

AHMAD DONISH'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS RELIGION AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT

This work is dedicated to a comprehensive analysis of the life, work, and philosophical-religious views of the eminent 19th-century Tajik thinker Ahmad Donish (1827-1897). In the context of the feudal-theocratic Bukhara Emirate, Donish emerged as a progressive reformer who sought to modernize society, education, and state governance. He put forward ideas that were ahead of their time: the necessity of limiting the power of the absolute monarch, the establishment of advisory bodies, and the advancement of enlightenment and science. Special attention is paid to his original approach to religion, which combines spirituality, rationalism, and the pursuit of social progress. Donish criticized religious fanaticism, advocated for the integration of scientific knowledge and faith, and supported interfaith dialogue and spiritual tolerance. His works, such as "Navodir ul-vaqoye'," "Nomus-ul-a'zam," as well as reflections on soul and body, underscore his profound philosophical erudition and aspiration for the moral improvement of society. Donish's views remain relevant today in the context of contemporary discussions about freedom of conscience, the role of religion in society, and the necessity of enlightenment. Ahmad Donish is justly considered one of the last encyclopedic thinkers of Central Asia and the founder of the enlightenment movement that influenced the subsequent Jadidist movement.

Keywords: Ahmad Donish, enlightenment, philosophy, religion and reason, rationalistic mysticism, Sharia, Sunnism and Shiism, tolerance, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, extremism, fundamentalism, religious fanaticism

ВЗГЛЯД АХМАДА ДОНИША НА РЕЛИГИЮ И НАУЧНОЕ ЗНАНИЕ

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Данная работа посвящена всестороннему анализу жизни, творчества и философско-религиозных взглядов выдающегося таджикского мыслителя XIX века Ахмада Дониша (1827–1897). В условиях феодально-теократического Бухарского эмирата Дониш выступал как прогрессивный реформатор, стремившийся к модернизации общества, образования и государственного управления. Он выдвинул идеи, опередившие своё время:

необходимость ограничения власти абсолютного монарха, создание совещательных органов, развитие просвещения и науки. Особое внимание уделяется его оригинальному подходу к религии, в котором сочетаются духовность, рационализм и стремление к социальному прогрессу. Дониш критиковал религиозный фанатизм, выступал за объединение научного знания и веры, поддерживал межконфессиональный диалог и духовную толерантность. Его труды, такие как «Наводир ул-вакоъ», «Номус-ул-аъзам», а также размышления о душе и теле, подчеркивают его глубокую философскую эрудицию и стремление к нравственному совершенствованию общества. Актуальность взглядов Дониша сохраняется и сегодня в контексте современных дискуссий о свободе совести, роли религии в обществе и необходимости просвещения. Ахмад Дониш справедливо считается одним из последних мыслителей-энциклопедистов Средней Азии и основоположником просветительского направления, оказавшего влияние на последующее джадидское движение.

Ключевые слова: Ахмад Дониш, просветительство, философия, религия и разум, рационалистический мистицизм, шариат, сунизм и шиизм, толерантность, свобода совести, свобода вероисповедания, экстремизм, фундаментализм, религиозный фанатизм

Introduction

Ahmad Donish (1827-1897) - Tajik thinker, poet, historian, philosopher, and educator from Bukhara. He lived during the period when the Bukhara Emirate was under the rule of the feudal-theocratic regime and acted as a reformer striving to modernize society, culture, and education. His religious-mystical views were closely connected with his philosophical and social beliefs.

Ahmad Donish (1827-1897) is one of the great scholars and thinkers who left a significant mark in the development of philosophical and historical thought, in the spiritual heritage of the peoples of Central Asia. He wrote his works under the pseudonym "Donish," and among the people, he was affectionately called "Ahmad Mahdumi Mukhandis," "Ahmad Mahdumi munajjim," "Ahmadi Mahdumi Donish," "Ahmadi Kalla."

Ahmad Donish left behind a rich philosophical, historical, and literary heritage that is studied in many countries. In particular, scholars such as S.Ayniy, I.Muminov, Z.Sh.Rajabov, E.Bertels, R.Hodizoda, A.A.Haydarov, and others have published a number of articles and monographs analyzing the works of Ahmad Donish.

Recognizing the need for change, Donish was ahead of his time. He put forward the idea of limiting the rights of the absolute monarch by creating an advisory body following the example of European parliaments, and also proposed establishing ministries and streamlining local government bodies. But at the same time, he could not refuse to support the traditional forms of state governance that had been developed over many centuries by Muslim rulers and Muslim jurisprudence.

He received a classical Muslim education and knew the Quran, hadith, sharia, and Islamic philosophy well. At the same time, he sought that religion should serve as a source of moral and spiritual revival, and not a tool of oppression.

Donish's attitude towards religion was special and peculiar. He opposed the religious figures' idea that "to achieve the love of God, a person must renounce worldly life and dedicate himself only to serving Him." According to him, a person in this life should live in pleasure and well-being, and for this, he must acquire knowledge and use it in his activities. "Some people believe that God gives everything to a person and they do nothing. But material goods are produced by the people themselves," said Donish. In his work "Navodir ul-vaqoye'," he notes: "Dar navodiri holatęandар, ki az jangi sibo' rahoi yoftand," that is, "If we were to sit idly by and wait, bread and grain would not fall upon us from heaven. Therefore, a person must work." Despite expressing his unique thoughts, Ahmad Donish was a true Muslim.

If a person leaves everything related to their life and well-being to fate's will and waits for God to give them all material benefits, doing nothing, becoming lazy and working, then they will never achieve anything, and such a person is considered misguided in their life and a great fool. Material goods do not appear by themselves; to provide oneself with necessities, a person must know the means and reasons for obtaining these goods.

One should not think that Man is a "Monster" who has lost his way in this world, and if there were no man in this world, then "Allah's great art and power would remain invisible behind dark curtains." Only through social activity and intellectual enthusiasm does a person achieve spiritual perfection. And if one hopes only for fate and gives in to passivity, then the individual and even society may suffer defeat.

The thinker writes the following about human life: "If a person follows the rules of proper nutrition, strictly follows the daily routine and hygiene requirements, he will certainly live one hundred and twenty years or even more."

Donish emphasized the enormous role of religion in the development of the country. In the democratic changes of power in Bukhara, he believed, it is necessary to use the educational characteristics of religion. He argued that no religion should be persecuted. Donish opposed blind adherence to dogmas and criticized religious fanaticism. He believed that true faith should be combined with reason and knowledge.

Today, this issue remains relevant and is reflected in Article 35 of the new Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It states: "Freedom of conscience is guaranteed for all. Everyone has the right to profess any religion or not profess any. Forced imposition of religious views is unacceptable." The fourth article of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" states: "Freedom of conscience is a constitutional legal guarantee of citizens' freedom to choose the truth of faith," and the sixth article of this same Law states: "Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan, regardless of their attitude to

religion and belief, are equal before the law." The "Concept of Ensuring Citizens' Freedom of Conscience in the Republic of Uzbekistan and State Policy in the Religious Sphere" outlines the principles of state policy in the religious sphere: legality, freedom of conscience, separation of religion from the state, equality, freedom of choice, interfaith communication, and mutual understanding.

In the chapter "On Craftsmen" of the book "Rare Incidents," the thinker states that the most correct and respected occupation is studying the foundations of Sharia, which illuminates our minds and souls. Furthermore, he approves of the activities of people engaged in the knowledge of Kalam, that is, religious law, the teachings of Fatwa, writing legal documents, calligraphy, medicine, clerical work, astronomy, poetry, and teaching. In his opinion, they develop public opinion, nurture human mind and soul. Donish emphasized the necessity of combining religious faith with scientific knowledge. He believed that Islam did not contradict reason and criticized Muslims who rejected science and progress. His approach can be called rationalistic mysticism. Donish's attitude towards religion is depicted in his work "Nomus-ul-a'zam" ("Great Law"). This book provides information on the main currents of Islam - Sunnism and Shiism, their similarities and differences.

Today, a dangerous threat is posed by such negative phenomena and ideologies as religious extremism, fundamentalism, fanaticism, dogmatism. Their goal is to seize power and rule the people according to their whims.

According to Ahmad Donish, the significance of each religion is known in its service to the peoples in joint and cooperative life. In his work "Advice for Reconciling Shia and Sunni" he writes about the history of the formation of two sects in Islam and the reasons for their discord. According to his arguments, the main goal of religion should not be to complicate relations between representatives of different movements, but, on the contrary, to call them to tolerance. Based on his beliefs, the thinker criticizes the discord between various movements and advises that disagreements between them should be resolved peacefully and reasonably.

Donish writes:... "to bring out the good power of man, and to prevent greed by conquering the soul of man, the laws of sharia were created." Furthermore, he noted: "Basically, the rules of Quranic verses are taken from the established rules and beliefs of the 'Badawi' tribe, which consists of a large number of Arabs."

When examining the relationship between soul and body, Ahmad Donish's various philosophical views manifested more strongly. Initially, Ahmad Donish acknowledged the idealistic and scholastic views of the Middle Ages. He wrote that the relationship between soul and body is a complex problem. But in modern times, Donish, continuing his thoughts on the relationship between soul and body, criticizes the views of the scholastics of the Middle Ages. He writes: "When you are asked what the ninth layer of heaven is, you will answer 'Arsh' (where the Being-Creator is). And if they ask: "What is further?" - you cannot answer, because the Mind cannot answer and explain what is above it or above it." Continuing his thoughts, he says: "The mind can understand and explain what is below it, but it cannot allow itself to contemplate what is above it." According to

him, the soul has two types: "One of them is a structureless invisible phenomenon, and the second is a complex phenomenon. The first life light that descended from Allah is called an invisible soul. And the soul that encompasses the entire space and is at the bottom is called "Arsh," and for the purpose of creating Man and transitioning to the structure of stars, the Sun and the Moon, it is called a complex soul.

Ahmad Donish concludes: "There are four elements: fire, water, earth, and air, The Creator, showing his art and power, assembles the human body from these four elements. Further, the most distinctive and transparent complex type of soul is introduced into the human body."

Based on the above, we can say that Ahmad Donish was a very intelligent and well-mannered person. The life, work, and views of Ahmad Donish have attracted and continue to attract the attention of scholars, researchers, and philosophers. Because his scientific contribution is still relevant today.

Ahmad Donish's place in our country's history is significant, and in his time, Ahmad Donish, as the founder of the enlightenment movement, awakened the Jadids with his progressive ideas. And it should also be added that Ahmad Donish can be considered the last encyclopedic thinker in Central Asia.

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