

FROM THE HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN UZBEKISTAN (1991–2000)

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The growing interest in the issues of tolerance and the activities of religious denominations in Uzbekistan has catalyzed the emergence of numerous scholarly works addressing various aspects of this topic. It is officially recognized that the role of historical science in spiritual revival and the objective reflection of historical processes was fundamentally elucidated by the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I.A. Karimov, in many of his addresses. Specifically, the President stated: "We learn about a nation through its culture, through its spirituality... It is impossible to achieve self-awareness without knowledge of truthful history..." [1]. Particularly following the first President's meeting with historians at the Academy of Sciences in 1998, extensive work was undertaken for the objective study and comprehensive analysis of the History of Uzbekistan as a whole. Candidate and doctoral dissertations were defended, and monographs and scientific collections by researchers and specialists on the topic of religion and its history in Central Asia were published.

Currently, national history is an integral part of the ideology of the independent state and is becoming a genuine mentor for the nation. The public's attention in the republic is focused on the problems of establishing a rule-of-law state in Uzbekistan, the democratization of society, the implementation of human rights, and the humanization of interpersonal relations. Quite naturally, increased interest is also devoted to the problems of freedom of conscience, the history of religious denominations, and the deeds of outstanding figures who combined a religious worldview with encyclopedic education.

"Our great ancestors: Imam Bukhari, At-Tirmidhi, Naqshband, Khoja Akhmad Yassawi, Al-Khwarizmi, Beruni, Ibn Sino, Amir Temur, Ulugbek, Babur, and many others made an enormous contribution to the development of our national culture and have truly become a subject of pride for our people" [2]. In this regard, research into problems related to the spiritual and religious heritage of our people has recently become particularly important and relevant.

Many figures in culture and science, religious scholars and publicists, clergy, and lawyers express various points of view on how the relationship between religious organizations and the state should develop, and what place freedom of conscience occupies in the system of universal values, democratic rights, and liberties. A special place in the public dialogue on the issues of religious denominations is occupied by the question of the practice of exercising freedom of conscience at various stages of the formation and development of our country.

It is advisable to divide the historical literature, in which the historiographical aspects of this topic have been reflected to one degree or another, into the following groups: a) works written on the philosophical side of religious denominations; b) research by scholars undertaken after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the establishment of independent democratic republics, in particular the Republic of Uzbekistan; c) works by foreign authors.

Decisive changes in the nature and methodology of scientific knowledge were determined only after Uzbekistan gained independence. In the historiography of this period, as in domestic historical science as a whole, one can trace the beginning of a process of revival—the first steps taken without the influence of totalitarian ideology toward objective scientific analysis. In the early years of independence, many scientific works did not set the task of historiographical analysis of the history of religious denominations. However, as they processed the literature, authors inevitably delved into the history of religious studies, identifying little-known or

completely forgotten names of researchers, determining their contribution to the study of religion, and thereby recreating a broader picture of the history of religious studies.

In particular, the attitude toward foreign religious studies, which was declared unscientific, idealistic, anti-communist, etc., in the Soviet era, has changed. Now, in the era of democratization, views on foreign religious studies, specifically Islamic studies, have shifted. It was recognized that during the "years of stagnation," a unique conspiracy of silence existed around many topics, entire historical periods, and personalities; that the past and future of religion under socialism, the national question, and the influence of the religious factor upon it received practically no proper reflection in Soviet literature. By denying the achievements of foreign social sciences and searching in them only for manifestations of class character and anti-communist orientation, Soviet researchers largely impoverished themselves, reaching the very scholasticism, dogmatism, and conservatism for which our social sciences are now criticized. A more detailed scientific study of this issue can be traced in the works of D.A. Alimova [3], dedicated to the classification and systematization of the historiography of the women's question.

The study of foreign religious concepts is gradually becoming objective; constructive study of the history of religious denominations is replacing criticism for the sake of criticism. General philosophical and methodological foundations of foreign religious studies were not previously analyzed; only Sovietological concepts were studied, which were criticized as part of clerical anti-Sovietism. Sovietology itself was understood as an instrument in the ideological struggle against the USSR. In the monograph by G.R. Baltanova [4], the latest foreign studies devoted to the problem of the contemporary state of the Muslim religion are considered; a comparative analysis with Soviet religious studies is conducted; and the place and role of Islam in the history, culture, and civilization of peoples is defined in a new way. G.R. Baltanova emphasizes that the central place in the theoretical developments of Western scholars is occupied by the concept of "Muslim revival," the beginning of which is dated from the late 1970s. It was then that a unique renaissance of Muslim themes began, not only in the pages of foreign scientific publications but also in the mass press.

A notable contribution to the formation and development of new ideas about religion and religious denominations was made by domestic scholars such as A. Mansurov, Sh. Ishanova, S. Boltabaev, B. Babajanov, A. Rakhmonov, E. Karimov, and others [5].

The aforementioned information indicates that dozens of works of varying significance are dedicated to the history of religious denominations, the principles of Uzbekistan's confessional policy, and its characteristics, but in general, they offer only a partial description of the historiography of the issue under consideration. For all the multitude of publications examining various aspects of the problem, there is still practically not a single work in domestic historiography dedicated to a comprehensive analysis of the available literature on the problem being studied for the period 1917–2000 [6].

In summary, the key findings and conclusions of this study can be outlined as follows:

The history of the formation and development of the principles of tolerance in Central Asia represents a multifaceted process deeply rooted in the socio-cultural code of the region. In recent decades, in the context of strengthening the independence of Uzbekistan, the study of this phenomenon has moved to a qualitatively new academic level [7].

Articles, monographs, and conference materials published during the period of independence contain valuable facts on the problem under study and represent significant historiographical interest. The revival of the priceless spiritual and cultural heritage of the people has become a crucial task raised to the level of state policy. Furthermore, in the modern era, the digitalization of archives and the integration of advanced internet resources play a pivotal role in preserving this legacy [8].

The confessional policy of the state is aimed at providing for the free development of spiritual culture for all peoples living in Uzbekistan.

Based on the results of this article, we consider it appropriate to outline the following proposals and recommendations:

It is necessary to continue targeted scientific research in search of solutions to the problems of the history of religion and religious denominations in the modern and contemporary periods;

Particular attention should be paid to the study of the life and activities of representatives of domestic religious thought and to the study of the role of religion in the history of Central Asian civilization;

Conducting a deep source-study and historiographical analysis of the history of religion and religious denominations in Central Asia; conducting a comprehensive study on the problem of "Islam and Power in the Modern World";

Developing and publishing educational and methodological literature on the history of religious denominations in Uzbekistan.

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