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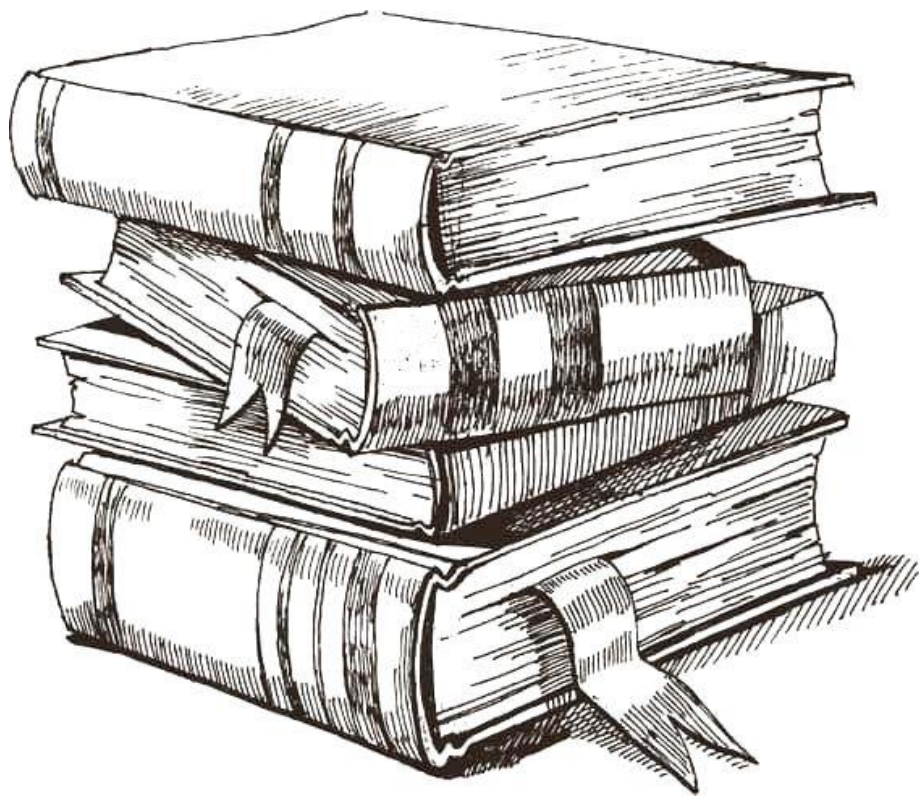
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# ƏDƏBİYYATŞÜNASLIQ

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## HAJI ZEYNALABDIN SHIRVANI'S LIFE COMPLETED IN TRAVEL

RAFAEL HUSEYNOV\*

### Introduction

His name deserves to be remembered among the great figures of Azerbaijan and the world. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was a highly knowledgeable person and the founder of geography in Azerbaijan. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani spent about 40 years of his 58-year life traveling. He journeyed more than 60.000 kilometers, visiting many countries in Asia and Africa, and wrote about his travels in valuable books. However, the books written by Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani are fundamentally different from the travel accounts written by other Western and Eastern travelers. His works – “Riyaz us-Siyaha”, “Hadaik us-Siyaha”, “Bustan us-Siyaha”, and “Kashf ul-Ma’arif” – each have a universal character, reflecting the author’s wide-ranging knowledge. It is no coincidence that Mahammadali Tarbiyat, the author of an encyclopedic study on famous figures of Azerbaijan throughout history, described these works as a “treasure of rich benefits” (Tarbiyat, 1314: 170).

Zeynalabdin Shirvani’s works combine different fields such as geography, history, ethnography, sociology, and cultural studies. Because of this, his writings are valuable and reliable sources for each of these areas. Zeynalabdin Shirvani’s notes about different countries and peoples are not just simple descriptions. They are serious scientific studies based on deep and detailed observations. For this reason, the works of Zeynalabdin Shirvani became trusted sources that scholars from India, Russia, Poland, England, France, Afghanistan, Türkiye, China and Iran regularly referred to from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

Writing under the pen name “Temkin”, Zeynalabdin Shirvani also holds a special place in history of classical Persian literature. His poetry is as diverse as his scientific works. In his poems, traditional lyrical themes are combined with clear scientific and philosophical ideas. Although various studies have been conducted on Zeynalabdin Shirvani, and some of his works have been critically published and translated, these efforts are still not sufficient or satisfactory. Because of this, his rich heritage has still not been fully published or properly studied. These unresolved issues are important not only for understanding the life and works of the great geographer, historian, ethnographer, and poet Zeynalabdin Shirvani more deeply and widely, but also for bringing into scientific circulation many valuable pieces of knowledge about the countries and peoples he encountered during his extensive travels across a vast region.

Restlessness is part of human nature, and people have always felt that the places they live in is too small for them. Humans have always wanted to reach wider horizons. Someone living by a mountain has always tried to find out what is on the other side of it, in the nearby villages.

A person who has lived by a river has tried to sail along it in a boat, to see other rivers that flow into it, to observe the different places along its banks, and to connect

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with people. A person born by the sea has, at some point, dreamed of going on a sea journey and wanted the sea to carry them toward new seas and new countries. Traveling, seeing, learning, and knowing more have always been inner needs of humans. And the more places a person visits and the more they learn, the more their eyes open, and the more beautifully they see the world.

And a person whose eyes have opened wider and who sees the world more beautifully has tried to share what they know with others. Most ordinary people have done this, but among them there have also been special individuals who wanted others – even from afar – to experience the places they had traveled, to see what they had seen, and to learn what they had learned. So how did it happen? People sat down and started writing, describing the places they visited and what they saw. In Azerbaijan and all around the world, many travel books and travel stories were created this way. And many of those who wrote these travel accounts were well-known writers and poets. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Khaqani Shirvani wrote “Tuhfat al-Iraqayn” (Şirvani, 1978: 51-91), which was the first poetic travelogue. However, there were also those who approached this work professionally – as geographers and true travelers. Azerbaijan is fortunate that among the most famous travelers in world history, there is also the name of our own renowned traveler – Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was born in Shamakhi – a place that, throughout history, has produced many great figures of Azerbaijan, including outstanding poets, scientists and thinkers. What makes Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani stand out and be exceptional among all of them is that he became known in history as the most famous traveler from Shirvan and Azerbaijan. But Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was not only a traveler. He was also a poet who wrote beautiful poems under the pen name “Temkin”. He was also a scholar. He was also a thinker – a man of ideas, a philosopher. If Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had devoted himself only to literature and spent his life writing poetry, with such remarkable talents, he would certainly have taken a leading place among the most famous poets of Shirvan, Azerbaijan, and the Near and Middle East. If Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had followed his passion for science from his teenage and early youth years and written only scientific works one after another, he would certainly have become one of those whose name lives on in the world of science.

In fact, during the Soviet period, the great scholar Ignaty Krachkovsky often called “the sheikh of orientalists” clearly noted Shirvani’s strong talent and enthusiasm for scholarship. He wrote that *“in every place he visited, he was primarily interested in local scholars and mystics, and his conversations with them usually ended in debates”* (Krachkovsky, 1957: 537).

Whichever of the talents given to him by God he had chosen to develop more deeply and broadly, he would undoubtedly have become one of the greatest in that field.

But what made Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani truly special and different was that he directed all of these abilities specifically into his travels.

He wrote many beautiful travel books – works that, although written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, have never become outdated despite how much the world has changed since then.

The books that Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani left to us – “Riyaz us-Siyaha”, “Hadaik us-Siyaha”, and “Bustan us-Siyaha” – will continue to be read, loved, and revisited over time, always taking people on new journeys full of fresh adventures and knowledge.

People have always needed bridges, and they have built many of them over time. Although different bridges may vary from one another, they all share the same idea: bridges connect and bring things together.

But there is also something else – bridge-people.

Abbasgulu Aga Bakikhanov one of the greatest sons of Azerbaijan, besides all his other qualities, was also a “bridge-person”. He was a great scholar, and he worked not just in one field of science, but in many different fields and the evidence of this is clear. He wrote works on history, as well as on geography and he also authored a book about astronomy. He was a poet too – he compiled a “Divan” and he created his works in several languages.

But even more important than all of this was the fact that his personality and legacy itself made him a bridge. Of course, every creative person, through the works they produce, is in any case a kind of bridge.

But Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov had another kind of “bridge” role as well. Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov was the main reason we know Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani today, and why he was already known as a famous traveler during his lifetime.

It was also thanks to Bakikhanov that people in Russia and through Russia, even in Europe at that time learned about the existence of such a traveler. In other words, this “bridge-person”, Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov, played a key role in bringing Shirvani to wider attention.

“Gulistan-i Iram” is the main masterpiece of Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov. It covers the history of the Near and Middle East, the Caucasus and Azerbaijan from ancient times up to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the author himself lived.

However, “Gulistan-i Iram” is different from all historical books and chronicles written before Bakikhanov. It was the first historical work written on a scientific basis, using comparative analysis of many sources. Because he used sources in many different languages, compared them with each other, and cross-checked the facts, focusing on the most accurate information. In his book “Gulistan-i Iram” Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov also mentions Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani (Bakixanov, 1951: 61, 90, 218).

Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov wrote “Gulistan-i Iram” in Persian (Bakikhanov, 1970), but he also translated it into Russian himself. The book was first published in 1926 by the Publishing House of the Society for the Study and Investigation of Azerbaijan.

Even at the time it was written, people in Russia and Poland had already started talking about it, and there were also plans to translate the work into other languages.

The first detailed information about Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani is found in this book – “Gulistan-i Iram”.

When Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov decided to write about Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani in “Gulistan-i Iram”, he first collected information about him from various sources and brought together all the stories that were told about him.

But first of all, he relied on “Riyaz-us-Siyaha”. Because in “Riyaz-us-Siyaha”, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani wrote his own biography in his own handwriting.

Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov, for the first time, provides detailed information about this traveler, scholar, and poet who was still alive at that time. He also separately analyzes all of his works and speaks about the routes he traveled and the countries he visited.

Encouraged by the heartfelt and enthusiastic writings of Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov about Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, well-known Orientalists of that time – Nikolay Khanikov and Bernhard Dorn – became interested in this figure and began to search for his works (Quliyev, 1964: 20-25).

There is another noble contribution of Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov, who was one of the main and perhaps the first reasons why Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani became well known in the cultural and scientific world of that time, as well as among his own people.

One day, Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov sat down and copied “Riyaz us-Siyaha” by Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani from beginning to end in his own handwriting. It was a complete version of the book.

In 1852, Bakikhanov’s wife, Sakina khanim Qudsi, personally presented this manuscript the original handwritten copy of “Riyaz us-Siyaha” – to the Imperial Library in Saint Petersburg (Quliyev, 1964: 20).

This became another bridge created by Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov. After “Riyaz us-Siyaha” was added to the manuscript collection, more scholars and writers began to study this course. Through it, the number of people who would better understand and introduce Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani also started to grow.

As long as copies of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani’s travel writings had not been widely reproduced and spread, the main source of information about him was Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov’s book “Gulistan-i Iram”. But now we also have “Riyaz us-Siyaha” written by Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani in front of us, “Hadaik us-Siyaha” is available to us, and we can also read “Bustan us-Siyaha”.

In addition, he also has poems that reflect certain moments of his life. By using these reliable sources and building on such solid foundations, it is possible to imagine the life path Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani lived and went through, looking at it from the height of time.

He was born in 1780 in Shamakhi. His father, Akhund Isgandar, was one of the well-known people of Shamakhi and the Shirvan region at that time (Shirvani, 1315: 318).

On the one hand, difficult living conditions and financial problems, and on the other hand, the desire to give his growing child a good education led Akhund Isgandar to leave those places and head toward Karbala in Iraq.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani also gives the exact date of this migration. In his book “Bustan us-Siyaha”, he writes that when he was five years old, his father took the family and set off for Karbala (Shirvani, 1314: 318).

In fact, this was the first journey, the first long trip of the future great traveler and geographer. They arrived in Karbala, and Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani writes in “Riyaz us-Siyaha” that from that day his education began. He says that for exactly 12 years, he studied religious and literary sciences under his father and other great scholars (Shirvani, 1339: 129).

What did he mean by religious and literary sciences? He was not receiving only a religious education. This education included *fiqh* (Islamic law), as well as *nujum* (astronomy, as it was understood at that time). It also covered music, mathematics, logic and philosophy.

During those 12 years, he didn’t study with ordinary teachers, but with the most respected scholars around. By the time he turned 17; this education had deeply shaped and filled Zeynalabdin from within. He also writes this in “Riyaz us-Siyaha” and especially points out that all the teachers who taught him were knowledgeable scholars who knew many things. But none of them had ever left the places where they lived or seen the world. As for me, a desire grew inside me, a strong urge to move away from here and set out on a journey. I wanted to travel the world, to see it, so that what I experienced and observed would enrich what I already knew and had read in books (Shirvani, 1339: 129).

And at the age of 17, Zeynalabdin Shirvani set out on his first major journey. First, he traveled through many cities of Iraq-i Arab. Then he headed toward Iraq-i Ajam. He arrived in Rasht and Gilan, where he met and spoke with the local people. He reached

Tabriz, a city he had often heard about and long wished to see. From there, he went on to Urmia and then to Khoy. He also describes these details in “Riyaz us-Siyaha” (Shirvani, 1339: 130).

His travels were different from those of other people. He didn't just travel to see places. Wherever he went, he tried to meet and talk with famous people and well-known scholars of that place. In the places he visited, he recorded everything he saw and wrote descriptions of them so he could include them later in his books. And then he returned to his homeland, Shirvan. He was only about 5 years old when he left Shamakhi (although different dates are given for their move, he himself states in “Hadaik us-Siyaha” that they moved when he was 5 (Shirvani, №141: 206).

Of course, at that time he was too young to understand the world. But now he returned to Shamakhi at the age of 17 as an educated and knowledgeable young man. Shamakhi looked completely different to him, and later in “Riyaz us-Siyaha” he wrote about what he observed in Shirvan and what he saw in Shamakhi with more love than he did about other places. Besides writing about the beauty of Shirvan, he also says that its people are just as beautiful as the land itself. He writes that the people there are very kind, brave and generous. Their doors are always open to guests (Shirvani, 1339: 116, 130-131, 141).

We have never seen Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. No photograph of him and no portrait drawn by artists of his time has reached us. However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there lived our famous painter and art expert, Ali Minayi. A notable feature of the portrait of Haji Zeynalabdin, created by Ali Minayi in the early 1960s, is this: when painting it, Minayi – who knew Persian-language sources very well, relied on written descriptions of how the famous traveler looked. He carefully examined these sources and based his work on the observations and verbal descriptions of people who had lived in his time (Minayi: 4). As a result, a portrait was created that was highly appreciated both artistically and for its scientific accuracy, and it turned out to be more favored than the portrait of Haji Zeynalabdin made earlier by our other well-known artist Oqtay Sadigzade (Quliyev, 1964: 19).

In “Bustan us-Siyaha”, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani wrote that when people leave a mark in the history of a nation and the past of a homeland, you wish to see their image before your eyes, and you feel a desire to know their life path well. That is why, even though it was created from imagination, this portrait of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani by Ali Minayi feels very familiar and close to people.

However, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani himself had another piece of advice. He said: *“Whoever wants to know me closely, whoever wants to understand my life path well, should read “Bustan us-Siyaha”* (Shirvani, 1315: 320).

In other words, each of his works should be seen not only as a description of the places he visited, but also as a story about his own life journey. He had come to Baku, then traveled to Salyan, and observed the Kura River and the Aras River.

Unlike many other travelers, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was also a scholar, so he did not simply describe the places he saw including Baku, the Kura, the Aras and Salyan and move on. He looks into historical sources about the past of Baku, the Kura River, and Salyan. He also shares with the reader the results of his research on where the words “Baku”, “Kura”, and “Salyan” come from (Shirvani, 1339: 119, 121, 138, 140). In other words, he approached everything he saw not just as a traveler, but as a scientist.

He had traveled to the ancient city of Tus in Iran – the homeland of Abulqasim Ferdowsi, the great author of the Shahnameh. He gives such detailed information about the city and its people, and their unique characteristics, that even after a long time none

of that information has lost its importance or value. Even today, it is still very interesting for people, especially researchers (Shirvani, 1339: 249).

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani – this young man had already been on the road for five years. The landscapes and history of Arabian Iraq, Persian Iraq, and many surrounding places were now clear to him, and he thought of this as knowledge equal to a whole library. But he was drawn to new lands and borders he had not yet seen.

Travel is like this – it is like being in love. Once that passion enters your heart, you cannot escape its magic. And when Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani turned 22, in 1802, he set out again on a long journey he had long dreamed of. He had already been on the road for 5 years. The roads had not tired him on the contrary, they had increased his love for travel, and he headed toward India, the land of tales and legends (Shirvani, 1339: 131).

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani would stay in India for 8 years. He would travel all over this ancient land from one end to the other and meet many different people living there. This country would become very familiar and close to him, and he would not forget his memories of Indian for many years. His writings are also considered among the most valuable accounts of India.

The point is that Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani did not just write travel notes or simply describe what he saw. In his travel writing, he also showed the complex social and political situation of India at that time. At that time, India was suffering greatly from the colonial policy of the British Empire, and although he was still young, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani thought like a wise elder and deeply felt the hidden painful side of life in this beautiful country. He saw both the good and the bad on one hand, he observed that these outsiders were exploiting the country, and millions of people were suffering from hunger and hardship. But on the other hand, he also noticed that those same outsiders were trying to build a new India, a country that would connect and interact with the rest of the world. He described all of this in detail in his book “Bustan us-Siyaha” (Shirvani, 1315: 288, 289).

He travels to Punjab, and from there he comes to Delhi. As everywhere he goes, he stays true to his habit. He looks for intelligent and talented people, talks with them, and because he has read a lot, knows a lot, and has gained life experience from all the places he has visited, he has become much richer inside. He also had great speaking skills and was very talkative. These are the words of people who saw him in his time. In India, whichever door he knocked on or whichever famous person he met, they were impressed by him from the very first minutes of conversation (Shirvani, 1315: 163, 181, 223, 226 and etc.). While in Delhi, he meets a ruler named Shah Alamgir and a physician named Sharifkhan. The impressions from this meeting stay with him for a long time, and so that history will remember it, he writes about it in his book “Bustan us-Siyaha”.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had always loved reading and learning throughout his life. Here, after meeting Sharifkhan, a new desire appears in his heart. Sharifkhan was a famous doctor, and Shirvani stays with him for some time and begins to learn the secrets of medicine (Shirvani, 1315: 288-289). What made Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani who he was, what made him stand out, was exactly this quality. By nature, he was restless, and throughout his life on the road, despite hardships, he never grew tired of reading and learning. Even in the most difficult situations, he always had a book in his hand, and the knowledge and experience he gained always helped him. Here in India, the months he spent with the famous Sharifkhan and the experience he gained from him helped him assist others as a doctor when needed, and also allowed him to treat himself like a skilled physician during the health problems he often faced on his journeys.

After spending 8 years in India, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani returned to Iran. He wanted to settle down there permanently, start a family, and live a calm, comfortable life. However, in different cities of Iran, he faced many hardships and troubles. Because of this, he later remembered every day of those 8 years in India with longing. He always recalled with respect the kindness, attention and care he had received there (Shirvani, 1339: 131–132). What kind of people had he met in India, and what kind of care had he experienced? He explains all of these one by one in detail. He had arrived in the city of Cinegar. First, he describes the city of Cinegar with admiration, saying that all the houses and public buildings there were built in a chessboard-like pattern. This city has a special order and neatness.

At first glance, this may seem like just ordinary information to the reader. But, in those times, not everyone had the chance to travel to India. The 19<sup>th</sup> century had just begun. People were hungry for information. Every city, village and settlement in India, along with its customs and traditions, clothing, food, table culture, and the character of its people all the knowledge that Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani wrote about and share through his books had great significance for readers. Those were times when people still did not know India well. The travel book of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was like a screen unfolding widely, showing people in India in way then could easily see something they might not even able to observe clearly even if they traveled there themselves. It was a time when people did not know India well. Haji Zeynalabdin's travel book was like a screen that opened wide, showing people an India, they could not easily see, even if they traveled there themselves.

In that city of Cinegar, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani stayed as a guest for 3 months in the home of the local ruler, Raj Portabchand. After meeting the traveling guest, the ruler realized that he was not an ordinary man but a person of great value, so he kept him in his residence for 3 months and treated him with exceptional respect (Shirvani, 1315: 208, 209).

After Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani returned to Iran and went through many hardships, facing the harshest and rudest sides of human relations, he would longingly remember those kind and beautiful people he had met in India.

He wrote about Raj Portabchand, saying that during 3 months he stayed as a guest in his house and palace, he received such care and attention that if he wrote it all down, it would make a large book (Shirvani, 1315: 210).

While in India, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani also met another ruler named Nasir al-Dawla. The emir was so impressed by his knowledge and conversations that he asked him to stay as a guest in his home for quite a long time, and he would gladly listen to him every evening. It is one thing to read about the places Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani visited and saw in his books and manuscripts, and quite another to hear them directly from him.

That is why Nasir al-Dawla would spend days in his company, enjoying his conversations and admiring his knowledge every time (Shirvani, 1315: 276).

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani writes that this Nasir al-Dawla had a very rich library considering of 12.000 manuscripts (Shirvani, 1315: 276).

Finally, after staying as the emir's guest for several days, the time comes to part. Nasir al-Dawla, who does not want to say goodbye to his dear guest, offers him money, rewards, and gifts as a sign of his affection.

But Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was a modest and content person, so he refused all the gifts. Nasir al-Dawla was also a wise man, and Shirvani wrote that he had read all 12.000 manuscripts in his library (Shirvani, 1315: 276).

The Emir orders that a list of the manuscripts in his library be brought. They give the list to Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. The emir then says: *“Look through it – whichever manuscripts you want or like, I will give them to you as a gift”* (Shirvani, 1315: 276).

This was such a wise and thoughtful gift offer that it was impossible for a book lover and knowledge enthusiast like Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani to refuse it. Both *“Riyaz us-Siyaha”*, *“Hadaik us-Siyaha”*, and *“Bustan us-Siyaha”* by Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani were each, in their own way, like an encyclopedia. It was an encyclopedia that created a precise and realistic picture of the places he had traveled. Anyone who read those books felt as if they had seen many lands from the far parts of India to Transoxiana, and from the Caucasus to various countries of the Near and Middle East. But at the same time, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani’s skill was that while creating these valuable works, he also managed to include a kind of *“encyclopedia of humanity”* in them. Alongside the geographical information he gave, whenever the moment was right, he also wrote about the people he met and their strong moral qualities. In India, he met another valuable person, another wise ruler – Karim Ali Khan. Karim Ali Khan kept Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani at his residence for days and hosted him as a guest in his home. Every evening, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani gathered well-known people of that place – intellectuals and scholars around him so he could benefit from his conversations and exchange ideas.

One evening, when the two were alone face to face, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani asked Karim Ali Khan a question. The fact that he asked this question on that particular evening is also recorded in Shirvani’s own writings. He wrote: *“I asked him why he was showing me such an unusually high level of attention?”* He said that it was not excessive attention, but that he had at least 8 reasons for treating him so well.

The 1<sup>st</sup> reason was humanity – people should show care and attention to one another.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> reason was that he was a stranger, coming from a different land, and while staying there he should experience such kindness and goodness that after returning home he would speak well of the country and its people.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> reason was that he was a guest. A guest is the decoration of any home they visit. A guest should always be welcomed properly and treated with care and attention.

The 4<sup>th</sup> reason is that you have come to our land with love. We must respond with love to anyone who shows love for our country and our people.

The 5<sup>th</sup> reason is that you are a scholar. Serving a scholar is an honor for every person.

The 6<sup>th</sup> reason is that you are a wise and perceptive person. Not every scholar reaches the level of true wisdom.

The 7<sup>th</sup> reason is that you follow a path whose goal is to help the poor and those in need, and to support people. It is certainly our duty to respect those who try to stand by people in need.

The 8<sup>th</sup> reason is that you are a very pleasant person. The taste of your sweet conversations will stay with us for many years (Shirvani, 1315: 293-294).

As he travels from city to city and country to country, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani does not only describe the places; he also pays special attention to recording the distinctive characteristics of the people living there. He does this deliberately, because those people are part of what completes the image of those places. Without them, the beauty of those places would likely not appear in such a complete and full way. While traveling along the roads, he arrived in Egypt. In Egypt, one day he met an emir named Ibrahim Bey. Ibrahim Bey was an intelligent and sensitive man. During a short conversation, he realized that Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was an extremely valuable and

remarkable person. He suggests: Stay with me. I will create whatever conditions you want for you. You have already traveled enough. Then he adds: One of the regions under my control is Qamus. It has 70 villages, I give all those villages, the whole region of Qamus, to you. All its wealth – everything will be yours. Just stay here with me. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani refuses (Shirvani, 1315: 568).

Not only here he had refused gifts, wealth, and luxury in many places he had visited before. He had long ago become a pure dervish, a Sufi. He was so spiritually rich inside that material wealth had no value for him. What mattered to him were human relationships and the pure, moral side of people.

When we imagine the hard roads of that time and the long distances between lands, we should also remember this:

Since those distances were not as easy to travel as they are today, they were, in reality, many times longer than what they would feel like now. The means of transport from one place to another were very limited. People traveled with great difficulty, facing many dangers, and even when they finally reached a destination, the opportunities to rest were limited. The caravanserais you came across from time to time did not really offer comfort, cleanliness, or proper relaxation – they were simply a place to spend the night. Despite all these hardships, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani always felt a strong inner desire to travel.

Because this spiritual man gathered light within himself from the places he saw and experienced. And he also felt a need to share that light with others.

From a philosophical perspective, the movement later called “Enlightenment” has existed in every era. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, through his work, writings, and character, deserves to be considered a great enlightener of his time.

The biographer Rzaqulu Khan Hidayat, who often talked with and knew Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani closely, also mentioned one of his qualities. He wrote that Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was extremely hospitable. Whoever came to his door, he would put everything he had on the table for them (Shirvani, 1339: 245). As can be seen from his biographies and the works he left to us, Rzaqulu Khan Hidayat was a very truthful person and reliable writer who accurately reflected historical facts. Therefore, his words about Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani should certainly be trusted. Because even though we have not seen Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani in person, we read his works. His generosity, open-heartedness, and willingness to freely share his knowledge and everything he gathered over the years are clearly seen in his writings.

The great Nizami Ganjavi left 5 narrative poems (masnavis) as a legacy. Some time after his death, biographers and literary scholars brought these 5 poems together under one name – first calling them “Panj Ganj” (5 Treasures), and later, in a shorter form, “Khamsa”, meaning “Five”. From the 13<sup>th</sup> century onward, many such “fives” (khamsas) were created. But, when we study the history of literature and science, we see that these collections were not made up only of love-themed poems.

There were also “fives” with other themes, and one such symbolic Khamsa belongs to Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. The 3 famous works of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani – “Riyaz us-Siyaha”, “Hadaik us-Siyaha” and “Bustan us-Siyaha” all have similar meanings in their titles. The words “Riyaz”, “Hadaik” and “bustan” each means “garden” or “park”. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani did not use the word “garden” in the titles of his 3 travel books by chance. In all 3 works, he truly created a rich, colorful “garden”. When you open the pages, you enter a vivid world, and it feels as if you have seen and come to know the countries he traveled through. But Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani also had a 4<sup>th</sup> work called “Kashf ul-Ma’arif”. This book is about philosophy, wisdom, the history of Sufism, and its

great figures. But Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani also describes this work as a kind of travel book. He writes that in his work; he takes the reader on journeys through the vast world of knowledge. A 5<sup>th</sup> work has also survived from Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani his "Divan", a collection of poems.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, who wrote poetry under the pen name "Temkin", had a strong love for literature and poetry, as well as considerable skill in this field. In all 3 of his travel books, he repeatedly refers to literary sources. He also includes examples from his own poems and quotes lines from other poets that match the ideas he is discussing.

Only in the first volume of "Riyaz us-Siyaha", there are selections from 60 poets. But, the "Divan" reflects the inner spiritual world of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. He even considered this work, written under the pen name "Temkin", as another kind of travel book – presenting it as journeys into his own inner world.

But the real question is: how fully have we preserved the legacy of this great traveler, scholar, and uniquely creative poet?

Already in the 1950s, there were attempts to study and present the legacy of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani to the public, and to help people better understand his personality. Literary scholars F. Seyidov and R. Babakhanov wrote a small booklet about him (Babakhanov, 1961). The geographer Nuraddin Kerimov conducted research and produced one or two books on the subject (Karamov, 1958; 1973). However, the most outstanding contribution to studying and presenting the personality and legacy of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani at the proper academic level belongs to the unforgettable scholar Aghamir Guliyev (Guliyev, 1964). That modest and unassuming scholar, who accomplished significant work, made the greatest contribution to bringing Shirvani's legacy into the field of science (Shivani, 1974).

I remember it was February 1975. A major conference was being held in Moscow dedicated to the memory of the great orientalist scholar Yevgeny Eduardovich Bertels.

I was a student at the time, but I was able to attend this first (and unfortunately, despite early expectations, never later continued as a series) academic conference, which gathered only prominent scholars. I participated with a presentation thanks to the recommendation of Gazanfar Aliyev, who would later become my academic supervisor, was one of Bertels students, and served as the responsible secretary of the conference organizing committee. At that academic gathering, some of the most famous Oriental studies scholars of the Soviet Union were present. From Azerbaijan, a group of textual scholars arrived, led by academician Abdulkarim Alizadeh. Aghamir Guliyev was also among them.

In the mid-1970s, Aghamir Guliyev had published a three-volume edition of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani's "Riyaz us-Siyaha" within the famous series of Eastern written monuments, along with an extensive introduction. This publication created a strong resonance not only in the Soviet Union but also abroad (Shivani, 1974).

This is the only work of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani that has so far been published at a proper academic level. However, his other works – "Hadaik us-Siyaha" and "Bustan us-Siyaha" should also be published. Publication alone is not enough; these works should be translated into Azerbaijani with full, detailed commentary. The "Divan" of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani should also be presented to Azerbaijani readers in both literal and poetic translations.

But who will do this work? Specialists need to be trained for it. In the time when dedicated scholars like Aghamir Guliyev were engaged in this field, obtaining manuscripts from different countries was extremely difficult. He himself told me that he

struggled for month to obtain microfilm copies of the manuscript of “Kashf ul-Ma’arif”, which he discovered, was located in Berlin. He was also trying to obtain its microfilm copy. Today, doing this kind of work and obtaining sources from different distant places is much easier. What remains is the effort of knowledgeable, experienced, and persistent scholars who are skilled in working with manuscripts, to take on the task and begin studying and translating these works. We still do not fully know our great figure Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. He does not fully belong to us. He will truly become ours of today and of tomorrow only when every work of the “fivefold legacy” he left to his nation and the world is re-edited, translated, analyzed, and made accessible to people, so that everyone can see him up close.

A “window” will open before Azerbaijan and the world through the re-publication of all the work included in the fivefold legacy of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, and via that window, the image of this great person, great traveler, and the great scholar will become much clearer to us.

Before Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, many travel books and accounts of journeys had already been written. But his travel writings are completely distinctive. He does not write only as a geographer but also as a historian, an anthropologist, and a naturalist. One of the places he visited extensively was his homeland, Azerbaijan.

He described Azerbaijan in such a way that even Azerbaijanis, when turning those pages, see their homeland in a completely different light. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani divided his homeland into 3 parts: the lands north of the Kura River as Shirvan, the region between the Kura and Aras rivers as Aran, and the territory stretching south of the Aras River up to the Savalan Mountains as Mughan.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani wrote that “Aran” in the Turkic language means “a warm place”. Regarding Mughan, he also collected various legends and noted that the name of this region is derived from a person named Mughan (Shirvani, 1315: 42).

At this point, he shares a very interesting detail about Mughan. He writes that a plant grows there which the local people call “the killer”. If an animal that is not familiar with it eats this plant, it gets poisoned and dies (Shirvani, 1315: 564). Why an unfamiliar animal? While writing these notes, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was pointing out that animals should not be seen as completely unconscious or unintelligent creatures. Even if you force the local animals, they do not touch those plants until spring, even when they are very green. Why until spring? It turns out that the poison in those plants decreases and disappears when spring comes. Then, after autumn arrives again, it returns. The local animals know this. But an animal coming from outside sees the fresh green plant, eats it, and dies immediately (Shirvani, 1315: 564).

Countless pieces of information like this, which may seem small at first glance, are scattered throughout Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani’s travel writings. As you read those valuable books, you not only get to know different places better, but also gain a deep understanding of the language of nature.

Strength of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani’s writing is that he speaks with affection about every land, city, and village he describes. However, when you compare, you can see that in what he writes about Azerbaijan, both the depth and the love are on a completely different level. He arrived in Tabriz. He explored this ancient city in detail and spoke about it with special admiration. He called Tabriz “nigaristain”, meaning “land of beauties”, and he had actually read a manuscript about Tabriz titled “Nigaristain”.

In that book, “Nigaristan”, he noticed an interesting detail about the history of Tabriz and included that information in his own work. It turns out that in the 14<sup>th</sup>

century, during time of Sultan Uveys, a plague struck Tabriz again – this time more severe than ever before. It was so devastating that it took the lives of 300.000 people.

However, the other side of this sad information, which he took from the source striking to Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. He writes that although 300.000 people died, the city's population was so large that even after such a loss, no emptiness was felt (Shirvani, 1339: 188-90).

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani also writes about the earthquakes that passed over Tabriz. The quake that occurred in 857 turned the city upside down. But gradually, the city was rebuilt and revived. Then came the terrible earthquake of 1041 – a devastating disaster about which there are sorrowful accounts in chronicles, historical sources, literary works, including the poems of Qatran Tabrizi (Tabrizi, 1967: 216-218).

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had read all those sources. But now, while walking among the people of Tabriz, he was also collecting oral stories preserved in the memories of elders. By combining these stories with written historical records, he deepened and expanded his knowledge about Tabriz's past.

As in every place he visited, here too – indeed even more than elsewhere – Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was eager to meet intelligent people and made many friends. One of them was Mirza Abulqasim, whom he would later mention with respect and affection. After meeting him in Tabriz and being impressed by his knowledge and depth, a close friendship quickly developed between them. Mirza Abulqasim was a man who had received a complete education in Isfahan and Karbala. But beyond all that, he also had a wisdom that could be felt in every conversation he had. This impressed Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani even more deeply. In their private conversations, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani recorded the wise sayings that Mirza Abulqasim told him in his book like proverbs, so that future generations could learn them and absorb them. Mirza Abulqasim himself was a great scholar and used to say that a scholar should stay away from arrogance, pride, and greed from money, and should not become a tool in the hands of kings. He said that having great knowledge is not enough; a person's moral character must also be honest and pure. Because knowledge in the hands of a drunk man. He also said that a scholar must have complete and deep learning. Just as an inexperienced doctor takes lives, an unskilled scholar is also a disaster for wisdom (Shirvani, 1339: 56).

Mirza Abulqasim spoke so wisely that his words were like pearls. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani wrote them down one by one so they wouldn't be lost. The world is temporary, and everyone including Mirza Abulqasim will pass away, but these wise words should remain.

Mirza Abulqasim has passed away, and Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani is also gone, but the book remains. Those words are still alive, and they will continue to serve as advice today and in the future.

Mirza Abulqasim said that a scholar's words and actions should match. If a scholar's words and actions do not match, then he is a scholar without practice.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani did not write only geography books or only history books – he created guides for people. He did this so that by reading his books, you could better understand both the world and the environment you live in, and also become a true, complete human being. He would connect the wise stories he heard and read, from many different sources, to the ideas he was discussing.

The discussion had turned to Alexander the famous Alexander the Great. He was talking about the lands Alexander had passed through. But he also included in his book

a meaningful story he had read about Alexander, so that it would remain as a lesson for people.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani recorded in his book a story that he had likely copied from some source of his time that no longer exists, so that it could serve as a lesson for us and for future generations. The story goes like this: someone had written a valuable book about Alexander the Great. The commander Alexander read the book and liked it very much. He saw that it showed his true image – his life, his journey, his struggles, and his victories. He then called his treasurer and said, “Give this person 200.000 mithqals of gold”. That amount itself was equal to a whole treasury of wealth.

The people around him, the members of the court, tried to advise Alexander the Great to change his decision. They said, “What is a single book that you are giving 200.000 mithqals of gold for it?”

Alexander replied, “No, I know what I am doing. Imagine that you are sick, suffering from a serious illness, and you are searching for a doctor who can cure you of this disease”.

You would be ready to give everything you have to a doctor who frees you from pain and illness and extends your life. But this man has written a book about me – a book that will give me eternal life. Compared to eternal life, what is 200.000 mithqals of gold?!

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani filled the pages of his works not only with historical and geographical knowledge, but also with such wisdom. He wrote books that you can never say you’ve fully read just once. You will have to return to them again and again – and each time you do, you will discover new pearls in those treasures.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had arrived in the Ottoman Empire and was traveling through it step by step. The Ottomans also had many travelers of their own. At least they had a great figure like Evliya Chelebi, who also traveled widely and wrote about what he saw. In some details, he may have described things even better than Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. Because he was inside the situation. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had only passed through and moved on, while the other person lives there. But Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani’s writings still have a human touch and feeling in them.

He also brings into his pages the people he spent time with, his conversations with them, and the light of their thoughts and the warmth of their feelings. That is why Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani’s writings are very different from those of Evliya Chelebi and other travelers (Shirvani, 1315: 78, 363-368, 432).

He arrives in the city he calls Anguri, which is Ankara. He describes it and talks about its people. Then he travels on to other cities, towns, and villages. Eventually he reaches a place where he is invited to a gathering. To make the gathering more interesting, they also invite a well-known local figure named Dede Mahmud.

In the middle of the gathering, they ask Dede Mahmud whether the old “neyreng” science still exists. “Neyreng” means illusion or magic. It was the art of hypnotizing or influencing people so that they would see different scenes in front of their eyes as if they were real. Dede Mahmud replies that the sciences that existed in the past still exist today. There is a well-known saying: what exists cannot disappear, and what does not exist cannot come into being. He asks for scissors and they bring them. He cuts out a figure of a man and a sword from paper and places them in the middle. Suddenly, in front of everyone, both the paper man and the sword start to move. The man picks up the sword and begins swinging it left and right, and some people become frightened and run away. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had seen such scenes many times before, and during his travels he had also met people who practiced this “neyreng” art. That is why

he sat calmly. Wise Dede Mahmud then said: *"This is also a lesson. Those who have traveled the world and seen it stay calm, while those who do not know the truth of the world become frightened and run away"* (Shirvani, 1315: 432).

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani would leave this gathering and new gatherings awaited him, because he was always on the road. And being on the road meant new places, new people, and new encounters.

He met Muhammad Durrizade, the Sheikh al-Islam of the Ottoman Empire. Muhammad Durrizade was a wise man. But when he met Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, he realized that the person in front of him was a very great and exceptional wise man as well. So he begins to open his heart.

In the meeting that took place in Istanbul, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani included everything Muhammad Durrizade said about wisdom and thinking in his book.

What is written in that book has become our wealth and heritage today. Muhammad Durrizade used to say that a person's true ornament is intellect. And intellect has only one path – truth. A person distinguishes well from bad through reason. A person who possesses intellect sees the world in a better way. A person with intelligence protects himself from many troubles.

One day, while they were spending time together and enjoying each other's company, Muhammad Durrizade learned that Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani would soon leave the Ottoman Empire. He told him that he had spoken about him, and that the Sultan also wished to meet him.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, however, tried to stay away from rulers not only here but in every country he visited. He was drawn more to poets, scholars, and people of knowledge and wisdom.

Still, he had great respect for Muhammad Durrizade and did not want to refuse his request. He asked whether the meeting was obligatory or voluntary.

Muhammad Durrizade replied that it was voluntary, but a sultan is still a sultan, and since he had already informed the Sultan, it would be better if he went to the meeting (Shirvani, №115: 383-384).

In Istanbul, they go to the palace of Sultan Mahmud. The meeting goes very well, because Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, as a man of great intellect, was impossible not to appreciate.

When the meeting ends, the ruler turns to Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani and says: *"You are a deep thinker, a wise man, and in some sense a sacred personality. I would like to hear prayers from you so that the life of my country and my rule may continue successfully"*.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani replies that the scholars of the past said: the justice of a ruler for even one day is greater than sixty years of worship by a believer.

Therefore, he says, the ruler does not need his prayers. Instead, by being just himself, he can become a source of blessing and prayer (Shirvani, №115: 384).

The road kept pulling him forward. He left Istanbul, headed to Kutahya and from there reached Bursa. After passing through several more cities, he arrived at a sacred place – Konya.

In Konya, he had a promise in his heart. First, he went to visit the mausoleum of Jala ad-Din Rumi.

In this city, he met a well-known poet named Rahmatali. This acquaintance later became the foundation for another work he would create.

Like everyone who met Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, Rahmatali was immediately captivated by his presence and wisdom.

Shortly before Shirvani left Konya, Rahmatlai gave him a gift the book “Maqalat” by Baba al-Din Velayi. The book contained descriptions of many events from that era.

Shirvani himself would later write that from “Maqalat” he learned a great deal about Jalal ad-Din Rumi’s eight disciples, their lives, and their activities.

After receiving this gift from the poet Rahmatlai, Shirvani once again revisited Rumi’s “Masnavi”, the great spiritual work of Jalal ad-Din Rumi.

The famous “Masnavi-ye Ma’navi” of Jalal ad-Din Rumi begins with these lines”

بشنو از نی چون حکایت می‌کند

و از جدایی‌ها شکایت می‌کند

کز نیستان تا مرا ببریده‌اند

از نفیرم مرد و زن نالیده‌اند (Rumi, 1263: 26).

*Listen to the reed, how it tells a tale,  
Complaining of separations.  
Since they cut me from the reed bed,  
My cry has made men and women weep.*

He carefully reads the Masnavi from beginning to end again and admires the greatness of Jalal ad-Din Rumi. While staying in Konya, he studies the life and work of Shams Tabrizi more deeply. He speaks very highly of Shams Tabrizi’s talent as a poet. He says that in the work he will write about Jalal ad-Din Rumi, he will also talk about Shams.

He strongly rejects the idea that Shams was not from Tabriz, defending it with conviction as an Azerbaijani. After giving proofs, he adds that wherever spring is, it is still spring. Shams is like a sun that rose from Azerbaijan, and wherever he is, his Azerbaijani light and radiance can be seen (Rumi, 1263: 22).

After many years, when he returned to Iran, his home was looted more than once – once in Shiraz and once in Kerman. Because of this, many of his manuscripts were lost, and as a result, only part of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani’s works have survived to the present day. Fortunately, some of his writings had been copied and spread while he was still alive, including what he wrote about Jalal ad-Din Rumi.

By 1895, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had long since passed away. However, in that year, Rumi’s Masnavi was published in Bombay, India, at the Nasiri Press using lithographic printing. One special feature of this edition was that it included a preface written by Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani at the beginning.

That preface gives us reason to see Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani not only as a traveler, scholar, historian, and poet, but also as a literary critic.

In that fiery extensive introduction, on one hand, he vividly describes the environment in which Jalal ad-Din Rumi lived, the people around him, and the movement he promoted. On the other hand, the preface presents a warm and relatable image of Rumi – someone who feels close and familiar to everyone.

Another advantage of that beautiful preface is that it helps reveal many of the hidden wisdoms beneath the lines of the Masnavi by Jalal ad-Din Rumi (Rumi, 1263: 23).

Each of the works left to us by Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani is like an ever-burning fire one that never goes out and never will. These are such fires that we and the future generations will always feel their warmth and light.

In 1826, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani himself stood before one of these eternal flames, was filled with wonder, and later recorded his impressions in his book.

By 1826, it had already been 20 years since Baku was annexed by the Russian Empire. As Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani writes, he arrived in Surakhani, located 3 versts east of the Baku port.

What amazed and attracted him most there was the Ateshgah of Baku. He wrote that these were miraculous places: people dig into the ground, bring a flame close to it, and immediately that spot turns into a fire. He noted that the place is considered sacred. It is a pilgrimage site for fire-worshippers – Zoroastrians.

He also writes that priests regularly come here from distant India to worship, and that some of them stay here to guard and tend the eternal fire (Shirvani, 1315: 129).

Even before Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, other travelers had written about Indians coming from India to Surakhani to guard the fire and continue their worship at the Ateshgah of Baku. Almost every traveler mentioned that some of these priests lived there permanently.

In 1746, the traveler Jonas Hanway wrote that there were 50 Indian priests at the Ateshgah in Surakhani. Over the years, their number decreased. By 1883, the last Indian priest was still there.

However, when Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani visited these places in 1826, there were only a few priests from India remaining at the fire temple, keeping watch over the sacred flame (Karamov, 1958: 55-56).

And Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani also included a symbolic detail about these places in his travel notes.

He wrote that believers had even found a way to carry the fire from here to another place. According to him, people would dig a hole and place a clay pipe into it, then cover the pipe with a leather bag. The gas coming from the ground would pass through the pipe and fill the bag. After tightly closing the bag, they would take it to another location.

There, they would again insert a clay pipe into the bag, and when they brought a flame close to the top of the pipe, it would ignite and start burning (Shirvani, 1315: 129-130).

What is being described is not just a technical curiosity, but a symbolic image: the fire of Azerbaijani land, of Surakhani, continues to burn even when it is carried to a distant place.

The scene witnessed and recorded by Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani gains a deeper meaning here. It is no longer only about a natural phenomenon, but about continuity – how something originating in one place preserves its essence even when displaced.

In that sense, the fire becomes a metaphor for persistence: what is rooted in Surakhani does not lose its identity when moved elsewhere.

No matter where you are in the world, and no matter what time you live in, when you open the books of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, they start speaking to you like a contemporary. And like a fire that kept burning even when it was taken from one place to another in ancient times, these books never stop giving off their light and warmth.

He personally saw the transfer of those fires at the Ateshgah of Baku from one place to another.

Later generations witnessed that the book “book-fires” he reached continued to burn and shine even after him.

As a continuation of the discussion about people coming from India to Azerbaijan the so-called “Mecca of fire worship” it is also worth mentioning that this fact is connected to Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani becoming a literary hero.

In the 1960s, the Azerbaijan State Theatre of Young Spectators regularly staged a play called “Goodbye, India”, written by Qeybullu Rasulov.

The play was dedicated to the adventures that Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani experienced during his journey in India (Rasulov).

In his youth and early adulthood, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani spent his life on the road. When he reached about 40 years old, he decided to get married. He understood that it was already relatively late, but after some rest he still wanted to continue his travels.

He came to Iran and headed toward Shiraz, specifically to a place called Baba Kuhi. There, he felt a kind of homeland attractions as well. Baba Kuhi himself was originally from Shirvan. The mountain known today as Baba Kuhi still stands, and it is named after him.

However, the great 11<sup>th</sup>-century thinker, philosopher, and poet Baba Kuhi of Shiraz spent most of his life in Shiraz and was ultimately buried there (Huseynov, 2014: 130, 139-140).

After living for a short time in the Baba Kuhi area, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was invited to move to Shiraz.

When he first arrived in Iran, his reputation reached the court, and Fath-Ali Shah Qajar invited him to his palace twice. The Shah had already heard much about Shirvani from afar, but after speaking with him directly, he realized he was even greater than his reputation suggested.

He then suggested that since Shirvani had already traveled widely and seen many lands, he should now rest for a while and accept a position at the royal court as an advisor (Shirvani, 1315: 413).

But, such a life and career did not suit the nature of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. For that reason, he politely declined the offer.

Naturally, this refusal caused some disappointment in the heart of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani settled in Shiraz and began living there. Soon, at the age of 41, he also got married.

He assumed that the difficult and unstable parts of his life were behind him and that from then on, he could live in relative peace and stability (Shirvani, 1339: 133).

But he was mistaken, and the hardships and anxious days he would face were still ahead. When Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani arrived, Shiraz – the center of the Persian province – had about 5.000 houses. Soon, an earthquake struck and destroyed most of them.

Even after the earthquake, Shirvani remained in Shiraz. As misfortune would have it, a plague broke out this time (Shirvani, 1339: 133).

But, in an even more unfortunate turn of events, opposition against Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had already begun in Tehran.

Religious figures close to Fath-Ali Shah Qajar realized that the Shah clearly favored Shirvani and might eventually bring him into the court. Because of this, they started spreading rumors about him.

They claimed that he was a misguided person, a follower of a sect, and even labeled him a heretic. They also said that during his time in India, he had joined movements opposed to their religion (Quliyev, 1964: 63-64).

At the same time, another great threat was directed against Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. The British also wanted to eliminate him.

This was because, during his time in India, his activities and writings against British policy had created serious problems for them. After learning that Shirvani had arrived in Iran and was living in Shiraz, the British reportedly instructed their diplomats in Iran to find ways to remove him (Quliyev, 1964: 63).

The period of persecution for Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had begun. When a plague broke out in Shiraz, he moved to the town of Qumsha.

While he was straying in Qumsha, his wife was also seriously ill. During this time, an order was reportedly issued to eliminate him.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani's spiritual mentor and leader in the Nimatullahi Sufi Order, Mjzub Ali Shah, sent him a warning message telling him to leave immediately, saying he had received news that an assassination attempt was being planned against him.

After receiving this letter, Shirvani took his family and went to Kernan. However, only a few days after arriving, once his presence there became known, riders were again sent after him.

From that point on, in the first weeks of his arrival and settlement in Iran, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was constantly followed by threats, persecution, and danger of death (Shirvani, 1339: 133).

At that time, the world felt smaller than it does today. Of course, 1,000 years ago, 500 years ago, and 300 years ago, the Earth was the same size as it is now.

But in those times, people did not know the world as well as they do today. Because of that, the world seemed smaller than it does now.

Because many places on Earth were still unknown to people. From ancient times onward, there were always dedicated individuals who tried to "expand the world from within" by broadening human understanding, opening people's eyes wider, and helping them learn about the world.

One of those who worked to make the world better known to his fellow citizens, companions, and to humanity as a whole was Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. He spent nearly 40 years of his not very long 58-year life traveling on the road.

He traveled from city to city, from country to country, from one land to another. He did not just pass through as an ordinary person – he observed as a scholar. He recorded what he saw, and over time, what he wrote and remembered turned into valuable, lasting books.

People like Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, who spent their lives on journeys and left behind books as the result of those travels, have one important feature that distinguishes them from others.

Every person makes journeys in their life, whether short or long. But some people leave behind books in which every page is filled with travels and journeys that continue to live on for humanity.

For figures like Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, even after their death, their own journeys among people and through history seem to continue forever.

And old proverb says that someone who reads a lot does not necessarily know a lot, but someone who travels a lot learns a lot. We should trust proverbs and folk sayings because they have been tested by history and time.

However, like any idea or statement, proverbs and traditional wisdom should also always be examined critically.

Is it really true that someone who travels a lot knows more than someone who reads a lot? Of course, the more a person travels and sees, the more their knowledge and experience grow. But where else can you get as lighter and knowledge as books give to people?

In history, there have been famous scholars, philosophers, and thoughtful poets who never left the town or city where they were born, yet through the power of reading and the knowledge they gained from books, they felt as if they had traveled the world and seen it all.

Someone who travels a lot learns a lot, but a person who deeply studies books will always have deeper and more comprehensive knowledge.

An important feature that distinguished the great Azerbaijani traveler and scholar Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani from many scholars and travelers who lived before him, during his time, and after him was this unique quality.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani spent most of his life traveling, dedicating about 40 years to journeys. Naturally, this gave him rich experience – he saw a lot and gained knowledge from what he observed.

But at the same time, he never stopped reading and learning day and night throughout his life. That is why everything he said and wrote was so well-formed. Both kinds of knowledge – experience from travel and knowledge from reading is clearly reflected in his works, giving them their depth and brilliance.

The 3 famous travel books of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani – “Bustan us-Siyaha”, “Riyaz us-Siyaha”, and “Hadaik us-Siyaha” – have been studied from beginning to end.

It has been found that he used at least 500 different sources when writing them (Quliyev, 1964: 165).

The sources he used were in Turkish, Persian, Arabic, and Indian languages. But in addition to these written materials, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani also relied on other types of sources, including oral ones.

He spent time with people and knowledgeable scholars, writing down what they said. He also collected folk tales, sayings, and legends from different peoples, and these became another important source for his works. And, of course, there were also his own direct observations of what he personally saw.

If we add these sources to the more than 500 sources he already used, the total number would become even higher.

Because his works are based on such a strong foundation of knowledge, they do not become outdated over time. They keep their freshness, reliability, and trustworthiness, and continue to provide knowledge and guidance to new generations. Wise Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani gave advice to those who came after him. He said that no matter how high a person rises, they will always need new experiences and knowledge. Through new experience and learning, a person can reach even greater heights.

However, to gain that knowledge and experience, there are always other great holders of knowledge that people depend on. That is why he advised: always turn to books and to people of knowledge. This is the advice he gave. And he himself always followed the advice he gave to others. He constantly had a book in his hand, and he always turned to people of wisdom and those who possessed knowledge.

All his writings are based on strong foundation of knowledge, so Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani can be considered one of the founders of our national scientific historiography and scientific chronicle writing.

At the same time, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani is not only the founder of Azerbaijani scientific chronicle writing and travel literature in a strict sense.

In this sense, he was one of the very few foundational figures in the Near and Middle East, and perhaps even the leading one. Because he read a lot, knew a lot, traveled widely, and saw many things, he could quickly notice mistakes and naïve ideas in the sources he studied.

One of the most reliable works of medieval Islamic historiography is “Tarikh-i Vassaf”, written by Shihab al-Din ibn Fadlallah Shirazi. In this work, he writes that Damascus is like paradise and the most beautiful of cities.

But Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani quotes this statement from “Tarikh-i Vassaf” and immediately adds his own comment. He says that he has seen many cities that deserve to be called true paradise and are far more beautiful than Damascus (Shirvani, 1339: 738). Although Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani knew a lot about the topics he discussed, he always tried to express his ideas briefly, and his views were consistently supported by reliable sources. Which sources did Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani turn to, and what did he rely on? He drew from almost all of the most famous works on history, geography, philosophy, and wisdom – those widely accepted in the scholarly world of the Middle Ages.

At that time, there was a recognized collection of authoritative books in the intellectual and cultural sphere, and anyone who considered themselves a scholar or an advanced intellectual was expected to study them. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had read this entire essential body of works, and the influence of his readings can clearly be seen in his writings.

Without reading Al-Tabari, it would have been impossible to write well about the past, or about the history and geography of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in which Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani lived.

Because to describe what he saw, he also had to show the history behind it – and since he had read all those old books, he was able to do exactly that.

The famous Arab traveler and historian of the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Al-Masudi, wrote the work *Muruj al-Dhahab*, which is also one of those essential historical sources that cannot be overlooked.

Even today, researchers who write scholarly works about the middle Ages cannot do without that book.

It is said that Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani relied on more than 500 authoritative written sources when composing his works and that *Muruj al-Dhahab* by Al-Masudi was counted as just one of those 500.

However, it should also be taken into account that *Muruj al-Dhahab* actually consists of nine large volumes. From this perspective, the real number of books he used was much higher. Since many of these sources had 3, 5, 9 or even 10 volumes, when counted together, the total exceeds a thousand books.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had a strong memory, and most of the important information from the books he read was always retained in his mind and memorized.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had read Rashid al-Din Hamadani’s “*Jami al-Tawarikh*”, and he had carefully studied from beginning to end Hamdallah Mustawfi’s “*Tarikh-i Guzida*”.

Mirkhwand’s “*Rawzat al-Safa*”, Khwandamir’s multi-volume “*Habib al-Siyar*”, and Iskandar Beg Munshi’s multi-volume “*Tarikh-e Alam-ara-ye Abbasi*” were all firmly stored in his memory.

However, for Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, history was only a means. He primarily wrote works of geography and travel accounts. Therefore, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani could not ignore the well-known works of major geographers.

He began with the classics: he carefully studied from beginning to end Ptolemy's "Geographia", read Al-Istakhri's "Masalik al-Mamalik", and studied Yaqut al-Hamawi's "Mu'jam al-Buldan".

He also carefully examined from beginning to end Hamdallah Mutstawi's "Nuzhat al-Qulub", taking detailed notes along the way. He had studied all the essential sources of the middle Ages related to philosophy, wisdom, logic, and Sufism. Naturally, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani could not ignore the tazkiras (biographical anthologies) either.

He had read Muhammad Afi's "Lubab al-Albab", and turned page by page through Farid al-din Attar's "Tadhkirat al-Awliya".

Dawlatshah Samarqandi's "Tazkirat al-Shu'ara", Jami's "Nafahat al-Uns", and Lotf Ali Beg Azar's "Atashkadeh-ye Azar" – along with many other such works – had all passed before his eyes. He had read them all, studied them, and knew them well.

That is why Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was deeply familiar with the traditions of earlier historiography and geography, had a full view of the landscape of literature, and was capable of exploring the many layers of philosophy.

By gathering the most essential knowledge from various fields into his mind, and by using that knowledge precisely where it was needed in his works, and of course by adding the most interesting moments from what he had seen and experienced during his travels, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani created works that never became outdated.

None of his writings can be reduced to simple travelogues or journey accounts alone – they always go beyond that.

The works are a true treasury of knowledge: when reading them, you travel together with Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani – passing through the countries and routes he himself crossed – while at the same time gaining knowledge and intellectual enrichment. It feels as if you are inside a vast palace of learning.

He also wrote that a lamp is essential for people, because without a lamp we cannot break through darkness.

In darkness, we cannot see what we need to see. But the best of all lamps is knowledge. Because knowledge is a lamp of lamps – it is not only useful at dusk, in darkness, or in complete night. It also spreads its light even in broad daylight, when the sun is shining, and can still guide you more clearly even in an already bright world.

Because he thought this way, believed in his ideas deeply, and carried a lifelong love for knowledge, the great Azerbaijani scholar and traveler Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani left behind works that are all valuable in their own right – each like a lamp – and bequeathed them as a legacy to his nation and to humanity.

The traveler and scholar Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani also known by the pen name "Temkin", was a poet as well. Throughout his life, one direction of his writing devoted to literature.

He wrote poems all his life and, as a poet, primarily reflected his own feelings, emotions, and personal experiences in his verses.

The life of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was marked by sorrow, and he encountered many hardships. However, many of his melancholic poems and sorrowful lines do not express only his personal grief.

They often describe the places and cities he visited, sometimes even praising them. But if those places had suffered disasters or misfortunes, he also brought that pain into his poetry as if it were his own.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani arrived in the city of Balkh. Before reaching it, he had already read much about this ancient city and knew a great deal about it.

But when he arrived and saw it with his own eyes, he was deeply moved. He saw that Balkh so magnificently described in historical sources and known for its greatness had fallen into a taste of ruin and poverty.

The reason for this destruction was the invasions of Genghis Khan.

When the Mongol armies passed through, they had completely destroyed this beautiful city and left it in ruins. For Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, the very concept of "homeland" its geography and boundaries had already changed significantly.

As he traveled through different cities, villages, and lands, and interacted with the local people, those places became familiar and close to him as if they were his own home and native land.

That is why Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani viewed the ruined condition of Balkh not as something distant, but as a tragedy affecting his own homeland. He treated it as a personal sorrow, and all the pain it caused him was transformed into poetic lines.

From the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many poets in the Near and Middle East composed poems dedicated to different cities, describing their craftsmen and urban life. However, none of those present the literary and historical picture of Near and Middle Eastern cities with the same level of precision, sensitivity, and breadth found in Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani throughout his life produced literary works in which he both expressed his feelings and thoughts, and composed descriptive poems that complemented his travel accounts and journey narratives. At the same time, he demonstrated his wisdom and scholarly depth, offering advice, guiding the reader, and pointing out paths of understanding and reflection.

In one of the quatrains he wrote in Persian, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani called people to humility, encouraging them to read much, listen much, and speak little:

تا ز تو نپرسند تو از خویش مگوی  
جز با دل خود راز دل ریش مگوی  
گوش تو دو دادند دو زبان تو یکی  
یعنی که دو بشنو و یکی بیش مگوی (Shirvani, 1315: 626).

*If no one is asking you, then do not speak at all.  
Hide the secrets of your heart from strangers.  
You have two ears, but only one tongue –  
So listen twice, and speak only once.*

In another poem, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani gives advice to the reader like a father advising his child. He constantly calls for patience, restraint, gentleness, and a mild temperament.

برد باری خزینه خرداست  
هر که را حلم نیست دیو و دداست  
دیو بند است حلم اگر دانی  
غضب از دست اوست زندانی (Shirvani, 1315: 391).

*The treasure of the mind is patience,  
While anger resembles a raging demon in the heart.*

*Gentleness can tame even a fearsome giant,  
And mildness keeps rage locked in a prison.*

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani ("Temkin") in all his writings whether historical works, geographical descriptions, scientific studies, or poetry – was not merely a traveler, nor only a poet or a scholar. Across all these forms, he also acted as a teacher.

This is a metaphorical comparison rather than a literal claim. Human beings are given two eyes, but their ability to see differs – some have sharper vision, others need glasses to see more clearly. Many people look at the world through correction, trying to improve what nature gave them.

However, the perception attributed to Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani is described in a different sense: his "vision" is intellectual and analytical. It suggests that he observed reality with unusual clarity compared to ordinary people – not physically, but through knowledge, experience, and interpretation.

What sharpened his "vision" was knowledge. When Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani arrived in a place – any land, any city – he would speak about its history and realities in such depth to the local people that they were often left astonished.

They would wonder how someone foreign could understand their homeland better than they did themselves, after living there for years.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani's ancestral homeland was Shamakhi. In his youth, one of his routes passed through Shamakhi, from where he descended to Aghsu. In his book "Burstan us-Siyaha", he writes that this place is called Shamakhi, and then immediately clarifies the historical background.

He explains that Shamakhi is Shamakhi and Aghsu is Aghsu but asks why Aghsu was also referred to as Shamakhi. From there, he guides the reader toward history: he notes that at one time the forces of Nadir Shah destroyed Shamakhi and forcibly relocated its population to Aghsu, after which Aghsu itself was given the name Shamakhi for a period (Shirvani, 1315: 42).

The episode you are referring to is part of local historical memory about the displacement of Shamakhi's population and its temporary relocation to Aghsu. After returning from travel and finding the city deserted, the poet Zulali expresses his grief in the following famous lines:

*Qürbət də deyirdin ki, Zülali, vətənin var,  
Ensin gözü nə qarə su, Ağsu vətən oldu (Mammadli, 1961: 64).*

"In exile you used to say, Zulali you have a homeland,  
May black water fall into your eyes – Aghsu has become your homeland".

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani arrived in Baku and noticed that all the houses had flat roofs, and in general no pitched roofs existed; everything was coated with tar. He immediately paid attention to this unusual architectural feature.

He was told the reason behind it, and he recorded it in his book so that anyone who might come here in the future would understand this reality. He wrote that this city is sometimes called "Badi-Kuba", meaning "the place struck by wind".

The winds and storms were so strong that they damaged livestock, poultry, houses, and courtyards, even tearing off roofs. Because of this, people began building flat roofs and covering them with tar (Shirvani, 1315: 129).

He had arrived in Gabala. But what had his sharp eyes noticed here that others couldn't see? What had he observed?

Of course, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani already knew many truths about the long and winding history that Gabala had gone through before he arrived there. He had read in Claudius Ptolemy that long ago there had been an ancient city here, on the right bank of the Garachay River. By asking around, he finds that place. People are surprised what is this man doing in those ruins?

But Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani writes down what he sees in those ruins and records it in history, so that in the future, those who want to study the past of Gabala and look for the location of the old city that once stood where the present city is can know exactly where it was (Shirvani, 1315: 281). Let them trace the lost place through his book and search for it, so that perhaps in the future they can uncover many truths about the city's past from beneath the ground.

Even today, across Azerbaijan, there are many place names left from the time of the Arab invasions, such as Arabmehdibeyli, Arabushagi, Chol Arab, Arabkhana, and many others. Of course, behind every place name, there is a story.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani wrote about Quba. He had personally traveled there and described it as one of the cities of Shirvan. However, even though he did not reach Quba himself, he had detailed conversations with many knowledgeable and well-informed people from there.

By combining those detailed conversations with what he had read in other sources, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani provides such information about Quba that some of those truths are still useful today.

For example, one of the place names in Aran left from the Arabs is the village of Arabqubali. So where did the name Arabqubali come from?

The answer is found in Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. He writes that long ago, several Arab tribes came and settled in Quba. Later, some of those families split off and moved to different parts of Azerbaijan.

Some of the Arab families who left Quba came to the Aran region and eventually founded the village that would later be called Arabqubali (Shirvani, 1315: 415).

Thus, the keen hearing ears and sharp eyes of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani perceived and noticed many truths, and his precise pen recorded all of them. And these writings, left behind by that great man, still guide us today and open our eyes to the truth.

Knowledge gives a person wings. Thanks to knowledge, you can look at truths from a much higher perspective. And when you observe from such a height, you begin to notice and understand many small details that you couldn't see when you were close or inside the situation.

And Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was capable of looking from such a high perspective. Because he read and learned a great deal, and also traveled widely and saw much, he knew more than most chroniclers and travelers. That is why he was able to view truths from above and even created proverbs. Geographical proverbs! Wisdoms that sound like sayings, carrying both knowledge and lessons at their core.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani combined cities he had visited, observed, and studied into concise geographical sayings. He wrote that if you bring together the water of Khwarezm, the soil of Isfahan, and the air of Herat, a person living there would never die (Shirvani, 1315: 165).

After traveling through Herat and other cities and villages of Afghanistan, he finally climbed the long-desired Hindu Kush. His goal was to reach the city of Bamiyan, more precisely to see its famous Buddha statues carved into the cliffs.

Baminyan is not actually at 6.143 meters; that figure is incorrect – the valley is much lower, around 2.500 meters above sea level.

After passings through Herat and other cities and villages of Afghanistan, he climbed the long-anticipated Hindu Kush and eventually reached Bamiyan. His goal was to see the famous Buddha statues carved into the rock cliffs.

He describes now, so that people could view them comfortably, a kind of terrace awas carved out of the rock, forming a viewing platform. Visitors would come, observe the statues, and instead of leaving immediately, they would fall into thought, contemplating these monuments that had survived since the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Shirvani, 1315: 65).

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani describes in detail the 2 statues carved into cliffs of Bamiyan. He notes their heights: one is about 55 meters, the other about 37 meters.

He also records an interesting local detail he learned from conversations with residents: each statue had its own name in the local tradition – one called Salsal, the other Shamama (Shirvani, 1315: 165).

The 2 famous statues in Bamiyan were a heritage of the Kanhadar – Indian cultural world. From the 6<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – over 1.400 years they stood on the cliffs. But in March 2001, they were destroyed. Taliban forces in Afghanistan declared that they would demolish these statues as symbols of idolatry, and they carried out their destruction. The statues – one 55 meters and the other 37 meters high, and as Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani wrote, about 16 arshins wide (a traditional unit roughly over 70 cm per arshin) were not easy to destroy.

At first, attempts were made to damage them with rockets and explosives, but these did not affect the solid rock cliffs. Later, mines were placed, and only then were the statues eventually blown up and destroyed. When those statues were being destroyed, the entire world raised its voice in protest and tried to defend them, because the destruction process lasted for some time. Countries like the United States, France and Italy, as well as many cultural nations, together with UNESCO, and also Muslim states, made appeals urging them to stop and not to destroy the statues.

However, one force supported the decision of the Taliban – Al-Qaeda.

Thus, two monuments that were about 1.400 years old, located in Bamiyan, and part of Afghan and Indian cultural heritage, were in fact destroyed; two treasures belonging to humanity as a whole were lost (Bakikhanov, 1970).

And what Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani wrote about those statues in his travel book is now twice as valuable to us.

Because he recorded such details about them, and such stories that people used to tell at that time, that is no longer possible to find them in any other source. Every line and every description from his pen is like a guide reliably connecting us to the past of our history and spiritual heritage.

Another important quality that distinguished Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was his passion. Whatever he wrote about, whatever he described, he did it wholeheartedly, with sincerity and love.

Just as he praised a city, a town, a mountain, a river, or a forest with deep admiration, he also described and celebrated the people he met with the same affection.

He eventually arrived in Badakhshan and there met a man who greatly impressed him – the ruler of Badakhshan, Sheikh Muhammad Sufi.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani writes with admiration about Sheikh Muhammad Sufi, saying that he was the ruler of Badakhshan and a man as strong as iron.

He was highly skilled, capable, and a good administrator, as well as a deeply religious person. He had united worldly rule with spiritual devotion, which is why the title “Sufi” was added to his name.

He was a man of the poor, always close to the needy, helping and supporting them. That is why all the people were satisfied with him.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani adds that they had many meetings and conversations, and he goes on to describe their very first meeting and their initial discussions with Sheikh Muhammad Sufi.

He writes that he was staying as a guest in a khanqah when suddenly the ruler of Badakhshan, Sheikh Muhammad Sufi, entered that simple place where ordinary people were gathered.

As soon as he came in, he warmly greeted everyone, spoke kindly, and gave many people gold, silver, and gifts, showing generosity.

Then he turned to me and asked, “From your clothing, you seem like a stranger where are you from?” I replied, “I am from Shirvan”.

He asked again, “Which part of Shirvan?” I said, “From the capital, Shamakhi”.

Then he asked, “In which climate zone is Shamakhi, and who built it?” I replied, “Shamakhi is in the fifth climate, and according to history, it was built by Khosrow I”.

From the expression on his face, I felt that my answers pleased the ruler...

So, I gathered courage and asked for permission to ask a question. He said, “Go ahead”.

I said, *“There is a great difference between you and us – like the difference between a river and the sea. You are a ruler, the ruler of a throne and crown, while all these people are ordinary”*.

What is the force that guides you, that brings you to sit among these simple people and treat them as your equals?

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani continues that Sheikh Muhammad Sufi replied thoughtfully:

What brings us close is spiritual unity. It is this unity that connects people and creates love between them. Every living being has a sense of love within. The only thing is, a person must awaken that feeling inside. Once that feeling awakens within you, you will always strive for spiritual unity (Shirvani, №115: 25-29).

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was a strong-willed and resilient man. He was not afraid of hardship. During his 40 years of travel, he faced many difficulties and struggles. He also went through many painful experiences.

But there was one great tragedy in his life that hurt him more than all the other hardships he had endured.

And he reflected this pain in his writings.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani writes that in 1241 (1825), he was traveling from Shiraz to Karbala. When he reached the town of Qumsha, its ruler, Mammadgasim Suleyman oghlu Qajar, treated him with extreme torture. He did not stop at taking all his possessions and property. He also had his family and all those close to him imprisoned.

But even this was not enough, he destroyed 25 years of his work, burning all the papers that contained the notes he had gathered over those years (Shirvani, 1315: 661).

Imagine the scale of that loss. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani had a strong memory, that is true. But there were many names, events, and details for which he had taken precise written notes.

It was impossible to reconstruct all of this purely from memory. Even if he retraced the same 25-year journey from the beginning to the present, it would still be impossible to restore those exact notes, memories, and details as they originally were.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani explains in the preface of his famous travel book that what happened was already in the past and cannot be changed. That is why he apologizes to the reader.

He says that if those notes had remained in his possession, what he wrote would have been much more substantial and detailed than what the reader is seeing now (Shirvani, 1315: 661).

There is a better reality here: in different periods of history and in different parts of the world, people with great intellect have often been subjected to persecution and oppression. Such acts have always existed, though they remain morally unacceptable and destructive to knowledge and culture.

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani faced threats and pursuit during his life, and the fear of death was often present. However, one of the reasons he was able to remain in Iran was that he also had many friends and people who sincerely loved and supported him.

Among them was Rizagulu Khan Hidayat, one of those who showed him respect and support.

Rizagulu Khan Hidayat is a historical figure. From the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many biographical books called “tazkirahs” were written. About 800 of these works exist, and they reflect medieval Eastern literature like a mirror. Rzagulu Khan Hidayat wrote 2 of these works: “Majma al-Fusaha” (Hidayat, 1295) and “Riyaz al-Arifin” (Hidayat, 1344).

Rzaqulu Khan Hidayat was a distinguished figure in Iranian society. At one time, he also served as the head (rector) of the University of Tehran (Dar ul-Funun). He was widely educated and highly respected in the field of science and education. He considered himself a student of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani and said that he had always learned from him. He also adds that it was Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani who gave him the pen name “Hidayat” (Shirvani, 1339: 245).

In “Riyaz al-Arifin”, examples of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani’s ghazals, qitas, and rubaiyat are included.

تمکین تو به صورت ارچه از شروان  
در جان به نگر که از جهان جان  
هر کس به تصور ز تو گوید سخن  
اینها سخن است آن چه دانی آن (Hidayat, 1344: 414).

*Even though you appear to be from Shirvan in your form and actions,  
In reality you belong to the entire spiritual world.  
Everyone forms their own idea about you and says something different.  
But only you truly know who you really are.*

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani clearly understood who he was. But, people around him, such as Rzaqulu Khan Hidayat, also understood his identity during his lifetime and recognized his greatness. This greatness would be understood even more deeply over time, especially after he was no longer alive.

One of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani’s major works is “Riyaz us-Siyaha”. The Orientalist scholar Bernhard Dorn, one of the deep experts on the Near and Middle East,

first worked in Germany and later in England. He then moved to St. Petersburg and worked there for 45 years.

His work was mainly connected with the Academy, the university, and the Imperial Library. One of the main reasons the Russian Imperial Library became a rich collection of manuscripts was Bernhard Dorn.

There was correspondence and contact between Bernhard Dorn and another famous 19<sup>th</sup>-century orientalist, Nikolay Khanykov. One day, Dorn wrote a letter to Khanykov asking about Tabaristan. Khanykov replied by sending him information about Tabaristan that he had found in Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani's "Riyaz us-Siyaha".

Dorn then wrote another letter saying that they should find the original work and arranged for it to be published and translated.

Khanykov also explained how to search for it, saying that the manuscript could most likely be found in Iran. Dorn then contacted the Caucasus viceroy, Vorontsov. Vorontsov, in turn, instructed Russia's ambassador in Iran, Dolgorukiy, to search for and find the manuscript. After extensive searching, Dolgorukiy eventually found it. There was only one copy of this manuscript in all of Iran.

The manuscript "Riyaz us-Siyaha" was written in Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani's own hand. He had presented it as a gift to Fath-Ali Shah. Later, it was passed from the shah to his heir, his son.

Ambassador Dolgorukiy, on behalf of the Russian government, approached Prince Mohammad Reza Mirza. The prince replied that the manuscript was a unique copy and considered a national treasure, so it could not be given away. However, he allowed a copy to be made (Quliyev, 1964: 20-23).

Thus, a copy was made, and that manuscript eventually reached Dorn. However, it contained only the first part of "Riyaz us-Siyaha".

In 1852, a more complete and refined copy of the work was donated to the Russian Imperial Library by Sakina Khanum, the wife of Abbasgulu agha Bakikhanov. After that, Orientalist scholars finally had access to the full version of the work.

The fact that Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani's work was so highly valued and actively sought after his death proves an important truth: despite all the hardships he faced in his life, he can still be considered a fortunate person.

Although during his lifetime there were many who persecuted him, threatened him with death, frightened him, and tried to prevent him from working and living freely, there were also many who sincerely loved and appreciated him.

Even during his lifetime, his works were being sought, and even after his death, there was still a need for them. No matter how much time has passed, that need still exists today and will continue into the future. What greater happiness could there be for a creative person than this?

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani married late and started a family at the age of 41. But, there was another delay in his family life. He had to wait 12 years for his first child. When he was about 53-54 years old, his first son, Jalaladdin Muhammad, was born.

He welcomed the birth of his son with great joy in his old age, and he also reflected this happiness in his writings.

2 years later, another son, Husamaddin Ali, was born. However, these children were not destined to experience much of their father's presence. At that time, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was still living a poor and modest life as before. Yet what kept him from becoming tired, broken, or discouraged was his strong inner richness.

In the Middle Ages, there were many Sufi orders in Central Asia. The Nematullahi order was one of them, but it was different from most others. Its purpose and teachings were primarily focused on the well-being of people.

The Nematullahi order taught its followers that, first of all, people should support and stand by each other.

It also encouraged them that whenever they see someone helpless or in need, they should quickly go to help that person and meet their needs – not only material needs, but also spiritual ones. They should try to expand people's knowledge and increase their education.

And no matter how many difficulties they face in these efforts, they should not give up or turn back.

Starting from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, from Haji Nematullah Vali, this Sufi order continued to exist and was still active in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, remaining one of the leading orders among others.

In later times, the leader of this order was Majzub Ali Shah, who was both the teacher and close friend of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani. Before his death, Mazjub Ali Shah entrusted the leadership of the order to Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani (Shirvani, 1339: 343-348).

This is not a simple matter. Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was a great traveler, an outstanding scholar, and a well-known poet. He was also a highly respected figure among the intellectuals of his time.

At the same time, he was regarded as a sacred personality, and he had many followers and companions who followed his path.

In 1838, Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani, who had spent nearly 40 years of his 58-year life traveling, set out on another journey. He took his wife with him and was going on a pilgrimage to Mecca. But, this turned out to be his final journey. He died in the city of Jeddah.

It is said that Jeddah is the city of Eve (Havva), and Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was buried in that sacred place (Shirazi, 1319: 128).

Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani was only 58 years old. He still had many duties to the world – works he had not yet written, children to raise (one was 5 years old and the other 3), and responsibilities he still needed to fulfill. He felt no financial support for his family.

Later, his relatives and friends wrote in letters to each other (and these letters still exist) that his children were in a very poor and difficult situation and that they should somehow be helped (Quliyev, 1964: 87).

As in every time and place, time once again showed its harsh side to a wise man. While Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani still had many tasks to complete and many responsibilities, he passed away. His way of leaving this world also carries a symbolic meaning.

At the age of 5, he set out on his first long journey. We do not start counting his last 40 years of travels from that moment, but it still serves as an introduction and a symbol. His life began with travel and journeys, and it seems that his life was meant to end in travel as well.

It did end in travel, in a journey, and in a sacred place.

## Conclusion

The main truth you understand when you get to know the rich and deep scientific and literary legacy of Haji Zeynalabdin Shirvani is this:

It doesn't just inspire admiration anymore, but real amazement – because his legacy could have been much greater and far more significant than what we have today. After the notes and information he had collected over 25 years were destroyed, he recreated his known works only from what remained in his strong memory. If those materials had survived, the range of information in Shirvani's treatises – which are now considered unique sources would have been much wider for new generations.

One of the main tasks facing Azerbaijani scholarship today is to carry out systematic work to publish all of Shirvani's existing works in their original Persian, and to organize their translation into both Azerbaijani and English.

If this legacy becomes accessible to modern world scholarship, many peoples of the Near and Middle East – especially in countries like India, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia – will better understand how valuable Shirvani's works are as rare sources for learning about their past.

This would also help show more clearly and completely that our great scholar is not limited to a local context, but is truly one of the outstanding figures of world science, opening the way for his recognition on a global level.

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### ***Hacı Zeynalabdin Şirvaninin səyahətdə tamamlanan ömrü***

**RAFAEL HÜSEYNOV\*\***

#### ***Xülasə***

*Hacı Zeynalabdin Şirvani universal biliklər sahibi olan nadir bir şəxsiyyət kimi ilk növbədə Azərbaycan coğrafiyaşünaslıq elminin banisidir. 58 illik ömrünün 40 ilədək müddətində 60 min kilometrədən artıq yol qət edərək Asiya və Afrikanın bir çox ölkələrini gəzib-dolaşmış Zeynalabdin Şirvani səyahətlərini qiymətli kitablarda əks etdirmişdir. Lakin onun qələmə aldığı kitablar digər Qərb və Şərq səyyahlarının yazdığı səyahətnamələrdən əsaslı şəkildə fərqlənir. Onun "Riyaz us-siyaha", "Hadaik us-siyaha", "Bustan us-siyaha", "Kəşf ül-məarif" əsərlərinin hər biri çoxsahəli biliklər sahibi müəllifin özü kimi universal səciyyə daşımaqdadır və səbəbsiz deyil ki, Azərbaycanın tarix boyu yaşayıb-yaratmış məşhur şəxsiyyətləri haqda ensiklopedik araşdırma müəllifi Məhəmmədəli Tərbiyə onun əsərlərini "zəngin faydalar xəzinəsi" adlandırır. Bu əsərlərdə coğrafiyaşünaslıq, tarix, etnoqrafiya, cəmiyyətsünaslıq və kulturologiya kimi elm sahələri qovuşur və həmin səbəbdən də Zeynalabdin Şirvaninin əsərləri bütün digər məziyyətlərindən savayı sadalanan istiqamətlərdən hər biri üçün mötəbər məxəz vəzifəsini daşıyır. Onun ayrı-ayrı ölkələr və xalqlarla bağlı qeydləri sadəcə təsvirdən ibarət deyildir. Bunlar dərin, müfəssəl müşahidələr əsasında aparılan təhlillərdən yaranmış sanballı elmi araşdırmalardır. Elə həmin səbəbdən də Zeynalabdin Şirvaninin əsərləri artıq XVIII yüzilin sonları, XIX əsrin əvvəllərindən etibarən hind, rus, polyak, ingilis, fransız, əfqan, türk, çinli, iranlı alimlərin mütəmadi istinad etdiyi mötəbər mənbələrə çevrilmişdir.*

**Açar sözlər:** *Zeynalabdin Şirvani, "Riyaz us-siyaha", "Hadaik us-siyaha", "Bustan us-siyaha", "Kəşf ül-məarif", "Divan", Təmkin, coğrafiyaşünas, tarixçi, etnoqraf, şair, yaradıcılıq, elmi dövriyyə*

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**РАФАЭЛЬ ГУСЕЙНОВ\*\*\***

**Резюме**

Его имя достойно жить среди редких деятелей науки, литературы и культуры не только Азербайджана, но и всего мира. Гаджи Зейналабдин Ширвани, как уникальная личность с универсальными знаниями, является прежде всего основоположником географической науки в Азербайджане. Зейналабдин Ширвани, преодолевший за свои 58 лет жизни более 60 тысяч километров, объездив многие страны Азии и Африки в течении 40 лет, отразил свои путешествия в ценных книгах. Однако написанные им книги коренным образом отличаются от рассказов о путешествиях, написанных другими западными и восточными путешественниками. Каждое из его произведений «Рияз ус-сияха», «Хадаик ус-сияха», «Бустан ус-сияха», «Кашф уль-маариф» носит универсальный характер, как и сам автор, владеющий многими областями знаний. В этих произведениях сходятся такие области науки, как география, история, этнография, обществоведение и культурология, и по этой причине труды Зейналабдина Ширвани, помимо всех прочих достоинств, служат авторитетным источником для каждого из перечисленных направлений. Его заметки об отдельных странах и народах носят не просто описательный характер. Это весомые научные исследования, основанные на глубоких, подробных наблюдениях. По этой же причине труды Зейналабдина Ширвани с конца XVIII и начала XIX веков уже стали авторитетными источниками, регулярно цитируемыми индийскими, русскими, польскими, английскими, французскими, афганскими, турецкими, китайскими и иранскими учеными.

**Ключевые слова:** Гаджи Зейналабдин Ширвани, «Рияз ус-сияха», «Хадаик ус-сияха», «Бустан ус-сияха», «Кашф уль-маариф», «Диван», Тамкин, географ, историк, этнограф, поэт, научный оборот.

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