

Қазақстан Тәуелсіздігінің 30 жылдығына арналған**N. Baitenova** , **B. Meirbayev** , **S. Baizhuma*** 

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TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION OF POST-SECULAR SOCIETY IN KAZAKHSTAN OVER THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

Religion is considered as a source of human values in any society. Humanity would have neither history nor culture without religion. After the collapse of Soviet power, the law on religious beliefs and religious associations in independent Kazakhstan gave freedom to religious activity, promotion of religious teachings, distribution of religious literature, and worship. Thus, the years of independence of Kazakhstan are characterized not only by the creation of a civil society and a market economy, but also by the passage of a religious breakthrough. Kazakhstan become a home to representatives of many nationalities and different religious confessions. Today, the current religious situation in multi-religious Kazakhstan is multifunctional, complex and progressive. The state policy of Kazakhstan in the field of interreligious relations is aimed at developing of interreligious dialogue, strengthening tolerance and compliance with the requirements of the law in the religious sphere. Kazakhstan has all the conditions for further strengthening of interreligious harmony and stability. Maintaining interethnic and interreligious harmony, security, and stability of international relations is one of the main directions of Kazakhstan's future development. Traditional religions, such as Islam and Christianity play a significant role in the formation of the spiritual values of Kazakhstani society. It should be noted that religions have a very important humanistic peacekeeping approach and have a positive impact on the life of society in Kazakhstan. The development of relations between traditional religions within the framework of a constructive dialogue contributes to interreligious and interethnic harmony in Kazakhstani society. It is a noteworthy factor in its stability and security as well.

Key words: Kazakhstan, independence, law, post-secular society, religious situation.

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Тәуелсіздік жылдарындағы Қазақстанда постсекулярлы қоғам жағдайындағы діни ахуалдың даму үрдістері

Қай қоғамда болса да дін адами құндылықтардың қайнар көзі. Дін болмаса, адамзат қоғамының тарихы да, мәдениеті де болмас еді. Кеңес билігі тарағаннан кейін Қазақстанда «Діни сенім және діни бірлестіктер туралы» Заң діни қызмет атқаруға, діни ілімдерді насихаттауға, діни әдебиеттерді оқу мен таратуға және құлшылық етуге еркіндік берді. Сондықтан Қазақстанның тәуелсіздігі азаматтық қоғам мен нарықтық экономиканың құрылуымен ғана емес, сондай-ақ діни серпілістің орын алуымен де сипатталады. Қазақстан – көптеген ұлт өкілдері мен түрлі діни конфессиялардың шоғырланған шаңырағы. Сол себептен заман ағымындағы өзгерістермен бірге қазіргі таңда Қазақстандағы діни жағдай көп дінді, күрделі әрі үдемелі болып табылады. Қазақстанның дінаралық қатынас саласындағы мемлекеттік саясаты дінаралық сұхбатты дамытуға, толеранттылықты нығайтуға және дін саласындағы заң талаптарын орындауға бағытталған. Қазақстанда дінаралық келісім мен тұрақтылықты әрі қарай нығайту үшін барлық жағдайлар бар. Ұлтаралық және дінаралық келісімді, қауіпсіздікті, халықаралық қатынастың тұрақтылығын қолдау Қазақстанның болашақтағы дамуының негізгі бағыттарының бірі. Дәстүрлі діндер: ислам және христиандықтың қазақстандық қоғамның қалыптасуында алатын орны ерекше. Бүгінгі контексте олардың аса маңызды гуманистік бітімгерлік қарымы бар екенін және Қазақстандағы қоғам өміріне оң ықпал етіп отырғандығын атап өткен жөн. Дәстүрлі діндер арасындағы қарым-қатынастың конструктивті сұхбат жүргізу аясында дамуы қазақстандық қоғамдағы дінаралық және ұлтаралық келісімге мүмкіндік туғызады, сондай-ақ оның тұрақтылығы мен қауіпсіздігінің маңызды факторы болып саналады.

Түйін сөздер: Қазақстан, тәуелсіздік, заң, постсекулярлы қоғам, діни ахуал.

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Тенденции развития религиозной ситуации в постсекулярном обществе Казахстана за годы независимости

Религия считается источником человеческих ценностей в любом обществе. У человечества не было бы ни истории, ни культуры без религии. После падения советской власти закон о религиозных убеждениях и религиозных объединениях в независимом Казахстане дал свободу религиозной деятельности, пропаганде религиозных учений, распространению религиозной литературы и отправлению религиозных обрядов. Поэтому годы независимости характеризуются не только созданием гражданского общества и рыночной экономики, но и совершением религиозного прорыва. Казахстан стал родиной для людей разных национальностей и различных религиозных конфессий. Текущая религиозная ситуация в многоконфессиональном Казахстане сложна и противоречива. Государственная политика Казахстана в области межрелигиозных отношений характеризуется ориентацией на развитие межрелигиозного диалога, укрепление толерантности и соблюдение требований закона в религиозной сфере. В Казахстане есть все условия для дальнейшего укрепления межрелигиозного согласия и стабильности. Поддержание межнационального и межрелигиозного согласия, безопасности и стабильности международных отношений – одно из основных направлений будущего развития Казахстана. Традиционные религии, как ислам и христианство, занимают особое место в формировании духовности казахстанского общества. Следует отметить, что они имеют очень важный гуманистический миротворческий потенциал и положительно влияют на жизнь общества в Казахстане. Развитие отношений между традиционными религиями в рамках конструктивного диалога способствует межрелигиозному и межэтническому согласию в казахстанском обществе, а также является важным фактором его стабильности и безопасности.

Ключевые слова: Казахстан, независимость, закон, постсекулярное общество, религиозная ситуация.

Introduction

Kazakhstan is an independent country with its rich history, rich treasures, which unites many nations and religions living in peace and harmony under unity and mutual understanding. Located at the crossroads of the Great Silk Road in its history, it is still the ninth largest land bridge in the world, connecting the continents of Europe and Asia.

The majority of the population of the country is Muslim and there are various religious communities as well. The Constitution of Kazakhstan also proclaimed social harmony and political stability. Since 2003, Kazakhstan has been holding the Congress of World Religions every three years. The purpose of this congress is to establish a dialogue between religious groups to discuss global issues. In addition, the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation, opened in Astana in 2006, is a symbol of this ethnic and religious diversity (Thomas Helm, 2020: 7).

Justification of the choice of articles and goals and objectives

The given research topic is based on the increasing level of religiosity of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The need to study the

development of the religious situation in the country is related to the significant impact of religion on the socio-political and economic development of the country. The main aim and objectives of the study are to give a brief resume of the today's condition and further evolution of the religious situation, to consider the issues of religious "revival", the main signs and characteristics of the types and models of state -confessional relations in the country.

Scientific research methodology

In this research paper theoretical, historical and comparative analysis were carried out. The methodological basis of the interpretation of religion as a philosophical socio-cultural phenomenon was theoretically fulfilled in the field of religion.

Main part

There is no doubt that religion is an important part of society. Religion plays an foremost role in the growth of society, maintaining and strengthening the stability of Kazakhstani society. In this regard, the first article of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan states that the main values of the State are a person, human life, his rights and

personal freedoms. The Republic of Kazakhstan proclaims itself as a democratic, secular, legal and social state, defines its socio-political strategy and agrees with religious values. The importance of state-confessional relations increased for the state in no doubt. In turn, religious associations have established relations with the state.

Religion is one of the main determinants facilitating to national security and conflict resolution. Religion relying on the religious policy of the state works as a mechanism that unites the people, ensuring the integrity of society and the security of every citizen and state.

When we talk about the religious situation, we should take into account two levels: *religious consciousness at the mass level* and *higher religious institutions level*. If we analyze the religious consciousness of the masses, the Kazakhs, who say that everything in the world is «religious», in the 1920s, especially young people turned from religion to atheism, and at the end of the twentieth century, after independence and freedom of religion, young people became more interested in religion (Aitaly, 2011).

In the first period of independence, the attitude to religion in Kazakhstan developed around the civil degree, as well as at the level of state-confessional relations. This period was characterized not only by the establishment of civil society and a market economy as an independent state, but also by a religious breakthrough, that is the strengthening of traditional religious associations and the emergence of new «non-traditional» religious organizations unknown to modern Kazakhstan (Baitenova, 2010).

The term secularism means the separation of the state from religion or religious associations; equality of citizens regardless of religion; ensuring the right of citizens to choose and renounce religion; social relations in society are determined not by religious dogmas, but by the laws of the state.

Secularism and traditional values of a nation are the most main factors in the foundation of a whole nation. Today, our country is in an exemplary harmony in the conditions of spiritual harmony and mutual cooperation. One of the achievements of independence is the freedom in belief in the state, as well as the fact that representatives of denominations operate within the law. It is known that a number of tragic events have taken place in the country in recent years due to the supporters of the ideas of radical movements that have a one-sided understanding of religion. However, the events that took place on the part of those who could not see the peace and unity of the country did not undermine

the solidity of the religious situation in the country. On the contrary, he was convinced that interfaith harmony is well-established in our society and that unity is invaluable.

In particular, Presbyterian and Methodist, Protestant denominations, as well as Protestant churches such as «Agape», «New Heaven», «Baha'i», «Church of Satan», «Church of Scientology» (Baitenova, 2010).

According to the data (January 1, 1989), there were about 700 religious associations belonging to 30 denominations, and it increased to 3,206 religious associations by January 1, 2003. Among them, there are 1652 Islamic: including 1642 Sunni, 2 Shiite, 2 Sufi, 4 Ahmadiyya. In addition, there are 241 religious associations belonging to the Orthodox Church (230 of them belong to the Russian Orthodox Church), 7 Old Believers' churches, 77 associations of the Roman Catholic Church, and a number of Protestant associations. Non-traditional religious communities in modern Kazakhstan include: 5 Buddhist communities, 24 Hindu, 12 Krishna, 23 Baha'i, 2 transcendental meditation communities, 2 congregations of the Great White Brotherhood, 6 Scientological Churches, etc. (Ismael, 2019).

Uniting about 200 religious associations, the Association of Religious Associations of Kazakhstan was established in 1999 to protect the rights and interests of religious associations. At the same time, the New Apostolic Church of Protestantism, the Pentecostals, Methodism, Mennonism, and Presbyterianism are spreading in the country. The pentecostals were founded in the United States in the early twentieth century. The largest communities of this movement are located in Karaganda and Almaty. Presbyterianism is spreading in our country as a result of the missionary work of American and Korean preachers. The sponsors of these preachers are mainly religious centers abroad. There are more than 20 presbyterian associations in the country. Among them are «the Almaty Regional Presbyterian Church», «the First Presbyterian Church» and «Grace».

The Republican Center of the Seventh-day Adventists Community The Seventh-day Adventist Conference is located in Nur-Sultan. Organizationally, this association is part of the Southern Union of Seventh-day Adventists, based in Almaty. There are more than 70 Lutheran religious communities in the country. Evangelicalism is widespread in the country, mainly among the German ethnic group.

The Evangelical Christian Baptist Church unites more than 10,000 believers. Evangelical Christian Baptists Kazakhstan has formed an alliance of

evangelical Christian Baptist churches. The center of the association is in Saran, Karaganda region. There are more than 250 Evangelical Christian Baptist congregations and groups. Evangelicals have been evangelizing Kazakhstan and Central Asia until 2010 guided by the development plan.

We also consider the Church of Scientology to be one of the non-traditional cults. This trend appeared in the States in the mid. of the XX century. Founder Lafayette Ron Hubbard (1911-1986). He summed up his teachings in *Dynamics: The Modern Doctrine of the Health of the Mind*. The religious association of the Church of Scientology is officially registered in Almaty, Karaganda and Semey. The Church of Scientology has close ties with Scientological organizations in Russia, the United States, England and Australia.

Krishna Consciousness is one of the new religious movements in the country. Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977) was the founder of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, a branch of Hinduism. This religious movement is especially widespread among young people (Baitenova and others, 2009: 250).

«Baha'i» («bab» – gate) – a new cult, promoting the unity of the ultimate goal of all religions, the unity of God, religious tolerance, brotherhood, registered in Kazakhstan since 1994. The founder is Sayyid Ali Muhammad. The highest organization of this faith is the World House of Justice in Haifa, Israel.

The «Association of the Holy Spirit» (Unity Church) was founded in 1954 to unite the world Christianity. The founder is San Men Moon (Sun Myung Moon). Missionaries of the United Church, which has been operating since 1992, serve in more than 100 countries around the world. This church has various organizations.

As for non-traditional cults, in the early 90's there were more than 10 new cults, and now there are 160. Beliefs of the twentieth century, such as “the Krishna Consciousness Society”, “the Church of the Last Testament”, “the New Heaven”, and “the New Life Church” carry out propaganda work through the organization of various festive and charitable events (Boleukhanova, 2020).

The extremist group Hizb ut-Tahrir (Liberation Party) has been outraged and outlawed. Hizb ut Tahrir's goal is to disrupt the peace and stability of Central Asia under the guise of Islam, to the detriment of inter-religious harmony, and to establish a caliphate in the region. Also, «Al-Qaeda», «Muslim Brotherhood», «Taliban», «Lashkar», «Taiba», «Boz-Kurt», «Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan» and others. The activities of more than 20 terrorist organizations are strictly prohibited.

Religious and political activity for the dissemination of the teachings of religious organizations can be interpreted as missionary. The baptismal policy of missionary organizations is intensified and purposeful among the peoples of Africa and Asia. Missionary organizations are supported by government agencies, charitable foundations, non-governmental organizations, and financial groups in a number of countries, both materially and morally. The missionaries study the religion, history, customs, mentality, and psychology of the host country.

Many missionaries live and study the language, customs, and behaviors of the local population in order to carry out their ministry successfully. The missionary activity of Protestant and Neo-Protestant churches in the country has a negative impact on the religious unity and solidarity of our people.

In spiritually weak societies, especially the unemployed, those who have no place in life, those who are in search of spirituality, those who cannot bear the psychological hardships of personal and family life, and those who do not have a deep knowledge of religion, young people are especially susceptible to missionary propaganda.

Today, the most pressing issues in religious field in Kazakhstan are:

- the whole religious situation identification (the state needs to know the real situation in this area in order to pursue an effective policy in the field of religion, there are many false suggestions and stereotypes),

- the religious sphere development trends analysis (implementation of these processes allows to «apply» the positive opportunities of religion and avoid negative situations), the implementation of state-confessional relations (Burova, 2013: 5).

In this context, the prevention of such actions is very important. The First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in his Message «Kazakhstan – 2050» Strategy» said: a new political course of the established state» said: «We need to strengthen the prevention of religious extremism in society, especially among young people». The main means of preventing provocations, acts of terrorism and extremism by foreign religious movements is effective advocacy.

To this end, the State Policy Concept in the Sphere of Religion of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2017-2020 (Information and Legal System of Regulatory Legal Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2017) and the Countering Religious Extremism and Terrorism in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2018-2022 adopted by the competent authority was a document that provides opportunities for concrete

steps of the state program (Information and Legal System of Regulatory Legal Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018). The main goals and objectives of the program is improving the prevention of religious extremism and terrorism, aiming the security of man, society and the state from the religious extremism and terrorism threats, and of course formation of immunity against the radical ideology in society.

Traditional religions play an important role in the spiritual renewal of Kazakhstan's society. The universal and humanistic values of Islam, Christianity and Judaism have a special role in the establishment of interethnic and interfaith harmony and peace. Traditional religions, rooted in the historical past and nature of the people, serve to strengthen friendship, mutual respect and understanding in our society. The culture and spirituality of the Kazakh people are an integral part of Islamic civilization and the world. Although we look at the history of the country, it is known that Islam entered the Kazakh steppes not by force, but peacefully. The Central Asian Nomadic people, including Kazakh, have made an important and significant contribution to the development and renewal of Islamic values and Islamic philosophy, Islamic culture and art. The thinkers's legacy of the Kazakh steppe Abu Nasir al-Farabi, Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, Mahmut Kashkari, Muhammad Haidar Dulati, Yusuf Balasaguni gave a powerful impetus to the formation and development of medieval Muslim philosophical thought (Baitenova, Tuganbayev, 2018: 78) and kept on with Abay, Shokhan, Ybyrai and Shakarim and others.

It is important for Kazakhstan to fulfill the task of forming the Kazakhstani model of secularism according to the issues of improving the form of state-confessional relations as a secular state. In the modern world, the nature of secularism can be occurred in different ways, analysing the different models of secularism in different countries we can come to the conclusion that this feature of a democratic secular state is realized in accordance with its situation and development goals. Hence the diversity of the form in which it is expressed.

The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan consecrates the principles of freedom of conscience and religious freedom, equality of citizens of different denominations in the formation of their religious associations, the separation of state from the religious associations. There are also a number of other legal frameworks based on international experience in regulating the social activities of religion and religious associations. However, the status of religion, its real state and role in society, ie the status, scope and boundaries of the impact of

religion on the socio-political and spiritual spheres of society are still unclear. Such uncertainty, or its negative impacts to the current religious situation in the country, in particular, due to the emergence of new religious movements and trends based on questionable religious and spiritual norms and dogmas of religion and religious consciousness. Such extremist symbols can be manifested as religious fundamentalism and religious extremism.

As Kazakhstan is a secular state, the official ideology of the state is the most neutral to religion: it is neither religious nor anti-religious. The situation of religion in modern Kazakhstan differs radically from the states with authoritarian, totalitarian and theocratic systems of government.

Interfaith peace and harmony is a difficult issue for a multinational, multilingual and multi-religious Kazakhstan. Today, Kazakhstan is known to the world as the center of the world religious forum. Leaders of world and traditional religions gather there to address the most important modern religious issues.

The I Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions emphasized the importance of interfaith harmony and dialogue in the country and the basic principles of interfaith harmony and dialogue identified: tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, interethnic harmony and religious tolerance. These principles also form the basis of interfaith relations in Kazakhstan as it's stated in the Message of the Elbasy to the People of Kazakhstan: «We guarantee the equality of all religions and ensure interfaith harmony in Kazakhstan» (Message of the Elbasy, 2006).

Religion can be a powerful factor in unification and integration processes. To do this, we must look for common signs and principles, common foundations and common values, a unifying source, rather than contradictions in religions (Beisenov, Beisen, 2012: 39).

Results and discussion

Kazakhstan has a exemplary tradition in the field of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony. As well as, in Kazakh land existed various cultures and religions from an ancient time. For centuries, various religions, such as Tengriism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, Christianity (especially the Nestorian and Jacobite branches) and Islam, coexisted peacefully in modern Kazakhstan, that is, they were examples of tolerance and interfaith harmony. Therefore, Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev said: «... intolerance or religious fanaticism is alien to

us. This is a spiritual tradition, an openness to God's Word in any context. This is one of the most important foundations of interfaith harmony in Kazakhstan. We are known to the world for our tolerance, preservation of interethnic and interfaith harmony and dialogue. The growing ideological potential of our country must be preserved and developed».

However, this issue needs to be analyzed and considered from a quantitative perspective. The Islamic mind is not only acceptable because it is very high, close to morality, but also because some of the features of a particular culture are considered un-Islamic. On the contrary, it can be studied and weighed in order to benefit for the development of our culture. Therefore, it is important to remember the wisdom of the ancestors: «Learn from the good, stay away from the bad.» Islam, in fact, protects and strives for human interests. Therefore, it is impossible not to accept a culture that serves the interests of mankind. We must not be isolated from

the vitality and advanced culture of our century, but understand it as a natural phenomenon, take the right aspects and apply them in our actions and life.

Conclusion

As Islam is the core of the civilization of the peoples of Central Asia. By taking into consideration the positive experience of the countries and Islamic states, where the vast majority of Kazakhstanis are Muslims, the formation and development of the concept of secular principles governing relations between the state of traditional and non-traditional religions is a very relevant issue in society. This concept of secularism should be a concept that takes into account the best practices and shortcomings of foreign countries, far from the superficial and stereotypical notions of secularism in the discussion of the principle of secularism, realistic in present and future Kazakhstani society.

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