
ISLAMIC STUDIES AS DIALOGIC PROJECT PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to consider Islamic Studies as a dialogue between the Islamic and Western Worlds, which forms the cultural identity of a modern human and his attitude to religious cultures and traditions. The authors of the article adhere to an objective position in Islamic studies, which allows us to reveal the dialogical content of Islamic studies.

Keywords: Islam, West, East, Turkic, world

1. Introduction

The humanities are dialogical in nature. Dialogicality is especially evident in the religious, philosophical and cultural branches of knowledge, since the author of them seeks to influence the reader in order to carry out successful communication in a space unlimited by chronological, geographical, or (in our case) cultural boundaries. The dialogical nature of scientific knowledge in general, and of Islamic Studies in particular, presupposes, on the one hand, the recipient - scientist's perception of the results of reflection of intellectuals and educators of the Islamic World who have had a discursive impact on the current state of the scientific industry and, on the other, the transfer of knowledge to subsequent generations and its re-interpretation. Thus, the dialogic nature of Islamic project contributes not only to the viability of epistemological approaches and traditions of ontological reflection, but also ensures their continuity, which is responsible for the preparation of the branch of knowledge for the conditions of modernization, which is almost a constant trend of society.

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Islamic Studies, deals with the formulation of fundamental problems, reveals the significance of Islamic cultural texts as existential, humanistic, ethical, aesthetic, and requires theoretical analysis, deep hermeneutics, since their dissemination is one of the tasks of this scientific field. Intellectual practice of Islamic Studies has given rise to the 'academic life' of many humanistic concepts. This discipline contributed and contributes to this day not only to understanding of the East by the West, but also to self-awareness of the West. The same practice inspired by look at the Self through the eyes of the cultural Other contributes to the self-reflection of the East.

Recognizing dialogicality as one of the properties of Islamic Studies, it should be noted that the subject of research itself, which is Islam as a religion and as a discursive tradition, has a dialogic nature. This is supported by Ethics, which was absorbed into the self-consciousness and regulates the attitude to the 'Cultural Other', which made possible the viability of the Muslim worldview.

The historical excursion into the development and formation of Islamic Studies as a fundamental science allows us to rediscover the value paradigms and attitudes that formed the basis of this knowledge, which could not fit into a rigid unified science, continuing to be a discourse of dialogue between the West and the Islamic world, since in the tradition of Islam, dialogic was an integral component.

2. Literature review - conceptualizing Islamic Studies

When the international scientific discourse refers to Islamic Studies, which literally means 'study of Islam', it is usually not the theological works devoted to the teachings (sciences) of Islam - 'Ulum ad-din, but their socio-political effect, as well as the rationalistic reflection of Muslim intellectuals on concepts inspired by religious knowledge that are taken into account. Researchers make a similar remark, pointing out that the study of Islam in the framework of academic Islamic Studies is not conducted in the context of the Islamic World, but in the context of the discussion of Islam as a subject of research by the West [1].

Before the formation of Islamic Studies into a discipline, and even before the revelation of the Qur'an, the Arab community was known to historical science for its trade connections. Later, they attracted attention due to the spread of a new territorial and ideological identity - the Islamic one. Religion is known to play an important role in the process of social transformation [2]. Religious polemics between theologians of monotheistic religions of the Middle East and the Mediterranean required awareness of doctrinal issues of the debating religious communities, which is why knowledge of religion (and nascent religious studies) acquired features of dialogicality. At the same time, it should be noted that as a 'Cultural Other', Muslims were represented for European Christianity, but not for Middle Eastern and Andalusian Christianity, which shared with Islam a cultural and communicative space, history, language and political culture [3].

The discourse of 'alienation' of Islam is already being read in the translations and interpretations of Islamic texts in the writings of Peter the Honorable of Montboissier [4].

At the same time, work was underway to translate the philosophical works of Muslim thinkers and the text of the Scripture itself, so the unique philosophical content of the Islamic Middle Ages made the Islamic World a civilization of Philosophy in the eyes of European researchers. This perception was reinforced by information from the Crusades, which brought to Europe the stories about the Ayubid Sultan - Salah ad-Din - and the foundations of the socio-political structure of the Islamic society [1].

Although the legacy of Peter the Venerable cannot be interpreted one-sidedly, because it is he who has the creative initiative in translating many Islamic sources, including the Latin translation of the Qur'an, by Robert of Ketton. Of course, the politicization of the Islamic factor in the works of Peter the Venerable led to a conflict of Christian-Islamic interpretations, but it is worth noting in this regard, an increased interest in the Islamic tradition in Europe. The Abbey of Cluny under him (12th century) was an educational centre with huge library resources. With the Abbey of Cluny begins the development of French Islamic Studies, which in the 20th century becomes one of the most brilliant areas of humanitarianism [5].

French Islamic Studies in the person of the famous scientist Louis Massignon makes a breakthrough in the dialogue of Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions. It was Massignon who defended the right of the Islamic tradition to preserve its own source and the ability to expand the existence of Islamic culture through Islam, without applying European standard methodologies. Islamic Studies in France, starting with Louis Massignon and his followers - Henry Corbin and others, developed a methodology of Islamic comparative studies, which opened up new opportunities for ontological problems of Islamic and Christian philosophy. In Western Islamic Studies, French discourse is presented by Sufi Studies, since its main representatives, including Massignon, devoted most of their works to a detailed analysis of Islamic mysticism. As an example, the works of L. Massignon, dedicated to the Sufi al-Hallaj, known for his famous metaphor: 'Ana al-Haqq' - 'I am the truth' [6]. L. Massignon's dialogical concept was based on the idea of religious harmony, which is achievable (especially) in the practices of Christian and Islamic mysticism. As a representative, most likely, of the Catholic discourse in Islamic Studies, Massignon sought to prove not only the existence of dialogue in religious traditions, but the need for its active promotion. Thanks to the work of Professor Massignon at the Sorbonne, Islamic Studies is freed from formally abstract and politicized methodologies.

The linear trend of Islamic Studies that had developed by the 19th century in European centres of Oriental Studies sought to use the methodological principles of transcendental-critical idealism and positivism, in which the basic principle was the principle of Western rationalistic science and its involvement in the Islamic tradition. Liberation from it begins in the 20th century, especially

in postcolonial Islamic Studies, which already uses non-linear methodologies, and distributes the Islamic tradition in a dialogue between the Self and the Other.

Islamic Studies are characterized by the understanding of the entire cultural process that has been carried out and is being carried out in the Islamic world as an intertextual one, in which the correlation with the Main Text - the Qur'an - occurs in co-creation with the texts of cultural historical memory. Islamic Studies as a scientific and educational process in the twentieth 20th is gaining popularity in Western European universities, where centres of Islamic Studies, Islamic Sciences are being opened. There is a reform in the teaching of Islamic Studies as a multi-faceted discipline that opens the prospect of Islamic and Western dialogue.

One of the most complex and informative disciplines in the framework of Islamic Studies is Qur'anic Studies, which revealed the form and content of the Holy Qur'an. Qur'anic Studies as a concept is introduced into scientific research by Western scientists [7], since Islamic scholars prefer the terminological use of 'Qur'anic Sciences'. 'Ulm al-Qur'an' became an independent discipline in the Islamic Middle Ages. The concept of 'Qur'anic Sciences' used by Muhammad Ibn al-Marzaban in the 10th century acquires a polysemantic character in the works of al-Anbari [8], al-Jauzi [9] and as-Suyuti [10].

With Islamic modernism, the process of educational reforms begins in Islamic universities, and first of all, it affects the teaching of Qur'anic Sciences. Western discourse in the Qur'anic Studies, as we have already noted, began with the Abbey of Cluny, and a Latin translation of the Qur'an. Since the 16th century, the texts of the Qur'an have been printed and published everywhere, the most famous of them being the Basle, Leiden, Rome and Hamburg texts. A distinctive feature of the Qur'anic Studies in the West is its critical methodological setting, dichotomous comparative studies. It is only since the 20th century that a non-binary, post-non-classical methodology begins in the study of the corpus of knowledge related to the Qur'anic Sciences.

In France, Qur'anic Studies became the basis for Islamic Studies as a science in the 18th century. With Napoleon Bonaparte, who made a campaign in Egypt, the expansion of the Islamic world and the politicization of Islamic Studies begun. However, the liberalization of French immigration policy in the 20th century contributes to another process - Islamization. Olivier Roy, a contemporary French scholar, writes about the formation of a new Islamic discourse in France that influences French Islamic identity. The scientist says that in Islamic studies, as in the religious practice of Islam, the spiritual need of society prevails, rather than the political component [11].

The problematization of religious issues in the 19th century by European research institutes of Orientalism required the development of a specialized methodology. This research activity initiated the differentiation of Islamic Studies from Oriental Studies in the 19th century. The widely accepted and deeply meaningful humanistic tradition (formed in the Middle Ages) gave an impetus to the study and restoration of the rich heritage of the Islamic Middle Ages, which is important on a global scale. This enthusiasm was reinforced by

an increased interest in the seemingly 'exotic' Other, which led to the flourishing of philological research and the study of the languages of the Islamic world, as well as geopolitical writings. At the same time (and we are talking about the turn of the 19th-20th centuries), there is an awareness of the postcolonial nature of orientalist constructions formed by Western cognitive discourse. The new anti-imperialist discourse, initiated by such researchers as Edward Said [12], Maxime Rodinson [13] and Jacques Waardenburg [14], has found its continuation in the Studies of Muslim intellectuals, emphasizing the need to be guided in Muslim countries by axiological guidelines and models of social interaction developed in the context of Islamic culture [15]. So, for example, Z. Sardar, emphasizing the importance of appealing to authentic Islamic values in the process of modernization, which affected the entire Islamic World, at the same time calls in his researches for a critical understanding of the dogmas developed by the Muslim Ummah over the centuries of its existence and 'layered' on the actual prescriptions articulated in the Qur'an (as the direct speech of God) [16]. The motives of Sardar's rationalistic interpretation of the Qur'an suggest an organic combination of faith and reason in the study of the world. 'Moderate' and 'middle' views of modern authoritative scientists contribute to the formation of a critical, dialogical and polyphonic character of the scientific communication space of Islamic Studies.

3. Methodology

The methodology of this work is based on the dialogical attitude as a whole, since the main goal is not a formal demonstration of Islamic studies as a discourse of dialogue, but a phenomenal one, inherent in the Islamic tradition. Dialogism as the intentionality of Islamic studies is substantiated by the body of Islamic studies, in which the quantification of knowledge comes from the nature of dialogue.

The interdisciplinary nature of this research has determined the use of a combination of comparative, historiographical, hermeneutical methods, as well as the method of phenomenological reduction. These methods allow us to comprehensively study the issues that are problematic in the study.

4. Dialogical potential of Islamic project in the perspective of future humanitarian studies

Integrating Muslim cultures into the global critical understanding of knowledge and values is seen as the main 'historical mission' of Islamic Studies as a humanitarian discipline. Researchers who marked a paradigm shift in favour of specifying the subject of research in the study of Islam - Josef van Ess [17], Theodor Noldeke [18], Ignacz Goldziher [19], Joseph Schacht [20] - introduced philological and historical-sociological approaches to Islamic knowledge. Methodological techniques undoubtedly play a primary role in the research of

the entire humanitarian heritage that has been formed and continues to be formed in the ontology of the Islamic tradition.

The authenticity of translation or semantic content, the phenomenology of translation or hermeneutics - these questions have even involved interdisciplinary methodologies in the orbit of Qur'anic research.

Well-known translations of the Qur'an made by G. Sablukov [21], T. Shumovsky [22], I. Krachkovsky [23], R. Blachere [24], R. Paret [25] and others opened the possibility of identification with the divine meaning. Islamic Studies contributed to the reconstruction of interfaith dialogue and the humanistic path of humanity. Dialogue in the horizon of consent erases the exclusion zone in the sphere of religion, creating a space for interfaith dialogue.

At the present stage, the main difficulties in the development of Islamic Studies are seen in following the orientalist traditions of the 19th century, on the one hand, and the emphasis on national identity issues of Muslim thinkers, on the other. The solution to the problem - the simplest and most complex at the same time - is to interpret the Islamic heritage from the perspective of universal culture and universal values, supplemented and expanded by the unique nature of the heritage of the Islamic world.

Western Islamic Studies in this area mostly contain either critical analysis or apologetic analysis. The expansion of the research field in the Islamic Studies of the 21st century is connected with the modernization and democratic processes in all societies. Freed from the binary, centred framework, Islamic discourse is involved in reflection on all (existing) social, political and cultural processes, moving away from rigid academism. At the same time, in modern Islamic Studies, there is a tendency to overcome Westernism, which, in fact, are echoes of the postcolonial turn of the history of world humanitarianism, and, in particular, Oriental and Islamic Studies [26].

Modern Islamic Studies, based on an anthropological approach (as opposed to ethnographic and philological) in the complex of sociological and linguistic analytical and critical concepts of the study of Muslim societies, is seen as a promising and significant scientific direction. The enrichment of world knowledge through the assimilation of unique samples of human creativity, the comprehension of works of human thought and the overcoming of the political context by the modern scientific community are seen as the fundamental goals and mission of Islamic Studies as a science.

In the same vein, we see the further realization of the potential of Islamic Studies: the inclusion of the Islamic world in scientific activities and scientific turnover can contribute to the enrichment of scientific approaches, vocabulary, conceptual apparatus, paradigms, the formation of a unified scientific project of the World, the role of which in humanitarian knowledge will be embodied in the continuity of ontological knowledge of different cultures. This same discourse of cultural complementarity requires overcoming the criticism of the Other - both its metaphysical representations and its practical manifestations. This overcoming of criticism is true for modern Muslim researchers, just as it was once true for Western Orientalists' bias against the East.

The fate of Islamic Studies in the 21st century depends primarily on fundamental research. The retreat into sociological and political discourse may be relevant for Islamic Studies and there is always a need for such research. But only fundamental Islamic Studies have a future, because applying the accumulated research experience in Islamic Studies, it is possible to form new trends in Islamic Studies. Islamic Studies still remains a knowledge focused on the awakening of spirituality in man and the search for transcendent truths that modern man needs. The trend in Islamic Studies towards the synthesis of science and education has opened up the possibility of enlightenment, knowledge and teaching, which is promising for the intellectualization of modern man and the preservation of spiritual traditions.

Islamic Studies will develop in several directions, such as comparative, political, dialogical and apologetic. But which of these areas will most fully reveal the content of the subject, solving relevant problems and tasks focused on it? There is no answer, but if there is, it is unlikely to satisfy all those who are engaged in Islamic Studies. A well-known scientist A. Knysh noted in his interview that there are about ten approaches to the interpretation of Islam, and, consequently, methods in Islamic Studies are increasing [A.D. Knysh, *Sufism can teach both Muslims and non-Muslims a lot*, 24.09.2018, dumrf.ru/common/interview/14327]. One of them is an apologetic and what is more there are a secular-liberal version of it and a theological one. Islamic

Studies as apologetics are a trend in the United States today. We can also note the multidirectional nature of the problems of Islamic Studies in Western Europe, the Islamic world, Central Asia, the Caucasus and Russia. Each region has its own specifics: from reflection on the transcendental problems of morality, faith, religious values, Islamic identity to the problem of terrorism, integration of Muslims into certain communities, the creation of strategies for Euroislam and so on.

For Islamic Studies in Central Asia, the most relevant topic is the preservation of Islamic identity in its historical and traditional context, as well as the formation of an Islamic tolerant consciousness to prevent inter- and intra-confessional conflicts. On the other hand, the Islamic scientific and theological heritage is being revived, which should also contribute to the deployment of an intellectual and rational component in Islamic culture and which can be used as a spiritual shock absorber against the ideology of radicalism. In general, this region is characterized by the construction of dialogical Islamic Studies, but its stability and cognitive 'expansion' is possible only in the application of interdisciplinary methodologies of the East and West. Political Islamic Studies solves short-term problems and tasks, but they are necessary in certain realities.

Basically, the politicization of Islamic Studies is associated with the problem of radicalization of Islamic currents and the raising of the issue of preventing extremism and radicalism. Nevertheless, it is necessary to highlight such trends in Islamic studies as political, sociological, cultural and philosophical Islamic studies, which reveal not only the 'integration' publicity of Islam in the modern world, but also reveal the features and mechanisms of

flexible adaptation of the Islamic tradition in secular societies. Great importance in such studies is attached to the disclosure of the possibilities of countering radicalization.

Kazakhstani Islamic Studies is involved into the practical sphere of applicability of scientific, sociological results to find a consensus between secularism and religion, Islamic and secular consciousness. Remaining a secular state, Kazakhstan is an integral part of Islamic culture and Islamic civilization, and therefore it is necessary to build a modern, relevant relationship between Islam and secularism. Islamic Studies in Kazakhstan is focused on these problems, which is very important for maintaining stability and consolidating society. But research of a deep theoretical nature is also needed, connected with the rediscovery and reconstruction of the dialogical potential in Islam.

5. Conclusions

Islamic Studies can be defined as a science engaged in a project of dialogue between the Islamic and Western Worlds.

Islamic discourse should be understood as the interpretation of the eventfulness of Islam beyond totalitarian boundaries, simultaneously in the linearity and nonlinearity of cultural Islamic events: from the source to post-modernity and post-history.

In Islamic Studies, the basis is the text of the Qur'an, which is subject to interpretations: theological, secular, scientific, and irrational. Faith, ritual, sacredness in these interpretations are represented by the concepts of Islamic anthropology.

Sociological research, which is currently becoming popular in Islamic Studies, reveals the depth of faith, attitudes towards Islamic ritualism and dogmas, and in recent years has become a necessary practice to complement theoretical research.

For Kazakhstani Islamic studies, it seems necessary and possible to develop in two directions: in the trend towards dialogue and in the trend towards preserving its own Islamic studies context, which, in turn, is associated with the uniqueness of the Kazakh Islamic project: the unity of the Turkic and Islamic spiritual components, the Hanafi madhhab, the Turkic Kazakh Sufism represented by A. Yassawi. Development in these areas will help avoid marginality, while maintaining sovereignty in Islamic Studies.

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