

ON THE PROBLEMS OF MODERN RUSSIAN QURANIC STUDIES*

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A remarkable feature of Muslims, including Russian, is a devotion to their religion. However, often the Muslims, especially young people, in fact, are not carriers of their religion as such. It's not only about the non-compliance with at least one of five pillars of Islam. Pathos religiosity of some Russian Muslims sometimes doesn't correspond to the level of knowledge and understanding of the foundations of the religion of their ancestors and of the Holy Scripture, not to mention their involvement in religious life. Things are better in the outback, where even kids are taught to read Quran and the Sunnah, worse - in metropolitan centers, despite the possibility to communicate there with the teachers of religious schools and Islamic scholars of secular educational and research institutions.

This, of course, is not related to the students who chose Islamic studies as their specialty. Here is a "problem" of another kind. Many young Muslims seek religious education abroad, naively believing that only there they can be taught "true" Islam. No one rejects the value of academic education at Al-Azhar, Karaouine or any other foreign Islamic University (despite the evacuation of Russian students of Al-Azhar in February 2011, we have no doubt that Russians will apply to this university in future). However, teaching there is cut off from the Russian reality, including the understanding of regional and national peculiarities of Russian Islam. Thus graduates who received thorough theoretical knowledge can't realize themselves as priests at home because of their alienation from Russian reality.

A serious obstacle for the majority of Russian Muslims is the development of a religious minimum of Arabic language, especially in adulthood. Native speakers are sometimes very upset when they hear our Muslims reading in Arabic of "Al-Fatiha" or other surahs. What if religious leadership of Muslims of Russia recognizes any of existing translations of the Quran into Russian canonical in the sense of most close matching to the Arabic original or prepares its translation as the Synodal version of the Bible was made? This could revive the interest in the study of the Quran, memorizing surahs in Russian, that would lead to the more frequent and accurate quoting of Quranic text. Of course, no translation-tafsir can not substitute the quotations from Quran in Arabic, not in vain, translation of G.S. Sablukov was published in parallel with Arabic text. Here pertinently to remind that Doctor of Philosophy, Professor Victor Danilovich Ushakov raised the question on choosing the translation of Quran during the "round table"

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held in Moscow "Holy Quran in Russia: spiritual heritage and historical destiny" back in 1997 asked whether "canonical" or "scientific" translation is necessary.

In recent years, a lot of new translations of Quran appear in Russia, which in fact are philological practice and don't introduce anything new in Quranic studies. We tend to think that it is necessary not to produce new translations of Quran but to interpret it in the context of contemporary realities, as does the Doctor of Philosophy, Professor Ibrahim Tawfiq, for example, in his work "On the way to the Quranic tolerance" (Nizhny Novgorod, 2007), thus it will awaken the interest of Russian society, including many Muslims, to the Islam in modern society. Otherwise, extremist elements will continue to claim the right to the true perusal of Holy Scripture, spoil immature minds and recruit from among them their minions.

Russian Quranic scholars, including through the efforts of Doctor of Philosophy, Professor Mikhail Vagabovich Vagabov, began to pay more attention to the history of Islam and Islamic Studies in Russia. However, history of Islamic studies abroad, including history of Quranic studies and mutual influence of Russian and foreign schools of Islamic studies still remain poorly studied.
