

## ISLAM IN MODERN RUSSIA: INTERRELATION OF TRADITIONS AND INNOVATIONS

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Islam in modern Russia has its peculiarities, formed in the course of centuries, connected with its spreading and adaptation to sociocultural Russian reality in imperial, soviet and post-Soviet periods. Not simple interrelations with Russian Orthodox Church also contributed to its formation. Regional, ethnocultural factors, customs, traditions of people, inhabited Caucasus, Volga region played an important role in perception and absorption of Islam. In this context one should speak about Caucasian (and mainly about Avar, Chechen, Karachayev and etc.) Tartarian, Bashkir forms of Islam manifestation.

Key words: religion, Islam, Caucasus, Orthodox, Russia.

Islam on the territory of modern Russia appeared earlier than Orthodoxy. Islam in Dagestan has existed since IX century, though one expresses the point of view of its earlier spreading. Such information is contained in researches of A.Z. Shikhsaidov, A.K. Alikberov, A. Kisriev. The history of penetration and spreading of Islam in Chechnia, Ingooshetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, the Karachayevo-Circassian Republic, Adygeya is reflected in the works of V.Kh. Akayev, N. Yemelyanova, S.A. Lyausheva. The famous theologian R. Mukhametshin writes about Islam condition in Tatarstan. The specificity of Islam in Bashkortostan is reflected in the works of A. Yunusova. The condition of modern Islam in Russia is in whole polemically opened in the works of A.V. Malashenko who has recently published some interesting books: "Islam revival in Russia", "Islamic alternative and Islamic project", "Islam for Russia", "My Islam" and etc.

Islam in Central Asia, Caucasus, Volga region has been existing more than thousand years, firmly established by different ways: by means of the Arabs conquest, mission activity and self-propagation. Islam in the Caucasus appeared in the first part of VII century that was connected with the Arabs campaigns in 642-643 to the North Caucasus and deforcement of Derbent, which during some centuries turned into centre of Islamic culture in the region. Taking into account this situation in 2012 it was proclaimed that Islam had been existing in Russia about 1400 years.

Islam in modern Russia represents a mosaic picture, where different forms of its existing coexist, based on that or other mazhabkh, directions and movements, ethnocultural peculiarities. Today its revivalist peculiarities are connected with internal modernization processes, external religious and political influences. Events of Gorbachev reconstruction in USSR, political and ideological processes, connected with dissociation of the given state, activated spiritually-cultural situation in Russia, experts began to proclaim about Islamic Renaissance, about reislamization (even pre-islamization) of the Central Asia, Volga region, Transcaucasia, and North Caucasus regions. Revivalism of Islam in Russian regions occurred in two directions on the base of current ethnocultural, spiritually-religious traditions and also under the influence of modernization and global alterations to Russian Islam, including such innovations as non-conventional movements for Russia (Salafism, Wahhabism, Khabashizm, ideology of Ikhvanstva and etc.) pretending to the new Islam reading, but aiming to political displacement of historically formed religious values. Interaction of innovations and historically formed religious traditions –was not smooth, it often had confrontational character.

Theologian A. Yarlykapov confirms that "the first Muslims in Caucasus appeared in the first century A.D" [12]. At this time Muslims could not be in the Caucasus, because they were absent even in Mecca, where the future founder of Islam, Islamic prophet Muhammad was born

in 570. This utterance – is a rude distortion of historical fact. It could be assigned to fortuity, sad mistake, editorial oversight, if its author would not commit outrage mistakes at the same publication. Then the author affirming that there were more than 70 % of Shiah in Azerbaijan and Sunni approximately 30 % more, stated that in Iran “overwhelming majority of inhabitants were Sunni” [12]. In Iran proceeding from statistics, situation with Shiah and Sunni was precisely the opposite. And this wrong utterance of the author could be referred to embarrassing miscount, if further in the text one could not find such terminological innovations as for instance, “new Islam”, “old Islam”, “universal Islam”, “genuine Islam”, “correct Islam”, “global Islam”, “traditional” and “non-conventional Islam” [12]. These terms, the content of which does not brighten, are used relating to “Islamic fundamentalism” in Russia. In its turn one cannot clarify what this phenomenon is. Meanwhile abundance of terms does not make the situation clear and vice versa confuses the eye of the problem.

It comes to light, that under the “new Islam” the quoted author comprehends the phenomenon of Wahhabism. But it by no means appears to be such phenomenon, as long as it represents religious political movement in Islam, emerged and formed in the first part of XVIII century, thanks to the activity of habalite alim Muhammad ibn al-Vakhab. In USSR practically nobody knew about this movement, its followers did not anyway express themselves. Specialist knew a lot of about this movement, but a mass of Islamic believers knew nothing about it.

One considers, that position of A. Yarlykapov is unsuccessful specification of A. Malashenko utterance, affirming that the main result of Islam revival in Russia consists in the fact that we deal with “new Islam and new Muslims” [6]. But there is no new Islam in Russia, all the more the new Muslims. This is a terminological confusion, distorting the concrete real facts, produced either intentionally, or because of ignorance of the situation.

There is no neither old, nor new Islam in the world, all the more in Russia, Islam is only one, but there are a lot of sects, movements in it as in Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism. Penetration of various Islam movements into Islamic environment of this or that country does not entirely denote appearance of “new Islam”, replacing the new form of Islam. Very often suchlike terminology confuses the substance of the matter, distracts from it.

Islamic prophet Muhammad at the proper time said that Islam would have 73 sects. Medieval Islamic theologian Ash-Shakhrastane notices that the prophet informed: “My community will be divided into seventy three sects, one of which will find salvation, other will die”. Specifying who will be saved, he replied – “people of Sunna and harmony”, and when he was asked what was Sunna and harmony, he replied “it was that I and my supporters kept to” [3]. He said that the part of his community would not stop to find out the verity. He also declared that “my community would not agree in delusion” [3].

The utterance of A. Yarlykapov about the fact that the North Caucasus possessed a large experience of local caliphate building is not considered to be correct. But where such caliphate existed? If one meant imamate of Shamil, then this experience was not so large, as the quoted author confirmed, because imamate had survived for twenty years. And this experience is considered to be quite modest. The affirmation of author that “the project of “Caucasian amirate” appeared to be successful was rather doubtful. It was not clear what kind of project was it, where it was realized?

The history of Islam in Volga region differs from the history in Caucasus. It penetrated not with the way of conquests, but by means of mission activity. The confirmation of this thought appear to be utterances of ibn Fadlan, Arab traveller who through all the Europe falling into Vikings, observing their way of life, participating in their war campaigns, reached Bulgaria (now the territory of the Tatarstan republic) and described religious situation among Bulgarians, the ancestors of the nowadays Tartars, contributed to the Islam spreading among them.

Islam in Central Asia was approved in the course of Arab conquests, by means of compulsion, fight against paganism. But, nevertheless, Islam did not manage to exterminate in whole archaic, religious faiths, they remained in ethnical cultures, composing together with Islam complex, syncretic spiritually-cultural ethnical system.

Islam among Muslims of Russia anciently has existed in the form of national (parallel) Islam, adapted to local ethnocultural peculiarities. Often their carriers were Sufi, acted in the quality of social inequity opponents, supporters of spiritual and moral self-culture. The most outstanding from them turned into popularly accepted religious advisors, they were worshiped after their death, and their depositions were turned into holy places of mass pilgrimage of their followers. And they still stay the same, attaching specificity to local ethnocultural traditions, adapting Islam to local, regional cultural forms.

Thereby regional forms of Islam were formed: Avar, Azerbaijanian, Bashkir, Kazak, Tatarian, Uzbek, Chechen and etc. In periods of Soviet authority Islam stood apart from the world centers of Islam and it functioned, realized as dogmatist, so ritual practice in proportion. The corresponding Islam lack of freedom influenced on its restrictive character of development and functioning. Various developments of Islam, its modernization, adaptation, tendencies to revival, politicization practically did not reflect on Islam condition in USSR. Islam in this country was abandoned, Muslims were devoid of ceremonial dogmatic practice free function possibility. Islam in USSR did not receive dynamics, characterized for Islamic world. Religious training, realized in the country, could not be compared with clergy training in Islamic countries. Seldom hafiz the deepest expert in Islamic dogmatist was one of the senior spiritual leaders of Muslims in USSR.

As V. Yakupov noticed, at the end of Soviet power resources of an official Tartarian Islam were extremely small – there were several tens of mullahs from whom only some had Shariat education” [11, p. 18]. Such situation existed in all Islamic regions of Russia.

Such situation, formed among soviet, and later post-Soviet Muslims, was a basis of criticism from the side of soviet, post-Soviet Islam supporters. To their number one can refer Salafists, Wahhabites, Ikhwans, Habashites, Khizbtakhriritsi. These groups are considered to be Islamic in Russia. Centers, connected with them, introduced the projects of traditional Islam improvement and replacement of it by “pure Islam”, creation of Caucasian caliphate. Such activity was observed throughout Russia. Islam politicization – process, connected with activity of non-conventional for country religious political movements, taking their source far from the borders of traditional for Russia Islam existing.

And this kind of situation generated conflict situation between so called Wahhabites and traditionals in Islamic regions of Russia, the ugly forms of which still express in Dagestan, Ingoshetia, Kabardino-Balkaria. As A. Malashenko noticed in Central Asia “chekists created “Wahhabite” cells, that gave them possibility to understand genuine views of Muslims and prevent the emersion of opposition”, so as in USSR recusance due to Islam was not fixed [6, p. 141].

S. Akkiewa, analyzing events in Nalchik writes that under the conditions of severest economical crises, unemployment of population, Islam in its radical forms can act as uncontested, consolidate ideology in significant part of population, especially youth. Politicization and structuring of Islam can represent the main danger, which can be controlled from outside by definite powers, interested in destructive processes<sup>1</sup>.

Nevertheless, though there are no real religious conflicts, one cannot deny some tensivity between federal centre and the North Caucasus. Some specialists from the centre of Carnegie, for instance, Aleksei Malashenko confirm the presence of “caucasiaphobia”, representing itself a large problem more than even some “civilization collision”. According to his opinion, the North Caucasus serves as a main source of Islamic and separatist tensivity. The question is not about culture opposition, but about political problem, which Kremlin and local pro-Russian elites did not manage to decide for the last two decades.

There is no doubt that Islam politicization is first of all activated from outside under the influence of forces, interested in destabilization of religious political situation in country. Law enforcement agencies proclaim this process to be traced and mark that: “Perhaps, the interest of

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<sup>1</sup> The Newspaper of the South. 2007. № 41. 11 october.

foreign countries to Islam on the North of Caucasus is not accidental". The statement about that all the Islamism researches in the region run after political goals, would be some kind of exaggeration, but it is worth to mention that a significant number of workers of different international organizations have visited the region for the purpose of status indexes clarification of religious and generally – Islamic structures" [4, p. 100]

Youth movement close to Wahhabism by religious attitudes recently appeared in Russia according to the common interest to religion and as result of mission activity of some foreign Islamic organizations. Organizational structures of movement were formed and Islamic party of revival, having its publishing agencies was established in (1991). This movement was spread in Karachayev and it opposes in significant, though in not so bright degree as in Dagestan and Chechnia, to "traditional" and "national" Islam. In their sermons-addresses (dauat, from Arabic, da'va) they appeal to the purity of monotheism, criticize (often fairly) ministers of traditional religion for deviation from the strict monotheism, for including of Sufi practice elements in liturgical ritual and etc., proclaiming all discrepancies with Coran and Sunna as "unallowed innovation" (bid'ah) and "polytheism" (shirk)<sup>2</sup>. In its turn, "traditionalists" accuse young radicals in neglect to customs and traditions (the special attention is paid to beards of young people, that contradict with norms of Caucasian custom - adat), in breakaway from Hanafiyah doctrine attitudes and etc. Speaking about notorious extremism and terrorism A. Malashenko declares that he flatly does not agree with Ben Laden and campaign interdiction from Islam according to strictly political considerations. Firstly, these people consider themselves as Muslims, and self-identification – is factor number one for religious and other belonging definition, secondly they bring up Islam attitudes to ideological and political absurdity [6, p. 43-44].

Conflicts, taking place between Wahhabite and traditionalists, composed the basis of Muslims religious political life in different regions of Russia. They had their own specificity in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, the North Caucasus, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod and etc. However, everywhere they had one general position - aspiration to discredit traditional Islam, official clergy, accusing it in neglect, absence of basic religious training. Similar assertions had under it the basis, determined by traditional faint training of clergy, which was historically formed in the country. Exactly for this reason some years later people began to create Islamic universities in Russia, for the purpose of professional Islamic clergy preparedness on the basis of modern educational technologies using, applied in the best educational centers of Islamic world, for instance, applied in universities of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran.

The other aspect of Islamic clergy training consists in their formation as conceptually, so patriotically on the basis of Russian identity. For these purposes 40 % of educational process is oriented to teaching in Russian. The aim of Islamic clergy training consists in skill to conduct polemic with religious extremists, opponents of domestic traditions, formed in anti-Russian centers of Islamic world. Many of these centers are private, the programs of youth education there have not so educational, but most probably religious political character, based on extremist ideologies.

Today the conflict which had taken place in 90-s in Chechnia between Wahhabite and followers of tariqah (Qadiriyah and Naqshbandiyah) was got over by policy of active revival of Chechen ethnonational traditions, realized by R. Kadyrov. However, violent measures, accepted in relation to representatives of extremistly oriented Wahhabite Jamaats, bring only temporary religious political stability, their public activity ceases, acquiring latent character. Having external distinctive and also slang features they communicate only between each other and involve in their circle the young people, taking interest to Islam, and yielding to corresponding influence.

In the Chechen Republic R. Kadyrov more than once severely criticized the activity of Wahhabite, Habashites, Khisbuttakhrits, proclaiming that there could not be another form of Islam except traditional, which the Chechen inherited from their ancestors. This position is not always uniquely perceived. It comes under attacks from the side of so called Salafists, consider-

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<sup>2</sup> Uzdenov T. A. Islam in в Karachayev // <http://www.elbrusoid.org/articles/dialog/360077/>

ing this to be delusion, deviation from the original Islam, which was preached by the prophet Muhammad. Tendency of religious youth radicalization appeared in Chechnia and began to undertake the certain activities. Some videos, proclaiming that there is a genuine jihad in Syria, appealing the youth to enter into ISIL (IS) for participation are spread among the youth. The conspiracy of the youth against the head of the Chechen Republic R. A. Kadyrov in the Argun city was revealed. In the Kurchaloy village the young Islamites burnt out mausoleum of Saint Yangulbi Hajji, motivating it as alms commitment. Preventive work strengthens with youth throughout the whole republic, it helps to explain the falsehood of Wahhabism, jihadism ideology, terrorist activity of “ISIL people”.

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*September, 6, 2015*