

Opinions of the participants of the international practical-scientific conference "Uzbekistan's contribution to the development of Islamic civilization"

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Tashkent, 14-15 August 2007 - Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Director-General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)

The Republic of Uzbekistan, which has a great place in the development of Islamic civilization, has symbolized the universal and Islamic values. The reconstruction of cultural and architectural monuments in such historical cities as Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand and Khiva is a shining example of it. At the same time Uzbekistan is famous for its great scholars who left rich legacy in Islamic enlightenment. They, with their knowledge and legacy, are widely known as great scholars of science. The author of "Jome' as-Sahih" ("Sahih Bukhari") Imam Muhammad ibn Ismoil Bukhari, the creator of "Al-Kashshaf" – the commentaries on the Koran - Umar az-Zamakhshari, physician, physicist, philosopher and the author of valuable treatises such as "The Rules of Diagnosis", "Disease treatment and rare plants", "On India" Abu Rayhan Beruni and many other scholars are considered as prominent ancestors of this great nation.

Halit Eren, Director-General of the Center of Analysis of Islamic history, art and culture, the Organization of Islamic Conference:

Uzbekistan, as a country that have had an essential role in many development processes of and made a great contribution to the formation of Islamic culture in four continents, requires special attention.

During the process of the spreading of Islam, since early centuries, the cities of Transoxiana (Ma Wara'un-Nahr) and especially Bukhara was the center of gathering and keeping of Islamic manuscripts. These books (manuscripts) were brought from this land to Europe by trade routes. From IX-X centuries on science began developing with fast pace in this territory. Known as "Alfraghanus" in Europe, a scholar named al-Farghani was born in modern city of Ferghana and lived in IX century. He wrote "Elements" on astronomy, which was translated into Latin and studied with great interest in European countries of XII-XIII centuries.

Another famous scholar of this region, Abu Ali Ibn Sino, lived in Bukhara in XI-XII centuries and was famous in European countries as Avicenna. His greatest contribution to the development of science was his work "Al-Konun fi-tib" or "The laws of Medicine". In this work, Avicenna was able to combine the knowledge that was available in medical science of his time.

Avicenna's book - "Kitab al Shifa", consists of information on all disciplines beginning with philosophy and includes not only theoretical knowledge i.e. physics, mathematics and metaphysics, but also some practical knowledge on ethics, economics and politics. At the same time he was also considered an astrologist, physician and encyclopedic scholar.

A well-known scholar and philosopher of VIII century Abu Nasr al Farabi was educated in Bukhara. He tried to make a synthesis of psychology with the works of such scholars as Plato and Aristotle. As a result of his scientific research he made a big contribution to the development of science and became famous all over the world as "the second mentor" after Aristotle.

Throughout its history Uzbekistan has been a center of culture and science and played the role of a bridge in the spreading of knowledge. All this resulted in the wide recognition of modern Uzbekistan, which possesses a unique cultural and architectural heritage, by the international community. Its cities are included in the list of the cities that are considered as global heritage. Many books and manuscripts edited in this region are considered of high value and are being kept as

distinctive works.

Saleh Hashem, Secretary-General of the Union of Arab Universities:

For centuries the territory of modern Uzbekistan has been regarded as a crossroad of different cultures and civilizations. The territory of Uzbekistan has been a center linking West and East for a long period of time.

Famous scholars of Islam lived and worked in the territory of olden Tashkent. One can point out among them such names as Khaffol Shoshi – he made a huge contribution to the Hadith and the Kalam (research on Koran), Khoja Akhror Vali and Khoja Zayniddin - founders of a Sufi movement and some others. The greatness of this city can be proven by the fact that Usman's Koran, written off in the VII century, is being kept there.

Bukhara is one of the well-known cities of the Muslim world. A great scholar Imam al Bukhari was born there. His work "Jami as-sahih" made a big contribution to the development of the Islamic civilization.

Scientists of Transoxiana, creating a unique cultural and scientific bridge between Central Asian countries and the Arab world, played a unique role in the development of the Muslim civilization and created a strong foundation for stable interstate relations that was suitable for the interests of all nations living in this region.

The Islamic World highly regards the preservation and development of a cultural and historical legacy and the efforts aimed to celebrate the birthdays of our great ancestors by the leadership of Uzbekistan.

Dr. Ahmad Manzoor, Rector of Islamabad International Islamic University:

Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara are famous all over the world as pearls of Islamic culture. The scholars of the Islamic world have recognized these cities as the centers of science since ancient times and enhanced their knowledge with the help of their great mentors from Transoxiana (Ma Wara'un-Nahr). The Islamic world owes much to the Central Asian countries, and especially to Uzbekistan, which has managed to keep and develop Islamic tenets, contributed a great deal to the spread of Islam around the world.

Today, when there is much debate over the clash of civilizations, like other Islamic states, Uzbekistan could also, on the basis of its rich experience, propose the appropriate way that is not based on eastern or western radicalism but reflects faith and secularity.

Yoshiaki Sasaki, Senior academician in Tokyo Foundation, expert on the issues of Islam and the Middle East:

In the 1990s I visited Uzbekistan and I developed an idea about the greatness of the masterworks of Uzbek architecture and historical monuments and witnessed the beauty and grandiosity of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Tashkent. I was deeply impressed by the fact that despite facing different challenges in their history, the Uzbek people have been able to fully preserve their history, culture, architectural monuments and scientific legacy.

In the times when different organizations and forces are trying to undermine the Islamic values based on humanitarian spirit and to use its holy symbol to achieve their self-seeking goals, the efforts of the government of Uzbekistan to restore the peace-loving and tolerant nature of Islam requires special attention.

Islam, by its nature, is a very peace-loving and tolerant religion. However, it is unfortunate to see Islam being linked to violence and terror by the western world. One of the main reasons for this is that most people lack sufficient knowledge about Islam. This serves the interests of some forces.

On this occasion, I would like to express my trust in the capacity of Tashkent Conference to contribute to the spreading of the genuine essence and aims of Islam, to come up with and present to the world community new ideas, in the example of Uzbekistan, on the civil society regarding Islam as a peace-loving, tolerant, enlightening and progressive religion.

Akber Ozgen, President of the Pakistan-Uzbekistan cultural society:

Today the capital of Uzbekistan – wonderful Tashkent proudly bears a title – the capital of Islamic culture in 2007. I have pleasure to realize the fact that how Islam used to be and still remains the basis of moral and spiritual outlook of the Uzbeks. Indeed, the Islamic religion helped that the Central Asia preserved its spiritual uniqueness, remaining to be the major cultural and shopping centre throughout centuries.

The first period of prosperity of Maverannahr coincided with the time of Abbasids khalifat in VIII-IX centuries. At that time Bukhara became the leading centre of education, science, culture and art of the Muslim world. In the sense of its magnificence this city ranked with such cities, as Bagdad, Cairo, Cordoba. The great encyclopedic scientists, religious statesmen of the Islamic world were born, lived and did creations in Bukhara.

The second "golden age" of Maverannahr coincided with the time of governing by Amir Temur – outstanding commander and statesman who was able to create one of the most powerful empires of the middle period. The names of Amir Temur and its descendants are reflected on socio-political, cultural and economic development of medieval Maverannahr.

Amir Temur who defined Samarkand as the capital gathered in his state the most skilful masters, architects, the best scientists and poets, rendering his support in every possible way. Amir Temur's grandson Mirzo Ulugbek was the greatest astronomer of that period. Indeed, during time of temurids Turkic became the literary language in Turkestan. Outstanding Alisher Navoi did his works in this language, proving that by its beauty and richness it can compete with others.

Having got independence of Uzbekistan – passing only sixteen years – hundreds of mosques and religious schools – medresa were constructed and restored in the country. And the most pleasant thing is that along with Moslem communities the other religions confessions peacefully co-exist in Uzbekistan.

Ilza Lauda-Sirtautas, professor, Washington University (Seattle):

«The Uzbek people are famous for their magnanimity and tolerance, and the Uzbek soil for the richest cultural heritage». These lines were written by the American scientist Edward Alvord in 1989. He is not the only foreigner who admired "the magic reference of Uzbeks" during a short stay in Uzbekistan. Uzbeks can call it «Uzbekchilik» ("Uzbekity"). These words include not only customs, but also the norms and standards of behavior among Uzbeks. It is important to know, that these norms are based on century wisdoms, which allowed keeping national and spiritual identity of the people, despite notorious «national policy» of CPSU.

Muratali aji Jumanov, Mufti of Kyrgyzstan Muslims:

The territory of Uzbekistan is considered as one of the ancient cradles of civilizations. Great scientist-ancestors of Uzbek people had left after themselves priceless masterpieces - theological and scientific works, treatises and works of art. They were included in the number of geniuses of the world forever.

We owe to Maverannahr land, because this land has given the world many great "muxaddis" ("muhaddiths") (collectors of Hadis's of the prophet Mohammed), who made great contribution to the rising and development of the humanitarian sciences.

Among them, first of all, we should mention the main collector of Prophet's Hadis's, great scientist Abu Abdullah ibn Ismail al-Buhari.

We should also mention the outstanding scientists, such as Al-Xafiz Abu Isa at-Termizi, Al-Hafiz Abu Abdurahman Ahmad ibn Shuayb an-Nasai.

Great encyclopedic scientists, poets and statesmen of Maverannahr – Abu Nasr al-Farabi, Abu Ali ibn Sina, Alisher Navoi, Mirza Ulugbek, al-Xarezmi, az-Zamaxshari and others made incentives to the development of philosophy, psychology, sociology, ethics, economy, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, geography, philology, a history.

Scientists of the Muslim world unanimously support the opinion that religious and scientific works of Maverannahr's theologians and scientists, which were created in VII-XII centuries, are serving as the main sources for Muslims of the entire world to this day.

In this land the books with religious values were highly appreciated at all times. In ancient times these kind of books carried information about religion, theology and history, which was of great importance to society.

These treasures of spiritual culture were very appreciated, that books were kept together with gold, silver and jewels.

The careful attitude to the invaluable manuscripts, created during ancient times by great scientists, thinkers, poets, historians, who lived in territory of present Uzbekistan shows our deep respect to their contribution to development of a world civilization and reflects our aspiration to spiritual enrichment. As it is said in the Sacred Koran: «He grants wisdom to whom He wants. Who has wisdom He blesses too, but only wise men can realize this».

Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pasha-Zade, Chairman of Muslims Department of Caucasus:

Today independent Uzbekistan headed by outstanding political leader - President Islam Karimov, demonstrates fine example of magnificent prospects opened before the country that promptly develops and at the same time carefully preserves richest spiritual heritage.

I speak about it with pride because I consider this blessed ground as my second fatherland. I am happy that exactly here lived and created great Muslim scientists and thinkers Ismail al-Bukhari, al-Termizi, al-Khorezmi, al-Farabi, al-Beruni, Avicenna. I comprehended Islamic sciences, have received high religious education. Under the recommendation of my great master Ziyouddinkhan Ibn Ishan Babakhan I have been chosen 27 years ago as Chairman of Muslims Department of Caucasus.

The contribution of Uzbekistan to history of the Islamic civilization, formation and development of Muslim culture is so great that any, even the most representative conference could not reveal it in all wholeness.

Islam came to present territory of Uzbekistan with will of the Allah in second half of VII century. New religion has met here not cultural backward region, but on the contrary - one of most ancient centers of world culture. Islam has ability to extend its ideology quickly and become promptly consolidated in this territory only with continuity of cultures.

Through cultural synthesis Maverannah has brought the incomparable contribution to treasury of Muslim culture in areas of science, poetry, architecture, public and political thoughts. The first significant name both in Mathematics and Astronomy was the name - al-Khorezmi that is known to the European scientists as Algorithmus. From his name became the term "Algorithm".

Today Uzbeks have the full right to be proud that their soil has given the world outstanding scientists and theologians such as Abu Rayhon al-Beruni, Said Sharif Dzhurdzhani, Muhammad Ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, Abu Ali Ibn Sino (Avicenna) and others. The brilliant representative of medieval Central Asian science Avicenna has been recognized not only in the Muslim East, but also in Europe as greatest philosopher and outstanding physician that nicknamed by the coreligionists as «Emir of all sciences».

Hu Zhenhua, professor of the China National University:

Uzbekistan made a big contribution to the wide dissemination and development of Islamic culture by its ancient history and rich cultural traditions. It is well-known that Bukhara, Samarkand, Khorezm, Tashkent and other historical cities situated on Uzbek land played an important role for development of Islam civilization in Central Asia. As of development of Islamic culture Uzbekistan is much advanced than other countries of Central Asia. Indeed, this is acknowledged not only in Asia but also in the entire world.

Uzbekistan's soil brought up scientists who contributed to flourishing of Islam culture and preserving humankind heritage by creative activity. In China, scientists like Abu Raykhan Beruni and Abu Ali Ibn Sino are valued highly by their work to development of science and medicine. "Canons of Medicine" by Abu Ali Ibn Sina was translated into Chinese and has been being widely used for enriching Chinese ancient medicine.

Hai Shuying, associate professor of the China National University:

While looking at development of the history of Islam in China, we can come to the conclusion that: the motherland of the science about Islam and place for its preserving generation by generation is Transcaucasia - the current territory of Uzbekistan. And the cradle of theological education was Bukhara. Bukhara Muslims made a big contribution to dissemination and development of Islam in China. Uzbekistan is important in the history of Islam civilization in China.

Hee-Soo Lee, professor of Korean Hanyang University:

Having important cultural and geographic position in Great Silk Road Uzbekistan became pivotal centre humankind civilization and history. Since ancient times, high level science and technology together with rich cultural heritage and methods of commerce came from Central Asia to Korean Peninsula. The history of relations between Maverannahr Muslims and Koreans of Korean Peninsula were well reflected in 20 Muslims books wrote in IX-XVI centuries A.D. by famous historians and geographers like Ibn Hurdabiy, Suleyman at-Tajir, Masudiy. In particular, Ibn Hurdabiy was the first among Muslims scientists who wrote the information about living of Muslims population in United Kingdom of Silla.

Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarkand were mentioned a lot of times in the history of Korean by historical facts. For instance, Samarkand was recognized as the country where high quality emerald had been produced.

Islam astronomy, medicine, architecture, weaponry and other spheres foundations were widely used in Korean Peninsula. Most of the scientific and cultural achievements of Korean Peninsula of the medieval times were possible because of inventions and studies of Uzbek scientist- encyclopaedists.

Shirin Akiner, professor of Oriental and African studies at the London University:

Central Asian scientists were traveling all around Moslem world. They've studied and had given lectures in the leading educational centers like Baghdad, Damascus, Nishapur, Basra and Kufa. Many of them contributed enormously to Islamic philosophy and law, as well as to the development of applied and theoretical sciences (mathematics, astronomy, medicine). They are well known in history with their Arabic like names. The place of their birth is a good evidence of their Central Asian origin. Among them such prominent persons like Al-Beruniy, Al-Bukhariy, Al-Fargoniy, Al-Horezmiy, Al-Maturidiy, At-Termiziy, Shamsuddin As-Samarkandiy and Najibuddin As-Samarkandiy.

During centuries, notwithstanding all difficulties of political and economic overturns, that major tradition of art and learning has survived and continued to develop. Today the government and people of preserved that rich heritage, which is a source of pride. For a young state it was not easy to find resources for the projects on restoration the ancient monuments. Many historical monuments that in different times of the past were despised or even deliberately destroyed, which were almost on the edge of disappearance, now again exist in its magnificence. That process of reopening and restoration is a gesture of respect towards great heritage.

In the beginning of the 21 Century we see in Uzbekistan a bright, multisided, interdisciplinary rebirth of historical Islamic heritage of the region. We are the witnesses of repeated reunion of people with their cultural roots. Achievements of the past serve as an inspiration similarly as a source of pride for the present generation. It is important not only to Uzbekistan but also for the entire Muslim world because Islamic heritage of that country is an integral part of our common spiritual, cultural and scientific traditions that cover entire Muslim world. Therefore, the fact that the Islamic Organization for Education, Science and Culture have announced Tashkent as a capital of Islamic culture in 2007 that in accord with ongoing process in Uzbekistan of spiritual and cultural renaissance.

Amanullo Nematzoda, mutfiy of Tadjikistan:

The Soil of Uzbekistan is the cradle of statehood of the peoples of Central Asia. Cities as Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, Marghilan and others are the most ancient centres of Islamic civilization. Many ulemas (scientist) and great theologians as Bukhariddin Marghilani, Khodja Akhrar Vali, Mukhammad al-Bukhari, Bakhouddin Nakshband havd been living and buried on that holy land. It is pleasant fact that ancient monuments and holy mausoleums are ennobled and protected by the state and people. All these noble deeds are done personally under the leadership of the President Islam Karimov.

Sheikh Ahmad Tamim, Chairman of the Muslims Committee of Ukraine:

In Muslim world Uzbekistan is famous with its ancient history, rich and unique culture, as well as contribution to the development of world civilization. Tashkent could be named not only as a capital of Muslim world, but also a center of enlightenment. We highly asses measures taken by the leadership of the Republic of Uzbekistan in person of the President of Islam Karimov, aimed at preserving that invaluable spiritual heritage.

Tashkent Islamic Institute which's aim is to teach religious and secular sciences is an important part in wide popularization and preserving knowledge about Islam.

Enlightenment activity, preserving of the ancestors' heritage, deep learning, enriching disseminating Islamic culture and spiritual values are the guarantee of preserving and passing invaluable spiritual heritage of Uzbekistan to the future generation on the basis of deep knowledge that have become a contribution to the Islamic civilization. That is why a rare and the only copy of Koran Osman, which had been rewritten in 7 Century A.D., is kept in Tashkent.

We highly asses the role of Uzbekistan in the development of Islamic culture, and would like to extend our support to the initiative of the Leadership of Uzbekistan aimed at enhancing the comprehensive relations with Islamic world. We hope that the international conference will serve to the improvement idea of the international community of Islam. One of the main purpose of that project is to deliver to the international community the view that Islam is a religion of a high culture and morality, which has nothing to do with such concepts as "abhorrence" and "violence"

Dr.Kenneth L.Honerkamp, professor of University of Georgia, Athens (the USA):

For 14 Centuries the ethic norms make the basis of Islamic world's religious thinking. That thinking was not originated in a separate region or specific period time, but throughout several centuries being developed and supplemented common heritage of peoples and cultures comprising Muslim world.

Sufism has an important place in religious and historical heritage of Uzbekistan. That teaching is considered as a system of religious ethics and knowledge related to the development of internal world of a human being and his spiritual purification. During several centuries Sufism played an important contribution in forming and developing ethnic norms in Islamic society.

Sufism has become the result of the evolution of notions of famous Islamic scholars Imam Al-Buhari and Abu Mansur Al-Maturidi. Later on, by the effects of spiritual teachers like Bahouddin Nakshibandi, Khodja Ubaydulla Ahror and Alisher Navoi, it had eventually transformed into the religious moral teaching.

Tashkent, where that conference will take place, is the hometown of Khodja Ubaydullo Ahror (1404-1490), one of the outstanding scholars of Sufism. He posses significant place not only in the history of history of preaching, but also in the history of Islamic religion at all.

From the very outset, Islam has set as its final destination - building society, which would strive for goodness and exterminate the evil. Principles of spiritual education and clearance of spirit and body had played and are playing a very key role in this process by being a core that inspires followers the Islamic religion and strengthens their believe. Sufism with its great scholars, who on their example having demonstrated the way spiritual power of human being is suppose to be, created in the Islamic society the axis that rolled the process of spiritual orientation based on specific principles of religious attitude and serving for the sake of exciting inner human power and strengthen his faith.

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