

consensus, the rejection of the forceful solution of social and interethnic conflicts.

KSENIA ATAMALI. ISLAM AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE. *Analytical Review*

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Abstract. The review is based on the analysis of articles dedicated to the dialogue between religions and related to a wider range of issues: relations between religions, society and the state. The researchers focus on the problem of the relationship between Christians and Moslems and the specifics of the dialogue between the two religions, and also discuss ways to achieve mutual understanding through interreligious dialogue.

Introduction

Religious and cultural dialogue is one of the fundamental issues in the modern world. The authors of the articles address theological topics, which should not be a source for an argument; issues of traditions and innovations; moral issues related to religious and moral education of coming generations; prevention of extremism among young people; development issues of the

day faced by both religions and society as a whole. Researchers review the views of those scientists of the 20th and early 21st centuries, who wrote about Islam in the context of interreligious dialogue. Having studied the concepts of Islam with regard to interreligious dialogue, the authors present their philosophical understanding of Islam in connection with issues of tolerance and understanding of an individual in different cultures.

The Modern World: Post-Secularity and Dialogue

Rawil Gaynutdin [1], PhD(Philosophy), Grand Mufti and Chairman of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims discusses post-secularity that emerged in the beginning of the 20th century. The author notes that on the threshold of the millennium, the global community was still partly in the illusion of secularism, since in a world that is becoming more scientifically and technologically progressive and profit-oriented there is seemingly no place for faith in God. In 'post-Christian' Europe, people started to consider themselves as empirical beings without a prospect of immortality and Divine supervision: neither atheists, nor believers, but mundane beings with their own will. Since then, however, religion has made a grand return to the spiritual and intellectual arena; the voice of world religions, and in particular Islam, has been growing stronger. Humanity is reviving half-forgotten and centuries-old traditions. In Russia, there has been two major scientific conferences on the problem of post-secularity: "The Sacred in the Post-Secular World" in Rostov-on-Don, 2017 and "The Religious Situation in the North-West: Religion in the Post-Secular World" in St. Petersburg, 2019. This proves that religion is becoming a subject of considerable discussion. Also, expanding contacts with people of other faiths and people raised without religion is necessary, since we all live in the same social space. There are slightly different pictures of the world and understanding of God in different religions, so these distinctions call for dialogue and

'translation' of meanings, even if people speak the same language.

The author starts with a discussion about Islam and Christianity. Since the Abrahamic religions have the same origins, on the one hand, it is easy for believers to find common ground, and on the other hand, it is rather complicated, because sharp disagreements among relatives are common. Muslims and non-Muslims must follow the principle *Love what is yours and respect what is others'*, since only respect can be the key to successful interaction, partnership and friendship, productive negotiations and joint efforts for the benefit of the whole society.

The author notes that people rarely think about a dialogue itself. Dialogue is a conversation between two people. A discussion involving several people is a polylogue. A political discourse where there is often neither dialogue, nor polylogue is a bad example of the inability to listen and hear the interlocutor. Dialogue between religions and traditions is a conversation where both sides are able to listen to and consider someone else's opinion with due respect and provide an adequate, amiable response. A different culture and a different faith should be valued from the start. Each religion is a bright flower woven into the fabric of the world created by Allah, and for each and every believer the flower of his own faith is the most beautiful. This is how Islam views other faiths. This kind of approach means that interreligious dialogue requires highly intelligent people and a delicate attitude towards a different faith. Everyone should understand early in life that we are all different, that we are not animals fighting for the upper hand in society. The author considers Muslims and Christians to be spiritually close, united by the belief in one God, allied in the desire to show kindness, generosity and forgiveness. Interreligious dialogue thus requires openness, trust and thorough knowledge of both religions. The history of interactions between religions has taught us many times that the separation between us and them was brought about by mutual ignorance and slander, leading to discord,

hatred and conflicts. The author believes that it is necessary to enlighten adherents of other religions about the ideas, traditions and rituals of Islam. Muslims would also be interested in studying Christian theology and ethics. Only knowledge gives understanding and rules out lies and slander. The history of Islam, as well as Christianity, is tortuous and complex, full of cruelty and injustice against different groups of people. Ability to forgive is an invaluable human characteristic. It is vital to forgive the history of your own and other people's delusions and mistakes, so that we can start over and enter into a dialogue. Any religion as a mundane social institution is translated into the deeds of imperfect people who can be ruled by their passions, and everyone who studies both their faith and religion of others should keep it in mind.

Interreligious dialogue is conducted at different levels. Neighbours of different religions talk about holidays and customs on a day-to-day basis; and at the conceptual level, educated theologians join in the conversation. It is essential that the interlocutors do not start an argument about whose faith is better. This kind of dispute only leads to an urge to disparage the views of the opponent and establish the precedence of one's own convictions. This kind of dialogue cannot result in agreement, since it is incorrect in the first place. Even general conversation on everyday topics should not be an argument, because the truth can emerge not from a dispute, but from a dialogue where there is an attempt to find mutual understanding, and the interlocutor's beliefs are taken seriously. Dialogue takes place primarily 'in a horizontal plane', both between spiritual leaders and ordinary believers. The whole process is conditioned by 'vertical linkages', since leaders set the tone and nature of intercultural conversation for their flock. The author notes that in Russia interlocutors in addition to differences have much in common, since they are citizens of the same state with similar background. Interreligious dialogue thus extends beyond solely doctrinal issues and touches upon general civil problems,

becoming a cultural dialogue in a broader sense. It should be noted that dialogue may take many forms, including newspapers and magazines, religious and educational television programs, various interfaith conferences, forums and organizations, etc.

The author notes that interreligious dialogue involves not only believers, but also non-religious people. They are inevitably engaged in conversation about moral and educational issues, customs, holidays, as well as legal, economic and political issues. The involvement of non-believers in the dialogue of religions is not propagandistic in the slightest; however, thanks to the amiable conversation between adherents of different faiths, a person might convert to one or another religion.

Discussing the types and topics of dialogue, the author begins with theological dialogue, which deals not only with some doctrinal issues, but also with the pressing problems of mankind in the context of each religion. The first topic is the features of religious ideas and their theological interpretation, and the second one is the modern world seen through the prism of a particular faith and in general. The author quotes Pope Francis, pointing out his acceptance of the attitudes of spiritual leaders of other faiths and ability to find common ground with them on the issues of interaction, friendship and brotherhood. Theological dialogue is not a prerogative of theologians but also involves ordinary believers who listen and read the messages of their pastors.

Traditions and innovations in the context of changing society and culture is another important topic of interreligious dialogue. It is also started by religious leaders who see social and cultural shifts clearly. Life molds both Christian and Muslim ideas to fit modern realities, which call for some acceptable changes in moral, ethical, social and ritual questions. Due to globalization, Islam can no longer be viewed in isolation from Western realities and the dialogue of cultures. It is crucial that interreligious and intercultural dialogues not remain in

retrograde positions, but also not deviate from the fundamental foundations of faith in favour of modernity.

The author emphasizes that Christian and Muslim traditional ideas on morality are extremely close; apart from faith, morality in both cases is closely associated with sympathy, generosity and magnanimity. Both faiths preach to all peoples of the world, and therefore rule out the idea of "God's chosen people" of any particular ethnic group or culture. Both faiths praise similar human qualities such as humility, honesty and courage, loyalty and striving for justice, kindness and mercy; and condemn falsehood and betrayal, narcissism and aggressiveness, drunkenness and drugs. Thus, representatives of the two major religions have no fundamental contradictions regarding their views on morality. Christians, Muslims and non-religious Russians value traditional humanistic culture of Russia, which opposes the ideas of absolute individual freedoms and permissiveness. The traditional Russian spiritual and moral values unite a multinational and multi-confessional country. The values are also included in the presidential decree on the national security strategy, thus promoting a productive conversation about modern education and preventing any manifestations of extremism based on the separation between us and them. Despite the fact that people usually correlate radicalism with Islam, Christians have also shown zero tolerance for adherents of other religions. There has been atheistic terrorism in the past as well. Dialogue on the prevention of radicalism is, therefore, another major task of interreligious communication. Both religions promote peace and encourage peaceful settlement of any problems via their representatives and organizations.

Dialogue on religious and moral issues touches upon a number of issues related to modern life, for example, the upbringing of children and their religious education. It should be noted that the moral aspect of intercultural and interreligious dialogue is relevant to the education and upbringing of both children and adults, since moral development lasts a lifetime.

Sometimes the experience of believers of another religion proves to be helpful and invaluable, and a sincere and open conversation reinforces the desire to repent and make a difference in one's life.

The author concludes the article by discussing the evolution of interfaith dialogue into a joint dialogue between religion, society, the state and business. By strongly linking financials and immorality, Pope Francis notes that some powers are working to create a new culture that serves the elite, and thus playing into the hands of financial speculators and raiders. Since Islam forbids usury, Muslims are hard-pressed to accept the fact that financial capital has become prevalent in the modern world. Therefore, Muslims should raise public awareness on curbing financial expansion and offer spiritual support in the medical and educational fields. It is impossible to halt informatization and digitalization in the modern world, and therefore the joint mission of Christianity and Islam is to ensure that future generations are not enthralled by social networks. Mutual agreement between religions on these matters paves the way for a joint struggle for spirituality.

Muslim View on Interreligious Dialogue

A.K. Toksanbayev [2], a post-graduate student of St. Petersburg State University, devotes the article to existing views of scientists of the 20th and early 21st centuries, whose area of interest is the attitude of Islam to interreligious dialogue. The author notes that the term "dialogue" originates in Ancient Greek and can be translated as "conversation" or "discussion". Socrates viewed dialogue as a Q&A format of conversation, while Plato used dialogue as a philosophical and literary form. Equality of interlocutors is the fundamental prerequisite for a dialogue. The author offers several views of scholars on the concept of dialogue, but notes that there is no precise definition. Thus, Austrian and Israeli philosopher Martin Buber believed that life is a dialogue between man and God, and man and the world, which manifests

itself in keeping the Lord's commandments. Russian philosopher M.M. Bakhtin maintained that to live means conducting a dialogue.

Many states and societies participate in interreligious dialogue, which has four types depending on its purpose, i.e. dialogue on peacekeeping matters, polemical discussion, cognitive and partnership dialogue. Peacekeeping interreligious dialogue seeks to resolve problems of social, cultural and religious nature; there are both grass-roots meetings between ordinary citizens and high-level dialogue between leaders of religious denominations, states, etc. Multiple forums and congresses provide a platform for high-level dialogue, for example, the Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which has been held once in three years in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan since 2003. Pope John Paul II, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, King Abdullah II of Jordan and many others have taken part in the Congress.

During polemical discussion each party seeks to prove validity and superiority of their dogma over the others. Thus, polemical dialogue is tantamount to missionary work, since the main objective is to spread the dogmas of one's religion. Muslims, Christians and Jews have had such meetings and disputes throughout history, and have been criticizing the other two Abrahamic religions on theological issues. The next type is cognitive interreligious dialogue with the purpose of getting acquainted with other religions, their dogmas and spiritual practices. The reasons for cognitive dialogue are frequently attributed to intellectual curiosity, the desire to understand spiritual experience and communicate on variety of topics. For instance, Catholic monks who take part in the spiritual practices of Hindus and Buddhists enter into cognitive dialogue. In Western Europe, Muslims invite religious leaders of various faiths to festive dinners during Ramadan, further familiarizing them with Muslim culture. The fourth and last type of interreligious dialogue is partnership dialogue, which is aimed at

combating global problems such as poverty, crime, extremism, terrorism, war, etc. In order to achieve their goals, believers of various faiths put aside theological dogmas and historical grievances.

The author cites the opinions of scholars on Muslim view on interreligious dialogue. Thus, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, an American-Palestinian researcher and philosopher, promoted the idea of Islamic approach to the establishment of relations between religions and cultures. He developed the concept of a 'true religion' (*Din Al-Fitrah*), which suggests that all people have an inner hidden religiosity and are part of a global religious brotherhood. Al-Faruqi believed that we should build relationships not on the religious basis, but on the basis of rationality; he maintained that the main goal of dialogue is to get to the truth. Al-Faruqi considered ethics to be a more suitable and universal topic for discussion in order to avoid theological disputes. The author discusses the concept of "dialogue of civilizations" proposed by the theologian and former President of Iran Mohammad Khatami at a UN meeting in 2001. The concept came as a response to the "Clash of Civilizations" theory by famous American scientist Samuel Phillips Huntington, who believed it impossible to avoid conflict between the Western and Muslim worlds. According to Huntington, dialogue demands openness and sincerity between the participants, ability to hear and listen to the interlocutor, desire to achieve mutual understanding and get to the truth. When it comes to the dialogue of civilizations, the participants should refrain from imposing their own way of life, culture, worldview, etc. on each other, and the main condition for a successful dialogue is tolerance. Khatami believes that scholars, politicians and intellectuals should study cultural and spiritual foundations of all humankind, and convey the knowledge to every nation. Some Muslim scholars also criticize "The Clash of Civilizations", pointing out that all the qualities needed for dialogue are an integral part of Islam. Thus, the Quran encourages people to take

interest in the traditions and way of life of others, and in the Sunnah the Prophet Muhammad engages in dialogue with Jews, Christians and even the Quraysh of Mecca.

In France, the researcher Merad Ali actively engages in dialogue between Muslims and Christians and encourages the two communities to bridge the gaps in order to resist a mechanistic society. He fears that interested groups may spur conflicts between Muslims and Christians with the aim of enrichment. The only possible solution is a dialogue built on mutual respect and tolerance. Speaking on the relations between Muslims and Christians, the author cites Mahmoud M. Ayoub from the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto, outlining the main pattern that has created animosity between the two faiths throughout history. Thus, Muslims accused Christians of misinterpretation of the Gospel, and Christians viewed Islam as a heresy, thus giving rise to hatred, mistrust and fear. Religious wars and colonial domination also had a great impact. For interreligious dialogue, Muslims and Christians should leave the history of their relationship behind and make an effort to understand what God says to Muslims through Christianity and to Christians through Islam.

The author discusses the approach to building interreligious relations offered by the Turkish researcher A. Betül. He views comparative theology and reflection on the Holy Scriptures as modern forms of interreligious dialogue. Despite all the benefits of studying the sacred texts of other religions, the Turkish scholar believes that focusing on texts and ignoring the rituals is the major oversight. He argues that an attempt to understand another religion through the prism of one's own faith is a mistake and impossibility, and therefore the interlocutors should clarify the concepts of their religions.

Prominent modern Russian scientists and researchers have also discussed Islamic view on interreligious dialogue. For example, the First Deputy Chairman of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims Damir Mukhetdinov notes that an

appropriate Muslim approach to religious diversity calls for an unbiased analysis of each religion and an effort to find divine dimension in it. Mukhetdinov points out the unique Eurasian religiosity in Russia, which, among other things, combines sincere search of God, spiritual temperance, pansacralism, flexibility, peacefulness and tenderness.

Quranic Approach to Interreligious Dialogue

The paper by A.M. Kakhaev [3], a postgraduate student of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, is devoted to analysis of the Quran and the Sunnah, which establish a dialogue between different religions and cultures. The purpose of the study is to show the importance of developing interfaith relations and to introduce the reader to the Quranic approach to interreligious dialogue based on religious tolerance. The author emphasizes the attitude towards representatives of other faiths during the early period of Islam.

The idea of interfaith dialogue emerged in the international arena in the 1930s. According to the author, interreligious dialogue means amiable communication and joint activities of representatives of different faiths in aspiration to reach an accord between religions and bolster the spiritual and moral foundations of society on the basis of brotherhood, unity, justice and religious tolerance. The main goal of the dialogue is peaceful coexistence and interaction between adherents of different religions, which is a must for a multi-confessional society. The author examines the accounts of religious tolerance and humane attitude towards representatives of various faiths provided by the Quran and the Sunnah. Thus, one of the verses declares the recognition of all one hundred four sacred books granted to the prophets, including the Quran, Torah, the Gospel and the Psalter. The Quran encourages Muslims to show kindness to all peaceful people regardless of their religion. Muslims' relationships with representatives of other faiths are basically guided by justice. The Quran affirms the

need to show initiative in interreligious dialogue between Muslims and the People of the Book (Christians and Jews). The dialogue with representatives of other religions is governed by ethics, wisdom, tolerance, reason and reliance on evidence.

According to the Quran, all people are created by Allah and are family descended from Adam. Differences between people are one of the reasons for meetings, acquaintances, cooperation and knowledge-sharing. The Quran acknowledges the close relationship between Muslims and Christians, calls for cooperation with the followers of other faiths for the benefit of justice and security. The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah between the Prophet Muhammad and the Quraysh polytheists of Mecca is one example of interfaith dialogue in the Sunnah. The Prophet also drew up the Constitution of Medina, which regulated relations between Muslims and non-Muslims and called for ending the hostilities with the Jews. In other words, different religions should not hamper the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The analysis of the relationship between Muslims and representatives of other faiths suggests that the Quran calls for respect for religious freedom. The Quran speaks of the imperative of interreligious dialogue and points to the unanimity between Islam, Christianity and Judaism. The life of the Prophet Muhammad shows the peaceful, ethical and respectful attitude of Muslims towards non-Muslims.

Conclusion

Throughout the existence of mankind, cultures and religions have formed various relationships with each other: there have been war and peace, theological disputes and persecutions, etc. Due to rapid technological progress, the world has changed over time and affected countries to a great extent, eliminating monocultural communities. Global processes have not bypassed the religious sphere. Dialogue between religions and cultures is essential, since certain interested circles politicize

religion for material gain, giving rise to radical extremist movements that seek to establish their own world order. Interreligious dialogue is studied in many countries worldwide.

Scientists work to find common ground with representatives of other religions, but at the same time stick to their own religious dogmas. There are various solutions ranging from organizing round tables between politicians and religious figures to studying each other's religious doctrines from the Holy Scriptures. The researchers conclude that tolerance is essential for a successful interreligious dialogue, and that result is closely dependent on the academic and political elites, which have a great influence on ordinary citizens.

Having studied Muslim view on interreligious dialogue, the authors come to the conclusion that Muslims are open to communication based on profound respect, where interlocutors are interested in each other's traditions, dogmas and the Holy Scriptures. Rational thinking is also essential for building effective communication between religions. In international practice, however, certain interested parties often politicize Islam and promote radical views, leading to a negative impact on the relationship between religions and cultures. Dialogue based on mutual respect and tolerance is the only way to prevent such situations.

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