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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ABOUT THE ACTIVITY OF TASHKENT CITY MOSQUES IN THE LATE XIX – EARLY XX CENTURIES

***Obid Eshmakhmatovich Tangirov**

Research Fellow of the State Art Museum of Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

The paper disclose the activity of mosques in Tashkent city in the second half of the XIX century. The author studies the role of mosques in social life of the city, the influences of Russian colonial policy on religious institutions and economy of mosques. Besides, there has been illustrated the staff of mosques and their incomes in the article. The functions of mosques apart from being praying houses has also been researched in the article. Archival documents, the works of scholars of studied period have been foundation to prepare the article.

INTRODUCTION

Before Russian invasion, Tashkent was a Beklik (province) under Kokand Khanate and sometimes was an independent state. It played a significant role to develop merchandising with Russian Empire and other northern states from which the city benefited a lot and became the biggest cities of Kokand Khanate. The conquest of Central Asia, particularly Tashkent by Russian Empire influenced broadly introducing changes in many spheres. Most changes were carried in administrative system, religious policy, people's lifestyle. Particularly, religious institutions and their resources of income were taken under control. Though new administration performed itself as being away from internal problems and religious beliefs of cormorants, they de facto interfered every sphere of local residents.

Main part

After Turkestan had been conquered by the Russian Empire, there appeared a number of problems in front of empire officials to introduce colonial governance in the area. Particularly, strong belief of the population, the use of sharia rules as principal legal source, association of people's social, economic, cultural, spiritual and even political life with Islam made the empire administration become conscious and consequently they had to approach the issue more seriously. Although the Russian Empire had the practice of governing Muslim nations under colonial regime, the administration had

to run another form of policy in the area because of centuries-old statehood history, having strong governing traditions, and formation of concrete system from legislative point of view. More precisely, the colonial administration used traditional system of governance in the area to administer local people while general power was given to militants of the Empire and one of the main functions of it was to control the population of the area. For instance, the officials of the Empire monitored religious control over population by local representatives trying to subdue them. According to the form of administration, Turkestan Muslims were under the control of Orenburg Muslims Bureau. However, there was hardly any collaboration in religious sphere between Turkestan, even its centre Tashkent and Orenburg. The correspondence written K. Kaufman to the Ministry of Education of the Russian Empire shows that he asked for limiting to bring Holy Koran to the area from which it can be found out that Empire administration fought secretly against further development of Islam in the area¹. The Russian Empire saw Islam as a threat standing behind rebellions and all movements against colonial policy in the area. Therefore, the colonialists tried to establish strong governance in the area by weakening religious beliefs of the population. However, empire administration ran this policy behind closed doors, they attempted to keep their plans unknown to indigenous people, particularly to local officials and distinguished clergymen. Because such groups as distinguished clergyman, local rich people and others who believed occupants promises about religious freedom participated in administering affairs in the area under the Russian Empire and supported the empire to

*Corresponding author: **Obid Eshmakhmatovich Tangirov**,
Research Fellow of the State Art Museum of Uzbekistan.

¹ Central State Archive of Uzbekistan (CSA of Uz). Fund 47, file 2, papers 2-3.

strengthen control over population. Tashkent was divided into four parts [Dahas]. Since Tashkent covered big territory whose most population was Muslims, there were many mosques in the city. There is a lot of interesting information about them in the works that were written by both local and Russian historians. For example, according to A.P. Khoroshkhin's treatise "*Otcherki Tashkenta (Treaties about Tashkent)*", approximately 300 mosques were functioning in the city in the 60s-70s of the XIX century. As it is known, the expenses of the mosques were covered by incomes from waqf properties². For instance, N. Maev noted that waqf incomes were used for the expenses of madrasas, mosques, cemeteries, as well as taharatkhanas (ablution place)³. This information proves that there were special taharatkhanas functioning at big mosques. O Korenskiy who visited different mosques and madrasas stated that madrasas had mosques in them and there were placed taharatkhanas in the middle of madrasas' yards⁴. N. Maev did not state functional activities of the mosques and mostly wrote about their activities as educational institutions. Muhammad Solihkhujja's work "*Tarikhi Jadidayi Toshkand*" is considered as an important source illustrating the history of Tashkent city in the second half of the XIX century and it is deliberated as a reliable source to give information about mosques in the city. There are some other sources in which the number of mosques is shown more than 300 in the second half of the XIX century. For instance, owing to results of his studies, Robert D. Crews wrote that there were around 400 mosques in the city in the second half of the XIX century⁵. However, according to archive materials, there were 255 big mosques in 1869 and 343 mosques were functioning in the city in 1891⁶. Among the researches that have been conducted lately, the work of U. Sulstonov "*Toshkent masjidlari tarikhi (History of Tashkent Mosques)*" is a book specially researched on the issue and it is significant since the book bases on Muhammad Solihkhujja's "*Tarikhi Jadidayi Toshkand*". According to N. Maev, there were even women mosques in Eski Juva and Eshonguzar mahallas⁷.

Archive materials give interesting and detailed information about the mosques in Tashkent city in the late XIX – early XX centuries. According to these materials, mostly imam, mutawalli, muezzin and others worked at mosques. Apart from leading five time praying as an imam of people attending to a mosque, he had a role of being spiritual assistant of the population and candle of spreading knowledge to them, as well as the councillor of the mahalla residents. Besides advising and educating mahalla residents, imams eliminated different kinds of conflicts between family members, neighbours, relatives and conflicts over different social problems and thus they were eminent people in the society. Moreover, as teachers, they taught reading and writing to children. Children were mostly taught at mosques by imams and muezzins. Thus mosques were considered important and valuable places and the centre of knowledge and wisdom by people. Taking into account the wills and requirements of the community, imams of mosques were chosen among knowledgeable people who graduated

madrasas. However, the Russian Empire interfered religious life of the population and drew its attention to the system of appointing imams and requirements of the population on the issue. Consequently, there appeared different conflicts and intrigues, and there were observed situation like a group of people supported one imam while another group supported one for themselves. Because of these conflicts, people applied for the governor of Tashkent city to solve the issue. So, the empire administration used different methods to sow discord among population and took some measures to strengthen its status in the area. One of the statements in this character was written to the governor of Tashkent city by the residents of Sukfurush Mahalla of Sebzor Daha. It is written in the letter that "... writing the statement to you Sir, we claim that Zoirali Mullo Otaboy oghli who is functioning as imam at our mosque is never available at namaz [praying] and he is unconcerned and he is not found when he is needed. Therefore we want mullo Alimuhammad okhund mullo Eshmuhammad oghli to be appointed as imam instead of him [mullo Zoirali mullo Otaboy oghli], hearing the decree that it is the will of a mosque's community to see the person they want as imam, we ask you to give your order for this AliMuhammad okhund to be appointed as the imam of our community. We are the citizens to write a statement and 43 people signed with their names"⁸. However, this situation was observed in few mosques and following their imams lasted in most mosques as it was before.

The age of imams was different in Tashkent city and they were appointed in accordance with their knowledge and potential. According to archival documents of the 90s of the XIX century, imam of Darvozakent mosque in Sebzor Daha was 85 year-old Shoikrom Shorahim oghli. Another imam among old-aged ones was Yormuhammad qori Muminboy oghli who was actively working at the age of 81 at a mosque in Khadrako'cha mahalla of Sebzor. Average age of imams was different in the parts of Tashkent in that period. For example, it was 48 in Shaykhontohur Daha, 44 on Sebzor Daha, 43,7 in Beshaghach Daha and 46 in Kokcha Daha. Among imams functioning in Shaykhontohur Daha in 1991, roughly 20 % was over 60, 37% ones were between 45 and 60. Only 7% of imams were between 20 and 30⁹. The imam of a mosque in Kunkocha mahalla in Kokcha Daha was 20 year-old Karimberdi Bekberdi. Another young aged imam in Tashkent city was 21 year-old Sultonkhoja Abduwakilkhoja who led a mosque with 35 congregations as imam. In Takhtapul mahalla of Sebzor Daha, one of the mosques' imam in 1891 was 27 year-old Saidmuzaffarqori Shomahdikhujja who was the youngest imam in the Daha. Mullo Jamoliddin Nizomiddin oghli from Chaqar mahalla and Akmalkhon Yusufkhon oghli from Samarkand Darvoza mahalla of Beshaghach Daha were 21 year-old imams¹⁰. In general, it can be seen that mostly 35-50 year-old people functioned as imams in the city. Apart from imams, noib (vice) imam, muezzin, worked at mosques. They had clear functional duties. For example, muezzin read azan before every praying, noib imam led the jamaat [worshippers] for praying when imam was not at the mosque. However, there were no noib imams at mahalla mosques. When imam was not at the mosque, the most knowledgeable and respected man among jamaat served as imam. Although imams spent most of their time at mosques, they dealt with such jobs as peasantry and craftsmanship for living. Because income from waqf was not

² Khoroshkhin A. 1876. Ocherki Tashkenta / Turkestanskij sbornik, Vol. 116, стр. 87.

³ Maev N.A. 1876. Aziatskij Tashkent // Jezhegodnik. Materials for statistics of Turkestan area. – St. Petersburg, Pp. 286-287.

⁴ Kerenskij O. 1892. Nashi uchebnije zavedenije / Zhurnal narodnogo prosveshanija, №11. – Tashkent, P. 1.

⁵ Robert D. 2006. Crews – For Prophet and Tsar. London, P. 252.

⁶ SCA of Uz. Fund 36, list 1, file 449, paper 77.

⁷ Maev N.A. 1876. Aziatskij Tashkent // Jezhegodnik. Materials for statistics of Turkestan area. – St. Petersburg, P. 291.

⁸ SCA of Uz. Fund 36, list 1, file 3180, paper 6.

⁹ SCA of Uz. Fund 36, list 1, file 3238, papers 28-30.

¹⁰ Ibid, those pages.

enough for imams at some mosques. There were built more mosques in big mahallas. Some streets had their individual mosques. For instance, Qiyot, O'qchi, Olmazor, Qoryoghdi, Labzak, mahallas in Shaykhontohur Daha had at least three or more mosques. There were 8 mosques in Kokhota mahalla, 5 ones in Takhtapul mahalla, 6 mosques in Ichki Takhtapul mahalla of Sebzor Daha. At least two mosques were functioning in such mahallas of Beshaghach Daha Eski Namozgoh, Eshonguzar, Chorsu, and Saghbon, Chaqchimon, Pichoqchi, Eshikobod Guzarboshi mahallas of Kokcha Daha also had more mosques. However, not all mosques were held Jum'a and Eid praying, they were read only namazgahs and big mosques.

Most mosques in Tashkent were mainly built of adobe and clay pellet and some big mosques were built of baked brick. They were built by commorants of mahallas or patrons of the city. Besides having the mosques built, sponsors in this character support their every year reconstruction. Such wealthy people as Saidazimboy, Qosimboy, Sharifboy, Khokhuja, Markarimboy, Madjidboy, Roziqboy, Shodjalil, Alimuhammad sponsored the construction of mosques in the city¹¹. There were mosques with long centuries history. For instance, Khodja Ahror Waliy mosque in Mahkama mahalla of Kokcha Daha and Shaikh Zayniddin mosque in this area were functioning in the late XIX century¹² and these mosques were reconstructed and equipped basing on income from their waqf. Coming to the second half of the XIX century, wealthy people in the city took advantage in building and constructing mosques¹³. Particularly, Pulatboy financed the construction of many mosques in Kokcha Daha. According to archival documents, scarcely 8,4% of 343 mosques were reconstructed by mahalla community while others were reconstructed by wealthy people. There were required some special construction styles to build mosques in order to make them comfortable for praying. Therefore they had many similarities in their interior and exterior designs. Mosques were built with a terrace and their entrance was behind the building since their mehrab had to face to Kaaba (Mecca). The mosques in Tashkent were compared to galleries in some sources in the late XIX century¹⁴. There were differences in the number of visitors to the mosques. Some had more congregations while others had fewer ones. For example, there were big mosque in such mahallas as Koryoghdi, Okkurghon, Egarchi whose congregations reached to 200 people at the end of the XIX century while smaller mosques had 25-20 worshippers¹⁵. Mosques in Teshikkopka, Yov, Rabot mahallas in Sebzor Daha had 100 – 150 congregations and around 200 people usually came to pray to the mosque in Registan mahalla¹⁶. In Beshaghach Daha, such mosques as Teshikkopka, Yov, Okkirghon and Rabot had congregations around 100-130. The number of congregations of mosques in Kallakhona, Ayilish Langar, Chaqchimon, Kulbilboy, Pitchokchi, Eshikobod, Guzarboshi mahallas of Kokcha Daha was around 100-130 people. In the examples of three mosques of Saghban mahalla, there were congregation around 100 to the first, 125 to the second and 350 to the third¹⁷.

According to the statistics about mosque congregations in 1891, the number mosquegoers of Shakhontohur Daha was around 6000 men, in Beshaghach Daha around 4100 men, in Kokcha Daha over 5300 and in Sebzor daha 4500 ones. As it was at madrasas and mausoleums, economic affairs at mosques were managed by a mutawalli. His was responsible for arranging financial and economic activities, revenues and expenses, salaries of the staff, accountancy and others. Income of big mosques from waqf property was enough to pay the salary of their staff, other expenses of mosques, and even was enough to educate a greater number of children in two, three of more rooms. Because, as it has been mentioned above, they also functioned as schools. It can be seen in the examples of big mosques in Sebzor Daha of Tashkent city in 1868. There were 7 big mosques in the daha:

- 1) Toshmuhammad karvonboshi Mosque, Imam is Mulla Orif qori and muezzin is Mullo Nazar, waqf of the mosque is 8 stores whose income from renting is 16 tillas [golden coins]. Imam gets 12 tillas, muezzin gets 4 tillas if it is left from the reconstruction of the mosque.
- 2) Hakimboy Mosque in Pushtihammom Mahalla. It has 11 hujras [rooms]. Imam and mutawalli is mullo Azim hoji and muezzin is Sul-tonboy qori and imom noib [vice imam] is mullo Muhammad Yoqub qori. Its waqf property is 3 stores whose renting cost 1 tilla. Since they have not been rented, there is nobody in its hujras. There are only 5 scientists.
- 3) Tursunboy Mosque in Behisht Hammam Mahalla. It has 1 maktabkhana (school). Imam and mutawalli Mullo Sodiq okhund, muezzin who also works as a teacher is Avaz Muhammad okhund, waqf of this mosque is income from renting two stores in 6 tillas and 10 tanabs of alfalfa land in Oktepa part and some land. The revenue from this alfalfa land is 7 tillas. Muezzin gets two tillas. The money left is spent on praying mat, lighting and reconstruction.
- 4) Pulatboy Mosque in Registon Mahalla, Imam is mulla Saidahmad okhund and muezzin is Shohalim, its waqf is 4 stores and income from their renting is 8 tillas, Imam gets 6 tillas and muezzin gets 2 tillas, the mosque has 8 rooms. Since there no other income, there are no students.
- 5) Azamatshoh Mosque in Tinchob Mahalla, Mulla Erkaboy is an imam and Okhund shoh makhsun is a muezzin. Its waqf is three stores and income from their renting is 3 tillas. The imam gets 2 tillas and the muezzin gets a tilla.
- 6) Khujayakka Mosque. It has 8 hujras. The imam is mullo Abdurahmon and muezzin is mullo Bekmurod and there is a man in one hujra. Its waqf is 8 stores and 5 tillas income from their renting is spent on the mosque expenses.
- 7) Sharifboy Mosque in Mahsiduzda mahalla. There are ten hujras in the mosque. The imam is Otoullo olim and the muezzin is Ibodullo khuja. Its waqf is two stores, income from renting is 3 tillas and it is spent on the mosque expenses.¹⁸

It can be recognised from the information that income of mosques from waqf property was mostly given to imams and muezzins. Because they were busy with leading 5 times

¹¹ SCA of Uz. Fund 36, list 1, file 3238, papers 28-30.

¹² SCA of Uz. Fund 36, list 1, file 449, papers 193-211.

¹³ SCA of Uz. Fund 36, list 1, file 449, papers 193-211.

¹⁴ Kerenskij O. 1907. Nashi uchebniye zavedenije / Turkestanskij sbornik. Vol. 418. – Tashkent, P. 2.

¹⁵ SCA of Uz. Fund 36, list 1, file 3238, papers 28-30.

¹⁶ Ibid, papers 30-33.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ SCA of Uz. Fund 36, list 1, file 449, papers 221-222.

praying a day, they had hardly any opportunities to deal with another job. Main suppliers of mosques were people attending to mosques and citizens of mahallas where mosques were located. Since lands and stores that were donated to mosques as waqf property were interfered by the Russian Empire, their income decreased considerably. Consequently, there appeared problems in economic supply of the mosques. Friday was day-off for population and it was held in festive mood. The holidays such as Ramadan Eid (Eid al Fitr) and Kurban Eid (Eid al-Adho) were celebrated cheerfully during the year. The days of holidays were declared by Chief Qadi of the city. N. Maev noted that Kurban Eid was celebrated on January 5 and Ramadan Eid was on October 22 in 1875¹⁹. In 1876 and 1877, Ramadan was mostly corresponded to September. It was in May in 1886 and in December in 1901 and in September in 1909. According to the information published in press, chaykhanas, craftsmen's shops and stores did not work in daytime during Ramadan²⁰. It was mentioned in another source how "old part" of the city became lively at night during Ramadan. There were held different performances at overcrowded places and most performances were mainly organised at Eski Juva bazaar and in the garden of Shakhontohur Mosque.²¹ The performances expended broadly on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays and there was no free place in the size of apple at places on these days²².

Russians and other nations living new part of Tashkent city came to bazaars on these days. During the time when people opened their fast after sunset in Ramadan, chaykhanas and their terraces were full of people. There were kebab cooks, fruit sellers, sweet sellers, vegetable growers, water sellers and others. Local circus performances lasted till midnight, as well as shops were open till midnight. Besides, Koran reciters (they learned Koran at daloilkhanas and madrasas) read extracts from Koran and many people spent most of their time at mosques being busy praying.

The night of from 26th day to 27th day of Ramadan is "Laylatul Qadr" and it was held in magnificent mood by Muslims²³. Madrasas stopped their activities during Ramadan while schools kept teaching²⁴. It can be found out that all students of madrasas kept fast during Ramadan, however, since most of schoolchildren were young, fast was not obligatory for them and they did not keep fast. Thus, education process continued although teachers kept fast. Pupils usually came to schools at mosques at about 7 o'clock in the morning. They studied till about 10 o'clock. After that pupils went either their homes or to chaykhanas to have lunch. Having had lunch, they kept studying till 1 o'clock in the afternoon. Having gone their homes and had dinner, they returned to school and studied till 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon.²⁵ Pupils spent most of their time at lessons on the days when lessons were held. Education at schools based on Uzbek alphabet system developed on the basis of Arabic alphabet. Although educational system was developed on certain regulations and control, pupils were absent for the lessons on some days. However, there was drawn special attention to educational process.

Conclusion

To sum up, mosques in Tashkent city were considered an important social key factor of the society at the end of the XIX – early XX centuries and the main reason of it was connected with religious belief of the population. Therefore, colonial administration could not confront openly to the activities of mosques in the area, more precisely mosques of Turkestan's centre Tashkent and could not resist candidly the existence of Islam in the society. The construction of new mosques and restoration of existing ones had to be conducted by local people. In the period of Soviet regime, most mosques were destroyed due to different no apparent reasons.

¹⁹ Maev N.A. 1876. Aziatskij Tashkent // Jezhegodnik. Materials for statistics of Turkestan area. – St. Petersburg, P. 275.

²⁰ M.Z. (the author was shown as this) Starij gorod // Turkestanskij kurjer, 1908, № 15.

²¹ Ostroumov N. Mesjats Ramazan i poet musulman / Turkestanskij vedemosti, 1908, № 198.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ostroumov N. Mesjats Ramazan i poet musulman / Turkestanskij vedemosti, 1908, № 198.

²⁴ Turkestanskij vedemosti, 1908, № 198, P. 12.

²⁵ Newspaper "Sredne-aziatskaja zhizn", 1906, № 271. / Turkestanskij sbornik Vol. 441, 1907.