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Research paper

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IBRAHIM B. KHUJASH IN THE CONTEXT OF SPIRITUAL TIES BETWEEN THE VOLGA REGION AND DAGESTAN

Abstract. With the development of multifaceted, and especially spiritual ties between the republics of Tatarstan and Dagestan, the issue of studying the historical connection between the republics is becoming increasingly relevant. This question has been covered in the publications of Khabutdinov A.Yu., Bobrovnikov V.O., Navruzov A.R., Shikhaliev Sh.Sh., Sfargaleev I.F., Malikov R.I., Kemper M. Despite this, the issue still remains insufficiently studied. The problem is in need of a more comprehensive and in-depth study, since there were both spiritual, personal and commercial ties between the theologians of the two regions. A deeper look into it could also give a clear picture of the mutual influence of the ideas of the theologians of the two regions. This issue also requires the study of individual personalities, such as Ibrahim B. Khujash, who was one of the first Tatar imams of the 18th-19th centuries who received education in Dagestan. He is mentioned both in the works of Sh. Marjani, M. Ramzi and R. Fakhrutdin, and a number of Dagestani theologians. Thus, the article aims to discuss already known studies on this topic, to identify and analyze information about the life and work of Ibrahim B. Khujash, as well as to trace the influence of Dagestan education on the views and activities of the said theologian.

Keywords: Tatar theology; Dagestan theology; Volga region; Dagestan, Ibrahim B. Khujash, religious education.

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Исследовательская статья

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ИБРАХИМ Б. ХУДЖАШ И ДУХОВНЫЕ СВЯЗИ ПОВОЛЖЬЯ И ДАГЕСТАНА

Аннотация. По мере развития разносторонних, а особенно духовных, связей между республиками Татарстан и Дагестан, вопрос изучения исторической связи между ними приобретает все большую актуальность. Данная проблема изучается в публикациях Хабутдинова А.Ю., Бобровникова В.О., Наврузова А.Р., Шихалиева Ш.Ш., Сафаргалеева И.Ф., Маликова Р.И., Кемпера М. Ей были посвящены некоторые из курсовых и ВКР в Казанском исламском университете. Несмотря на это, вопрос остается исследованным не полностью. Данная проблема нуждается в более комплексном и глубоком изучении, так как известно, что между богословами двух регионов были как духовные, личные, так и коммерческие связи. Ее более глубокое изучение могло бы дать и представление о взаимном влиянии идей богословов двух регионов. Данная проблема также требует изучения отдельных персоналий, одной из наиболее известных среди них является Ибрахим б. Худжаш, который был одним из первых татарских имамов XVIII–XIX вв., получивших образование в Дагестане. Он упомянут как в трудах Ш. Марджани, М. Рамзи и Р. Фахрутдин, так и ряда дагестанских богословов. Таким образом, целью данной статьи является изучение уже известных исследований по данной тематике, выявление и анализ информации о жизни и деятельности Ибрахима б. Худжаша, а также попытка проследить влияние дагестанского образования на воззрения и деятельность богослова. Анализ литературы по данной тематике показал, что проблема не раскрыта и нуждается в более глубоком и комплексном исследовании. Биография Ибрахима б. Худжаша в различных источниках представлена довольно кратко. Из нее следует, что, получив образование в Дагестане и некоторых городах Османской империи, он вернулся на родину и исполнял обязанности имама.

Ключевые слова: татарское богословие; дагестанское богословие; Поволжье; Дагестан, Ибрахим б. Худжаш, религиозное образование

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Introduction.

Ties between theologians of the Volga region and Dagestan

The relations between the theologians of the Volga region and Dagestan were previously not covered in the works of the 19th – early 20th centuries. Information about them can be obtained only from the biographies of famous personalities of both regions, which were written by both Tatar and Dagestan theologians-historians.

Tatar sources include the works of Sh. Marjani (1818-1889) “Mustafad al-Akhbar ...”, “Wafiyat al-Aslaf”, M. Ramzi (1854-1934) “Talfiq al-Akhbar ...”, R. Fakhrutdin (1859-1936) “Asar”, which mention a number of famous personalities of the Volga region who were educated by Dagestan spiritual mentors. Dagestan sources are represented by the works of Dagestani theologian and historian Ali al-Gumuki (Kayaev, 1878-1943), who mentions in his biographical essay “Tarajim ‘ulama Dagestan” Dagestani theologian Sadr al-Din Sulaiman al-Lakzi, who taught in one of the major cities of the Golden Horde [1, p. 43]; Nazir al-Durgili (1891-1935), author of the bio-bibliographic dictionary “Nuzhat al-Azhan”. He particularly points out: “Among those Kazan scholars who came to Dagestan in search of knowledge were Sheikh Muhammadrahim al-Kazani, who died in 1232 / 1816-17; Sheikh Ibrahim al-Kazani, who died in 1241 / 1825-26. Sheikh Ibrahim Efendi and Sheikh Muhammadrahim Efendi arrived in Dagestan, studied there with great scholars for ten years, and met with ‘Ali Efendi Shirvani” [2, p. 27].

Among modern researchers, this problem is covered by A.Yu. Khabutdinov in his article “Stages of the development of education among Muslims of the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly in the 18th – early 20th centuries: a regional aspect” [3]. With reference to Tatar sources, he writes that “after the destruction of the Kazan Khanate, some Muslims fled to Dagestan, Crimea and even Turkey. After a while, some of them returned home. Among those who returned were people who studied with scholars, and in places of education they copied and brought with them some works and books” [4, pp. 238–239].

The article by Bobrovnikov V.O., Navruzov A.R., Shikhaliev Sh.Sh. “Islamic education in Dagestan from ‘Perestroika’ period to the present day” [5, pp. 137–158] provides a general overview of the history of the functioning of the Islamic education system in Dagestan, starting from the rural and ending with the republican level. Although it examines the mechanisms of interaction between regions, it does not touch upon the historical aspect.

Relations between members of Sufi brotherhoods of Muslim regions of Russia of the late 19th – early 20th century are covered in the article by Shikhaliev Sh.Sh. “Zainulla Rasulev and Sayfulla-qadi Bashlarov: written evidence of the mentorship of two sheikhs” [6, pp. 359–364]. Analyzing one of the manuscripts found in the private collection of a resident of Dagestan, the author explores the close contacts of two mentors Zainulla ishan Rasulev and Sayfulla-qadi Bashlarov. This document is a collection of *ijazahs* (mentoring permits) received by Zainulla Rasulev from his teachers, which were subsequently transferred to Sayfulla-qadi Bashlarov – another follower of the tariqa tradition.

The publication by Safargaleev I.F. “The ritual practice of the Naqshbandi Tariqa in

the written heritage of Zeynulla Rasulev and its significance” [7, pp. 173–181] discusses the relevance of the revival of Sufism as a traditional form of Islam for Russia. In it, the author focuses on the legacy of Zeynulla ishan Rasulev, the continuity of whose teachings is preserved and developed thanks to the Dagestan followers of Seifulla Bashlarov.

The collective study of Kemper M., Shikhaliev Sh.Sh. “Dagestan Muslim reformism of the first third of the 20th century as a type of Jadidism” [8, pp. 52–58] explores mainly the issues of Jadidism. Analyzing the ideas of reformism, the authors pay attention to those thinkers who went beyond the ideas of the reform of the education system and criticized traditionalism in matters of Muslim dogma and Fiqh, which unites them with the Tatar Jadids.

R.I. Malikov also examines the question of ties between the two regions in the article “The life and work of Garifulla ishan Gainullin (1894-1984)” [9, pp. 95–106]. Garifulla ishan Gainullin, one of the authoritative religious figures of the Middle Volga region of the Soviet period, was the last Tatar sheikh of the Naqshbandi tariqa. He was associated with Sheikh Bayezid ishan Khairullin, a disciple of Zainulla ishan Rasulev.

This issue is covered extensively in the article of Shikhaliev Sh.Sh. “Brief information about the contacts of Muslims of Dagestan and the Volga-Ural region in the 18th – 20th centuries” [10, pp. 104–128]. The author thoroughly analyzes the relationship between the theologians of the two regions. The sources cited by Sh.Sh. Shikhaliev point to the bilateral, systematic nature of contacts between them. If at the end of the 17th – 18th centuries the training of some Tatar theologians in Dagestan impacted the education system of the Volga-Ural region, then, since the second half of the 19th century, there has been a very strong influence of the renovationist ideas of the Volga region thinkers on the Dagestan intellectual elite. Starting from the 20th century, numerous Tatar journals, textbooks and scientific and theological literature have been brought to Dagestan.

Ibrahim B. Khujash as one of the most prominent Tatar graduates of Dagestan theological school

Although Ibrahim B. Khujash was a well-known figure in the Volga region, his biography is only briefly considered in all of the three mentioned works of Tatar theologians. In general, the information about the name and origin of the theologian coincides. Thus, Sh. Marjani notes: “Mullah Ibrahim bin Khujash comes from the village of Sharlama in Bugulma county” [11, p. 24].

The authors briefly touch upon the theologian’s training in Dagestan. The “Mustafad” says: “Ibrahim ibn Khujash together with Akhund Mukhammadrahim, when they were young, went to the Caucasus and studied with Mullah ‘Ali ash-Shirvani, as well as other reputable theologians of their time. While studying with Mullah ‘Ali, Mullah Ibrahim wrote his treatise ‘Rub’al-mukantyrat’...” [11, p. 24]. M. Ramzi in “Talfik ...” reports that they “... also visited Sivas and Diyarbekir” [12, p. 352], from which it follows that in addition to Dagestan education, Ibrahim B. Khujash and Muhammadrahim also received Ottoman education, or met with theologians of the Ottoman Empire.

Having received his education, as Sh. Marjani writes, “Ibrahim returned to his homeland, and in 1197 (1782 – *author’s note*) began to serve as imam in the village of Utar, and later in the village of Novy Kishit (Үәңә Kishet). In 1208 (1794) in the month of Zu al-Qa’dah (May, June), Mullah Ibrahim moved to Kazan and after Mullah Abu Bakr began to perform the duties of the imam, preacher and teacher in the first mosque, he was also appointed to the position of akhund. He was close friends with Mufti Mullah Mohammadjan (held office in 1788-1824 – *author’s note*) and even in his prayings he asked Allah: “Oh Lord, preserve my strong friendship with the mufti.” The appointment on the position of akhund was most likely related to the religious, theological authority of Mullah Ibrahim. He was also recognized by the authorities: according to R. Fakhrutdin, in 1797 Mullah Ibrahim, having gathered Kazan imams, met Emperor Pavel Petrovich [13, p. 109]. Ramzi M. writes that Ibrahim B. Khujash taught “Usul al-fiqh”, “Hadith” and “Tafsir” [12, p. 352], which testifies to his broad outlook and deep knowledge of Islamic theology.

Apparently, Ibrahim b. Khujash was a fairly wealthy man. Sh. Marjani, speaking about him, notes that “he lived freely, was engaged in a brisk trade, had great wealth, and possessed valuable books” [14, p. 255].

Despite the rather scanty information, we can learn about some of the theologian’s views: “Mullah Ibrahim was one of those who did not refuse to perform night prayer during the shortest summer nights. He determined its time approximately (*takdir*)” [11, p. 25]. Since the information is quite brief, and the specifics of this fatwa and the theologian’s arguments are unknown, it is hard to determine whether this was the impact of education received in Dagestan or not.

Assessing the result of Mullah Ibrahim’s activity, Sh. Marjani writes: “His courage, financial independence and proximity to the mufti is said to allowed him to oppose some Kazan innovations. Prior to his designation, men and women sat at the same table during meetings and feasts. Men wore black hats, doublets and boots, but did not wear turbans. Having become the imam, Mullah Ibrahim began to correct all these mistakes related to lifestyle and clothing. People started to attend mosques and meetings wearing turbans. He turned nikah into a means of calling to perform prayers; in this regard, during the nikah ceremony, the grooms were given prayer mats, and the brides came to the grooms’ house with a jug. At the beginning of these transformations, only black hats could be found in Kazan. The Kazan merchants Yusuf B. Ismail b. Apanay, Yusuf b. Bikbau b. Hatay and Ubaydulla B. Murtaza, having collaborated, were the first who brought white hats from Moscow” [11, p. 25]. Analyzing the above-mentioned views of Imam Ibrahim, it can be assumed that the reason for such attitudes was Dagestan education, which emphasized hadith and led to a particularly scrupulous attitude of Mullah Ibrahim to the concept of *bid’a*.

In addition to teaching, Ibrahim Khujash was also engaged in resolving controversial issues, especially internal family conflicts. As Sh. Marjani points out, “...Mullah Ibrahim resolved disputes between husbands and wives. If a woman applied for a divorce, he, claiming that the majority of commoners did not have a valid marriage, did not hesitate to make a decision on divorce” [11, p. 26]. Fakhrutdin R. tells in more detail about this direction of Ibrahim B. Khujash’s activity in his “Asar”, where he refers to specific situations resolved by the imam and mentions the names of Muslims who turned to him for help [13, p. 111], as

well as the content of letters from those who turned to him in solving family issues [13, pp. 112–114].

Sh. Marjani partially criticizes the arbitral role of Ibrahim B. Khujash: “However, his behavior as a judge was not impeccable. Sometimes he would marry off married women to other men and said that the marriages of the common people are not strong, since they constantly say things that destroy marriage” [14, p. 254].

Describing Ibrahim B. Khujash as a theologian, M. Ramzi summarizes: “Thus, the hero of our story was one of the greatest scholars, preachers of this ummah, who encouraged the good and warned against the prohibited. He spoke the truth, was distinguished by an eloquent, logical speech. He made a change in many innovations and traditions related to clothing, food, drink and many other aspects that contradicted Islam” [12, p. 353].

Conclusion

The question of the relationship between the theologians of the Volga region and Dagestan, their mutual influence, clearly remains relevant to this day. This is due to the rather warm relations between the Spiritual Associations of Muslims of Dagestan and the Republic of Tatarstan, and a similar stand regarding the preservation of the theological tradition. The presence of a fairly large Hanafi community in Dagestan also adds significance to these relations. However, the analysis of the study on this issue shows that the topic has not yet been thoroughly researched and can be further transformed into an independent comprehensive study, the result of which could be the publication of a guidebook of personalities of Tatar and Dagestan theologians associated with the ties between the regions.

One of the most famous figures who received education in Dagestan madrasas was Ibrahim B. Khujash. Despite the scarcity of information, the study of his biography, education and activities demonstrates that he was a fairly popular and influential theologian of his time, who made a significant contribution to the correction and development of the theological tradition of the Volga-Ural region. The analysis of information about his contribution to the spiritual life of the Tatar people makes it possible to assume the meaningful influence of Dagestan education on the views of the theologian, who expanded the list of Islamic disciplines taught, and actively advised the population on family issues.

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