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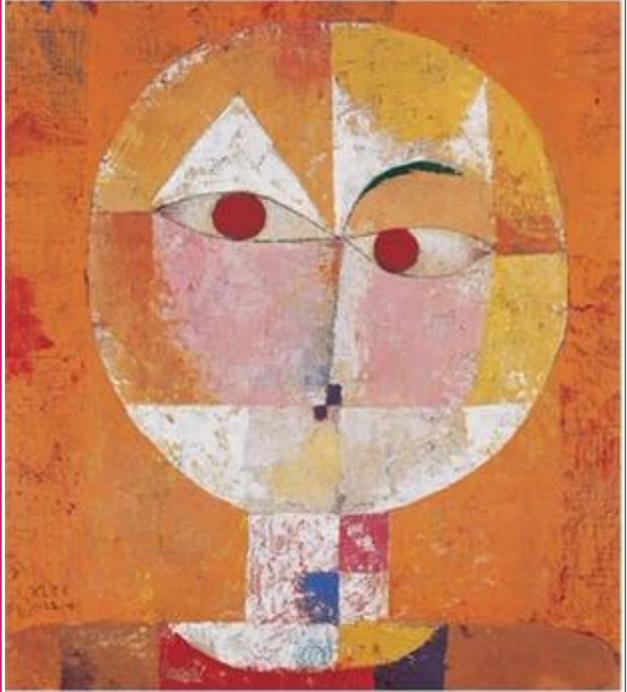
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# The role of a woman in Tatar cultural traditions revival

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## Abstract

The aim of the paper is an immersion into national, secular and intra-confessional specifics of the cultural life of Tatar-Muslim women's community. The methodological basis was made by the system and structural, historical, anthropological and functional approaches. In result, activists of the Muslim movement, now, using cultural traditions and innovative approach solve the problem of ensuring communication between generations. In conclusion, developing of culture during the last decades in the republic of Tatarstan determines the content of the process of ethno-cultural traditions revival of the Tatar people, introducing a role of a female factor in sociocultural development of Tatarstan in general.

**Keywords:** Language, Education, Ethno-Cultural, Traditions.

## El papel de una mujer en el renacimiento de las tradiciones culturales tártaras

### Resumen

El objetivo del documento es sumergirse en detalles nacionales, seculares e intraconfesionales de la vida cultural de la comunidad de mujeres tártaro-musulmanas. La base metodológica fue hecha por el sistema y los enfoques estructurales, históricos, antropológicos y funcionales. Como resultado, los activistas del movimiento musulmán, ahora, utilizando tradiciones culturales y un enfoque innovador, resuelven el problema de garantizar la comunicación entre generaciones. En conclusión, el desarrollo de la cultura durante las

últimas décadas en la república de Tatarstán determina el contenido del proceso de reactivación de las tradiciones etnoculturales del pueblo tártaro, introduciendo un papel de factor femenino en el desarrollo sociocultural de Tatarstán en general.

**Palabras clave:** Lengua, Educación, Etnocultural, Tradiciones.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

According to LIKHACHEV (1987) traditions play an irreplaceable role in the culture. The cultural history is not the only the history of changes, but also the history of values accumulation as surviving and effective elements of ethos in the subsequent development. From the point of view of the scientist, the creative potential of an era is defined by the unbreakable unity of traditions and innovations. Tradition in his understanding is at the same time the mechanism of preservation of culture, an element of philosophy and means of its broadcasting. Traditions play a special role - the mechanism of reproduction of culture and, in a certain measure, a necessary condition of its existence. Therefore, loss of tradition as a very significant part of culture can lead to its degradation. Preserving traditions within the activity of women's institutes are one of the most important categories of the theory of culture.

Women, being the chief keepers of customs of the Tatar people, always have acted as active advocates of preserving religious and cultural traditions, integrating them to a concept of sanctity. Studying of the main directions of sociocultural activity of Muslim women

organizations of Tatarstan republic as the factor of stabilization and rooting of the principles of civil society demands the complex analysis of interrelations and functioning of public, ethno-confessional components of the Tatarstan society. Determination of women's value role who accepted and practicing traditional Islam nowadays is found in the work of dynamic groups of Muslim women. The context of research, the forms and mechanisms of influences on society, contribution to preserving ethno-cultural traditions leads to the stable development of society in general.

The purpose of the paper is the identification of a role of Tatar women's groups of the Republic of Tatarstan in the civic and cultural development of the XX-XXI centuries. For disclosure of an effective objective in the work, the following problems are solved:

1. Analysis of the revival process of ethno-cultural traditions in forming an image of the modern Tatar woman;
2. Specifics of formation of Tatar women's public organizations in the conditions of the multiethnic environment.

## **2. METHODS**

The most important principles of historical knowledge are theory and methodology basis of the research: scientific character,

objectivity, historicism that assume the use of a wide range of the sources, which cover all set of the historic facts allowing presenting authentically dynamics of the role of a woman in Tatar cultural traditions revival phenomenon. The methodology of the paper relies on the use of civilization approach which theoretical basis was developed by DANILEVSKY (1991), SPENGLER (1993), WEBER (1990), SHUBART (2000), etc. It provides consideration of historical, culture features development in Russia in general, and in polyethno confessional Tatarstan. The methodological basis was also made by the system and structural, historical, anthropological and functional approaches.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

According to the world outlook beliefs and ethno-cultural accessory, the Muslim women actively work in the sphere of education, spiritual education and culture, participating in various women's groups. In the Russian Federation, there are about 164 women's organizations based on the secular principles though many of them at the same time accurately expressing the confessional and cultural orientation are officially registered. Cultural movement of the Muslim women's organizations in the Republic of Tatarstan (RT) relies on the state support expressed in a number of republican socio-cultural programs.

Many members of Association working in the pedagogical sphere set the tone in the orientation of arrangements. Education stays among priority, therefore; congresses of teachers of Tatar language were combined with a language course of practice. Masterclasses were introduced. The comprehensibility of the material was promoted by excursions to memorable places of the capital of Tatarstan – Kazan city.

Creation of the All-Russian public fund Tatar Family became one of the points of realization of the stated strategy. Association, without being limited to education as the instrument of forming the national beginnings of family traditions involved cultural figures of RT in which they were in great need in the 1990th. This association petitioned for registering educational charity foundation of Sara Sadykova at the Writers' Union of RT as a public organization. In November 2003 activity of Bayazitova, the founder of the first Tatar newspaper, became a subject of discussion of a special conference.

The persuasiveness of the taught canons would be less effective if was not a gift of the teacher organizer, the rector Ilyas Ziganshin. Almost all graduates of madrasah the 1000 anniversary of the adoption of Islam, like F. Zalyaliyeva, work in educational sphere. Therefore, by the invitation of the famous imam Ayrat Mukhametzyanov, Zalyaliyev together with classmates of madrasah Ziganshina and Yarullina organized Islamic schools in the mosque Gadel. Their graduates who were fond of occupations in madrasah come back to mosques as religious educators, combining jobs of tutors of bases of

morality in villages of areas of residence. Free courses of Arabic and graphics work for all comers at mosques of the republic (ZAPESOTSKY & LUKYANOV, 1999).

Faniya Zalyaliyeva initiated this new form of work with Muslim women. Inhabitants of the summer camp Faniyabik madrasah created by Muslim students of secular educational institutions became an object of application of the ideas in August 2006. 25–30 young Muslim women in the period of vacation studied the fundamentals of religion, traditional Islamic regulations, Tatar language, etc. The activity of the female group of madrasah found admirers among regular readers of Vatany Tatarstan, Shekhri Kazan, Islam info, Muslim newspapers and books by Rashida Iskhakov, Raufiya Akhmatyanov, Vassilya Rakhimov.

The female Muslim vector of sociocultural life of Tatarstan came under the influence of the ideas of Valiulla Yakupov. The organization conducted the work on the release of Muslim literature devoted to belief canons and on the reprinting of Tatar theologians works. Works of G. Kursavi, Sh. Mardzhani, R. Fakhretdin and M. Bigi' ideas in the Muslim cultural heritage of Tatars firmly made the cluster of classics for the Tatars. The publication of monuments of spiritual culture of Tatars, Islamic studies texts, textbooks and dictionaries in Arabic made a quintessence and a vector of activity of the center. It is not surprising that the ideas and undertakings of the

educated Hazrat were embodied in public and visible in the outings Migradzh (the 1990th).

During the period after a historical pause, at the end of the XX century tenders of readers of the Holy Quran and courses of studying fundamentals of Islam in pioneer camps were resumed (children's camp Solar, May, 1991). With the assistance of the Iman center, these forms affirmed also in practice of women's public organizations that promoted the distribution of the value of Islamic culture as a part of ethno-cultural Tatar traditions.

The charter of Union of Islam Youth public organization was approved at a general meeting in Kazan on July 9, 1996, and performed the activity according to the current legislation and this charter. The revival of a system of confessional education became an important factor of cultural activity of the Muslim women's movement. From the first steps, it faced considerable problems. The existing system of licensing of religious professional educational activity at the Ministry of Education and Science of RT was impractical as did not consider specifics of religious education, features of functioning of religious educational institutions in practice. When licensing certain ratios of secular and spiritual objects were not provided. The training program for various steps of professional religious education representatives is also not up to the end unified by RT.

Secular education does not exclude spiritual education. Now the Russian legislation regulates questions of religious education, and

education in the law on the liberty of conscience and on religious associations and the education act. There came the following stage when became effective the state guarantees on the realization of democratic principles of education.

The main part of professional religious educational institutions is concentrated in the capital of the republic: Russian Islamic University (RIU), madrasah The 1000 anniversary of the adoption of Islam, Mukhammadiya. There are Tanzil, Ikhlas, Nuretdin, Yoldyz in Naberezhnye Chelny city, Islamic Institute of R. Fakhretdinis in Almetyevsk city. By 1999 about 1,600 people in internal, correspondence and evening forms of education had got professional religious education, 630 of them got an education in Naberezhnye Chelny, 900 - in Kazan. The total number of teachers is 150 people, 17 of them are foreigners.

#### **4. SUMMARY**

The carried-out monitoring of work above-mentioned centers gives the chance to note certain trends. At 1164 centers 242 courses with 10504 students are organized. Female representatives are about 74%, men make only a quarter of the total number of full age students. This fact demonstrates that primary Muslim education is much more popular among women and needs further research. The prevalence of women is characteristic not of all mukhtasibat. Therefore, in

Alekseevsk region –there are about 52% of women, High-mountain region - 74%, Mamadyshsk city - 57%, Menzelinsk city - 46%, Sabinsk region - 100%, Yutazinsk region - 57% (Nasibullov, 2015).

The number of studying men exceeds or it is correlated to number of studying women. This phenomenon concerning girls is a little counterbalanced: girls make 56%, boys - 44%. Respectively it is possible to assume that essential differences in ‘popularity’ of madrasah courses among children are not observed. Males (52%) prevail a little among teachers in the madrasah courses. Probably, it is connected with the fact that teachers quite often are heads or Imams. Therefore, female teachers do not combine this activity with religious practice.

The bases of the rapid development of female Muslim education in the region are caused by a certain public request. Activation of the Islamic organizations became the impulsive cause of necessary staffing. According to the first deputy mufti of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Tatarstan, we have the whole education system including state which very much needs female personnel, teachers. A need for women specialists is in many industries. A striking example is a tourist and hotel sphere. Tourists from the Middle East have a need for personnel, consisting of representatives of the Islamic faith.

There are certain difficulties and objective inconveniences respecting traditions of Islam of the Quran nowadays. As a result, the

key purpose of consolidation of Muslim female is their (women) adaptation to social life, improvement of quality of everyday life, their broader involvement in public, social and cultural life of society (KUZNETSOVA-MORENKO & SALAKHATDINOVA, 2005).

Activity of Tatar women's public associations is imprinted in various spheres: education of youth, public relations and PR campaign in the field of the *dagvat* (an appeal to Islam), a healthy lifestyle and medicine, fashion, national and religious holidays and as active participants of humanitarian scientific and informative projects and program cycles in media, on radio and TV. There was an opinion connecting a constructive role of the Muslim women's social movement with ideas of traditional spiritual and cultural bases of public life.

However, spiritual education, enlightenment, the activity of charity and other socially important work remains the most important directions of cultural activity of Muslim women's groups. Such editions as the Muslim newspaper, the *Musulmanka* magazine, courses on reading the Quran, having religious and educational focus were created for the solution of questions of education and creation of a possibility of exchange of experience. So, anniversary 10th republican competition of readers of the Quran for children up to 14 years took place in the central mosque *Qol Sharif* on April 21, 2007, where 500 boys and girls from all corners of our republic took part. In each of the

three age categories, there were about three prize-winning places and several special nominations.

Proceeding from the general requirements imposed on an education system in general (religious in particular), it is important to provide education of tolerance and friendship between people of different ethno confessional traditions. Each person has the rights and opportunities for education. It is important to consolidate the efforts of government institutions and public organizations for joint actions for education and spiritual development of the younger generation. It will become an essential barrier to the penetration of the destructive influence of the nonconventional religious ideas and currents into educational institutions.

In this regard, Muslim women of Tatarstan made the following offers:

1. The number of children from Muslim families sharply increased in the republic. Their parents have a natural desire that in kindergartens there are groups in which the situation is not strongly discorded from family. We appeal to permit to create groups with teaching bases of Muslim culture and halal food in the kindergartens in Tatarstan.
2. To appeal to the Ministry of Education and Science to enter the subjects Morality, History of Religions and optionally A

basis of Islamic culture into the curriculum of comprehensive schools for the purpose of cultural and moral potential of Islam.

3. To appeal to the Ministry of Education and Science of RT, Institute of History of Academy of Science of RT to enter the textbook on bases of Islamic culture for elective courses at high comprehensive schools.

4. To address the Kazan university to introduce the new specialty Teacher of religious culture.

The modern state national educational policy of the Russian Federation is aimed at consolidation of the Russian society, education of citizens of Russia that in turn is impossible without the satisfaction of ethno cultural educational needs of the people inhabiting it. There is a strengthening of equality of all languages and religions of the people of Russia, preserving regional, national and confessional cultural traditions and features, an exception of any national, religious and language superiority are one of the paramount tasks to day for all education system of our country.

Any law and the decree of the Russian Federation and RT does not forbid (at least optional) teaching of fundamentals of Islam, Judaism, Buddhism or Orthodoxy in school and preschool educational institutions. Similar preschool teaching and educational institutions or groups for children of Muslims exist in a number of regions of the Russian Federation. As experience shows, development of the

international and interfaith relations promotes the education of civic consciousness and patriotism and culture of international and interreligious communication, promotes forming of the spiritual ethical principles based on the tradition of the people.

Today work of women's public organizations in the republic with youth can be classified depending on the factors put in its basis. It is possible to allocate educational activity, activities for the eradication of social problems and the propaganda activity focused on informing the public on the fundamentals of religion. This work can be divided into sociocultural work with the young neophytes who chose a religious way and observing Islam canons, and sociocultural work with young people whose belief is formal or nominally (owing to ethno confessional identity, characteristic of the population of the republic, which is characterized by a position I am Tatar – I am a Muslim).

Chronicle of cultural and confessional life consistently recorded opening of Muslim women's club (July, 2004), women's office of the Russian Islamic University (October, 2004), The Educated Woman — a Pearl of Islamic Heritage conference (May 24, 2007) took place in Kazan. There were new opportunities of self-manifestation of student's youth, including charitable actions and public discussions of various religious problems. The emergence of an unusual contest for children of school age *The Blessed Child* became a significant event. It is directed to the identification of the exceptional children knowing history, culture, the language of the ancestors. It is a magnificent opportunity for school students to show the erudition, deep inner

world, breadth of views. For the organization of rest and leisure of Muslim families, the summer camp in the village of Urkush of Kukmorsky district of RT is organized. Many children are given also an opportunity for training, improvement, sports activities for the physical and spiritual training of the younger generation. It is possible to notice that activists of the Muslim movement, now, using cultural traditions and innovative approach solve the problem of ensuring communication between generations.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

Thus, the participation of women's groups in cultural and educational activity (and other cultural actions) became a noticeable phenomenon in the socio-cultural development of Tatarstan. The arisen groups and special women's madrasahs and also active participation of Muslims in educational courses form a new generation of youth which in turn, being young keepers of the family center, raise the children on the basis of the gained knowledge of ethno-cultural and Islamic traditions of the Tatar people. It promotes the implementation of the concept of the state ethnonational educational policy, in particular forming a skill to communicate and tolerance excluding nationalism and xenophobia in children, their parents and tutors, strengthening interfaith world in Tatarstan. Such strategy is submitted a powerful contribution in development of the all-Russian spiritual unity, promoting the development of the population, cultural policy of the state aimed at the development of respect for historical heritage and forming conditions for careful attitude to traditional spiritual and moral values in the society.

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