

The Namaz Practice in the Structure of the Middle Volga Tatars' Daily Life at the End of the 19th - Beginning of the 20th Centuries

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Abstract

The urgency of the problem is determined by an increased public interest in Islam, its history in the Russian Federation, and particularly to the rituals and practices. The aim is: to show the role of fivefold prayer (namaz) in the everyday life space of Muslims of the Middle Volga region at the turn of XIX - XX centuries. The leading approach to the study of this problem is a thorough analysis of the periodic and journalistic press as a source of the most authentic conveyance of the contemporaries' attitude. Development of this type of sources shows that prayer demonstrates remained an inherent part of the Muslims' life, but at the same time under the influence of westernization and the lack of religious education some followers have partially or completely ceased to fulfill the religious requirements. The materials of the article can be useful for the ethnographers, historians and religious scholars investigating profile problems.

Keywords: namaz, Islam, Volga Region, daily life, religious practices

1. Introduction

The Volga Region is the unique region where Islam and Orthodoxy coexist for over five hundred years. Despite there always was certain interference, the spheres of religious life remained autonomous and independent, entering only the intellectual disputes caused first of all by the missionary activity. Such inaccessibility was defined by the adherents' religiosity of both religion and also it was the way to keep its ethnicity and culture for Muslim Tatars. The namaz was one of basic elements of everyday religiosity.

The The namaz (Arab. as-salat) is the salat, one of five Islam precepts. The order of prayers by the Quran was not clearly defined. It is considered that all ritual was developed as the imitation of the devotional attitude and Mahomed's movements.

The daily devotional cycle consists of five obligatory prayers preceded by Ritual Voodoo. The namaz could be accomplished individually and collectively in any suitable place" (Kamali, 2010).

Shariah and Sunnah as the leading bases of Muslim society ordered an obligatory execution of a fivefold prayer. Shariah says: "If a person makes ablution five times a day, his body will be cleared out and the fivefold prayer will clear from sins" (Kerimov, 1978). Besides, it should be noted that is in certain cases admissible to start a prayer execution later than it is offered. For example, it is allowed in case of studying of works on fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) (Ostoroumov, 1909).

Despite that great attention is paid to a fivefold prayer from the position of Muslim divinity, the question of prevalence of this phenomenon among the Volga-Ural region Muslims remains opened.

2. Methodological Framework

2.1 Research Objectives

The following objective was defined in the research process: to reveal characteristic features of the existence of a fivefold daily prayer among the Tatar population during the end of the 19th century – the beginning of the 20th century.

2.2 Theoretical Methods

The principle of historicism and objectivity underlie the work. For studying the declared subject, the complex of various sources was analyzed: a historical and genetic method which allows to reveal the dynamics of social and cultural trends dominating in society that gives the chance, to fix conservative manifestations of Tatars inhabitants and their reaction to "novelty" in religious life. The system approach assuming the analysis of all factors which affected of a religious ritualism in everyday life; a historical and comparative method is necessary for comparison of the existence of forms of religiosity in daily occurrence space; a historical and descriptive method as in work the memoirs and documents describing different parties of Tatar society life are used.

2.3 Source Base of Research

Periodicals, journalism and ethnographic materials answer for source base for research. All these materials have original information about Muslim Tatars daily life of different regions. Despite subjectivity, this type of sources is very important as it reflects the relation of authors, their emotional experience.

The most volume source on research daily practices of Tatar society is Tatar journalism in periodicals of the beginning of the 20th century (Koyash, Kazan mohbire, Bajan al-hak Olfat, the Al-Islakh, Vakyt, Ad-din va Al-adab, Shura, etc.). Newspapers and magazines give small details from routine and festive life of Muslims in a large number. Readers' questions and editors' answers have the estimates allowing to judge admissible and inadmissible behavior, a condition of the obligatory Muslim practices in daily space.

3. Results

It is hard to overestimate the role of the prayer in the life of Muslims. The prayer marked the commencement and the completion of the day, as well as significant events in the life of the community or the whole region.

For example, the opening of "Official National Society of the County" took place in Kuznetsk of the Saratov province on Friday, in April 14, 1906 (Kazan Mohbire, 1906a). According to the newspaper Kazan Mohbire: "More than a hundred people entered the society: imams, mugalims, muezzins and the sympathetic people the county... Friday namaz was accomplished after the meeting in a mosque built by the brothers Deberdeevs with the participation of all who got around" (Kazan Mohbire, 1906a).

Such actions were obviously dated on Friday since the day the salat al-jum`ah (a congregational prayer on Fridays, instead of the prayer just after noon) – a joint prayer was accomplished. That in turn is Sunnah. As A. Maksudi writes in "Zhamagat" (Society): "Sunnah is the execution of the namaz with the imam and dzhamat (a group of people)" (Maksudi, 1915). This a small brochure – the part of a big work under the common name "Gyibadat Islamiah" (Following Islam) intended generally for shakirds (pupils) of madrasah. It is also mentioned in "a good person" life the value of the namaz in "Donja Maglumaty" (Information about the world) (Maksudi, 1908).

A.V. Kobzev emphasizes the importance of public prayer for Muslims: "Perhaps no other religious precepts of Islam are given such tremendous importance as the common prayer" (Kobzev, 2007). The namaz was not only a part of a religious cult mandatory for fulfillment, but also a form of social solidarity, that is why the formal, ceremonial side of the issue was given a considerable attention.

One of the readers of the newspaper Vakyt appealed to the Muslim community in 1909 with the headline: "Save 300 Muslims". In the article is about "The Polish Muslims" from the village Yuvkovtsy in Ostrowskij county of the Volyn province (Vakyt, 1909). Due to the certain circumstances this community was left without an imam, and as the author writes: "Although they know the obligatory nature of the namaz and other rites, but they do not know how to fulfill them" (Vakyt, 1909). In the same year of 1909 the magazine "Shura" published a letter from the Imam Galiulla al-Karimi. The Imam was very sorry for misleading the community of his parish in connection with the Zuhr-namaz execution (Shura, 1909).

Long time the problem of yasig namaz is the necessity of the execution after a sunset prayer in months with short nights was discussed in the society. This problem for the Volga region was solved by Sh. Mardzhani (Mardzhani, 1888). However and after that there were comings in which refused reading the yasig. According to one of Kazan newspapers, in the village Chubakchi of the Belebeevsky county, local people began to miss salat al-jum`ah because of Market Day and the threat of losing earnings (Kazan mohbire, 1906b).

Another concerned reader of the newspaper "Kazan Møhbire" was indignant about the very strange manifestation of devoutness of his fellow villagers. The article reported, that the residents of one of the Tatar village refused to burn lime stone to get lime, because "stones utter ziker" (*apparently rural inhabitants took hissing of stones during heating for "ziker" - I.Sh.*) (Kazan Mohbire, 1906a). Ridiculing such imaginary

commitment to Islam the author admonishes fellow villagers, that for all their religiosity "they do not observe the namaz". The namaz as one of the basics of Islam was studied in the madrasah under the fiqh (law) section - "Gibadat". This section considers the people's responsibilities toward God. According to T.R. Usmanov: "There are four the most important among these obligations: the namaz - fivefold prayer, siam - the fast in the month of Ramadan, zekat - one fortieth of the possessions donating to the poor, hadj - a journey once in a lifetime to Mecca" (Usmanov, 2010).

According to Akhmetzaki Validi Togan's memories, a prayer was the obligatory for all members of his family and despite "small age" (Validi, 1994) since early childhood he was got up on morning and night namaz.

Many people believed that religion and work are inextricable. So, describing the activities of trading peasants the newspaper Koyash in one of its editions dwelled on the fact that prior to mastering a profession the boys were taught "namaz and prayers" (Koyash, 1913). Since their childhood they were indoctrinated mandatory fivefold prayer as a tribute to the Creator, as an unconditional order and a vital necessity.

In the booklet "Zhamagat" by A. Maksudi mentioned earlier the author reveals the details of performing a public prayer. For example, it says it is unacceptable for the adult men to stand behind women and children. It is mandatory for the children and women to join a man playing the role of the Imam (Maksudi, 1915). It should be noted that this book is recommended for students of the third grade of the primary school (ibtidaiya). And for the little shakirds learning the basics of literacy, Ahmet Hadi Maksudi created "Mogallime auval" (The First Teacher) for them - one of the most popular textbooks (reprinted 31 times, with a total circulation of more than 1200000 copies) (Rahimova, 1995). It was made in the form of the ABC book with pictures, and became a simple and effective textbook for the study of Arabic script of the Tatar language by the phonetic method (ycyl-i-dzhadit or ysul-i-sautija).

At the end of the book some texts are given for practices, one of them is called "Moslemism". A. Maksudi begins with the following words: "All of us are Muslims" (Maksudi, 1917). In this article small in a volume, Islamic principle - future outlook and attitude are explained for children of ages 6-7. According to the author, the vital credo of Muslims was formed the following: "That is told to be executed in the Quran, we (Muslims - I.Sh.) execute, that is not ordered we do not execute" (Maksudi, 1917). Children are brought to awareness of the obligation of precepts performance otherwise which "infernal torments" in the next world are threatened. Therefore: "You learn about affairs which Muslims should execute when read books more than this one" (Maksudi, 1917).

In the book "Berenche Kitap" intending for reading after studying the aid "Mogallime auval" A. Maksudi placed a small text under the name "Mosque" of the following content: "A mosque is a house for accomplishing the namaz. Every day in a mosque the namaz is accomplished five times..." (Maksudi, 1993). Subsequently the text are understandable for children, elementary rules of carrying out are described: fivefold namaz, jum'ah namaz and also festive namaz. The role and place of the imam in pursuance of a collective prayer are explained: "On Fridays imams rise on a minbar (chair), and say a hutba and the sermon for worshippers" (Maksudi, 1993). At the end of the text the facts about mosques are given: their number, the device and the muezzin's post at a mosque (Maksudi, 1993).

One more popular ABC book "Tatar alifbasy" - was developed and published by mugallim Mukhitdin Kurbangaliyev in 1912. In this edition arranged similar previous there is a small text under the name "What does Hassan do it in the morning?" "Hassan wakes up at seven in mornings; washes, does taharat (ritual ablution), puts on and accomplishes the namaz..." (Kurbangaliyev, 1936).

The image of a praying person was familiar and clear to any member of the community and was perceived as a social norm. For example, in a note "From the country of khans" the Vakyt newspaper issued in the 226th number, Yusuf Akchura estimating the contribution of the Crimean Tatars to enlightenment, compared them with the muezzin calling for a night prayer. Quoting the author's words: "The Crimean are the people living at the seashore, the first from the Russian Turkic people. The Crimeans are inhabitants of the seashore - first woken up among Russian Muslims, and cried out: "The prayer is better than a dream" (Akchura, 1907).

The biographic works of Riza Fakhretdin such as "Mashhur irlar" or "Asar" promoted "namaz" as an integral part of life-style "akhle Islam", adhering religious precepts despite all adversities, diseases or other barriers.

R. Fakhretdin found similar examples not only among well-known ishans and imams of big mosques or mudaris of madrasah. For the author there were important personal qualities ideals and aspirations, and also the importance for a community, even if it is really small visits.

For example, the biography of Gabdelgali ibn Gubaydulla ibn Ibrahim (died in 1901) as R. Fakhretdin writes: "Before 4-5 years of his death [Gabdelgali], he became blind but even after that he did not leave public prayers in a mosque, neither rain nor snow-storm were a barrier to visit collective namaz.

The humility of our teacher before the face of adversity and misfortune always amazes. By the will of Allah once in summer after the midday namaz his house caught fire. In an hour three of his own children- Musagid, Mufazzyl, Safia were dead by fire. For this reason, the whole village mourned. Nevertheless, our teacher led the afternoon namaz. And then, turning to the congregation and having read a prayer he said: "I'm worried not because of the fact that I am unhappy with the will of the Almighty, but because of the fact that my sons and daughters were turned to dust after burning (*apparently the Imam meant that the children were not buried according to Islamic norms - note I.Sh.*)." After that for the rest of his life he did not come back to this conversation " (Fahretdin, 2010).

Similar biographies of people sincerely became faithful to their religion, awakened readers' desire to follow the example of "nice husbands" in, observing Islam requirements and showing sabr (humility).

For many people the namaz became a vital necessity, guarantee of heartsease, but not only a duty. It is so necessary to note that R. Fakhretdin's mother all life did not miss a prayer without a reason and died at the age of 52 during the execution of the namaz (Sharaf, 1999).

The father of the well-known writer Shamil (Abdullah) Usmanov – Khairul, until the end of his life worried concerning the left son's namaz. As Sh. Usmanov in the diaries writes: "My late father was the first dzhadid in a Tatar village ... lived with Islam greatness and Muslim culture ... often told he was dissatisfied with that his son left the namaz" (KP Natsionalnyj muzei Respubliki Tatarstan - 18548-233).

The namaz role in the social and cultural environment of towns and villages with Muslim population is huge. As was already mentioned, very often the only public building in the areas densely populated by the Tatars was mosque: jami Cathedral mosque and Five-time mosque. According to I.K. Zagidullin: "The attitude to the mosque was primarily as to a public building for performing worship by a group of persons and to architectural structure defining by its exterior the image of the community" (Zagidullin, 2001). Therefore, "The mosques with minaret verticals were usually located at the corners of the blocks (at their diagonal or as if cutting them off by their dimensions)" (Nadyrova, 2000). Such organization of blocks with the dominant verticals of mosques in the areas of composition influence is a reflection of the population of Tatar settlements mentality. Five times a day muezzins were calling the faithful to prayer from multimeter minarets towering over the one- and two-story houses of the inhabitants.

A fivefold namaz was the part of routine life, but at the same time they were the part of festival of big Muslim holidays such as Gaid al Adkha (Kurban bairam) and Gaid of Al – Fitr (Uraza bairam). The word "guide" means festive namaz in Islam.

People, meeting on streets welcomed each other with the words "Gaid Mubarak" (The festive namaz is blessed), the festive mood reigned everywhere. It should be noted that the spirit of festival was expressed not only in public namaz, but also in emergence at the beginning of the 20th century such phenomenon of an epistolary genre as a festive card.

For example, one open letter of the beginning of the 20th century directed to certain Nagima Murat begins with the words: "Nagima let the festive namaz will be blessed! Gaid al Kurban let will pass in happiness, and for many years ahead let Allah will bless you" (Museum Nationalnyj Culturnyj Sentr "Kazan" KP - 12792).

In fact festive namaz and related to religious festivals became the reason of emergence whole still poorly studied sources.

The Muslims of the Volga region in the early XX century actively started to master the fruits of progress. Thus, riding the train (which Tatars called "machine") - became a part of the everyday life. However, the inability to perform the religious requirements stopped Muslims from traveling for long distances. "The cars lacked facilities for ablutions and namaz" (Sibgatullina, 2010) - that is the main reason why westbound hajj (via Moscow and Eastern Europe) was not popular, according to the opinion of one of the contemporaries.

In connection with the alarm clock with the phonograph production, one of the readers of the magazine "Shura" wrote: "In Europe, the machines and technical knowledge are developing each day more and more rapidly. Everyone knows the alarm clock ringing and playing music, ready to wake you up at your whim. However, currently Swiss watchmakers started to make alarm clocks with little phonograph placed inside.

Due to the fact that one can say anything onto the phonograph, soon our table clock will start to broadcast: "The

sun is rising, get up for the namaz...” (Shura, 1908).

4. Discussions

It should be noted that the problem in this key has not studied yet. However, its separate aspects were investigated by Zagidullin I. (2006), Kobzev A. (2007), Gibadullina E. (2008), Senyutkin S. (2009), Malikov R. (2013), Salnikova A. & Galiullin D. (2014) and others.

5. Conclusion

Thus, the namaz was being remained part of everyday life in all its forms. A salat al-jum'ah and festive namaz went over with great solemnity. The image of the praying person as a social norm and an obligatory attribute of “Moslemism” continued to dominate in an era discourse being one of Muslim Tatars identity bases of the beginning of the 20th century. However, the clergy of an era noted that some of contemporaries began to neglect a prayer because of a lack of religious education or being followed by the mercantile motives. In order to stop doing such actions, the intellectual elite of an era became more attentive to the younger generation, exhorting them the necessity and certainty of a fivefold prayer. They entreated the contemporaries of advanced age by means of the companions' images in accordance with religious despite vital difficulties and adversities. The achievements of progress were actively used which are facilitated the officiation of chores. However in its turn, the lack of a certain comfort became the hindrance for implementation of some religious precepts, in particular the hajj.

6. Recommendations

The article is of interest for religious scholars, specialists of the Volga-Ural Muslims everyday life, ethnographers researching ceremonialism and religious life.

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