

# HAJJ PILGRIMAGE IN 19<sup>th</sup>- CENTURY AZERBAIJANI SUFİ LITERATURE AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE TSARIST POLICY TO THIS MORAL VALUE

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**Abstract:** Naqshibandi sect of Sufism has made a great contribution the Islamic world. Several examples of this influence can be listed in different forms. But its unity mission among the people while safeguarding the national and moral values and in the same time, against the intrusive politics of strangers, has always been among the best examples that is worth to be mentioned. The Mahmoudiyya branch of the Naqshibandiyya sect of Sufism, which had been scattered in Azerbaijan in the 19th century, was demonstrating such a feature. The successors of this Sufi school have a role in the formation of Sufi literature. Pilgrims and the Mecca Pilgrimage have a special place in this literature. This ubiquitous value, which had led to the moral unity of Muslims in general, was also disturbing the Tsarist policy at that time. Our article outlines such features.

**Keywords:** Sufism, Naqshibandi, Ashik (Ashiq), pilgrim, Mecca Pilgrimage, poem, spirituality, literature.

## XIX ƏSR AZƏRBAYCAN SUFİ ƏDƏBİYYATINDA HƏCC ZİYARƏTİ VƏ ÇARLIQ SİYASƏTİNİN BU MƏNƏVİ DƏYƏRƏ MÜNASİBƏTİ

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**Xülasə:** İslam aləmi üçün Nəqşibəndilik böyük töhfələr vermişdir. Bunun nümunələri müxtəlif formalarda sadalana bilər. Ancaq onun milli-mənəvi dəyərlərin qorunmasında, eyni zamanda yad ünsürlərin məkrli siyasətinə qarşı xalq arasında daşdığı vəhdət missiyası qeyd edilməyə dəyər ən gözəl nümunədir. XIX əsrdə Azərbaycanda şaxələnmiş Nəqşibəndilik qollarından Mahmudiyyə qolu məhz belə bir xüsusiyyət nümayiş etdirmişdir. Bu sufi məktəbinin davamçılarının sufi ədəbiyyatının meydana gəlməsində rolu böyükdür. Zəvvar və həcc məfhumları bu ədəbiyyat içərisində xüsusi yer tutur. Ümumilikdə müsəlmanların mənəvi birliyini meydana gətirən bu ülvü dəyər o dövr Çarlıq siyasətini də narahat edirdi. Məqalədə bu əsaslar əks etdirilmişdir.

**Açar sözlər:** Sufi, Nəqşibənd, aşıq, zəvvar, həci, şeir, mənəviyyat, ədəbiyyat.

## Introduction

There are a lot of scientific arguments in connection with the origin of Ashik art. Because this old people's art has had different manifestations in different eras. Those who refer to the word's internal content along with its etymology, call it a kind of mystical Sufism tradition. From this point of view, the explanation of Uzeyir Hajibeyov's view attracts more attention. The word meaning is associated with the Arabic word of Eshq (love = عشق) and Ashiq (عاشق) means "Lover". The love refers to the spiritual and divine love.

According to this criterion, the art of Ashik has mainly served religion and spirituality and this heritage has passed from one generation to the next one. Above all, Ashiks have in course of the history spread religious motives such as truthfulness, belief in truth, perfection, mercy, purity, lawfulness, adultery, noble emotions, and spirituality through their artistic language. In other words, they've promoted details such as faith, belief, deed, sanctuary, personalities, and so on in the light of enlightenment. They've always had in their hearts the love of Allah and supplication of truth has been the main essence of their language. They used their poems, which are the result of their high language capabilities, to transfer this soul to the people.

Notably, in the history of Car-Tala, there have been many people's art and wordsmiths. Among them, we can name Ashiq Mohammad of Warkhiyan<sup>1</sup>, Abdulkarim of Warkiyani, Ashiq Jamal, Ashiq Donu, Ashiq Mohammad, Ashiq Rajab<sup>2</sup> Ashiq Arab and his son Ashiq Yaqub who been extensively studied by our (Gulnigar, 2009, 85.) scientists and (Hashim, 2004, 20.) have been covered in special publications and media.

However, manuscripts show that this field requires more in-depth research. Because, there are many masters of speech in each region that reflect the religious life of the people of the region, which has given rise to the spiritual wealth of the public. The main part of artistic speech wealth among the Muslim people of the Eastern world during the medieval era was made up of Sufism literature. The Sufism and Mysticism, which have had a leading role in broadcasting the philosophical thought of the era, have directly influenced spiritual life and spread mystic thoughts quickly. Therefore, as a method of promotion, one of the most common natural means of dissemination of the period was the art of poetry. The art of poetry, which gathers people around a particular thought, is masterfully crafted, religiously spoken in the language of the masters of words, and then introduced and disseminated among the people. For that time, the thoughts of the people, the philosophy of life, and the Islamic

<sup>1</sup> For detailed information on Varxiyanli Ashiq Mohammad, see: Hashim Ismayilov, *Book XII of Zaqatala – Notable Personalities*, Baku 2009, p. 23; Hashim Ismayilov, Gurban Shabanov, *Varxiyanli Ashiq Mohammad – Zagatala Ustad*, Baku 2000, p. 30-110.

<sup>2</sup> For examples of poems by overzealous lovers, see Muhammad Shabanoğlu, *Our History: What Manuscripts Speak*, ZAQATALA, Zaqatala District Public and Political Newspaper, No: 37 (8087), October 14, 2013.

religious thought laws and rules acted through the prism of Sufism.<sup>1</sup> The famous Orientalist I. J. Krachkovsky says: “During this period, the Islamic culture served as an example of a unique period of “renunciation” in the Caucasus.” (Крачковский, 1960, 574.)

In line with this, the religious and spiritual qualities were translated into poetry by wordsmiths as caused the rise of values in social life. These ubiquitous emotions rapidly spread to every aspect of people's lives, and on the other hand, they led to a stronger current social consciousness. Ashiq Murtuzali's “Aman Mahmoud Efendi!”, “Oh my God, I seek a remedy from You”, “Forgive for me my sins! Abdulkarim Varjiani's “Sheikh Mahmoud”, Ashiq Usta Rajab's “You're my desire Sheikh Ahmed!”, and a poem dedicated to Talal Ahmed Efendi, by an unknown author under the title of “Mubarak Sheikh Efendi”, Molla Gasim's “I seek intercession from you Sharif”, dedicated to Talal Ahmed Efendi, Ashiq Khalil's “Hadji”, “I cry” and “Let's to Come”, and a poem known to be written by Sheikh Mohammed's son under the title of “I seek a Remedy from You or Allah!” Abdulkarim Sakhi's “People without Prayer” and Ashiq Haji Qurban's “O My Lord have mercy on me!?” Poets were spoken in the region are among the samples. However, among the poems, there are some samples that are the most common one among the people. These are obtained by writing or causing others to write and have been protected as moral values. Among them are “Aman, Mahmoud Efendi!” and “You're my desire Sheikh Ahmed!” which have the highest number of manuscripts when compared with the others. This proves that they are more common among the elites. (Niyazov, 2016, 201.)<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Sufism poems of Jarli Ashig Khalil

Ashiq Khalil is a Sufi poet who lived in the Jar-Tala region end of the 19th century. His poems "I Cry", "Let to Come", "Hajise", "I Said Alhamdulillah" constitute unique examples of Sufi literature in the region. It should be noted that these samples were obtained from archival documents that are new to the scientists. Ashiq Khalil's two poems are important in terms of their subject, and these two poems each have their own unique deep meaning from the point of view of meaning and the thought. Love is the most important matter in these poems, containing their life experiences which they've translated them into poetic forms. The poem "Hajise" has such a context. Because Ashiq Khalil, indeed, narrates in his poems the tradition of the time in which he lived, and mirrors the feelings of his people in regard of the their respect and esteem towards the sacred values.

<sup>1</sup> For detailed information see: Ahmad Niyazov, “Religious life, Science and Madras in the North-West region of Azerbaijan (Ganykh-Khaftaran valley) in the 19th century. Baku-2016 (Published by Presidential Decree on the theme “Preserving Traditional Islam” based on the draft of the Committee on Religion); Ahmad Niyazov, “Azerbaijan as the center of Sufism in the Caucasus”, Department “Traditional religion in Azerbaijan”, 197-222, Publication of the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations, Baku, 2014. ; Ahmad Niyazov, “A general view on the Caucasus madrasas (Sample Jar-Balakan)”. KUT, Faculty of Theology Journal, 2/2 p.20, Trabzon, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> For poems, see Appendices

According to him, the Mecca pilgrimage had been among the traditions of the people of the region and they were looking forward impatiently throughout the year to visit the sacred lands. Preparations had been made months in advance, and road supplies had been prepared. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) says in His words: “They are the guests of the Most Gracious” as prescribed by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), people saw the pilgrims as servants of the Most Merciful. They wanted the pilgrims to represent them as well and pray on their behalf at every holy place they visit along their road, and in every sanctuary they land in.

It is one of the peculiar customs here that the pilgrim who returned from Mecca pilgrimage said "Haji", and "Hajjul-Harameyn". However, they used the name more in correspondence which shows their respect to the pilgrims. It is known that Mecca and Medina were declared two sacred places in the Islamic faith. Another meaning of the word "haram" is a holy place in Arabic. In this respect, again, it is one of the peculiar examples of the region that the pilgrim who went on the pilgrimage to the Kaaba for the worship of Hajjul-Haramaini used to say to the pilgrims Hajjul-Haramaini (حاج الحرمين) - the pilgrim who visited the two holy/scared places”. This phrase not only can be found in documents and letters, declarations, record books, and information but also in gravestones. In fact, it is a rare occurrence in the Muslim world that respect and reverence for religion and religious values is the limit.

Haji Khalil is among Ashiqs who paid more attention to these divine values and the holy places in his poems, describing situations the same as they're in real life. For praising the sacred ceremony of Mecca Pilgrimage, he wrote a poem named “Hajis”, and another poem named “I said Alhamdulillah” which indeed narrates the feelings of those who leave those holy places.

### 1.1. Hajis

*When you arrive in Bayt Allah<sup>1</sup>,*

*Don't forget us hajis!*

*When you visit any holy place,*

*Don't forget us hajis!*

*When hajis wear on Ihram<sup>2</sup>,*

*When you wear soul in the right way,*

*When you say “Labbaik”<sup>3</sup>,*

*Don't forget us Hajis!*

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<sup>1</sup> House of Allah

<sup>2</sup> The special covering cloths hajis wear for doing the Pilgrim rules

<sup>3</sup> The words that the Pilgrims say at the time of circling the Kaaba (Tawaaf)

*When you arrive in Mina City,  
When you see Ismail Zabihullah,  
When you visit that holy place,  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

*When you enter into Halab City,  
And visit Zakariya, the Messenger's, tomb,  
When you pray there,  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

*When you're in the way of pilgrim,  
When you climb "Qixlar" Mountain,  
When you see the White Minaret,  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

*When you enter into Bab us-Salam,  
When you stand around the Bayt,  
When you see the Holy Bayt,  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

*When you enter into Madina City,  
When you see Rasulollah,  
When you say Salam to him,  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

*When the Hajis wear in Ihram,  
And walk from Safa to Marvah,  
When you drink from Zam-Zam's water,  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

*When you pass in front of Rukn al-Yamani<sup>1</sup>,  
When you arrive at Rukn al-Iraq,  
When you touch the Kaaba door lock,  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

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<sup>1</sup> The southern corner of Kaaba, which is towards Yemen

*The holy pharos,  
Has a gold gutter,  
May the God accept your pilgrim,  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

*The Ibrahim Stand,  
When you see its green cloth full of Ayah,  
Please visit it and,  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

*When you climb Jabal Qubeys,  
And look at Mina's road,  
When you slaughter animals and shave and trim,<sup>1</sup>  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

*When you return from Arafat,  
When the circling ends,  
When you offer Umra prayer,  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

*Haji Khalil be thankful!  
Say the words of the Lord!  
Think by yourself!  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

*Haji Khalil fell into love,  
Forgot himself when saw pilgrims,  
How beautiful is Hajj road,  
Don't forget us Hajis!*

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> When you're going from Muzdalifa to Mina, after stoning the evil (رمى جمرات), have to slaughter an animal and shave and trim their hair and then wear off Ihram.

## 1.2. I said Alhamdu Lillah<sup>1</sup>

*Hajis are in their way,  
The camels are in que,  
Each follows the other,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*Then I said “pull” to Arab,  
Don’t let me to go upset,  
I miss “oh my Lord”!  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*We’ve forty stands,  
I read the revealed Quran,  
Arab told me “Anzel”<sup>2</sup>!  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*All the way deserve visit,  
We visited tomb that pure Pir<sup>3</sup>,  
Where the balance was set up,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*Visited Madinah al-Munavvara,  
Visited the Holy Prophet’s tom,  
The tomb of Rasool,  
Saw this Alhamdu Lillah!*

*The regret is over,  
I joined to my Prophet,  
“I’m your ummah!” I said,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Lord

<sup>2</sup> Get off!

<sup>3</sup> “Pir” means elder and refers to the man of highest rank in Sufism

*I came to visit you,  
To go the God's path,  
I believe on your intercession,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*You're my rightful prophet,  
Please count me as one of Ummah,  
Say me, welcome my Ummah!  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*You're the last prophet of Allah,  
We're all your ummah,  
Het said "hello my ummah!"  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*You're belonging to Quraish<sup>1</sup>,  
Oh Abulqasim, Muhammad!  
And your name is Ahmed,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*Oh Ahad, oh Samad!<sup>2</sup>  
Min an-Nuri Muhammed,<sup>3</sup>  
He Intercede for servants before God,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*Najm<sup>4</sup> is your name,  
All your body became the light,  
All your body became the light,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

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<sup>1</sup> A tribe that the Prophet belongs to it

<sup>2</sup> "Ahad" and "Samad" are the names of Allah; Ahad means He's the one and Samad means He does not depend to anyone but all depends on Him.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad created from light

<sup>4</sup> Najm means star also refers of one of Quran's Surahs.



*Your tomb is in a mosque,  
The steel barriers around it,  
I really lost my patience,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*Also visited the tombs of Omar and Ottoman,  
Ali and Abu Bakr,  
Told the words of worship,  
Saw our Prohphet Alhamdu Lillah!*

*Abu Bakr, the Sediq<sup>1</sup>,  
They were the sincere companions of the Prophet,  
Oh my God, you're the breadwinner!  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*Your name is pure and good,  
A descendant of Ibrahim,  
Pure is name of all his children,  
All of them Alhamdu Lillah!*

*Zeynab<sup>2</sup> and Ruqayyah<sup>3</sup>  
Ummi Kolsum<sup>4</sup> Fatimah<sup>5</sup>  
All are Prophet's daughters and His descendants<sup>6</sup>  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*We entered into Bab as-Salam,  
And saw the holy Kaaba,  
Then stand on four sides,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

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<sup>1</sup> Sediq means truthful

<sup>2</sup> Imam Hossein's sister

<sup>3</sup> Imam Hossein's daughter

<sup>4</sup> Imam Hossein's sister

<sup>5</sup> Imam Hossein's daughter

<sup>6</sup> The tombs of all the named people are in Syria – probably the hajis passed through Syria (Halab) in course of their Mecca Pilgrimage

*There are four faiths and four stands,  
And one Imam in each stand,  
All covered by black curtain,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*The cover curtain is black,  
All verses written on it,  
I went closer to it,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*The four dimensions are marble,  
There are many gold gutters,  
The columns continue up to the heaven,  
And sow the light Alhamdu Lillah!*

*Has His head at the ar-Rahman's Heaven,  
All the world obey His Order,  
The seven earth and skies obey him,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*I've a Lord that's very high,  
His name is Imam,  
He calls me (to prayer) five times,  
And we said our prayer Alhamdu Lillah!*

*We all hajis gathered together,  
And sow Ibrahim there,  
Visited Mecca, Madina and Sham<sup>1</sup>,  
Saw all Alhamdu Lillah!*

*I worshiped Allah,  
And told Salam to the Prophet,  
Then towards the Qiblah,  
We stand Alhamdu Lillah!*

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<sup>1</sup> The old name of Syria

*Wearing the haj cloth on my shoulder,  
Together with other hajis,  
And could approach the Kaaba,  
And touch it Alhamdu Lillah!*

*It's Hajar al-Asvad<sup>1</sup>  
The genuine gold and ruby,  
Placed in (wall of) Bayt ul-Mamur<sup>2</sup>,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*We, the Hajis, gathered together,  
Wear Ihram cloths,  
Drank from Zam-Zam<sup>3</sup> water,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*One who stands in Safa and Marvah<sup>4</sup>,  
The truth that is the essence of Quran,  
When I went and returned seven times,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*With bare feet and head,  
With a sincere heart just for the Lord,  
Because He has this ordered,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

*After circling in Arafat,  
Went to Mina at midday,  
Into Ibrahim's Mosque,  
And read Alhamdu Lillah!*

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<sup>1</sup> Means the "Black stone" and it's the name of a stone placed by the Prophet into the Kaaba's wall. Therefore, all the Hajis try to touch it at least once.

<sup>2</sup> One of names of Kaaba

<sup>3</sup> Name of a well with holy water in Mecca

<sup>4</sup> Name of the two mountains that Hajis walk between them 7 times

*The worship in Arafa,  
I did the Sunnah,  
May the Paradise be,  
For these poor people Ahamdu Lillah!*

*Oh poor Haji Khalil,  
The strange and helpless,  
The Ayat is on my mouth,  
I said Alhamdu Lillah!*

\* \* \*

## **2. Prohibition of Hajj under Tsarist policy in the nineteenth century**

One of the most important aspects of Hajj worship was certainly the opportunity for a pilgrim to become involved with the Islamic world, regardless of where they live. The pilgrims, who performed their worship in the Holy Land in the midst of spiritual unity and brotherly feelings with the believers, grew stronger in terms of spirituality by acquiring spiritual feelings, and promoting those values upon their return. This was deeply troubling to Tsarist Chineseovniks of that time, making it difficult for them to manage the citizens.

That is why Tsarist Chinovniks took another policy in this regard. They began banning Muslims from the Mecca pilgrimage. Thus, the Tsar's most brutal villain in the region, General Yermolev, wrote a letter to the Tsar, addressing the following facts:

### **“To His Majesty!**

*Residents of the Muslim provinces normally visit Mecca. Given the current state in Turkiye, I think it would be best to ban it. Those returning from pilgrimage not only bring different rumors with them but also witness the Turks' bad attitude towards Christians. They consider the Sultan as their caliph; they are more likely to believe in his power... ”*

Tsar Alexander I replied as follows:

**“His Excellency the Imperial Highness needed to ban residents of Muslim provinces from visiting Mecca for a certain period of time...”<sup>1</sup>**  
(АБПР, 1829, 24.)

<sup>1</sup> The original of this document, researched by Russian Caucasian scholars, has not yet been involved in scientific circulation. Soltanov Jahangir, “*Islamic factor during certain periods of historical and political life of Zaqatala*”, Scientific Assembly of Zaqatala Branch of Baku Islamic University, No 3-2008, p 182.

According to this letter, a ban was imposed on those who wanted to go to the Mecca pilgrimage and only allowed those over the age of fifty years. The essence of this was that it was intended to minimize the influence of the Islamic world on the region by keeping young people away from the Pilgrimage. The ban lasted from 1822 to 1905. During this time, only those who were able to get special permission would be able to visit Mecca. Once the people obtained a certificate from the village executive, they would then apply to the zone representative and wait to receive permission in the future. It turns out that, due to limited conditions and occasions, this sacred journey was accessible to all, but to those known well by all the people and testified on the basis of unanimity of the community members. This idea, which targeted the social unity of the community, required the pilgrimage candidates to refer to several authorities to get the final permission. One of these applications for issuance of a permit had been sent from Qimir village to Zaqatala. The following is the (3KM KII-6682.) text of the document written on August 23, 1864;

**No: 2948**

**To Mr. Tala the Chief of the Zakan Region  
From: Mohammed son of Jabrail the resident of Qimir Village  
Petitio**


*I tend to go to Pilgrimage to carry out one of my religious obligations. The residents of my village are ready to certify me for going on a one-year Mecca Pilgrimage in Rome (Ottoman Empire) country. Since this application has been certified by Mukhakha executive, I have attached the certification signed by local people and ask you to kindly approve my application and issue the permission. Please also issue the proper order on the issuance of a passport for going abroad which is required for going to Mecca Pilgrimage.*

**Written on the 20th day of Rabi al-Awwal of 1281 (24 August 1864)  
I, Molla Bayram, wrote these words based on the petitioner's request**

The prohibition, which lasted until 1905, was completely lifted by negotiations with Varantsov following a rally of five thousand people gathered in Zagatala Square following the call by Aslan Bey Gardashov one of the prominent figures of the Azerbaijan People's Republic (Soltanov, 2008, 183).

### **Conclusions**

Since Islamic beliefs have mainly been mixed with the customs, habits, and traditions of our people, it is possible to witness a beautiful lifestyle. Because it's historical past was mingled with the teachings of the school of mysticism one of the ultimate aims of the community has since long ago been education and growing up a complete human for the community. In order to achieve this goal, the followers of the Sufi and the mysticism have made all



endeavors to pass the road of inner completeness. Although they build the world, but ignore the world themselves.

The ultimate goal in the teachings of Sufism school was the cultivation of decent, perfect human beings, and the nurturing of human beings. In this training, the element that makes a person human is to be decent, and the most perfect person is the one who makes himself decent and adorns himself. Therefore, there are many phrases in the teachings of Sufism that introduce this criterion as a formula. Haji Khalil is among Ashiqs who paid more attention to these divine values and the holy places in his poems; describing situations exactly in the manner, they are in real life. For praising the sacred ceremony of Mecca Pilgrimage, he wrote a poem named “Hajis”, and another poem named “I said Alhamdulillah” which indeed narrates the feelings of those who leave those holy places.

#### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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