

Late Onset of Sufism in Azerbaijan and the Influence of Zarathustra Thoughts on its Fundamentals

Parisa Ghorbannejad¹

Abstract

Islamic Sufism started in Azerbaijan later than other Islamic regions for some reasons. Early Sufis in this region had been inspired by mysterious beliefs of Zarathustra which played an important role in future path of Sufism in Iran the consequences of which can be seen in illumination theory. This research deals with the reason of the delay in the advent of Sufism in Azerbaijan compared with other regions in a descriptive analytic method. Studies show that the deficiency of conqueror Arabs, loyalty of ethnic people to Iranian religion and the influence of theosophical beliefs such as heart's eye, meeting the right, relation between body and soul and cross evidences in heart had important effects on ideas and thoughts of Azerbaijan's first Sufis such as Ebn-e-Yazdanyar. Investigating Arab victories and conducting case studies on early Sufis' thoughts and ideas, the author attains considerable results via this research.

Keywords: Sufism, Azerbaijan, Zarathustra, Ebn-e-Yazdanyar, Islam

Introduction

Azerbaijan territory² with its unique geography and history, was the cultural center of Iran for many years in Sasanian era and was very important for Zarathustra religion and Magi class.

¹ PhD, Faculty of Science, Islamic Azad University, Urmia Branch, West Azarbayjan, Iran. Email: gorbannejad@gmail.com, Tel: +989143473828

² According to historical evidences both in western and Iranian documents regardless to little changes during history, Azerbaijan geographical territory limited from north to Aras river and Ararat Mountains, from west to Zagros Mountains, from south to Orumyeh lake and from east to GhezelOwzan river (Sepid river- in Mogul Hoolan Mooran) and Talesh Moutaians. Islamic geographers considered Nakhjavan in the other side of Aras River as a part of Azerbaijan (Zaryab Khooyee, 1379, 1/206). Formation of Iran northwestern province in Sansanian period which was controlled by one of four governors (PigoloSekaya, 1372, 242) named AzarbazganEsbahbaz shows the importance of

It was a symbol for Iranian rituals with many temples and large estates which belonged to Mogi. Historical sources confirm that there was a mysterious intellectual background in this territory before Islam which not only continued after Arabs invasion of Iran but also its effects and consequences remained as domestic Sufism. Although Sufism started in Azerbaijan later than other Islamic regions, but traces of pre-Islamic theosophical beliefs remained among Sufis of Azerbaijan. These thoughts continued alongside exclusive and pure Islamic Sufism initiated and penetrated in the third Hegira century in this territory. This had a long history in the tenet of chivalry which appeared in Azerbaijan as the result of political and social evolutions.

Among all the cities mentioned by Islamic geographers just some of them were the origin of the growth and spread of Azerbaijan Sufism such as: Ardabil, Oromiyeh, Tabriz, Sarab, Khoy, Maragheh, Shabestar and Ahar. Authors of "MasalekvaMamalek" (rituals and territories) books describe cities of Azerbaijan and mention that they have almost fair weather, desirable fruit gardens, abundant mineral water, nice-looking people, prosperous markets full of goods and customers and various religious centers. Tolerance of citizens with different religions in these cities surprised the authors.

No research has been done on this topic yet and the recent study will survey reasons of delay in starting Islamic Sufism in Azerbaijan compared with other Islamic regions in an analytical approach and will address the influence of Zarathustra theosophical ideas on initial beliefs of Sufis. The importance of the study is highlighted in analyzing the proximity of Islam and Zarathustra theosophical thoughts in the region and their mutual interactions which shows that artistic (theosophical) view to religion exists in all divine religions.

Background of Islamic Sufism in Azerbaijan

Unlike other Islamic territories such as Egypt, Morocco, Hijaz, Iraq and Khorasan, well-known mystics and Sufis³ introduced themselves to Islamic culture and civilization from Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan in Sasanian period and early Islamic era. Although just two cities of Ganzak and Orumiyeh were mentioned in Pahlavi and Zoroastrian texts (Oryan, 1371, 69).

³ Such as ErafilMaghrebi (late 2nd century), Yousef Asbat (d 196 AH), Abu-alasvad Maki (late 2nd century), Abu-Hashem Koofi (d 161 AH), DavoodTayeeAntaki (d 166 AH), OveysGharani (d 37 AH),

Abu-Isaac Ebrahim-ebne-YahyaJoveynani⁴ (Karbalayee, 1349,1/275) was the first mystic who lived in late 3rd Hegira century. According to Rowzat-al-Jenan (written at 9th century in Azerbaijan), he was the first person known as a mystic in this region(ibid). But in some credible documents which belong to first centuries on Sufism history such as Solmi's andTabaghat-al-Sowfieh (d 412 AH), Ansari's Tabaghat-al-Sowfieh (d 481 AH) and even in Jami's Nafahat-al-Ons (d 898 AH), Abu-al-Hassan Alarmooy has been mentioned as the first known Sufi in Azerbaijan with a social base and khanqah (monastery). He lived in second half of 3rd Hegira century contemporary with Abu-Abdollah-ebne-KahfifShirzai (d 371 AH) and Sheikh Abu-AbdollahRoodbari (d 369 AH) but there's a little information on his life and beliefs. We only know "he was one of the elders of the tribe contemporary with Hosri⁵ (d 371 AH) (Attar Neishaboori, 1366, 2/pp 288, 291).and Abu-AbdollahRoodbari and Ebn-e-Khafif. He lived in Oromi and was buried there." (Jami,1370, 239)

Jami quoted this short description of Abu-AlhassanOrmavi with small changes in Tabaghat-al-Sowfieh. Ansari mentioned his name as Abu-AlhosseinOrmavi and wrote: "Bu-Alhossein was a Seyed (descendant of the prophet) from this tribe." (Ansari Heravi ,1362, 532).

And other content is the same as Tabaghat-e-Ansari text. On the other hand, taking a careful look at another Ebn-e-YazdanyarOrmavi's grave, a Sufi from Azerbaijan, this text can be read clearly: "This is the grave of high excellency sheikh Abu-al-Bakr Hosseinebne Ali OromiYazdanyardied in 3rd decade of fourth Hegira century⁶" (Ramyan, 1340, 159). Accordingly, Ebn-e-Yazdanyar whose biography has been mentioned in most of credible and first references of Sufism is a predecessor to Abu-AlhosseinOromi and is the first Sufi of this region. Abu-AlhosseinOrmavi was contemporary to Ebn-e-Khafif and Roodnari and Hasri who died in the second half of fourth hegira century. Ebn-e-Yazdanyar had a special position and rank which made him different from Baghdadis like Shebeli, etc. and their method of Sufism.

Hassan Basri (d 10 AH), Muhammad Vase cotemporary with Hassan Basri, Abu-IssacBalkhi (d 166 aH), ShafighBalkhi (d 174 AH), Abu-Ali Marvzi (d 187 AH).

⁴ Related to a district of Tabriz which has been ruined.

⁵Abu-al-Hassan Hosri Baghdadi was from Basra and lived in Baghdad and was sociable with Shebeli. He has a notable position and participated in Sema with his followers. He was detracted in presence of Caliph. So Caliph investigated him and finally let him go"

⁶-This tombstone was in Orumyeh until early years of 14thShamsi Century and now is kept in ancient Iran museum.

Consequently, Sufism history in Azerbaijan is not earlier than second half of third Hegira century (birth date of Ebn-e-Yazdnayar).

It's necessary to consider two hints at this stage: first why Islamic Sufism appeared after 3 or 4 centuries after Arab invasion of Azerbaijan? Second what was the manifest of early Sufis of Azerbaijan which can be interpreted as a sign of connection between Islamic Sufism and heritage of culture and pre-Islam religions? First, the issue of delay in the existence of Islamic Sufism in Azerbaijan is addressed.

Investigating Reasons of Delay in Sufism Appearance

Undoubtedly, the spread of Islam in Azerbaijan has not occurred at the same time as in Iraq, Hijaz and Yemen. In Hijaz, since the first Hegira year, the base for Islamic governance and the spread of Islam, a prophetic religion, was formed. Yemen joined this scope when Prophet Muhammad was still alive and Iraq and Egypt joined the territory of Islam governance and culture in Rashidun Caliphate era at the first half of first Hegira century. Although Azerbaijan was invaded by Muslim warriors in the first years of third decade in first Hegira century and according to authors of victory books Arabs arrived at Azerbaijan since then (23-643 AH), no government established there capable of setting up Islamic social cultural institutions and just civil institutions became active and Azerbaijan residents were loyal to their old beliefs of Zoroastrianism till early years of 4th century⁷(Petroshfski, 1351,46).According to archaeologists' findings and reports of Muslim travelers such as Abu-Delf itinerary (Abu Dolaf, 1407, 363). there are evidences that Takht-e-Soleyman fire temple and Zoroastrianism school of Azerbaijan were active and provided Azerbaijani Zoroastrians society of Azerbaijan with religious services.⁸

⁷-Although Schpoler evaluated Krinsky comments about large number of Zoroastrians in Iran till 4th Hegira century as an exaggeration, but did not deny it. (Schpoler, 1369, 1/ 346 -349). Whom adopted Islam in Azerbaijan never left all of their Zoroastrian beliefs aside (Chuksi,1381,134). Most of residents in cities of Sistan and Azerbaijan remained Zoroastrian till mid-Abbasid period .Muslims had no access to the villages beside Aras river till later tears of 3rd century (ibid,96- 102). for more information look at : (Movahed, 1385, 144-145).

⁸-Zoroastrianism initiated from east of Iran plateau about 500-600 B.C. Magus supported this religion (VidenGreo, 1377, 112). and made use of the chance from ruling Sasanian dynasty to join Zarathustra life with their domestic land of Azerbaijan (little Mad) in competition with eastern Magus lived in Rey (Bois, 1374 ,94). built numerous religious centers in Azerbaijan and they were successful to show their homeland as the center of Zoroastrianism. This claim has been mentioned in Islamic documents and many of them considered Azerbaijan as the birth place of Zarathustra (Ammożgar, 1375, 22). Azerbaijan was important for Sasanian government and religion in military and religious aspect and Kertir built new fire temples and boosted Parthian kings' summer palace as Azargoshtasb fire temple

Azerbaijanis paid annual taxes to the invaders for their personal freedom and conducting religious behaviors in fire temples especially at Takht-e-Soleyman (Chuksi,1381, 30). On the other hand, due to the lack of permanent presence of Arab army in Azerbaijan, people had the opportunity to revolt. Such insurgencies took place in Ardabil, Oromieh till 3rd century of Hegira(Sayeedi,1379, 7/478;Kasravi, 1355, 106). It was only at the late years of Umayyad dynasty (41 to 132 AH) that Arab colonies could fix their footprint in Azerbaijan especially in the rural areas where insurgents were active. Tabriz was established by Zobeydeh wife of Haroon-al-Rashid (170-193 AH) on the wreckage of an Iranian village (Chuksi, 47). In later years, Muslim immigrants built their mosques in cities like Ardabil in places where they had not to pass Zoroastrians neighborhoods. If we consider mosque as a base for Muslims and a sign of Islam spread, in places far away from major cities of Azerbaijan there was no mosque ⁹(ibid, 117-118).

According to historical analysis of new historians, increasing Arab population may be a reason for Khorramdinan uprising in third Hegira century, a riot led by a heretic semi-Zoroastrian named Babak with followers among commons and rural society. He was a guard for Mazdak beliefs and a propagandist for his manner. Hatam-ebne-Harasameh, ruler of Azerbaijan, led an uprising as vengeance for his father. Khorramdinan made use of this as an opportunity to crack Arab domination. BabakKhorramdin's uprising led to his dominance on cities like Ardabil and after 20 years of fighting he was finally captured and executed in 223 AH. His followers escaped to Azerbaijan Mountains and their staying in remote rural areas made it difficult for Islam to diffuse in such places (Schpoler, 1398,370). Weak Sajian dynasty (267 to 317 AH) who disobeyed Abbasids was a chance for Zoroastrian society to live peacefully alongside Muslim Arab colonies in Azerbaijan and keep their religion and traditions for years. It was just after invasion of fanatical Turk tribes with hardline opinion on traditional Islam in, (Basani,1366, 5/278).

Rich Zoroastrian families can be found from Ardabil to Oromieh till 4th Hegira century which remained from religious feudalism of Sasanian era and had both land ownership and religious leadership. They were almost from Zoroastrian priest families and they guard Zoroastrianism.

(Army fire place) and supported religion and government there and secured Hirbods, priests and Sasanian kings.

⁹- In Gharan khan era there was no mosque or bathroom of Islamic style in Azerbaijan. For more information look at:(rashid-al-din-Fazlallah, 1940, 325).

Their positions were allocated by Caliph officially and even increasing their taxes (3 times) by Arab and Muslim officers had no effect on their religion and traditions (Chuksi, 123). On the other side, there were just poor Zoroastrians captured by Arabs in uprisings who were forced to adopt Islam and never had the chance to live equal to Arabs.¹⁰ Certainly, this condition did not allow the appearance of Muslim Sufis and mystics from commons of Azerbaijan territory in the first three Islamic centuries.

Despite the late acceptance of Islam in Azerbaijan, it's necessary to remind that habitation of Arab colonies and executing religious regulations and their life styles and implementing Islam rules by Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties gradually changed people's opinion on their own culture and made them more familiar with Islam. This resulted in facilitative and gradual acceptance of Islam. Consequently, the interaction between Islamic culture and traditional culture (Zoroastrianism) was inevitable because no culture can resist when surrounded by other culture.

Arabs and their rulers could not conquer whole territories of Azerbaijan. In addition, some factors resulted in late diffusion of Islamic culture in Azerbaijan including non-rational behaviors of rulers and their agents, continuous turmoil, inaccessibility and remoteness of the region, difference between lingual and cultural basis of residents and invaders, rooted Zoroastrianism traditions in Azerbaijan and power of Zoroastrian feudal families. Quran quoted Zarathustra as Majoos (Haj/18) which means they must be treated by tolerance (although this verse includes hint not promise).

Zoroastrians could prevent Arabs from destroying fire temples by referring to this verse and other quotations of Islam prophet and consider their religious books as divine books (Schpoler, 1/337). Therefore, the presence of Zoroastrianism in Azerbaijan results in late onset of Sufism and mystery as signs of Islamic culture in this region compared with other Islamic territories like Yemen, Sham, Hijaz, Iraq and Khorasan.

¹⁰- When military prisoners freed, releasing people for religion adaptation had little importance (Chuksi, 97).

Influence of Zarathustra mystery on thoughts of first Azerbaijan Sufis

The second issue of concern is whether Zarathustra culture and religion and its branches in Azerbaijan could influence new-comer Islamic culture and the appearance of Sufism or not.

Undoubtedly, in order to recognize Sufism in Azerbaijan and its situation since the beginning until Mogul dominance, the ideas, thoughts and methods of individual Sufis originated in Azerbaijan or habituated there, must be investigated. Here, some Sufis of this period will be introduced. Delay in the diffusion of Islamic culture in Azerbaijan till the 3rd century left Islamic Sufis and mystics with no chance to settle and guide people in this region. Nevertheless, a general view of life, thoughts and ideas of these Sufis are presented by referring to original documents and facts in order to provide a historical background for studying Sufism in this region.

If we accept Hafez Hossein Karbalayi comments in *Rowzat-al-Jenan* (Karbalaye, 1/275), Sheikh Abu-Isaac Ebrahim-ebne-Yahya Joveynani must be considered as the first Sufi of Azerbaijan, but it must be reminded that he must be considered as the first Sufi lived in Azerbaijan with no or little information about their life and works. Joveynani was a relative of Bayazid Bastami (d 261 AH) (Ansari Heravi, 1362, 104; Zaryab Khoyee, 1379, 2/176).

according to *Rowzat-al-Jenan*. He was one of the elders of Tabriz but studied at Khorasan under the supervision of Bayazid.

After Tabriz earthquake in 244 AH, Bayazid urged him to go back home by telling: "Tabriz ruined but the old mosque and your house are undamaged. You have to go to Tabriz because your mother waits for you."¹¹ (Karbalayee, 1/276) Joveynani guided his disciples in a monastery located in Charandab district of Tabriz beside a mosque and finally died and was buried there in 275 AH.

Hafez Hossein Karbalayee reports are the only information available about Joveynani who mentioned the dialogue between Bayazid Bastami and Joveynani.

¹¹- Abu-Isaac Joveynani came from Khorasan to Tabriz by guidance of his Murshid and educated pupils. Khorasan Sufism arrived at Azerbaijan in second half of third century. (Movahed, , 1381, 57).

Bayazid advised him before his trip to Tabriz: "Don't socialize much with Tabriz people and present yourself as a needless man. It takes time for Tabriz people to get close to you, but they'd give up their relations very soon. They take wise people for granted. Be aware of their Murshids. Tabriz has a cold climate and its people have economical wisdom for life but they don't care about their resurrection."(idem)

Bayazid advice to Joveynani emphasized the fact that Sufis in Azerbaijan have rapture. These Sufis were called respectfully later by the title of Baba which reminds the title of Pir in Sufism. Sufis who led groups of organizations of Sufism had a stronger social figure than their mystical figure.(Kuperily Zadeh,1375, 1/19). So, it can be concluded that Sufism history in Azerbaijan begins from early years on the second half of 2nd century.

After Joveynani Azerbaijan witnessed Sufis who worshiped and meditated in Tabriz and Ardabil Khangahs, but there's no name of them in valid references of Sufism and biography of mystics.

After Joveynani, the greatest Sufi of Azerbaijan in the 3rd century, there was Sheikh Abu-bakrHossein-ebne-Ali-ebne-YazdanyarOrmavi known as Ebne-Yazdanyar. This title shows that he had a rich Zoroastrian family who kept their traditions and religion until early 3rd century. (PourJavadi, 84) Most of credible mystic references such as AllamSeraj, AltaarefKalabazi, TabaghateOwlyavaOrafa mentioning his name and describing his biography show that he had a very important position and status among Sufis of Islam world such as Baghdadis and Khorasanisabd Egyptians. The same scholars mentioned Hessam-aldinChalabi (d 683 AH) as Ebne-Yazdanyar's descendent. His nickname was Ebne-Akhi and was mentioned by Rumi (d 672 AH) (Goulpenyarli, 1375, 227).in the beginning of first chapter of Masnavi as the main promoter for writing this masterwork(AbulghasemJoneyd, 1328, 512-4).

Ebne-Yazdanyar had a good sociability with Iraqi Sufis. He tended to secure Sharia (bargain owner) and attain the science of Sufism.(Solmi, 1986, 406).

Therefore, he challenged Baghdadi Sufis and mentioned Sufis like Joneyd, Noori and Shebeli as people out of monotheism believers¹²(Alseraj-altoosi,1380,505).

¹²-Ebne-Yazdanyar had objective Sufism and considered as a sheikh of Tariqa and disagreed with Iraqi Sufis violated Sharia even Joneyd(Movahed1381, 76).

Ebne-Yazdanyar joined Abdollah-ebne-Ahmad-ebne-Mohammad Albaheli Baghdadi known as Gholam Khalil (d 275 AH) when he announced his disagreement with Sufism manner of Noori and Joneyd and stimulated Caliph against them by declaring them as denier of Islam prophet traditions. (Zarinkoob, 1375, 119-30).¹³ This act caused Baghdadi Sufis blame Ebne-Yazdanyar. He admired Gholam Khalil moderate Sufism who was Sufi, ascetic and narrative (muhadith) at the same time, so we can categorized them in the same class. Ebne-Yazdanyar had such strong ideas on fundamental concepts of Sufism that credible Islamic Sufism sources cannot ignore his remarks. His remarks on recant, repentance, preventing doubtful acts, satisfaction and modesty (his most quoted remarks), fondness with Allah, affection, loyalty, cognition and intuition and also about Sufism, interpretation of Quran verses verifies his accuracy and validity in Sufism, hadith and interpretation. Similar to Gholam Khalil, he adapted Sufism with the school of Imam Ahmad-ebne-Hanbal(Noya,1373, 270-2). Ebne-Yazdanyar ideas had strong effect on later Baghdadi Sufis and the books written on theoretical Sufism. His comments on modesty was quoted by Abu-Saeed KhargooshiNeishaboori (d 406 AH) in Tahzib-al-Asrar. Ghosheiri allocated a chapter in ResaleyeGhosheirieh to the topic of modesty by quoting Ebne-Yazdanyar remarks. His comments also appeared in Sohrevardi'sAvaref-al-Maaref and Ez-al-Din Mahmud Kashani'sMesbah-al-Hedayah(Poorjavadi, 81).

Among Ebne-Yazdanyar ideas on Sufism, there are three important topics: cognition, intuition and relation between spirit and body which highlight his Sufism from others Sufis in his era. In cognition, he believes in accuracy of science by Allah, certainty of what belongs to Allah by heart's eye, realization of Allah unity in heart and appearance of realities and crossing intuition in heart which are different with ideas of official Sufism representatives (Solmi,1986, 409). He considers an eye for the heart via which certainty will be attained (Pourjavadi, 77). His approach to cognition is fundamentally different from mystic thoughts of Hoyveyri (d 465 AH) reflected in Kashf-al-Mhajoob and Najm-al-Din Razi (d 654 AH) in Mersad-al-Ebad, who were representatives of their contemporary Sufism in eastern Islam world and among the followers of Khangahs (monastery).¹⁴

¹³- for more information about disagreement between Noori and Gholam Khalil look at(Noya,1373, 270)

¹⁴Hajviri and Naj-alDinRazi divided wisdom to scientific and inspirational, mentally and theoretical and perceptual (appearance of divine specification on mystis heart).(Hojviri, 1336, , 342-47; Razi, 1366 ,114).

This heart's eye makes mystic desirable for Yazdanyar (Solmi, 408.) and extreme cognition can be achieved by the destruction of purity i.e. not seeing your own purity which makes the perception of truth possible in this world by heart's eye (Kolabadi, 1371, 136). Ebne-Yazdanyar left aside his contemporary moderate Sufism in perception of truth (intuition) (ibid, 42) and unlike many of other Sufis considered this act permissible in this world and expressed some of his own experiences (Ansari Heravi, 462). Although before Ebne-Yazdanyar, some other Sufis such as Bayazid Bastami, Ghazi Ibrahim Bakhrzi, Shah Shoja Kermani and Ali-ebne-al-Movafagh visited Allah in their night dreams, but none of them talked about heart's eye and truth intuition in this way (Ansari Heravi, pp 106, 237, 290).

Although all of them were Sufis with Iranian origin in the first Islamic centuries, one can guess that Ebne-Yazdanyar's thoughts rooted in his Zoroastrianism background and moderated in conjunction with Islamic Sufism. In Zoroastrianism traditions, meeting Ahura Mazda, talking to him and even fighting beside him had a long history (Zarinkoob, 1375, 24). This visualization can be found in lithographs of Achaemenian where Ahura Mazda appeared like a mid-aged man with symbolic tools in his hands. (Oshidri, 1376, 27). In Sasanid era (Ebne-Yazdanyar family are descendents of this dynasty) Ahura Mazda riding a horse presents kingdom and religious power to Sasanid kings. This figure can be found in Fars lithographs¹⁵ and on the coins discovered from Azerbaijan. Certainly, this approach to wisdom lord (Ahura Mazda) (Kent, 1955, 164) who is the creator of goodness can be shown in Islamic period with a moderate picture in intuition (truth perception) by heart's eye. Yazdanyar's words on the relation between spirit and body are evidences for the assumption of the existence of signs of Zoroastrian thoughts. Nasrolah Pourjavadi said that:

"One of the important words remained from Ebne-Yazdanyar is his comments on spirit and body and their relationship which is first quoted by Solami referring to Abubakr Razi in Tabaghat-e-al-Sowfieh. In Ebne-Yazdanyar opinion, spirit is the farm of goodness because it's the mine of mercy and body and self are the fields of evil because they are mines of lust. Desire is the educator of body and wisdom is the educator of spirit. Cognition stands between wisdom and desire and locates in heart.

¹⁵- For example in Naghs-s-Rostam lithograph shows Ardashir I crowning where Ahura Mazda ride on a horse trampled Ahriman and gave the power ring to the king. (Ikonin, 1365, 32).

Desire and wisdom are in struggle one with the army of self and the other with the power of heart. God helps wisdom and God chooses the winner of this fight.”(Solomi, 408).

These words of Ebne-Yazdanyar are important in history of Iranian psychology in Islamic period. Phrases used here are different in philosophy and meaning with the known format of them. Ebne-Yazdanyar lived in an era when new-Plato philosophy tradition did not appear and was not wide-spread in Iran. He lived before Farabi (d 339 AH). Self here has not the philosophic meaning of this term (Greek: pashookhe). Its meaning is based on Quran and is the same as Sufi phrase of despotic soul and wisdom here means rational wisdom used by philosopher which is blamed by Sufis and considered against love and kindness. Wisdom here means rational soul among philosophers and spirit means wisdom (Greek: noos) as new-Plato philosophers used.

Pre-Islamic Iranian ideological backgrounds can be found in Ebne-Yazdanyar words. His grandfather with Iranian name was Zoroastrian and his family in Uromyeh were inspired by Iranian spiritual heritage. Usually, scholars and religious figures in this period were among rich families and Ebne-Yazdanyar was no exception. However, the challenge between spirit and self, one as field of goodness and other as field of evil is equal to tend toward either goodness or evil, one deals with wisdom and other deals lust which is similar to belief in Ahura and Ahriman forces in ancient Iran. These forces each with an army struggle one another. Wisdom is the heart's army (or spirit) and desire is the army of self. So there's a persistent fight between goodness and evil inside human being. They are supported from outside, wisdom is supported by divine grace and desire is backed with Khezaln (leaving one alone). So divine grace is Ahura's support and Khezlan's is Ahriman help(Pourjavadi, 83-85).

In fact, Ebne-Yazdanyar's idea on relation between self, wisdom and spirit is opposite Farabi and other scholars such as Ebne-Moskoye (d 421 AH), Razi (d 320 AH), etc. Farabi thoughts in practical wisdom (morality) is based on triple selves. Self contains what gives life to physical body by forces and tools and makes plants, animals and humans out of it and includes plant self, animal self and human self or rational self (DavariArdakani, 1389, 51). In this theory wisdom is considered as perfection of rational self and rational self is the perfection of body (ibid, 261).

According to the theory of triple selves with Greek roots (Aavani, 7/11-210), quad-virtues of wisdom, chastity, braveness and justice are effective in attaining bliss by avoiding extremism (theory of mediocrity). But Ebne-Yazdanyar considered wisdom against self and believed that wisdom is related to spirit and triple selves are not effective and like ancient Iranian traditions he believed that not only in the outside world but inside human being there's a challenge between antithetical forces of Ahura and Ahriman. Farabi theory of triple selves had strong effect on later scholars via his writings (Davari, 261).

Thus, Ebne-Yazdanyar (d 333 AH) is the greatest Sufi of Azerbaijan prior to Mogul massacre with his exclusive mystic thoughts in Islamic Sufism through east of Islamic world. He was an effective person capable in joining ancient Iranian thoughts with Islamic mysticism. The same belief backgrounds appeared as Hekma-al-Eshragh by Shahb-aldinSohrevardi (killed at 587 AH) based on Khosravani wisdom.

After Ebne-Yazdanyar, another Sufi from Orumiyeh was introduced, called sheikh Abu-al-Hassan Ormavi. As pointed out earlier, his name was just mentioned in Heravi's Tabaghat and Jami's Nafahat (Ansari Heravi, 532; Jami, 240) and the only words remained from him are about loyalty: "Abu-al-Hossein was asked what loyalty is? He said: what you return from, never return back. They said: this is the general description, what is the specific meaning? He said: it's when you know why you have returned" (Jami, 240) This quotation is reminder of Alast promise which is a common concept among Sufis and according to the equal meaning of promise in Farsi compared with Vafa (faith) in Arabic, this phrase was used against perfidy (Kashani, 1376, 116). This was considered as part of Iranian mythological thoughts on the promise between Ahura and Ahriman by Mehr angel (Mitra) as the guard for this promise which must be reminded by all Ahura man (Zarinkoob, 23; Shaked, 1381, 257-87). This homology must be accepted with care.

Conclusion

Islamic religion and culture diffuse later in Azerbaijan. Presence of traditional religious centers and rich fanatic Zoroastrian families till 3rd Hegira century, influence of Mazdak and Mani tradition among people of mountainous and remote regions, poor political performance of agents and rulers assigned by caliph, lack of growth of Islamic social and cultural institutions, uprising of people against Arab dominance, lingual difference between victors and local people and attention of people to livelihood instead of resurrection were important factors preventing the spread of Islamic culture in Azerbaijan and consequently late onset of Islamic Sufism. In the thoughts of initial Sufis of Azerbaijan which is represented by Ebne-Yazdanyar Ormavi (from Orumiyeh) signs of mystic pre-Islam Iranian thoughts can be seen which later appeared in Sohrevardi's Hekmat-al-Eshraghand spread in Sufism and philosophy of Islam through him. Concentration of these thoughts on heart and their illumination is the perception of God (intuition) and the issue of goodness and evil. If mysterious manner of Ahl-e-Haghis also considered as a type of mysticism and Sufism, one must consider the effects of Mani tradition on Ahl-e-Hagh which appeared in Azerbaijan and later highlighted in mystic tradition of chivalry which needs further research.

References

- Abu Dolaf, M. (1407). All about Geography. Edited by Fouad Sezgin, Frankfurt.
- Alseraj-altoosi, A. (1380). Allam-fi-Tasawuf. Abdulhalim Mahmud and Abdulbaghi Sarvar, Cairo.
- Ammożgar, Zh. (1375). Myth of Zarathustra life. Tehran: Cheshme.
- Ansari Heravi, Kh. (1362). Tabaghat-al-Sowfieh. Edited by Sarvar Moolayee, Tehran: Toos.
- Attar Neishaboori. F. (1366). Tazkerat-al-Owleya. Edited by Muhammd Estelami. Tehran: Zavar.
- Boil. G. (collector) (1364). Iran Cambridge History. Translated By Hasan Osheh, Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Bois, M. (1374). History of Zoroastrianism. Translated by Homayoon Saanati Zadeh, Tehran: Toos.
- Chuksi, J. (1381). Fight and Compromise. Translated by Nader Mirsaedi, Tehran: Ghoghnoos.
- Davari Ardakani, R. (1389). Farabi Philosopher of Culture. Tehran: Nashr-e-Sokhan.
- Goulpenyarli, A. (1375). Life philosophy and works of Rumi. Translated by Tofigh Sobhani, Hehran, Human Science and cultural studies research center.
- Hojviri, A. (1336). Kahsf-al-Mahjoob. Edited by Valentin Zhokofski. Tehran: Amirkabir.
- Holly Quran

- Islam world Encyclopedia. (1379), Supervised by Mostafa Mirsalimm, Tehran.
- Islamic Great Encyclopedia, (1374-1383). Supervision by kazemMousaviBojnordi, Tehran: Encyclopedia Center, 12 Vol.
- Jami, N. (1370). Nafahat-al-Ons men Hazart-al-Qods. Edited by Mahmud Abedi, Tehran: Etelaat.
- Karbalayee, H. (1349). Rowzat-al-Jenan and Janat-al-Jenan. Edited by Jaafar Soltun Algharayee, 2 volumes, Tehran: Nashr-e-Ketab.
- Kashani, A. (1376). Sufism Phrases. Translated by Muhammad Ali Mododlari, Tehran: Art bureau of Islamic propaganda organization.
- Kasravi, A. (1355). Unknown commanders, Tehran: Amirkabir.
- Kent, R. (1953). Old Persian Grammar Text lexicon American Oriental Society, new haven.
- Kolabadi, A. (1371). Ketab-al-Taaraf. Edited by Muhammad JavadShariati, Tehran: Asatir.
- Lokonin, V. (1365). Sasanian Iran Civilization. Tehran: Elmi-va-Farhangi publication.
- Movahed, M. (1381). Safi-alain Ardabilly original figure of Sufism. Tehran: Tarh-e-No.
- Movahed, S. (1385). Look at sources of Eshragh wisdom and its fundamental concepts. Tehran: Tahoori publication.
- Noya, P. (1373). Quran interpretation and mystic language. Translated by Ismael Saadat, Tehran: Nashr-e-Daneshgahi.
- Oryan. S. (1371). Pahlavi Texts. Tehran: National Library.
- Oshidri, J. (1376). Mezdisna Encyclopedia, Tehran, Nashr-e-Markaz,
- Petroshfski, I. (1351). Islam in Iran, translated by Karim Keshavarz, Tehran, Nashr-e-Payam.
- PigoloSekaya, N. (1372). Iran cities in Parthian and Sasanian periods. Translated by Enayatallah Reza, Tehran: Elmi-va-Farhangi Publications.
- Pour Java di.n
- Ramyani, M. (1340). Elders and Scholars of West Azerbaijan, Tabriz, 2500-year ceremonies.
- Rashid-alain-Fazl Allah. (1940). Mubarak Ghazani History, edited by Carl Yan, London, Herstford.
- Razi, N. (1366). Mersa-alebad, edited by Muhammad Amin Riahi, Tehran, Elmi-va-Fahangi publication.
- Schpoler, B. (1369) Iran history in first Islamic centuries, translated by Maryam Mirahmadi, 2 volumes, Tehran, Elemi-va-Farhangi publication.
- Shaked, Sh(1381). from Zoroastrian Iran to Islamic Iran, translated by MortezaSaghebfar, Tehran, Ghoghnoos.
- Shirazi, A. (1325). Shad al-azrar fi hat al-awzar, edited by Muhammad Ghazvini and Abbas Eghbali, Tehran.
- Solmi, A. (1986). Tabaght, edited by Sharibe, 3volumes, Cairo.
- Viden Gren, G. (1377). Iranian Religions, translated by Manoochehr Farhang, Tehran, Agahan Dideh publication.
- Zarinkoob, a (1375). Search in Iran Sufism, Tehran, Amirkabir