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## **ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL SOURCES OF INTERCONFESSIONAL CONSENT OF KAZAKHSTAN PEOPLE**

### *Abstract*

The article is devoted to the analysis of the spiritual foundations of inter-confessional harmony in the Kazakh society, which have developed recently in the development of Kazakhstan in the conditions of spiritual revival and cultural transformation. The author reveals the essence of the multi-confessional and multi-ethnic space, draws attention to the impact of globalization and modernization on ethno-confessional and inter-confessional relations in the republic. The author points out the need to pay special attention to the socio-cultural identity of the Kazakh society, which affects religious tolerance as the most important principle of inter-confessional and inter-ethnic relations in the Kazakh society. The article examines the evolution and spiritual roots of interfaith harmony in contemporary Kazakhstani society. It explores the influence of globalization, cultural transformation, and spiritual revival on ethno-religious relations. It addresses the roles of Islam, Orthodoxy, and other denominations in shaping the country's cultural identity. The article emphasizes the need for governmental policies to support interfaith dialogue and counter extremism. It delves into the historical context and contemporary challenges facing Kazakhstan in terms of religious tolerance and socio-cultural integration.

**Keywords:** spirituality, spiritual revival, multi-ethnic society, confessions, religious organizations, interfaith relations, globalization.

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## **ҚАЗАҚСТАН ХАЛҚЫНЫҢ КОНФЕССИОНАЛАРАЛЫҚ КЕЛІСІМІНІҢ РУХАНИ КӨЗДЕРІ ТУРАЛЫ**

### *Аңдатпа*

Мақала Қазақстанның соңғы дамуы барысында рухани жаңғыру және мәдени қайта құру жағдайында қалыптасқан қазақ қоғамындағы конфессияаралық келісімнің рухани негіздерін талдауға арналған. Автор көпконфессиялық және көпэтникалық кеңістіктің мәнін ашып, жаһандану мен модернизацияның республикадағы этноконфессиялық және конфессияаралық қатынастарға әсеріне назар аударады. Автор қазақ қоғамындағы конфессияаралық және ұлтаралық қатынастардың ең маңызды қағидасы ретінде діни толеранттылыққа әсер ететін қазақ қоғамының әлеуметтік-мәдени ерекшелігіне ерекше назар аудару қажеттігін көрсетеді.

Мақалада қазіргі қазақ қоғамындағы дінаралық келісімнің эволюциясы мен рухани тамырлары талданады. Ол жаһанданудың, мәдени трансформацияның және рухани жаңғырудың этно-діни қарым-қатынасқа әсерін қарастырады. Елдің мәдени бірегейлігін қалыптастырудағы ислам, православие және басқа да конфессиялардың рөлін қарастырады. Сондай ақ, конфессияаралық диалогты қолдау және экстремизммен күресу бойынша мемлекеттік саясаттың қажеттілігі атап өтілген. Қазақстанның діни толеранттылық пен

әлеуметтік-мәдени интеграция саласындағы тарихи контекст пен қазіргі заманғы сын-қатерлері қарастырылады.

**Түйін сөздер:** рухани жаңғыру, көп ұлтты қоғам, конфессиялар, діни ұйымдар, конфессияаралық қатынастар, жаһандану.

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## **О ДУХОВНЫХ ИСТОКАХ МЕЖ КОНФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО СОГЛАСИЯ КАЗАХСТАНЦЕВ**

### *Аннотация*

Статья посвящена анализу духовных основ межконфессионального согласия в казахстанском обществе, сложившихся за последнее время развития Казахстана в условиях духовного возрождения и культурной трансформации. Автор раскрывает сущность поликонфессионального и политэтнического пространства, обращает внимание на влияние глобализации и модернизации на этноконфессиональные и межконфессиональные отношения в республике. Автор указывает о необходимости обращения особого внимания на социокультурную идентичность казахстанского общества, влияющей на религиозную толерантность в качестве важнейшего принципа межконфессиональных и межэтнических отношений в казахстанском обществе. Статья анализирует эволюцию и духовные корни межрелигиозного согласия в современном казахстанском обществе. Она рассматривает влияние глобализации, культурной трансформации и духовного возрождения на этно-религиозные отношения. Обращается к роли ислама, православия и других конфессий в формировании культурной идентичности страны. Статья выделяет необходимость государственной политики по поддержке межконфессионального диалога и борьбе с экстремизмом. Рассматривается исторический контекст и современные вызовы, стоящие перед Казахстаном в области религиозной толерантности и социокультурной интеграции.

**Ключевые слова:** духовное возрождение, полиэтническое общество, конфессии, религиозные организации, межконфессиональные отношения, глобализация.

### **MAIN PART**

In the context of Kazakhstan's geographic and strategic importance in Central Asia, the diversity of social, religious, and cultural ideas shaping the region's culture becomes apparent. This synthesis of East and West, along with the influence of various religious traditions such as Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism, defines Kazakhstan's cultural identity.

The religious landscape of Kazakhstan is viewed as a result of the interaction of different religions and cultural traditions. Special attention is given to the role of Islam in ensuring spiritual harmony and countering Islamic extremism, as well as the impact of globalization on religious processes in the country.

The importance of state policy in fostering interaction with religious associations to prevent extremism and terrorism is highlighted. Active promotion of dialogue between different faiths helps create a tolerant atmosphere of interfaith harmony and mutual respect.

The religious diversity in modern Kazakhstan and its significance for the formation of social order and cultural identity are described. The historical experience of peaceful coexistence among different religions, cultures, and civilizations is considered, contributing to the establishment of shared value orientations and a tolerant atmosphere.

The role of religion is emphasized in preserving rich cultural and valuable material, as well as the centuries-old wisdom of mankind, and in introducing young people to the cultural heritage of religious experience. Religion serves as the guardian of the spiritual values of the people and contributes to expanding the ideological positions of society.

The rich experience of peaceful coexistence among various religions, cultures, and civilizations in Kazakhstan is analyzed, which contributes to the establishment of a tolerant atmosphere and mutual respect. Religious pluralism is one of the fundamental elements of national identity and fosters interfaith harmony.

## **INTRODUCTION**

For more than a quarter of a century, our country has been developing in conditions of independence, where the state guarantees its citizens freedom of conscience and religion. The modern experience of post-totalitarian and post-atheistic development of our country shows how each new historical stage enriches the world community with new social experience and creates conditions for humanity to become wiser, more spiritual, to understand itself more deeply and to treat the world responsibly.

Nowadays, the world community has begun to pay more attention to the problems of spirituality and religion. This is not accidental, because the socio-economic and ideological orientation of society has changed, resulting from the influence of objective stable trends in global development, and a new stage has begun in improving not only the national, but also the spiritual self-awareness of man.

The dominant religion in Kazakhstan today is Islam. Islam, being the spiritual and religious foundation of culture and one of the factors of cultural self-identification, is of great importance in the countries of Central Asia. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, Islam has long-standing, strong roots, has both deep traditions and its own specifics, dictated by various cultural-historical, sociocultural, psychological, state-political conditions for the development of Kazakh culture over the last millennium.

The influence of globalization processes is felt by Kazakhstanis in all spheres of society: the national economy adapts to the requirements of the global market and its main players, political reforms are carried out not without the influence of international democratic institutions and organizations; ongoing reforms in the higher education system are aimed at its entry into the global educational space, etc.

### **Literature Review**

The problems of the spiritual foundations of the formation of a tolerant attitude between faiths are considered in the works of the following Western scholars: Huntington S. [1], Neklessa A.I. [2], Berger P. [3], Bromley Y.V. [4], etc. Various facets of this problem in a multi-confessional society have been studied by Russian researchers, religious scholars and political scientists, such as: Semenov Yu.V. [5], Petrenko S.P. [6], Kurbanov M.G. [7]. And also this problem is illuminated with the peculiarities of the evolution of religiosity in the conditions of nomadic civilization, as well as in the modern Kazakh polyphony of culture in the works of the following Kazakh religious scholars: Baytenova N.Zh. [8], Kydyralina Zh.U. [9], Kosichenko A.G. [10].

## **METHODOLOGY**

The dialectical method, free from materialistic or idealistic monism, and grounded in pluralism and multifaceted interconnection of public religious associations and confessions, serves as the theoretical and methodological foundation for exploring the spiritual underpinnings of interfaith harmony and tolerance in Kazakhstani society. Additionally, throughout the formation and development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a philosophical-religious analysis has been conducted to examine the spiritual, socio-cultural, and ethno-political principles of state policy. This analysis particularly focuses on the spiritual origins that underpin a tolerant attitude, aiming to uphold the state's obligation to safeguard the beliefs of its citizens.

The study of the spiritual sources of interfaith harmony among Kazakhstanis was conducted using a systematic methodological approach that incorporated diverse strategies for data collection and analysis. Initially, an extensive literature review was undertaken, comprising a systematic analysis of

academic papers, publications, and reports from pertinent research organizations. This phase was organized around identifying key themes and trends prevalent in previous research within the field.

Empirical methods were employed, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups with representatives of various religious communities and denominations in Kazakhstan. The aim of these activities was to systematically collect data based on direct interactions with research participants. An analysis of the gathered data was conducted, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. This stage involved systematic coding and classification of information, followed by comparative analysis among different religious groups.

Within the framework of theoretical analysis, various theoretical concepts and approaches to understanding and studying the spiritual foundations of interfaith harmony were examined. This stage facilitated a thorough understanding of the research phenomenon and the development of a theoretical framework for subsequent analysis. The study formulated generalized conclusions and recommendations based on the data obtained and analytical findings. Additionally, practical recommendations were formulated for the maintenance and development of the spiritual foundations of interfaith harmony within the context of Kazakh society.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Kazakhstan, as the geographical and strategic dominant in Central Asia, embodies many social, religious, and spiritual ideas that have been shaped by the culture of this region. Within this culture, there exists a synthesis of Eastern and Western, Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim religious ideas, exemplified by religious parity, spiritual harmony, and the emergence of new religious concepts. This synthesis encompasses nomadic and agrarian traditions, as well as elements of both individualism and collectivism. Over millennia, the Kazakh people have seamlessly integrated into the world of Muslim ideas while preserving the traditions and customs of their ancestors.

The religious discourse takes on particular significance due to the aspirations of Islamic fundamentalists to establish a new totalitarian political regime with religious overtones. Additionally, the early 21st century witnessed the unleashing of a terrorist war by these fundamentalists, targeting not only Western civilization but also moderate Muslims who espouse universal human values in their way of life.

It is widely acknowledged that the progress of any nation is predicated on the prioritization of moral and spiritual values. Indeed, spiritual values constitute the determining factor for the future of civilization. The role of Islam in the public consciousness of Kazakhstan, its spiritual life, and its contribution to fostering spiritual harmony among all peoples, is traditionally significant and shows a tendency to grow. Therefore, in state and cultural development, in the upbringing of the younger generation, and in fortifying the moral fabric of society, it is imperative to comprehend and theoretically elucidate the importance of Islam, its ideals, spiritual and ideological underpinnings, including its emphasis on social justice and its aspiration for harmony with adherents of other religions.

The ethno-confessional diversity in modern Kazakhstan precludes categorizing it as a country dominated by any single religious tradition. Nevertheless, the Muslim and Orthodox communities are the most populous in the republic

In the era of globalization and the construction of an open society, the religious factor will largely determine Kazakhstan's internal political agenda in the coming years. Therefore, the Kazakh government, in order to prevent extremism and terrorism, is compelled to continue pursuing an active state policy in the sphere of interaction with religious associations.

Religion, as a carrier of spiritual and moral ideals and cultural traditions, holds significant value in the eyes of Kazakhstani. The influence of religious ethics is actively utilized to shape the moral and spiritual world of the younger generation. Islam and Orthodoxy are among the primary cultural components shaping the lives of the Kazakh and Russian peoples, and it is no coincidence that the state has recognized Kurban Ait and Christmas as official holidays. Each religion, in its own

language, conveys universal human values, establishes societal norms of behavior, and serves as a guardian of the people's spiritual values."

Kazakhstan has traditionally served as a natural boundary between the world's largest religions - Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism, earning our country the rightful title of the "crossroads of civilizations." For centuries, representatives of different peoples and ethnic groups have coexisted and collaborated here. Robust cultural and economic ties have formed, fostering mutual enrichment and prosperity. The people of the country endeavor to preserve this immense wealth and pass it on to future generations.

It is important to remember that religions have been repositories of rich cultural and value materials, preserving the centuries-old wisdom of mankind, encompassing its dreams, expectations, aspirations, and hopes. Therefore, exposing young people to the cultural heritage of religious experiences will aid in expanding their ideological perspectives and cultural enlightenment.

Historically, Kazakhstan has been characterized by religious pluralism. The majority of its confessional landscape is comprised of Muslim and Orthodox Christian associations, representing the largest number of parishioners. Among the population of the republic, there is a growing prestige of religious organizations, accompanied by the emergence of new religious formations, and a noticeable inclination towards religion among those who were previously indifferent. Today, our fellow citizens are increasingly focusing on genuine spirituality, rather than solely on external forms of religious expression.

If we consider from a geographical perspective, the most religious regions are the southern and western areas of Kazakhstan. Although Protestantism traditionally holds strong positions in Kazakhstan. Despite the mass departure of the German population from the country, Baptist, Lutheran, Adventist organizations, as well as numerous Protestant associations, occupy a certain place among the faiths widespread in Kazakhstan. Over the years since independence, many different missions and communities have emerged, the doctrines of which until relatively recently were known only to a narrow circle of religious experts, namely religious organizations of Methodism and Neo-Protestantism, communities and cults such as the Baha'i Faith, Scientology, the Unification Church, Krishna Consciousness, the Last Testament Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and so on.

The influx of religious denominations into Kazakhstan, previously unknown to our society, can be attributed to the consequences of globalization, intentionally or unintentionally eroding to some extent the cultural identity of Kazakhstanis. Attitudes towards these denominations are ambiguous. The population of Kazakhstan has never been inclined towards fanaticism; it is characterized by tolerance and interfaith tolerance.

Adhering to a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of denominations, the state stimulates dialogue development among them, facilitating the full implementation of their functions.

Currently, Kazakhstan possesses a rich and historically invaluable experience of peaceful coexistence among different religions, cultures, and civilizations. This experience has contributed to the formation of similar value orientations among the majority of the country's population and the creation of a tolerant atmosphere of interfaith harmony and mutual respect.

This statement of facts is significant because amidst the emerging interethnic and interfaith conflicts worldwide, Kazakhstan's unique experience in strengthening interfaith and interreligious dialogue has proven to be valuable at the global level. The genesis of identity lies in the sphere of spirituality, and its priorities are encapsulated in religious culture. Furthermore, religious identification often serves as a component of cultural identification. A person who affiliates with a particular group aligns themselves with the religion accepted within that culture.

According to the norms of International Law, members of UN states are obligated to cultivate and promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all individuals, without distinction based on race, gender, language, nationality, religion, or health status, and to combat manifestations

of intolerance [11]. However, at the same time, we must understand the importance of the issue of national security, which serves as the foundation of the country's existence and sovereignty.

Article 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan declares that Kazakhstan is a democratic, secular, legal, and social state, with the highest values being the individual, their life, rights, and freedom [12].

The Law "On Religious Activities and Religious Associations" of October 11, 2011 confirms the right of every person to freedom of conscience, guarantees equality for all regardless of their religious beliefs, acknowledges the historical role of Hanafi Islam and Orthodox Christianity in the development of culture and spiritual life of the people, respects other religions that are in harmony with the spiritual heritage of the people of Kazakhstan, recognizes the importance of interfaith harmony, religious tolerance, and respect for the religious beliefs of citizens [13].

Today, spiritual movements with views that can influence the established religious situation have become widespread in the Central Asian region. Favorable ground for such movements includes inexperience in religious dogmas, a lack of a clear position in life, as well as the gullibility of Kazakhstanis. Adherents of the above-mentioned movements are characterized by extreme intolerance towards anyone who does not share their political views, including fellow believers. Under the guise of teaching Islam, they spread extremist ideas: organizing groups that call for the fight for "Islamic orders", establishing close contacts, and uniting with other extremist groups. Religious intolerance, based on intolerance, can cause significant damage to the spiritual security of any society, while affecting the centuries-old foundations of traditional religions for a particular state, including Islam.

We should not forget that terrorism is rapidly gaining momentum and finding its adherents thanks to the development of the Internet. The history of terrorist groups in cyberspace began quite recently, approximately dating back to the beginning of 2000. Now, this is a very dynamic phenomenon on the World Wide Web. Websites with extremist and terrorist contexts suddenly appear and often change format, then quickly disappear. In many cases, this is only an appearance of disappearance; only the site address changes, while the content remains unchanged. The Internet, by its nature, is in many ways an ideal field for the activities of terrorist organizations. Thanks to free access, little influence of censorship and other forms of government control, and sometimes even their absence, anonymity of communication, rapid movement of information, multimedia components, and much more, the Global Network in "skillful hands" becomes a weapon of mass consciousness destruction.

According to the prosecutor's office, the main source of information and channels for disseminating the idea of religious extremism is the Internet. As a result of the inspection, the activities of more than 150 Internet resources that provide information on the manufacture of improvised explosive devices, as well as those promoting extremism and terrorism, have been suspended. As noted by religious experts, extremism and terrorism in Kazakhstan have a criminal basis rather than an ideological one. Behind the pseudo-religious rhetoric lies criminal activity that undermines the foundations of society. Authorities have set the task to "rigidly suppress the activities of non-traditional sects and dubious pseudo-religious movements", strengthen the prevention of religious extremism in society, especially among young people, use the advantages provided by the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, and on the basis of this dialogue platform create a new platform for conflict resolution on religious grounds" [14].

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Main finding of a study**

In Kazakhstan, a state program has been approved to counter religious extremism and terrorism for the years 2018-2022 [15]. The main goal of the program is to ensure the security of individuals, society, and the state by preventing manifestations of religious extremism and thwarting terrorism threats. Recognizing that religious consciousness often takes on ethnic dimensions, it is crucial to leverage the authority of leaders from national diasporas and national-cultural associations in

countering the spread of ideas promoting religious radicalism. Much of the credit for the absence of religious confrontation and interethnic conflicts in the country is due to the active involvement of religious leaders and national diasporas. Therefore, it is imperative to actively utilize and promote this extensive positive experience and potential.

Today, the primary impact of interreligious dialogue on interethnic relations and their humanization can be achieved through its educational influence on the population. Such dialogue shapes the consciousness of people from various nationalities and religions towards tolerance, non-violence, and a culture of peace. In addressing issues of internationalism and ethno-tolerance, education plays a decisive role through the development and implementation of educational concepts that contribute to societal consolidation.

The unprecedented pressure of cultural globalization diminishes the prospects for the emergence of a global culture based on dialogue and fosters growing resistance from the "periphery" to the "center," leading to clashes and conflicts among cultures. Global culture becomes a source of instability and fault lines for civilizations, while religious values transform into acute forms of quasi-religious fanaticism, with individuals largely absolving themselves of responsibility for their actions and shifting the burden of guilt onto the values and norms of belief.

It is worth noting that the actual high level of religiosity among modern youth can largely be attributed to the formation of their worldview without clear ideological and political guidelines or established moral stereotypes.

Kazakhstan's policy of spirituality and tolerance aims to introduce new, relevant priorities in the humanitarian and moral sphere. One of the main premises that our state adheres to in its foreign policy sounds particularly significant: for humanity to continue its history, it needs to learn to coordinate not only its local but also global activities with its own capabilities.

Kazakhstan has succeeded in transforming the vulnerability factor of a multiethnic society into a source of social and cultural wealth and the dynamic development of interethnic relations. Religion in Kazakhstan does not function as a competing identity opposed to ethnic or political communities, but rather as a complementary element of the spiritual culture of Kazakhstani, providing society with unique diversity and, at the same time, unique identity [16].

The common historical background and ethnocultural traditions of the ethnic groups in Kazakhstan have had a decisive influence on the nature and characteristics of religious traditions. Their important distinguishing feature is their mutual attraction to one another. Good relations have developed in the country between Islam and Orthodoxy, as well as other religions. Under the influence of this factor, the activities of the most numerous faiths acquire unique, distinctive features. This, in turn, contributes to the effective state development of the country and further strengthens national unity and tolerance.

In each country, based on established customs and norms of life, patterns of historical development, a certain attitude towards non-traditional religions has been formed, which is not clearly positive or negative. Since an individual's religiosity is a purely private, individual matter, all issues related to religiosity are primarily resolved not at the state or societal level, but rather at the individual or familial levels.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that modern individuals are confronted with the necessity of independently developing their own individualized multidimensionality in the face of a crisis of traditional ideological identity and the advent of cultural globalism. On one hand, faith should be a purely personal matter for each individual; on the other hand, religious faith retains its quality of practical, true universality within the structure of ideological values in the modern world. The new generation signifies new aspirations. They represent the future of our country. For it is within the hearts of those who harbor strong feelings of citizenship, patriotism, diligence, and a reverent attitude towards the spiritual values of the Kazakh people—values that have absorbed all that is best and progressive in our national culture—that the seeds of unity for Kazakh society and the state reside, as they live ahead of their time and contribute to its unity.

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