

THE IDEA OF ISLAMIC UNITY AND ITS HISTORY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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Abstract: *This article emphasizes the importance of studying the causes of the emergence of ideological teachings at the stages of historical development of the countries of the Middle East and Central Asia in the late of the 19th - early 20th centuries, the mechanism of their functioning and their influence on the world's population at present. The article highlights the process of transformation of the ideology of pan-Islamism into a political weapon in the second half of the 19th century as a result of the anti-Western policy of the Ottoman Empire and the combination of issues of Islamic unity and nationalism.*

Keywords: *Pan-Islamism, Islamic unity, politics, Islam, Middle East, Türkiye, Jamaliddin al-Afghani.*

It is important to study the reasons for the emergence of ideological doctrines at the stages of historical development in the world, in particular, in the countries of the Middle East and Central Asia, the mechanism of their functioning, and their combined influence on the world's population today.

In the second half of the 19th century, ideas such as the awakening of Muslim society and the achievement of Muslim unity emerged in the East as part of the Ottoman Empire's anti-Western policy. Furthermore, as a result of combining the concepts of Islamic unity and nationalism, the ideology of pan-Islamism transformed into a political weapon.

In the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, under the guise of the idea of "pan-Islamism" political movements striving for Islamic unity were intensified. "Pan-Islamism based on the idea of Islamic unity arose as a form of rejection of foreign domination by the Muslim masses, as well as as a political doctrine designed to serve the "survival" of the Muslim bourgeoisie under this domination and used to protect the interests of its individual groups" [1, – P. 45]. Because it was precisely the unification of Muslim peoples that was, on the one

hand, a way of liberation from colonialism and on the other hand a political position as an anti-Western force. Therefore, the concept of "pan-Islamism" seemed like an ideology leading to salvation for Muslims.

"Pan-Islamism is a political movement that emerged in the Middle East at the end of the 19th century, putting forward the idea of uniting Islamic countries under a single flag" [2, – P. 126], the founder of which is considered to be Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, a religious and political figure and educator of Afghanistan. He proposed the idea of Islamic unity against the Western threat and called upon all Muslims to unite in the struggle against colonialism, which meant uniting territorially [3, – P. 134].

Jamaluddin al-Afghani being from the Sayyid family was born in 1839 in Asadabad in Afghanistan. There are various opinions regarding his origins; in particular, some researchers claim that he was an Iranian Shiite, although he himself did not acknowledge this. In general, regardless of the direction of Islam, Jamoliddin al-Afghani is considered as the founder of the idea of Muslim unity, that is, the ideology of pan-Islamism.

The theory of pan-Islamism expressed the desire of the peoples of the East to preserve their independence and was, in a certain sense, a progressive idea for its time. Al-Afghani saw in it the unity of nations, harmony, and solidarity in the struggle against foreign invaders. Because he firmly believed that freedom cannot be achieved until the peoples, regardless of their nationality, race, language, and views, unite against the scourge of evil and tried to incorporate this idea into the theory of "Pan-Islamism" [4, – P. 334].

"Al-Afghani was one of the first among the enlighteners of the East to recognize the need to revise the religious, socio-philosophical system of Islam based on the tasks of anti-colonial struggle. He tried to convince his like-minded people that the East would follow the same path as the West, and that Islamic slogans should play a unifying role in the Muslim world, as well as various currents of Christian thought" [5, – P. 15]. In 1884, in Paris, al-Afghani published a weekly publication "al-Urva al-vuska" together with Muhammad Abdo, in which it was developed the idea of pan-Islamism [6, – P. 26]. He is also considered one of the ideological founders of the "Khabla-l-matin" and "Chehranamo" newspapers in which pages he actively promoted the role of Islam in the history of human civilization [7, – P.3].

Jamaluddin al-Afghani's concept of Islamic unity had a profound impact on the changes in the socio-political life of the Muslim world. The ideological reformist doctrines of that time became particularly popular: religious reformism, Islamic modernism, Islamic socialism and later Islamic positivism (positivism of logic), Arab personalism, Arab existentialism and Islamic pragmatism.

In the late of the 19th and early 20th centuries, some Muslim intellectuals realized that the most correct way to overcome the socio-economic backwardness of the Muslim world was to reform the traditional rules of Islam and meet the demands of the new era based on the concept of Islamic unity. From this perspective, Jamoliddin al-Afghani was among the first who initiated the reform movement. He developed ways to revive Islam based on rationalism. In particular, "Jamaluddin al-Afghani and his companions formed the idea of Muslim unity, which later gave rise to the concept of pan-Islamism and spread widely throughout the Muslim world" [8, – P. 6].

"Muslim ideologists and political figures, turning to the traditional values of Islam, put forward the ideas about the "Islamic path of development" as the only acceptable path for Muslim countries. On this basis, concepts such as "Islamic state", "Islamic government", "Islamic economy" and even "Islamic socialism" emerged. By the way, the initiator of the idea of "Islamic socialism" was Jamoliddin Afghani, although he later abandoned it. This ideology was not alien to the left-wing reformist movement of the Jadids in the Volga region and Turkestan" [9, – P. 38].

Overall, while reformist tendencies played a positive role during the national liberation movement based on the idea of Muslim world unity against colonizers, it was precisely during this period that the use of this unity concept by radical groups led to the movement's failure to fully achieve its goal.

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