



# THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENTIFIC AND EDUCATIONAL CENTERS IN AVOIDING THE INFLUENCE OF DESTRUCTIVE FORCES

(In the case of Uzbekistan and the Arab Republic of Egypt)

**Shermuhamedov Komiljon Abduvaliyevich**

*International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, UNESCO Department for Religious Studies and Comparative Study of World Religions Acting Associate Professor*

## ANNOTATION

*Respectively approaching to the national history and to the culture, to the intellectual and spiritual ability which considered the biggest wealth in the world, protecting and enhancing it, behaving the offspring with the human customs, moreover, saving them from the diverse strange ideas play the main role in the life of each country in the world.*

**KEY WORDS:** *scientific and educational centers, destructive forces, world, national history, ability, research.*

The scientific heritage of the great scholars which surprises the world is not the heritage of one nation, but it belongs to whole popularity, and it is the main knowledge and philosophy source to the new generation, significantly it provides new inventions as a durable base undoubtedly.

In order to deeply research and widely promote the rich heritage of Imam Bukhari, the Sultan of Hadith science, and the great thinkers who emerged from the Muslim world, their invaluable contribution to the development of science, and to educate the young generation in the spirit of inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance, Imam Bukhari International Scientific Research Center was established on March 27, 2017<sup>1</sup>.

To establish inter-religious and inter-civilizational dialogue at the international level, to reveal the humanitarian nature of Islam in today's complex era, when various threats to capture the human heart and mind are increasing, to fight against ignorance with enlightenment, to educate the young generation with humanistic ideas, the Center of Islamic Civilization in Uzbekistan was established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated June 23, 2017<sup>2</sup>.

On September 10, 2017, at the 1st Science and Technology Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Kazakhstan, the Muslim community was informed about the project, and the member countries of the organization were called to actively cooperate towards this great goal.

By revealing the true nature of Islam and educating young people in the spirit of love for the Motherland and respect for national and religious values, the ground will be created for restoring the role of our country in the development of today's Islamic civilization. Just as the "House of Wisdom" in Baghdad, Khorezm Ma'mun Academy and the scientific school of Mirzo Ulugbek, established in Samarkand in the 15th century, were the foundations of the upsurges that took place in our country in their time. The Center of Islamic Civilization in Uzbekistan, which is being built in Tashkent, is expected to be the foundation of the Third Renaissance in the history of our country.

<sup>1</sup> Decision No. 2855 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to establish the Imam Bukhari International Research Center under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan" dated March 27, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Decision No. 3080 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to establish the Center of Islamic Civilization in Uzbekistan under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan" dated June 23, 2017.



Studying the heritage of Imam Maturidi, founder of Maturidiyya school, and his followers, researching and promoting their contribution to the science of Kalam and Aqida, improving and protecting the national cultural property, behaving the offspring with the human customs, moreover, saving them from the strange ideas play the main role in the life of each country in the world. On this purpose, on 11 August, 2020, founded the scientific research center named by Imam Maturidi<sup>3</sup>.

The purpose of these Centers, established at the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, is to deeply study the scientific heritage of great scholars who made a great contribution to the development of the Islamic religion, to establish inter-religious and inter-civilizational dialogue at the international level, and to promote the humanistic essence of the Islamic religion, to fight against ignorance with enlightenment, to educate the young generation in the spirit of humanistic ideas and national pride.

On September 19, 2017, in his speech at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev took the initiative to adopt a special resolution called "Enlightenment and religious tolerance"<sup>4</sup>. On December 12, 2018, the resolution "Enlightenment and religious tolerance" proposed by Uzbekistan was adopted at the plenary session of the UN General Assembly. Special attention was paid to the promotion of the idea of enlightenment, and the importance of integration, mutual respect, compromise, and mutual understanding in order to strengthen security and peace in the world.

On the basis of the grand idea of "Enlightenment against Ignorance", a wide coverage of the true humanitarian essence of religion, virtues such as goodness, peace and humanity are the expression of our ancient values, and intensive organization of scientific and educational activities in this field was launched.

In the spiritual and educational struggle against religious bigotry and extremism, in the Arab Republic of Egypt, which has been clashing with destructive forces for several years and has a lot of experience in this regard, scientific centers operate in this direction.

The Al-Azhar complex<sup>5</sup> in Egypt is an educational and religious center that forms the intellectual potential of society. Sheikhs of al-Azhar performs the task of training specialists in the religious field. The head of the Al-Azhar complex, the chief imam of Egypt, Ahmed Tayyib, is considered one of the most moderate Sunni religious figures in Egypt. Ahmad Tayyib was criticized by the Morsi regime for being a supporter of Hosni Mubarak and opposing radical groups in the country. He has always emphasized in his speeches that Al-Azhar will never become a propaganda site of the Muslim Brotherhood. In July 2013, under the leadership of Major General Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, he actively supported the overthrow of the regime of Mohammed Morsi. Under the leadership of Ahmed Tayyib, active propaganda against the destructive ideas of radical movements is carried out in the Al-Azhar complex.

In June 2015, under the Al-Azhar complex, the "Al-Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism" (مرصد الأزهر لمكافحة التطرف) was established, aimed at studying the activities of extremist and terrorist organizations and analyzing the expected threats in advance. It has become one of the main institutions of the Arab Republic of Egypt in the fight against extremism. Its purpose is to monitor processes related to extremist ideas and ideologies disseminated by terrorist groups in mass media.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Decision No. 4802 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to establish the Imam Maturidi International Scientific Research Center" dated August 11, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Mirziyoyev Sh.M. The approval of our people is the highest evaluation given to our activities. - Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 2018. - P.244-254.

<sup>5</sup> The Al-Azhar complex is a large official religious complex in Cairo, which includes a mosque, a university, secondary and special education institutions, and several other structures. The complex was built in 970-972 by order of the Fatimid caliph al-Muiz on a par with the city of Cairo. The Fatimids named it "Azhar" after the name of Fatima Zahra. Al-Azhar has been teaching since 975. At that time, education in Al-Azhar was not limited to religious sciences, but philosophy, logic, mathematics, and medicine were also taught there. In 1961, the decision "On the development of Al-Azhar" was adopted.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism. <https://www.azhar.eg/observer>



For the study and analysis of such processes, 50 employees with excellent knowledge of foreign languages have been allocated, they monitor extremist ideas and opinions on websites and social media in different languages, and quickly prepare answers and refutations to them in 12 languages. Its official website is available in Arabic, English, Persian, Urdu, German, Japanese, Spanish, Swedish, and French. Also, the "I listen and speak" project was introduced, and this propaganda activity is carried out in cooperation with the Al-Azhar International Fatwa Center.

In November 2016, Al-Azhar International Fatwa Center started its activity in Egypt as part of "Darul-Ifta"<sup>7</sup>. It was established following the decision of the Chief Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed Tayyib, to identify and respond to bigoted fatwas on the Internet. About 300 researchers and religious leaders work in the center. In addition to answering questions from different parts of the world, the fatwa center also identifies fake fatwas distributed by extremist platforms.

Today, the Al-Azhar International Fatwa Center organized a live broadcast of "Ask Al-Azhar" to answer questions about Islam. The center has launched its electronic fatwa service and has also provided hotlines for those who send questions.

A counter-propaganda mechanism against radical ideas was developed based on the experience of the "Al-Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism". It stipulated the implementation of step-by-step measures. In particular, at the initial stage, the Internet and social network sites are monitored, at the 2nd stage, radical content information is identified, at the 3rd stage, a refutation (article, video, photo, expert opinion) is prepared in relation to the radical content information, at the 4th stage, refutations prepared by experts are studied and published on the Internet or social network sites, at the 5th stage, the attitude of Internet users to the published material is studied, and at the final stage, analytical information, refutations, and studies are prepared. Also, articles and opinions published in mass media are studied and statements are made about them.

"Al-Ahram Center for Strategic and Political Studies" (مركز الاحرام لدراسات السياسة والاستراتيجية) started its activity in 1968 and specializes in the study of regional, international political, and strategic issues. Today, the scope of the Center's activities has expanded, and one of its main tasks is to analyze the religious situation in the Middle East region, in particular, to fight against extremism and terrorism.<sup>8</sup>

The Center publishes the quarterly "Situation in Egypt" and the annual "Arab Strategic Report" and "Catalogue of Islamic Organizations" devoted to the analysis of the internal problems of Egypt and the countries in the region.

The center's scientific activities include the analysis of international conflicts, the analysis of internal and external relations in Arab countries, the study of issues related to political, economic, social, military, cultural and historical events in Egypt, as well as the determination of Egypt's role in the region.

This Center plays an important role in promoting Egypt's initiatives in the international arena to maintain peace in the world, ensure stability in the region, and fight against international terrorism.

In recent years, attention has been paid to maintaining peace and tranquility between the two countries, further strengthening interreligious tolerance, and ensuring the well-being of the population as a strategic task.

On September 4-5, 2018, the President of Egypt Abdulfattah al-Sisi paid a state visit to Uzbekistan. During the visit, the leaders of the two countries paid special attention to strengthening regional security, combating international terrorism and extremism.

On February 20-21, 2023, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev paid an official visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt. Egyptian President Abdulfattah al-Sisi said at the meeting that promoting moderate Islam and establishing close cooperation in the fight against international terrorism is important for achieving positive results.

<sup>7</sup> The House of Fatwa was established in 1895 by the leading scholars of Al-Azhar. It prepares fatwas and religious conclusions on contemporary issues based on the Qur'an, Hadith, and Sharia sources. The most influential scholars who are graduates of "Al-Azhar" work in the institution. In its activities, it relies on moderate Islamic views and cooperates with religious institutions of foreign countries.

<sup>8</sup> The Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Egypt. <https://www.iicss.iq>



On March 3-4, 2020, the international conference on "Imam Abu Mansur Maturidi and Maturidiyya Teachings: Past and Present" held in Samarkand. At the conference, it was also noted that the fight against the destructive forces of various forms of bigotry, the strengthening of people's social activity, and the importance of "fighting ignorance with enlightenment" are more important than ever.

Sheikh Ahmad Tayyib of the Al-Azhar complex, who participated in the conference, said in his speech: "There is only one way to get out of the "desert of death" that can take the whole community to its end - and that is to restore the heritage of the ancestors, to study it, to introduce it into the educational system, to select the methods that combine intellectual and technical development and contribute to the "New Renaissance" with this heritage. At this point, I express my deep gratitude to Uzbekistan for its leadership in this field. I consider this to be a proud and commendable work."<sup>9</sup>

At the conference, the works being carried out on the organization of scientific research centers specializing in the study and promotion of the religious and spiritual heritage of great scholars were highlighted. The consequences of extremism and terrorism, as well as issues of strengthening international cooperation in combating them, were also discussed. In this regard, it was recognized that the fundamental reforms implemented in the religious sphere in Uzbekistan brought the study of the legacy of great scholars who made a great contribution to the development of Islamic civilization to a new level, the ideas of scholars such as Imam Maturidi, Abu al-Muin al-Nasafi served the development of society and the peace of the country for centuries, and the use of this teaching on the basis of the principle of "enlightenment against ignorance" is having a positive effect in the context of increasing destructive ideologies acting in the name of Islam.

In particular, the Chief Imam of Egypt, Ahmed Tayyib, expressed his full support for Uzbekistan's initiative to fight with "enlightenment against ignorance". He emphasized that the strengthening of mutual cooperation between the two countries is of urgent importance in this direction.

As a conclusion of the above opinions, it can be said that it is important to develop new ideological and spiritual-educational methods of fighting against extremism and terrorism by analyzing the positive experiences of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Uzbekistan in this direction, which have been struggling with religious fanaticism for many years.

## REFERENCES

1. *Mirziyoyev Sh.M. The approval of our people is the highest evaluation given to our activities. - Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 2018.*
2. *Imam Abu Mansur Maturidi and the Maturidiyya Teachings: Past and Present // Proceedings of the International Conference. -Tashkent: Mawarannahr, 2020.*
3. *The Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Egypt. <https://www.iicss.iq>*
4. *Al-Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism. <https://www.azhar.eg/observer>*

<sup>9</sup> Imam Abu Mansur Maturidi and the Maturidiyya Teachings: Past and Present // Proceedings of the International Conference. - Tashkent: Mawarannahr, 2020. - P. 3-4.