

## **ABSTRACT**

**Dissertation of Kassabekova Yenglik on «Traditions of secularism and religiosity in the spiritual world of Kazakh people» presented at the PhD degree in philosophy (PhD) «6D020600 - Religious studies»**

**General characteristics of the work.** The content of the dissertation covers the formation, development paths, and evolution of secularism and religious phenomena in the history of the Kazakh people. The research identifies the origins and historical development of secular and religious traditions of the Kazakh people from the ancient Turkic period to the present, and provides a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted stages of their formation.

**The relevance of scientific research.** Secular and religious traditions are among the key aspects of the spiritual life of the Kazakh people. It is well known that the phenomenon of secularism plays an important role in regulating intercultural relations not only for the Kazakh nation but also for humanity as a whole in the era of global development. Therefore, this research topic holds great relevance within the social sphere of the humanities. During the course of the study, through examining various facets of the Kazakh people's spiritual world, the necessity of exploring secular and religious traditions that align with the Kazakh worldview and mentality became evident. The centuries-long hardships and achievements in the history of the Kazakh people have been intertwined with their unique spiritual identity and culture. In these processes, the traditions of secularism and religiosity and their harmonious coexistence have played a crucial role. The fact that these two phenomena are an inseparable part of the cultural life of the Kazakh people further enhances the relevance of the topic. Moreover, the interconnection and interaction between secular and religious traditions in the spiritual life of the Kazakh people is one of the most important factors. The significance of these two globally relevant phenomena in preserving national unity is growing day by day. In the current historical context, it is clear that ensuring a balance between secularism and religiosity requires finding this balance for the social well-being of the country.

Generally, secular and religious values are reflected in the strategic and tactical plans of major nations to shape modern geopolitical dynamics. Domestic policies of all nations always take into account religious factors, as well as the interests of both believers and non-believers. It is evident that secular and religious values form the fundamental basis for significant processes related to religion, even though they may be obscured by other phenomena in public life.

In this research, these value systems are examined individually and in interaction with one another. The conceptual framework of the study aligns with its practical implications. As factual data, research by prominent sociologists on issues of religious and secular elements in the Republic of Kazakhstan has been utilized, along with sociological and expert surveys among the population.

We understand that every aspect of the spiritual, cultural, social, and political-economic landscape of modern Kazakhstan's pursuit of global development is influenced by the country's independence. Independence is a fundamental value, and therefore, there is a need to objectively understand the historical roots, circumstances,

and preconditions for maintaining and strengthening the nation's independence, as well as its ideological orientation and philosophical foundations.

**The thesis of this study.** The topic of secularism and religious belief is widely reflected in the spiritual and intellectual history and culture of the Kazakh people. The analysis of religious belief has been a subject of consideration for Turkic and Kazakh scholars, such as Al-Farabi, Zhusip Balasaghun, Khozha Akhmet Yassavi, M.H. Dulati, S. Ualikhanov, A. Kunanbaev, S. Kудayberdiuly, I. Altyntssarin, as well as in the works of A. Bokeikhanov, A. Baiturssynov, M. Dulatov, S.S. Seifullin, M. Zhumabaev and others. The important progressive ideas in their work on the study of the place and role of secularism and religion in society have been logically continued in the work of Kazakh scholars M. Auezov, A. Margulan, S. Kasskabassov, M. Orynbekov, and others.

Among the scientists engaged in scientific research in the country as a whole on the topic of the study, stand out: N.Zh. Baytenova N.G. Esim, N.L. Seitakhmetova, S.U. Abjalov, D.T. Kenzetaev, B.K. Beissenov, A.G. Kossichenko, E.E. Burova, K.M. Borbassova, A.D. Kurmanalieva, S.M. Kaupenbayeva, M.B. Alikbaeva, B.M. Satershinov, B. Baymakhanov, M. Isakhan, Zh. Akhanov, Z.G. Jalilov, A.K. Baissultanova, K.A. Zatov, Sh. Ryssbekova, A.D. Shaghyrbai, Sh. M. Zhandossova, M.K. Bektenova, L.N. Toktarbekova, M. Zhuzei, A. Altaikyzy, A. Artemiev and R.A. Podaprigora.

In Kazakh philosophical and religious studies, this question has not been the subject of specific research, but generally, philosophers who have made a significant contribution to the examination of the issue within the context of studying the history of Kazakh philosophy and spiritual culture, such as A.H. Kassymzhanov, A.N. Nyssanbaev, K.Sh. Nurlanova, S.N. Akatai, T.H. Gabitov, Zh.A. Altayev, G. Ayupov, K.K. Begalinova, B.I. Karybpayev, S.E. Nurmuratov, D.U. Kussainov, G.Zh. Nurysheva, A.P. Massalimova, A. A. Kuranbek, A. Sagikyzy, G.G. Barlybayeva, K.M. Konyrbayeva and G.I. Nussipova, have influenced the study of religious values.

The work has contributed to a broader consideration and study of the dissertation topic. The dissertation is based on the works of Kazakh scholars who have accumulated a rich intellectual legacy through their study of the history, literature, laws, and customs of the Kazakh people. It concludes that the principles of liberty and justice are spiritually and morally essential to the existence of Kazakh society.

**The aim of this research work** is to identify the historical significance of secular and religious traditions among the Kazakh people and their role in the development of their spiritual world. It is also to determine the importance of these traditions in the context of the cultural-historical evolution of modern society.

In order to achieve this aim, **the following tasks** have been set:

- To define the theoretical, methodological, and conceptual approaches and principles for the study of secularism in the spiritual world of the Kazakh people.

- To identify the theoretical, methodological, and conceptual foundations and principles of analyzing religiosity as an integral part of the spiritual world of the Kazakh people.

- To analyze secularism and religiosity in the traditions of Turkic spiritual culture.
- To reveal the interrelationship between secularism and religiosity, identifying their worldview features in the socio-cultural and religious-spiritual space of Kazakhstan from the era of the Karakhanids to the present day.
- To study the phenomena of secularism and religiosity in the teachings of Abai.
- To explore the features of secularism and religiosity traditions in the spiritual and practical culture of the Kazakh people.
- To justify the role of the spiritual factor of religiosity in the secular society of Kazakhstan.

**Object of the research** is the secularity and religiosity of the spiritual world of the Kazakh people.

**The subject of the research** is the features of the traditions of secularism and religious beliefs in Kazakhstan in the context of its historical development and the prospects for modernity.

**Methodological and theoretical foundations of scientific research.** In this study, it was necessary to draw on the perspectives of religious, philosophical, and socio-psychological research as the methodological and theoretical underpinnings for a comprehensive exploration of the issue. The principles of historical accuracy, historical reconstruction, and objectivity have been updated to thoroughly examine Kazakh spiritualism, phenomena of secularism, and religiosity within national culture and worldview. Value, hermeneutical, and comparative analytical approaches have been productively employed. On the basis of these methodologies, the theoretical substance of the fundamental aspects of the mind, meaning of life, freedom, and spirituality in Kazakh culture has been revealed, ontologically linked to the traditions of secularism and religion. In modern domestic studies in the field of religious studies, efforts are made to expand methodological approaches as much as possible, with a focus on considering social, cultural, and spiritual phenomena in their interactions.

**The practical significance of the research.** The findings from this research can be applied in specialized lectures on philosophy, cultural studies, and religious studies, as well as in specialized courses such as «Religious Studies», «Cultural Studies», and «Kazakh Philosophy». Theoretical principles and conclusions can be utilized in socio-cultural, intellectual-spiritual, and educational contexts while implementing the modern doctrine of «Adilet Kazakhstan» and the concept of «Adal Azamat», and can contribute to fostering multicultural dialogue in contemporary Kazakh society.

**The scientific novelty of the thesis.** During the thesis work, a number of new scientific results were obtained:

- As the main scientific novelty of the dissertation, a methodology has been proposed to enhance the theoretical significance of religious studies in close interconnection with the relationship between secular values and the objective assessment of the secular views of the Kazakh people in the spiritual space.

- An analysis of religiosity as an important component of the spiritual world of the Kazakh people is presented, based on the systematization of theoretical, methodological, and conceptual approaches.

- The objective study of scientific and religious problems, along with a clear identification of some similarities and features of secular and religious positions in society, has shown that these can be viewed as authentic manifestations of Turkic spiritual culture.

- The traditions of secularity and religiosity in the spiritual world of the Kazakh people are ontological, embedded in the Kazakh model of life, where a deep connection between spirituality, enlightenment, intellectuality, and sociality was realized.

- The main philosophical meanings of the spiritual history of the Kazakh people have been identified, aimed at the improvement of human spiritual existence through the artistic depiction of secularism and religiosity in the works of the outstanding thinker Abai Kunanbayev.

- The features of the traditions of secularism and religiosity in the spiritual and practical culture of the Kazakh people have been explored.

- It has been substantiated that the evolution of the development and formation of the phenomena of secularity and religiosity in independent Kazakhstan has gone through several stages, during which a historical experience of the interconnection and mutual complementarity of secularism and religiosity has formed, playing the role of a spiritual factor that contributed to the preservation of the unity and national cultural identity of the country.

#### **Provisions for defending the PhD Thesis:**

- Throughout human history, there has been a mutual influence between science and religion. Since society is in constant need of reasoned and reliable information, secularism and religiosity have, for centuries, become the core of public consciousness. Therefore, there are specific historical foundations for studying these phenomena. Such studies must rely on theoretical and methodological approaches and results. Humanity has always aspired both to knowledge and to faith, which is why a distinct tradition of secularism has taken shape throughout history.

- In the history of our country, the interaction between secularism and religiosity has undergone changes during various historical periods. However, the core of the people's mentality and religious traditions has remained largely intact, and the customs of secularism and religiosity were not significantly disrupted. Alongside the national traditions of the people and the humanistic principles of Islam, the works of the Kazakh intelligentsia laid the foundations for spiritual and moral principles in society.

- The Turkic period is distinguished by its unique values and historical figures. In the spiritual world of the Turkic period, the traditions of secularism and religiosity were closely linked and developed continuously. Our ancestors, by synthesizing the traditions of Tengriism, Zoroastrianism, and Shamanism, combined rationality and irrationality, holiness and pragmatism. The Turkic world absorbed secular-religious content into its spiritual culture, and then Kazakh culture, in the course of its evolution, synthesized Islamic traditions.

- The era of the Karakhanids represents a unique historical period when secular and religious powers coexisted during the process of Islamization. Despite the significant influence of Islam on public consciousness, the secular authority, guided by practical considerations and the need for effective state governance, tried to preserve its independence. Studying this period allows for a deeper understanding of how religious reforms and political transformations of the medieval and modern eras influenced the formation and development of secularism.

- In the works of the great thinker of the Kazakh people, Abai, and other philosophers, the positions of the Kazakh people on secularism and religiosity are clearly expressed. Abai criticizes the superficial religiosity of ordinary people, the hypocrisy and ignorance of some citizens, and expresses concern about the future of youth who have not chosen the path of education. Thus, the thinker calls for revealing the unique and universal aspects of the human being in society, forming the concept of the "Tolyk adam".

- In the secular society of Kazakhstan, religion occupies an important place in the spiritual sphere, maintaining balance in the landscape of the country's secular culture. In the context of religious and secular interaction, this contributes to the strengthening of the spiritual and moral paradigm of our society.

- Currently, the ideological and theoretical platform of «Adiletti Kazakhstan» has become an integral part of the interaction between secularism and religiosity. The effective realization of any spiritual phenomenon in society is closely connected with conducting scientific research. In secular Kazakhstan, religion preserves spirituality in the landscape of the country's secular culture, maintaining the religious and secular interaction. In their balance, there is a noticeable strengthening of the spiritual and moral paradigm of our society.

**Approbation of the results of research and publications.** Twenty articles have been published related to the subject of the study, including nine in journals recommended by the Committee for Supervision in the field of science and education of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (five in «Adam Alemi», two in «Al-Farabi», one in «Bulletin of KazNU University», and one in the electronic journal «History»). Two articles have been published in indexed journals included in the SCOPUS database: 1. Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies. The Role of Religion in Shaping Sociocultural Self-Identification of Society in Kazakhstan. Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 2023, 12(5), PP 145–156; 2. Relacoes Internacionais no Mundo Atual. Intercultural connections in Central Asia: comparative study of Zoroastrian and Kazakh traditions, religiosity, and culture Vol.3, n.45|e-7486 | p.556-573|Julho/Setembro 2024.

**Structure and volume of the Thesis** The structure of the dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and a list of sources used. The structure of the dissertation corresponds to the set goal and objectives. The total volume is 124 pages.