used go to school when they were 10 years old and this activity continued all their life. It was mandatory do study Koran for Muslim children. However, children of poor families studied in religious schools and Medreses. Educational structures established in cities (Bünyadov, Yusifov, 1994: 558-559). In this period, being teacher (Muderris in Arabic) was an honorable work for everybody. Muderris teaches students Arabic and Furu id-Din (mainly subjects of Islam). At the same time, teachers were called Molla, Akhund and Mektebdar. Even, these persons managed charity structures and they gave information about religious stories in mosques every Friday (Bakihanov, 1985: 140). Shiiti Muslims called religious person "Akhund", Sunni Muslims called their "Efendi". These persons can give religious orders; celebrate religious ceremonies and other religious programs (Huseyinli, 1996: 5). In period of Khans, "Emri- bil-maruf, nehyi an-il-

munker" (instruct the good, forbid the wrong) was one of duties of religious persons (Bakihanov, 2001: 136). This was one of important duties in this time. This duty is known in Islamic history as structure of "Mutesib" (Kazıcı, 1987).

It is impossible not to give information about Sufi currents, which activated in all regions of Azerbaijan. It is possible to say that Sufism as a mystical movement developed with Islam in Azerbaijan. Therefore, there is a need to describe Sufi activities in Azerbaijan.

### **Justification of the choice of articles and goals and objectives**

The chosen research topic is based on the religious identification and the religiosity of Azerbaijan from an early age and it's basis. The need to study the impact of Sufi to the development of society is related to the significant impact of its orders, such as: The Safavids, Hurufis, Suhrawardiya, Naqshbandi and Khalwati orders. The main aim and objectives of the study are to give a brief resume of the historical background and today's condition and further evolution of the impact of Sufi to the society.

### **Scientific research methodology**

The results of the research work were achieved by using the historical and comparative, grouping (classification) and descriptive methods in the study of the influence of the Islamic religion and traditions on society, which is connected with the historical roots of the people of Azerbaijan.

### **Main part**

#### *1. Sufism in Azerbaijan*

Medieval ages were significant for Azerbaijan through the social and cultural prisms. It is known by historical information that there are important and developed cities such as asGence, Berde, Baku, Maraga and Tabriz. Even, these cities were well-known trade centers, since they were established on the silk way. In every corner of Azerbaijan have been built medreses, mosques, quest houses and other social-cultural significant buildings. Especially, there were developed science, craft and literature in Azerbaijan during the Atabek Seljuk Empire in XI-XIII centuries. Azerbaijani historian Z. Bünyadov calls the most beautiful ages to Atabek Seljuk Empire for Azerbaijan. It is known enough about Prime Minister Nizamul-Mulks actions in social-cultural life of

the Empire. Abbasgulu Bakihanov gives information in about his historic work called "Gulustani-Irem" that Nizamul-Mulk has helped scientists and poets (Bakihanov, 2001: 7). In this period were ripen famous persons as NizamiGencevi, Gatran Tabrizi, EfzeleddinHakani, ImameddinNesimi and others. We can show philosopher Ebul Hasan Behmenyar Ibn el-Merzban el-Azerbaijani who had fetched Islamic philosophy to Azerbaijan, philosopher and geographer NasraddinTusi who was follower of philosophical school of Ibn Sina, and we must give information about Shehabeddin Yahya Suhreverdy who was builder of Ishraky philosophy in history of Islam (Sadiqov, 1986: 32-33). Generally, in Seljuk Empire developed all spheres of social life, were built many scientifically centers and other social significant structures. Sultan Togrul gave especially importance to science and education. In medreses (religious school) was studied theology, philosophy, logic, math, geometry, astronomy, cosmology and medicine (Turan, 1969: 258). Also, Celebi gives information about actions of these Sufi currents and their roles in educational systems, especially accounts of mosques and medreses. And he emphasized that there are 7 medreses, 47 street schools in Shamaky (Ceferzade, 1994: 111). In Tabriz were 600 street schools and 47 medreses. Moreover, it was possible to observe this condition every regions of Azerbaijan (Hasanli, 2000: 15).

Azerbaijan is historically one of the unique places where Islamic Sufism first took shape. The first school established here was the Sühreverdiye order, systematized by Ebu'n-Necip Abu HafSühreverdi in the 12th century. Sühreverdi was not only a saint or sufi, he also acted as an advisor to the Abbasid Caliph and he even had a diplomatic mission to conduct peace negotiations. The Sufi school he established became popular in the Muslim world beginning in the 12th century. Azerbaijani Sufi followers of this school then founded the Ebheriye order in the 13th century and the Zahidiye, Safeviye and Halvetiye orders in the 14th century.

According to information of famous historian George Zeydan, increased educational structures connected with speared of Sufi houses with becoming stronger of Batiny current in beginning XI century (Gæniyev, Ismayilova, 1999: 11). Philosopher Pir Huseyn Abunasrmanaged these educational structures. At the same time, Khakani Shirvanihad remarked that he worked in his uncle's library and medrese in this time (Mahmudov, 1977: 138). Generally, Sufi actions have been diffused wide in the medieval ages in Azerbaijan. It was possible to observe

in everywhere their meetinghouses. In Azerbaijan lands have acted, Hurufiy, Suhriverdy, Nakshibendy and Khalvety Sufi currents. Especially, theosophical current Khalvety was effective in Azerbaijan, Anatolia, The North Africa and Europe (Yilmaz, 2004: 248).

## 2. Hurufism.

Mystical Gnosticism was the traditional form of Islamic mysticism in Azerbaijan. Hurufism is one of the important mystical Gnostic orders in Shiite Sufi community in the Meadville ages in Azerbaijan. Sufi FazlallahNaimiAstrabadi (1340-1394) founded the community at the end of the XIV century. Naimi showed an inclination for mystics and asceticism and could interpret dreams. There were many followers in Azerbaijan. Imamed-din Nesimi (1369-1417) was one of the important figures in this community. Nesimi spread the ideas of Hurufism far beyond Anatolia to Syria and other Arabic countries (Ashurbeyli, 1992: 180).

According to Fazlallah, - "the key to open seventh sealed book, the Qur'an, is a kabbalistic system of letters that is expounded by later Hurufis in the Hidayat-nama, Jawidan and in the Mahram-Nama. The Universe is eternal and moves by rotation. God's visage is imperishable and is manifest in Man, the best of forms: zuhur kibriya. God is incarnated in every atom. Hurufis considered Fazlu l-Lah, a manifestation of God's force after Adam, Moses and Muhammad. God is also embodied in words and the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet and the 32 letters of Persian one are the basis for love and beauty in the world. Seven is a key number corresponding to noble parts of the face, the verses of Al-Fatiha and verbal confession of faith. Man is a supreme copy of the divine and the key to haqiqat" (Astarabadi, 1921: 36).

According to R. N. Frye - "Hurufism was an expression of Ismailism in its mystical identification of human figure, but differed in its recognition of haqiqat in the substance of letters rather than in the person of the Imam" (Idem, 1998: 408-412).

After his death Naimi's ideas were developed and propagated by Ali Imamud-Din Nasimand Aliul A'la in Azerbaijan and SeyidIshag in Turkey. Nasimi (?-1417) and other Hurufis make kabbalistic tendencies subordinate to mystic concepts of Sufism, and specifically those of Mansur Al-Hallaj, who was another great influence on Nasimi (Kulizade, 1970: 48).

Through Nasimi's poetry Hurufi ideas influenced, in different degrees, people like Niyaz-i Mis-

ri, Fuzuli, Habibi, Khatai (Ismail I), and Rushani. The Bektashi Sufi order that was once widespread in Anatolia and the Balkans was a repository for the Hurufi teachings and writings. In fact, many of Hurufi manuscripts that are existent today were safeguarded in the libraries of Bektashi lodges. Hurufi terms and concepts permeate Bektashi poetry. Gül Baba provided an extensive compendium of Hurufi ideas in *The Key to the Unseen*. The Shattari tariqah is a contemporary repository of Huruf-e-Muqattiyat (secrets of the alphabets) (Idem, 1964: 15-22).

#### *Suhrewerdism*

Suhrawardiyas a philosopher, a Sufi and founder of Illuminationism, an important school in Islamic mysticism that drew upon Zoroastrian and Platonic ideas. The "light" in his "Philosophy of Illumination" is a divine and metaphysical source of knowledge. He is sometimes given the honorific title Shaikh al-Ishraq "Master of Illumination" and sometimes is called Shaikh al-Maqtul "the Murdered Master", referring to his execution for heresy. Mulla Sadra, the Persian sage of the Safavid era has termed Suhrawardi as "the Reviver of the Traces of the Pahlavi (Iranian) Sages" and Suhrawardi, in his magnum opus "The Philosophy of Illumination", thought of himself as a reviver or resuscitator of the ancient tradition of Persian wisdom. Arising out of the peripatetic philosophy as developed by Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (Weber, 1938: 1), Suhrawardi's illuminationist philosophy is critical of several of his positions and radically departs from him in the creation of a symbolic language (mainly derived from ancient Iranian culture or Farhang-e Khosravani) to give expression to his wisdom (hikma) (Keklik, 1982: 69).

Suhrawardi considers a previous existence for every soul in the angelic domain before descending to the realm of the body. The soul is divided into two parts, one remaining in heaven and the other descending into the dungeon of the body. The human soul is always sad because it has been divorced from its other half. Therefore, it aspires to become united with it again. The soul can only reach felicity again when it is united with the celestial part, which has remained in heaven. He holds that the soul should seek felicity by detaching itself from its tenebrous body and worldly matters and access the world of immaterial lights. The souls of the Gnostics (Eliade, 1996: 86-87) and saints, after leaving the body, ascend even above the angelic world to enjoy proximity to the Supreme Light, which is the only absolute Reality.

Suhrawardi elaborated the neo-Platonic idea of an independent intermediary world, the imaginal world. His views have exerted a powerful influence down to this day, particularly through Mulla Sadra's combined peripatetic and illuminationist description of reality (Nasr, 2006: 390).

#### *Safaviyya*

Safaviyya is an Islamic sect founded in the town of Ardabil of Southern Azerbaijan by a Sufi sheikh named Sheikh Safi ad-Din. He grew up in Ardabil, after travelling Ishaq, Shiraz; he settled in Gilan and became a student of Sheikh Zahid Gilani. Then he married the daughter of Sheikh Zahid and became the leader of the disciples in the sect, and after the death of Sheikh Zahid in 1291, he began to lead the sect. King Ismail has developed this Sufi order as a state ideology inside Shiite thought (Wird, 1998: 97-99).

#### *Nakshibandism*

Naqshbandi order also, is speared in India, China, Anatolia, Egypt, Palestine, Dagestan and Azerbaijan. Especially, in XIX centuries Nakshibandism as one of important Sufi order diffused widely in the Western Azerbaijan by Mir Hamza Nigari. This Sufi order have diffused in Karabakh, Qazakh and Borchli (Sothern Georgia) (Halili, 2003: 45-48).

#### *Khalvety*

The word "Khalvet" etymologically means "solitude" or "privacy," and in the Sufi terminology, it means a period of solitude when a dervish retires into seclusion in a Sufi lodge or mosque with the permission of his Sufi master in order to dedicate his daily life to worship and self-questioning in order to attain inner purification. This period generally lasts for 40 days. During this period, a dervish eats and sleeps very little, allocating as much time as possible to worship, reflection, remembrance (of God) and contemplation. The founder of the Halvetiye order, Pir Omer was fond of performing Khalvet and he would frequently retire into Khalvet.

### **Results and discussion**

Seyid Yahya Bakuvi, known as the "Pir-i Sani" or the Second Founder of the Halvetiye order had met Sadreddin, the Sufi master of the Khalvetiye order, in Shamakhi in the early 15th century. Bakuvi's father, Bahaeddin, was a reputable and rich man in Shamakhi, and he was also an important official at the Shirvanshah state. He wanted his son to follow

his example and take over his legacy. But under the influence of a dream, Bakuvi joined the Halvetiye order. Then, he started to attend the order's lodge and learn and practice the Sufi tradition. About a century after Pir Omer, Bakuvi re-systematized the Halvetiye order and played a major role in promoting the order. Before he died, Sufi master Sadreddin told his pupils to elect Bakuvi as their master. However, the dervishes elected Pirzade, who was older than Bakuvi. Therefore, Bakuvi left Shamakhi and went to Baku upon an invitation from Shirvanshah Halilullah. With his coming, Baku emerged as the new center of the Halvetiye order. If the Halvetiye order still survives in our time, this is thanks to Bakuvi's efforts.

It is captured believe of God mainly place in Bakuvi's worldview. He confirmed that God create in every time. Also, he accepted two type creation: real and metaphorical. According to Yahya Bakuvi God had created firstly substance and creation of

existence have occurred with elimination. If this process stopped then all existence can be murdered (Aliyeva, 2011: 36-40).

### Conclusion

In final of this research, we can emphasize that there is significant place of Azerbaijan in history of Islam. We can observe all these in different stages of Islamic history. Since, Azerbaijan had played importance role in develop of this culture. Azerbaijan overturned to carrier of Islamic culture, but it realized with protecting national values: Turkish customs and Islamic faith.

Also, it needs to emphasize that Azerbaijan is one important historical place for Sufi movements. Since, it is diffused many Sufi orders from Azerbaijan to different towards of the world. For it, it is possible to call Azerbaijan beginning source for every Sufi order.

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