

TEACHING THE SUBJECT OF RELIGION IN MODERN UZBEKISTAN: REPRESENTATION OF CULTURE IN EDUCATION

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Abstract:

The article discusses the teaching of the subject religion in modern Uzbekistan, the representation of culture in education.

Keywords: religion, Uzbekistan, subject, culture, education, young generation, value.

Introduction

Political transformations in different countries of the world have raised the issue of the role of religion in education. Religious education is believed to contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of individuals and communities. In the modern unstable political system of the world, religious factors are beginning to play an important role in the social life of society, especially in the field of education and upbringing. Therefore, we should pay attention to the way religion is taught in modern schools.

In Uzbekistan, religion is part of the national and cultural identity of the people. A significant part of the country's population professes Sunni Islam. Muslims living in Uzbekistan are mainly followers of the Hanafi madhhab³³⁸. Public moral and ethical norms stem from Islam and play an important role in the spiritual life of the country's population. Nevertheless, there is no coercion on the part of the state to comply with religious rules and guidelines characteristic of Islam. The Hanafi madhhab is highly adaptable to the customs and rituals of local residents and the achievements of scientific and technological progress.

The Constitution of Uzbekistan declares that religion is separate from the state and for this reason is not taught as a separate subject in public and private schools. Public schools provide limited exposure to world religions, including Islam, as part of their "moral" curriculum. At the same time, students can gain more in-depth knowledge of Islam and other religions outside of public schools - in religious educational institutions such as madrassas or through special courses.

In 1991, the authorities of Uzbekistan determined the country's development strategy based on international treaties and conventions on human rights. Uzbekistan has declared itself a secular and democratic state. At the same time, religious activities were transferred to the jurisdiction of non-governmental organizations. In modern Uzbekistan, teaching religious sciences is a pressing issue in public life. At the same time, the main tasks of education in the field of religious sciences are to ensure that young people follow the principles of democratic development, as well as national identity and cultural and historical worldview. Religion is of



great importance for the spiritual enlightenment of Muslims³⁴¹. The purpose of religious education and upbringing is to instill in children patriotism, loyalty and respect for their homeland, as well as a love of its history, from which they can draw inspiration. Given this, it is necessary to pay attention to Islam and its values in the development of a democratic society and state.

In the era of independent development of Uzbekistan, a process of spiritual and educational revival began, which contributes to the acquisition of national identity and self-awareness by citizens³⁴². Islam in Uzbekistan is viewed not as a religious doctrine, but as a system of national and spiritual values that can have a positive impact on the development of society and culture. The main focus of the chapter will be on the role of Islamic traditions in the education of youth within the framework of national ideology. During the Soviet period, there was a one-sided and superficial understanding of Islam; its deep philosophical potential, capable of instilling the principles of high morality and morality that instilled in the individual a desire for humanism, justice and respect for other peoples and cultures, was not recognized. In Uzbek society, Islamic norms are so closely intertwined with culture, ideology, raising children and customs that it is difficult to separate them.

The state focused on increasing the cultural and spiritual significance of Islam in society, justifying its importance for the thousand-year history of the country. Therefore, in educational institutions, religious sciences or “the study of national culture” are taught on the basis of moral standards (akhlaq) to improve the spirituality of youth. In Uzbekistan, religious education can be obtained in denominational schools run by the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan³⁴⁵, as well as in general educational institutions that teach such subjects as: “Dinshunoslik” (Religious Studies), “Dunyo Dinlari Tarihi” (History of World Religions), “Tarbiya” (Education), “Odobnoma” (Ethics), “Eski Uzbek Yozuvi” (Old Uzbek script), “Adabiyot” (Literature), “Vatan tuygusi” (Feeling of Motherland), “Milliy istiklol goyasi va manaviyat asoslari” (National ideas and education), “Uzbekiston Tarihi” (History of Uzbekistan) and “Zhahon Tarihi” (World History).

This chapter is devoted to an analysis of the role of Islam in modern Uzbek culture, teaching religion at school, as well as the study of Islam in secular and spiritual education. In schools in Uzbekistan, the study of the spiritual heritage of great Islamic thinkers is considered as part of important knowledge for the younger generation. The study of the history of religions and Islam, the promotion of education and the encouragement of children to strive for science are at the core of the teaching of Islamic philosophy. Therefore, the state faces a large-scale task of increasing the level of religious education of young people and their ideological protection from radical ideas that are alien to Uzbek society.

Legislation in the field of religious activity and teaching

Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan have the right to secular education, regardless of their attitude to religion. Also, everyone has the right to receive professional religious education in the country’s confessional educational institutions. Citizens can be admitted to religious educational institutions after completing secondary, secondary specialized or vocational



education. Persons with religious professional education have the right to teach Islamic sciences in confessional educational institutions.

To ensure the normal functioning of the mechanisms of a democratic state, a new legislative and legal framework was created to regulate the relationship between religion and the state, freedom of conscience and the existence of religious organizations. In particular, the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” (1991) proclaims the separation of religion and religious organizations from the state and the inadmissibility of establishing any advantages or restrictions of one religion in relation to others. In addition, such legislative acts as the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (1992), the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education” (1997), as well as the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers “On further improvement of the activities of the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic” were adopted Uzbekistan” (2004), etc. Reforms carried out in the religious sphere during the years of the country’s independence created opportunities to raise the cultural level of Muslims and ensure their participation in educational processes.

The policy of the country's government and the adoption of the necessary legislative acts and orders have created the foundations of a democratic society, one of the main tasks of which is to protect the rights and freedoms of citizens in the field of freedom of conscience. Other important documents were also adopted: “On non-governmental organizations” (1998), “On the procedure for state registration of religious organizations in the Republic of Uzbekistan” (1998), “On further improvement of the activities of the Committee for Religious Affairs” (2004).), resolution “On approval of the Regulations on licensing of religious educational institutions” (2004). In 2021, a new version of the law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” was adopted. Article 8 “Education system and religion” once again proclaims the separation of the state education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan from religion, and also does not allow the integration of subjects related to religion into the curriculum of schools with the exception of denominational ones.

In Uzbekistan, the sphere of religious education includes three areas:

- professional theological education (madrassah, Tashkent Islamic Institute, seminaries);
- academic religious education in secular educational institutions (including secondary schools and universities);
- religious educational institutions (Arabic language courses and reading of the Koran), the purpose of which is to study religious practices that are of interest to the population and considered necessary for everyday life, as well as the acquisition of knowledge based on religious views on issues related to morality.

Today, professional theological education can be obtained at madrassas and the Tashkent Islamic Institute under the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan. In secular educational institutions of Uzbekistan, knowledge about religion is given on the basis of an academic approach. Religious education in secular educational institutions is carried out according to state programs: in secondary schools and higher educational institutions the courses “Religion”, “Odobnoma” (Ethics), “Uzbekiston Tarihi” (History of Uzbekistan), “Jahon Tarihi” (World History), “Dunyo dinlari tarihi” (History of world religions), “Vatan tuigushi” (Sense of



Motherland), "Tarbiya" (Education), "Milliy istiklol goyasi va manaviyat asoslari" (National ideas and education). Textbooks for these subjects contain examples from different religious traditions, which are designed to foster a sense of humanism, patriotism, respect for Uzbek culture, parents and kindness towards people.

According to the legislation of the republic, the inclusion of religious subjects in the curriculum of the educational system is not allowed, but subjects that provide information about religion are not excluded. This is due to the fact that in items that provide information about religion, information about the main world religions, including their cults and rituals, is presented encyclopedically, without preference for any religion. It should be noted that since 2019, the subject "Tarbiya" (Education) has been included in the curriculum of general secondary education. The subject covers issues of education, morality and universal principles of religion. Religion, culture and spirituality in the public education system of Uzbekistan

Serious reforms in the field of education are taking place in Uzbekistan. In recent years, the population's need to create a modern education system has been met, teaching methods are being improved and educational standards are being raised, textbooks are being updated, and advanced foreign experience is being introduced, taking into account national traditions and values. The importance of carefully developing national ideas for educating the younger generation in the spirit of national pride and patriotism based on the principle of "national revival is the beginning of national growth"³⁵² is emphasized. In this context, it is necessary to study in detail the Islamic heritage, which has made a significant contribution to the development of Islamic culture, science and philosophy, to protect the population, especially young people, from the influence of radicalism and fundamentalism

In connection with the above, a decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to radically improve the activities of religious education" was approved, in accordance with which courses "Reading the Koran (Tajwid)" were organized at the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan. According to the decree, from June 10, 2018, according to programs approved by the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, these courses are organized in eleven regions: the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Andijan, Bukhara, Surkhandarya, Samarkand, Jizzakh, Fergana, Namangan, Kashkadarya, Khorezm regions and Tashkent. To date, more than 22,000 people have completed the courses.

Religious education in secondary schools of Uzbekistan is mainly taught on the basis of theology, the history of world religions, ethics, old Uzbek writing, literature, spirituality, history, and national ideology. In the 1991-1992 academic years, educational programs related to religious studies were adopted for grades 2-3 in Uzbek-teaching schools. The following subjects were taught there: "Eski Uzbek Yozuvi" (Old Uzbek writing), "Odobnoma" (Ethics) for grades 1-4, "Vatan tuigushi" (Sense of Motherland) for grades 5-6, "Manaviyat asoslari" (Fundamentals of Spirituality) in grades 7-9, "Odobnoma" (Ethics) in grades 10, "Fundamentals of State and Law" in grades 8-9. For grades 5-8 and 11, the subject "History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan" was taught, which contains primary knowledge in the humanities and social sciences (religion, sociology)³⁵⁴. The current curriculum on topics related to the "History of World Religions" is taught from the first to the ninth grade and is covered in such



subjects as "Ethics", "Sense of Motherland", "Fundamentals of National Idea and Spirituality", "History" and "Literature". Two hours per week are allocated for these subjects in each class. The total number of hours devoted to topics on spirituality is 3.55% (ethics, patriotism and the basics of spirituality).

In particular, the textbook on "History of Uzbekistan" for the sixth grade talks about the Arab invasion of Central Asia, the spread of Islam, the history of the country during the Caliphate, the Renaissance in the 9th and 12th centuries. The works of al-Khorezmi (783-850), al-Ferghani (798-861), Imam Bukhari (810-870) and Beruni (973-1048) are presented as achievements of Islamic and world science and culture. In addition, in the literature textbook ("Adabiyot") the principles of humanism and morality are called the basis of national ideology and family education, forming a full-fledged personality.

It should be said that the old Uzbek writing/graphics was based on the Arabic writing, which is the main language of Islam. Old Uzbek writing has been introduced in schools in Uzbekistan since the 1991 academic year. In pursuance of the law on the state language, from September 1, 1991, new subjects were introduced in all classes teaching the Uzbek language. Old Uzbek writing began in the 2nd or 3rd grade, and in the 10th grade "Odobnoma" (Ethics) appeared, in the 8th and 11th grades - courses on the "History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan".

Official Islamic educational institutions

Opportunities for professional religious education in the field of theology in Uzbekistan are provided by specialized religious institutions, which are primarily intended for the training of ulema. Today there are 15 religious educational institutions in the country. Thirteen of them are higher and secondary specialized Islamic educational institutions under the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan. It should be noted that madrasahs are divided by gender. Under the Administration of Muslims of Uzbekistan there are secondary specialized Islamic educational institutions (two for women) and three higher educational institutions: the Tashkent Islamic Institute, the Higher Madrasah "Mir-i Arab", and the School of Hadith Studies.

List of professional Islamic educational institutions:

1. Tashkent Islamic Institute.
2. Higher madrasah "Mir-i Arab" (Bukhara).
3. School of Hadith Studies (Samarkand).
4. Secondary specialized Islamic school (madrassa) "Kokaldosh" (Tashkent).
5. Secondary specialized Islamic school "Sayid Muhiddin Makhdum" (Andijan).
6. Secondary specialized Islamic school "Khidoya" (Mullah Kyrgyz) (Namangan).
7. Secondary specialized Islamic school "Muhammad al-Beruni" (Nukus, Karakalpakstan).
8. Secondary specialized Islamic school named after Fakhridin ar-Razi (Khorezm).
9. Secondary specialized Islamic educational institution "Khoja Bukhari" (Kitab, Kashkadarya).
10. Secondary specialized Islamic school "Miri Arab" (Bukhara).
11. Secondary specialized Islamic school "Imam Termizi" (Termez).
12. Secondary specialized Islamic school for women "Khadijah Kubro" (Tashkent).



13. Secondary specialized Islamic school for women “Djuibari Kalon” (Bukhara).

In the system of professional religious education, the entry level is madrasah. To enter it, you need to pass entrance exams, which are conducted in the form of testing and interviews in secular sciences (history, foreign language). For admission, exams are also taken in religious sciences. As the main principles of state policy in the field of religious education, madrasahs train specialists with in-depth knowledge of the history and theory of the Islamic religion. At the madrasah, students are brought up in the spirit of humanism, love for the people, and devotion to the homeland. Graduates will become Mudarris-Islamic scholars in the areas of Islamic studies, Oriental studies and pedagogy, teachers of the Arabic language, as well as advisers on religious, educational, spiritual and moral issues at khokimiyats (representative authorities in cities, regions and districts), assistants on religious issues in regional and district offices of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, local government bodies (makhallas).

The educational process of secondary specialized Islamic schools (madrassas) is carried out on the basis of the requirements of the Law “On Education”, the national training program, standards of religious education developed by the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In 2017, the teaching hours of social sciences and humanities were increased in the curricula of Islamic educational institutions in order to increase their integration into the system of special religious subjects. For example, in the Zhuybori Kalon madrasah, along with such religious sciences as the study of the Koran, exegesis (tafsir), Muslim traditions (hadith), jurisprudence (fiqh), dogmatics (‘aka’id), morphology and syntax of the Arabic language (sarf and nahv), reading the Koran (mutala), secular disciplines were also taught. for example, Uzbek language and literature, history, geography, English, physics, mathematics, astronomy, calligraphy, etc. The madrasah also teaches cooking, sewing and gold embroidery.

In the 2019-2020 academic year in the madrasah education system, the number of hours of humanities and socio-economic sciences in the first year was: history of Uzbekistan - 36 hours, civil society - 36 hours, religious studies - 36 hours, Russian language - 108 hours, English language – 144 hours, mathematics – 36 hours, computer science – 36 hours, geography – 36 hours, pedagogy and psychology – 36 hours³⁷⁹. It should be emphasized, firstly, that graduates of secondary schools are admitted to secondary specialized Islamic schools on a competitive basis. Secondly, the humanities in the curricula of madrassas repeat the educational program of secondary schools. This is especially visible in the study of the history of Uzbekistan, religious studies, geography and other subjects.

As one of the specialists in the philosophy of Islam in Uzbekistan, M. Nuritdinov, writes, the main task of Islamic institutions is to train highly qualified personnel in the field of religion for the republic, who must meet the requirements of the time, conduct independent scientific research in the future, and connect the doctrinal foundations of Islam with innovations in science, have a broad scientific outlook, conduct a constructive dialogue with representatives of different public spheres, know secular sciences and European languages. However, in this area, significant changes need to be made to the curricula. Thus, although Islamic education includes the teaching of secular sciences, the methods of teaching them need to be reformed.



At the same time, in recent years, some changes have already been noticeable in the field of spirituality and education, as in other areas. Several decrees of the President of Uzbekistan have been adopted aimed at organizing and developing the religious education system according to international standards: “On measures to radically improve activities in the religious and educational sphere” and “On measures to organize and support the activities of the hadith school.” It should be noted that since 2017, the number of religious educational institutions in the republic has increased. The Tashkent Islamic Institute, the “School of Hadith” in Samarkand, “Tasavwuf” in Bukhara, “Aqida” in Kashkadarya, “Islamic Law” in Fergana, and the “Hadith” and “Kalam” schools in Samarkand were opened.

Conclusion

Religious sciences serve to educate youth in the spirit of cultural and national enlightenment. In secular educational institutions of Uzbekistan, knowledge about Islam and religion in general is given on the basis of an academic approach. History, philosophy, ethics, and moral principles are taught in general education schools. Thanks to the information presented in textbooks for secondary schools and universities, young people gain knowledge about humanism, tolerance and tolerance of other religions, cultures and nations. It should be noted that education is aimed at expanding the knowledge of young people. The education system is faced with the task of increasing publications of a spiritual and educational nature and increasing the population's awareness of the elementary concepts of the Islamic religion. At the same time, it is necessary to increase the number of printed materials published under the leadership of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan. Religious issues of various nature are covered by such publications as the newspaper “Islom Nuri” (Light of Islam), the magazine “Khidoyat” and “Muminalar” (Muslima)388 at the UMU. However, their circulation is small, and besides, these publications are found only in bookstores in Tashkent. The information provided in the magazines can provide answers to religious questions that arise among the population and ensure compliance of morals and ethics with the prescriptions of the Koran and Hadith. It would also be useful to organize a special free course in religious studies for high school students, the completion of which would be on a voluntary basis. It should reflect basic knowledge and ideas about religion and the spiritual heritage of great thinkers. Thus, the state now faces a large-scale task of increasing the level of religious education of young people and forming ideological defense against radical ideas that are alien to Uzbek society.

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