



About Some Religious Customs of Shii Muslims in Azerbaijan in the 19th Century

XIX. Yüzyılda Azerbaycan'da Şiî Müslümanların Bazı Dini Geleneklerine Dair

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Abstract

As in other Muslim countries, traditions formed on the system of religious beliefs have an important place in the culture of Azerbaijani people. These traditions, which are an integral part of Muslim culture, were formed under the ideological influence of many denominations and doctrines. The purpose of this study is to examine some aspects of the traditions that existed among Shiite Muslims in Azerbaijan in the 19th century. Despite the need to study Islamic culture in post-Soviet Azerbaijan, there is still a lack of comprehensive research on the subject. In this context, the cultural traditions of the Azerbaijani people, mainly Shiite Muslims have been studied on the base of alams, kirkachar cams, prayer rugs and the other samples which belong to the 19th century and are being preserved in the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan. Although the research aims to examine the spiritual culture, the specificity of the materials in the article as an example of art, the meaning of the structure, the technique of preparation, the content of the patterns and calligraphy on it have been also studied. At the same time, in order to show the connection of the mentioned traditions with the historical past of the people, reference has been made to the previous periods and as a result, the ethnographic features belonging to the 19th century have been identified.

Keywords: Religious customs, Alam, Keshkul, Sharbatkhor, Prayer Rug, Shia Muslims

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Öz

Diğer Müslüman ülkelerde olduğu gibi Azerbaycan halkının kültüründe de dini inançlar sistemi üzerinde oluşan gelenekler önemli yer tutmaktadır. Müslüman kültürünün ayrılmaz bir parçası olan bu gelenekler birçok mezhep ve tarikatın ideolojik etkisi altında oluşmuştur. Bu çalışmanın amacı XIX. yüzyılda Azerbaycan'da Şiî Müslümanlar arasında var olan geleneklerin bazı yönlerini incelemektir. Sovyetler dönemi sonrası Azerbaycan'da İslam kültürünü inceleme ihtiyacının ortaya çıkmasına rağmen, konuyla ilgili kapsamlı çalışmalara hala rastlanmamaktadır. Bu sebeple, başta Şiî Müslümanlar olmak üzere Azerbaycan halkının kültürel gelenekleri, Milli Azerbaycan Tarih Müzesi'nde korunan XIX. yüzyıla ait dini geleneklerle ilgili elem, keşkül, şerbethor, kırkaçar camı, seccade gibi materyaller üzerinden incelenmiştir. Araştırma, halkın manevi kültürünü incelemeyi amaçlasa da makalede yer alan materyallerin sanat örneği olarak özellikleri, yapılışının anlamı, hazırlanma teknikleri, üzerindeki desen ve hat yazılarının içeriği de araştırılmıştır. Aynı zamanda söz konusu geleneklerin halkın tarihsel geçmişiyle bağlantısını göstermek için önceki dönemlere de değinilmiş ve sonuç olarak XIX. yüzyılın etnografik özellikleri tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dini gelenekler, Elem, Keşkül, Sarbethor, Seccade, Şiî Müslümanlar

Introduction

The cultural heritage formed by the people over centuries developed and enriched mixing with Muslim culture. Muslim culture formed by spreading of Islam could awake a great interest to the science. Muslim historians were already learning the history of Islamic culture referring not on the base of amirs' and maliks' (monarch) lives way but according to the scholars' thoughts (Əliyeva, 2017, 201). Besides, having more public character Islam being different from other religions and it is not limited just with temples or sacred places. On the other hand, Islam has great affective opportunities in public-cultural attitudes (Paşazadə, 1991, 107).

Since that time, the ideological changes happening in the people's life of Southern Caucasus made a great formation of changes in their welfare, too. Entering Islam geography decorative applied art based on graphical, geometrical, floral patterns began to form in the territory of Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, this process lasted for a long time and Islam culture could affect on some fields very late (Qasimov, 2008, 234).

Different religious writings were on the things used by Muslims especially by Shia's in Azerbaijan. Quran ayats, prayers, the names of 12 imams were engraved on rugs, metal things, clothes and wall decorations. Such writings were mainly on plates, water containers used in farming, which meant that they were praying for benefit and blessing. Sometimes there were Quran ayats on the guns too. It meant, "To win" in the battles (Mustafa - Numan, 2006, 346). Having written in Arabic language such inscription on the borders and in the panels were used as a decorative motive relevant to the letters' forms (Nemət, 2003, 247, Nemət, 2004, 27). From this point of view, there are a lot of materials used in everyday life but it will not be right to accept them as religious allocation. Because the appointment of materials must not be defined according to theme of writings on them but according to their role in welfare. The tradition of writings in welfare things having religious content lasted until the beginning of 20th century. From the beginning of 15th century, the inscriptions on the welfare things taken from Holy Quran began to lose its importance and it replaced with poems of East poets. Among these poets Hafiz, Saadi, Nizami took an honorable place.

1. Artifacts Belonging to Religious Beliefs and Ceremonies

While making ethnographical research it is possible to study traits of Islamic culture by researching in everyday life in Azerbaijan until 20th century. "Alam"s consist such of these materials. "Alam" means a banner, a flag in the Arabic language. Since ancient times a flag has been the symbol of fights. Fighters showed heroism in order to save the banner not to let it come down. Nevertheless, after Battle of Karbala "alam" had a religious meaning as a fighter symbol among Muslim belonging to Shias. That is why "alam" is accepted as a sect symbol among Shias living in modern time in Nearest Middle East countries and in Azerbaijan. Shias accept it as a symbol of being martyrs in Karbala and they raise it in the ceremonies, which takes place in Muharram month. It connects with the legend about Abu-al Fazl Abbas who showed unexampled heroism in the Battle of Karbala. It happened in the field of Karbala in Iraq in 680 (hidjri camary 61) (Şərifov, 2013, 185). Imam Husayn and his followers who were encircled by Khalifa Yazid began to decisive fights. It was mentioned in historical sources that Imam Husayn gave "alam" to his little brother before the fight on Ashura day. Moreover, Abu al-Fazl who protected Imam Husayn until the last moment was a martyr; his arms were cut while he went to Euphrates River to bring water to tents. Although the enemies wounded him, he tried to protect the "alam" until the end (Şərifov, 2013, 182-183). One of the main episodes of Ashura ceremony is the heroism of

Abu al-Fazl. Symbolizing “alam” as cut arms of Abu al-Fazl on the mentioned ceremonies has the aim to make Karbala incidents alive. “Alam carrying” ceremony which is held on Ashura day on Muharram month expresses this theme.

Picture 1: In Baku “Shakhsey Vakhsey”, 19th century, Photographer M.K.Popov (National Museum of Azerbaijan History, Fund of Documentary Sources, No 1331)



Another view also exists with the formation of alam. References to the legends as the people informed “alam” having the shape of hand appeared as the symbol of “Ahl al Bayt” and symbolizes in itself five holy persons: Prophet Muhammad, Imam Ali, Fatima Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn. It was also mentioned that remorse penitents (Tawwabun) first used “alam”. Later “alam” was characterized as one of the main symbols of Shia Muslims and some other religious-political movements.

Picture 2: Alam, 19th century (National Museum of Azerbaijan History, Ethnographic Fund, No 3284)



We have to point that in different regions of Azerbaijan in the past on “alam carrying” ceremonies not everybody could hold “alam” as it was considered holy one. The men called “Dastabashi” (Group leader) “Alamdar” were chosen for it who passed youth and had prestige among people. Besides, historical literature and ethnographic materials show that this ceremony was held under the name of “Shakhsey Vakhsey” (it means Shah-Husayn, vakh-Husayn) in some regions of Azerbaijan and country sides of Baku (Musayev, 2006, 252, NMHA EF No, 1331, 1339). Both on “alam carrying” and “on Shakhsey Vakhsey” ceremonies rhubarb and elegies were told which were described the Battle of Karbala. Historical literature informs that such ceremonies, which were register officially during the Safavids reign, were also held in earlier times too. According to this historical information, rituals, ceremonies and condolences describing Karbala event were held everywhere in Azerbaijan before Safavids period (Bünyadov - Əliyev, 1994, 153). In modern time, this ceremony is more characterized for Lankaran-Astara regions where religious traditions are stronger.

As we mentioned “alams” which were the symbol of religious ceremonies consisted of various assortments according to their forms. As a rule “alams” made of metal had a hand form but sometimes they were prepared in the form of crescent, pear-shaped, round or

as a flag form of a sharp knob. Nevertheless, in some regions of Azerbaijan “alam” was differed from banner. In some villages of Masalli region, this ceremony is called “Tuggezdirme” which means banner carrying (Bayat, 2014, 150). The “alams” and banners used in Azerbaijan were brought from ideological centers especially from Karbala. However the “alams” made by local artisans were used too. The “alams” considered untouchable, holy among people can be considered beautiful art samples of metal ware for their patterns on them. Artisan skillfully used national ornaments and patterns on alams (NMHA EF No, 3285). Inscriptions on the “alams” are mainly the names of “Ahl al Bayt” (NMHA EF No, 2104, NMHA SMF No, 3288).

A number of samples, which have a hand shape belonging to 19th century, are kept in Ethnography fund (storage) of National Museum of History of Azerbaijan. Most of “alams” made from yellow metal differ from others for very few features. These differences are mainly observed for their measures and content of writings (NMHA EF No, 2101, NMHA DSF No, 3288). The inscriptions on the alams consist mainly of the names of the Ahl al-Bayt: on the alam made of bronze (29 cm in height, 11 cm in width) in the middle with a large nastaliq line *الله، محمد، علي، فاطمة، حسن، حسين* (“Allah, Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Husayn”) were engraved. (NMHA EF No, 2104). On the alams (NMHA EF No, 2101, 2102) made of bronze and copper by the method of chopping were engraved first the worlds: *الله (Allah), محمد (Muhammad), علي (Ali), فاطمه (Fatima), حسن (Hassan) and حسين (Husayn)*. Allah's greetings to the family of the Prophet Muhammad and the martyrdom of Ali, Hasan and Husayn were engraved on the edges (NMHA DSF No, 2101, 2102). At the same time among the materials, we come across to “alams” in the shape of half-moon. Besides, the banner of black cloth were also used funeral ceremonies. One of the samples of these banners is kept in the Ethnography Found (Storage). The banner which has triangle shape which is black is decorated with floral patterns and has the words in Arabic “Ya Mazlum Husayn” (Poor Husayn) on it. In the middle of it, there is description of “Shiri Khurshid” (Khurshid’s lion) (NMHA EF No, 2862). It should be noted that such flags are not called alam because the word “alam” is accepted as a term among the people and has a special meaning and does not have a lexical meaning.

In the Ethnographic Fund of the museum, among the materials related to the sect, there are Sufi keshkuls (dervish bags). If we look at the historical sources on the history of Sufism, we find that the ideas of Sufism have been spreading in the territory of Azerbaijan since the early days of Islam. The book *Kitabuz-Zuhd*, originally written in Arabic by the famous Islamic scholar of the Shaybani tribe, the jurist Ahmad ibn Hanbal al-Shaybani al-Marwazi (d. 855), which is also believed to have been written by his students, states that Islam An influential person named Veysel Qarani (d. 657), who was considered one of the Sufi ideals in the early days of his conquests, settled in Azerbaijan and died there (Ahmed ibn Hanbel, 1993, 480).

Sufi historians claim that the Sufi movement in Azerbaijan dates back to the 10th century. The names of many Azerbaijani Sufis, such as Abu Husayn Dundari-Shirazi, Husayn ibn Yazdinyar, Abu Hasan, Abu Zura, Abu Abbas, Abu Said Abdal Bakuvi and others, who lived in this period, which is called the “Sufi period” in the sources, are also found (Rihtim, 2011, 211-213). From the 12th century onwards, the period of sects began in the history of Sufism in Azerbaijan, and Sufism was divided into separate branches on the basis of various theoretical ideas.

Picture 3: Keshkul, 19th century (National Museum of Azerbaijan History, Ethnographic Fund, No 523)



Dervishism also has a special place in Sufism. “Dervish” is a Persian word meaning “door-to-door”, “beggar”. The word “poor” is used as the Arabic equivalent of the word. In Sufism, both of these concepts are used. Dervishes, who lived a more nomadic life and had a poorer lifestyle, were often involved in the propagation of sectarian ideas (Ahmed, 2012, 150).

As mentioned, the term “poverty” in the term “dervish” means to give up material wealth and blessings. Because Sufi dervishes struggled with selfishness and lived a poor life, far from wealth, it seems that the kashkuls, which were apparently considered the dervish's bag, also emerged as a symbol of racist ideology, such as renunciation of worldly blessings and contentment.

Dervishism was especially widespread in Azerbaijan in the 18th and 19th centuries. This can be said based on the large number of specimens preserved in the Museum of History of Azerbaijan. Most of the kashkuls belong to that period and attract attention as examples of high art.

Kashkuls were mainly made of coconut shell and in some cases copper. The materials in the Ethnographic Fund of the museum show that in Azerbaijan the kashkuls were mostly cigar-shaped, sometimes oval in shape, and made in different ornaments and styles. The oral part of the ankle-shaped scales is either completely in the center (NMHA EF No, 2101, 523), or by being relatively outside (NMHA EF No, 2101, 526, 3160), is heart-shaped, which can be assumed to be not accidental. Thus, the human heart is one of the main topics of Sufi-dervish teaching. In Islam, the mind, knowledge, purity of heart, justice in public relations, and so on. While such moral values are considered to be equally important conditions of perfection, in Sufism such principles as the close connection of the mind and man with the life of society are either of little importance or are completely abandoned. According to Sufi teachings, only cognitive evolution, that is, the reform of the heart in order for man to attain spiritual perfection and divine love, is accepted as a fundamental value. Therefore, the heart is at the heart of Sufi ideology. Perhaps the fact that the mouth of some squirrels is heart-shaped symbolizes this factor.

The decoration of the kashkuls with high artistic taste and national ornaments is especially noteworthy. The depiction of rich floral patterns on it is one of the specific features of the kashkuls preserved in the fund. In particular, copper ornaments were carved and engraved, national ornaments were used with great elegance, floral patterns,

scenes depicting various aspects of dervish life, as well as words in the spirit of Sufism in Arabic were engraved: "O great Abdullah, perceive me! O great Abdullah, perceive me! O great Abdullah! Written by Sheikh Ali/ date 1293=1876-th year". The famous saying "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful" is engraved on the border of another kashkul. Poems in Persian in the margins was written:

دلّم از قیل قال کشفه ملول | ایخاشا خرّقه و خشا کشکول | از کتون سمور بی زارم |

باز میل قلندری دارم | باز جند سحری ز سر مکحول کنم | بر خیز که تا دست بر کشکولیکه (NMHA EF No523).
"Turn to kashkul and go straight to kashkul. Everyone indents to aspire you. Adherent of the murid, I am looking for that murshid. My lord, if you have sorrow in your heart, murid will give you kashkul and will help you. Kashkul is an oratory for everyone". In general, these materials once again confirm the spread of the Sufi-dervish sect in Azerbaijan in the 19th century, as well as the high development and popularity of decorative-applied art. Syrup makers (syrup bowls), which were used in more religious ceremonies in the past, can also be considered as rare examples of the traditional art heritage of the people due to their rich design. Several juicers preserved in the ethnographic fund are astonishing in terms of the delicate workmanship of the patterns and inscriptions on them. Syrups were usually made in large containers, as they were intended for ceremonial use, not for everyday use. During the Muharram ceremony, it was customary for a person entering the assembly to drink specially prepared syrup as a blessing. This, as a rule, applied to women's assemblies.

According to the believes such tabarruk came from blessing, it was considered a spiritual facility, a means of healing mental and physical ailments and at last it was good deed. On the other hand as it was said it was used to share syrup with everyone who came to the ceremony, because Muharram month rituals reminded whole Karbala tragedy. They said that drinking sharbah-syrup caused or made a person to be thirsty and in this case, it was easy to understand or feel martyrs situation and their trouble in Karbala field. According to the belief, such mourning was rewarding (Bayat, 2014, 151). Usually sharbat-syrup was shared in sharbah containers having a wish difficult or complicated situation to be settled. Such ritual is realized nowadays in some regions of Azerbaijan, especially Lankaran-Astara ethnographic region.

The sharbat-syrup containers made of copper with forging method sometimes were made of pottery. They are in different sizes and design. For example, some sharbatkhors-syrup cups consisted of three parts pedestal, cylindrical body and main gloss. However, the others were made in the shape of pot, long that don't have special pedestal or body and some were made of pottery in the shape of aftafa (pitcher). Nevertheless, handmade work on the syrup cups awake great interest. Gentle plant patterns, the names of 14 innocent persons, the elegies about Karbala tragedy and other religious writings were engraved on these cups with highly and exactly in Arabian, Persian languages with "naskh" calligraphy in a scratching method (Aliyeva, 2003, 256-257). The descriptions on long, pot shaped cups gives us opportunity to consider that this cup was used not only in religious ceremonies but also for celebrations. For example on one of the cups we can see a depiction of tiger hunting a gazel, besides of animals depictions, there is a man who has a tambourine that shows opposition of religious destination (NMHA EF No, 9472).

Picture 4: Sharbatkhor, 19th century (National Museum of Azerbaijan History, Ethnographic Fund, No 9486)



The blessings of Allah to the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatmayi-Zahra and the twelve Shiite imams are engraved in a large, beautiful line on the belt-shaped border of the mouth of the syrup No. 9486 which belongs to the Ethnographic Fund of National Museum of History of Azerbaijan:

اللهم صل على محمد المصطفى على المرتضى فاطمه البتول الحسن و الحسين السبطين و صل على زينالعابدين و على محمد الباقر و رفعج الصادق و موسى الكاظم على محمد النقي و النقي على الحسن العسكري الامام المهدي الهادي صاحب الزمان و صلوات الله سلامه عليهم اجمعين آمين يا لرب العالمين (Əliyeva, 2003, 255).

At the beginning of 19th century "kirkachar cam" (the cup for "40" opening ceremony in Shia Muslims) made of copper took special place in the welfare culture of Azerbaijan people as protection amulet. The number "40" – forty was considered the holly one in religious outlook and mystic imaginations of Azerbaijan people like other eastern peoples. The number forty was also differentiate in the Islam religion and a lot of divine were connected with it. Prophet Muhammad said: "The person who spread 40 hadith about love to Ahlul-Bayt is better than he spends forty thousand dinars as a sadaqah", "The one who learns 40 hadith by heart from my ummat Allah will make him scholar or faqih on doomsday" or "The person who eats pomegranates will leave the satan out of soul for forty days". Even in folk samples in epic, tale and legends the role of this number is large. For example in "Malikmammad" tale (one of Azerbaijan famous tales) Malikmammad fights with Divs for forty days, forty nights. Alternatively, with help of simurgh bird, he supplies forty bushels of meat and forty bushels of water to enter the enlightened world. Except all these we came across with many proverbs as: "Quduran qırx gün gedər" (The rage lasts for forty days), "Qırxında öyrənən gorunda çalar" (Learning in the forties plays

in the grave), “Dəni qırx dəyirmandan gəlir” (His grain comes from forty mills), “Bir gün duz yediğin yerə qırx gün salam ver” (Greet the place where you ate salt for forty days) (Abdulla, 2007, 375). The point connected with number 40 – forty is also exist in some traditions of our people, especially birth traditions. In the past, these various ways connected with forty number were used in order to keep away from bad spirits or the woman who borne a child had to be kept and protected with her child (we call it “çiləyə düşməmək” – not to fall into “chile” – trouble). It was a bowl having 40 tiny copper boards, which was considered the key for settling every difficulty and had depictions of 12 zodiac towers. The “mamacha” (midwife) used to pour water from this bowl on the head of “zahi” – the person who just gave a birth to the child (Cəfərova, 2001, 467-471). It expressed the number of the days after birth. A.P. Popov noted that it existed in the family traditions of Turkish people the Far East especially in family welfare of Siberian Tatars (Popov, 1949, 160).

The witches in Near East and Middle Eastern countries and in Azerbaijan used to inform the faith beforehand with the help of “kirkachar cam” – bowl for ceremony forty – 40. They even used to interpret a dream, physicians used to treat women who didn't have a child and also sick people were cured by pouring water on the shoulders for twenty times. According to another tradition for the people who faced with a great tragedy in order to get rid of it and it was called “çilə kəsmək”-“defeating the trouble or evil eye”. Usually the person whose “çilə” (40 days) was going to be cut were bandaged with white ropes on his hand and toes for three times, the person who did it slowly singing the spell song cut the ropes with scissors and it was repeated for three times. Then the ropes were kept on the head and water was poured, it meant all trouble was cleaned and it was believed that the person got rid of his troubles (Abdulla, 2007, 375). The “kirkachar cam”'s belonging to the Ethnography Found attract with their structure composition. The ayahs and suras from Quran-i Karim in Arabian (more Surah of “İkhləs” and “Ayat-al Kursi”) also “Allah”, the name of prophet Muhammad and imams as Ali, Hasan, Husayn are engraved on the most of these bowls on both sides of stripes. On some of them “40 prays” were engraved. The writings and patterns on them were used of naskh script and scratching method (Əliyeva, 2003, 358). At the top and bottom of a 19th-century bronze glass, in Arabic script and naskh, are written the blessings of Allah to the Prophet, his daughter Fatima, and 12 imams. The inscription on the top of the container - البتول فاطمه الحسن و الحسين نبيطبلسا و صل على زين العابدين و على محمد الباقر و جعفر الصادق و موسى الكاظم على الرضا و محمد التقي و على النقي , the inscription at the bottom continues المهدى صاحب الزمان و صلوات الله سلامه عليهم اجمعين آمين يا لرب العالمين (Əliyeva, 2003, 255).

2. Ethnographic Features of Sajjadas Used for Worship

One of the main indicators of Islamic culture in the daily life of our people is the items used during worship. A large part of such materials preserved in the museum are examples of prayer rugs. Prayer rugs, which originated in connection with religious rites, is used, as always, to be prayed over. These prayers, which differ in size, artistic structure and color, consist of different varieties depending on the piece, the style of the pattern, as well as the type of embroidery. With the spread of Islamic culture in the Caucasus, various floral and geometric patterns were placed on the handicrafts made in the field of ancient weaving and embroidery to reflect the unity between man and Allah, the world and the hereafter (Bünyadov, 1994, 164). American orientalist Rouzentel noted that the union of religion and art in the Muslim culture became a reality (Əfəndiyev, 1976, 33). In this case, besides the thematic artistic embroidery or knitting patterns on “namazliq” the writings connected with holy persons, ayahs from Quran-i Karim, the names of artists knitting

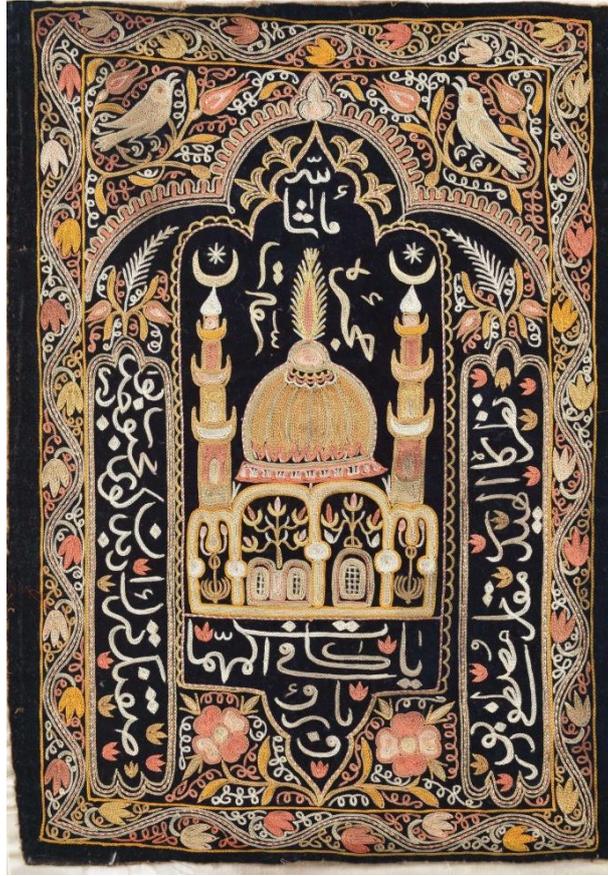
with hijri take honorable place. The first weaving sample created by the influence of Islam is “janamaz”. The “janamaz” was irreplaceable rug of the prayer Muslim. Prayer rugs of the 19th century used by the Muslim population of Azerbaijan were woven in various sizes. At the top of the prayer rug, an arch was placed for the place of prostration, and ayahs of the Qur'an were engraved on the belts of the composition. Therefore, prayer rugs in Azerbaijan are called "janamaz", "mehrab" (altar), "taghi" (arch) in Iran, and "sajjadah" (prostration) in Turkey and in most Arabic countries. Prayer rugs can be divided into two groups according to their composition: 1.the independently weaved carpets after spreading Islam, 2. Carpets woven from the 16th century on the basis of sketches by professional masters. The arches and altars were mostly woven on top of the prayers. If you pay attention carefully to the artistic order of arches, you can see that they remind us a person figure and it confirms that the namazliqs are related with religious believes (Керимов, 1983, 122). Let us note that such tags are characteristic for grave monuments in Azerbaijan after spreading Islam. Latif Kerimov wrote that he didn't have any doubt that these descriptions on the namazliqs have very old and deep origins these arches were the symbols of seven famous planets, or the sun, the moon or Venire-love and beauty divine (Керимов, 1983, 122). The arches were used in the arrangement of mosques too. In fact, arches were not only characteristic for Arabian architecture. It was used in the sanctuary in the past. Arches used till 7th century in descriptions and architecture weren't left after Arabian occupation, even it also supported the development of new traditions integrating to Islam traditions further (Керимов, 1983, 105). In the arrangement of namazliq “altar” pattern has advantage (Mustafayev, 2009, 84). We can come across to prayer rug compositions in arches part of mosque and temple. It seems the compositions were used in decoration elements first in architectural monuments and later in applied arts.

Besides the description of mosque there was the weaving date in prayer rugs too. In some cases we can also see different crosses, “bukaghi” (the symbol of family unity in Turkish people) and bird descriptions belonging to the religion of Gok Tengriciliq or Tengrism. Such descriptions on the prayer rugs show that it was not so speedy to change old religion and accept the new one, in the earlier period of Arabic occupation. Although they had political advantage even mosques were built in Ardabil, Shamakhi, Derbend but the Azerbaijanis could not get rid of zardusht, pagan and believes of Christianity of their ancestors (Vəlixanlı, 2016, 115). According to the Islam sharia, description or image of any living beings is not considered acceptable. In spite of it both in Azerbaijan and in neighbor Turkey, there are prayer rugs where we can see description of living beings. The description of camel is weaved on the prayer rugs, which belong to the Tonus region of Turkey. Nevertheless, later in order not to give any harm to the prayer paint was poured on it (Kayıpmaz - Kayıpmaz, 1988, 13). Religious sources exists in the hadiths about the description on the prayer rug. As one of the sahabahs (companion of Prophet Mohammed) Abu Hurairah told: Once though the angel Gabriel allowed him to enter the prophet's room he said to Prophet:

“How can I enter the place where a curtain is hang with a horse and a man on it? You have to either take away the heads of them or put the curtain on the ground. We will not enter the place where the pictures are in the angels” (Eyupoğlu, 1998, 287).

From this incident, we can conclude that it was not reprehensible to pray on the prayer where the images are on the foot not on the head.

Picture 5. Prayer rug, 19th century (National Museum of Azerbaijan History, Ethnographic Fund, No 4150)



The inner and external views of mosques are masterfully described on some prayers. On one of the prayers, the holy and sacred place of Muslim Kaaba is described. Beytullah or Kaaba, which is considered the house of Allah, believed the first temple in the humankind by prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) built due believes of Tawhid conviction. Having built this temple, he founded the faith due to Tawhid conviction as Hajj. One of five terms and conditions that Allah told all the Muslims is the necessarily of visiting Kaaba, if he has financial opportunity. The messenger of Allah prophet Mohammad visited Kaaba for three times: two before Hijrah and one after Hijrah period (Nəsirov, 2014, 254). From this point of view, the description of Kaaba was described on some prayers. Probably, it was for the persons who had always visited Hajj. The things used while namaz as muhr, tasbeh-rosary, beard comb or sometimes tooth sticks or misvak were weaved on the prayers (Керимов, 1983, 119). We can see such images on the prayers in Azerbaijan and Dagestan. There is an embroidery sample in the ethnographic collection of National Museum of History of Azerbaijan. Mohr, rosary and the words “Subhana rabbiyal aziim ve bihemdih” are moved on this embroidery belonging to Shamakhi region. This expression is used while doing namaz and it means: I glorify my Almighty Lord with flawed faces. Except it the words Allah, Muhammad ya Ali are are embroidered in the middle of circle (NMHA EF No, 1465). From this point of view, another prayer rug differs from the others with its extraordinarily belonging to the 20th century. Thus, there are religious writings along the altar and border. The Ali’s sword is weaved on it. The swords weaved both on the left and right shows love to Imam Ali by Shia Muslims (NMHA EF No, 2271). The other point which differs the prayer rug is the floral descriptions worked with filling technique and the names of Allah worked in the circle with sewing method. One of the fragments on

the prayer is the writing: Subhane Rabbiyalazim or Muhammed Allahu akbar (İnnâ fetahnâ leke fethan mubînâ (mubînen)) with the meanings: I glorify my Almighty Lord with flawed faces, and Muhammed is great without any doubt, we gave you obviously conquest. Let us note that this writing was taken from the surah when Muhammad conquered Mekka. We can come across the description of Zulfiqar sword or Surah al-Fath on the flags exhibited in the exposition of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan. On some prayers, the moon and stars are woven in parallel with Zulfiqar's sword. The half-moon and star has great place in the Islamic history. The name of this form of moon as hilal is given in Quran, too. It will be not right to make mistake between the hilal weaved on the prayers and the ancient moon believes belonging to the Turkish peoples. Mainly the moon and star given together are the pure Islamic symbols. There is a wall decoration sample in Museum collection with almost all Islamic symbols on it (NMHA EF No, 9706). The mosque, hilal over it, star, altar, chandelier and Zulfiqar sword are weaved on it. The sun weaved over the mosque at the same time two phoenix birds weaved on it shows that the people not only respected the values of Islam, but also could not get rid of genetic reminders in the 20th century. Although in Islamic worldwide birds, are heaven symbols, but in ancient times in Iranian mythology phoenix appears before us, too. After Islam, phoenix also appears in stories where mythical features, especially mysticism, are felt (Çoruhlu, 2000, 172). On this wall decoration were embroidere in Arabic various graces. The writing in hidjri 1331, which accords to 1960s, shows that this decoration belongs to the 20th century. It is also possible to read the names of khalifa Ali and his sons Hasan and Husayn. At the top on the right is written hamd va hamd.

We have to note that in the past prayer rugs were used as valuable presents given to the rulers. Left from 16th century the antique prayer sized 163x110 sm Safavid rulers gave to Ottomans Sultan III Murad as a peace gift (Bünyadova, 2014, 88). Generally, today the prayers weaved in Azerbaijan are being preserved in the famous museums of the world. Among valuable exhibits in Topkapi museum there are some rugs weaved in 16th century in Azerbaijan (Керимов, 1983, 122).

While researching the prayers we think it will be better to divide them into 3 groups according to their patterns. First group, the symbols of Islam: mosques, chandeliers, Zulfiqar sword, mohr, rosary, Quran, hilal, star and etc. The second group includes ayahs and religious writings in Arabic language, the third descriptions belonging to the earlier believes before Islam which contains: peacock, buta, phoenix, trees and others.

Conclusion

It is clear from the research that under the influence of Islam, a new culture was formed in Azerbaijan - Muslim culture. Although this culture had a general Islamic character before the Safavids, it was based on the Shiite faith in the post-Safavid period. In the 19th century, some of the cultural values studied in the article were based on the traditions formed during the Safavid period. Even in the pre-Safavid period, some of the Sufi sects affiliated with the Sunni sect (such as the Dervish sect) adopted the Shiite faith. The inscriptions on the dervish caskets also prove this. These inscriptions mostly contain the names of Shiite imams. Although dervishes living in other Muslim countries in the Middle Ages used kashkul-like vessels, in Azerbaijan the design of dervish kashkuls and ornamental patterns on them had a national character. It should be noted that during this period, along with the Sufi dervishes belonging to the Shiite sect, there were many Sunni Sufi sects operating in different parts of the country.

At the same time, since the population did not completely forget the ancient customs in the period under study, it was sometimes possible to find traces of pre-Islamic religious

beliefs in Azerbaijan, such as magic and sorcery. In the nineteenth century, this could be seen more often in the performance of some rites through a forty-foot glass. For example, prayers for the Islamic faith were recited during such rites, which were performed with forty glasses to protect a newborn baby or a woman from evil spirits, although the verses of the Qur'an were recited. The prayer rugs used during worship of the period which we are studying were also national in nature due to their composition and patterns. At the same time, motifs related to living beings which were not found on prayer carpets in Arab countries were characteristic for Azerbaijani prayer rugs. Textiles, including prayers, were mostly decorated with various verses from the Qur'an, the names of imams, the sword of Zulfiqar, and other inscriptions symbolizing Islam.

Thus, the examples of material culture with a religious content used in Azerbaijan allow to study the role of the Islamic faith in the cultural, social and everyday life of the Muslim population. Traditions based on the Shiite faith have a special place in the domestic culture of the Muslim population of Azerbaijan and have been passed down from generation to generation as an integral part of the life of the population.

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