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State And Religion Relations In Uzbekistan: Priority Directions

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes issues related to relations between the state and religion, reforms in the field, its legal foundations, and priorities in Uzbekistan during the years of independence. Also, the attitude towards religion, the persecution and pressures against the representatives of the industry during the Soviet period are justified.

Keywords:

Religion, conscience, freedom of worldview, interreligious tolerance, religious confessions, public atheism, national-cultural heritage, spiritual and spiritual needs, religious holidays.

Since Uzbekistan has gained independence, it is the task of forming honesty and self-sacrifice in people, especially in the young generation, in the spirit of independence. Everyone, even religious people and figures, should actively participate in this honorable work. Consequently, we even have freedom of religion and conscience constitutionally guaranteed¹.

Currently, 138 national cultural centers, 35 friendship societies, 2313 religious organizations belonging to 16 religious denominations are operating in Uzbekistan². Of these, 2,122 are Islamic, 174 Christian religious organizations, 8 Jewish, 6 Baha'i communities, 1 Krishna Consciousness Society, 1 Buddhist

temple and 1 Bible Society of Uzbekistan. In this regard, there is no doubt that the traditions of tolerance, characteristic of our people since time immemorial, play an important role.

The system of religious education in our country has also been radically improved, new educational institutions and research centers have been established. Currently, the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, the Tashkent Islamic Institute, the "Mir Arab" higher madrasa, the School of Hadith, 10 secondary specialized Islamic educational institutions, and Orthodox and Protestant seminaries are operating in our republic.

In order to comprehensively study the rich historical, scientific, and spiritual heritage of

¹Qamar Amon., Theory and history of spirituality. Tashkent., "Sharq" NMAK., page 188.

²Scientific and popular guide dedicated to the study and promotion of the Address of the President of the Republic of

Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis among the general public. Tashkent, "Spirituality", 2019., p. 266.

Islamic science and culture, to deeply reveal the humanitarian nature of Islam, and to fight against ignorance with enlightenment, the Center of Islamic Civilization in Uzbekistan, the Imam Bukhari International Scientific Center in Samarkand research center, Imam Termizi international research center in Surkhandarya, Abul Muin Nasafi complex in Kashkadarya was established³.

The constitution and laws guarantee that all citizens, regardless of nationality, language and religion, have equal rights and freedoms. They were given all the opportunities to preserve and develop their national culture, traditions and customs.

Independent Uzbekistan inherited a society far behind the former union, derelict production relations and national economy, educational and moral retardation, spiritual and educational backwardness, and a society deprived of its national values. became The country was in a difficult situation in all respects.

During the period of the former Soviets, the movement to introduce mass atheism in the country intensified, and the policy of separating religion not only from the state, but even from society was carried out. Atheistic propaganda was carried out in the most brutal forms, aimed at destroying religion, which was considered as an opponent of the great state, the interests of the red imperialism, and the ideology of the communist party. For this purpose, thousands of mosques, madrassas, synagogues, churches, and monasteries were destroyed. The old religious schools were closed. Thousands of religious figures were persecuted. Religious holidays and customs were banned or many obstacles were placed against their observance. For example, in those days, only 1-2 people went on pilgrimage to Uzbekistan in a year⁴.

In the former Soviet state, the newspaper "Khudosiz" and the magazine "Khudosizlar" were published. Religion was assessed as an antiquated trend, and efforts were made to

completely eliminate these trends. Books and manuscripts written in the old Arabic alphabet were removed from religious sources and destroyed. It is forbidden to store and read them. As a result, our nation was practically cut off from the values of Islam, and irreligion was on the rise.

The reins of the ruling communist party in the former union considered religious communities to be their rivals in the struggle to capture the minds of the people. Throughout their career, they took the most drastic measures to denigrate the religion, eliminate the clergy, and subjugate the survivors. Religion was artificially turned into one of the most heated aspects of the ideological struggle. Thousands of respected scholars of Islam were persecuted. Thousands of mosques and hundreds of madrassas were demolished. Many of these monuments were considered an invaluable architectural and historical value for our people and human civilization. Most of the believers did not enjoy the Holy Quran until the early 90s.

In the religious sphere, in all the former Soviet republics until 1990, the decision of the government of the RSFSR adopted in 1929 "On Religious Associations" was in force. After the disintegration of the former union built on the basis of coercion and the achievement of independence, the religious factor objectively increased in Uzbekistan. In 1991, the Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" was adopted for the first time in the legal experience of Uzbekistan⁵.

Religion is closely connected with the spiritual world of a person and has always been with him in his social life. That is why the study of religion means the study of humanity. History itself has proven that religion cannot be separated from humanity, and humanity cannot be separated from religion.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations"

³ S. Toshboyev "Confessions are a factor of harmony, peace and stability" newspaper "New Uzbekistan" October 12, 2021, No. 202(458)

⁴A collection of theses on seminar-training organized for the chairpersons of citizens' assemblies. Tashkent., 2019, page 194.

⁵Republic of Uzbekistan. Encyclopedia. Tashkent, Komuslar General Editorial Office, 1997, p. 536.

adopted after our country gained its independence stated its attitude to religion as a secular state.

The values of all religions, including Islam, have been revived in the villages and cities of our republic, where various religious confessions are widely active. The number of Muslims has increased, young people are interested in learning religion, religious ceremonies, especially Islamic holidays - Eid al-Adha and Ramadan have been restored, and these auspicious days are giving more and more spiritual spirit to our people. Thousands of people are performing Eid prayers in thousands of mosques during Ramadan and Eid al-Adha holidays, which are marked as holidays. He goes to the graves of his deceased loved ones and recites. Thousands of madrassas and mosques, built in ancient times and turned into ruins during the Shura era, were renovated and new ones were built.

Even today, a lot of work is being done to restore the memory and heritage of our holy religion, national values, and the heritage of our great saints. For example, during the former autocratic regime, there were about 80 mosques in our country, and now their number is more than 2,101⁶.

A good knowledge of the relationship between religion and the state strengthens the foundations of a democratic society. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" provide full information about the rights and obligations of members of various religious communities. Citizens respect the law, respect and try to understand the religious feelings of not only their own, but also others. forms concepts such as not allowing violence, aggressiveness in issues.

Therefore, neither the state nor certain individuals should interfere with the religious activity, freedom of religion, conscience, and worldview of any person, if it does not exceed the limits of law and social security. It is

necessary not to impose administrative and ideological pressure on him. On the other hand, it is emphasized that a person who believes in his religion and promotes his worldview should not threaten society and personal safety, his rights and freedoms.

The priority directions of relations between the state and religion in Uzbekistan include:

- respect religious feelings of believers;
- recognizing religious beliefs as the private business of citizens or their associations;
- to guarantee equal rights of citizens who adhere to religious beliefs and those who do not adhere to them, and to prevent their persecution;
- the need to look for ways to communicate with various religious associations in order to use the opportunities of spiritual revival and determination of universal moral values;
- recognizing that religion cannot be used for destructive purposes.

In a situation where the Republic of Uzbekistan is entering the world community, it is of great importance to achieve a high culture of communication with representatives of different confessions. It is known that representatives of religions such as Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity have lived in peace and harmony in Uzbekistan since ancient times. This is confirmed by the fact that mosques, churches and synagogues functioned in our big cities, and that there were no disagreements and conflicts between them even in the most difficult and difficult periods of our history. This is a rare symbol of religious-spiritual harmony in the land of Uzbekistan and the rarest example of tolerance towards representatives of all religions.

It is the sacred duty of every citizen to know the place of Islam, which has become the national value of our people for many centuries, in the history of the Central Asian region and in the lives of the peoples of this land. Because a

⁶A collection of theses on seminar-training organized for the chairpersons of citizens' assemblies. Tashkent., 2019, page 195.

person cannot be highly spiritual without knowing national and religious values and respecting them. Therefore, there are many influences and characteristics of the religious worldview in our national ideological system. In particular, evil vices such as alcoholism, drug addiction, debauchery, bloodshed, and theft, which are contrary to human qualities and harmful, are condemned in religious ethics. In contrast to them, virtues such as honesty, goodness, mutual respect, honoring elders and parents were praised. In our national ideology, these features of the religious outlook are inherited.

The relationship between the present era and religion can only be understood in connection with changes in politics. Realizing national identity in our politics, building a great country in the future, rising to the level of the most developed countries, establishing equal and mutually beneficial relations with foreign countries, building joint ventures, science, technology, art, literature, training of personnel and specialists, relations in the field of sports, maintaining peace and harmony within our country, strengthening citizen cooperation, conducting education and training of young people based on new, modern requirements, restoration of national values, etc., and we are developing towards the future. All this increased the activity of religion in society. For example, the Religious Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan maintains active relations with foreign Muslim countries and their religious organizations. Also, religious leaders are actively participating in the life of society. Many representatives of religions and hundreds of imams are closely helping our country in raising the morale of our people and straightening it. They encourage the people to unite towards a common goal and to stay away from disputes and disagreements.

At this point, it is necessary to pay attention to two important aspects arising from the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations". First, in Uzbekistan, religion is

recognized as an equal value among all national values that are part of the general series of cultural and spiritual factors. Secondly, it is strictly forbidden to seek to use the religious factor to achieve any malicious goals, except for the satisfaction of pure religious beliefs.

Taking into account this situation in our country's policy towards religion, the opportunities to strengthen religious tolerance and, on this basis, to strengthen peace and stability in the country will expand. Religious tolerance is an important condition for building a prosperous society, strengthening peace and stability.

As in other times, the issue of religious tolerance and inter-ethnic harmony is recognized by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev as a priority in the new stage of socio-political and legal reforms in Uzbekistan. In particular, special attention was paid to this issue in the Address of the President to the Chambers of the Oliy Majlis dated December 28, 2018. In particular, the President expressed the following thoughts: "Uzbekistan is always faithful to its traditions in the field of inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance, and will never deviate from this path. In our country, primary attention is paid to strengthening the atmosphere of mutual respect, friendship and harmony between representatives of different nationalities and religious confessions. It is our greatest wealth and it is our duty to protect it like the apple of our eye...⁷".

In this matter, the President's address to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan on December 20, 2022 was emphasized once again: "We will mobilize all our strength and capabilities to further strengthen the atmosphere of international friendship, solidarity between religious confessions, and social tolerance".

The dangers of radicalism, extremism, terrorism, human trafficking, drug addiction, which are increasing all over the world, unfortunately, do not escape us either. But I repeat, in our land, where great scholars such as Imam Bukhari, Imam Termizi, and Imam

⁷Scientific and popular guide dedicated to the study and promotion of the Address of the President of the Republic of

Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis among the general public. Tashkent, "Spirituality", 2019., pp. 264-265.

Moturidi, who taught the Muslim community, grew up, can there be people who are lost in this regard, who are given to the ideas of radicalism and extremism? We will not allow any kind of radicalization in our society, the poisoning of the minds of our youth with destructive foreign ideas, the use of religion for political purposes, the replacement of enlightenment with ignorance..."⁸.

So, Uzbekistan's policy towards religion is based on the principles of human rights, freedom of belief and conscience, and does not allow discrimination of any nationality or religious belief. On the contrary, he always pays attention to the development of other denominations in our republic.

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⁸ Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis and the people of the Republic of Uzbekistan. www.prezident.uz.