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ISLAMIC ONLINE EDUCATION. CURRENT CONDITION AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS



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The topic, which I would like to present to you today is Online Education or Distance Learning. To be more precise - Islamic Education with implementation of online technologies.

Let us begin with the definition of the term: "Distance education is acquisition of knowledge and skills through intermediate information and guidance, which involves all technologies and other forms of remote learning" this definition is given by the United States Distance Learning Association.

There is another more concise version of the definition, which I also find very appropriate: *"Distance education is a system, a process, which connects students with the suppliers of education services through various educational resources"*.

According to some sources, today more than 70 million students have completed their education by taking 8,000 online-courses designed by educators from more than 750 universities of the world.

Affordable Colleges Online points out the fact that today more than 6.7 million people undergo their studies on the Internet.

In 1997, for example, Peter Drucker, a re-known American scholar in education management stated that 30 years from now the big university campuses will become relics.

Universities will not survive. The future is outside the traditional campus, outside the traditional classroom. Distance learning is coming on fast.

Although his forecasts were not accurate the tendency is rather strong and intensive.

It is clear that the concept of education is inevitably going to be modernised. This is also due to the evolution of the function of the educators.

Practically all new tendencies in education field are moving towards modification of the role of an educator and a student in favour of the so-called reversed classroom, where the primary role in the learning process is given to the student who must himself digest the material, whereas the educator's role is only to assist in the process.

Exhausting publications, lectures that have become a cliché and outdated materials will see their end.

Micro-learning or in other words mini bytes of educational content is another tendency which is gaining popularity in this field and which will most probably become a hit in the future, especially in the corporate world. Five-minute videos, single page documents, specific courses, small pieces of information will be easily integrated into daily life of a busy individual, as the cognitive load is much lighter. Let's also not forget that micro-learning is ideal for mobile devices, which partially explains their popularity.

A well-known researcher and a founding general director of Class Central – a popular system for the search engine and review sites for online courses, Dhaval Shah concluded the development results of online-education over the past six years and outlined six main trends in evolution of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC).

Having listed the main trends of MOOC evolution, Dhaval Shah points out their multi-directionality.

The first trend is monetisation of online courses. According to Dhaval Shah, in 2011 the content and certification of online courses was free, but today this is no longer the case.

The second trend - online courses are becoming distant from the learning process moving towards independent learning. As Shah points out, 55% of all courses which make up the Class Central system do not have a specific date of beginning and end of lectures and are available at any desired period of time. Since 2014 online courses which were earlier available only within a defined period of study session have taken On Demand format – “upon request”.

This leads us to the third trend – decrease of the general load of each individual online course. In the old days, when online courses were conducted once or twice a year, all students used to gather into one massive group. Today these courses are available at any time. This means that instead of collective learning, each student undergoes his studies at his own individual pace and non-synchronous participation has eased the course load. Individual online education, by the way, serves as a good drive towards monetisation of the service.

The fourth trend is mainly related to online education system in the USA and concerns the issues of accreditation process. Mainly the certificates which the students receive upon the completion of MOOC in a particular field offered under Coursera's programme Specializations, Udacity's Nanodegrees или edX's XSeries. These programmes have

been accredited by colleges, universities and the credits received in the process can be used to acquire certificates.

The fifth trend is that online courses are gaining a larger audience in the field of professional education. Today the volume of potential market for corporate online education amounts to billions of dollars annually. According to Coursera online platform, more than 50 enterprises use corporate product Coursera for Business. Colleges and universities nevertheless remain in the centre of the system, despite the fact that online platforms strengthen partnership with business for the development of online courses, online platform operators repeat continuously that external developers of MOOC cannot be considered as alternative to universities in terms of developing educational content. This should pacify opponents of open education from university academia who are concerned with a possible disappearance of the need for universities in the near future.

The sixth and the last trend is the disruptive development of national online education programmes as opposed to global platforms. Programmes like XuetangX (China), HPIIOO (Russia), Fun-mooc (France), Mexicox (Mexico), Miríada X (Spain), NPTEL (India) etc.

It is obvious that today governments of the leading countries of the world invest into online learning in an attempt of not being left behind the evolution of educational technologies.

What does this have to do with Islamic Education?!

The new era and old concerns.

Every time a new form of knowledge transmission is introduced the conservatives label it as innovation.

Unodoubtedly this was the case at the advent of teachers who started practicing personal systematic education. In the ancient times people learned by observation acquiring their knowledge and skills naturally in the course of attending to their daily affairs.

Later, we noticed a shift from personal education to groups with an advent of the first madrasahs and universities. Strange as it may seem but even today we have certain people who consider group education an innovation.

In our times, in the age of new technologies in a rapidly developing world we find ourselves standing at the doorstep of a new turn a new form of delivering education to the masses. A distance education. And as before, we see opponents of this knowledge transmission method.

And if in the West opponents of distance education are almost non-existent, Muslims often refer to this method as innovation.

All this brings to mind not so distant past, when a ban was imposed on importation of typewriters into Muslim world, in fear that it may lead to uncontrollable publishing of books and as such to possible deviations in religious knowledge. As a result, for dozens of years our Ummah has been deprived of access to elementary and applied knowledge in contrast to mass education of the Western world.

And here we find ourselves again at the new turning point of technological development with some suspiciously questioning the new methods and forms of knowledge transmission. We hear familiar statements like:

- The student must be able to see the teacher in person. Although video format perfectly fits this requirement.
- The teacher must be able to establish eye contact with the student in order to understand him.
- There are no guarantees that the student will digest the material in an appropriate manner.

There are many more arguments beyond any criticism.

The Good News

A number of concerns, however, are quite clear and fairly objective, but these concerns should lead us towards finding solutions rather than complete avoidance of the problem, which may cause us yet again to lag behind in this new endeavour.

Should there be concern with the remote presence of the student one must ensure proper feedback from him, to establish a sense of interactive and accessible communication channel.

Should there be a concern with regards to proper understanding or lack of assistance from the educator's side in the process, the programme can be enhanced with additional webinars or direct student-lecturer communication option.

These additional features will add to the cost of online education but this may only seem to be at the beginning.

Once we look from a different angle, a possibility to enrol students en masse in thousands, tens of thousands or

even hundreds of thousands, substantially reduces the relevant cost of education. If the courses are offered at a nominal fee, then these projects can become very profitable. If we can develop a culture of making payments for acquisition of religious knowledge within the Muslim community, it would open a good commercial perspective. Imagine if every student of our academy today makes a monthly payment of \$10. Our monthly revenue will amount to \$350,000. Of which clean profit would be \$300,000. Not bad, right?

Jama'a Islamia, for example spends around \$3,000 for each of its student.

The cost of learning at our academy, for example, currently stands at \$0.5 per month. With every new student enrolled this cost is further reduced. Incomparable figures, aren't they?

The Most Important!!!

We must understand that when we declare the universality of the Quran and the applicability of the Islamic religious culture for all times and changed, we must be able to show it in the example, by walking in pace with the latest trends and technologies. Without it we will not be able to show attractiveness and universality of our religion.

We cannot speak of the necessity of spiritual development and religious practice on one hand, by declaring them to be the guarantee of success in this world and in the Hereafter, and at the same time maintain such a backward state of these two fields that deal with eternal values. We could try to justify it by pointing at conservatism

and inclination towards old school, but that would mean self-deceit.

In order to prevent our religion from being confined to mosques and religious schools by isolating it from natural course of day-to-day life, as it was done by the People of the Book who lived before us, we must walk in line with technologies and adapt them, including religious sciences, and their dissemination methods to the modern means.

This distinguishes us from the monks and ascetics who have left the worldly life, rendering unto Caesar that which belongs to Caesar and having locked themselves up in monasteries seeking salvation.

Our mission is much wider than that. We must, to the best of our abilities, help the humanity achieve happiness in this world and in the world to come. Internet today is that powerful and effective instrument that helps overcome all administrative obstacles, borders and material difficulties, and to deliver awareness about the eternal afterlife to each and everyone.

Everyone has his or her gadget today. Today even the family institution does not influence education of a child as does the content present in gadgets.

The world is witnessing appearance of the artificial intelligence, whereas we still lack electronic platforms, which would enable us to use it effectively.

What We Need

- The required volume of knowledge, which a Muslim should possess, is substantially higher in comparison to other religions and more so to a secular society.

- Large volume and variety if technological means used to deliver the knowledge should be our distinct differentiating factor from other religions.

- Rapid globalisation forces people to migrate, change countries and even continents. Online access is becoming more and more relevant. Only massive and wider practice will help us sharpen and adapt programmes and instruments to the tunes of time.

- We are possessors of a unique approach when it comes to religion. There is no separation between attending to worldly matters and spiritual practice. We therefore need to find out ways to make learning process fun and interesting in online world. More often trendy and modern individuals can be found there.

- There is a problem of a unified standard programmes of Islamic education. We need to address the big question whether these programmes should be standardised or not. We can undoubtedly state that development of educational platforms of different formats will create positive and dynamic process, which will lead to creation of new learning programmes offering Islamic education.

- Adaptation of content to the needs and requirements of the online user will be another challenging aspect. We will witness the creation of new engaging forms of information presentation, visualisation and dissemination using various instruments for a specific age group and target audience. These will include gamification and animation of various religious educational programmes. This is an interesting but very challenging and costly work. The inventors of such programmes will have to find ways to earn money to survive. While the user's preferences and tastes have been spoiled considering the high

quality products and creative channelling available today, we will need to take quality of our products seriously.

This will tremendously help improve the quality of the products and the methodology itself.

My apologies for making my presentation sound like a sermon, which is because I am a graduate of a faculty of fundamentals of religion and religious call.

Thank you for your attention and wishing you success in all your noble endeavours.

THE NORTH CAUCASIAN RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS AND THEIR ROLES IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN 20'S AND 30'S YEARS OF THE 20TH CENTURY



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Preface

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah. And may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon His beloved Messenger Muhammad, His family and companions, and those that follow Him in righteousness until the final day.

Allah (subhanahuwata`ala) says in the Holy Quran:
(يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ) الحجرات: 13.

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into Nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (Not that ye may despise (Each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most Righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well – acquainted (with all things). [Al Hujurat: 13].

Due to this Quranic verse we Muslims should learn each other's lives deeper as much as we can.

Because the people's nature created like that; what we do not know we cannot love or follow.

To prove this, the Malaysian proverb comes on time. Malaysian proverb goes: "Takkenalmaka, takcinta" which means: You cannot love what you do not know. Therefore,

the people must know each other to believe in each other, and to be good brothers in Islam.

A. Proposed study

1.0 Introduction.

This topic is about: "The North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20`s and 30`s years of the 20th century".

This topic is one of the least studied and discussed topics in professional journals and books. This history lies somewhere between nations who are practicing Islam in their daily life and teaching Islam at madrasas. In other words very basic level. Islam did not come to Russia at once, but it came by stages, year after year discovering new parts of Russia.

The North Caucasus people fought for their peaceful life with Islam against the superpower country, which is much bigger than the North Caucasus by population and military might, from the early time of the Russian tsarist era till it`s end, and, after that it begun again with the Communisttime. When Bolsheviks start spreading their ideology of atheism.

That is why this research needs to highlight to the people by raising educational level as the final agenda. The people are in the great need for knowledge:especially today there is a need to know much more about this, to go furthermore than just being able to show on the Russian map to the students where is The North Caucasus locating.

The researcher hopes that this research will make a Muslim unity and non-Muslim friendship much closer to the Muslims of Russian Federation.

2.0 Research Aims

The proposed study aims to show some historical aspects to prove how the Islamic schools in the North Caucasus played role on the education on that time.

The following research questions will guide the proposed study.

How developed the Islamic schools in the North Caucasus after the Tsarists era in Russia?

How the Islamic schools in the North Caucasus effected to the education in Russia in the beginning of the 20th century?

What are the similarities between Islamic education and the Soviet education?

In doing this research, the proposed study aims to investigate the experience of development of the Islamic culture on the academic level of it, in the Russian Federation generally, and in The North Caucasus particularly. And to investigate the real meaning of The North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20`s and 30`s years of the 20th century. Through making multiple contacts with the Russian people who are really in Islam.

3.0 The Research Context

In the past 20th century, the Russian official educational system had ignored the Islamic culture as a culture, and

banned it from teaching and propagating in Russia, although there were a quite big number of Muslims in Russia.

The main and only reason is that the ideology of the Soviet Communism system were built on the ideology of the atheism. That is why the Russians had back worded to understand the history of development of Islamic culture, and the Islam as a religion.

4.0 Literature Review

4.1 Twelve secrets of the Caucasus¹

This book is about the history of the Caucasus from its ancient time until the Stalin (the author writes: its incredible history stretches from Prometheus to Stalin) that is why this book includes the history of Russia. In this book the author discovers the historical background of the Russian Muslims and the History of who and how the Russian Muslims converted to Islam, after their long life way of practicing in other religions and paganism. The researcher thinks that this book will not just helpful for this research, but also it will be very interesting for the people to discover for them Caucasus with its very early started history. And this book covers a lot of information about Russian Muslims all around Russia.

¹Essad-Bey author of Blood and Oil in the Orient; Twelve Secrets of the Caucasus. Translated from the German by: G. Chychele Waterstone. Nash and Grayson Curzon Street Mayfair London.

4.2 The ghost of freedom a history of Caucasus.²

This book is about the history of Caucasus from its very beginning and Russia when it conquered Caucasus until now.

The author of this book tries to give a picture of all Caucasus including its uniqueness with its longest and the second largest mountains (after Himalayas) in the world, and to give a historical point of view and the author divided this history in his book as follows: Empires and boundaries. Rule and resistance. The imaginary Caucasus. Nations and revolutions. Time of troubles. In this very academic research the author talked about pre Islamic Caucasus and how and who Islamized it, and the political rule of Russia in it. The researcher sees that this book will help in doing this research.

4.3 Islamic historiography and “Bulgar” identity among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia³.

In this book the author writing about the history of Islamic background of Tatars and Bashkirs.

This book contains the following contents:

First chapter is about: Islamic historiography in the Volga-Ural region to 1800.

Second chapter is about: the Volga-Ural Ulama and the Russian state: 1552-1788.

In the third chapter there is about: the Tawarkh-iBulgharia of Husam ad-Din al-Bulghar.

²Chares King; The ghost of freedom a history of Caucasus. Oxford university press. (2008)

³Allen J. Frank. Brill Leiden. Boston Kuln. 1998.

In this chapter the author talking about: the legacy of the Tarikh-I Bulghari of Husam ad-Din al-Bulghar.

The chapter four is about: the TarikhNama-iBulghar of Taju ad-DinYalchnghulogli. In this chapter the author wrote about the Bulghar identity in its Bashkir context.

In the chapter six there is about the Bulgharism in the 20th century. The researcher sees that this book also will be helpful in doing this research because the researcher is trying to give a complete picture about the Islamic culture in Russia generally.

4.4 Muslim resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the conquest of Chechnya and Dagestan.⁴

This book is about the history when the Russian Empire was conquering it's today territories. The author writes: "Russia contacts with Caucasus date back to the times of the principality of Kiev. In the Muscovite and early periods these contacts, mainly with the Dagestan and Chechnya". In this book the author continuously year by year talking about the period of conquering Dagestan and Chechnya with connecting it with the war of Russia against the Crimean Tatars. In this book the author talks about the Othman Empire (Doulat al-Uthmaniyah) and Persians, which play the key role in the Russian Muslim on that period. Because the Muslims of Russia did not come such easier to the Russian control as it does some independent states.

For that reason, the researcher believes that this book will be very helpful in doing this research.

⁴Moshe Gammer Teal Aviv University. 1994.

4.5 The North Caucasus barrier.

The Russian advance towards the Muslim World.⁵

The author of this book (Abdurrahman Avtarkhanov who's origin is Chechen) writes about the historical background of war of the Russian Muslims of the North Caucasus, during the Russian so-called "RusskoKavkazskaya-voina" Russia-Caucasus war which is started in 1556.

In this book the author discusses about the situation in the Muslim world not just Russia but also the Muslims around the world like the Muslims of Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan and of course the Muslims of former USSR. As long as this book written by the Russian Muslim, it will be much useable to the research, which is researcher of this proposed study looking for.

5.0 Research Plan

5.1 Theoretical Framework

This proposed study intends to give as much as possible information about "The North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20's and 30's years of the 20th century". The researcher will try to give maximum information about this research study depending on the authority of the historical evidence and the researcher proofs. He will be faithful in his research with help of Allah swt.

⁵AbdurahmanAvtarkhanov, Maria BenningsonBroxup. Editor: Fanny E. B. Bryan, Moshe Gammer, Paul B. Henze. Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay. The North Caucasus barrier. The Russian advance towards the Muslim World.Hurst and Company, London 1992.

5.2 Research Questions

This proposed study will seek to answer these central research questions:

1) What is the historical background of “The North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20`s and 30`s years of the 20th century”?

2) How easy Russia accepted the Islamic Education with its differences to their Christian religion and its culture? (If there is any acceptance of it).

3) Is it true what some scholars say: that Islamic culture spread in Russia by sword, or it just came with the Arab-Muslim Merchants?

4) What are the positive and negative sides for Russia in acceptance of the Islamic culture?

5) As we know, the Russia is a Federative country. There must be some states which had accepted Islamic Education and Islamic culture before than others.

5.3 Research Design

In this proposed study, the researcher will try to give full understanding of how successfully the history of Islamic culture developed in Russia.

6.0 Methods

As long as this research study is about “The North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20`s and 30`s years of the 20th century” the methods of data collection will be many.

The first is a Historical method, which will depend on the evidence of archeology and the history.

The second method intends to gather data through in-depth interviews which are semi-structured.

The third method: Library research for collecting data from the primary resources, such as books, magazines, journals, articles and PhD dissertations.

The fourth method is: will depending on Internet, research method, which used to mean looking for additional information up on the Websites.

The fifth is: the analytical method, because it need some analyses of some historical background.

6.1 Significance

This proposed study aims:

To make a substantial and original contribution to knowledge about “The North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20`s and 30`s years of the 20th century”.

To add knowledge to understand better the history of development of Islamic culture in Russia.

To further our understanding this history.

To encourage other researchers to go further far searching in this area.

6.2 Trustworthiness

This proposed study seeks to enhance its trustworthiness through long-term involvement of researchers.

Though the use of trustworthy information, the researcher aims to provide information to ensure that the research findings are consistent with the data collection.

6.3 Fieldwork

For doing this research the researcher will need to get some evidential sources from the ancient places which are a lot in Russia generally, and in the North Caucasus particularly, and also will need to collect some library sources for this research.

Chapter one: The geographical location of the Caucasus

First paragraph: A picture of the geographical location of the Caucasus

In this chapter the researcher will try to give a picture of the geographical location of whole Caucasus generally, and the North Caucasus in details. Because the research study is about The North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20`s and 30`s years of the 20th century.

The mountain range spreading North-West to South-East, between the Caspian Sea and Black Sea is known as Caucasus.

When we say the Caucasus we should know that we mean the territory of the second largest mountains in the world (after Himalayas), the foothills, three warm seas (Sea of the Azov and the Black Seas from the North-West, the Caspian Sea from the South-East), boundless steppes,

mountain rivers, impassable forests, endless fields, Pearl Lakes, grape and fruit gardens.

Caucasus has its very unique geographical location, where the four seasons evenly divided in time. With its very mild winter, Golden autumn, velvet spring and Hot Sumer. And of course with the most hospitable residents.

Second paragraph: A historical imagination
of the Caucasus

From the very ancient time Caucasus was known to the people of other countries. Who ever visited that small part of this big world, would never forget it, and by their great memories and imaginations always tried to give their picture name to it.

From that time people have their interest to visit this very small place by territory, and very big by culture and by history, which stretches from ancient time to the present day. The people who ever visited the Caucasus felt themselves in a fairy tale.

The ancient people were calling it: "the ring of mountains which encircles the earth, as a marriage ring does a finger"⁶. Because of its very beautiful mountains which are surrounding that territory. Every next name which given to the Caucasus always takes over on the previous name, because of uniqueness of this place. The poets of the East have named it: "the land of tongues and of miracles"⁷. May be because of the innumerable languages spoken on

⁶Essad-Bey; Twelve Secrets of the Caucasus, p-vii.

⁷Ibid; p-vii.

that piece of land, and the miracles without end that are related to the people of Caucasus.

Third paragraph: The meaning of the word
“Caucasus in the local languages”

We the Vaynakh people (Chechens and Ingushs) call this land: “Kov-azya”, which means the Gates to Asia. Because for thousands years (or may be longer time) the Caucasus, dividing Asia from Europe like a giant gate.

Fourth paragraph: Approximate size of the Caucasus

The Caucasus is approximately 1100km across from the Taman Peninsula in the Sea of the Azov and Black Sea in the North-West to the Apsheron Peninsulain the Caspian Sea in the South-East. The main chain of the Caucasian Mountains divides the area into two: Transcaucasia (consisting of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) to the South.

The North Caucasus which is populated by Chechens, Ingush and Dagestan numerous ethnic and linguistic groups and presently divided into numerous administrative units within the Russian Federation⁸.

⁸Anna Zelkina, In Quest for God and Freedom the Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd. 38 King Street, London WC2E 8JZ. 2000. Printed in Malaysia ISBN 1-85065-384-4, p-9.

Fifth paragraph: Administrative Russian Federal territories of the North Caucasus

This territory, which we call the North Caucasus had divided administratively into the Russian regions.

These regions as follow by their names:

Stavropol is the Federal region of Russia.

Karachaevo-Cherkesia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Osetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan. These six Republics are the national Federal Republics of Russia.

This is what the researcher could tell about geographical location of Caucasus in his humble research.

Chapter two: The History of the North Caucasus Republics

First paragraph: A brief history of the North Caucasus

The North Caucasus is one of the most mysterious and ancient regions of the world.

The history of the North Caucasus goes to very deep in the time, rooted leading the prehistoric time.

The researcher will not talk here about so deep history of that place so as not to tire readers.

In spite of the existence of distinct languages and dialects, the North Caucasian Mountaineers are essentially one people consisting of kindred tribes sharing a common history and culture.

Second paragraph: The unity of the tribes
of the North Caucasus

The historical unity of these tribes conditioned their common evolution and historical struggle for independence, best exemplified by the Holy war of Shaikh Mansur (1780-91), the State “The Caucasian Imamate”.

Shaikh Shamil (1834-64), the Mountaineers Republic of the North Caucasus (May1918- June 1920 Capital City: Temir-Khan-Shura (now Buinaksk)).

The North Caucasian Emirate (September 1919-March1920 Capital City: Vedenov).

And finally the Mountain Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (20 January 1920- 7 July 1924 Capital City: Vladikavkaz)⁹.

If we read carefully the historical unity of this people we find them from the 17th century until the end of 20th century their history is always together as if they are one family from one father and one mother. In their everyday life and if it needed even for war just to die to save each other's lives. This is the convincing evidence of that the Caucasian people are all one unit.

If we go for two centuries back from we had mention here, we can find that Moscow had its intention to go deeper to the South, where are located three warm Seas: Sea of the Azov, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.

⁹AbdurahmanAvtarkhanov, The North Caucasus barrier. The Russian advance towards the Muslim World, p-149.

Third paragraph: The beginning of Moscow interests in the Caucasus

Moscow became interested in the Caucasus after its conquest of the Kazan and Astrakhan Khanates in 1556. Ivan the Terrible (Russian Tsar: 16 January 1547- March 1584) even married a Cherkess princess, Maria Temrukovna, in 1561 to provide a basis for peaceful incorporation of the North Caucasus into Russia¹⁰.

Alas, to His great regret, this plan was not destined to be.

A half century after that, Russian Tsar Boris Godunov in 1606 made several unsuccessful attempts at conquest, and for a century no further move was made by Russia in that region.

After one and half century of respite the Peter the Great (Russian Emperor: 1721-1725) tried to take control over the whole Caucasus, but was forced to withdraw his troops after suffering a serious defeat at the hands of the North Caucasian and the Azeripeople in 1772¹¹.

For influence all over the Caucasus including the North Caucasus collided the most powerful Empires of that time (Russia, Turkey and Iran). Due to its geographical location of Caucasus, the Caucasus turned out to be in an advantageous position for Russia. Which ultimately pushed Russia to the war against Turkey in 1768 which lasted six years until 1774. It was the cause of Russian campaign on the

¹⁰Abdurahman Avtarkhanov, The North Caucasus barrier. The Russian advance towards the Muslim World, p-149.

¹¹Ibid: p-149.

Caucasus, because that cherished dream of Russia was all Asia.

For above mentioned reason Russian expansion in the Caucasus was renewed under Catherine II; her commander-in-chief, Suvorov, directed this new campaign, which provoked the first organized resistance to the North Caucasus operating mainly from Chechnya and Dagestan.

As we understood, the history of the Caucasus for the centuries oozing blood not because the Caucasian people do not know how to live in peace and harmony with their neighbors, but because of their geographical location.

Fourth paragraph: The Caucasus turned up between Empires

The Caucasus by the will of Allah swt turned up between great Empires such as: Russia, Turkey and Iran like cloth between scissors. These bloody conflicts between Russia and the North Caucasus people which are lasted endless for centuries (from 16th century until the end of 20th century) created again and again new Imams (Leaders) such as: Imam Mansur, Imam Shamil, Ali-Bek Haji, Mulla Muhammad of Yaraghi, QaziMulla of Ghimree. Unfortunately this name list of warlords can be continued infinitely.

Fifth paragraph: The new era started in the North Caucasus

After the end of the Tsarist Russia and the beginning of new era after revolution in Russia (in 1917) by the new Russian Soviet Communists government the North Cau-

casus people declared their independent state on 11th of May 1918. Its status as such was recognized by Germany and Austria-Hungary and Turkey. Unfortunately, it could not last long. On June 1920 the Independent Republic of the North Caucasus fell.

After that, the Caucasus people passed several more attempts to build their state, but in vain.

The reason is the same as it was centuries before, geographical location of Caucasus and its natural resources which are uncountable.

Here the researcher would like to stop writing this brief history of the North Caucasus. In this humble study it is impossible to cover all events happened there millennium back. The history of the Caucasus as a whole is very rich with roots that go back thousands of years. The researcher hopes that he could give some information, which can bring readers closer to the point.

Chapter three: Discussion about “The North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20`s and 30`s years of the 20th century”

First paragraph: The Muslim population in Russian Federation

This chapter three is the main chapter of this research study. Because the researcher will discuss about the North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20`s and 30`s years of the 20th century. Before we start to talk about this topic we should know: how and

when the religion Islam came to Russia generally, and to the North Caucasus namely.

Russia is the federal country, it is the biggest country in the world, which consists of 85 subjects of the Federation.

Russia has up to 30% Muslim population (which is in number about 30 million people, although the Russian official information that, there are about 20 million Muslims) out of its population.

Unlike other Muslim minorities in United States and Europe, Russian Muslims are not foreign immigrants.

They are native citizens of the country in which they live in.

When we say the Russian Muslims we have to know that the ethnically Muslims are predominant in eight Federative Republics of Russia.

These Republics are as follow:

Republic of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan in the Volga-Urals region, and the Republics of Adygeya, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Ingushetia Chechnya and Dagestan in the North Caucasus, which is the South of Russia. The majority of Russian Muslims live in the Volga-Ural region and in the North Caucasus.

Other parts of Russia including megacities, such as Moscow, Petersburg, Krasnoyarsk, Yaroslavl and Russian Siberia also have significant Muslim population.

Second paragraph: The brief history
of Islam in Russia

Islam is among one of Russia's traditional and state religions, legally a part of Russian historical heritage. Islam

to Russia came before Christianity, when ethnical Russians were Pagans¹².

Islam came to Russia (to the modern Russian territory) mainly in three stages.

The first stage: (It is written in every history books) Islam on the territory of today Russia appeared nearly 350 years before Christianity. Baptism of Russia, as we know, took place in 988. While still in 642 Muslims (with a large number of the pious Companions of the Holy Prophet peace be up on Him) entered the ancient city Derbent, which is located in the south of the Russian federal Republic of Dagestan. From here began spreading Islam in to European part of Russia.

The best proof of this is, the letter of Huzaifah bin al-Yaman (may Allah's blessings up on Him), which was addressed to the pious Caliph Uthman bin 'Affan (may Allah's blessings up on Him) from Azerbaijan and Armenia informing Him about the disagreement between the reciters of the Holy Quran.

On that time the stronghold of the pious Caliph Uthman was the ancient city Derbent, which is today in the Russian side (in Dagestan).

If we want to answer the research question "Is it true what some scholars say: that Islamic culture spread in Russia by sword, or it just came with the Arab-Muslim Merchants"? Now is the time to answer this question.

In my humble understanding Islam in the Caucasus spread by sword. Because in the city of Derbent there are

¹²Marjani, Shihabetdin. Mustafa al-akhbar fi Ahawali Qazan wa Bulgar. Kazan: Tatarstan Publishing House, 1989.

forty graves of the Companions (may Allah's blessings upon Them) of the Prophet (peace be upon Him).

The second stage of spreading Islam came to the territory that later became a part of Russia through the land of Tataristan and Bashkortostan in 922. Here Islam brought the representatives of the Baghdad Caliphs, which gave rise to the adoption of Islam ancestors of modern Turkic-speaking people of the Volga-Ural region, as the state religion. Which again for 66 years before adoption of Christianity in Russia.

Moreover, the third stage is: in 1312, under Khan Uzbeks finally Islam became the state religion of the Golden Horde, located on a large part of the territory of modern Russia.

From this studding we can say that bringing the religion of Islam to the Russia was a complex process, which took more than ten centuries of time to complete.

However the Islam came to Russia from its very beginning time, but, unfortunately the Russian ethnic people did not accept Islam as their religion, in opposite, the Russian Tsars from the middle age until the end of the Royal era fought the Muslims, trying to bring them back to the Paganism.

Third paragraph: The beginning of Bolsheviks era in the North Caucasus

After the revolution accompanied the overthrow of the Tsar, to the power in Russia came the Communists led by Lenin (Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov).

Unfortunately, after all the troubles and persecutions which ruined Islamic culture by the Russian Tsarists and

killed the Muslims all in row. The North Caucasus suffered from Bolsheviks of Russia much more. What Bolsheviks did to the religious schools and the peoples in the Soviet Russia (USSR) even Satan would envy their cruelty.

They killed everyone and destroyed everything that would remind about Religion. Not just Islam, but all other religions with their Mosques, Churches, Synagogues and Temples. And they closed all religious schools, mad-rasas and seminars which were acting during the Tsarists time.

However, Muslims in Russia never gave up in the spread and popularity of Islam in Russia. After conquest, Muslim territories by the Russian Empire in the middle age, the Russian Muslims started to play the key role even in the Russian highest political arena.

Fourth paragraph: "The North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20`s and 30`s years of the 20th century"

Our proposed study is "The North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20`s and 30`s years of the 20th century", we have to bring all sides, in other words: look from the all angles of it. We should take a look to: the history of the translation of the Holy Quran, and the Islamic books like: the life of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon Him), the life of the pious Caliphs, the books of Hadith, the books of Islamic jurisprudence.

Also this research should affect such topics: literature, language (effect of the Quranic language to the multilingual Russia), writings, sports, poetries, dancing, songs,

fighting, food, dress and of course, the Sufism which is became the main direction of practicing Islam in Russia.

Fifth paragraph: Religious schools and their role in Islamic Education during the Communists time in Russia

At the time in 1917 Revolution, under the doctrine of state atheism in the Soviet Union, there was a “government-sponsored program of conversion to atheism”.

The Communist regime targeted religions based on State interests, and while most organized religions were never outlawed, religious property was confiscated, believers were harassed, and religion was ridiculed while atheism was propagated in schools.

The religious institutions were not allowed to express their views in any type of mass media, and most of the religious buildings were demolished or used for other non-religion related affairs.

As the founder of the Soviet state, Vladimir Lenin, put the most frequently paraphrased statements of German philosopher and economist Karl Marx on the top of his state ideology: “*Religion is the opium of the people*”.

After this above mentioned, for the religious schools left nothing except give up to the Communists regime.

Sixth paragraph: Allah swt helped His religion

Islam is not a folk tale, Islam is the religion of Allah swt. So Allah swt showed His Mercy to the people how can they survive in this difficult period of time. And He swt

showed the way to the believers how they can save themselves with the religion of Islam. And this way was unique, where the people never need for the buildings (like: Madrasas, Schools, Institutions and Universities), bureaucracy, regular workers, accountants, salaries and so on.

And that way was the real Sufism which adheres to all the requirements of Islam. Not that Sufism that some people have spoiled by adding their fantasies to it.

The Sufism was known in the north Caucasus long before nineteenth century. But officially by its full meaning the Sufism started preaching by the beginning of the reign of Imam of the North Caucasus Sheikh Mansour. Relying on historical references Sheikh Mansour was the first Imam of Naqashbandi Teriqat. And this Naqashbandi Sufi Teriqat, (religious path) that spread Sheikh Mansour for the North Caucasus-it is the ideal form of religion for facing outside cultural and military pressure.

Naqashbandi Teriqat is a Sufi tariqat bears the name of Baha al-Din Naqashband who lived in the fourteenth century in Bukhara (b. 1318- d. 1389 AD).

Seventh paragraph: Imam Mansour
(Sheikh Ushurma) the founder of the
Naqashbandi Tarqat in the North Caucasus

In the East, the anti-colonial struggle came to be expressed in terms of a broader religious movement under the auspices of Islam.

Usually associated with the Naqashbandi Imams, this tendency first became embodied in the movement led by a Chechen from the village of Aldy (which is now within

the city limits Grozny), Imam Mansour (known to Russians as: Ushurma). Popular memory in the North Caucasus has preserved his image as the first Naqashbandi Imam, a claim which was later upheld by virtually all scholars who studied the North Caucasian Muslim resistance.

Sheikh Mansour (b. 1760 - d. 1794) was the first Naqashbandi leader who combined the national struggle with the religious one and as such can be seen as first in the line of North Caucasus Imams¹³. Not much known about Imam Mansours early life. Born in 1760s in a poor Chechen family. In 1783 he was proclaimed as Sheikh and Imam and took the name "Mansour". In 1785, Mansour-Ushurma assumed the title of Imam of all the Caucasian Mountaineers, a move which affectively united all the tribes of the North Caucasus: the Chechens, the Ingushes, the Dagestanis, Adygs, Kumyks, the north Azeri peoples the Osetians, the Cherkess, Balkars and Kbardians.

The reign of Imam Mansour had, however, new important characteristic.

Which is for the first time in the history Islamisation was carried out by Vaynakh (Chechen) rather than a Dagestanipreacher.

Sheikh Mansour: the Imam of the whole North Caucasusin 13April 1794 accepted a martyr's death in the Schlesselburg Fortress of the Russian Empire. Although Imam Mansour was captured and died a martyr's captivity, but, it did not mean the end of the Mountaineers struggle.

¹³Anna Zelkina; In Quest for God and Freedom, p-58-59.

The North Caucasians vivid memories of Sheikh Mansour, his preaching and military activities prepared the ground to spread and validate Islamic knowledge for the later Nqashbandi Imams who saw themselves as his disciples (students).¹⁴

The new era after Imam Mansour started under the leadership of Ghazi Mohammad (b. early 1790s- d. 1832. the first Imam of the Caucasian imamate: 1828-1832, the prime supporter of "Muridism"),

Hamza Beck (b. 1789- d. 1834. the second Imam of the Caucasian Imamate: 1832-1834)

And Imam Shamil (b. 1797- d.1871. the third Imam of the Caucasian Imamate: 1840-1859 and Sheikh of the Naqashbandi Sufi Tariqat), Dagestan and Chechnya made an appeal-to-arms uniting the mountain tribes¹⁵. The struggle was crowned by the success of the Mountain-eers¹⁶.

Eighth paragraph: Qadaritariqat

The Sufism, is unique form of school, which is, as we mentioned before, has no need for the formal building-sand other places. Also Sufism as school in preaching and spreading of Islamic Education does not need for any bureaucracy that infinitely requires finances. And its undocumented but fanatically loyal members can easily go underground or surface whenever they choose.

¹⁴Ibid, p-67.

¹⁵For their dates of birth and their reign go to this site: www.ru.m.wikipedia.org

¹⁶AbdurahmanAvtarkhanov, The North Caucasus barrier. The Russian advance towards the Muslim World, p-149.

In addition to the NaqshbandiTariqat popularized by Imam Mansour, another Sheikh – KuntuKhajjiKishiev (b. 1796 Imam of Mansour) started preaching in the North Caucasus even more passionate new tariqat which is QadariTariqat in the 1850th. (Here the researcher intentionally missed details of NaqashbandiTariqat and QadariTariqat-zikr in order to avoid verbosity).

Recognizing the power of the Sufi schools, the Russia tried banning the Zikr in the late 1860th.

Ninth paragraph: The soviet regime
and the Sufi schools of the North Caucasus

But when the Soviet Communist regime came to the power in Russia after the revolution in 1917 the Bolsheviks understood it more deeply than Tsarist Russia. And they start using ruthless methods, rounding up and killing the spiritual leaders, and closing mosques.

However, both Sufi schools (Naqashbandi and Qadari) not only survived the persecutions, they thrived even in the Soviet era, unseen and underground, in Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia.

After this short and humble research of study one may understand that the religious schools in 20s and 30s of the 20th century as such were not legally and officially.

Perfected Sufi schools by Imam Mansour andKuntu Haji Kishiev continued by other Naqashbandi Sheikhs such as:Tashu-KhajjiEndireevsk-Sayasanski (b. 1770- d. 1843-46)

Ghazi Khajji (b. 1808- d. 1867)

And the sheikhs of the Qadaritariqat such as: Bammatt-Giri Hajji, VissHjii, Chimmirza Hajji and much more other

Sheikh all around Dagestan, Chechnya Ingushetia and other parts of North Caucasus. These are the North Caucasus religious schools which played the most important role in Islamic education in 20s and 30s of the 20th during the Communists regime.

Tenth paragraph: The role of Islam on the different parts of education during the Communists time in the North Caucasus

Influence of Islam on the languages.

Arabic played a major role in the arena of the languages of the North Caucasus since Islamisation of the North Caucasus. Among so many languages of the Caucasus not a single language was left aside without significant changes in the position of the Arabic language since the Islamisation of the North Caucasus.

Although the Caucasus was completely under the jurisprudence of the Ottoman Empire (1281-1924) (Dowlatu al-Uthmania). In addition official language of the Great Imams times was the Turkish. The Turkish language could not push back the Arabic to the second level. The reason is that the Arabic is the language of the Holy Quran. But alas, the Communists managed to achieve in several decades what the Ottoman did not manage to do in many centuries. They destroyed everything including languages.

Praise be to Allah; the Muslims of the North Caucasus did not leave the Arab Islamic words, which were adopted and practicing in their languages before the revolution in 1917 in Russia, and we are proud of it.

The history of translation of the Holy Quran to the Russian.

The history of translation of the Holy Quran to the Russian language goes far back to the Tsar Peter the Great. At the behest of Peter the Great in 1716 in St. Petersburg Synod printing house published the *first translation* of the Quran into Russian language "АлкораноМагомете, или-ЗаконТурецкий" - (Al-Quran about Mohammed, or Turkish Law). Russian scholars attributed this translation to PyotrVasilievichPostnikov (1666 - ca. 1702). Translation preserved only in manuscripts.

A new period in the history of the Quran in Russia associated with the reign of Catherine the Great, which by decree in 1787 , first time in Russia was printed full Arabic text of the Holy Quran.

ThesecondtranslationoftheHolyQuranmade in 1790 by Mikhail IvanovichVeryovkin (1732-1795) Russian poet, novelist, playwrightand translator.

The third translation made in 1792, AV Kolmakov Russian poet, translator, and employees of the Admiralty Board, made a complete translation of the Holy Quran, from English translation of George Salem.

The fourth translation made in 1859 was published "KunuzMiftah al-Quran" - "complete concordance of the Quran, or the key to all the words and expressions of his texts for guidance to the study of religious, legal, historical and literary beginning of this book".

From the very beginning of Russian contacts with their new conquered Muslim territories the Russian Tsars real-

ized the need of the translation of the Holy Quran to the Russian language.

Even the Russian Communists who were calling the world to the faith of Atheism (new era without the god and religion) understood that it is impossible to control the Muslims without knowing their Religion which is fully depends to the Holy Quran. On this basis Russian Communist periodical published the translations of the Holy Quran translated by: Russian Orthodox Christian Gordiy Semionovich Sablukov (1804-1880), reprinted in Russia in 1896, 1907, 1990, and in 1991 even two editions. Unfortunately, the Bolsheviks never allowed to the Muslims (even for the non-Muslims to translate the Holy Quran during their reign time).

The history of the translation of Biography of the holy Prophet and the Islamic Jurisprudence to the Russian language.

Vladimir Sergeyevich Solovyov (1853–1900) was a Russian philosopher, theologian, poet, pamphleteer and literary critic, who played a significant role in the development of Russian philosophy and poetry at the end of the 19th century and in the spiritual renaissance of the early 20th century.

During his life he wrote a book about the Holy Prophet Muhammad - peace be upon Him-: "Mohammad His life and religion".

In this book he mentions references: "The main source for this book was the Quran, which I used in the various translations of old and new".

V.Solovyov says in the preface of his book: "I will show only the most important books which I have read about the writings about Muhammad [peace be upon Him] and the Arabs of his time".

The effect of the Islamic culture to the Russian Literature.

First: Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin (1799–1837) was a Russian author of the Romantic era who is considered by many to be the greatest Russian poet and the founder of modern Russian literature.

The subject Islam affected in many works of Pushkin, where he positions himself as a follower of Islam, with love and warmth of he mentions the Holy Quran.

For example:

Well take heart, despise cheating,
Cheerfully follow the paths of righteousness,
Love orphans and my Qur'an
Trembling creature preach.

In the manuscript of "Eugene Onegin" were also words:
In the Quran, many thoughts of soundest,
For example: "Before each sleep
Pray; run from the crafty ways
Honor God and do not argue with a fool.

And here lines devoted wives of the Messenger
of Allah, peace be upon Him.
O clean wives of the Prophet
From all the wives you are different:
Terrible for you and vice shadow.

Under the canopy of sweet silence
Live modestly, you stuck
Unmarried virgin veil
Keep faithful hearts
For bliss legitimate and bashfully
And wicked eyes
Not shall see your face!
Each word of Pushkin is significant, as the heavenly
revelation and prophetic verb.
For example, lines from a poem, inspired by sura
"Blind"
But twice angel sounded:
Heaven on earth thunder clap:
And the brother from brother will run away,
And the son from mother recoil,
And all before God will gather
Disfigured by fear,
And the wicked will fall,
Covered in flames and ashes.

The imitation of Pushkin to the Holy Quran is too long poems. For not being too long the researcher cuts here the examples because the reader is already understood that Russian great poet Pushkin had a deep interest to the Holy Quran.

Second: Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov (1814 –1841), a Russian Romantic writer, poet and painter, sometimes called "the poet of the Caucasus", became the most important Russian poet after Alexander Pushkin's death in 1837. Lermontov is considered the supreme poet of Russian literature alongside Pushkin and the greatest figure in

Russian Romanticism. His influence on later Russian literature is still felt in modern times, not only through his poetry, but also through his prose, which founded the tradition of the Russian psychological novel.

"Allah is Great and Mohammed"

...The tomb itself

Is obedient them! In someone else's country

My brother was protected with their hand:-

Do you know Ismail?

He grew up among enemies,

But he did not recognize their shrines...

Third: Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev (1803-1873) is generally considered the last of three great Romantic poets of Russia, following Alexander Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov.

Olegov Shield:

"Allah! Pour out your light on us!

Beauty and strength of Faithful

Thunderstorm infidels hypocritical!

Your Prophet - Muhammad!"

Fourth: Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1828-1910), also known as Leo Tolstoy, was a Russian writer who primarily wrote novels and short stories. Tolstoy was a master of realistic fiction and is widely considered one of the world's greatest novelists. He is best known for two long novels, *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1877).

If we want to know more about Leo Tolstoy from the Islamic perspective when we read below we would under-

stand that this great man was caring the Muslim ideas. After full contacts of Leo Tolstoy with Sufi sheikh Kunta Haji Kishiev the Chechen, and Muhammad Abduh the famous reformer of Islam from Egypt he learned more about Islam, and understood that the Church is preaching not at all what Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) preached to the people.

In the days of agonizing search surrounded by misunderstanding, he wrote in one of his letters: "I would be very glad if you would have the same faith with me. You hearken little in my life. Any successes of life - wealth, honor, fame - all that I have not. My friends, even family, turned away from me. Some - liberals and infidels - consider me crazy or a moron like Gogol; others - revolutionaries and radicals - believe I am a mystic windbag; the government people see me as a malicious revolutionary; the Orthodox people consider me a devil. I confess that it is hard for me ... And so, please, look at me as a good Mohammedan, then everything will be fine". (Russians from their first contact call Muslims "Mohammedans").

Ivan Alekseyevich Bunin (1870 – 1953)⁸, was the first Russian writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Like Pushkin, Lermontov, Tyutchev and Tolstoy deep reverence and respect for Islam kept this great Russian classic Bunin, he wrote a number of poems that begins with an epigraph from the Quran.

Although none of these authorities had been recognised as a Muslim, though according to their way of thinking they are de-facto Muslims. Here the researcher talked about the Russian popular poets who sympathized to the

Holy Quran, but not Islam. This just to give an information about the Russian poets who wrote about the Holy Quran.

As if we did not turn in search of the role of Islam in education 20s and 30s of the 20th century in the North Caucasus. We are convinced that the Sufi Schools of our Sheikhs of the eighties and nineties centuries are only wore fruit. It is no matter how hard we try, we still come back to the fact that Islam is the religion of Allah swt which should lead the people to the threshold of the Doomsday. And Sufism is one of the teachings given by Allah swt to the people so that they can, while preserving Islam, save themselves.

Conclusion

This research study could be continued much longer, but the researcher does not want to bore you with the details. If we come back to our topic, "The North Caucasian religious schools and their roles in Islamic Education in 20`s and 30`s years of the 20th century" we see during the Bolsheviks ruling era the religious schools lost their meaning in the full sense of the word.

They made a terrible mistake banning all religions in the territories under their control. They made people of all denominations enemies of nations, as a result they themselves turned into enemies of nations.

For this reason the country so called USSR could not survive. Such a great country called Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) did not stretch even one hundred years.

May Allah swt, bless those Sufi Sheikhs, who made such powerful system of preserving people in the spirit of

unshakable Islamic character. Because of these Naqashbandi and Qadartariqat schools, such a powerful state machine of all times and peoples (USSR) could not break the spirit of Muslims of Russia, despite the very small number of Muslims and weakness in strength.

The best examples for this are, the two bloody fratricidal wars that Russia and Chechnya went through on the eve of the twenty first century (1994-1996 and 1999-2001).

On that battlefield two big forces of different weight categories collided. The Great Russian army which for decades has been preparing for war against world powers, and a small Chechnya retaining its being in the spirit of Islam, which retained its existence in the spirit of Islam because of the system of Sufism, unshakable as the Caucasus Mountains.

In this research paper the research is not going to evaluate any of these two fought nations, it is not of this research study concern.

Akhmat Hajji Kadyrov

But, the researcher would like to give a fair assessment to the leader, who, having assumed the full responsibility, stopped or, rather, put an end to this fratricidal war.

And this man was Kadyrov Akhmat-Haji Abdulkhamidovich (b. 1951- d. 2004). He was born and raised in without exaggeration in the family practicing Islam and complying with all the requirements of Islam. Over a short period of his life, Akhmat-Haji Kadyrov excelled in many ways.

The most important and unshakable that will be remembered for centuries is that (By the will of Allah swt) at the cost of his life he stopped this bloody massacre, which

could not benefit the Chechen people and, especially, great Russia, which makes its plans for the centuries. We should know that Akhmat-Haji Kadyrov, as well as hundreds of thousands of other Caucasians, were brought up in the spirit of the QadariTariqat under the banner of the great teacher of the peoples of the Caucasus and the pride of Muslim UmmahKuntu Haji Kishiev, founder of one of the two Tariqats of the North Caucasus, QadariTariqat and NaqashbandTariqat, which are Sufi teachings.

Ramzan Kadyrov

After tragic death of Akhmat Hajji Kadyrov, Chechnya was closer than ever to chaos and unrest. But Allah swt never lives His obedient slaves without His mercy in hard times. Allah swt says in the Holy Quran: So, verily, with every difficulty there is relief. Verily, with every difficulty there is relief. (Chapter: 94, verses: 5-6).

Due to this verse from the Holy Quran we Chechens believe that Allah swt gave us RamzanKadyrov the son of Akhmat Hajji Kadyrov to lead us out of the current difficult citation. Ramzan leads Chechen people to world level in all its meaning. Because of His persistent character, phenomenal mind and infinite patience the Chechen people have achieved such great success.

We Chechens consider that Ramzan the son of Akhmat Hajji Kadyrov is a gift to the Chechen people given by Allah Almighty so that they can survive in such difficult times.

Unfortunately, today we see some uneducated people of North Caucasus following the idea of destroying this Sufi Tariqats. This idea imported from outside people who never can understand what service Sufism rendered the

little Caucasus in preserving the great ideas of Islam. They forgot the real meaning of it, when their own parents and grandparents could not pray in public. But the way which showed us these Sheikhs: Imam Mansour, Kuntu Haji Kishiev and other tens of Sufi Sheikhs with their respectful followers of whole North Caucasus, which are including Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardini-Balkaria, Adygea, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and north Ossetia-theia.

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EDUCATIONAL POLICIES OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE WELL-BEING OF THE SOVIET MUSLIMS



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Abstract

This paper discusses the status of Islamic education in Russia during the Soviet era from 1920s until 1991 through highlighting the Soviet anti-religious policies affecting the wellbeing of the Muslim population in general and their religious education in particular. The paper suggests that it is impossible to generalise all policies of the Soviet Union as anti-Islamic as the Soviet regime tried to collaborate with its significant Muslim population when the support was essential at the formation era until 1928 and also during the time of the Second World War (1941-1945). The years of the rule of Stalin (1923-1953) completely uprooted the traditions of Islamic education in Russia and Muslim pupils were taught within the compulsory unified Soviet educational system, a central element of which was atheistic communist indoctrination. Banning of Islamic books, executing of religious leaders and scholars, massive closure of mosques and religious schools were the main tactics within an aggressive policy of suppression of any manifestation of religious or national identity. The subsequent part of the paper discusses the Soviet policies during the Second World War time and finds that in 1945 the famous madrasah of Mīr-i ‘Arab was re-opened in Bukhara to prepare

a new generation of younger official Soviet clerics who would in the future act as loyal spokesmen for the Soviet power. The graduates of this *madrasah* defined the future and character of Islamic education in the Soviet Union until 1991. Thus, more often, the role of Islam was reduced to the level of a political tool often used at international level to spread the communist ideology in the Muslim world while the local Muslims were deprived from their rights to practice Islam and get access to religious education.

Introduction

The agenda and philosophy of education is not a rigid concept. It is heavily influenced by the existing context, mainstream ideologies of the dominant groups, and social fabric. Very often, suddenly emerged radical ideas may destroy the very foundations of the centuries' long traditional structures, milieu and worldviews. Such damages are almost impossible to fix. One of the examples of the tragic damage made to Islamic educational tradition can be seen in the Russian context during the Soviet Union. Extreme anti-religious policies of the Soviet regime had resulted in long-lasting consequences for the welfare and mindset of Russia's Muslim nations through destroying their educational structure, heritage, national spirit and identity, which are highlighted in this paper.

Historical Outline of Islamic Education in Russia

Islam spread in the territory which is called at present the RF since the time of the Righteous Caliphs.¹ In 654, the Muslim army took the city of Derbent (now in the republic of Dagestan, RF), which subsequently became the regional centre for Islamisation of the north-eastern Caucasus.² In the central parts of modern Russia, the upper Volga region, Islam has been gradually established through trade and diplomatic relations with the Muslim world. In 922, Islam was voluntarily recognised as an official religion of the Bulghar Kingdom, the most powerful state in the region which existed from the 8th century until its invasion by the Mongols in 1236. Very soon, the Bulghar Kingdom has been converted into a significant Islamic educational hub with dozens of madrasahs and famous scholars, and the extensive scholarly and economic ties to the rest of the Muslim world.³

In 1242, a new state, called the Golden Horde (in Tatar: *Altyn Urda*; in Mongol: *Juchi Ulu*) has been established in the region as a western province of the Chingizid Empire as a result of the Mongol invasion of the Bulghar Kingdom and other neighbouring territories. Yet, Islam remained being an official religion in the region while the Bulghar elite

¹ The period which is called the time of the Righteous Caliphs consists of the rule of four companions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) after his death: Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali (632-660CE).

² Galina Yemelianova, "Islam in Russia: An Historical Perspective," in: Hilary Pilkington and Galina Yemelianova (eds.), *Islam in Post-Soviet Russia: Public and Private Faces* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 28.

³ Shireen Hunter, *Islam in Russia: The Politics of Identity and Security* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2004), 3.

dominated its educational, cultural and Islamic ethos. Its new capital Sarai was one of the greatest cities of the medieval world, with 600,000 inhabitants. Around 1332-1333, a famous traveller from North Africa, Ibn Battuta (1304-1377) visited Sarai and described it as "one of the most beautiful cities ... full of people, with the beautiful bazaars and wide streets", and having 13 congregational mosques along with "plenty of lesser mosques."⁴ It was the home to numerous local and visiting scholars, poets and scientists such as Saif Sarai (d. 1396), Qutb, Mahmud al-Bulghari, Muhammad Hafiz al-Din bin Muhammad Shihab al-Din bin Yusuf (Ibn Bazzaz, d. 1424), Ibn Arabshah (d. 1450), Yusuf Jamal al-Din bin Hasan bin Mahmud (d. 1479) and 'Isam al-Din bin Abd al-Muluk al-Marghinani.⁵

By the beginning of the 15th century, the vast territory of the Golden Horde had gradually been dissolved into several independent khanates (or states), including the Kazan (in Tatar: *Qazan*), Crimean, Astrakhan, Nughay, Kasim (in Tatar: *Qasiym*) and Siberian khanates due to the long-lasting internal and external conflicts. Yet, the traditional educational system and cultural life have not been considerably disturbed by the appearance of new administrative systems. The overwhelming majority of the population remained being literate, and madrasahs in the cities such as Kazan, Bolghar and Astrakhan continued being the signifi-

⁴ Ravil Bukharayev, *Islam in Russia: The Four Seasons* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 116.

⁵ Gamirzyan Davletshin, "Pis'mennaya Kul'tura I Nauchniyi Znaniya" [Writing Culture and Scientific Knowledge], in Usmanov and Hakimov (eds.), *Istoriya Tatar* [History of Tatars], Volume 3 (Kazan: Institute Marjani, 2009), 644-653.

cant educational and cultural centres of the Muslim communities with an intensive syllabus and renowned scholars.⁶

From the beginning of the fifteenth century, the energetic and centralised Muscovite state began to bring its neighbouring lands under Russian rule. Muslim khanates were conquered one after another and incorporated into the Russian Empire, including Kazan (1552), Astrakhan (1556), and Siberia (1598). By the end of the seventeenth century, the Russian advance had reached the North Caucasus as well.

The Russian conquest caused a significant detriment to the traditional Islamic educational system. The Muscovite government used a policy of systematic repression of Muslims and destruction of Muslim civilisation within Russia's borders. To avoid any further Islamic development within the rapidly expanding Russian rule, the Muslim state archives, libraries, books and manuscripts in the newly incorporated territories were completely destroyed.⁷ In 1593, Fyodor Ivanovich (r. 1584-1598), the last tsar of Russia from the Rurik dynasty, ordered to destroy all mosques and religious schools in colonised territories. This policy continued for centuries. On 19th November 1742, for instance, the Empress Elizabeth (r. 1741-1762) issued another decree to destroy all mosques in Russia. In the span of seven years (1738-45), 418 mosques out of 536 were demolished in the Kazan province alone. In Siberia, 98 mosques out of 133, in Astrakhan, 25 mosques out of 40 were destroyed. Muslim

⁶ Mikhail Khudiakov, *Ocherki po Istorii Kazanskogo Khanstva* [Essays on History of the Kazan Khanate] (Moscow: Insan, 1991), 272-275.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 154-155.

charitable properties (*waqfs*) were also confiscated.⁸ Yet, although Islamic education was formally forbidden, the Muslim subjects of the empire continued transmitting the basic knowledge about Islam to the next generations through the concealed informal ways.

The ascension of Empress Catherine the Great (r. 1762-1796) to the throne created favourable conditions for the rise of formal Islamic education in the empire. In 1773, Catherine the Great instructed the Holy Synod to issue a 'Toleration of All Faiths Edict,' which prohibited "all bishops and all priests" from "destroying mosques" and ordered them "not to interfere in Muslim questions or in the building of their houses of worship."⁹ In 1789, the first official Muslim institution, the Ufa Spiritual Muhammadan Assembly (in Russian: *Ufimskoe Dukhovnoe Magometanskogo Zakona Sobranie*) was established in the city of Ufa. New mosques were built and religious schools were opened in large cities such as Kazan, Ufa, and Orenburg. In 1844, four madrasahs existed in Kazan alone. The number of Islamic schools in villages increased as well.¹⁰ In 1787, upon imperial orders, the first Qur'an in its Arabic original was published at the typography of the Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg. In 1801-02, the Arabic script was passed from Saint Petersburg to Kazan, thus establishing the illustrious tradition of Kazan Tatar book-publishing. In the second half of the 19th century, in Kazan alone, 3,300 Tatar books were published in an overall print run of 26,864,000.

⁸ E. Akhmetova, *Islam in Russia: Historical Facts and Modern Developments* (Malaysia: IAIS Publications, 2013), 13.

⁹ Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 71.

¹⁰ Gayaz Ishaqi, *Idel-Ural* (Naberejniyi Chelny: KAMAZ, 1993), 32.

There were years when the overall print run of Tatar books was about 2,000,000 copies. In the statistics for 1913, the number of books printed in the Tatar language amounted to 267 in a print run of 1,052,100 copies.¹¹ Muslim culture in the Volga-Ural basin was once again in ascendance. The well-known historian of Kazan, Karl Fuks, had spent long years researching Tatar ethnography and wrote the following lines in 1844:

No doubt, every visitor to Kazan will be surprised to find among the Kazan Tatars some persons much more educated than even Europeans ... A Tatar, who does not know how to read and write is held in contempt by his fellows and is not respected as a citizen [...]. This nation, which has been subjugated for two hundred years and is nowadays scattered among the Russians, has been able to preserve its customs, morals and pride so amazingly, as though it had lived separately.¹²

The number of primary schools in the Kazan province before the October Revolution of 1917 was four times larger than the number of Russian schools. The level of basic literacy among the Tatars was close to 100%.¹³ Islamic education accordingly has a long tradition in a Russian soil, where important educational and cultural centres of the Muslim world were located. Serge Zenkovsky acknowledged that, towards the beginning of the 20th century, the Tatar city of Kazan, because of its numerous educational institutions, publishing houses, and intensive intellectual life, became

¹¹ Bukharayev, *Islam in Russia*, 311.

¹² *Ibid.*, 310.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 227.

one of the four cultural capitals of the Muslim world.¹⁴ For instance, modern type of elementary schools of a Crimean Tatar educator, Ismail Gasprali, called 'new-method' (*usul al-jadid*, in Tatar), multiplied rapidly throughout Russia, including Chinese Turkestan and India, reaching a total of about five thousand by 1914.¹⁵

Besides, the religious components were a crucial part of syllabus at any types of educational institutions run by Muslims until the October Revolution. From the 19th century, madrasahs began issuing certificates which slowly became an essential to be employed at local religious and educational institutions. But informal education was always in existence in the region to educate the Muslim masses about their religious rituals and traditions until the religious education has been completely prohibited by the Soviet regime in the 1930s.

Islam and Muslims Under the Soviet Regime

The Russian Socialist Revolution of 25th October (7th November, according to the Gregorian calendar) 1917 shattered the very foundations of Russia's state and society. On the next day after the coup, the "Declaration of the Rights

¹⁴ According to Zenkovsky, the other main centers of Islam in the beginning of the twentieth century were Cairo, Istanbul and Calcutta. See, Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia*, 36 and 290.

¹⁵ According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education, in 1913 the total number of Muslim elementary schools (*maktab*) in the empire registered and controlled by the Ministry exceeded 10,000, while the number of registered madrasahs was 1,085. However, the majority of Islamic madrasahs were never registered, and their total number was over 25,000. See, Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism and Islam*, 289-290.

of the Peoples of Russia” was passed at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, in which the equality and sovereignty of the peoples living in Russia, including its twenty million Muslims, was proclaimed and their right to free self-determination was confirmed. This promise of the Bolsheviks has been seen by the Muslim population as a great opportunity to become independent from imperial Russian colonialism and join the world Muslim community at last.¹⁶

During the decisive years of the Russian Civil War, the young Bolshevik government was obliged to endeavour to win the sympathy and support of the Muslim population in order to secure Soviet power in the territories of the empire inhabited by Muslims. The Russian Civil War ended in 1920 with the establishment of the undisputed authority of the Soviet regime in Russia as well as in Muslim populated territories of the Volga-Ural region, Caucasus and Central Asia. Now the Communist authorities were doing everything in their power to liquidate everything related to Islam.¹⁷ In general, the anti-Islamic policies of the Communist regime had three principal components:

1. The eradication of the Muslim judicial and educational infrastructure;
2. The elimination of the clerical establishment’s financial independence by dismantling the *waqf* system; and
3. Anti-Islamic propaganda.

¹⁶ For instance, during the All-Russian Muslim Congress at Ufa (16-20 September 1920), a well-known scholar, Musa Jār-Allāh, officially declared the ‘submission’ of Russia’s Muslims to the Ottomans; see “Ufa’da dini qurultay,” *Yeni Kafkazy* [Istanbul] 1, no.2 (1339 AH/1939CE), 16.

¹⁷ Elmira Akhmetova, *Ideas of Muslim Unity at the Age of Nationalism* (Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2009), 25-26.

As stated by Shireen Hunter, “all religions were anathema to Communist ideology, but Islam was especially targeted because it was viewed as reactionary and backward.”¹⁸

The worst time for Muslims and Islam in the Soviet Russia, however, was during Josef Stalin’s rule (1923-1953). The initial post-revolutionary and relatively liberal approach toward Islam and Muslims was replaced under Stalin’s leadership by an aggressive policy of suppression of any manifestation of religious or national identity. The main assault on Islam started in 1928 and included the following policies:

- ***Massive closure of mosques and educational institutions***

In the course of the anti-Islamic campaign of the 1930s almost all mosques, madrasahs, makhtabs and other Islam-related institutions were destroyed or, in most cases, were converted into social clubs, shops, secular schools, post offices, barns, pigsties or storage houses. Before the October Revolution, there were about 26,000 functioning mosques in the Russian empire with 45,000 mullahs serving the faithful. By the end of Stalin’s ‘Great Purge’ in 1942, only 1,312 working mosques remained open.¹⁹ All of the 14,500 Islamic religious schools existing in the country were forcibly shut-down.

- ***Liquidating Muslim religious scholars and imams***

The majority of distinguished Muslim scholars were arbitrarily charged with anti-Soviet activity and executed or

¹⁸ Hunter, *Islam in Russia*, 25.

¹⁹ Ibid, 29-30.

sent to the Gulag. Religious scholars and imams were arrested and liquidated as 'saboteurs' and, after 1935, as spies. Fewer than 2,000 of the approximately 45,000 religious figures survived. Thousands of mullahs and famous Muslim intellectuals were obliged to flee to Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran, or China. The entire heritage of leading Muslim intellectuals such as 'Abd al-Rashīd Ibrahimov, Musa Jār-Allāh, Ayaz Ishāqī, Ismā'īl Gasprali and many others were blacklisted due to the 'ideological danger' emanating from them. Their names were erased from documents, encyclopaedias and all types of textbooks as enemies of the Soviet 'nation'.

• *Cutting Soviet Muslims off from their religious and cultural heritage*

The publication of the majority of Islamic literature and periodicals was halted and previously published Islamic books were banned from circulation and holding. The banning of Islamic books was accompanied by highly publicised book burnings – something (and apparently not the only thing) Stalinist Russia has in common with Nazism. Moreover, to avoid imprisonment or even a possible death penalty, Muslims possessing 'forbidden' books were obliged to burn or bury their entire Islamic literature.

Muslim children, like all Soviet children, were taught within the compulsory unified Soviet educational system, a central element of which was atheistic communist indoctrination. They were taught a new Soviet version of their history, defined by class struggle, in which national and religious identities were depicted as insignificant and rudimentary. Those national historic figures that did not fit the class-rooted interpretation of the historical development of Russia were erased from school curricula and textbooks.

The names of many pre-revolutionary Muslim intellectuals who had rejected the Bolshevik revolution were not mentioned, while those who had cooperated with the Bolshevik regime were glorified as national heroes.

In order to promote a unified and Russified version of the history of non-Slavic peoples of the USSR, Moscow created a network of Research Institutes of History, Languages, and Literature in every ethnic union and autonomous republic. These Institutes were important elements in promoting an understanding of the role of the 'Great Russian people' in 'civilising' and 'liberating' their non-Russian 'younger brothers'.²⁰

The introduction of Cyrillic script resulted in another assault on the religious and cultural heritage of Muslims in Soviet Russia. Discussing the effect of the script change on Tatars, Galina Yemelianova stated:

Overall, the Soviet period dealt a devastating blow to Tatar national development. Among its tragic consequences was the rupture of Tatar intellectual and cultural traditions due to the physical liquidation by the Bolsheviks of the key representatives of the intellectual elite and a double script change: first from Arabic to Latin (in 1927) and subsequently from Latin to Cyrillic (in 1937). The introduction of Cyrillic isolated the Soviet Tatars from their literary heritage and from the intellectual debate being conducted by Tatars in emigration. Objective research into Tatar history and Tatar-Russian relations, in particular, was prohibited. Instead, Tatar historians were encouraged to glorify the achievements of Soviet Tatarstan, the vanguard role of the Tatar working class under the guidance of the Communist

²⁰ Yemelianova, "Islam in Russia," 44.

Party, and the new supra-national historical entity 'the Soviet people'.²¹

- *Elimination of Muslim intellectuals and the political elite*

Bolshevik leaders were suspicious of all prominent Muslims under Soviet rule, regardless of whether they were those who led revolts against Soviet power, 'modernist' Muslim fellow-travellers or even members of the Bolshevik party, and eventually Stalin ordered the liquidation of most of them. By the late 1930s, Stalin succeeded in liquidating nearly all of the nationalist Muslim intellectuals as well as pre-revolutionary Muslim intellectuals who stayed in the country regardless of whether they had opposed the Bolshevik regime or had favoured it.²²

Even the most prominent and loyal Communist leaders of Muslim origin such as Mir Said Sultan-Galiev (1880–1939?) could not escape this massive 'cleansing' campaign of Stalin. Born in the village of Kyrmyskaly (present-day Bashqortostan) in the family of a Muslim Tatar teacher, Sultan-Galiev rapidly became after the October Revolution of 1917 the highest-ranking Muslim in the Communist party hierarchy – member of the Central Muslim Commissariat, chairman of the Muslim Military Collegium, member of the Little Collegium of the Narkomnats (the Soviet Peoples Commissariat of Nationalities), editor of the *Zhizn Natsional'nostei*, the official organ of the Narkomnats, and member of the Central Executive Committee of the Tatar

²¹ Ibid., 81.

²² Alexandre Bennigsen, George K. Tanham, and Paul B. Henze, *Soviet Strategy and Islam* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 21–22.

Republic.²³ Working successfully as Stalin's assistant at the Commissariat for Nationalities question during decisive years of the Civil War, Sultan-Galiev also was the first communist to be expelled from the Communist Party (in 1923), arrested, and later executed on charges of nationalism and pan-Islamism.²⁴

Among other high-profile victims of Stalin's dictatorship were the Crimean Tatar leaders Veli Ibrahimov, DereñAyerli and Umer Ibragimov, who were charged with Crimean nationalism, as well as Veli-Ibragimovshchina. Veli Ibrahimov was the first important official arrested while still in office and executed for nationalism after a short trial behind closed doors. Together with Ibrahimov, 3,500 Crimean Tatars were executed, imprisoned or exiled from Crimea. Muslims of high-rank positions were replaced with ethnic Russians. Until Stalin's death, Russians and other Slavs tended to occupy the key political, economic, military and academic positions in Muslim populated regions.

• *Causing disunity among Muslims by playing upon ethnic and tribal differences*

Before the October Revolution, with some very rare exceptions, the idea of belonging to a particular nation, to an Uzbek, Turkmen, or even a Tatar nation, did not exist in the consciousness either of the Muslim intelligentsia or of the

²³ Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union: A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 207-208.

²⁴ On the life and ideas of Sultan-Galiev see Ariel Cohen, *Russian Imperialism: Development and Crisis*, (Westport CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996), 83; B. F. Sultanbekov and D. R. Sharafuddinov (eds.), *Neizvestniy SultanGaleev: Rassekrechenniyi dokumenti i materiali* (Kazan: Tatarstan Publishing House, 2002).

public. They thought of themselves simply as Muslims or in term of their place of residence (i.e. as 'Bukharaly', 'Qazanly' or 'Ufaly'). In other words, their religious identity was superior to the regional identity. According to Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, this situation remained unchanged during the first six years of Bolshevik rule and the existing unity of the Muslim people was accepted implicitly by the new Soviet regime. The term 'Muslim' was officially used to designate its nation, its armed forces (the Red Muslim Army), and its central administration (Central Muslim Committee of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities). Until 1924, the new government more or less maintained the administrative divisions inherited from the tsarist empire; these divisions were territorial and historical and took no account of the specific linguistic and ethnic character of the inhabitants. In general, in the beginning the new regime treated Soviet Muslims as one people, a single nation divided into several administrative entities.²⁵

However, the first policy shift towards the Muslim nation of the Soviet government took place in 1919 when Soviet leaders divided the Muslim community of the Middle Volga into Tatar and Bashqort states at a time when Muslims were demanding one unified republic for all Muslims living in that region. Following this, Soviet leaders moved to enforce a policy of *razmejevanie* or 'demarcation' of the Muslim community of Central Asia during 1924–1925 in order to formulate new nations on the basis of the four criteria of nationhood as propounded by Stalin: unity of territory,

²⁵ Bennigsen and Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*, 32.

language, economy and culture. Accordingly, the 1959 Soviet census divided the Muslim community, constituting about 20 percent of the Soviet population, into 38 different groups. Some of them were called 'nations' (in Russian, *natsii*), others 'sub-nationalities' (in Russian, *narodnosti*). The largest of these nations were the Uzbeks who numbered over six million, while the smallest were the tiny sub-nationalities of Dagestan and the North Caucasus numbering fewer than twenty thousand. It must be noted that these 'nations' and 'sub-nationalities' were created by the Soviet regime to keep Muslims disunited and weak in order to control them without difficulty.²⁶

Change in the Soviet Attitude towards Islam and Muslims Due to Second World War

The Second World War known as the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against Nazi aggression (1941–1945) presented a serious challenge to Russian-Muslim relations within the USSR. Hitler regarded Soviet Muslims as a potential fifth column within Soviet society and they were promised political independence if they agreed to collaborate with the invaders. Stalin responded to such German propaganda by promoting a supra-national Soviet patriot-

²⁶ On Soviet policies aiming at dividing the Russian Muslim community see Alexandre Bennigsen, "Islamic or Local Consciousness Among Soviet Nationalities," in: Edward Allworth (ed.), *Soviet Nationality Problems* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1971), 178-182; Elmira Akhmetova, "Mūsā Jārullāh Bigiev (1875-1949): Political Thought of a Tatar Muslim Scholar," *Intellectual Discourse* [Kuala Lumpur] 16, no. 1 (2008), 61-63; eadem, *Ideas*, 57-59.

ism and appealing to the religious feelings of the multi-religious and multi-ethnic population of the USSR. This was accompanied by a relaxation in the regime's national and religious policies.

Moscow entered into a 'Concordat' with those Muslim clerics who had survived Soviet persecution during the 1930s, represented by the mufti of Ufa, Abdurrahman Rasulev. The Soviets agreed to reduce the intensity of their anti-Islamic propaganda and ceased the persecution of Muslim clerics willing to support them. Islam as an institution was granted legal status with the creation in 1943–1944 of an official Islamic administration, the three Muslim Spiritual Directorates or *muftiyāts*, in addition to the one in Ufa, which administered the Sunni Muslims in the European part of the USSR. Among the new *muftiyāts* were the *muftiyāt* of the North Caucasus, based in the city of Buinakhs in Dagestan, which was to govern the Sunni Muslims of the Caucasus; and a *muftiyāt* based in Baku to oversee the Shiah Muslims of Azarbaijan. The third new *muftiyāt* was established in Tashkent and administered the Sunni Muslim population of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. These directorates played an important propagandist role in exploiting national and religious sentiments of Muslim believers and called for a *jihād* against Nazi aggression. They also organised the collection of money and aid for the Red Army, which enabled the formation of one entire tank column.²⁷

Between 1943 and 1954, about 500 new mosques were opened across the Soviet Union. In 1945 the famous madrasah of Mīr-i 'Arab was re-opened in Bukhara to prepare

²⁷ Bennigsen, Tanham, and Henze, *Soviet Strategy*, 26; Yemelianova, "Islam in Russia," 46–47.

a new generation of younger official Soviet clerics who would in the future act as loyal spokesmen for the Soviet power. Originally this madrasah was founded in 1536 by a Naqshbandi sheikh from Yemen, Abdullah, and had been closed in 1920 when the Soviets invaded the region from anti-Soviet forces. After re-opening in 1944, Mir-i Arab remained to be the only madrasah which provided Islamic education for the entire Soviet Muslim population until 1989. Yet, the population of this the only madrasah for entire SU was quite tiny. In 1963, the madrasah had 40 students and 86 in 1982. The curriculum was designed in line with the Committee for Religious Cults and has been divided into three parts: (1) religious subjects (*tadjwid*, sciences of hadith, history of Islam and others), which constituted 30 per cent of curriculum; (2) secular sciences (history of the Soviet nations, Constitution of the Soviet Union, Russian language, physical activities and others); and (3) common subjects (such as Arabic and Persian languages). Study period was intended for nine years, but students who enrolled after finishing their secondary education, were able to complete the entire syllabus within four years.

The results of this war-time religious policy of the Soviet regime were positive. During the war, hundreds of thousands of ordinary Muslims fought side-by-side with their non-Muslim compatriots and lost their lives for the sake of Soviet victory. Despite the historically difficult relations between Russia and the North Caucasus, the latter produced the largest number of 'Heroes of the USSR' per capita of the population.²⁸ During the legendary defence of Brest Fortress alone, the Chechens constituted one third of the Soviet

²⁸ Yemelianova, "Islam in Russia," 47.

opposing force. Their heroism became a symbol of Soviet resistance during the Great Patriotic War. Yet close to the end of the war entire Muslim nations such as Chechens, Ingushs, Kumyks, Karachays, Balkars, Meskhetian Turks, Crimean Tatar and others were overnight deported to isolated areas of Central Asia under the accusation of cooperating with the invading Nazis during the war – genocide and ethnic cleansing being the ulterior objective. Many of the deportees did not survive the winter journey or died from hunger and disease upon arrival.²⁹ As a result the Chechen population alone was reduced by almost one-third. The heroism of the Chechen soldiers at the Brest Fortress and their names were kept secret as a deported nation could not be a hero. This is why hundreds of those who fell in that legendary battle were merely listed as ‘disappeared without trace’.³⁰

With the victory of the Soviet Union, the anti-religious and anti-nationalist propaganda of the Soviet regime was resumed in 1945 and the persecutions of practicing Muslims (and, needless to say, people of other faiths and persuasions) continued after the Second World War although it was far less violent than it had been before the war. Nevertheless, in 1953 the official Great Bolshevik Encyclopaedia continued to describe the regime’s perception of Islam in familiar terms: “In the USSR, Islam is a vestige of the society of exploiters, and [abroad] it is a weapon in the hands

²⁹ Cohen, *Russian Imperialism*, 91-94.

³⁰ The president Vladimir Putin was the first person who in 2004 openly referred to the presence of a large number of Chechen soldiers in the defending army of Brest Fortress; see Said Bitsoyev, “Ubyty i Zabyty,” *Noviyi Izvestiya*, available online at <http://www.newizv.ru/news/2005-07-01/27341> (accessed on 15 November 2018).

of the local reactionaries and of foreign imperialism.”³¹ The anti-Islamic campaign employed visual and verbal propaganda often in the form of public lectures, and religious fasts were broken by forcing people to drink water or eat pork. The Soviet guardians of atheism ensured that no major festivities fell on religious holidays and created Soviet holidays in their place. Where believers were ‘exposed’, they were thrown out of their places of study, lost their jobs, and were expelled from the Party.³²

Due to Communist political propaganda in the international arena, especially during the Cold War era, many parts of the Muslim world remained largely ignorant of the real state of Soviet Islam until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. As was observed by Alexandre Bennigsen, during the pre-1991-period the ‘Islamic channel’ was used especially to enhance Soviet influence on the Muslim world. Soviet Muslim religious authorities were encouraged to cultivate relations with the ruling elites of the Muslim world abroad, especially in those of the conservative countries with no (or poor) diplomatic relations with the USSR: Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Kuwait, the Gulf emirates and sheikdoms, Lebanon and Egypt. Between 1973 and 1979 alone, Soviet muftis leading official religious delegations visited twenty Muslim countries, some of them more than once. In the host countries, they nearly always were received at the highest levels of the government and religious leadership – which often had a profound influence on the politics of their governments.

³¹ Quoted in Bennigsen, Tanham, and Henze, *Soviet Strategy*, 27.

³² Elena Omel’chenko and Gusel’Sabirova, “Islam and the Search for Identity,” in: Pilkington and Yemelianova (eds.), *Islam in Post-Soviet Russia*, 168.

Soviet Muslim leaders emphasised several important themes in all of their work, logically on order of the Kremlin:

1. The 'evils' of US, Israeli, and Chinese 'imperialism';
2. That the USSR is a substantial Muslim power and the best 'friend' of Islam. As such a part of the world of Islam, the USSR joined hands with other Muslim countries to oppose continued domination and oppression at the hands of the hostile world of 'infidels', typified by the Americans (and, of course, other capitalist Westerners);
3. The religious 'tolerance' of the Soviet government, and especially the 'freedom, happiness and prosperity' of the Soviet Muslim community.³³

These antagonistic policies of the Communist regime disrupted the traditional religious, social, economic, and political foundations of Russian society. However, the Muslim nations of the Soviet Union paid the heaviest price. Their heartache, which had emanated gradually from the religious and social injustices throughout tsarist rule, actually multiplied under the Soviet regime. The Muslim nations were politically deceived; their entire clerical and political elites were eliminated. The populations of those Muslim nations were significantly reduced due to the deportations to Central Asia in the 1940s. Most importantly, the aggressive Soviet policies had resulted in long-lasting consequences for the welfare and mindset of Russia's Muslim nations. The overall results of the anti-religious policies of the Soviet Union were tragic. The younger generations totally forgot about Islam. Thus, Ravil Bukharaev wrote in 2000 that "looking at the Russian ummah today, we could sadly

³³ Bennigsen, Tanham, and Henze, *Soviet Strategy*, 38-44.

state that the Communist atheism of the past eighty years has done it more harm than, maybe, all previous trials of history put together.”³⁴ Yet, Islam again did survive on Russian soil. The collapse of the Communist regime was followed by the revival of Islam and other religions what we can witness today.

Conclusion

The paper suggests the following conclusions. First, historically, the modern territory of Russia was an important centre of Islamic education with advanced learning centres and renowned scholars for centuries. This unique experience of Russia’s Muslims should be taken into consideration while dealing with problems occurred in contemporary Islamic educational system in Russia. The concept of formal Islamic education had started during the Tsarist Russian period by initiating the practice of the imperial appointment of qualified imams starting from the beginning of the nineteenth century. But informal types of education were always there to educate the Muslim masses about their religious rituals and responsibilities.

Second, this comprehensive and long-lasting legacy of Islamic educational structure was completely destroyed by the Soviet regime. Madrasahs were closed, religious books were banned, and teachers and religious scholars were eliminated. As a replacement, the Soviet regime introduced a compulsory public education for all citizens, which had

³⁴ Bukharaev, *Islam in Russia*, 319.

been based on the ideology of atheism and communist indoctrination. Religious education or any knowledge related to spiritual enhancement, was brutally demolished.

Third, the paper suggests that the Soviet policies and realities played a significant role in introducing a new tradition in Islamic education in Russia – that is the training of Muslim professional clerics (professional imams) with an unconditional loyalty to their fatherland, Russia. The Soviet regime was obliged to adopt more flexible policies towards Islam and Muslims during the decisive years of the civil wars after the October Revolution and the Second World War times as the support of its Muslim population was critical. Thus the Soviets compromised with the establishment of more muftiyats and re-opening of the historical madrasah of Mīr-i ‘Arab in 1945 in Bukhara to prepare a new generation of official Soviet clerics who would in the future act as loyal spokesmen for the Soviet power. The graduates of this madrasah defined the future and character of Islamic education in the Soviet Union until 1991. In fact, these happenings shifted the philosophy of Islamic education in Russia from being a system that empowers the Muslim masses with the fundamental Islamic knowledge which is necessary to live as a Muslim and the formation of Islamic worldview to the factory of the production of professional Muslim clerics with certain knowledge on Islam. This is still relevant to many of the existing Islamic universities and madrasahs in contemporary Russia.

Accordingly, the Soviet government maintained few selected Islamic educational institutions under its strong control to shape professional Soviet religious clerics for the purposes of diplomacy and international relations with the rest of the Muslim world. Afterwards, this tactic played a

major role in creating a perception in the post-Soviet Russia that Islamic education should be predominantly directed towards preparing the formal religious professionals. Yet, the thirst of the masses for a comprehensive religious education has simply been neglected. Individual attempts to offer religious education to the population were labelled as informal and mostly not welcomed.

Therefore, the paper suggests that Islamic education should be defined in a much broader setting. Present scholarly discussions existing in Russia connotes it as the formal structure of producing certified imams and Islamic officials. In practice, the term Islamic education is more relevant to a comprehensive system of the guidance of Muslim masses from their early children until the last breath. Informal types of education play the vital role in providing continuous education. Also, if we define Islamic education in the populist sense, basic Islamic knowledge of the Muslim population in Russia is obtained mostly by informal channels, while the formal Islamic universities and institutions mainly focus on producing certified Islamic professionals.

Lastly, the earlier Post-Soviet Islamic educational institutions played the crucial role in formulating the Islamic worldview and Muslim elite in modern Russia, and the majority of them functioned without a formal registration, nor having a proper curriculum or textbooks. At large, Russia's Muslims today obtain the basic Islamic knowledge in their families and communities, as well as through social media and other means of informal Islamic education. Only limited number of local Muslims enrol at formal Islamic educational institutions.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN CRIMEA AFTER 2014



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Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of the situation in the sphere of Islamic education of Crimea after the 2014. It shows the changes that occurred at the level of primary and secondary Islamic education, as well as the prospects for the development of higher Islamic education. The article is based on the methods of content-analysis of Crimean media materials and interviews with representatives of the Education Department of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Crimea and Sevastopol. It identifies the main trends that emerged after 2014, among which the elimination of foreign influence on the system of Islamic education, the strengthening of the domination of the Muftiyat of Crimea at all levels of education, its orientation to the spiritual and educational institutions of the Republic of Tatarstan, as well as the centralization of the Islamic educational system in the form of Islamic courses. The author makes a conclusion that changes that have occurred create conditions for unifying the system of Islamic education and raising its professional level.

Key words: Islamic education, Crimea, Islamic courses, Azov madrasah.

Introduction

The contemporary system of Islamic education began to take shape in Crimea in the early 1990s, after the mass repatriation of the Crimean Tatars to their homeland. This process was carried out in parallel with the creation of centralized Muslim bodies, construction of mosques, organization of Muslim cemeteries, opening of Halal shops, etc. At that time courses on the basics of Islam and Arabic literacy, where everyone was recruited regardless of gender and age, began to appear and later professional educational institutions – madrasahs and schools of Hafiz began to work. A huge role in the revival of the Muslim education system in Crimea was played by foreign missionaries, mainly from Turkey, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries [Bulatov 2011]. Their contribution was decisive both at the level of organization of the educational process (purchase of buildings, development of educational programs, provision of textbooks, etc.) and at the level of teaching [Muratova 2010]. The Crimean Tatar people, who had returned from the places of deportation and was occupied with the problems of their social and economic development, was not able to solve these issues on their own at that time. Nevertheless, since the mid-2000s, the activity of the Crimean Tatars in the sphere of Islamic revival began to grow: mosques were built at their own expense, Islamic courses and teaching at madrasahs were organized.

By 2014, Crimea had its own system of Islamic education, consisting of two levels – primary, implemented in the form of Quranic and Sunday schools at mosques, and secondary – in the form of madrasahs and schools of Hafiz,

which, in general, met the needs of the Crimean Tatar people in obtaining Islamic knowledge. The purpose of the initial courses was to help Muslims to support and confirm their Islamic identity, and institutions of higher level were designed for professional religious training of young Muslim clerics [Bogomolov et al. 2006: 72-73]. There was no higher Islamic education in Crimea. Graduates of madrasahs, who wanted to continue their education, as a rule, entered Turkish universities and other universities of the Muslim world. Upon their completion, some of them, having returned home, joined the process of Islamic education and administration of the religious life of the Crimean Muslims.

The events of spring 2014, which changed the political and legal status of Crimea, had a significant impact on many processes on the peninsula. They have significantly transformed the situation within the Crimean Tatar people: the balance of social-political forces, people's attitude to ethnic and religious structures [Muratova 2016], ethnic agenda, the structure of identity [Mukomel and Khaikin 2016], etc. Among other things, the system of Islamic education in Crimea has undergone changes. But if a number of processes (including those mentioned above) are already reflected in the scholarly literature [Mukhetdinov and Khabutdinov 2014; Yakubovych 2016], the changes in the field of Islamic education have not yet become the subject of a separate study. This determines the relevance this paper. Its object – Islamic education in the post-Soviet Crimea and the subject is the main trends in the system of Islamic education in Crimea taking place after 2014. The article is based on such research methods as content analysis of Cri-

mean media materials, as well as interviews with representatives of the Department of education of the Spiritual administration of Muslims of Crimea and Sevastopol (SAMCS). The paper presents an analysis of the situation at the primary and secondary levels of education, as well as prospects for the development of higher Islamic education on the peninsula.

Primary level of Islamic education

This level of education appeared on the peninsula first. From the very beginning of the 1990s, Islamic courses were opened at the Central mosque of Simferopol – Kebir-Jami and other mosques and prayer houses in Crimea. They offered training in the basics of Islam, religious practice and reading the Quran. It should be noted that the demand for such courses was considerable, due to the general growth of people's interest in religion at that time. Students of the courses were children, women and men of different age groups. The process of training at the initial stage was led by foreign missionaries – representatives of the Department of religious Affairs of Turkey (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* – hereinafter *Diyanet*) and private Turkish and Arab foundations and organizations. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the activities of a number of Arab missionaries were curtailed due to the inconsistency of their views with the cultural traditions of the Crimean Tatars, some foundations were closed, and teachers of Islam were forced to leave Crimea.

During the 2000s, two organizations were mainly engaged in open teaching within the framework of Islamic courses. The first is the Spiritual administration of Muslims

of Crimea (SAMC) or Muftiyat of Crimea, which supervised the Quranic schools that functioned at mosques. They were taught mainly by Turkish missionaries, as a rule, who were in Crimea within the framework of the agreement between the SAMC and *Diyanet*, who had its office at the *Seit-Settar* mosque in Simferopol. At the same time, about two dozen Turkish teachers worked in Crimea and often served as imams along with the performance of educational functions; after the expiration of their contract, they were replaced by others. In addition to the employees of *Diyanet*, representatives of private Turkish foundations were engaged in educational activities. Some of the teachers of the Quranic schools were represented by those Crimean Tatars who managed to get religious education in the 1990s either at home (graduated from courses or madrassas) or abroad.

The second organization involved in the field of Islamic primary education was represented by the all-Ukrainian Association “Alraid”, which was founded by Arab students of Ukrainian universities in 1997 [Bogomolov et al. 2006: 43-48]. At the central office of this association in Simferopol, as well as in a number of regions of Crimea, there were Sunday schools where Islam was taught by employees of this organization [Yakubovych 2012]. In addition to teaching Islam, the Association implemented charitable projects (digging wells, distributing cows and building greenhouses to needy Crimean Tatars, etc.), held scientific conferences on interethnic and interfaith topics.

It should be noted that the Islamic courses of that period did not have a single curriculum, which included standard terms of study, subjects and the number of hours for covering each topic. In each case, it depended on the teacher, his/her capabilities and competence.

The exact number of Quranic and Sunday schools operating in Crimea in the 1990-2000s can be named only approximately. According to the official data of the Ministry of culture of Ukraine, which was in charge of religious institutions at that time, in 2012, there were 74 Sunday schools in Crimea [Brilev 2013:107]. It is difficult to say how many of them actually worked under the patronage of the SAMC and other organizations. There was a lack of attempts to systematically take into account Islamic courses, and the quality of instruction offered there. It was difficult to do also because some of the courses operated privately in the homes of Muslims.

Summing up, it can be noted that the functioning of Islamic courses until 2014 was not regular and centralized mainly due to the lack of qualified specialists able to carry out such activities, and most importantly – financial resources to pay the work of teachers. This shortage was especially acute for the SAMC, which for this reason resorted to the help of the *Diyanet* and Turkish foundations. Other Islamic organizations and groups in Crimea ("*Alraid*", "*Hizb ut-Tahrir*" (HT), Salafits, etc.) had better financial resources, and therefore more initiatives in the field of primary Islamic education. Especially noticeable this dominance was in the segment of women's education, which was largely represented by the teachers of "*Alraid*" and HT. Extraordinary activity in the field of Islamic education was showed by representatives of HT. On their account there was a number of conferences, educational activities for children and women.

After the spring of 2014, the situation has changed dramatically. Due to the more stringent (in comparison with Ukrainian) Russian legislation in the sphere of religion, the

possibilities of implementing initiatives on Islamic education among organizations and groups in Crimea have been significantly reduced. The pressure on “*Alraid*” (in form of searches and withdrawal of banned religious literature) and HT (in form of searches and arrests of party members) has led to their cessation of public educational activities. If the first organization was forced to re-register under a new name – “*Creation*” and shift the focus of its activities from religious to social, the second organization, HT, was declared extremist and was forced to go to underground. The vacated niche is the sphere of primary Islamic education was actively occupied by the SAMC, though in the light of changing conditions. In the new realities, the Muftiyat cannot count on the help of missionaries from Turkey. All Turkish teachers were forced to leave Crimea before the beginning of 2015. Organizational and teaching activities in the field of Islamic courses and madrasahs laid on the shoulders of the *Muftiyat*. And if at first, in 2014, it gave rise to a crisis and almost paralyzed the system of Islamic education, then gradually the situation began to level out. Not the last role in this was played by the process of normalization of relations between the SAMC and the Russian authorities and the improvement of its financial situation due to funding from Moscow [Muratova: 2016: 165-166].

In 2014, the SAMC launched an educational project called “*Faydali Ilim*” (“Beneficial knowledge”), in the framework of which the work of the Islamic courses began to improve. The dynamics of the latter can be judged by the official information of the *Muftiyat* posted on its website. So, in 2014 there were 8 teachers of the basics of Islam. In 2015, their number increased to 35. At the end of 2016 teacher corps of “*Faydali Ilim*” numbered 56 people. They provided

functioning of 74 Sunday schools in different regions of Crimea, in which at that time more than 500 people were trained. Among the teachers were mainly young women who graduated from *Azov* madrasah, located in Dzhankoy district of Crimea. They supervised the work of women's and children's Sunday schools. According to Zeyneb Bairova, the head of the project "*Faydaly Ilim*", the male segment of Sunday schools for various reasons (lack of time, decent funding, etc.) has not yet sufficiently developed. There were only five such courses in the project. The contribution of teachers of Islamic courses is largely based on their enthusiasm; they do not receive regular salaries, but sometimes get bonuses from the SAMC.

Sunday schools continue to teach the rules of reading the Quran and the basics of Islam. At the request of students, this can be added and other classes – sewing, Crimean Tatar embroidery, English and Crimean Tatar languages. Sunday schools are held the Friday *sohbeti* (talks) on different topics. A common standard of training developed by employees of "*Faydaly Ilim*", provides for a two-year program. During the first year of study, the reading of the Quran and the subject "*32 farz*" which includes the most basic knowledge of Islam (the pillars of faith, the pillars of Islam, the rules of prayer, etc.) are taught. In the second year, students pass the basic rules of correct reading of the Quran and develop a quick technique of reading it, as well as issues related to the worship and biography of the Prophet Muhammad. There is also the third year of the training offered in the form of *sohbeti* designed for advanced students, but it applies so far only in the central office of "*Fagaly Ilim*" in Simferopol. Students who have completed the third year of

study, if desired, can become assistant teachers and independently conduct classes in small Sunday schools. According to Bairova, this year five such graduates have joined the teaching process.

Course participants are of different age groups, but the majority of them (approximately 75-80%) are women aged 50-60 years. However, the age composition of the groups varies according to the regions in which the classes are held. So, in Simferopol and Simferopol district, as well as in the *Staryi Krim* – they are mostly children and young people, while in the more remote regions of Crimea – the older generation.

In addition to the standard courses, in the framework of the project “Faydali Ilim” during Ramadan, there are courses for the accelerated learning of the Quran. In 2016, about 50 people completed these courses. In 2017, 10 such courses were reopened. In addition to this “Faydali Ilim” organizes other events, for example, “Altyn Nesil” (“Golden generation”) – the annual all-Crimean competition on knowledge of Islam among children, “Muhammad alayhi Salaam – insanların en uyesidir” (“The Prophet Muhammad is the most exalted of men”) – a literary contest. Also annually hosts a drawing competition for children, iftars, workshops, etc. Thus, in 2016, 42 seminars and 25 events were held within the framework of the project “Faydaly Ilim” to present the Quran to the graduates of the courses.

Thus, a distinctive feature of the Islamic courses after 2014 was their more centralized and coordinated nature, which opens up opportunities for the unification of the Islamic education system and the organization of its work on a more professional basis. Within the framework of the project “Faydaly Ilim”, there is a methodical department,

which is engaged in the development of textbooks and visual aids on the Basics of Islam and the Crimean Tatar language. In March 2017, there was a presentation of teaching projects in the SAMCS, and those selected are planned to be implemented in the educational process. Periodically “*Faydali Ilim*” conducts training courses for teachers of the basics of Islam. The program includes lectures, workshops, and trainings on proper reading of the Quran, the funeral rite, on the history of Islam in Crimea, etc. Another feature of the work of the Islamic courses became a female-dominated segment of the courses and the dominance of teachers of the SAMCS.

Secondary Islamic education

On the eve of 2014, there were six educational institutions with the status of madrasah in Crimea [Brilev: 2013]. However, in reality, only one of them – the Azov madrasah in Dzhankoy district corresponded to this status and offered a three-year course of secondary professional Islamic education on the Turkish model of *Imam-Hatip Lisesi*. All the rest functioned rather in the format of Quranic schools with different periods of study. Apart from the madrassah there were two Hafiz schools in Crimea: one in Simferopol and another – in the Krasnogvardeysky district. The official founder of all Islamic educational institutions in Crimea was SAMC, but de facto the educational process was led by other organizations. The Azov madrasah and Hafiz school in the Krasnogvardeysky district were under the patronage of the Turkish private foundation “*Aziz Mahmud Khudai*”, which followed in Sufi orientation [Yarosh and Brylov:

2011: 259]. The educational process in Hafiz school in Simferopol region led by the Association "*Alraid*". In the diplomas of graduates of all three institutions was indicated a specialty "Imam-Khatib, teacher of Islamic subjects". The diplomas of those who learned the entire Quran added "Hafiz" [6, c. 304].

The presence of different organizations in secondary Islamic schools with their models and features of training provided pluralism of the education system. At the same time, the lack of financial and organizational capabilities of the SAMC to effectively control the work of educational institutions, led to the inconsistency of the Islamic education system and the presence of a number of problems. Among the mains we can note the low level of training of entrants in the madrassas and the Hafiz school, the lack of a large number of people wishing to train there, the non-recognition of diplomas of these institutions by the state institutions, and, therefore, prospects for further studies in secular universities and employment of graduates, the low level of teaching, etc. Individual initiatives, intended on optimization of the system of Islamic education, such as the development of standards and levels of education, did not significantly change the situation.

The events of the so-called "Crimean spring" have made adjustments to the functioning of the middle level of Islamic education in Crimea. From all educational institutions only the Azov madrasah works and even it (for the period of action of the transition period for educational institutions of the Crimea till September, 2018) without the license. In employees of the SAMC noted that the sanitary-epidemiological requirements for obtaining a license in Russia, is extremely difficult to perform. For this reason, the

activities of all other educational institutions are temporarily frozen. In June 2017, 78 people were trained in the Azov madrasah, including 50 boys and 28 girls.

An important issue related to madrasah was the issue of bringing its curriculum in line with Russian educational standards. The leadership of the SAMC made a decision to orient in this regard to the experience of the Republic of Tatarstan. In May 2016, an agreement between the Council for Islamic education of Russia and the Azov madrasah was signed in Kazan. The agreement was signed by mufti of Crimea Emirali Ablaev and rector of the Russian Islamic Institute (RII) Rafik Mukhametshin. It was decided that the students of the Azov madrasah from September 1, 2016, will study on a single Islamic educational standard, prepared by experts of the RII and the Spiritual administration of the Republic of Tatarstan (DUM RT). It was envisaged that this would open up opportunities for Crimean graduates to continue their studies in Kazan Islamic universities, where they could be admitted immediately to the third year.

By the end of 2016, the staff of the Department of education of the SAMC developed a new curriculum for the Azov madrasah. According to the head of the Department Ruslan Abdullayev, much in the old curriculum did not have to change, as 90-95% of the subjects were the same. The difference was only in the disciplines that formed the national and regional components of the program, and in the number of hours allocated to the development of certain subjects. At the moment, the period of study in the madrasah is three years, of which the first two years students are engaged in a simplified program, as in parallel they have to study in secondary school (in 10-11 grades), and the third year – in an enhanced program. According to Abdullayev,

Azov madrasah corresponds to the beginning-basic level of educational standards of secondary professional religious education of the Republic of Tatarstan.

While madrasah students are engaged in an adaptive program, with reduced number of hours to study religious subjects. The transition to the new program is planned from September 2018. Students attend a secondary school in the morning and classes in madrasah – afternoon. According to Abdullayev, this option has not justified itself: students come from school tired and unable to study religious subjects. Therefore, it is planned to move to the external system of self-education. Students will study secular subjects in the madrasah, for which there will be specially invited teachers and take exams at the school to which they will be attached.

The curriculum of the madrasah provides for the development of 22 subjects, the study of which in the first year of study is given 15 hours a week, in the second and third year – 18 hours. After the transition to a full-fledged program, the workload will increase: in the first and second years it will be 15 hours, and in the third year – 33 hours a week.

Madrasah prepares *imam-khatibs*, teachers of fundamentals of Islam. Those students who complete the first two years of study will receive the qualification of “Imam of the 2nd category”, and those who successfully complete the three-year program – the qualification of “Imam of the 1st category”. In addition to students involved in the imam training program, a separate group of students (17 people), specializing in the Hafiz training program, is trained in the Azov madrasah. As Abdullayev noted, they are there tem-

porarily due to the fact that the Hafiz school in Krasnogvardeysky district is not functioning yet. The SAMC plans to open this school in the near future.

The teaching staff of the madrasah consists of 13 people: 6 – in the men's department and 7 – in the women's department. All teachers of madrasah are its former graduates, some of whom also managed to finish theological faculties in Turkey. In addition to them, there is one teacher with higher secular education in Arabic studies, graduate of Taurida National University in Simferopol. Madrasah operates with the financial support of the Fund for support of Islamic culture, science and education (Moscow).

Thus, after 2014, the Azov madrasah entered a new stage of its development and is gradually adapting to new realities. In addition to stationary classes, madrasah is a platform for various competitions and other events. Among them: competition “*Kuran tilaveti*” (“Beautiful reading of the Koran”), competition for the best reading of *azan*, competition “*Sier*” (“Life and way of the Prophet Muhammad”), competition for the best knowledge of the Quran, etc.

Prospects of higher Islamic education

The idea of creating a higher Islamic educational institution hovers in the Muslim environment of the Crimea for a long time. This was stated in the Qurultay Muslims of Crimea, held in Simferopol in 2008. The same was stated during the world Congress of Crimean Tatars in 2009. Several attempts to launch such a project failed for various reasons. At the same time, at that time, speaking about the Islamic University, mainly the model of Turkish higher educational

institutions – faculties of theology (*Ilahiyat*) was taken as a basis [Brylov: 2013: 110-111].

After 2014, the establishment of the Islamic University is still among the priorities in the development of Muslim education in Crimea. This idea was actualized in the framework of the international conference “Islamic education in Crimea: historical milestones and the way of revival” held on 10-11 Oct 2015 in Yalta [Resolution]. At the current stage, the staff of the SAMC is studying the experience of existing Russian Islamic universities and is working on the development of the Charter of the Crimean Islamic Institute.

While Islamic University has not been established, the problem of training highly qualified personnel is solved by sending Crimean Tatars to study in RII in Kazan. In July 2016, the Crimea has been visited by representatives of the Admissions Committee of RII with the aim to inform possible Crimean applicants about the rules of admission to study. During the meetings with the applicants, they told future students about the organization of the educational process, the educational and material base of the Institute, the specifics of training in a religious university, material support, living conditions at the Institute. In the same year, the first applicants from Crimea became students of RII. In 2017, 5 persons were enrolled in the bachelor fulltime study, another 60 persons – in distance learning study, while another 13 – in MA distance learning study. All of them had practice as assistants to imams at Crimean mosques.

Conclusion

Thus, the system of Islamic education in Crimea is gradually adapting to the new political and legal realities that came after the spring of 2014. As shown above, there are new trends in its functioning. Among them, first of all, it should be noted the elimination of foreign influence, which previously was decisive for the Crimean Muslims due to the lack of their own experience and financial opportunities. Turkish and Arab influence, present at both the primary and secondary levels of Islamic education, has played a significant role in the development of the education system and has given impetus to its development. At the same time, this influence limited the possibility of implementing local Crimean Tatar educational initiatives, as well as raised issues related to the compliance of educational traditions of missionaries from abroad with Crimean Tatar religious traditions.

Another trend is the monopolization of the influence of the SAMC in the field of Islamic education of Crimea at all levels. This is facilitated by the elimination with the help of the state of other actors in this sphere (both external and internal), improving the financial situation of the Muftiyat, as well as the emergence of grass-roots initiatives, which in the new conditions are supported by official religious leaders.

An important trend is the rapprochement of the SAMC with the spiritual and educational institutions of the Republic of Tatarstan, borrowing their experience, which is manifested in the use of educational standards for Islamic secondary schools and in the training of specialists in Kazan Islamic universities.

A new trend in the field of Islamic education and enlightenment was the centralization of the Islamic education system, implemented in the format of Islamic courses, which creates conditions for their unification and professional development. Women's initiatives in the sphere of Islamic education in contemporary Crimea needs a special attention.

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**ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
OF RELIGION EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OF AZERBAIJAN DURING THE INDEPENDENCE
PERIOD (WITHIN THE CONTEXT
OF LIFE SCIENCE TEXTBOOKS)**



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Since its independence in 1991, the subject of religion education in state schools of Azerbaijan has been discussed and it seems will proceed. There are several important reasons for it. The first and more general one is related to the presence of different practices and approaches in world countries with the status of religion education in schools. Another reason is related to the view of academia to the religious education in schools, since it shifts toward a more positive approach than in the past. The next and more specific reason is about which model will be applied in the religious education in the schools of Azerbaijan, since it is a secular country with no state religion.

Although there is no compulsory religion subject in the primary, middle and upper-secondary schools in Azerbaijan, information about religions is included within the framework of Life Science subject which is compulsory in schools since 2004-2005 academic year. Unlike other courses, Life Science does not teach the basics of a particular science, and includes basic components of social and

natural sciences taught in public schools. The main aim of the course is not only to teach religious and moral issues, but also different topics related to law, security, etc. which overall pursue a goal of integration of students' instruction and education. In this respect, about one third part of the Life Science textbooks subjects contains information on religious, moral and spiritual issues. Through this course, it is aimed that students have the basic knowledge about different world religions while on the other hand they are aimed at teaching high moral values such as moral competence, honesty, justice, tolerance towards him/herself and others.

This article analyzes the development process of religious education (2004-2018) in public schools of Azerbaijan. Life Science textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education for the compulsory courses in public schools will constitute the main sources of the research. The following questions about the content of the Life Science course is answered in this paper: Is the content prepared to cover more than one religion or is there basic information about all religions? Are all religions and sects approached objectively? Are world religions and beliefs other than dominant religion presented in their entirety without being judged? Is the doctrinal teaching of a religion or sect avoided? Is the concept of religious education that advocates a specific religious belief avoided? Has the "supradenominational" approach been adopted related to the Islamic topics? Has the concept of Azerbaijani citizenship been supported in explaining the topics related to differences?

Keywords: religious education, Life Science textbooks, Azerbaijan

1. Introduction: Textbooks as a Source for Religious Studies

Textbooks continue to play a substantial role in both school and university education, despite the ongoing debates that due to the internet and other technology tools they will lose their priority over time and will be pushed into the background in education. The reason is that the textbooks play a significant role for both teachers and students compared to other educational materials in terms of content, context, volume and continuity of the topics (Eisner, 1987, p. 11-13).

In addition to the mentioned practical facilities, textbooks are not only books systematized educationally for certain age groups and presented in value-free approach. On the contrary, they are the works presenting information with ideological, political, cultural and scientific claims. First of all, the textbooks reflect the official view of the state they belong. Because they meet the demands of the curricula determined by the education system of the country. From stories to people, rules and norms, many elements in the textbooks reflect the values supported by the state (Pingel, 2010, ps. 9-10). Therefore, along with transmitted information and knowledge, the textbooks reflect values such as moral personality and patriotism (Fleming, 1990, p. 7). As a natural consequence of all these, textbooks are also important as a means in framing citizens' personality or preparing future generations of a global society (Kramsch, 2013, p. 24-25).

Considering the mentioned reasons, the textbooks are not only neutral texts written in descriptive methods, but also the official sources of information that the community wants to teach students. On the other hand, due to the au-

thors proven status as experts in their fields, textbooks are considered as texts proposing “correct” information. They have the characteristic of being the main information offered to learners by who knows. The so-called major facts are written in such a convincing way that they claim to reflect the truth which can be called “power texts” (Andreassen Bengt-Ove, 2014, p. 1-15).

Given these characteristics, it is clear that among other disciplines, particularly history, literature and language textbooks turn into research objects of social sciences. The increasing interest to evaluate religion textbooks as a research object of the religious studies should be considered from this point of view. Among many other reasons of it, two main ones worth to be mentioned here. Primarily, this is closely related to the multicultural and pluralistic structure of the contemporary societies. In this way, it is also important to what extent the religions of the plurality and minority are represented in the textbooks. On the other hand, the fact that religion has been turning into one of the important research topics of social sciences and humanities also plays an important role in raising this interest. In contrast to what was expected at the beginning of the last century, the effect of religion perception on the approach of individuals and societies from the perception of identity and civilization to political, economic, social and other processes has not only diminished, but rather has continued to increase its effects in many societies.¹ Along with

¹ Brian J. Grim, “International Religion Indexes: Government Regulation”, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, Vol 2, 2006, p. 2 ff. For the analysis of religiosity in Azerbaijan society - Elnura Azizova, *Religiosity of Azerbaijan society in comparison with the Mus-*

the family and society, the role of the education system, especially school education, is undeniable in relation to the formation of a religion approach.

Although a compulsory religion course is not taught in the state schools of Azerbaijan, the main subjects related to the religion are taught in the Life Science subject since 2004. The content and scope of this knowledge are prepared according to the Life Science course curricula for schools of the Republic of Azerbaijan. For both primary and secondary schools, information on religion is presented under the main topic titled “Spirituality”, the third of the four parts of the Life Science content lines. Educational outcomes expected from the students about the Spirituality topic are:

For primary schools (the 1st-4th grades):

- To know the main scientific and religious world views about the creation of the world
- To understand the spiritual values communicated by religions and to distinguish them from the superstitions (Education curriculum for Life Science course, p. 19)

For middle-secondary schools (the 5th-9th grades):

- To evaluate the role of religion in framing the great human being, its contribution to the human morality and actions (Education curriculum for Life Science course, p. 21).

Considering the overall number of words related to religion in Life Science textbooks, there are low (100-650 words in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 6th and 7th grade textbooks), medium (1000-1250 words in the 4th, 5th and 8th grade)

and high (more than 6000 in the 9th grade) considered examples.

2. Religion in the Life Science Textbooks

The subject of religion in the Life Science textbooks, has been explored within the context of the definition of religion, its origins, purposes, classification of religions, concepts such as “god”, “prophet”, “revelation”, the perception of the world, the presentation of religion on the basis of human rights and tolerance. The approach to religion has not explained in the case of individual religions, but in general concept of religion. Because it would exceed the limits of this article, the investigation of the content and method analysis related to individual religions will be investigated in further researches.

2.1. The Definition of Religion

Faith, worship, the need to perceive the world, morality and social function are more highlighted elements related to the definition of religion in the Life Science textbooks. The belief element of religion is emphasized in the 2nd grade textbook (Ibrahimova, 2014, p. 56). Few examples of the definition of religion are encountered in the 5th grade textbook. In one of them religion is presented as a belief system and a way of perceiving the world. Additionally, it is considered as a large road, with many paths taking to the perception of world reality, which explains why the world population believes in various religions accordingly (Memmedova, 2016/1, p. 71). The definition of religion in the 5th grade textbook is not related only to this world, but also to life after death where the religion is called the divine belief system, which brings people to the happiness

of the world and hereafter by Allah. In the same textbook it is emphasized that the origin of religion is the belief system based on the Creator (Memmedova, 2016/1, p. 73).

While faith and worship as importance elements are highlighted in the descriptions of religion in the 1st-5th grade textbooks, key aspects of religion like world view, morality and social function are emphasized in the 6th-9th grades. For instance, religion is called a type of the world-view emerged from the desire of man to perceive the world in the 6th grade textbook (Memmedova, 2017, p. 24). In the 8th grade textbook the idea of religion is presented as the product of human contemplation (Memmedova, 2015, p. 60). The role of ethics is highlighted in the description of religion presented in the 8th grade textbook, where the religion is described as the sum of the moral values that people apply through their lives faithfully in reaching happiness, and its undeniable role in the formation of moral values is emphasized. According to the textbook, the basis of religions is morality, regardless of whether they are polytheistic or heavenly (Memmedova, 2015, p. 60).

2.2. The Origin of Religion

In regards to the description of religion, its origin is approached from various perspectives in the textbooks. For the first time in the 3rd grade textbook the subject is emphasized and the answer to the question of “what is religion?” and “how is it created?” is explained through evolutionist approach to religion, its origins, belief of God, and its development process (Mehdiyeva, 2014, p. 84). Exemplifying the religions existed in Azerbaijan, in the 3rd grade textbook it is stated that religion has passed the his-

torical development stages to the contemporary time and the progress it has made from dualistic belief system to monotheistic religions is emphasized (Mehdiyeva, 2014, p. 84).

The evolutionary approach towards the meaning and development process of religions is presented in the textbooks through the expression such as “in the ancient times”, “distant past” and “contemporary world” mentioned in the same text, supporting the thesis that in the ancient times religions were founded on the basis of people’s belief in life after death, in distant past it gained the feature of dualistic belief system in progress of time, and consequently evolved into a monotheistic religion which is generally accepted in the contemporary world. Nevertheless, it is indicated that there are some exceptions such as Buddhism and Hinduism through noting down existence of non-monotheistic religions (Mehdiyeva, 2014, p. 85). A similar approach to the development stages of religion is found in the 9th grade textbook where it is stated that religion has passed a long way of religious contemplation from worshipping to animals and idols to the believe in one god (Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 107).

2.1.3. The Concept of God

In terms of imagination of god, the terms of “God”, “the Great God”, “the Supreme Creator” and “the Divine Being” are used in the textbooks. Especially in primary school textbooks, the concept of god is presented within the context of monotheistic religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the 1st grade textbook the above mentioned religions are called monotheistic religions and “according to these religions” world and humanity was

created by the only God (Kerimova, 2018, p. 47). In the 3rd grade textbook it is emphasized that the common point of all three religions is “the Creator” (Ibrahimova, 2014, p. 56). God is placed at the center of religious faith in the 9th grade textbook, where it is recorded that despite the fact that people put the different names on Him in different languages. As a matter of fact, the God has the same meaning for everyone that he is the only and powerful Divine being of one world, but, as a matter of fact religions present many paths to get closer to God (Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 108).

2.1.4. The Concepts of Prophet and Holy Book

The prophecy and sacred book are two other important perceptions reflected in the textbooks related to the origin and development process of religion. For the first time, in the 2nd grade textbook the Prophet Muhammad is reported to be the prophet of the Muslims, where prophet is called “the messengers who delivers the words of God to the people”. It is stated in the same textbook that Christians and Jews also have their own prophet and holy book (Ibrahimova, 2014, p. 56).

All in all, the perception of prophecy as the belief of god, is presented within the context of monotheistic religions, Moses for Jews, Jesus for Christians and Muhammad for Islam. Along with the perception of Prophet Muhammad, the holy book perception is presented as the heavenly books, because they were sent by God. The Book of Psalms, the Torah, the Bible and the Qur’an are exemplified for holy books (Mehdiyeva, 2014, p. 84)

In the 5th grade textbook, subject of the revelation and the prophet were discussed within the context of Islam

and the first human being Adam is considered as the first prophet. From Adam to Jesus all the prophets communicated the unity of God and how to worship him (Memmedova, 2016/1, p. 73). With these expressions, it is explained from the Islamic point of view that the prophethood was an institution started with the first man who also communicated worship to God.

The textbooks also focus on perception of “revelation” in different places. In the 5th grade textbook, the term meaning of the revelation is shown as the giving of the idea and judgment to the Prophet by God (Memmedova, 2016/1, p. 73). The relationship between religion and revelation is also mentioned in the 9th grade textbook. It is stated that according to the holy books of the most widely spread religions in the world such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism, the religious advice, narrations and provisions are means of communication with human beings (Memmedova, 2016/1, p. 73).

Consequently, regardless of which key aspects of the religion is given to the foreground and whether the source is sacred or unholy, it is thought that religion plays an important role in the life of people and society, and sometimes this role is stronger than the law. The following statement in the 9th grade textbook, which is the last year that the Life Science course is taught, clearly illustrates this approach: *“... In our age, religion has a stronger impact than laws on people’s way of life, rules of conduct, way of life and behavior. The collapse of the Soviet Union has proved that it is not possible to separate people from religion and isolate them. The Soviet government, which did not accept religions for many years, could not eliminate the religious beliefs and traditions of*

people. Follow-up increased people's commitment to religion..." (Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 100).

2.1.5. Classification of Religions

In the Life Science textbooks that uses different terms in the classification of religions, the pluralism approach of religions is in the foreground without making any difference between them. From the 1st grade this approach is mainly presented in the framework of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in accordance with the religious demography of Azerbaijan (Kerimova, 2018, p. 47). The terms related to the classification of religions are presented from the 2nd grade textbook. In this classification religions are divided into two categories: monotheist and other religions. Islam, Christianity and Judaism are presented as monotheist religions. In the teachings of all three religions, the textbooks place more emphasis mainly on two ideas that all leaving creatures are design of the Great God, and that religions call to a good deeds such as love, peace, knowledge and truth.

This classification is further developed with the term "heavenly book" in the 3rd grade textbook. The monotheistic religions are presented as the religion of contemporary people. According to monotheistic religions, earth and sky, the universe and all of creature are created by the only God. The concept of "heavenly book" and names of the prophets of the monotheistic religions have been added to the information given in the 2nd grade textbook about Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Mehdiyeva, 2014, p. 84).

The terms as "true religions", "heavenly" and "non-heavenly religions" are added to the categories of reli-

gions in the 5th grade textbook where “heavenly religions” are presented as sources of revelation from God through the angels sent to the prophets and Christianity, Judaism and Islam are presented as examples for the “heavenly” and “true” religions (Memmedova, 2016/1, p. 73). Accordingly, “non-heavenly religions” are presented as religious systems created by human and Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Shintoism are given as examples for this category (Memmedova, 2016/1, p. 74).

Life Science textbooks emphasize commonalities in belief and deeds in spite of differences in worship and rituals among “monotheist”, “heavenly” or “true” religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Memmedova, 2016/1, p. 75). The textbooks highlight that the members of these religions believe that everyone will see the results of his/her deeds (Mehdiyeva, 2014, p. 84), and these religions call people to be righteous, cleanliness, friendly to others, to respect the elders, to be merciful to the kids and sick man which is the reason of their ongoing existence throughout history (Mehdiyeva, 2014, p. 85).

Despite being classified in various categories, the idea that religions serve for a common purpose is generally accepted in the Life Science textbooks. Thus, the religions are not prevented from serving their common purpose and promoting goodness, whether or not they are “heavenly”, “true”, “monotheistic” religion or having “a messenger” and “holy book” sent by God. The most common characteristics of religions is calling to a good deed and preventing from evil (Mehdiyeva, 2014, p. 85).

2.1.6. Religion on the Basis of Human Rights and Tolerance

Yet another important issue in terms of image of religion in the textbooks is that religion is evaluated within the framework of human rights. Particularly highlighted in primary school textbooks, this approach is supported with the expressions such as “there is not possibility to impose religion and everyone has right to choose his/her own religion” in the 1st grade textbook (Kerimova, 2018, p. 47), “to believe in religion or to accept it is voluntarily” in the 2nd grade textbook (İbrahimova, 2014, p. 56) and “according to the Holy Koran there is not compulsion in religion” in the 3rd grade textbook (Mehdiyeva, 2014, p. 85).

Religion is broadly evaluated in the context of human rights in the 9th grade textbook. Liberty of conscience is presented as a feature of the democratic countries which covers choice of religion, free expressing or disseminating every religious belief, right to learn about and participate in religious ceremonies (Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 109). The 48th article of the Constitution of Azerbaijan Republic is presented to support the freedom to choose religion. In this way it has been attested that in the Republic of Azerbaijan, as a democratic country where religion is separated from the state, the necessary legal background for religious freedom has been established (Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 103).

In the 9th grade textbook it is stated that an individual's approach toward a religion is determined by two ways. In the first case, religious identity of the individual's family and society plays an important role in indifferently and unconditionally determining religion. In the second case,

it is freely selected in accordance with the personality and spirituality of the person, understanding the demands and necessity of religious rituals freely from his national identity (Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 109).

Apart from assessing the position of religion in the framework of human freedoms in democratic countries, religion is presented in the textbooks as a measure of tolerance of nations throughout human history. The Azerbaijani experience for religious plurality is the main focus related to the issue. Almost all of the textbooks are emphasized that despite the fact that the majority of the Azerbaijani people are Muslims, other religious communities such as Christians and Jews historically have lived in peace and sound in the country (Ibrahimova, 2014, p. 56; Mehdiyeva, 2015, p. 45; Memmedova, 2016/1, p. 72; Memmedova, 2017, p. 22; Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 99 ff). It is emphasized that the Azerbaijani people's tolerance toward various religions is not only the result of a contemporary approach offered by the democratic states within the framework of religious freedom, but also its historically developmental characteristics, demographic composition of the population, geographic location as a space of conjunction of Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam and other religions (Memmedova, 2016/1, p. 72; Memmedova, 2017, p. 22). Through sample story given in the 5th grade textbook on Jews and Christians living in Azerbaijan, it is shown that the tolerance retained in the past is still valid today, and is practiced not only on the political and legal level, but also as a form of lifestyle habits: "Ibrahim's friends David, a Jew and Aleksey, a Russian come to his house. After kissing them Ibrahim's mother calls them brothers of Ibrahim". At the end of the

text, students are asked to opine to the mother's words (Memmedova, 2016/1, p. 72).

Azerbaijani people's religious tolerance given through this example in the 5th grade textbook is supported by National Leader Haydar Aliyev's words cited in the 9th grade textbook and on this root the state policy of Azerbaijan Republic is based: "Azerbaijan has a rich spiritual heritage that reflects the high moral values of all the heavenly religions of the world. Therefore, the calls to the dialogue are fully supported by each Azerbaijani, regardless of their religious and ethnic identity. In our country, where the atmosphere of friendship and cooperation has always prevailed, religious tolerance has been turned into a lifestyle of our people..." (Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 99). It is supported by the words of H.Aliyev that being a tolerant religion against other beliefs, Islam has played a major role in Azerbaijan's tolerance throughout history (Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 103).

The religious tolerance policy of Azerbaijan and its positive results are presented wider in the 9th grade textbook, under the topic titled the tolerance. In the contemporary world, where religious tolerance has not yet established as a universal value, unlike many countries Azerbaijan is a good example for it (Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 99). The idea that religious tolerance is a state policy is emphasized through selected visuals on National Leader Haydar Aliyev's official meetings with religious leaders of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in Azerbaijan and opening ceremonies of new temples (Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 85). It is also noted that this successful policy, founded by H.Aliyev, is still being continued by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev (Memmedova,

2016/2, p. 99). The activities of the Caucasian Muslims Office and the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations are highlighted in the implementation of religious tolerance policy and religious awareness in Azerbaijan (Memmedova, 2016/2, p. 104).

Conclusion

To conclude, religion is presented with a pluralistic approach in the 1st-9th grade Life Science textbooks. The textbook presentations of religions are descriptive without any criticism against their key aspects. The use of possessive pronouns and adjective as “our”, “we”, “for us” etc. is avoided and neutral words like “according to the religion...”, “according to the sacred books of religions...”, “according to Christians/Jews/Muslims...”, “according to the sources” are preferred for presenting the information about “miraculous phenomena” such as “divine source of religion”, “God”, “prophet”, “revelation”. In this way, presenting the information as an absolute truth or as a subjective opinion of the author is avoided as much as possible.

Supradenominational approach is usually adapted to the religious topics. While Christianity as the only religion mentioned with its subgroups such as Protestantism, Catholicism and Orthodoxy, not the terms “sect”, “denomination”, “group”, but “church” is used to refer. Considering Azerbaijan’s religious demography, textbooks contain more detailed information on Islam. Nonetheless, with the exception in the 4th grade, in all of the Life Science textbooks, Christianity and Judaism share the common topics

with Islam, for pages assigned on key aspects as belief, rituals, worship, communities, sacred books etc.

While the textbooks are mainly focused on general and common aspects of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, less attention is paid to the religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Taoism etc. The information related to the latter are not as systematic as for former, although rare it is limited only to the name of the religion. To sum up, more research will be needed to develop a methodology to conceptualize the religion and cover its different dimensions for school textbooks, meeting the requirements nationally and globally.

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A NEW APPROACH IN EDUCATION FOR ISLAMIC FINANCE AWARENESS IN RUSSIA



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Abstract

At present, Russia has a unique situation with regard to Islamic finance. On the one hand, there is a huge interest and demand for educational programs in this specialty, not only among Muslims but others as well. On the other hand, presently there are not much job opportunities available in this area. This reflects the lack of solvency of demand for Islamic educational products in educational sphere. And interestingly, each group of citizens has its own motives. Most ordinary citizens who have a sincere interest in Islamic finance have naïve understanding about finance in general. Professionals in finance also show great interest in Islamic finance, but the lack of employment prospects for this specialty does not allow them to acquire appropriate educational services. Otherwise, it will be an investment with zero returns. Finally, many high-rank officials - especially after imposition of financial sanctions against Russia – demonstrate a careful demand for Islamic finance sector. They do expect that Islamic finance will solve many of the financial problems of the country and

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yet they face lack of proper understanding of the specifics of Islamic finance. In general, there is a huge demand for educational products in the sphere of Islamic finance in Russia. However, there is a need for a new approach in education. Therefore, this paper will focus on the followings three focus groups: a) various educational courses to increase public awareness on finance in general and on Islamic finance in particular; b) trainings for the regional leadership and top officials about Islamic finance; c) special programs and trainings for experts in finance.

Key words: Islamic finance, banking, education, course

1. Introduction

Currently, a unique situation has emerged in Russia with regards to Islamic finance. On the one hand almost 80% of the Russian population does not have a clear idea about Islamic banking and finance³. At the same time the central bank of Russia is also very careful in implementing Islamic financial system and prefers to develop it gradually rather than over-speeding it up for possible negative outcomes.⁴ On the other hand there is a huge demand for training in this specialty not only among Muslims but non-Muslims as well. It is a fact that not much opportunities are available for these interested people to realize themselves in this area mainly due to absence of solvency of demand for Islamic educational products in the field of education. Undoubtedly each segment of the society has its own motives. Thus, ordinary citizens who have a sincere interest in Islamic finance have naive understanding

³ <https://rt.rbc.ru/tatarstan/freenews/591db0c19a79477f0dded485> retrieved on 11/11/18 at 2:34pm.

⁴ <https://lenta.ru/news/2017/05/18/islamic/> retrieved on 12/11/18 at 4:06pm.

about finance in general; therefore, before studying the subject of Islamic finance, they need to go through a serious educational program to increase their awareness about financial system as such. Professional financiers also show great interest in Islamic finance, but the lack of employment prospects in this specialty does not allow them to acquire relevant educational services because otherwise it will turn up to be a zero-return investment. Finally, regional leadership of various Russian states, especially after the imposition of financial sanctions against the Russian Federation, demonstrate cautious demand and, due to a lack of understanding of the specifics of the Islamic finance industry, the expectation is that Islamic finance will solve all Russia's problems at once. Generally in Russia, there is a real demand for educational products in the field of Islamic finance, which, however, can be satisfied only on the basis of free of charge courses and programs.

However, in addition to the specifics of demand, there is another problem that lies in the field of substantive content of the courses: what exactly to teach and how to teach. Therefore, we will use descriptive and analytical approach and will study this problem in the context of the same three groups of potential consumers (ordinary citizens, regional leadership and top officials of the Russian states, experts in the field of finance). Eventually, our objectives are to propose a better way of instructing the course on Islamic finance for the above named segments of the Russian audience.

2. Training ordinary citizens

For the training of ordinary citizens, university standards are not applicable. We can even say that this group is

the most difficult one to handle in terms of the time, skills and variety of teaching methods and approaches it will require. In the beginning it is necessary to eradicate the erroneous myths and fantasies of many ordinary citizens about Islamic finance. Even though, public awareness of Russian Muslims about Islamic finance has noticeably improved and yet a number of Muslims quite seriously believe that Islamic banks are obliged to provide them interest free loans or provide financing just because they are Muslims who perform five obligatory prayers. Some others, though not many, believe that Islamic finance means "to get a loan from an Islamic bank and not to be bothered much about returning it" because banks should be more giving to people rather than demanding from them. And yet another group believes that Islamic banks must be more of a charitable organization rather than a pure financial institution.

It is obvious that to overcome such stereotypes with ordinary lectures will be problematic, therefore there is a need for other, more relevant approaches. Perhaps the main platform upon which any proper methodological approach should be built is the following verse of the Quran:

{ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ [النحل:125]}

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction..." (16:125)

There is a famous statement of Ali bin Talib: ⁵حدثوا الناس بما "حدثوا الناس بما" which can be translated as *"speak to people according to their understanding"*. Therefore, even explanation about ba-

⁵ العيني، بدر الدين أبو محمد محمود بن أحمد: *عمدة القاري شرح صحيح البخاري*، دار إحياء التراث العربي - بيروت، ج2، ص204.

sics of Islamic finance should be done professionally and according to their educational and intellectual ability of audience. For example, currently in Russia, the possibility of implementing the project under the code name “Financial Preaching” is being considered⁶⁶. The goal of this pilot project, which at the first stage may be implemented in one of the Muslim states of the North-Caucasus, is to increase the awareness of mosque parishioners about financial products, about the features of financial decision-making and financial risks. To do this, at the end of the weekly Friday prayer, imams of mosques will spend some time (up to 10-15 minutes) reviewing specific financial cases / situations that parishioners face on a daily basis. It is possible that the discussion of financial issues in a familiar environment and with a respected imam will allow us to get rid of financial myths faster and better. We admit that mosque parishioners represent only a certain segment of the society and yet it is one of the ways to increase the awareness of the public of the concerned issues in this area. For any audience, especially for ordinary citizens learning atmosphere i.e. physical environment is very important because it makes audience feel comfortable. And when the ordinary citizens find that they are being treated equally and with respect they tend to trust their psychological environment. It helps them to establish good and trust based relationship with the teachers/imams/instructors and to believe in usefulness of the program. Considering the fact that audience consists of people with various ability to learn, instructors/teachers should be prepared

⁶⁶ *The idea was initiated by Dr. Magomet Yandiev at the department of the Central Bank, which deals with financial literacy.*

accordingly. For example some people remember things they hear because they are good listeners while others remember and memorize things much better if they read. The latter group usually prefers instructions to be written be it in a form of slides with texts or texts and pictures. Therefore, the instructor should know what type of teaching materials to prepare and to make it as interesting and attractive as possible.

Setting objectives for such a group work is indispensable. (Ian Forsyth et al 2014)⁷ provide a detailed discussion on every subtlety of how teachers, lecturers and trainers should organize and prepare their courses in order to achieve desired objectives. We will only emphasize selected points which in authors' opinion might be very useful not only from pure strategic point of view but even from Islamic perspective. Here are some of them accompanied with our comments and brief discussions:

- *"Assisting the learners in the development of critical thinking, decision making and problem solving skills"*. Indeed, when it comes to a certain set of Shariah rules such as prohibition of Riba, gambling, uncertainty etc the learners need to think critically to know why they are prohibited. They need to understand the wisdom and logic behind every prohibition. For that, the teacher himself should be qualified and experienced to explain the hidden obvious as well as negative aspects of the above prohibited elements. In fact, the major focus of such discussion must be concentrated on harmfulness and sinfulness of Riba. The

⁷ Ian Forsyth, Alan Jolliffe, David Stevens: *Preparing a course: practical strategies for teachers, lecturers and trainers*. ISBN 13: 978-0-749-42808-2 (pbk). Second edition, 2014 by Routledge. p 8.
file:///C:/Users/gapur/Downloads/9781135727888_preview.pdf

fact that Riba is the only sin among all other sins mentioned in Quran against which Allah and His Messenger declared a war:

{إِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ...[البقرة: 279]}

“ And if you do not (stop eating from Riba), then be informed of a war [against you] from Allah and His Messenger...2:279”

It is also advisable not to idealize the whole Islamic banking and finance industry. It is relevantly young industry compared with the traditional financial system and that many problems such as sale of debt, insurance for invested capital etc. still remain unsolved.

- *“Promoting discussion between the learners and the teacher, the discussion leader”*. If the instructor intends just to “tell” to his audience then most probably the course content and most of the information might be forgotten. And if the audience sees that you are going to “tell” and then “discuss” the retention rate will be better. However, if the audience, in addition to benefits of “tell” and “discuss” has a chance to “work” with the materials chances for successful retention is even higher. The latter can be achieved through some unsophisticated questionnaires, simple case studies etc.

- *“Increasing motivation of the learners”*. The teacher/instructor should be able to convey the message to the audience in such a way that Islamic finance is not just about rightly doing business and improving a one’s well-being but above all it is a God pleasing act similar to a worshiping. That’s because in Islam avoidance of prohibition is equally rewarded as obedience to the orders.

In addition to all the above stated methods and techniques we can propose special courses on Islamic finance on radio, TV and YouTube channels besides we already

have cases of similar programs⁸. Obviously each of these will have only a certain percentage of success because it is a one way conducting the course and not like in a class where questions and queries can be raised.

3. Training regional leadership and top officials

The training of heads of state bodies, ministries and departments also has its own content specificity. In contrast to the previous group radio, TV and YouTube programs will not help here definitely. There will have to be a very focused, professionally designed program that would suit not only their personal interest to learn about Islamic finance but the economic benefits of it as well. The difficulty with this group is that it is not easy to organize course for them mainly due to lack of time and constantly busy schedule. Besides, these people usually want things to be done fast. Another common characteristic of this group is that they look for the application of some desirable and unique financial instrument or action that would be capable of solving all the problems of the economy at once and at the same time being as understandable as possible to ordinary people. But reality does not accept this and has its own rules. Moreover, it should be noted that the heads of states and top officials are usually extremely undisciplined learners of any courses. They are constantly distracted by solving some very important problems by phone. Perhaps, it may be necessary to legally prohibit officials to use phones at all to avoid being distracted during courses. Such measures, as an experiment, were undertak-

⁸ Dr. Gapur Oziev conducted numerous lectures on various topics in Islamic banking and finance on local "Angusht" Radio of republic of Ingushetia, Russia.

en during the training courses for heads of Russian regions (governors) this summer and showed excellent results.

The last point, in relation to Islamic finance, causes difficulties. Russia is a multi-religious country and the provision of any preferences by the authorities of one of the religions may cause objections from the society or at least to the authorities may face some uncomfortable questions.

This possible circumstance was taken into account by the Russian authorities when they made a principled decision to start exploring the opportunities offered by the Islamic finance industry in 2014, immediately after the first financial and economic sanctions were imposed against the Russian Federation (I underline the word “exploring” of Islamic finances, and not “implementation”). Moreover, they decided to replace the words “Islamic finance” with “partnership finance” as it seemed to them to be a more neutral rather than a pure religious term. However, the time has shown that it was an unsuccessful decision, because when discussing “partner finances,” the authorities appealed specifically to the requirements of Sharia, and not to some abstract provisions of “partner legislation” that does not exist in nature.

The idea of introducing Islamic finance in a multi-religious state, such as Russia, is accompanied by the need to create such a financial and legislative environment that will allow adherents of any traditional denomination to build such a model of financial relations that fits their notions of beauty. Given that the basic requirements and prohibitions of the *Shari'a* in relation to finance are found both in Christianity and in Judaism, it is quite realistic to create such a legislative mechanism. Moreover, at present,

Russia has already developed and is awaiting its time to draft a federal law "On the specifics of non-interest financial activities".

The importance of having professional regional leadership and top officials who fully realize their responsibility not only before the law and citizens but above all before the Creator Himself can be understood from the following Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari;

"كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْأَمِيرُ رَاعٍ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَوَلَدِهِ، فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ"⁹

"Every one of you is a shepherd (guardian) and every one of you is responsible for his flock (people). The leader of people is a guardian (and is responsible for his people), a man is the guardian of his family (and he is responsible for them). A woman is the guardian of her husband's home and his children. So every one of you is a guardian and every one of you is responsible for them".

It is a common factor in many parts of the world that people are reluctant to any changes or even apprehend unnecessary problems. They prefer things to go on as usual without any amendments. In most cases they try to justify the correctness of the existing situation and that changes will or may lead to a problem. Almost similar situation is observed among the high rank government officials of Russia. Majority of them do not believe or accept the fact that financial system can be very efficient and successful through partnership contracts rather than relying

⁹ البخاري، محمد بن إسماعيل أبو عبد الله الجعفي: **صحيح البخاري**، المحقق: محمد زهير بن ناصر الناصر، دار طوق النجاة (مصورة عن السلطانية بإضافة ترقيم محمد فؤاد عبد الباقي، الطبعة الأولى، 1422هـ. ج. 7، ص. 31).

on traditionally established but very controversial interest based financial system (Riba). Accordingly, the correct and professional way of conveying the message to this group of the society about benefits of Islamic finance is very crucial. Instructors and trainers should be carefully chosen among the most experienced and efficient professionals. That's because if these regional leaders – especially the Muslims - and high rank top officials are not convinced about the whole idea then there is little to hope for Islamic finance in the nearest future in Russia.

4. Training of specialists and experts

Finally, the most massive and most significant in the promotion and dissemination of Islamic finance is the training of specialists and middle managers. This group is the most significant compared with other two groups for several reasons. The first reason is that if this group is professionally trained and prepared for the possible challenges in implementing Islamic finance then the successful future of this industry is guaranteed in the eyes of the Russian government. The second reason, ordinary citizens will have more confidence in feasibility of this industry. And finally, it will provide a stable and reliable atmosphere for potential international investors to come.

As for the formation of the curriculum content for this group we can propose two approaches: The first approach: adding the subject of Islamic finance to traditional finance courses. In this case, students receive knowledge about Islamic finance which is based on traditional finance. Accordingly, at the first stage the students may perceive Islamic finance as a kind of artificial distortion of traditional ones. We see the consequences of such training

in practice: copying the practices of traditional banks, amending minimal changes, and then applying them as Islamic one. For example, an Islamic bank offers its mass customers a deposit, the profit distribution rate of which depends on the amount of the deposit: the greater the deposit, the higher the rate. This is normal if the deposit is individual, but if it is massive, then the question arises: why do clients receive different rewards for the same product and at the same risk level? The answer lies in the fact that an Islamic banker thoughtlessly copies the marketing rules of traditional banks and applies them as they are.

Another example is an attempt to come up with an analogue of the deposit insurance system, introducing a third party into the deposit agreement that guarantees the return of the principal amount of the deposit. Next we can mention as an example what is called a special right i.e. purchase of the rented asset at the end of the lease term, it is also called *Al-Ijarah Thumma Al-Bay'* (AITHAB) which is signed and agreed upon by both parties - lessor and lessee - at the conclusion of the Ijara contract. The most extreme and extraordinary case probably is Iran, where the financial sector, being Islamic in name, uses a wide range of exceptions.

Thus, the application of the first approach where teaching Islamic finance leads to the emergence of traditional financiers, who easily adjust Islamic finance norms to the traditional notions of banking products. But the Islamic finance industry needs specialists who will develop both the theory and practice of the real Islamic finance regardless how it works in traditional finance. In other words, it is necessary to teach Islamic finance as the main and inde-

pendent course rather than complementary. And everything else that a financier needs to know about what goes beyond or contradicts with Islamic finance should be provided as additional information. This would be the second but correct approach.

This approach should be linked to the place occupied by Islamic finance in the financial system. The lecturer/instructor should show the presence of four currently relevant forms of organization of financial relations: traditional finance, corporate finance, Islamic finance and digital finance. (See Appendix A). Moreover, it should be emphasized that digital finance can act as a direct competitor of Islamic finance in the countries of the non-Islamic world, attracting the attention bankers and investors.

In addition, the instructor of Islamic finance courses should be ready for the possibility of having an audience without any background or even slight knowledge about theories of Islamic finance, its theoretical laws, formulas and concepts, as it is the case in traditional and corporate finance. By teaching a course on Islamic finance (similar to the one that was conducted in this autumn for employees of the Central Bank of Russia)¹⁰ the instructor explains about Islam, its basic prohibitions, Islamic financial instruments and the specifics of financial institutions (Sharia control). To do the above, it requires spending a lot of time to explain the practice of Islamic finance in certain countries. But for full-fledged training, the priority should be given to mathematical formulas and theoretical concepts rather than focusing on examples from practice although the importance of it is not questionable.

¹⁰ <https://mbschool.ru/seminars/101561> retrieved on 14/11/2018, at 11am.

The Islamic financial model needs, in particular, analogues of the DCF and CAPM models, an analogue of the interbank loan market rate, an Islamic understanding of the dependence of company value on capital structure and capital costs, and so forth. But while this is not there, the instructor should be able to explain to audience that the theoretical component of the Islamic financial model is still in the development stage. The above description, as the reader can notice, is mainly about content of the courses and possibility of having an audience either with little knowledge of Islamic finance or completely ignorant about it. And yet the audience should never be underestimated. There are some important characteristics which instructors should possess prior to conducting any courses on Islamic finance. The instructor should, first of all, establish and maintain "instructor credibility" by demonstrating effective communication and presentation skills. This is relevant to all three above mentioned segments of the society. Mere preparation of the course materials with the learner information is not enough. If this audience – which consists of specialists and experts in finance - finds that the instructor does not professionally respond to their needs for clarification on certain issues the courses will be unsuccessful or even ruined. Instead, the instructor should be capable to provide positive reinforcement and motivational incentives in a very appropriate and smooth way. Above all, the instructors of Islamic finance course should always keep in their mind that in contrast to other instructors of any other course, they bear responsibility not only before the audience but before the Creator Himself because Islamic finance is a part and parcel of religion of Islam. In other words, here we are talking about emphasiz-

ing on professional qualification and occupational competency of the instructors. (Bunk 1994) believes that a person who has occupational competence has the necessary knowledge, skills and ability to perform his job is able to solve his task independently and flexibly and is able to contribute to his professional environment and the organization of work.¹¹ Given the fact that the Russian public is going to take courses on Islamic finance for the first time, it is extremely essential to keep the standards of Islamic finance reputation high and convincing otherwise the whole idea might be jeopardized.

Finally a logical question arises: who will sponsor all those trainings, courses and programs for the above named three groups? The authors believe that the expenses for organizing relevant programs for ordinary citizens should be borne by the business elite who, in their turn, should be given special opportunities and priorities in the future industry of Islamic finance industry of Russia. However, training courses for the regional leaders and top officials should be provided from the budget while bankers, specialists and experts should be sponsored by their respective organizations and institutions.

5. Conclusion

We have come to conclude that the development of the full-fledged and uncompromised Islamic financial indus-

¹¹ G. Bunk, *Teaching Competence in Initial and Continuing Vocational Training in the Federal Republic of Germany*. *Vocational Training European Journal*, Vol. 1 (1994), p9.

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/137/1_en_bunk.pdf

try needs professional specialists who have been originally educated and trained specifically for the Islamic financial model. We also emphasized the fact that each of the group will need a specific approach considering their circumstances.

For training and producing such specialists, a set of carefully designed methodological framework is needed, which will include the theoretical laws, formulas and concepts.

And in order to develop such methodological framework, Islamic scholars should concentrate their effort equally on both the theoretical as well as practical components of Islamic finance.

Last but not least, though there is a real demand from ordinary Russian citizens for educational products in the field of Islamic finance, which, however, at the moment can be satisfied only on the basis of free of charge. The expenses for organizing relevant programs for ordinary citizens should be borne by the business elite who, in their turn, should be given special opportunities and priorities in the future industry of Islamic finance industry of Russia. However, training courses for the regional leaders and top officials should be provided from the budget while bankers, specialists and experts should be sponsored by their respective organizations and institutions.

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5) Gapur Oziev and Magomet Yandiev: *Cryptocurrency form Shariah perspective*. Pp 2-3.

<file:///C:/Users/gapur/Downloads/SSRN-id3101981.pdf>

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Appendix A

Table 1: **Four models of organization of financial relations:**¹²

№	Parameters	Existing Models of Finance			The New finance model:
		Classical Finance	Corporate Finance	Islamic Finance	Digital Finance
1.	Era of establishment	The beginning of the currency emission	Development of financial markets	Economic growth of Islamic countries	1. Independent Internet access 2. Independent currency emission
2.	Single emission center	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
3.	State regulation of financial activities	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
4.	Interest based loans	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
5.	The cost of money over time	Constant	Future money is cheaper	Constant*	Future money is more expensive***

¹² Gapur Oziev and Magomet Yandiev: *Cryptocurrency form Shariah perspective*. Pp 2-3. <file:///C:/Users/gapur/Downloads/SSRN-id3101981.pdf>

6.	The objective of doing business	Profit maximization	Maximizing the cost of capital	Achieving prosperity in both worlds**	Maximizing personal freedom of action***
7.	Criteria for business efficiency	Income exceeding expenditure	profits exceeding expenses for servicing capital	Excess of incomes over expenditures taking into account religious restrictions	Steady growth in clients***

* From theoretical point of view, it is constant, but since Islamic finance does not have its own (Islamic) currency and is based on conventional / traditional currency, the value of money over time can be unstable, for example, "future money could be cheaper than the money at hand" as is the case in corporate finance.

**This unscientific formulation implies the desire of Muslim businessmen to maximize their family and social wealth by observing strict religious rules and regulations.

***Presumption of the authors

MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN LATE TSARIST RUSSIA



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Abstract

Education to a certain extent reflects the general civilizational patterns, but the regional society develops its own peculiarities of the forms of implementation of the general patterns. The importance of education in the development of the spiritual life of the community and its involvement in the global process cannot be underestimated. The study of the history of the formation of Russian-Muslim pedagogical relations makes it possible to follow at all stages of development the process of spiritual growth of regional society, determine the patterns of this growth, change of forms and content of education, incorporating the logic of vital activity of the community, evaluate the possibility of applying past experience in modern society. The study explores the development of educational relationship between Russian and Muslim community in late 19 early 20 centuries with special focus on the Northern Black Sea region and the Caucasus.

Keywords: education, Russian educational system, Caucasus, medrese, traditional education.

EDUCATIONAL REFORMS PROPOSED
BY MŪSĀ JĀRULLĀH BIGIEV (1875-1949)
AND THEIR APPLICATION TO MODERN
ISLAMIC EDUCATION



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Abstract

The paper discusses Mūsā Jārullāh Bigiev (1875-1949), his experience with and ideas about education in the Muslim world, as well as a brief proposal on application of Bigiev's thought in the contemporary Islamic educational sphere. As Bigiev was a staunch critic of the Islamic education existing throughout the Muslim world in the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries and yet, being a highly educated Muslim intellectual, he was never satisfied with knowledge obtained in the madrasahs of his era. To gain as much knowledge as he did, he travelled throughout the Muslim world, attended various madrasahs and universities, sat with distinguished sheikhs, studied in secular educational institutions, learned languages and applied all of that in his writings and political activism. The paper will peruse Bigiev's biography and works to construct a vision of an educational system that is very much needed in the Muslim world. Specifically, it will be argued that his upbringing and integrated approach to studies are what really make his personality and ideas stand apart and should be applied in our today's circumstances. Additionally, Bigiev's ideas on Islamic educational reform will be proposed for the modern context.

Educational Reforms Proposed by Mūsā Jārullāh Bigiev (1875-1949) and Their Application to Modern Islamic Education

1. Introduction

Education, including Islamic, is not static. Ideas are being exchanged all the time at intergenerational level, at international level within one generation, and at national level within a given state or country. Debates at national level usually happens at all levels of society because everyone is affected. In countries with less corruption and good democratic governance, debates result in better and more progressive education for all citizens. At international level, there is a great deal of comparison between the educational systems of countries, which result in educational reforms in a country with an inferior system. At intergenerational level, we tend to study, among others, the legacy of various scholars, their views on educational matters and the context, at which their views were formed.

It would make sense to ask why, in this day and age of technological advancement, do we need to study the legacy of some scholar who lived probably many decades or hundreds of years ago? Can their views be still relevant? What makes their ideas so influential as to warrant a study many generations after their passing?

This paper will try to partially answer the questions above with regards to ideas of a famous Tatar Muslim scholar, Musa Jarullah Bigiev, who travelled much to gain knowledge and transmit it to others; who had to flee the persecution in Soviet Union and died in exile at the age of

seventy four. He produced books and articles, printed newspapers, worked as an imam and teacher, organized and actively participated in Russian Muslim congresses, was one of the founders of a Muslim political party, got arrested several times in Russia and abroad, travelled to the Far East and South-East Asia to spread the message of Islam.

Jarullah's great legacy has only recently started to be uncovered. Several books have been written about him in Russian, Tatar, Turkish and English. Some of his books have been translated and re-printed. Conferences were held where modern scholars were engaged in re-discovery of Musa Jarullah Bigiev's great intellectual heritage.

This paper is organized as follows. The next section is going to briefly present Jarullah's biography, which will set stage for the following section dealing with his ideas on Islamic education. Lastly, before conclusion, the paper is going to discuss some of the ways those ideas could be (and are already being) implemented in the context of integration of knowledge.

2. Partial Biographical sketch of the scholar

Mūsā Jārullāh Bigiev was born in 1875 in the town of Novocherkassk, near Rostov-on-Don. His parents were originally from the village of Kikino, Penza province (about 700 km north of Rostov). His father, Yarullah, had received the primary religious education at the village madrasah and after moving to the city, served as an imam of a local mosque. Sadly, Yarullah died when Musa was just six years old. Musa's mother, Fatimah, was his and brother's (named Zahir) first religious teacher at home. She wanted her children to become religious scholars. Consequently, after studying

at a technical lyceum in Rostov-on-Don, Musa was sent to Kazan's well-known Külbuye (Apanay) madrasah, and later to Bohchisaray madrasah in Crimea.

Upon his return to Rostov in 1890, Musa Jarullah completed the Real Technical lyceum, after which he again set out to increase his Islamic knowledge, this time in Bukhara and Samarqand (Akhmetova, 2007, pp.24-25). According to El-Idrisi (1987, p.241), he disliked the educational system encountered in Central Asia, whereby he claimed that Bukhara graduates, after decades of studying at the madrasah, were ignorant of basic knowledge about Shari'ah. In the meantime, however, he took private lessons on philosophy, mathematics and astronomy. During the years in Central Asia, Musa learned the heritage of Euclid, Pythagoras, Archimedes, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and Bacon (El-Idrisi, 1987, pp.241-242).

Upon his return to Russia in 1896, Musa Jarullah wanted to enroll into the Emperor's university in St. Petersburg to study law, but because he did not know the Latin language, he was not accepted (Khairutdinov, Vvedenie, 2005). Then he decided to go to Istanbul and study at the Military-engineering college Kyuleli (Khairutdinov, 2018). There he met Musa Akyegetzade, a Tatar poet and writer, who advised Jarullah to continue his religious education instead of engineering. Musa Jarullah took that advice to heart, quit the military college and began his great journey in search of knowledge. He studied in Istanbul, then left for the Middle East. According to Khairutdinov (2005), Musa Jarullah travelled to Egypt on land through the Levant, and studied for a while at Al-Azhar, which he also disliked. So, he took private classes on fiqh, hadith and literature (Jarullah, 1907, p.2). Akhmetova (2007, p.25) argues that in

Egypt Jarullah did not enroll at Al-Azhar but studied “under Shaykh Muhammad Bakhit Al-Muti’i (d.1935), one of the most influential scholars of the country, a student and follower of Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani (1838-1897) and a close friend of Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905).” While in Egypt, Musa Jarullah also researched the history of the Qur’anic studies at the National Library (Akhmetova, 2007, p.25).

Thereafter, Jarullah left for Makkah to perform hajj and stayed there for another two years to study the Qur’an and the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Later, he travelled to India, where he studied Sanskrit for about a year. After that he returned to Egypt to continue the research at National Library for another three years. From there, Jarullah went to Beirut and Damascus to meet Muslim scholars and teachers.

Finally, after years of studying and researching abroad, Musa Jarullah returned back to Rostov-on-Don in 1904. A year later “he married Asma Aliye Khanim, a daughter of Shaykh Zakir Efende, who was an imam and religious teacher in a small town called Chistay” (Akhmetova, 2008, p.26).

However, marriage did not stop him from continuing his quest for knowledge and from being an active member of the society. Evidently, Russia was experiencing a lot of political reforms and upheavals during 1904-1905. Hence, Jarullah decides to come to St. Petersburg and study law at the same university he couldn’t get into earlier. Due to the existing political situation in the city, Jarullah joins the political movement of Muslims. Such a movement became possible due to the 1905 revolution and the subsequent, albeit temporary, relaxation of the essential freedoms, such

as freedom of the press, political activity and religious practice. It was during these years, before the October revolution of 1917, he wrote extensively on religious, educational, political, social and moral issues. Besides, he took an active part in organizing the Russian Muslim conferences that sought to unite the Russian Muslims and to come up with solutions to important social, educational and political problems.

However, Musa Jarullah's political activism was not his main goal and purpose. Moreover, the freedoms the Russian population enjoyed after 1905 were shortlived and censorship had returned two years later. Also, we can see the same kind of temporary political freedoms and activism after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.

Nevertheless, Musa Jarullah was first and foremost a scholar, who dedicated his life to research and writing on highly important topics for contemporary Muslims. Hence, in the next section I will outline his ideas on Islamic education.

3. Mūsā Jārullāh Bigiev's Ideas on Islamic education

During the formative years of his life, Musa Jarullah had travelled the Muslims world in search of knowledge. Though he was equally interested in secular sciences, such as law and engineering, his final choice was the Islamic sciences. His areas of expertise, as evident from his writings, were the sciences of the Qur'an and Hadith, *fiqh* and Islamic history.

Musa Jarullah (1907, p.2) writes:

Seeds of love for religious sciences were planted into my heart by the hands of the Almighty; after wasting ten years in religious schools of Qazan and Mawarennahr, I departed

to Muslim countries full of hopes. I used to travel in Islamic territories like Turkey, Egypt, Hijaz, India, and Sham for nearly five years; and was staying at religious madrasahs of those countries for either short or long periods. I have seen every famous religious school of those lands. But, unfortunately, the thing I was able to find the least in the 'great religious madrasahs' was religious education.

Jarullah's hunger for knowledge could not be satiated at madrasahs. Instead, he gained much knowledge through private classes and personal research and translation efforts. He realized that the contemporary Islamic education had been experiencing stagnation and, consequently, negatively affecting "the Muslim society by imprisoning the will and thought" (Akhmetova, 2010, p.20). So, when he came back to Russia, along with political activism, he began to write textbooks and translate important but forgotten works of earlier scholars. In his opinion, the main problem of the existing education system was wrong textbooks that "did not train students to think and apply their knowledge into practice" (Akhmetova, 2007, p.28).

Musa Jarullah publishes his first work, *Tarikh al-Qur'an wa al-Masahif* (The History of the Qur'an and the Manuscripts) in 1905 in Kazan. This work was written in Arabic and was meant to serve as a textbook for sciences of the Qur'an. *Al-Manar* journal in Cairo reprinted the book in 1907.

Jarullah also wrote textbooks on the subject of *fiqh* as well. The scholar mentions that he wrote a comment to *Bulugh Al-Maram min Adillati Al-Ahkam* (by Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani) entitled *Ifadat Al-Kiram fi Sharh Ahadith Bulugh Al-Maram* (Jarullah, Al-Luzumiyat, 1907, p.3). *Al-Luzumiyat*, being the Tatar translation of Abu Al-A'la Al-Ma'arri's

(d.1058) poems, was published in Kazan in 1907. In the same year, he published the translation and a commentary to Al-Shatibi's (d.790AH) *Al-Muwafaqat fi Al-Usul*. This great book contains Jarullah's introduction to *Usul Al-Fiqh*, which itself was published in 1909 as an independent book. In the year 1910 he published another important book on *fiqh*: *Qawa'id Fiqhiya*, which comprised the translation of the Ottoman *Mejelle Ahkam Al-'Adliya* which comprised over 200 rulings (Jarullah, *Qawa'id Fiqhiya*, 1910).

Another important work of Jarullah's entitled *Adabiyat 'Arabiya ile 'Ulum Islamiya* (Arabic Literature and Islamic Studies) was published in 1908 in Kazan. In this book, he again harshly criticized the educational system of the Muslim world. He wrote: "...in 'religious madrasahs' we convert Muslim children into complete disbelievers..." (Jarullah, *Adabiyat 'Arabiya ile 'Ulum Islamiya*, 1908, p.3).

Jarullah continues to write and publish books. In 1909 he had published another significant work dedicated to pointing out and amending typographical mistakes in the Qur'an published in Kazan (Jarullah, *Tashih Rasm Khatt Qur'an*, 1909).

In the same year Musa Jarullah accepted a teaching position in the famous *Husainiya* madrasa in Orenburg, where another famous Tatar scholar – Rizaeddin Fakhreddin – was teaching *hadith*. In the madrasa Jarullah taught history of religions, history of Arabic language and literature, *fiqh* and psychology (Akhmetova, 2010, p.23). Hence, it is evident that this scholar had a diverse range of expertise and was able to write on and teach various subjects.

Nevertheless, Jarullah's only paid job was not to last long. Using Ibn Arabi's (d.1240), Al-Ma'arri's and Al-

Jawzīyah's ideas, he began propagating the ideas of universality of God's mercy among his students at the madrasah. Jarullah "declared that all religions belong to Allah, and all people, regardless of their religion, will be eventually forgiven by Allah. As a result, punishment of the hellfire as depicted in the Qur'ān, as the hell itself, are not eternal" (Akhmetova, 2010, p.23). The ideas sent shock-waves within the Tatar Muslim community. So, he was expelled from the mad-rasa and left Orenburg (Akhmetova, 2010, p.23).

After that Musa Jarullah continued writing and publishing. According to El-Idrisi (1987, p.243), by 1914 Jarullah had published more than twenty five books and dozens of articles. After leaving Orenburg he wrote two books on God's mercy: *Rahmat Ilahiye Burhannari* (Proofs of the God's Mercy) and *Insannarning 'Aqidah Ilahiyatlarena Ber Nicha Nazar* (A Glimpse at the People's Belief in God). After that he sent another shockwave through the Muslim world by publishing a book titled *Ozin Konnarda Ruza: Ijtihad Kitabi* (Fasting During Long Days: A Book of Ijtihad). In this book he argued, after visiting Finland in 1910, that Muslims, living in northern territories with long summer days and nights don't get dark, don't have to fast but must pay *fidya* (ransom) as an expiation. Consequently, his last three books were banned in the Ottoman empire by *Shaikh Al-Islam* Mustafa Sabri. Nevertheless, Jarullah's popularity did not diminish.

Jarullah continued his highly productive life. In 1914 he published four books, two of which were dealing with contemporary *fiqh* issues (cremating the dead and eating horse meat and seafood) and other two were book reviews. Then

in 1916 Musa published an extremely important work entitled *Zakat*, in which he wrote about the economic issues as “how to utilize modern banking system, loans, understanding of *riba*, and social matters like polygamy, *mut’ah* marriage, etc” (Akhmetova, 2007, p.38). This book marked the beginning of Jarullah’s actively advocating rights of women to participate in public life and to have equal rights with men. Thanks to Musa Jarullah’s untiring efforts to bring women into the political and social life, a Tatar woman named Muhlis Bubi was elected *qadiyah*, and one fifth of one thousand representatives to the *All Russian Muslim Congress* held in Moscow in May 1917 were women. This was also when Russian Muslim women had obtained voting rights.

The issues brought up above have a significant bearing on educational ideas of Musa Jarullah. First of all, one can see how diverse his scholarship was and that he touched upon many different fields. He not just studied and regurgitated the classical *fiqh*, but actively used it to solve contemporary problems. So, his books encouraged Muslim Tatars, Turks and Arabic speakers to apply the vast Islamic heritage and use critical thinking in reforming themselves. Hence, it should again be emphasized that Jarullah’s main purpose was to effect reform in the Muslim mind, especially through educational reform which was advanced by writing textbooks, applicable to current issues and challenges.

Another extremely important book that has sections on educational reform is the book published in 1923 in Berlin, entitled *Islam Milletlerine* (To Muslim Nations). Actually, the book was written three years earlier in Petrograd (St.

Petersburg) and was known as *Islam'in Alifbasi* (*The Alphabet of Islam*), which was written as a response to Nikolay Bukharin's *The Alphabet of Communism* (*Azbuka Kommunizma*) written in 1919. Jarullah dedicated this book to the Turkish soldiers who fought in the Gallipolli campaign (known as *Çanakkale Savaşı*) and orphans of that war. *Islam Milletlerine* is written in the form of a program for the reform of Muslim nations and institutions, including education. Akhmetova (2010, p.27) writes:

The work of Jārullāh was read in the Congress of Muslim 'ulamā' at Ufa, 16-20 October, 1920, and its copies were sent to Turkistan, Kashgar, Afghanistan and Turkey. *The Alphabet of Islam* includes 236 articles under the following themes: 'General Regulations', 'Regulations Concerning Important Modern Needs', 'On the Unity of Muslims', 'The Issue of Caliphate', 'Regulations on War Time', 'Bases of Islamic Diplomacy', 'Rights of Women', *et cetera*.

The education section of the book begins with the acknowledgement that the recent World War had uncovered all human flaws and sins, while the Muslims' main flaw was the "absence of sciences, industry, schools, economy, and the general poverty and weakness" (Jarullah, *Islam Millatlarena*, 1923, p.46). To counter the existing problems, Jarullah suggests to send Muslim children to secular educational institutions in order to prepare them for the real world challenges. He decries absence of Muslims capable of leadership positions, absence of brave scholars and other active individuals. Jarullah emphasizes on the necessity of producing Muslim individuals, capable of independent reasoning.

Further, Musa Jarullah opines that Muslims have two main needs: (1) the need for all sciences, disciplines,

industries and technologies of the secular West; (2) the need for Islamic sciences and adab (Ibid., p.48). The first need, writes Jarullah, can be fulfilled by attending the mainstream schools and universities. However, these institutions lack Islamic moral norms and are, therefore, dangerous for the Muslim youth. He further proposes to actively engage in *ijtihad*, so that Muslims can rely on their own scholars for the whole spectrum of Islamic sciences and disciplines (Ibid., article 51). To tackle the need for modern sciences and the problems of *adab*, Jarullah proposes to set up a council of Muslim scholars, which would be able to find solutions and assist the youth in obtaining the secular technical and social science education while preparing them for an active economic, social and political life (Ibid., pp48-49).

As education requires big money, Jarullah proposes to set up a special fund that would take care of the education needs of all Muslim children, including the need to pursue studies at secular institutions. In his opinion, education must be free and obligatory (Ibid., article 57, p.51). He takes the issue of funds for education very seriously and writes that money must be collected from all legitimate sources possible, such as awqaf, 'ushr, sadaqa, zakat, other taxes, gifts from newly-weds and gifts upon registration of newborns, other voluntary contributions by individuals and organizations. According to the scholar (Ibid., article 58), financing of education is the foremost priority of the nation and the most noble one.

Even though Jarullah wrote many important books after the October revolution of 1917 while remaining in the Soviet Russia, and after exile in 1930, one book stands out with regards to Islamic education. While in India, Musa wrote a

rather small book entitled *Nizam Al-Jami'ah Al-Islamiyah Al-'Ilmiyah* (Structure of the Islamic Science University), published in Bombay in 1946, three years before his death. The book is in Arabic and touches upon the idea and curriculum of an Islamic university. He starts the book by criticizing the *Sharī'ah* courts and the religious schools as ineffective and unable to find solutions to contemporary problems. When writing about the curriculum of a proposed Islamic Science University, Jarullah starts off by emphasizing on the study of the Arabic language and literature as the foundation of all subsequent studies of religious sciences because language is the foundation of all understanding. Then he further advocates the study of *adab* (civility and manners). Then he proposes the subjects of hadith, the meanings of the Qur'an and its *tafsīr*, then '*aqīdah* of *Imam al-Taḥāwī* and suggests specific reading materials for each subject. He also emphasizes on the study of philosophy of jurisprudence. Then Jarullah suggests to study astronomy and says that every Muslim scholar must study astronomy so to be able to explain the Qur'anic verses about the sky and the stars. Another field of study advocated by Jarullah in his book is the study of the Persian language and the great works of philosophy, *tasawwuf* and *adab* written in Persian. He also proposes the study of the secular sciences, such as natural sciences and mathematics. Lastly, he proposes for Muslim scholars to study sciences of the ancient times as well as modern ones, this is especially because the Qur'ān contains a lot of verses about the ancient world and what is applicable in modern times. In this regard, he proposes to study books by Al-Razi, by Al-Qarafi, by Al-Alusi, and by Imam Al-Hindi (Jarullah, *Al-Jami'ah Al-Islamiyah Al-'Ilmiyah*, 1946).

To conclude this section, we can briefly re-state the main ideas of Musa Jarullah Bigiev in the area of Islamic education.

1. Jarullah's main purpose of the writing and teaching activity was to free the Muslim mind and enable it to think independently and use critical thinking to solve modern problems.

2. His approach to advancing this idea was by publishing textbooks, relevant to contemporary times.

3. His political activism also reflects the ideas of equality, freedom of expression and desire for all types of beneficial knowledge, including secular.

4. Emphasis on *adab* (civility and good manners) as part of the overall educational system.

5. Financing of education is the most noble obligation of the society, and the community must support its educational institutions financially.

6. Jarullah's diverse interests and areas of expertise show the multi-disciplinary nature of his scholarship.

7. Advocating modern Islamic educational institutions to study religious (old and contemporary) sciences, secular (natural and social) sciences and mathematics, as well as the heritage of ancient civilizations.

In the next section, the paper will illustrate the utilization of Jarullah's ideas in contemporary settings. The following suggestions are not specific to any country but carry a general character. The ideas are relevant to all areas where Muslims live, either in minority or majority.

4. Application in contemporary settings

The complexity of today's world makes it impossible to develop and sustain a civilization based on old and outdated knowledge. Despite the saying "every novelty is a well forgotten oldy," education must move in the same pace as the world around. Too many scholars have written about the backwardness of Islamic education and the necessity of reform. Early on, the founders of the Islamic reformism movement of the 20th century have identified education as the main source of the Muslims' backwardness. Musa Jarullah Bigiev was one of the many Muslim intellectuals, who strongly advocated for changes in the modern Islamic education to make and keep it relevant.

To apply Jarullah's ideas on Islamic education to contemporary settings, one would have to admit the necessity of textbooks, relevant to modern times. IIUM and IIIT are spearheading the drive to produce textbooks in various fields of knowledge, both Islamic and secular. The two-readings approach proposed by Al-Alwani is the basis for integration of knowledge and a methodology used to produce relevant contemporary materials.

Both, IIIT and IIUM, are institutions established for the purpose of educational reform and integration of knowledge. Recently, these two institutions have embarked on a mission to produce textbooks for existing courses at Islamic universities. To date, ten textbooks have already been published, and forty more are being prepared.

The idea of integration of knowledge, according to Al-Alwani (2005, p.32), refers to the combination of the revealed and the existential. However, this approach requires the educator to be open-minded and seek points of conver-

gence with different disciplines. Hence, the Muslim researchers, lecturers, writers and students should make efforts to read a lot, especially in areas other than one's own specialization. As illustrated above, Musa Jarullah wrote about and taught subjects as diverse as history, *fiqh*, psychology, law, economics, literature and language. He was able to achieve a high degree of influence not only due to his active nature and a keen mind, but also due to interest in a wide range of topics.

Another idea of Jarullah's is the necessity of knowing languages. To understand and be academically proficient in the Islamic sciences, Musa was strongly advocating the study of Arabic and Persian as much of the scientific heritage was written in these two languages. Today, sadly, many students do not master the languages but graduate with only superficial knowledge that let's them pass. Many are unable to express their thoughts freely, especially in writing, and are deficient in critical thinking skills. Language is the basis of understanding; therefore, students have to be proficient in the language they choose to further their study.

Despite his position on obtaining knowledge from secular institutions, Jarullah was acutely aware of the dangers of an environment devoid of Qur'anic ethics. That is the reason he always emphasized on *adab* in his writings. The beginning of the 20th century was the time of revolutions and active propagation of new ideas, which seemed quite advanced compared with the old religious dogma. So, the youth naturally gravitated towards revolutionary ideas and so the loss of traditional ethics and manners was a natural progression. As we now know, those revolutions (not only in Russia, but starting from the French revolution of

1789) destroyed societies, traditions, relations and, eventually, millions of lives. Today, hundred years after those events, we see the world being agitated. Our modern problems are not too much different from those one century ago. Hence, ethics today must be re-emphasized in education and government policies.

As for financing of education, Jarullah proposes the community to take care of it. Independent Muslim nations today have budget allocations that are education friendly. For example, Malaysia allocated RM60.2billion (19.1% of the total budget) for 2019; Turkey allocated USD208billion (22% of the budget) in 2018. Likewise, Indonesian education budget for 2018 amounts to 20% of the total allocations. While Pakistan's 2018 education budget allocation was only about 2.2%, Russian allocation for 2019 is about 4% of the total planned expenditures, Kazakhstan's – about 5%. These figures show the degree of importance various countries give to education.

Traditionally, in the Muslim world educational institutions had been financed through endowment funds (*awqaf*). In the modern settings, many universities in countries with Muslim majority also have such funds. Turkey is quite exemplary in that sense. According to Dzuljastri et.al. (2016), there were 75 universities supported by a waqf out of a total of 195 universities in 2016. Similar funds have been established in Malaysia and Indonesia (Dzuljastri, Che Embi, Che Mohd Salleh, & Fakhrunnas, 2016). Hence, there are many different ways Islamic educational institutions or Muslim students can access financing. Some are government based, while others are private. Some universities use their facilities to generate income for the waqf funds they might have.

With regards to Jarullah's idea about having Islamic scientific universities, Muslims have been able to establish such universities in many parts of the Muslim world. Some are successful, some are not. I would argue that IIUM is an example of a successful Islamic university that is able to teach Islamic sciences, social sciences and natural sciences, including medicine. Many IIUM graduates are holding influential positions in business, government and education throughout the world.

To conclude, Musa Jarullah was profoundly impacted by the formative years when he travelled the Muslim world in search of knowledge. In those journeys he became dissatisfied with the formal Islamic education but managed to learn and become a true scholar of Islam by studying with famous teachers of his time and doing research. As Jarullah disliked the formal Islamic educational system and the learning materials, upon return to Russia he set out to write textbooks, relevant to contemporary times, and reform the system itself through his writings and active political involvement.

Musa Jarullah's ideas are quite relevant even today, because some of the problems he faced during his studies still persist. For example, inadequate learning materials and curricula make students unable to understand and apply the Islamic sciences. This is evidenced by low levels of literacy in some Muslim countries, high levels of corruption and extremism.

5. Conclusion

The intellectual legacy of Musa Jarullah Bigiev is very wide and covers many aspects of Islamic sciences and Muslims' lives. He had mastered the sciences of the Qur'an,

hadith, *fiqh*, *usul al-fiqh*, and history. He was a true polymath and polyglot. An active participant in the political sphere, a journalist, teacher, publisher, researcher and writer.

On the Islamic educational front, he disliked the formal education of the madrasah system of his time and, upon return from his educational journey in 1904, set out to reform whatever he could through his activity. So, he wrote textbooks and articles that were relevant to his time.

His ideas on Islamic education could be summed up as follows:

- Purpose of education: freeing mind from captivity and enabling critical thinking.
- Curricula: must be multi-disciplinary with emphasis on ethics and languages.
- Teaching materials: textbooks relevant to contemporary times.
- Nature of financial support: by community via waqf, charity, zakat, gifts, etc.

Application of Jarullah's ideas can be mainly done in the form of:

- modern study materials and methods;
- emphasis on collaboration between sciences;
- reforming the curricula to make education relevant;
- include study of applied ethics in all relevant subjects and levels of education, and
- to seek alternative methods of financing.

Lastly, the paper briefly illustrated just one small aspect of Bigiev's heritage. His life and writings have been studied for about twenty years, but there is still more to learn about this scholar and his legacy.

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SOME ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN AZERBAIJAN BEFORE THE OCTOBER COUP OF 1917 AND DURING THE ADR* PERIOD (1918-1920)



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The main aspects of religious education in Northern Azerbaijan in the designated period must be considered in the context of the general religious situation that has developed since its accession to the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 19th century. As a result of the Russian – Iranian wars of 1804 – 1813-s and 1826 – 1828-s, the Azerbaijani country and people were forever divided into two parts by the border, which was drawn along the Araz River. The Muslim clergy of the part of Azerbaijan conquered by Russia (Northern Azerbaijan) fell under the full control of the imperial authorities. From that very moment on, the entire religious policy in this region turns out to be aimed at the violent reorientation of the local population in the pro-Russian direction. The Tsarist authorities even considered such absurd variants as an attempt to Christianize the Muslim regions of the South Caucasus. However, the developers of this idea, initially understanding the impos-

* The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic also known as Azerbaijan People's Republic in diplomatic documents of the period is first secular parliamentary state in the Islamic world.

sibility of implementing such an enterprise, simultaneously suggested creating the supreme organization of the Muslim clergy obedient to imperial power¹. Naturally, the centuries-old factor of Islamic spiritual and socio-religious consciousness is a stumbling block in this matter. For this reason, throughout the 19th century, religious education in the region developed rather weakly. However, domestic scientists proved that before the October Coup the education of the Muslims of the South Caucasus was in the hands of the Muslim clergy. The names of many Islamic *sheikhs*, scholars, theologians and *mudarris*, who lived and worked in Shemakha, Shusha, Gakh, Zagatala, Sheki, Oguz, Akhsu as well as in the western regions of Azerbaijan (particularly, the Erivan Governorate) and other places at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and played a huge role in the development of culture and education in Azerbaijan, as evidenced by the huge number of monuments and epigraphic data and historical and archival materials². *Madrasahs* and *mekteb* schools functioned at

¹ Already in 1823, the tsarist authorities officially established the post of SheikhuIslam of the Caucasus to which has been appointed Tiflis *Akhund*, Muhammad Ali, Azerbaijani by origin.

² For details see: (6) Kuliyeva V.A. The role and position of the Muslim clergy in the socio-political and cultural life of Azerbaijan in the 19th – early 20th centuries from the perspective of the Armenian-Azerbaijani political relations. Ed. M.S.Neimat; Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of ANAS. Baku: Nurlan, 2003. - 371 p. (In Russian). // Роль и позиция мусульманского духовенства в социально-политической и культурной жизни Азербайджана в XIX – начале XX вв. в ракурсе армяно-азербайджанских политических отношений / Кулиева В.А.; ред. Неймат М.С.; Институт Археологии и Этнографии НАНА. - Баку: Нурлан, 2003. - 371 с.

mosques at the expense of *Awqaf*, incomes and donations (*zakat*) of local residents, in the houses of *mudarris* teachers, and premises specially leased for study. Mullahs taught in *mektebs*, *mudarrisas* and *akhunds* taught in *madrasahs*. The tsarist government did not finance these schools but controlled the process of distributing funds from *waqfs*. By the 60s of the 19th century in Northern Azerbaijan, there were 299 schools and *madrasahs* (262 in villages, 37 in cities), only in the Shemakha Governorate alone 4,700 students were studying, and by the end of the century there were 500 to 700 schools and *madrasahs*. The periods of study were divided into two stages: primary (from 6-8 years old) and higher (from 10 to 15 years old) education. By the 80s of the 19th century there were already over 500 *mektebs* in Azerbaijan, where about 7000 children simultaneously studied (3, 616-617).

It should be noted that by the beginning of the 80s of the 19th century, in Northern Azerbaijan, in general, there were three types of primary and secondary educational institutions: 1) *mektebs* (primary school) traditional for Muslim peoples and *madrasahs* (secondary educational institutions); 2) Muslim schools are elementary schools, where children of wealthy Azerbaijanis in the Azerbaijani language studied some secular general education subjects, as well as Russian language. At the same time, the word "Muslim" did not reflect the religious orientation of studies, but the confessional affiliation of students; 3) state primary and secondary educational institutions, modeled on the all-Russian (including the women's gymnasium in Baku) and intended, first of all, for the children of Russian officers and civil administration representatives. The number of Azerbaijanis in them did not exceed 15%. As

the researchers note, these education systems existed in parallel, which did not exclude their mutual influence on each other. However, at the same time, there was a rather sharp competition for students between secular and religious Islamic forms of education. The main purpose of Islamic schools was the religious education of students, rather than providing them with primary education. In a number of *mektebs* literacy took place and even the basics of some other subjects (for example, the Persian language) were taught. However, this education played a secondary role in relation to Islamic education. This was the exact reason for the entire educational system, which was established in *mektebs* (7).

Contrary to the prevailing view of the allegedly reactionary and non-modern nature of traditional educational institutions, the backwardness of teaching methods, the obstacles they create in the way of the spread of education, the quality of education in *mektebs* and *madrasahs* was not that low for that period. The famous statement of the inspector of schools of the Kazan school district, the largest Russian turkologist V.Radlov is well-known: "*Shakirds* (students of Muslim educational institutions) are mentally much higher than our parish teachers". The traditional curriculum of the *madrasah* included Muslim law (*fikh*), Islamic scholasticism (*kalam*), Quranic disciplines, *Hadithology*, Arabic, logic. Additionally, they could study arithmetic, medicine, astronomy, rhetorics, dialectics (this was the name of the ancient Greek philosophy associated with the study of the Quran); an important place was given to Eastern classical literature, including Azerbaijani. The positive aspects of traditional education can be listed: the study of the works of the classics of the Muslim East,

mainly Persian literature, the assimilation of Arabic and Persian languages, basic knowledge from various secular sciences. Many students knew by heart the works of Rudaki, Ferdowsi, Nizami, Jami, Hafiz, Saadi. There were also such *mektebs* (for example, the school of Mirza Rza, a close friend of the prominent Azerbaijani poet and educator Seyid Azim Shirvani, in Shemakha), in which besides languages much attention was paid to history, arithmetic, penmanship, calligraphy (11, 109-110).

However, the local traditional religious education had its weak points. So, training in *mektebs* and *madrasahs* had no unified character. In *mektebs*, mainly Sharia, reading, writing, Persian (and sometimes Arabic) language, history of mainly Iran, were taught. The training was conducted on the basis of the visual memorization of the word-writing and the mechanical memorization of the Quran, which was an extremely inefficient method. According to eyewitnesses, "the habit of purely mechanical reading is rooted so much that, having often read the simplest statement in its own language, a student in *mekteb* is completely unable to retell the content of the read material." The training was paid and was individual. Duration of study was uncertain. There was no such thing as a school season, there was also no timetable for lessons, and the division into classes was not practiced. Reception continued throughout the year. Pupils, as a rule, came by 8 o'clock in the morning and studied until 2-3 o'clock in the afternoon. Age characteristics of students were not taken into account. In *mektebs*, the age range was from 7-8 to 16, and in *madrasah* – from 15-16 to 30 years. As a result, along with seven-year-old children, 15-16-year-old boys were trained. Also, the main disadvantages of *madrasahs* and

mektebs were teaching in a non-native language, outdated, inadequate with the requirements of the time and historical setting, unchanged from the Middle Ages curriculum. Many schools eked out a miserable existence. M.Shakhtakhtinsky³ in the article "School life among Muslims" wrote that the financial situation of mullah teachers forced them to engage not only in pedagogical activities, since their earnings in school did not allow them to support their family. The authorities were wary of *mektebs* and *madrasahs*, although for a long time they did not interfere in their activities. In the last third of the 19th century, there is observed a desire to strengthen the supervision of these educational institutions. In 1870, the government enacted the Law and Regulations on religious institutions, *mektebs* and *madrasahs*. The Minister of Education, D. Tolstoy, with the aim of reducing the political and religious-ideological influence of the Ottoman Empire and partly Iran, in particular, introduced the teaching of the Russian language and arithmetic in *mektebs* and *madrasahs*. At the same time, the teachers were paid not at the expense of the treasury, but assigned to the population. In 1874, the government approved a new "Regulation on the Administration of the Transcaucasian Muslim Clergy", according to which the *mektebs* and *madrasahs* were removed from the formal subordination of the directorate of public schools,

³ Muhammad agha Muhammad Taghi Sultan oglu Shakhtakhtinsky (Azerbaijani: Məmməd ağa Şahtaxtinski) (1846-1931) was a prominent Azerbaijani journalist, educator, orientalist, linguist, teacher and public figure, full member of the International Phonetic Society (1899), member of the International Asian Society (1900), member of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society (1903).

and the supervision over these schools was assigned to inspectors of public schools (Ibid). According to this provision, all revenues from *waqfs* were concentrated in the hands of the state, and it was only after the special permission of the Governor that funds from *waqfs* were allocated for these or other needs. Thus, at the end of the 19th century, the Muslim clergy was deprived of financial strength and past political power. *Mektebs* and *madrasahs* were opened partially at the expense of *waqfs*, and partly, with donations from local residents. Shia and Sunni schools were subordinate, respectively, each to its own Spiritual Board, and existed separately from each other. All these factors explain the deficiencies of religious education in the specified period.

Despite this, by the end of the 19th century *mektebs* continued to hold the leading position. In the Baku province by the end of the 19th century there were 245 *mektebs* in which 4915 students were studying, including 64 girls. Their number is growing, especially in the Sunni *mektebs*. However, an attempt to open a special educational institution for Muslim girls during this period failed. At the same time, in the Elisabethpol Governorate in 268 *mektebs* more than 4 thousand students, including 145 girls, studied. It should be noted that, in state and private educational institutions, education was of an estate character, in traditional institutions, children from the common people predominated in numbers. For example, in 1879 in the Baku Governorate from 2946 students who studied in *mektebs*, 2713 were children of peasants. *Madrasahs* were numerically inferior to *mektebs* and were, as a rule, in Baku, Nakhichevan, Ordubad, Shamakha, Shusha, Ganja (Elisabethpol). In 1895, only in Shusha there were 12 *mad-*

rasahs, in 10 of them 484 students studied. The basis of training was the study of Arabic and Persian languages (11, 110).

Traditional schools dominated primary education until the October 1917 coup, and the number of mosques grew. At the beginning of the 20th century, the number of religious schools and *mektebs* increased several times throughout Azerbaijan. A significant role in this belonged to the intelligentsia and enlightenment, as well as to local Muslim benefactors and patrons. At the beginning of the 20th century, there were 296 Shia *madrasahs* in all of Azerbaijan, including Zangezur district, which taught 296 teachers and a total of 2,585 students (6, 79). By 1913, there were 903 and 676 Sunni mosques and parishes throughout the South Caucasus, where 690 mullahs served. Shia mosques and parishes throughout the South Caucasus by 1915, there were 801 and 859, where 580 clerics served (6, 75).

It must be said that in line with the renovation-reformist movement "Jadidism" in Islam, which ideologically was associated with bourgeois liberalism and pan-Turkism, since the 80s of the 19th century in Azerbaijan, taking into account the national and traditional religious specifics, a wide network of *mektebs*, *madrasahs*, Muslim schools is being created, new so-called new-method (*usul-i jadid*) training programs are developing. The founder and active propagandist of jadidism was the outstanding Crimean Tatar enlightener Ismail Gasprinski (1851-1914) who promoted his ideas from the pages of the newspaper "Tardzhuman" ("Translator") published by him. Gasprinski applied to the Arabic language the European syllable system. With this technique children, as from the familiar

primers, did not learn words, but letters and syllables, and as a result, instead of three years, they began to read in just a few months. The first new schools among the Muslim peoples began to appear in the late 70s of the 19th century in Lankaran, Shamakha, Shusha, Salyan, Ordubad, Nakhichevan. At the end of the 19 century they are widely spread in other cities of the South Caucasus, as well as in Dagestan. For example, in the Elisabethpol New Method School, founded in 1896, 290 students were enrolled, and 50 students from poor families were exempted from the fee (11, 113).

From the documents and postal correspondence of 1901 it becomes clear that the representatives of the tsarist authorities were afraid of the activities of the *madrasah*. The director of public schools in the Stavropol province wrote, recalling the *madrasah* of 1901 in Shusha in Karabakh: "There are a lot of young people who were fluent in Russian, learned Arabic, knew the meaning and commented well on the Quran. They even studied zoology and anatomy. Their leaders, the mullahs along with knowledge of the Arabic language and literature, at the same time owned and European sciences." The director believed that the government needed to be more attentive to these educational institutions, since it was them who educated genuine defenders of Islam, who could pose a threat to Russian absolutism. They are also dangerous because, along with the propaganda of Islam in mosques, at the same time they trained well-trained teachers for Muslim *mektebs*, thereby protecting Islam (6, 72-73).

In general, according to statistical data of two central – Baku and Elisabethpol Governorates for 1887 and 1903, one can see that traditionally educated stratum of society

at that time in Azerbaijan invariably was the clergy. If the number of educated people in medical, legal, technical areas as well as in the field of liberal professions (literature, art, architecture) amounted to dozens and less often hundreds of people, in the sphere of the clergy there were up to 2,992 educated people for their time, which was twice the number of people in public education (1,260 and 1,719 people, respectively) (2).

In the period 1905-1907, the idea of the religious and educational autonomy of Muslims and the creation of a nationwide system of secular and spiritual education became the main idea in the cultural life of the Muslim peoples of Russia. So on August 16, 1906, a Congress of Muslim Teachers was held in Baku, attended by representatives of Ganja, Derbent, Petrovsk, Guba, Aghdam and other cities of Azerbaijan and the North Caucasus. In May 1917, the First Congress of Muslim Students of the Caucasus was held. Later, the Central Committee and the Fund of Muslim Students of the Caucasus were established (11, 128). In the same year, the 2nd and 3rd Congresses of the Union of Muslims of Russia ("Ittifag-i Muslimin" or "Ittifag al-muslimin") were held in St. Petersburg and Nizhny Novgorod, where its Program was prepared by a prominent Azerbaijani educator and political figure, one of the future founders of the ADR – Alimardan Bey Topchibashev. Along with important social and political issues, the program envisaged the implementation of school reform in 33 points, according to which, in addition to general education schools, the opening of new *mektebs* and *madrasahs* was also planned. The Program also reflected the most important requirements for Muslims to grant them rights on a par with other nations, education and

publication of newspapers and magazines in their native language, freedom in Islamic religion. In 1914, at the suggestion of the Muslim faction of the Duma, the Congress of Muslims of Russia was convened, dedicated to the reform of Muslim religious schools. Speaking on behalf of the Azerbaijani Muslims, Muhammad Yusif Jafarov, stressed the importance of creating a single spiritual government for all Muslims of Russia. Also at the Congress was the issue of granting permission to work as teachers in Muslim *mektebs* to persons who received religious education in Turkey and Iran (4, 424-426).

It should be noted that «the combination of Islam and modernism», which is often understood as «Jadidism», in Azerbaijan has not turned into the main direction of social thought. «While in other Muslim regions, Islam was central to the activities of Jadid reformers, in Azerbaijan reformism took on the character of a rather modernist movement with a pronounced tendency towards secularization and secularism. The sources of enlightenment and cultural reform in Azerbaijan were associated with the names of Seyid Azim Shirvani (1835-1888), Muhammad Taghi Safarov (Sidgi) (1854-1903), Hasan-bey Zardabi (Melikov) (1837 - 1907), Jalil Mammadguluzadeh (1869-1932), Mir Movsum Navvab (1833-1918) and many others. “Also in the Caucasus, the issue of changing the Arabic alphabet to the Latin alphabet was sharply discussed. The reform of the alphabet suggested the accelerated Europeanization of culture, which was advocated by some Azerbaijani modernists headed by Mirza Fatali Akhundov (1812-1878) – a philosopher whose views were clearly anti-clerical (11, 11-12). Throughout the history of the Turkish-Muslim peoples of Russia, the period of the emergence and develop-

ment of Jadidism is a unique process of updating and modernizing Muslim culture while preserving the traditions, moral foundations and spiritual values of Islamic civilization. New method implementing schools contributed to the emergence of a new Muslim intellectual elite, who knew Islam well and at the same time European-educated, able to organically engage in the all-Russian cultural and civilizational process. But, in general, the enlightenment movement in the Caucasus had the character of a sociocultural reformation, and later set itself tasks of a more fundamental level, aimed at sociopolitical transformations. Later, these goals came into conflict with some ideas of Jadidism (11, 112). Already then in Azerbaijan has been a gradual shift from religious to ethnic identity and the separation of ethnic consciousness from religious awareness. This can be seen in the works of A.A.Bakikhanov, M.F.Akhundov, M.Kazembek and other writers, publicists, poets and public figures of that period (1, 148).

Under the influence of the ideas of Islamic reformism of the 19th and 20th centuries, inspired by prominent Islamic figures, Muḥammad Abduh and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, a number of parties and circles emerged in Northern Azerbaijan in the early 20th century. The surge of political activity and the growth of national consciousness culminated in the creation in 1918 of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic – the first Republic in the Muslim East, where Religion was separated from the State. Its ideologists and founders noted that, due to the Tsarist absolutism's fault, the Muslims did not have a single middle and even lower religious school that would graduate from educated clerics, and the Tatar (that is, Azerbaijani) branch of the

Transcaucasian Teacher Seminary in the city of Gori was not at all consistent with its purpose. As the scholars fairly point out, “the alternative to traditional religious education in the form of creating a reformed Islamic education system in their native language has never been not only implemented by the Russian government, but has not been seriously discussed. There was not a single Islamic higher education institution in the region that could become the spiritual center of the “enlightened Islamic clergy” and serve to train teachers ... because all this “contradicted the state ideology of the cultural unification of all subjects of the Russian Empire” (2). Azerbaijani enlighteners demanded instruction in their native (Turkic) language and teaching not only religious, but also secular subjects. However, in their opinion, the *mektebs* and the *madrasah* should not be closed, but reformed⁴ in order to get competent and intelligent teachers and mullahs. In particular, a series of articles entitled “Mekteb and madrasah” (“Məktəb və mədrəsə”) by one of the founders of the ADR, M.A. Rasulzadeh ⁵, has been published on this topic since March 1916 in the newspaper “Achig Soz” (“Free Word”). According to the author, the Azerbaijani intelli-

⁴ Thus, in 1919, the Fifth Commission on the Law of God (Sharia) chaired by SheikhuIslam Agha Alizadeh as part of mufti A. Talibzadeh and enlightener R. Efendiyev (23) worked in the development of curricula in connection with the reform of the secondary school.

⁵ M.A. Rasulzadeh, the founder of the first democratic Republic in the Muslim East, the ADR, believed that religion was the only possible means of preserving the nation, therefore Muslims, whatever party they belong to, should be based on the doctrines of holy Islam, and democracy complies with the rules of the Islamic religion. Hence, the green color on the tricolor State flag of the ADR and modern Azerbaijan indicates the belonging to the Islamic civilization.

gentsia was to blame for succumbing to Russification and turning away from *mektebs* and *madrasahs*, considering them to be a “Crooked Tree” that cannot be straightened. Wealthy people began to send their children to Russian schools, while the majority of the people registered their children in *mektebs* and *madrasahs*, which were in a deplorable state. Therefore, they need to be reformed, and the administration of them should be entrusted to the Islamic religious authorities and persons themselves (10, 438-441).

During the ADR period, besides secular ones, religious theological schools continued to operate. A bright example is the school with the same name, opened in 1907 with the support of the Baku Muslim Theological Society «Saadat» («Happiness»),⁶ which was the first Muslim religious school for boys in the Caucasus. By the way, the Reading-room and New-Method School «Saadat» for Girls was opened in 1909 by the educator Mukhtar Efendizadeh (1880-1975), who in 1904 opened schools called *Usul-i Jadid* in Guba and *Dar-ul-Irfan* (“House of Knowledge”) in Agdash. Many Azerbaijani enlighteners taught at *Saadat* school – the future founders of the ADRs, as well as prominent Islamic figures – Akhund Agha Alizadeh, Mirza Gadir Ismail-zadeh, Akhund Abdurrahim Hajizadeh – who wrote a textbook on Sharia, printed in the printing house of Hashum-Bek Vazirov «Sada» (“Voice”) on his own money.

Chairman of the Board of the society – Akhund Agha Alizadeh (later, the eighth Sheikhulislam of the Muslims

⁶ Akhund Mullah Ali Akbar Abbas-gulu Zadeh headed the Community.

of the Caucasus, as well as the ADR and the Soviet period) in appeals published in local newspapers asked wealthy people to help the society school in Baku, where the number of students reached 400: "We, Muslims are backward people, first of all need to be enlightened. Only the school can save us, the Muslims. We need to help the society in every possible way, illuminating our path to the future. Look ahead and help existing schools. If you really want the future generation to be awakened, then lend a helping hand to the schools" ("Kaspiy" newspaper, January 31, 1914). The school widely promoted the ideas of Islamic unity and Turkism. The school principal was one of the ideologists of the ADR, a scientist Ali Bey Huseynzadeh, who was brought up by his grandfather, Akhund Ahmad Salyani, who was SheikhuIslam of the Caucasus for 32 years. All school programs were supervised by a graduate of the Gori Seminary Farkhad Aghazadeh. Along with Islamic sciences, theology at school placed great emphasis on general educational subjects (arithmetic, geography, natural science) and languages (Turkic, Arabic, Persian, Russian and German). The education was free. In 1919 there were 5 classes where, in general, 123 pupils studied: a preparatory (for completely illiterate children), three prep schools and one first classes. The "Saadat" School was supported by voluntary donations collected by the Muslim spiritual community at Islamic holidays, and also received 3,000 rubles a year from the Baku Duma. At that time, the population continued to make requests for the opening of Muslim *mektebs*. For example, Ashagi-Gendob rural society of Guba district requested the opening of the *Amiriyyah* Mekteb Muslim-school. Most of these residents' petitions were resolved positively (9, 77-78.). However, as

the researchers point out, in that period the population's desire for secular education intensified. For example, in many villages of the Lankaran district, parents refused to send their children to Muslim *mektebs*, where the mullahs taught according to the old method and, closing rural *mektebs*, opened a secular school (9, 80).

Speaking about the religious policy of the ADR regarding religious education, we need to remember that its founders – the advanced intelligentsia and enlighteners of Azerbaijan – were originally united by the idea of a cultural revival of the Muslim world in crisis, and then, after being politicized, these ideas became the logical outcome creation of ADR in the years 1918-1920. The people who stood at the origins of the ADRs needed a powerful unifying ideological base exclusively on an Islamic basis, since they clearly understood that Islam is an integral part of the national identity of the Azerbaijani people and attached great importance to religious enlightenment.⁷

After the declaration of independence of Azerbaijan in 1918, representatives of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus moved to Baku. A unified religious administration was established here (“Mashikhati Islamiyyah”), where the Shia Sheikulislam and the Sunni Mufti of Azerbaijan received equal rights. In addition, a special structure for religious affairs is being created in the ADR – the Ministry of Education and Religion. However,

⁷ That is why the Dashnak-Bolshevik detachments on March 31, 1918, starting a massacre of the Muslim population in Baku and several regions of Azerbaijan, first defeated the building «Ismailiyyah», which played a special role in the scientific and religious enlightenment, editorial office of the newspaper «Kaspiy» and burned there 5,000 copies of the holy Quran samples that have been just published (8, 11).

it is necessary to understand that during the ADR period a number of Sharia laws were rejected by the national government, which went against the principles of secularism and modernization. Sharia courts were also eliminated and a secular court system was created. Religious affairs were exclusively concerned with religious matters, but religion did not interfere in the affairs of the state. The state, however, has embarked on secularization, reforms and the widespread introduction of secular education, the involvement of women in secular schools⁸ and endowing them with the right to vote. That is, the idea of equality has been implemented in the education system (11). Considering the factor of multi-confessional and multi-ethnic population, in ADRs, students of all nationalities of secondary schools were given the opportunity to study their religions.

These are, in general, aspects of religious education in the designated period. We believe that the consideration and identification of the specifics of traditional Islamic education in the region is relevant in the context of asserting the identity of the Azerbaijani people, taking into account its ethnocultural diversity, where the Islamic religion has

⁸ It should be noted that the first female Muslim school for girls in the Muslim East, which existed for 17 years and played an important role in the history of the formation of the female national intelligentsia, was opened in 1901 at the expense of the great Azerbaijani philanthropist H.Z.Tagiyev, inspired by ideas of enlightenment. After the establishment of the ADR on May 28, 1918, the number of female gymnasiums increased to 10, women received access to the Baku State University, which opened in 1919. However, all these institutions were secular, not religious.

been the dominant and consolidating factor for many centuries.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ISLAM IN GEORGIA AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN MODERNITY



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Georgian Muslims Union

The republic of Georgia is located in the south part of Caucasus Mountains. The population of Georgia is about 4.5 million people and almost 17 % of Georgian citizens are Muslims. They live in different regions of the state, but majority of them live in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, in the western part of Georgia. Muslims in Georgia are different in terms of ethnicity, including Georgians, Azerbaijanians, Chechens, and Turkish. However, Azerbaijanians and Chechens have a long history of living in Georgia.

The simplicity of getting dual citizenship in Georgia increased the number of Turkish and Iranian communities as well. According to various data, their number is more than 5,000 people in Georgia.

Now let me speak about the process of development of Islam in Georgia.

The spread of Islam on the geographical area of Georgia began in VII century (634). When Caliph Omar defeated Persia, Muslim army came to the area of Georgia as well. However, they did not have success and they were forced to retreat. Finally, in the middle of the VII century, through Habib Ibn-Maslama's "Certificate of Security" started the relationship between Georgia and the Muslim world.

In the VII century, Georgia was not strong enough to avoid the expansion of Arabs. Since the majority of people were orthodox, the church tried to protect population from Arabs and Islamization. However, Islam could become popular in the Elite society. That was a result of targeted policy of Arabs who ruled East Georgia.

According to Georgian historical literature, Arabs ruled East Georgia before the King David the Builder forced them to leave the Tbilisi city in 1122. However, During the reign of David the Builder Islam did not stop development. Tbilisi (the Capital city of Georgia) was regarded as an important Islamic centre at that time, in the Caucasus region.

Because of the lack of historical sources, it is hard to say how Islam was spread in Western part of Georgia. It is unclear, if Islam existed in Adjara before Ottoman Empire or not.

In the XVI century the Kingdom of Georgia was divided into several principalities. In 1461 the Ottomans expended the Empire to the western part of Georgia. Therefore, the region of Adjara was under the ruling of Ottoman Empire.

The system of Ottoman Empire required the existence people who had excellent knowledge in Islam who would teach the religion at religious institutes (Madrassa, that is called in Arabic). Therefore, some Georgian men were sent to Turkish big cities to get proper qualification in Islam. Additionally, in the region of Adjara there were religious schools or Madrasas where the local young people were taught the Koran and basic principles of Islam. Successful student were sent to Istambul or to Erzurum to get higher degree in Islam.

During the XIX century there were 68 Madrasas in Adjara where about 1180 students attended religious sessions. This kind of institutes helped Georgian Muslims at this period, to increase their knowledge in Islam and to study Arabic and Turkish languages. Some successful graduates of these schools were appointed as Mufti and Cadi (Islamic judge) in the region.

In the XVI century there were three mosques in Batumi (a city in Adjara). One of them was for military elites; another one for authorities of the Empire; the third one for ordinary people.

In the XVI century Georgians did not go to mosques since they had not accepted Islam as a religion yet. The active process of islamization in Adjara started in the XIX century. In the middle of XIX century, most of the local people of Adjara were Muslims.

In 1877-1878, during the war between Russia and Ottomans Empire, many Georgian Muslims left their native region Adjara and moved to the area of Turkey because of their religious safety. Historically, this movement is known as "muhajir" in Adjara. Before the "muhajir" the population of Adjara was about 50 000 people, but the process of muhajir significantly decreased the number of people.

It is also important to say a couple of words about the development of Islam in Georgia Under the control of Russian Empire

In 1878, by the agreement made between Russia and Ottoman Empire, Whole Georgia was under the controlled of Russian Empire. Russian Empire had a policy to built mosques in every populated area where lived more than 200 Muslims people. By this decision, the governors on the

one hand supported Muslim community in Georgia, on the other hand they tried to have a big influence and control on them.

In 1921, Georgia lost its three-year independence and became the part of the Soviet Union. It the hardest time of Islam in Georgia, because a lot of Georgian Muslim scientists were killed or strictly punished because of their religious activities.

As we know, the communists were against all kind of religion. Therefore, they had strict policy toward Islam as well. In 1929-1930 closed 150 religious schools where 6000 Georgian children studied basic principles of Islam.

They started prohibition step by step. In 1926, the communists prohibited teaching Islam. Finally, in 1930 they prohibited all kind of religious schools. Even they went more, and they closed all the mosques in Georgia except one of the central mosques in Batumi.

Islam in Independent Georgia

Finally, Georgia got independence in 1991. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Muslims had an opportunity to open or rebuilt several mosques in Georgia. According to statistic that was carried out in 2017, there are 210 mosques in the western part of Georgia. Among them 45 have status of historical heritage.

Based on the same statistics there are 120 mosques and about 64 religious institutes (Madradas) for children in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.

The main Islamic literature that is available for Georgian Muslims is translated version from Turkish into Georgian. After the collapse of the Soviet Union young generation had an opportunity to study Islam in Turkish

universities. Therefore, the main sources they use to offer to the believers are Turkish versions.

From 2005 to 2010 the Koran was translated two-times. However, none of them was translated by Muslim. Finally, in 2012 the first Georgian version of the Koran was translated from Arabic by Georgian Muslim.

Because there is not Islamic faculty at any universities that exist in Georgia. Therefore, some Muslim students go abroad, either to Turkey or to any of the Arabic countries to get high education in Islam.

Nowadays, there are several religious organizations that do different activities related to Islam. Among them is "Georgian Muslims Union" that was established in 2008. The main purpose of this organization is to protect Georgian Muslims rights inside and outside the country. As well as Georgian Muslim Union tries to help young people to increase their knowledge not only in Islamic principles but get effective knowledge in other fields as well.

THE ROLE OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS DURING INDEPENDENCE IN PRESERVATION OF ISLAMIC NATURE IN UKRAINE



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Head of Dawah Department in AUASO "Arraid"

Nowadays the "Islamic" factor plays a prominent role in the spiritual, cultural, social and political life of the Ukrainian people.

The intensity of the spiritual, cultural, political life and statistics indicate that in modern Ukraine there are places where Muslims live compactly and Muslim historical and cultural traditions are developing.

In 2010, 86% of the Muslim religious network of Ukraine were communities of Crimea. For the period 1988 - 1998 183 Muslim communities were registered in Crimea, in early 2003 their number exceeded 300. There were already 445 Muslim communities in Ukraine that had their own registered charters and 22 communities that operated without registration of the statute (which was allowed by the legislation of Ukraine) in 2004. And there were 369 communities of 445 functioning on the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

Today, Muslims in Ukraine and even in the Crimea are not only the Crimean Tatars, but also, for example, the Volga Tatars, Russians, Ukrainians, Azeris and some representatives of some other ethnic groups.

The democratization of all spheres of public life in Ukraine, of course, facilitated the spiritual and cultural life of all religious and cultural communities, including

Muslims. It brought development that contributed to the revival in new conditions.

According to M.I. Kyrushko in 2010, there were 7 Muslim religious schools in Ukraine with 276 students, 90 Sunday schools, 5 periodicals existed. Muslims had 160 mosques and prayer houses at their disposal, of which 10 are architectural monuments.

The revitalization of the Islamic world led to an unprecedented recovery of Islamic movement in Ukraine. In the early 90s, only 90-95 thousand citizens of Ukraine identified themselves as Muslims. At the beginning of 2002, in Ukraine (according to various estimates) there were already from 1.2 to 1.8 million Muslims. At the beginning of the 2000s, there were 3 spiritual and administrative centers: the Religious Administration of Muslims of Crimea (276 communities and 29 out of registration), the Religious Administration of Muslims of Ukraine (54 communities and 1 out of registration), the Religious Center of independent Muslim communities (12 communities), and 44 independent communities. [1]

Later, the Religious Administration of the Independent Muslim Communities of Ukraine - "Kiev Muftiat" (RUNMOU - "Kiev Muftiat") was created in 2006, the Religious Administration of Muslims of Ukraine "Ummah" in 2008, the Religious Administration of Muslims of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in Ukraine opened in Kiev in 2017 (after Crimea annexation)

It should be noted that in 2001, under the Islamic University (Donetsk), courses on the study of the Koran and the Tatar language began to operate. Representatives of almost 10 regions of Ukraine became applicants of the university. [3] In the Crimea almost annually several

mosques were built with the support of Turkey (beginning in the mid-1990s) and later on by Arab countries. All the mosques that were built in the Crimea subsequently were equipped with rooms used as classes for Sunday schools.

Educational activities have also been carried out by various public organizations throughout the country, such as the NGO Almanar (Kharkiv) since 1994, the NGO En Nebras (Lviv) since 1996, Ansar Foundation (Kiev), Al-Masar (Odessa), Al-Fajr (Zaporizhia), and others. In 1997 Association "Arraid" was registered and included most of that organizations. Soon Arraid became leading in Ukraine. Among the primary goals of this association was educational activities among local Muslims, "mainly from among the Crimean Tatars" [3]

Naturally, the main emphasis was on the Crimea and eastern Ukraine. As one of the participants in Ukraine described the situation, foreign students, watching the return of the Crimean Tatars, were filled with a desire to help local Muslims who, during the Soviet era, forgot about Islam. Students stayed over the studyholidays to teach Islamic culture, reading the Quran and the Arabic language. [2]

In eastern Ukraine (mainly Donetsk and Luhansk regions), as already mentioned, Islam remained largely at the level of traditions. The main rites that bound the Muslim population with their religion (as in the Crimea) were prayers (duas), janazah, the ritual of reading azan to a newborn, etc. Of course there couldn't be any question neither about the mosques, nor about the burial in a separate cemetery. As the current Mufti RAMU "Ummah", born and raised in Donetsk, recalls, "in the times of the Soviet Union, when we did not have mosques,

the old Muslims still kept the tradition. In many localities there were not even Muslim cemeteries, despite the fact that a Muslim should bury the deceased co-religionist in a Muslim cemetery. "[7]. The dead were buried in Christian cemeteries. The rituals were conducted by local mullahs (people who, unlike the rest of the co-religionists, could know several short suras from the Quran, knew how to read the duas.

It was the place of compact residence of the Tatars on the outskirts of the Donetsk in the village of Oktyabrsky where work with local Muslims began. By the way, it was there the Akhat-Jami mosque was opened in 1999. The local population, after so many years of neglecting their religion, with the collapse of the USSR, had a great desire to study their religion, but they lacked basic resources. There were no preachers, theologians who could teach Islam, because the mullahs often could not even teach the basics of prayer. According to the words of representatives of the Donetsk Tatar community, it was the Saar Foundation who was engaged in educational process first in the city/ It ceased its activities in Ukraine with the start of the first Chechen war [6]. Then the community representatives invited foreign students from Muslim countries who was studying in Ukraine. Students took the organizing of teaching process for local Tatars in basics of religion and reading the Quran. 2-3 groups of 15 people of different ages were formed. During 4 years the Donetsk Sunday school operated at the weekend in the building of a simple secondary school. Then, after a short break, the school was held in the premises provided by one of the universities, and later moved to the building of the Al-Amal mosque, the Muslim community "Duslyk".

The work of Sunday schools was not limited to Donetsk. On weekends, students visited such cities and towns as Makeevka, Snezhnoye, Granitnoye, Torez, Shakhtersk. There Muslims gathered in private houses, where they held classes. Before compiling the textbook Al-Maududi's "The Islamic Way of life" was used as basis. As for prayer and reading the Quran foreign students explained based on their knowledge.

In the Crimea, of course, the center of work with local Muslims was Simferopol. After Perestroika, the city, like others in Ukraine, received students from abroad. At that time, the main mosque of the Crimea - Kebir-Jami, which is located in Simferopol, was in process of repairing. Despite the restoration work, Muslims gathered in the mosque. Students drew attention to the growing number of Muslims (the repatriation of the Crimean Tatars took place until recently) and their need for religious knowledge. Respecting the traditions of the Muslims of Crimea and the opinion of the leaders, the students turned to the Muftiyat with a proposal to help with education. The leaders (Seitdzhelil Ibrahimov before 1995, Nuri Mustafayev after 1995) let organize the Sunday school, first in Simferopol and then in the Crimea. As in the east of Ukraine, in the Crimea, the work also spread to areas of the peninsula. Thus, according to the testimony of one of the participants of Islamic work in the Crimea, foreign students of public organizations from all over Ukraine who wished to devote time to Islamic education, could come to the Crimean villages during summer holidays for 30-40 days to teach the basics of Islam and the Quran. In villages close to Simferopol, the work of Sunday schools was held weekly on weekends. By the end of the 90s, the

problem of the lack of educators began to be solved gradually by the Turkish imams, who were sent by Diyanet of Turkey.

As had been said, the program of schools in the form of a methodological guide did not appear immediately. Despite the limited number of Islamic literature, the books "The Islamic Way of life", "40 of An-Nawawi", "General Introduction to Islam" were reprinted in some Ukrainian cities and spread. Already in 1999, a 'Study Guide for Sunday Schools' was distributed in Sunday schools throughout Ukraine.

Subsequently, best Sunday schools' students from all over Ukraine were encouraged by trips to Islamic camps in the Crimea: Novo-Alekseevka, Simeiz. In Donetsk, Kharkov Sunday schools organized picnics twice a year. They gathered 200-300 students on it. In the Donetsk and Luhansk regions every year from 2006 and up to the beginning of 2018 for local Muslims was organized a large-scale educational event "Prophet Caravan" Mercy for the Worlds" by activists of the AUASO "Alraid". It was started in Donetsk and took place in every city, large or small where lived at least a small group of Muslims.

It should be mentioned that the role of foreign students in the revival of Islam in Ukraine cannot be exaggerated. As already stated, competent people in the knowledge of Islam among the local Muslims were almost completely absent. And even by the end of the 90s, when Muslims communities, spiritual administrations and associations started to organize, among local Muslims number of such people practically did not increase. Therefore, for at least 10-15 years, work on Islamic education was almost completely on the shoulders of foreign students not only

in the Crimea and eastern Ukraine, but throughout the whole country.

As being noted earlier, at the dawn of the Islamic revival in Ukraine, the main goal was to return the islamic knowledge to the peoples, torn off from their Islamic roots by the Soviet authorities. However, in the late 90s among the parishioners of Sunday schools, non-Muslims could be often seen. They wanted to study the Arabic language and Islamic culture for various reasons: professional, personal. Anyway Sunday schools have become an instrument for acquainting ukrainians with the culture of Muslims, fighting stereotypes toward Islam, and establishing relations between people of different cultures and nations.

Over the past 10 years, Sunday schools have ceased to perform their original function. In mosques and Islamic centers in places of compact residence of Muslims and in large centers of the country, local Muslims, who received education in Islamic universities abroad, are already worked as imams. Weekly they organise religious activities for muslims: tajweed lessons, lectures, sermons etc. Thus, nowadays in the Sunday schools, the vast majority of visitors are non-Muslim. Starting from 2008-2009, the Dawah department of the AUASO "Alraid" has been closely involved in the building of the program for Sunday schools.

From the results of Islamic work through Sunday schools was the return of ukrainian Muslims to religion, strengthening communities, as evidenced by the subsequent opening of mosques in the Donetsk and Lugansk, the Crimean regions. In the Crimea, 2 religious madrasas were opened, in the cities of Ukraine were opened mosques and Islamic centers. But the most

important indicator, in our view, is that the leaders of most of the communities, positions in the spiritual departments and Muslim public organizations are not foreigners, but local Muslims.

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A NEW CONCEPT: THE INTEGRATION OF RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR ENTITIES



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Abstract

Islam has played an increasingly significant role in Kyrgyzstan since independence with a surge of interest among the Kyrgyz population in recent years. As such, Islam's historical and contemporary role is being reappraised more favorably by many and the construction of mosques and proliferation of Islamic institutions and religious centers has flourished. A lot of religious educational institutions have appeared in the republic, which do not have a license or a single curriculum. All madrasahs in the Kyrgyz Republic are privately owned and are financed from private sources. In many Islamic educational institutions, curricula are limited to memorizing the Quran and teaching traditional rituals necessary in the family and household sphere.

The demand for teaching religion at secular schools is increasing. The government admits that the sphere of religious education should not be solely under the control of the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. This report focuses on examining the process of Islamic Education in Kyrgyzstan, its challenges and prospects.

Key words: *Kyrgyzstan, Islamic education, Islamic university, Islamic institute, madrasahs, faculty of theology, Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, Islam, religion, securitization, nationalization, constructivism.*

A new concept: The integration of religious and secular entities

Introduction

In 2014, the Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia conducted a situation analysis of the current state of Islamic education in Kyrgyzstan. The primary focus of that piece is an analysis of the bill "On Religious Education", which at that time was being considered and debated in Parliament. Three years later, however, the education landscape has changed and the number of religious educational institutions has increased significantly. These facts, as well as the lack of in-depth research on religious educational institutions, particularly in regards to madrasah, have prompted the Bulan Institute to take the initiative **into** its own hands.

The Bulan Institute for Peace Innovations (hereinafter - Bulan Institute) is a non-governmental organization whose activities are aimed at preventing conflicts and threats to security in Central Asia. The head office of the Institute is located in Bishkek; there is also a small office of an international representation in Geneva. The Bulan Institute is engaged in the prevention of religious radicalism, including working on a project to reform the system of religious education in Kyrgyzstan.

Since the time of Independence, it is for the first time that a systematic work is being carried out to improve the quality of religious education; attempts are being made to reform religious studies; researches are being conducted on the religious situation in the Kyrgyzstan specially, as to what questions on religious issues should be given priority.

The Bulan Institute had published report which contains research on curricula and conditions at the Islamic religious educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan, with a special focus on madrasah.

In this report, the Bulan Institute has not limited itself to conducting only an analysis of the state of Islamic religious education in the Republic, but also raises the problem of integration and proper interaction of secular and religious entities. It must be respectively noted that, for the first time since independence, the Kyrgyz government has finally started to pay attention to the problems of religious education in the country. A working group, established by the Kyrgyz government, has developed a "Concept for Reforming Religious Education in Kyrgyzstan" and made public discussions. This concept is aimed at bringing all religious educational institutions of the country in line with state standards qualifications. In addition, the document aims to support the initiative to introduce secular subjects in the religious curriculum and raise the issue of the need for mandatory education along with religious and secular education by students who are enrolled in these schools.

According to the Constitution, Kyrgyzstan is considered a secular state. At the same time, since 80 percent of the population is Muslim, there is an increased interest among Kyrgyz people in obtaining Islamic education and studying the Koran. Adopted in Kyrgyzstan following state independence in 1991, the Law "On Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations" opened a wide path towards the revival of all religions, first and foremost Islam. This led to the spontaneous opening of various religious educational institutions on the ground. The state however, has not taken effective steps to legally and conceptually streamline

and standardize their activities. Thus, throughout 25 years of independence, an array of religious educational establishments has been formed in Kyrgyzstan, carrying out their activities without any licenses or appropriate training programs. If we compare official data, the number of children studying in madrasah is increasing on a yearly basis. According to the State Commission on Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, by 2013 the number of madrasah reached 67, the higher Islamic educational institutions 10, and the number of students studying in them constituted 4'565 people.

In February 2017, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan reported that the number of children attending madrasah constituted around 6'000. However, since not all of madrasah are state registered, and the actual number of students in these Muslim schools/establishments has not been specified the number is likely much higher.

Indira Aslanova, a specialist in religious studies, points out that for the first time in Kyrgyzstan, in its 20 years of independence, the state has started paying attention to improving the quality of religious education. Zaiyrbek Ergešov, Chairman of the State Commission on Religious Affairs also notes that the state was not concerned with what children at the religious educational institutions are being taught: "In the past 25 years, the state has not paid adequate attention to this field has not been concerned with the curricular and with what children are thought there. Consequently, we have received such a rift and confrontation between the religious and secular education." {3} In 2014, the Defense Council of the Kyrgyz Republic (now the Security Council) convened a special meeting where the "concept on the State policy on the questions of religion for the 2014-

2020" was adopted. One of the goals of the concept is reforming religious educational institutions and strengthening control over their activities. {4}

In order to fulfill this concept, the Kyrgyz government allocated funds to the Yiman Fund, which was tasked with raising the level of education of imams. According to Nurzhigit Kadyrbekov, the head of the fund since 2014, the project titled "Raising the educational level and capabilities of religious workers", has seen 2,959 imams have completed a 12-day training program. Also on the auspices of I. Arabayeva University, a state educational institution, the "Institute of Training and Retraining of the Management of the SAMK" was opened, which will soon receive a license from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Institute will annually receive 15 people and will train cadres to work in the SAMK (Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan) according to a specialized in depth program combining secular and religious knowledge.

In addition, after several years of discussion, the Kyrgyz government this year launched a pilot program to introduce the subject "History of Religious Culture" into the school curriculum. As the Deputy Minister of Education and Science Salidin Kaldybayev informs, the ministry together with the relevant specialists has developed a pilot training course and prepared books for publication. At the moment, the pilot program has been launched in 10 schools in different regions of the country. In the first half of the school year the subject "History of Religious Culture" is given 16 hours of instruction, and additional educational circles will provide students with additional information about the history of world religions. {5}

In September 2015 the Kyrgyz government ordered the Ministry of Education and Science to establish a working commission to develop a concept for reforming religious educational institutions. Concept development was completed at the end of 2016, after which the State Commission for Religious Affairs opened it for public discussion with hearings in Osh and Bishkek. {6} According to Nurlan Ismailov, one of the authors of the concept, Kyrgyzstan, unlike countries such as Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and even Turkey, is a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional, democratic secular country. He stated, "Religious workers must correspond with the nature of our state, that is, they must have deep knowledge of not only religion, but social and human sciences. They must very well understand the principles of a secular state and democratic values. Since, in the future, it is them, who will have to fulfill the main connecting role between the state and religion." {7} *One of the main goals of the concept was to standardize the curricula of religious schools, create a unified curriculum, and introduce secular disciplines in them.* Mr. Ismailov goes on: "After the introduction of a single training program, secular subjects will gradually be introduced. Eight disciplines will be introduced in the madrasas, ten disciplines - in the highest religious schools; the list of disciplines has been specified. These are mathematics, geography, Kyrgyz language, Russian language, law theory, foreign language, history and civics." {7} Since the concept has not yet entered into legal force, however, there are no concrete steps to introduce these disciplines.

The concept says that "state bodies can only interfere in the work of a madrasah in cases of detection of extremist propaganda; in other cases, they cannot directly interfere with their activities but only regulate the introduction of

secular disciplines in their curriculum." The concept also requires religious educational institutions to be open and transparent. The religious educational institution must have its own website with full information on the curriculum, the names of the teachers, the address of the educational institution, as well as financial sponsors. To this end Mr. Ismailov stated: "It is very important who are funding the educational institutions of a religious nature. The state should know about this. In short, one of the goals of the concept is to achieve transparency in the question of sources of funding of the religious educational institutions." {7}

Based on the demand by the Security Council to improve the quality of education in religious educational institutions, the State Commission for Religious Affairs, the Muftiate and the Ministry of Education and Science, jointly opened a pilot project theological college as part of the I. Arabaev University. This college provides both a madrasah style religious education as well as secular lessons. Students enter this college only after graduation from grade 9 and receive a diploma recognized as meeting state standards. {8}

In fact, the college is working on the basis of an experimental plan with the program used in it to be gradually introduced into all madrasah. Ermek Bekturov, head of the college, describes the program:

"At the moment there are still madrasah where the quality of education and the state [of the school] do not meet requirements. All of them in the future should receive a license and become an educational institution in which modern imams will be trained. A modern imam should be both a manager and a diplomat. He should also be an authoritative person who knows the philosophy,

and at the same time he should master the laws of the Shariah, he should be a prominent figure in the education of the younger generation, as well as be able to represent himself worthily in the council of elders, the ayil okmotu. At the moment, we should introduce and develop exactly this kind of pilot projects in madrasah."

For many years, control over the work of educational institutions of a religious nature was laid off the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims. In 2014, when this issue was brought up at the Security Council meeting, the State Commission on Religious Affairs intensified its activities in this direction and began monitoring madrasah and verifying their curricula and conditions for students. In 2015, the State Commission conducted monitoring in 34 madrasahs and in 2016 74 madrasahs and issued a warning to individual schools that do not meet the requirements. Since the beginning of this year, the organization has again conducted monitoring operations and a warning from the State Commission has already been received by 27 madrasahs. {9} Also in 2016, the department carried out the certification of teachers working in madrasah. As of the result of this, 92% of the madrasahs heads did not pass attestation, due to the lack of higher secular education in their schools. {10} The fact that the State Commission began to demonstrate decisiveness on this issue is encouraging; the Commission is bringing discussions about religious education into to the public and openly holding conferences devoted to reforming the system of religious education. According to experts, state authorities did not pay attention to religious education for a long time, referring to the secular nature of the country. In the opinion of Keneshbek Sainazarov, a specialist on the

prevention of religious radicalism, the Ministry of Education and Science was particularly reluctant to address these issues, since it considered that the Ministry had nothing to do in regards to religious education. He explained: "Professionals, working in this Ministry, still adhere to the position of non-interference in the activities of religious educational institutions. Therefore, it is precisely because of this attitude and lack of proper support that the initiatives and initiatives of the State Commission are slowing down." {11}

The other side of the matter is that religious schools are currently incorrectly qualified, with the Muftiate dividing them into three categories - primary, secondary and higher, with two years as an acceptable period of study in the primary madrasah, three years for the secondary, and four years for the higher. That said the programs at the madrasah and Islamic University are the same. Therefore, there is a lack of standardization and a legal basis for the regulation of activities of religious educational institutions. In 2013, Kanybek Osmonaliev, deputy of the Kyrgyz Parliament, initiated a bill "On Religious Education and Religious Educational Institutions». {12} The objectives of this bill were the accreditation of curriculums, the classification of religious educational institutions, and the regulation of trips to foreign countries for religious education and many other issues. The bill was rejected by parliament; however, the need for developing legal norms that would allow regulating the activities of religious educational institutions in the country remains an urgent issue.

Conclusions

○ In 2014, for the first time after achieving independence in Kyrgyzstan, attention to the quality of education provided in madrasah has been paid on the state level. Although the "Concept of state policy in the sphere of religion for 2014-2020" is showing certain positive shifts, indifference and apathy remain prevalent among authoritative religious figures, as well as in the Muftiate itself. It is necessary to accelerate steps to 65 From the field notebook of Shayyrbek Sherov, 2012 No. 3 - 3-7-b. 27 implement the concept, strengthen control, and find financial sources for their implementation of these activities at the state level;

○ Over the past five years, madrasah went through spontaneous stages of development; it is now time for the madrasah to adapt to modern realities. It is necessary to reduce their number by introducing a standardized curriculum in all Islamic educational institutions with appropriate conduct accreditation and licensing;

○ The classification of religious educational institutions remains in a chaotic state. We need to create a single state standard for secondary and higher education (bachelor and masters level) at the religious educational institutions. For example, the Muftiate divides madrasah into three categories: primary, secondary and higher. There is also an Islamic university and other institutes that should be logically superior to them. Therefore, it is not considered appropriate to divide the madrasah into three categories, but rather afford a three-year period of study in the madrasah and then, if the child wants to continue education, he can go to higher educational institutions;

○ The public discussion of the "the Concept of Reforming of Religious Education and the System of Religious Studies" has

finished. The concept should be adopted as soon as possible, endow it with legal power and start its implementation. These activities should be accelerated at the state level and financial and other resources should be found for their implementation;

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