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ON SPIRITUAL AND PEACEMAKING ACTIVITIES OF NAKSHBANDI SHEIKH KOSUM-HAJJI FROM DARGO

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Abstract

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in the Northeast Caucasus, nakshbandiya tariqa as a type of Sufism became widely spread. It influenced spiritual and moral perfection of Muslims orienting them to the defense of their homeland. Shamil used tariqa to unite the mountaineers of Dagestan and Chechnya in their fight against tsarism. Nakshbandiyar tariqa was transformed into Muridism relying on Gazavat. However, ideas of patience, peacemaking, and consent were present in this teaching. Nakshbandi sheikhs used them in their spiritual and religious activities (Muhammad Yaragsky, Jamalutdin Kazikumukhsy, Tasha-Khadzhi, Abdurakhman Al-Suguri. Kosum-Khadzhi). Although conflicts forced the latter to show the qualities of a warrior. Kosum-Khadzhi Sabatayev was a sheikh of Nakshbandi tariqa, a Muslim missionary. He was born in 1855 in the mountain village Belgata in the family of the village elder Sabatay. He received an Islamic education in the rural madrasa. 13 years later he studied at Sogratlin school of sheikh Abdurakhman Al-Suguri, a follower of Naqshaband tariqah. Kosum-Hadjji performed the hajj to Mecca three times, possessed deep knowledge of Islam, knew the Koran by heart, possessed secrets of nakshbandiya meditation, the gift of foresight, performed the “halbat” ritual. In 1917-1918, he was engaged in peacekeeping activities. After his tragic death, Islamic theologians decided to bury him at the family cemetery in Dargo.

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Keywords: Sheikh Kosum-Khadzhi, Nakshbandi tarik, Dargo.



1. Introduction

In the North-East Caucasus, religious-political processes were associated with activities of the Muslim clergy which used the teachings of Sufism, in particular, Nakshbandiyar tariqah, to achieve an ideological unity. Tariqa was popular in the region thanks to the activities of sheikhs M. Yaragsky, D. Kazikumkhsy, their followers Gazimhammad, Shamil, Tash-Haji, and later Abdurahman-Haji as-Suguri. The Murids of Nakshbandi tariqa, who were taught at the theological school in the Dagestan village Sograttli by Ustaz Abdurakhman-Haji Al-Suguri, participated in the liberation struggle against tsarism, spiritual and cultural activities of Muslims, peacemaking activities. Among them was Sufi Kosum-Khadzhi Sabatayev from Dargo. His life path, religious practice, political activities were understudied. In difficult revolutionary years, the peacekeeping position of Sheikh Kosum-Khadzhi faced difficulties and conflicts. It was difficult for him to save the highlanders from the revolutionary bacchanalia. Knowledge of his activities are important for understanding the historical and cultural continuity between the past and the present.

2. Problem Statement

In the process of formation of the national statehood of the peoples of the North Caucasus, the followers of Nakshbandi tariqa took an active position. In difficult circumstances, religious leaders restrained the people from provocations and reckless actions which helped protect the multinational region against ethnic and religious confrontation.

3. Research Questions

The article aims to describe the life path of Sheikh Kosum-Haji as one of the practical manifestations of Islamic, the role of Sufi ideas in the socio-political, spiritual and cultural life of Chechen society.

The study can help understand characteristics of Nakshbandiyar tariqa in Dagestan and Chechnya, its role in the spiritual and political life of people, peacemaking activities of Kosum-Khadzhi.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to gather and analyze facts of life and spiritual heritage of Naqshbandi Sheikh Kosum-Khadzhi Sabatayev, highlight his social and political role in the difficult period of development of Chechnya.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the study is the principle of historicism, the method of understanding controversial spiritual, cultural, political development used to solve the research tasks. Biographical and problem-historical methods were used to gather information from published sources, as well as ethnographic information from informants.

6. Findings

There were a lot of spiritual and political leaders in the history and spiritual culture of the peoples of the North-Eastern Caucasus of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One of them, Kosum-Khadzhi Sabatayev, was born in 1855. He died at the end of 1918 and was buried in Dargo.

The date of birth was determined based on the census in the “Family lists of Ichkeria district” (Bettuganov, 2010).

Since childhood Kosum had remarkable abilities. He began his studies in a madrasa at the oldest mosque at an early age. Belgatoy. When his family moved to Dargo, he was taught by alim Avtorkh-moll. Kosum was the best student of alim Avtorkh-moll. He was recommended for further theological education in Dagestan by Sheikh Abdurahman Al-Suguri from Sogratl. He was the third sheikh of Nakshbandiy in Dagestan. He improved his knowledge of Islam in Mecca (Magomedova, 2011).

The Sogratlyn Nakshbandi school was one of the recognized Muslim educational centers in the Caucasus. Such well-known madrasahs as Shafi-Haji, Mahdi-Muhamm and Abdurahman-Haji were located there. It owned the largest library and bindery. The faculty was famous for its high level of knowledge. “... sheikhs, imams, alims, mutalims of the school were highly educated people who knew many languages, including Arabic, Islamic culture, science and philosophy” (Pokrovsky, 1924, p. 36).

Pokrovsky (1924) wrote:

Among other skillful artisans, Dagestan supplied the entire Eastern Caucasus with experts in Arabic, readers, mullahs and Qadi. This pile of bare rocks was perhaps the most literate place in the Caucasus: each self-respecting family taught children to read Arabic texts ... In Dagestan, theological debates and life according to Sharia were a common practice. (p. 62)

Graduates of these madrasahs “received the official right to continue their studies at the All-Muslim Center of Education at Cairo University Al-Azhar” (Magomedova, 2011). In the Sogratlin Muslim school, the mentor of the mutallim and Kosum was Ustaz of the Naqshaband warrant Abdurahman Al-Suguri famous for his deep knowledge of Koran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Abdullayev, 1998).

Sheikh Abdurakhman Al-Suguri honored Chechnya. One of his three best-known essays “Kasyd” was devoted to the victory of the mountain militia over General Vorontsov's detachments in Dargo during the period of Imam Shamil. The battles of "Balgito (Belgato) and Dargo" are fanned with glory. Being a mukhtasib of imam Shamil (a state inspector and an advisor), he often visited Dargo (Abdullayev, 1998).

After graduation, Kosum performed the Hajj to Mecca and returned to Dargo. It was a significant event which he celebrated in the Muslim community of the village. Relatives of his mother gave him 80 sheep. Sabatay consulted mullah Autorkhoy. The latter advised him to marry Kosum. The teacher offered one of his three daughters as a bride.

Kosum-Haji was appointed to the position of a qadi of the rural society. These were years of preaching and educational work. In the rural madressa, hundreds of children and young men received theological education. Among his students was Manzig-Haji – father of Sheikh Said-Ahmad from Benoi. The bonds of kinship and brotherhood were strengthened by the power of faith.

Adherence to the Nakshband principles became the Kosum-Haji's lifestyle. Following the second principle "Vukuf-i-Adadi", he carried out a *wyrd* (pronouncing "Astaghfirullah" 100 times, "Lailah Ilalah" 500 times, "Allah" 100 times, "Subhannallah va Bihamdi "100 times, " Salavat "100 times after the morning or midday prayers.

Kosum-Haji performed the hajj to Mecca two times. He often performed the Nakshbandi ritual "halbat". Years of painstaking theologian work expanded his activities. In addition, the position of qadi in Venedo district contributed to this.

Deep and heartfelt sermons, the very life of the righteous became an example for the highlanders.

The proarchs of the teip were Muslims since the 7th century (according to the tribal teptar). Kosum-Hajji earned unquestioned authority.

In Dargo, Jamaat was united. The rural society was honest, non-obstinate, hard-working. Islamic canons intensified. The village was famous for homeiness. There were craftsmen, gunsmiths, masters who made papakhas. Prosperity caused a construction boom. Tile production, wooden architecture was distinguished by good quality. Painstaking work, competent management brought wealth in the barns. The villagers sold grain. Farmers and livestock breeders made traditional sausages, corn flour and cheese. Their products were in demand.

The prosperous life in the mountain villages was disturbed by the revolutionary events in the Russian Empire. Kosum-Haji could not remain a bystander.

After the February revolution, revolutionary committees were formed throughout the provinces and districts of the empire. In March 14 (27), 1917, on the initiative of the Provisional Central Committee of the united mountaineers in Grozny, the First Congress of Chechnya was held. Chermoev, "one of the most influential representatives of the Chechen elite," made a report on the activities of the Caucasian Committee and tasks of the national movement: The union of the peoples of the North Caucasus must fulfill all the aspirations of the Highlanders. In order to form the self-government of the Chechen people, the Congress elected the Chechen People's Executive Committee of Grozny and Venedo districts which became the highest authority in Terek region. Tashtemir Eldarkhanov was elected to the position of Grozny district commissioner, i.e. the head of the district executive power. Colonel Abdulla Aduiev was elected to the position of the commissioner of Venedo district. Kohurs Temirgireev and Shepi Borschikov were Abdullah's assistants. Shepi Borschikov headed Venedo commissariat. Kosum Sabatayev headed and Nozhai-Yurtov Commissariat, Vakha Kadiev – Shalinsky Commissariat, Yasa Yanarsaev – Oisungur Commissariat, Kaim Ahayev – Sharo-Argun Commissariat (Shigauri, 2001).

The leaders of the Muslim clergy headed the national liberation struggle. The peoples of the North Caucasus were in a difficult situation. Political declarations were not understandable. Some Highlanders supported the Bolsheviks, while others – the occupation regime. The intelligentsia sought to create an independent Mountain Republic which was proclaimed by the May Congress of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus in Vladikavkaz. Nazhmudin was elected to the post of mufti. He made efforts to restore order, prevent interfaith discord. In November 1918, the mufti gathered his militia, sending letters to the Kadis.

Nazhmudin sent letters to Kosum-Hajj with an appeal to join his militia. The Red Army detachments made counterfights, hindering the advance of the militias to Temir-Khan-Shura, the capital of Dagestan. Violent battles took place near Chirkey, preventing the movement of the Chechen troops. The first ranks of

the militias who tried to break through the corridor turned out to be under heavy shelling. The price of success was too great - Sheikh Kosum-Haji was killed. He was buried on Chirkey mountain.

His family decided to re-bury Kosum at the ancestral cemetery.

His grave was found at the site of the former battle on Chirkey Mountain, but it was not possible to take the body back without serious military support. The mountain was controlled by the Red Army detachments. At the village meeting, Abdul-Rashid reported on the search results. The elder brother of Kosum Islam appealed to his fellow villagers with a request to equip a support squad. Up to hundreds of people responded voluntarily to go camping. They were joined by militia units from the villages of Tazen-Kala and Tsentaroy. In the village Benoy, they were warmly welcomed, and several hundreds of horsemen joined them. After passing through Nozhai-Yurt settlements, the detachment met Imam Saidbek who addressed them. The detachment was replenished with 500 Teil Bilta volunteers headed by the famous commander Mezhid.

The ways to Chirkey were fired. It was decided to join the battle. Mezhid was elected a commander of the joint detachment. The battle was won without loss, the mountain was taken; 13 guns became a trophy. However, the local mountaineers did not allow to open the grave considering it good for them to have the burial of a righteous at their disposal. They said that they had observed a wonderful glow above the grave, testifying to the holiness of the deceased in the Gazavat Sheikh Kosum-Haji. The son of Sheikh Abdul-Rashid asked them to allow them to take the father's body for burial in the family village. The body extracted from the grave did not emit a corpse-like smell, the blood was pure. Having performed a "doa", the procession started off on the way back.

Kosum predicted that he would have two graves - outside his native village and at the family cemetery. He specified that an outsider would commit his burial. The funeral procession stood at the grave pit when a stranger appeared from nowhere. He went down into the grave pit, took the body, performed the burial rite and disappeared. Four sheikhs were at the funeral procession. They decided to build a Mazar over the grave of Kosum-Haji.

The stormy post-revolutionary years plunged all the highlanders into the whirlpool of events. Repressions killed Kosum's sons Mahmud and Azi; Abdul-Rashid was prisoned. Kosum's grandsons Mokhmad and Saydmagomed were prisoned as well. In 1939, the NCIA burned the houses of Kosum's children as religious figures. In February 1944, women with children in their hands were exiled to distant snow-covered Kazakhstan. The Kosumhadzhiyevs and the Makhmudovs are Kosum's descendants.

The memory of Kosum is still alive. His deep knowledge of Islam, piety and high morality are respected by believers.

Kosum-Hajj instructed the highlanders to observe the Shari'ah prescriptions and strictly follow the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad.

During the hard years, madrasas were eliminated, unique theological books and manuscripts were destroyed. However, the sheikh's ziyarat has been preserved in its original form. It experienced his second "birth". In 2018, the ziyarat was restored with the assistance of the Regional Public Fund named after the Hero of Russia Akhmat Kadyrov. The Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Akhmatovich Kadyrov honored the memory of Kosum.

7. Conclusion

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in the Northeast Caucasus, nakshbandiya tariqa as a type of Sufism became widely spread. The teachings of this tariqa were followed by Sheikh Kosum-Hajji, a follower of the famous Dagestan ustaz Abdurakhman Al-Suguri. Relying on peacemaking ideas and principles that are inherent in this teaching, Kosum advocated active participation in the new power structures of the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus. As an authoritative spiritual leader of Chechnya, he called for peace and harmony. He saved the population of Vedeno and Nozhai-Yurt districts from interethnic dissension, political confrontations. The Sufi worldview and activities of Kosum-Hajji were practical. He sought to solve life tasks of the population, overcoming conflicts, following the norms of Islam, Sharia, overcoming contradictions and conflicts.

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