

VIEWS ON THE ISSUE OF SHRINES IN UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT: The article discusses the fact that before the advent of Islam in Central Asia, there were cults of different religious views, and these customs did not lose their significance even during the Arab and Mongol invasions. It is also said that Sufism played an important role in the pilgrimage to the shrines associated with the names of Islamic scholars, that religious rituals were integrated with the ancient shamanic traditions and a new practice was formed.

KEYWORDS: Religious views, cults, early Islam, holy places, mysticism, school of Sufism, saints, worship, pilgrimage, customs, rituals.

INTRODUCTION

Before the advent of Islam in Central Asia, there were cults (idols, household items) associated with various religious beliefs among the local population. And among the locals, religious beliefs have been preserved in the form of pilgrimage. In later processes, such customs did not lose their significance even during the Arab and Mongol invasions. Once Islam was fully established in the country, ancient religious notions and their traditional way of life of the local population underwent significant changes. They mixed with new forms of religion and played a regulatory role in the lives of the local population.

Such forms of belief do not exist in early Islam, in later times, visiting saints and their tombs, shrines, visiting places of worship, killing animals, lighting candles, slapping and other religious rituals formed under the influence of local religious cults and traditions became widespread.

Muslim Sharia law does not mention visiting shrines, which shows that visiting the graves of “saints” is not legalized in Islam. According to researcher M. Tastanbekov, there is a fierce struggle between Muslim sects against the worship of “holy places” [1: 667-675].

THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

All the scholars of the four sects known as Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah have issued a number of fatwas stating that visiting the grave is beneficial and rewarding. For example, Hafiz al-Baghdadi says that Imam al-Shafi'i said: "I used to bless Abu Haneefah (may Allaah have mercy on him). I used to visit his grave almost every day, and if I had any need, I would pray two rak'ahs and then go to the grave of Abu Hanifa, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and ask Allah to make my need there, and my need would be satisfied." Sheikh Hafiz al-Jazari of the Qur'an wrote in his book *Hisn al-Hasan*, "The graves of the righteous are the places where prayers are answered" [2:29]. As a person confesses his sins, visits the graves of saints who are closer to Allah than himself, and prays to God there, Allah Almighty answers the prayers of those saints. This form of belief is called "wasila" in Islam. That is, in asking Allah for his needs, the servant mediates between a saint and himself [3: 271-272].

Commenting on worship, shrines and visits to holy cults in Islam, the French scholar D. Surdel noted that religious rituals were integrated into local shamanic traditions of worshiping saints, a practice that was accepted as a canonical practice after it spread among the peoples [4: 70].

To this day, there are opinions among various religious scholars that positively or negatively evaluate the worship of saints, but on the other hand, pilgrimage is considered important in the spiritual and enlightenment life of the local population. In this sense, it is in the example of Uzbekistan that during the visit to the sites of pilgrimage we can see its regulatory, mediating, healing and communication functions.

According to I. Goldtsier, prayer was considered important for some forms of the old faith to enter religion. While the Muslim population conquered countries and lands that had previously practiced polytheistic beliefs, M.B. Piotrovsky, on the other hand, notes that a visit to a sacred cult unites people's beliefs, ancient customs, and rituals. However, he says that in traditional Islam, which is not canonical, dogmas about the worship of intercessors to Allah have been spread. In "Folk Islam", such defenders claim that the so-called guardian, the cult of the guardian, belongs to pre-Islamic shamanistic beliefs [5:45].

M.M. Tastanbekov, who studied the issue of shrines in modern Central Asia, noted that the tradition of religious pilgrimage in the region was formed long before the advent of Islam, and that elements of worship remained part of the religious consciousness in the lives of nomadic people who called themselves Muslims. It is said that the faith implies the existence of a

symbiosis of “folk Islam”, so it is not ruled out to perform it through “holy places”, pilgrimage practices and rituals [6: 667-675].

In this regard, the Soviet ethnographer V. Basilov assessed it as follows, noting that with the help of this cult (pilgrimage prayer) pre-Muslim beliefs and ceremonies in the country were adapted to Islam, which allowed it to spread to new areas[7: 61].

It should be noted that Sufism [8: 521] also played an important role in the spread of the issue of pilgrimage to “holy places” in the territory of modern Uzbekistan. According to W. W. Barthold, although there is an official prohibition in the Qur’an (visit to the tombs of saints - S.J.), Sufism is considered closer to pre-Islamic religious teachings [9: 115].

For example, Ibn Battuta writes that the graves of many saints are found in every city in Central Asia. Pilgrims from all over the Islamic world visit the tombs of the saints in these cities. However, it is said that in some cities there are tombs of saints known only to the locals and circumambulated [10: 52-53].

Ethnologist S.N. Abashin also confirms this in his research, citing the fact that Sufism in Central Asia was a factor that contributed to the formation of the cult of saints. That is, the Sufis (murshids, sheikhs, pir, eshons), who were famous for their piety and deep knowledge, were revered as saints during their lives or after their deaths, and their graves became the object of worship [11:128-131]. Thus, the worship of saints by Sufis is firmly entrenched in social life.

Researcher A.V. Syzranov also commented on this issue, noting that Muslim saints and their places of pilgrimage in the Astrakhan region were formed in the Middle Ages under the strong influence of the traditions of the Central Asian Sufi school [12: 127-143], researcher V. Litvinov, He calls his worship of “holy places” and “places of pilgrimage” the “Turkestan model” of Islam [13: 45-54]. The results of this study show that an element of Sufi tradition played an important role in the formation of the cult of pilgrimage in Central Asia. It is obvious that during the heyday of Sufism, the number of visits to the shrines and tombs of saints, who are considered “shirk” in Islam, increased. At the same time, reverence for sacred lands left over from pre-Islamic ancient beliefs has also become a tradition. This shows that the remnants of pre-Islamic traditions have been preserved and given a new look.

CONCLUSION

From the above considerations, we can conclude that although scientists disagree about the emergence of places of pilgrimage, in the life of the local population pilgrimage is preserved as

an important phenomenon of spiritual and psychological purification and spiritual and educational function.

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