

TOLERANCE IS THE BASIS OF STABILITY

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Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) has declared the city of Tashkent as the world capital of Islamic culture in 2007. The reason for making such an important decision is the place the Republic of Uzbekistan and Tashkent have in the history of Islamic civilization, solicitous and deferential attitude of the President and the nation of Uzbekistan to the rich heritage of Islam.

As it is known, tolerance, humanism, and peacefulness constitute the basis of Islamic culture. Exactly these qualities were always inherent to the Uzbek people. Representatives of various nationalities, religious beliefs and cultures traditionally lived on our land situated in the crossroads of ancient caravan itineraries of the Great Silk Road. We are proud of the fact that for over the period of our entire history there have never been conflicts on religious or racial grounds. Tolerance and humanism are strongly exemplified in announcement of the year 2007 as the Year of Social Protection by the President of our country, and in today's peaceful residence of representatives of more than 130 nationalities and nations, 16 religious confessions in independent Uzbekistan.

As it was reported earlier, on March 12 the international roundtable discussion on the topic "Islam and tolerance. The example of Uzbekistan" took place at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the UNESCO Office in Uzbekistan, UNDP and UWED have organized this event.

Heads of diplomatic missions, representatives of embassies, a number of international organizations and funds accredited in Tashkent, deputies of Oliy Majlis, heads of large religious confessions in Uzbekistan, representatives of expert and academic communities of the republic, of local and foreign mass media took part at the roundtable discussion.

The State Advisor to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan B.Abdukhalimov, who opened the forum, has said that the announcement of Tashkent as the world capital of Islamic culture in 2007 made by ISESCO, which is one of the structures of the Organization of Islamic Conference, is a recognition of merits of Uzbekistan beyond the Islamic culture and science in preserving the world culture, monuments and further enriching the Islamic heritage. Mr. Abdukhalimov also considered the issues vis-à-vis interfaith and international accord in Uzbekistan, peculiarities of formation and development of the Uzbek model of an enlightened Islam, as well as its interaction with other religions and confessions of the republic.

The Head of the UNESCO Office in Uzbekistan Barry Lane read out the Message to the participants of the roundtable on behalf of the UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura. "The announcement of Tashkent as the world capital of Islamic culture was a logical continuation of ideas reflected in the Tashkent Declaration on tolerance adopted at the International UNESCO Congress on interfaith dialog and the world culture in 2000 held on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov", – said the Message.

"Today we honor beautiful and ancient Tashkent, where the representatives of various religions and nationalities live side by side in peace and accord and where the feelings of spirituality and religious tolerance exist from the times immemorial. Being the place where a lot of peace agreements were signed, Tashkent entirely deserves the title of a city of Peace.

Religions can and must play an important role in the life of the society in order to purify the human soul, develop values of kindness, tolerance and compassion among people, preserve peace and promote mutual understanding among representatives of various cultures and religions.

In today's world of different contradictions it is essential to replace the "conflict of civilizations" by the dialog among cultures. Representatives of the world religions and those who teach them play a key role in bridging of understanding among the people of various cultures and beliefs, as well as in common struggle against violence and oppression.

Uzbekistan has a special place in the history of the world civilization where from the earliest times a great number of world religions were developed and spread. The fact that people of various religious denominations live in peace and accord and closely communicate with the large Muslim community is another proof that the essence of all religions is to promote the high spirituality and kindness.

From the very beginning of its close cooperation with Uzbekistan, UNESCO has been developing its joint programs directed at preserving the unique cultural and scientific heritage of the country. Tashkent was the place where a lot of innovative projects of this international organization have been launched such as ceremonial welcome of the Executive Committee of UNESCO on the world culture, the International Congress on interfaith dialog and the world culture, the International Conference on the role of Sufism in the inter-religious dialog, and a many other forums on education, science and culture.

UNESCO is proud that it has supported the initiatives of the Government of Uzbekistan to celebrate the 1225th anniversary of Imam Al-Bukhari in 1998, the 2700th anniversary of creation of “Avesta” in 2001 and the 900th anniversary of Abdulkhalik al-Ghijduvani in 2003” – the Message read.

Besides, UNESCO alongside with the Government of Uzbekistan participated in the projects on preservation and promotion of not only the Islamic heritage, but also monuments of Buddhist heritage in Fayaz-tepa in Surkhandarya Province, and Jewish heritage in the reconstructed historical house in Bukhara, which is the museum of Bukhara Jews culture.

The unique rarities preserved in Tashkent, in particular the holy Quran of Osman as well as the collection of manuscripts at the Abu Raikhon Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies are included in the international register of the UNESCO Peace Memory program. In this context, Mr. Barry Lane has underscored that we are very much glad that at the moment the new museum where the Quran of Osman will be kept is being constructed by the Government of Uzbekistan in the historical center of the old Tashkent near the complex of Khazrat Imam.

Emphasizing the importance of preserving value of various religions Uzbekistan is also carefully preserving the heritage of Islamic religion. The UNESCO Director General during his visit to Uzbekistan in September 2006 paid a tribute to an outstanding contribution of the Uzbek Government to preserving the heritage of the world’s material and non-material culture, promoting the world’s culture via intercultural and interfaith dialog.

This year the UNESCO Executive Committee and the 34th UNESCO General Conference will view the list of celebration of anniversaries, in which the organization will take part in 2008-2009. The celebration of 2200th anniversary of Tashkent was also proposed for consideration of member states the organization. “I hope very much that this proposal will be accepted and we will continue our cooperation on the way of preserving and developing various historical and cultural heritage of Tashkent” – told in conclusion of his speech the Head of the UNESCO Representative Office in Uzbekistan Michael Barry Lane.

While taking floor at the roundtable discussion the academician A. Rtveladze has spoken about the historical and modern significance of Uzbekistan in reviving the Islamic culture and science. He has recalled numerous works by the medieval and contemporary scholars in Uzbekistan, which are protected by the government. Mr. Rtveladze noted that “the history of Uzbekistan is great and peculiar and it goes without saying that it had made outstanding contribution to the development of the world civilization including the Islamic civilization.

The first international congress organized in France in 1996 under auspices of UNESCO devoted to the life of the great ruler, commander and statesman Amir Temur is one of the many examples of recognition of our great past by the world community. Without learning the whole period of Temur and his dynasty one cannot consider the world history. Uzbekistan is an example of historical development of global and Asian scale.

In Uzbekistan the fates of the world history were intertwined owing to geographic location of the country between Europe and Asia, Europe and Far East. At the same time, Uzbekistan passed cultural values throughout the entire Europe. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the role of Sogds and significance of the Great Silk Road.

The work on learning the history of Uzbekistan has been carried out until today since many things should be investigated and the correct and fair analysis on the country’s place and role in the world history should be given. Foreign researchers understand this too. So the support of close scientific contacts with Austrian researchers in the field of numismatics exemplifies this fact. Three French and three Japanese archeological expeditions have been continuing their job. Australian

scientists from Sidney University have been exploring the civilization of ancient Khorezm.

Mr. Rtveladze underlined the efforts of Uzbekistan government to revive and pass our historical heritage to the future generations.

Since gaining its independence Uzbekistan has held 10 jubilee conferences dedicated to outstanding and historical figures in the area of culture and science, a number of cities in Uzbekistan celebrated their centuries –old anniversaries. Concluding his address the academician E. Rtveladze has said that the “declaration of Tashkent as the world capital of Islamic Culture in 2007 is indeed a recognition of our great history and the present”.

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Egypt H.E. Mrs. Nadia Kafafi in her speech on “Heritage of Ahmad Al-Ferganiy in Egypt” has spoken about the distinguished role of Uzbek thinkers in the development and further evolution of enlightened Islam and its role in the establishment of secular sciences in Egypt as well as all over the East. “In the second half of 18th and the first half of 19th centuries A.D. secular and natural sciences started its intensive development. Many books on medicine, mathematics, astronomy, logics and psychology were written and were translated from Greek and other languages”, according to the Ambassador of Egypt.

At the beginning of the 9th century during the reign of Khalifa Al-Mamoun “Baytul Hikma” (house of wisdom), which was founded by him, was well-known all over the world and had turned into the academy of sciences of the East. There was a large library and observatory. Khalifa Al-Mamoun invited many scientists from different parts of the world to conduct research and do translations in the academy. Among them there were such eminent thinkers as Al-Khorezmiy (algebra, mathematics), Al-Ferganiy (astronomy), Jaber Ben-Hayan (chemistry), Al-Beruniy (medicine and philosophy) and Nasreddin At-Tusiy (trigonometric). “Baytul Hikma” had united about 500 scientists who had specialized in different areas of science. Construction of the observatory in Baghdad in 829 promoted the development of school of astronomic sciences there. Ahmad Al-Ferganiy had also made his profound contribution. The scientific investigations of the Baghdad school of astronomy served for over centuries as a basis for scientific works in Europe. According to sources, Ahmad Al-Ferganiy’s scientific heritage consists of eight works dedicated to astronomy. We’ll stop on two of them that have been studied from scientific point of view. The first work named “Basics of star sciences” was written in 840. In the 12th century it was translated into the Latin language. This book for a long time had served as a textbook on astronomy. It has been mentioned in “Divine comedy” of Dante. The second book was named “Ideal book about astrolabe structure ”or “Ideal book of Al-Ferghaniy”.

In the historical sources the year 789 is also mentioned as a year when this great scientist according to the order of Khalifa Al-Mutavak invented “Nileometr”, the tool used to measure the level of water in the River of Nile. “Nilometr” played an important role in rational use of water resources in Egypt and it functions till now. As a tribute of great respect to this historical construction and as testimony of centuries-old cultural and scientific links between the people of Egypt and Uzbekistan a monument to Ahmad Al-Ferganiy is decided to be unveiled in Cairo. “I would like to note that till nowadays in the capital of Egypt there are residential quarters named “Hadiqatul Uzbekiya”, “Sur Al-Uzbekiya”, “Hay Al-Uzbekiya” where in middle ages the caravans moving along the Great Silk Road stopped to rest. At the moment in “Sur Al-Uzbekiya” there are some bookshops where ancient and rare books can be found. This fact also verifies the solidity of our cultural links”, - has said in conclusion the Ambassador of Egypt Mrs. Nadia Kafafi.

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of India in Uzbekistan Skand Tayal appreciated the efforts of the government of Uzbekistan to preserve the enlightened spirit of Islam and development of progressive society. Ambassador S.Tayal cited some examples of high intellectual potentials of Uzbek thinkers, in particular, those who had lived in the period of dynasty of Babur in India and their creations, which are preserved up until now. “In India we highly respect an example of modern Uzbekistan in development of religious harmony,” - said the Indian ambassador, “the Uzbek people and government have gone out far from simple tolerance to other religions and ancient legacy. Uzbekistan has not only a tolerant attitude, but also accepts its entire of its ancient legacy – from Buddhism and Zoroastrianism to Islam. The celebration of Navruz as a national holiday and, at the same time, rendering attention to the restoration of Buddhist monuments near Termez – demonstrate the bright example of religious toleration inherent to Uzbekistan.

Deputy Metropolitan of Tashkent and Central Asia the Father S.Statsenko in his speech on “Tolerance of religions in Uzbekistan and comprehensive assistance to Orthodoxy” has said that people of 130 nationalities live in Uzbekistan. Most of the citizens identify themselves with different religious traditions, which at times differ radically from each other. However as practice shows this fact in no way impedes the joint residence of people in the same territory and to communicate with each

other, as well as to be friends. The unique feature of Uzbekistan is that here the special experience of not only confessional coexistence, but interfaith cooperation in different spheres of theology and common life has been accumulated. We now may share this experience with the countries, which enlist themselves among politically and economically prosperous countries.

It should be noted a special merit of the government of the republic in wise and well-considered attitude to religious organizations, which allows to introduce an additional element of stability and prosperity not only in the life of our country, but also throughout the Middle Asian region.

“The recent decision of the US State Department on including Uzbekistan to the countries where there is no freedom of conscience is an infringement of not only the norms of diplomacy, but if to put it correctly, is a step of violating the concepts of common sense,” – further said the Father Statsenko, “when taking a decision concerning the country that is situated far overseas it is necessary to approach with a high responsibility to the collection of analytical data, which is supposed to be done with the help of surveys and observations.. We may testify that there wasn’t any official or non-official inquiry to the eparchial office of Tashkent and Central Asia Metropolis of the Russian Orthodox Church vis-à-vis the observance of human rights and freedoms among orthodox believers. Though a simple logic hints about the need to learn the views on this issue of the largest faith after Islam in Uzbekistan.

The Father Statsenko expressed an anxiety about the growing number of different missionary organizations, in particular, the sects. “It is not a secret that from the very beginning many of the similar organizations are financed by Western Europe and the United States. Hence it logically follows that the sects must fulfill any orders of their “benefactors”. On the next stage, when the quantity of adherents increases the sects turn into to self-financing. The sects just physically will not be able to survive without missionary work. Looking from the side of our Church, we were witnesses of that the toleration of these organizations, which cover themselves with the mask of religion, was more than a broad from the part of the government. However, as soon as the control over the execution of its own law was strengthened Uzbekistan was thrown with the squall of calumnies and charges. But that “very far abroad” signs in the self-weakness to destroy the stability of the life of the state, to break a friendship and constructive interaction of traditional confessions, historically settled on this blessed soil. The contemporary situation in the world teaches by showing the results of political-technological principle like “destroy and dominate”.

The Father Statsenko believes that from the declaration of the independence of the republic of Uzbekistan, the Russian Orthodox Church has also acquired an independence from the “guardianship” of totalitarian atheistic ideology. The regeneration of a faith among people and more than favorable attitude of the new government of Uzbekistan opened the most perspective opportunities for the orthodox confession.

“Our Church had received a full support from the Government of Uzbekistan: the lands were allotted, broad privileges were given during the period of construction, moral and material support was rendered from all the levels of the government. At the moment, many temples have been restored. Moreover, the temples appeared at those places where they had never been before at all. Now there is a new place to see in Tashkent - the building of Ecclesiastical- Administrative Center of Metropolis located near to Saint Uspensky Cathedral.

The second significant problem for the Church during the period of restoration was a shortage of staff of priests. It was not possible to prepare the highly educated priests. So Tashkent Ecclesiastic School was called to make up this shortage. In 1998 with the help of the government the School was transformed into Tashkent Theological Seminary, where the students get a complete high theological education. This year we have the fifth graduation of the students. It is necessary to note the fact that the Theological Seminary appeared firstly in Central Asia for over the period of an entire history. This fact is very significant”, - concluded the Father S.Statsenko.

“When I am asked about how the Orthodox Church may exist in depths of Asia, I want only to smile leniently. How can one characterize the relations between Islam and Church in Uzbekistan? And how in another way one may characterize the attitude to orthodoxy if not as friendship, utmost help and support”.

Concluding his address S.Statsenko cited from joint document “Address to all believers of both religions living in the region” of the heads of Islam and Orthodox clergies of the countries of Central Asia, which was one of the final documents at the international Christian-Muslim conference “To live jointly under the same sky” held in 1995 in Tashkent.

We have a general interest to strengthen the spirit of Islam among Muslims and the spirit of Orthodoxy among the Slavs in Central Asia since these beliefs are holy legacy of our ancestors. Muslims and members of the Orthodox Church see a general task in creating of prosperous, highly morale, and spiritually enlightened societies in their native countries.

We are for the religious freedom; however we are anxious when the growing number of foreign missionary organizations abuses it. We are worried about their actions, which carry the split, about their negligence towards our culture and traditions, about their aggressive religious propaganda, and that they use material needs of people in the aims of proselytism.

Islam and Orthodoxy figures acting as kind neighbors and sincere collaborators in strengthening of our countries are resolutely stand ready for the struggle against any kind of distortion of the manners of our great world religions”, - the Father Statsenko said.

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of France in Uzbekistan in his address “Islam in France and the problem of terrorism” has analyzed the current situation in France vis-à-vis the recent disorders and problems of adaptation of the Muslim youth in the streets of Paris and other cities. He has emphasized the need to ignore the opinion of some experts about the alleged Islamic basics of the problem. He has also stressed all the importance to study its social and economic elements.

In his opinion, “France has the biggest Muslim community in Europe, on the one hand, - and this religion is the second biggest in France after Catholic. There are about 5 million Muslims among more than 60 million of population in France. This is a new fact in the history of French society and quite natural that it causes the problems of adaptation. But there is no link between Islam and terrorism in France and our authorities are doing their best to integrate this considerable Muslim community into the French society both socially and economically to prevent the sense of discrimination, which may cause violence and extremism,” - said Jean Bernard Art.

The French envoy also noted that the issues of coexistence of cultures and different lifestyles concern the considerable part of the Muslim community. However, France is a secular state. What we reject and what the French law forbids is intolerance, incitement of the religious and racial hatred, and call for violence. Sometimes this concept of a secular state suggests some problems.

One of the problems of the Muslim community is a bad organization. Today there are only four big Islamic organizations in France, which participate as communicator with the state to resolve the problems, in particular, the problems of education of Imams (because, today many of our imams come from abroad). The French Ambassador underlined that in these issues we share the same opinion with Uzbekistan, where the authorities also pay a great attention to the education of the religious staff.

Jean Bernard Art mentioned the problem of Islamic (women's) veil (hijab) in French society and said that the secular concepts of French institutions do not allow wearing any religious symbols in public places and especially at schools. The problems with hijab have been considered for the last ten years in France. The law of 2004, which forbids not only Islamic kerchiefs but also all other religious symbols including Judaic, Catholic, and Sikh caused some misunderstandings and quarrels in France. It is necessary to state that we do not oppose the Muslims to the Christians; even within the Muslim community itself some people claim strict civil principles to introduce; the others - to develop civil principles in accordance with the development of French society. Jean Bernard Art also said that after the tragedy of the September 11, 2001 many people in the world and especially in the West began to link Islam with terrorism. This connection, in the opinion of French Ambassador, is unfair since Islam as well as other great religions appeals to tolerance and peace in the world.

The Head of Board of Muslim of Uzbekistan Mufti U. Alemov in his speech on “Revival of religious and spiritual values of the Uzbek people” has set numerous examples of how a profound attention is being paid towards preserving the Islamic heritage in Uzbekistan on the high governmental level and personally by the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov.

“Islamic culture in our country has centuries-old roots,”-U.Alemov has said, “it is reflected in our historical and cultural places of sightseeing, religious works, manuscripts and calligraphy, handicraft and customs. Since a long time, when holy Islam has enlightened souls of our ancestors, till nowadays our country has taken a deserved place in Islamic world as a result of the entire embodiment of all the criteria of this human religion into a life. National values of the Uzbek people have become harmonized with Islamic values.

The Islamic culture has material and spiritual manifestations. Under material manifestations we imply mosques, clothe,

customs and different events. Spiritual manifestations of Islamic culture cover belief, outlook and Muslim's character, and their tolerance to other religions.

It should be noted that Uzbekistan doesn't give in to any country in the issues of material and spiritual heritage. Islamic monuments in Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Urgench, Shakhrisabz, Termez, Ferghana, Tashkent and other cities of our country serve as a bright example of this fact. Adorning oriental ornaments and also their exaltation astonish every visitor. It is good that current generation continues traditions of national architecture of our ancestors. Congregational mosques built during the years of independence are the bright proof of this fact.

On initiative of the President of the Republic Uzbekistan such historical and architectural monuments as "Masjidi Kalon" in Bukhara, "Shahi Zinda" in Samarkand, "Kuk Gumbaz" in Karshi, and also memorial complexes of great thinkers Imam al-Bukhari, Bakhouddin Nakshband, Abdulkhalik Gijduvani and Burkhoniddin Marginoni were restored.

Declaration of Tashkent as a world capital of the Islamic culture in 2007 is a significant event not only for Tashkent, but also the whole Uzbekistan. I believe our city deserves such a glorious status and this is based on the two factors. First, our country is the homeland of such great thinkers as Imam-al-Bukhari, Imam-at-Termizi, Imam Nasafi, Abu Lays Samarkandi, Bakhouddin Nakshband, Kaffol Shoshi, and Burkhoniddin Marginoni, who had made a great contribution to Islamic culture and science. Second, our country created the original model of Islamic architecture, which is reflected in historical monuments of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Karshi, Shakhrisabz, Termez, Urgench, Ferghana, Tashkent, and other cities. During the years of independence the government of our country has undertaken a number of measures directed at thorough investigation of spiritual heritage of our land. Celebration of the 2700th anniversary of city of Karshi, the jubilees of great thinkers, and the preparations to celebrate the 2750th and 2700th anniversaries of Samarkand and Marghilan, respectively, may serve as an example.

The Decree of the President of Republic Uzbekistan Islam Karimov "On supporting the Public Fund "Hazrati Imom" (Hastimom) additionally confirms that the declaration of Tashkent as a world capital of Islamic culture is a special event. This fact also manifests the great attention of our Government to preserving the Islamic values.

The Complex of "Hazrati Imom" (Hastimom), which is currently situated in the "Old City", has turned into a construction site, where the big public betterment works have begun. Mausoleum of "Kaffol Shoshi", remembered as "Hazrati Imom", Madrassah of Barokkhon, which at its time had trained hundreds of scientists, the cathedral mosque of "Tilla Shayh", Library of Board of Muslims of Uzbekistan, where the invaluable copies of Koran exist, which are edited in different languages of the world, are located here. The Koran of Usman, which is considered to be one of the pearls of Islamic world, is also kept here.

Recent interview of the President Islam Karimov to the non-state news agency "Turkiston-press" has aroused feelings of pride and dignity of the Uzbek people. The President has explained in details the historical and contemporary factors of such a high status conferred on Tashkent, the attention of the government to the issues of revival and preservation of national values.

According to Mufti U.Alemov, the announcement of Tashkent as a world capital of Islamic culture should not be limited to the scope of 2007. "I am confident that our capital will keep this high status for many years", - the Mufti Alemov has said.

In the report «The interfaith and interethnic accord - a basis of stability in the society» the advisor-envoy at the Embassy of Russia in Uzbekistan V.Serazev has analyzed the current situation in Russia vis-à-vis the religious tolerance and highly estimated the efforts of a government of Uzbekistan on preserving the inter-religious stability in the country.

Unfortunately, according to Mr. Serazev, at the moment the aggression is dominating in the world as a way to achieve the goals. Only the behavior based on the tolerance, which leads to the accord, can withstand this.

Demonstration of tolerance is similar to respect of human rights. Here it does not mean the tolerance to social injustice, refusal of personal belief or concessions to another's beliefs. It means that everyone is free to follow his or her beliefs and recognizes the same rights of others. It also means that the views of one person cannot be imposed to another.

It is known that the establishment of peace is the main objective of any other religion as all religions aspire to people's well-being and happiness.

As the Russian diplomat said, a priority problem of the Russian Federation is to develop a democratic social relations based on the principles of tolerance; uniting all forces of a society irrespective of their nationality, the attitude to religion and confessional beliefs; strengthening the interfaith peace as part of the civil peace and the public accord; supporting the religious organizations which traditionally exist in Russia and are historical and a cultural heritage of its people.

Russia is open for religious dialog. The proof of this is a number of large international conferences on moral, tolerance, education, interethnic and interfaith dialog, which have been organized by Inter-religious Council of Russia for over the last years.

On July 3-5, 2006 the World summit of religious leaders took place in Moscow. Last year two other sessions of the Strategic vision group “Russia – the Islamic world” were held.

On March 5-7, 2007 the 11th World Russian National Cathedral took place in Moscow on the topic “Richness and poverty: historical challenges of Russia». One of the directions of the discussions, in particular, the “Interaction of religions and ethnicities – a condition of existence and prosperity of the Russian civilization», directly corresponds to our present discussion in Tashkent,” – Mr. Serazev said.

In his address on the topic “The religious tolerance is the basis of stability in the society” the Acting Chairman of Religious Affairs Committee at the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan O. Yusupov said that building of the democratic state based on the observance of universal values is impossible without an active civil position of the whole society regardless of religious or national characteristics of the citizens of our country. The fact that Uzbekistan is multinational country, the power of our government is a pledge of its great future. The factor of national heterogeneity of a society positively impacts on political and economic development of any country.

After gaining the independence, the attitude to the issue of spirituality and freedom of conscience has radically changed in Uzbekistan. Restrictions on religion have been lifted. During the years of independence the hundreds of mosques, churches, synagogues and prayer places have been constructed and restored. The Orthodox temples in Tashkent, Samarkand, Navoi, and a Catholic church in Tashkent, the Armenian Apostolic Church in Samarkand can be the examples of the above fact. The religious literature became more accessible.

Uzbekistan has chosen a secular way of development that is the religion in Uzbekistan is separated from the state and the state does not interfere with the affairs of religion. Besides, the legislation of the country has established the equal rights and duties to all religious faiths. The religious people in Uzbekistan freely mark all religious holidays. So, from year to year Muslims more and more widely celebrate Qurban-Khait (Eid-al-Adha) and Ramadan-Khait (Eid-al-Fitr). Christians celebrate the Easter and Christmas. Jews celebrate Peisah, Purim and Hanukah.

O.Yusupov underlined further that today in Uzbekistan 2,227 religious organizations of 16 confessions are registered. Out of them Muslim organizations constitute 2,046, which makes up 92 percent of the total.

Besides, there are 165 Christian organizations, 8 Jewish communities, 6 Bahai Communities, one society of Krishnaites and one Buddhist temple in Uzbekistan.

The system of religious education in the country includes the Tashkent Islamic Institute, 10 Madrassah, Orthodox and Protestant seminaries. As an example of harmonization of secular and spiritual-theological traditions O.Yusupov spoke about the activity of the Tashkent Islamic University founded in 1999 on the initiative of the leadership of Uzbekistan.

On August 22, 2003 the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted the Decree “On rendering the social assistance and privileges in further development of spiritual, enlightenment and educational activities in the sphere of religion”.

Each year with the comprehensive aid of the government of the country the believers make pilgrimage to sacred places: Muslims - to Saudi Arabia to offer Hajj and Umrah, Christians - to Russia, Greece and Israel, Jews - to Israel. In total, for over the years of independence more the 60,000 citizens of Uzbekistan have been provided the opportunity to go to Mecca for Hajj and about 200 citizens – went for pilgrimage to Russia, Greece and Israel, holy places for Christians and Jews.

There is a comprehensive assistance for pilgrims - the organization of special air flights, rendering the medical services, free

converting of foreign currency, reduced prices of air tickets, fast and unimpeded registration of visa documents.

O.Yusupov has emphasized that the state supports the interfaith peace and accord in the country.

Deputy chief mission at the German Embassy in Uzbekistan Bonn Rudiger in his speech “The study of Islamic heritage of Uzbekistan in Germany» has said that Islamic heritage of Uzbekistan is well known and well studied in Germany. Particularly, the German universities are one of the best educational institutions in learning the Arabic language and Oriental studies. The study of the Orient and Islamic religion are linked with the heritage of famous medieval scholars.

A number of German scholars of Oriental studies specialized on the study of Islamic culture in Uzbekistan. Among them - Burchardt Breites, Jorgen Paul, and certainly Ulrich Rudolf, whose book dedicated to al-Maturidy contributed greatly in promoting the Uzbek Islamic heritage abroad. The Islamic heritage of Uzbekistan is not only a theology but also is an architectural heritage of famous cities of the Great Silk Road. Germany provides assistance in preserving them while supporting the reconstruction and restoration works of the historical monuments of Samarkand and Bukhara. German tourists manifest a great interest to ancient cities of the Great Silk Road and particularly to the cities in Uzbekistan. - Germany is not only interested in studying the Islamic history of Uzbekistan, has said Rudiger. B. - We hold an active dialog with theologians and officials of Germany and Uzbekistan on modern Islam, relationship of religion and government. The representative of Friedrich Ebert Fund in Uzbekistan also participates in this process. In particular, for over the last years the fund organized several conferences and seminars and issued five books from “Samarkand-conference” collection dedicated to the modern relations of government and religion.

In his address Khudoyberdiyev B., the Director of Institute of Strategic and International Studies at the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, said that the declaration of Tashkent as an Islamic culture capital in 2007 confirms to the authority of the biggest Islamic school, the history of which begin in the works of famous scholars such as al-Bukhari, al-Termezi, Nakshbandi, al-Moturidy and other.

The rich cultural heritage of Central Asia which had existed prior to Islam greatly influenced on its further development. It was vividly presented in secular sciences of our ancestors. Ibn Sino, Al Khorazmi, Mirzo Ulugbek, Alisher Navoyi and many other great scientists, promoted secular sciences alongside with underscoring Islam as religion. This strong impulse has been still being as cultural factor up until now.

The principal bases of Islamic faith – tolerance – have been highlighted in the research works of the outstanding Islamic theologian – our countryman- al- Moturudi.

It is known that ten centuries ago he could overcome the contradictions of various religious sectors of that time and linked religious studies with the habits, customs and traditions of Central Asian nations.

These well-known people have become as one of those luminous figures of Islam by expanding and strengthening the holy canons of this religion. Upon this they could create the conceptual frameworks of an enlightened Islam that was enriched with comprehensive pragmatic outlook with their theological and theoretical concepts, as well as the examples from real life. This model, representing the harmony of spiritual basis and realities of life, has become as the main core of religious practice of our nation.

Conceptually it is worth pointing out the following priority aspects in the enlightened Islam. First, leaning upon the makhallya as to the traditional neighborhood community, the social basis of a Muslim community. Second, the orientation on the social activities of Muslims. Third, the value of civil positions in forming of the life activities of Muslims. Fourth, priority to the spiritual and moral orientations. Finally, adherence to a secular way in the spirit of Islamic culture and consecutive struggle against religious extremism.

The contemporary Uzbek model of Islamic culture is also being improved with the principles of development of domestic policy of Uzbekistan such as priority to spiritual and moral orientations, adherence to secular way in the spirit of Islamic culture and consecutive struggle in protecting Islam from negative effects of religious extremism and “ideas” of Islamic Caliphate that may bring this religion to absurdity of delusional concepts.

In the current world some forces are attempting to use Islam in their narrow and selfish goals as an instrument of political

struggle to influence the mass political consciousness. The outcomes of such interpretation lead to challenges and security threats related to religious extremism, xenophobia, as well as interfaith and inter-civilization conflicts.

Another alarm-raising fact is that the extremist and radical organizations of Islamic persuasion have expanded the broad-range propaganda and practical activity in European countries. Significant concentration of Muslim population in the European countries is not the only factor that contributes to strengthening of this tendency. The policy of those countries is also promoting this due to the fact their policies allow allocating the financial assets and accommodate the headquarters of various Islamic radical organizations legally on their territory. As a result, at the moment more than 700 central offices of different radically oriented parties and organizations are functioning on a legal and half-legal base in Western Europe.

Now it is impossible to deny the fact that Europe has become the connecting-link between the West and Muslim World. However the debates in Europe on “cultural dialog” with Islamic extremism to establish a mutual understanding are very indistinct, yet.

The European politicians and experts so frequently talk about the need of the search and incorporation of adequate models of building the relations with Islamic religion in order to provide a full integration of Muslims to a secular western society.

The successful experience of Uzbekistan on ensuring the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of representatives of various religions and nationalities, where the Muslim spiritual leaders play an important role, can be used in practice in other countries where these problems are presented as urgent, according to Mr. Khudayberdiyev.

The results of the international roundtable discussions on “Islam and tolerance: the example of Uzbekistan” have once again demonstrated that Uzbekistan is one of the centers of Islamic culture, its policy, first and foremost, is built on the bases of inter-religious and interethnic accord, considering the characteristics of establishing and development of the Uzbek model of an enlightened Islam, as well as its interaction with other religions and confessions existing in Uzbekistan.

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