

**FROM THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE BUKHARA EMIRATE IN THE  
SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES**

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**Abstract.** *In the Bukhara Emirate, all aspects of social life were regulated by the norms of Sharia, and the religious stratum played an important role in the governance of society. Imams and priests, along with religious and educational activities, also performed such tasks as collecting taxes and resolving civil issues. Dervishes, kalandas, and maddohs occupied a place among the people as mobile propagators of religious and spiritual life. Sources indicate that women's lives were under strict moral and normative restrictions, and in some communities, customs prevailed over Sharia. Local and foreign authors describe the rise of injustice in society, abuse of officials, and religious fanaticism based on scientific observations.*

**Keywords:** *Emirate of Bukhara, Sharia, clergy, dervishes, moral standards, social order, religious fanaticism.*

As in other Muslim countries, in the Emirate of Bukhara, Islam had a dominant position in all aspects of social life. All important issues in the life of the population, in particular, from land ownership relations to taxes and duties, trade, occupations and lifestyles of the population, all the rules and norms were completely under the Sharia requirements. Sharia, i.e. Islamic religious standards, regulated all aspects of society's life.

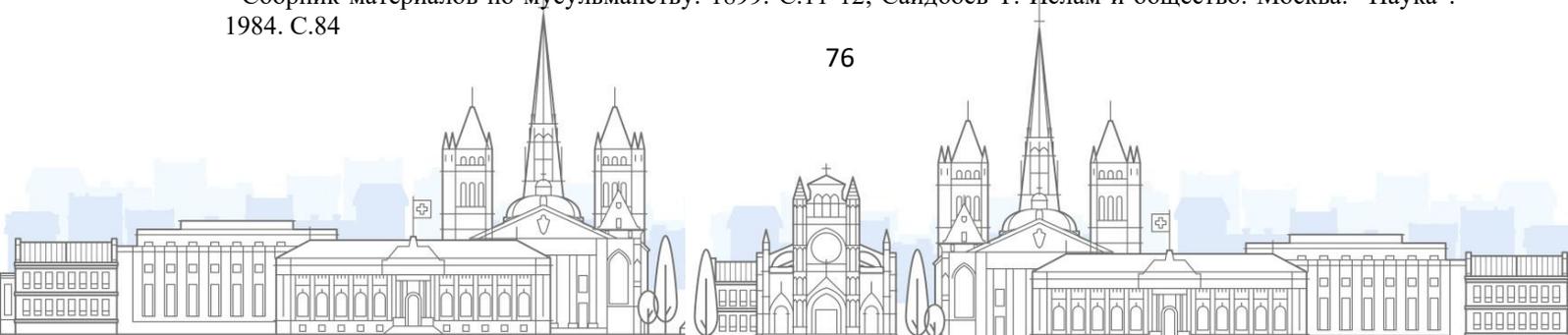
There were neither nobles nor lower-class groups among the clergy who performed religious duties, and they were used to making a living as imams, muezzins, and teachers in neighborhood and village mosques.

The imams supervised the daily religious propaganda in the city and village mosques. He carried out all the civic affairs of his community, in particular, he was an advisor to his community, collected taxes and fees, organized the Hashars, and educated children. He was also the "chief physician" of the village, from whom one could obtain medicines and amulets that protected against various diseases and fears<sup>8</sup>.

Although the dervishes and wanderers were not in the public eye, they were welcomed with kindness in the houses they entered. This was especially noticeable to women, as if

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<sup>8</sup> Сборник материалов по мусульманству. 1899. С.11-12; Саидбоев Т. Ислам и общество. Москва. "Наука". 1984. С.84



they were a sign of some change or event. Therefore, women took more care of the newly arrived dervishes, giving them food, felt, carpets, and old clothes.

One of the religious groups that occupied a special place in the religious and spiritual life of society was the maddohs. They, along with the dervishes, sang various religious and moral songs on the streets, squares, and markets.

According to V. Nalivkin, who studied the lifestyle of the people of the Bukhara Emirate, from the age of 7-8, the behavior, thoughts, and feelings of any family member should not deviate from the existing moral and religious rules.

Women are prohibited from walking alone in public places, with their faces uncovered, or interacting with strangers.<sup>9</sup> They were not allowed to go to mosques, but were required to perform religious rituals at home. Women who violated moral and religious rules and had extramarital relations with a foreign man were sentenced to death.

V.V. Radlov, who was in the Zarafshan oasis in 1868, emphasizes that the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples of the emirate (Kyrgyz, Karakalpaks, Turkmens, Arabs, partly Uzbeks - H.O.) had their own moral standards. In his opinion, any established standards were consistent with their centuries-old customs. Of course, although they also believed in Islam, they considered it more important to follow their own customs than the rules of Sharia. Therefore, there were often disagreements between them and the Bukhara scholars. The scholars considered them “disloyal” because they did not pay attention to religious practices.

The inhabitants of the Bukhara Emirate "should all live in such a way that even the smallest necessities of life, which no one needs, are as if they were given to those around them." "It is necessary to create an impression that is completely in line with the requirements of the Sharia and the rules of morality." A. Vamberi: "Here a person only needs to appear human, no one cares about what is in his heart. It is possible to superficially perform the deeds of Islam and the rules of the Sharia, but in reality be ignorant, tyrannical, and escape punishment. Although Bukhara and Samarkand were considered the centers of Islam, by the middle of the 19th century religious fanaticism had become so strong in these places that it was accompanied by negative situations such as ignorance, injustice, and violation of human rights rather than goodness and humanity"<sup>10</sup>.

Ahmad Donish describes the “order-makers” in society in the Bukhara Emirate as follows: “As the proverb says, hands wash hands, that is, the language and views of the emir, ministers, and officials are the same. If we look at them more closely, the emir is a vengeful and tyrannical man, and the judge is stingy and cunning. The unscrupulous

<sup>9</sup> Гребинкин Г. Узбеки // Туркестанские ведомости, 1871. №30

<sup>10</sup> Вамбери А. Очерки Средней Азии. – Москва, 1868. С.174



chairman is also a big thief and the head of the bandits. The Mirshabboshi, like the rest, is an avid gambler and a drunkard”<sup>11</sup>.

“During the time of Amir Muzaffar,” writes Akhmad Donish, “the oppression and tyranny became so severe that, for example, a minor theft was sentenced to death, while a murderer was not punished, and those who committed the smallest crimes were imprisoned. The minimum term of imprisonment was not less than 3 years, and the maximum was not more than 7 years. If the prison was full, the prisoners were sentenced to death all together.”

D.I. Logofet, the author of a number of works on the Bukhara Emirate, in his work “Country of Lawlessness” (“Strana bespraviva”), writes about the wild lawlessness and complete lawlessness in the Bukhara Emirate, which made its 3 million inhabitants worse off than serfdom, and that this situation was under the patronage of the Russian Empire<sup>12</sup>. In fact, his main goal was to achieve the complete annexation of the Bukhara Emirate to the Russian Empire.

Abdurauf Fitrat also describes the incident in detail in his work “Stories of an Indian Traveler” using the example of a greedy judge and a victimized family. According to him, a victimized woman, in order to save her husband, sold only 2 plots of land and gave 2,000 tanga to the judge, and 1,500,000 tanga to the assistants of the judge, the chairman, city managers, and the elder who “helped” the family, and saved him.

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<sup>11</sup> Аҳмад Дониш. Наводир ул-вақое. ЎзР ШИ Инв. №814 С.80; Трактат Аҳмад Дониша. История Мангитской династии. Душанбе, 1967. С.83

<sup>12</sup> История Узбекской ССР. // Под ред. М.Г. Вахабова, В.Я. Непомнина, Т.Н. Кары-Ниязова. Т. 1. – Кн.2. – Ташкент: Фан, 1956. С.315

