

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EVOLUTION AND HISTORY OF THE IDEOLOGY OF ASCETICISM IN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

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**ABSTRACT.** One of the common features of all religions in the world is ascetic (Greek askesis (in Christianity) - the movement of the human will on the way to achieve divine grace), ar. zuhd-zuhd – not to incline the heart to the world) is the existence of views and practices in one form or another. But this situation does not require that the ascetic processes in religions are exactly the same, but the ascetic state, formed separately in each religion, acquires its own characteristics. This can be observed as a unique phenomenon in monotheistic (Greek monos-theos - monotheistic) and polytheistic (Greek poly-theos - polytheistic) religions and religious-philosophical teachings. Today, the basis of ascetic views in Christianity and Islam, which are among the world religions, is of great importance due to the presence of a number of common and different aspects based on the reliance on sacred sources, development stages and evolution, institutionalization processes, and their place in social life.

**Key words:** *asceticism, history of the ideology, monotheistic religions, Sufism, zuhd, Bible, Qur'an*

### MAIN PART

Scientific research centers around the world are conducting research on the formation of asceticism, the history of ascetic views and practices, and studying the stages of development. It is being studied the aspects of the interpretation of asceticism as a religious phenomenon, its philosophical essence, its manifestations in the stages of historical and gradual development, the manifestation of ascetic practices in religions, the foundations of ascetic views in Christianity, the formation of the institution of monasticism, the essence of asceticism and asceticism in Islam, the early schools of asceticism, the development of asceticism in connection with mysticism. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of religions, their characteristics, the influence of ascetic practices on social life, and the aspects related to the human psyche based on religious experience.

A lot of work is being done to ensure the priority of the principle of religious tolerance in the modernizing Uzbekistan. In particular, 178 of the existing non-Islamic religious organizations in our country belong to Christianity, a total of 3 Christian monasteries (2 for women and 1 for men) and an Orthodox seminary are operating in the city of Tashkent. In addition, a number of updates and creative works related to the study of the scientific and spiritual heritage of Islamic culture and heritage, in particular, the establishment of the "School of Sufism" at the Mir Arab Higher Madrasa in Bukhara, a huge project aimed at improving the "Yeti Pir" steps are also examples of consistent reforms in this field. In our country, Muslims and Christians have lived in harmony for centuries and have respected each other's beliefs, religious traditions and rituals. The above-mentioned factors require the need to include the history and evolution of ascetic views in Christianity and Islam into the scope of research.

The history, evolution, manifestation of ascetic views, their role in the life of the society, the process of institutionalization of asceticism have been carried out by Eastern and Western scientists. In particular, the topic of asceticism in religions has been researched in Germany, the USA, Great Britain, Russian Federation, Turkey, Kazakhstan and the researches of scientists such as O. Akimushkin, Dj. Trimmingham, M. Joshon, U. Turar, J. Rothschild, U. Chittick, A. Knish, A. Schimmel are significant.

From Russian-Soviet scientists: V. Barthold, Ye. The studies of Bertels, V. Vyatkin, V. Gordlevsky, M. Ivanov, A. Boldere also have thoughts on the development of asceticism and Sufism. The research "Traditions of asceticism in Christianity before monasticism" by the Russian research scientist A. Korpachev is also considered an important research work in the study of asceticism and monastic traditions.

Despite scientific research carried out in Uzbekistan about the history of ascetic views in Islam, the formation and development of Sufism, and its role in social life by N. Komilov, B. Babadjanov, I. Haqqul, E. Karimov, H. Yuldashkhodzhayev, A. Dzhozhoziy, G. Navro'zova, J. Kholmominov, I. Usmanov, K. Rahimov, I. Ostanakulov, A. Jumanazarov, M. Mamatov, G. Razzokov, Q. Rozmatzada, H. Hamidi and young scientists: M. Amonov, N. Toychiyeva, F. Mirzayeva, asceticism in Christianity and Islam has not been comparatively analyzed.

Philosophers of the ancient times also addressed this topic and explained asceticism in three ways: physical (physical exercises), spiritual (exercises of the mind and will) and religious (freeing the soul from bad inclinations and passions). It has been determined that there is a general ascetic state in the composition of world religions, and that each of them has its own characteristics.

It is explained that asceticism is given a very high value in Hinduism based on religious-philosophical teachings, it is believed that supernatural power can be mastered through it, and moreover, asceticism is considered to be the only way to get rid of the chain of rebirth. According to the famous German Buddhist scholar Ernest Lothar Goffmann (Govinda Lama Anagarika, 1898-1985), who studied ascetic practice in Buddhism within the framework of religious and philosophical teachings, there are three levels of perfection: the first level is only physical suffering, the second is a mental state, that is, it is determined that a person's disillusionment with life and suffering on the third level are comprehensive and become an integral part of the surrounding existence<sup>1</sup>. In African religions, it is observed that the elements of asceticism are integrated into the composition of religious rituals. For example, according to the beliefs of some tribes, in order to maintain communication with the gods, the shaman must comply with certain conditions: abstaining from forbidden (taboo) foods, singing praises to the gods for a long time alone, apart from the community, were considered in the research work.

In monotheistic religions, asceticism is analyzed as an activity that includes a set of theoretical and practical rules, procedures, and rituals in order to make sacrifices to the only God. Although asceticism was not important in the early days of Judaism, later, during the rule of the Roman Empire, it acquired a significant religious content, in particular, in the Nazarene, Qumran, Essenes and Havur (Pharisee community) branches of Judaism, asceticism is a practice based on the sources of Judaism. It was considered that it was manifested in the style. In Christianity, asceticism is regarded as a force that strengthens a person's will to fulfill God's commandments, and the main principle of Christian asceticism is embodied in divine and human synergism. In Islam, the concept of "asceticism" is explained by the term "zuhd" (Arabic), and asceticism means not giving in to the world and not giving up on its blessings.

It is found that the basis of Christian asceticism relies on such sources as the Bible and the Acts of the Apostles. It is highlighted that the ways of life and lifestyles of apostles such as Paul and Peter, as a high example, had a great impact on the development of Christian asceticism. Written sources on Christian asceticism began to be formed by religious leaders in the 4th-5th centuries, and later works of theoretical and practical importance were written on this topic. The basis of ascetic views and practices in Islam is considered on the example of verses and hadiths based on the main sources of Islam - the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah. Also, in the research, the works of the "Kitab az-zuhd" series compiled by Islamic

<sup>1</sup> Говинда Лама Анагарика. Психология раннего буддизма. – Санкт-Петербург: Андреев и сыновья, 1993. – С.49

scholars served as the theoretical and practical foundations of Islamic asceticism, almost all the literature of the classical period included chapters related to asceticism, in particular, in the works of Sufism by scholars like Kalabadi, Qushayri, Abu Talib Makki, Imam Ghazali.

In the dissertation, among the scientific studies on the topic of asceticism in Christianity, scientific works and conclusions of research are involved in the scientific works "Genealogy of morality"<sup>2</sup> (1887) by the German philosopher and writer Friedrich Nissche (1844-1900), "The Religious Life" by the French sociologist and philosopher Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) "Elementary Forms of Religious Life"<sup>3</sup> (1912), famous German philosopher, sociologist and historian Max Weber's work (1864-1920) "Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism (Die protestantische Ethik und der "Geist" des Kapitalismus)"<sup>4</sup>, the work of the Russian philosopher and theologian S. Khoruji (1941-2020) entitled "On the Phenomenology of Asceticism" (К феноменологии аскезы)<sup>5</sup>. Among the studies devoted to the study of asceticism in Islam: "Lectures on Islam" (Лекции об Исламе)<sup>6</sup> by the Hungarian orientalist, Oriental scholar I. Goldsier, "Mysticism and Mystical Literature" (Суфизм и суфийская литература)<sup>7</sup>, among the Russian researchers are M. Mekerova's "Sufism as a mystical-ascetic direction of Muslim culture" (Суфизм как мистико-аскетическое течение в мусульманской культуре)<sup>8</sup>, I. Nasirov's "Basics of Islamic Sufism" (Основание исламского мистицизма)<sup>9</sup>, Turkish researcher Mustafa Turko's "The issue of asceticism in the Qur'an and hadiths"<sup>10</sup>, "Sufism or perfect human morality" and "Sufism (Secrets of Monotheism)", by N. Komilov an orientalist, historian and researcher from Uzbekistan, B. Bobojonov's "Revival of Sufi communities", (Возрождение деятельности суфийских групп), I. Usmanov's "Sects of Sufism", K. Rakhimov's "History of Movarounnahr Sufism: formation and systematization of doctrine (8th-11th centuries)" K. Rakhimov's "History of Movarounnahr Sufism: formation and systematization of doctrine (8th-11th centuries)"<sup>11</sup>.

the early periods of Christianity, more precisely, the "great persecutions" from the end of the 1st century to the 4th century, to the existing religions of the Roman Empire (Greco-Roman pantheon of gods) that the contradictions were one of the factors that caused the persecution by the government, that during the persecution that lasted for almost three centuries, most of the early Christians were forced to live in the mountains, caves, deserts, as well as in the catacombs<sup>12</sup> this and, in turn, the fact that it influenced the development of Christianity, in particular, the formation of the theology and organizational structure of the church, in addition, it was during this period that the views on the cult of saints and martyrs appeared, and various apologetic sources were written. It is explained that it contributed to the expansion of the scope.

<sup>2</sup> Нишце Фридрих. Генеология морали. – Москва: Изд. Азбука, 2021. – 224 с.

<sup>3</sup> Дюркгейм Э. Элементарные формы религиозной жизни: тотемистическая система в Австралии /Пер.с фр. А. Апполонова и Т. Котельниковой; под науч. ред. А. Апполонова . – Москва: Издательский дом "Дело" РАНХиГС, 2018. – 736 с.

<sup>4</sup> Вебер М. Протестантская этика и дух капитализма. – Москва: Изд.: АСТ, 2002. – 360 с.

<sup>5</sup> Хоружий С. К феноменологии аскезы. – Москва: Издательство гуманитарной литературы, 1998. – 352 с.

<sup>6</sup> Гольдциер И. Лекции об исламе. – Брокгаузъ: Ефрон, 1912. – 454 с.

<sup>7</sup> Бертельс Е.Э. Суфизм и суфийская литература. – Москва: Наука, 1965. – 523 с.

<sup>8</sup> Мекерова М. Суфизм как мистико-аскетическое течение в мусульманской культуре.: Автореф. дис. докт. филос. наук. – Ставрополь: 2005. – 24 с.

<sup>9</sup> Насыров И. Основание исламского мистицизма. – Москва: Языки славянских культур, 2009. – 553 с.

<sup>10</sup> Türköz Mustafa. Kur'an ve hadîs bağlamında zühhd hayatı. T.C.Selçuk üniversitesis sosyal bilimler enstitüsümetel islam bilimleri anabilim dalı tasavvuf bilim dalı. – Konya, 2007. – 190 с.

<sup>11</sup> Рахимов К. Мовароуннахр тасаввуфи тарихи: таълимотнинг шаклланиши ва тизимлаштирилиши (VIII-XI асрлар). – Тошкент; Академнашр, 2020. – 396 б.

<sup>12</sup> Katakomba (lat. "catacumba") – means deep, hollow.

The emergence of the ideal of celibacy as one of the unique and new forms of asceticism in the II-III centuries<sup>13</sup>, as a result of the reforms carried out by the Roman Emperor Constantine in 313, Christianity achieved an equal status with other religions in Rome, wide spread of the status of martyrdom as the highest form of asceticism in the IV century<sup>14</sup>, in the same period, it was analyzed that new practices of asceticism began to spread: vigilance (insomnia), madness (Old Slav. urod', yurod') and stolpnikism (lat. stylita) as the most difficult type of asceticism. It is precisely during this period that the ascetic views of the early period of Christianity took the form of certain regulated practices, monastic<sup>15</sup> institutions were formed based on these procedures, and St. Anthony (251-356)<sup>16</sup> was recognized as the founder of Christian monasticism, who was established in Egypt in the 4th century (305) is revealed to have founded the first monastic institution. By the 9th century, a set of rules and regulations named "Rule of Benedict" (lat. Regula Benedicti) began to serve as the main criterion for the activity of monasteries in the Catholic direction, and the term "Benedictists" meant an association of several monasteries, it is explained that its official name is called "congregations".

Asceticism (asceticism) is a practical and intellectual process that is formed within the framework of Islamic teachings, on the one hand, giving up material wealth and desires, and on the other hand, self-humbleness. It can be observed that even before Islam, asceticism existed in its own form in different nations. In pre-Islamic Arabia, the activity of "Hanifs" can be noted as an ascetic movement. The Hanifs did not worship idols, followed an ascetic way of life, and lived separately from Jews and Christians.

In the studies of the history of Islam, the mood of asceticism was manifested in some of the Companions (Abu Dardo, Umm Dardo, Abu Zar Ghafiri, Huzaifa ibn Yamani, Salman Farsi), and later some of the followers (Hasan Basri, Malik ibn Dinar, Amir ibn Abd al-Qays), who were influenced by the way of life of the Prophet (pbuh), and they are recorded as the first ascetics in Islam.

The mystic scientist A.D. Knish also notes that the ascetic sentiments underlying Sufism emerged at the same time as Islam, but points out that the ascetic-Sufi movement in the literal sense emerged later<sup>17</sup>. According to A. Knish, the social structure of asceticism, the first form of Sufism, included muhaddis as well as storytellers, qaris, warriors fighting with Byzantium, pious merchants and artisans<sup>18</sup>.

Researchers have expressed different opinions about the formation process of zuhd, and it is noted that these processes were motivated by a number of factors, including religious, social,

<sup>13</sup> Корпачев П.А. Аскетизм в христианстве I века. //Вестник Челябинского государственного университета, 2016. – С. 29

<sup>14</sup> Корпачев П.А. Аскетическая традиция в христианстве до появления монашества. Научно-технические ведомости СПбГПУ, 2017. – С.129

<sup>15</sup> The word "monk" (Gk. monos - solitude, living alone) is used for a celibate person who, according to Christianity, has renounced the world and devoted himself to the worship of God. Monks believe that they pray for an individual, and at the same time, for all of humanity. These people devote themselves completely to the service of people and renounce the world.

<sup>16</sup> Saint Anthony spent more than 20 years in the desert on the banks of the Nile and lived completely alone. He was influenced by Matthew 19:21 and chose this path. Twice a year, some of his friends brought food to Antony and in return took it from baskets made by Antony. As Antony's unusual lifestyle spread throughout Egypt, the number of people who visited him increased. Some settled near Antony and asked him to teach him the secrets of asceticism. In 305, Antony and his followers founded the first monastic system.

<sup>17</sup> Кныш А.Д. Ат-Тасаввуф. //Ислам. Энциклопедический словарь. – Москва: Наука, 1991. – С. 225

<sup>18</sup> From the same source

economic and political reasons<sup>19</sup>.

At the beginning of the 1st and 2nd centuries of Hijri, the spirit of asceticism influenced many areas of Islam. During this period, along with the word "zuhd", the terms "nisk", "qanaat" and "vara" were in use, but in the second century of the Hijri, the term "zuhd" began to be possible widely used. It can also be seen that it was customary to add the name "hermit" to the names of most of the Muslim scholars of the Middle Ages. Although asceticism remained a private matter until the end of the 2nd century A.H., groups and, later, schools following the views and practices of famous ascetics can be seen in some regions. As early ascetic schools, we can cite Madinah, Kufa, Basra, Khorasan and Mowarunnahr schools of asceticism.

In the early days of Islam, asceticism was formed based on verses and hadiths, but in the later periods, the views of certain personalities began to show the foundations of asceticism. Also, the views of the representatives of the ascetic schools listed above had their influence on the views of asceticism of the next period.

Many Orientalists and Islamic scholars, including A. Schimmel, I. Goldsier, I. Petrushevsky, noted asceticism as the basis of Sufism<sup>20</sup>.

Along with the above opinion, there are some scholars who believe that asceticism developed separately from Sufism. As a proof of this, they explain that asceticism continued independently from Sufism: "If Sufism was the next stage of asceticism, asceticism would have disappeared during the period when Sufism developed. However, it is noted in the sources that most of the jurists and scholars of Egypt during the Mamluk era were not Sufis, but ascetics. Due to the compatibility of asceticism with Sufism, earlier Sufis mentioned influential followers Hasan Basri, Sufyan Sawri and Said ibn Jubayr among the leading Sufis to confirm the conformity of their teachings with Islam. Although there is a certain difference between the concepts of asceticism and Sufism, the first Sufis managed to spread their teachings using the methods of asceticism<sup>21</sup>, most expert scholars have accepted asceticism as the basis and initial stage of Sufism.

In the 10th-11th centuries, when the processes of systematization were taking place in Sufism, the word "zuhd" acquired the meaning of "status" in Sufism from the meaning of a special maslak. At first, the path of asceticism, which was dedicated to special works, was described as another stop on the path of the zuhd in the works of the theorists of Sufism - Abu Bakr Kalabadi, Abu Nasr Sarroj, Abu Talib Makkiy, Abdurahman Sulamiy, Abu Hafs Suhrawardi.

Although the early Sufis did not agree on the rank of "zuhd" among other "status", they were unanimous in including it among the first status.

Abdurrahman Jami (1414-1492) dwelled on the difference between an ascetic and a Sufi in his work "Nafahot al-uns": "When ascetics avoid this world and look to the beauty of the hereafter with the light of faith, they cannot escape the emotional pleasure associated with the illusion of paradise, and the true Sufi is blocked from the worries of the two worlds by the beauty of the Creator and the curtain of love."

<sup>19</sup> Прозоров С.М. Ислам как идеологическая система. Т. II. Институт восточных рукописей РАН. – Москва: Наука, Вост. лит., 2016. – С.134

<sup>20</sup> Шиммель А. Мир исламского мистицизма. – Москва: Алетейа, Энигма, 2000. – С. 194-201; Бертельс Е. Суфизм и суфийская литература. – Москва: Наука, 1965. – 523 с.; Гольдциер И. Лекции об исламе. – Брокгауз: Ефрон, 1912. – 454 с.; Петрушевский И. Ислам в Иране в VII-XV вв. Курс лекций. – Ленинград: Издательство Ленинградского университета, 1966.

<sup>21</sup> Ahmad Subhiy Mansur. At-Tasavvuf va al-hayot ad-diniya fi-l-mamlukiya. – Qohira: Al-markaz al-mahrusa, 2002. Т. 1. – В.26

The research focuses on the regional characteristics of ascetic practices, in particular, the monasticism formed in the West at the end of the 4th century, mainly relying on Eastern schools, the ways of information about Eastern monasticism entering the West, the activation of monasticism in the West in the second half of the 4th century, unlike Eastern monasticism, monasteries are explained that it was organized in cities and their surroundings. Also, the specificities of ascetic practices in Islam according to regions, including as one of the important aspects that distinguish the Central Asian school of asceticism from other ascetic schools of Khorasan and Basra, in which the majority of ascetics are representatives of socially active layers of the population - with the level of muhaddis and faqih. As established by imams, judges, etc., external asceticism (physical asceticism) - rather than being completely cut off from society and indulged in extreme worldliness, internal asceticism (mental asceticism) - it is mentioned that it is more common among people to be a hermit at heart while living a socially active life.

### CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of the history and evolution of the ascetic view in Christianity and Islam was researched, and the following final conclusions were formed within the framework of the stated goals and objectives:

1. Asceticism exists as a practice, phenomenon, and condition in all world religions and has its own characteristics in various teachings. In this case, there are cases of general similarity in terms of belonging to certain categories of religions. In monotheistic religions, the essence of asceticism and related practices are based on the idea of knowing the Creator and getting closer to Him, while in polytheistic beliefs and religious-philosophical teachings, the main emphasis is on man himself - physical and mental development - is emphasized.

2. Ascetic views in Christianity and Islam were based on the sacred sources of both religions. Although the word asceticism (zuhd) appears only once in the Qur'an and the Bible, there are many examples of ascetic practices (zuhd). In addition, in Christianity, the Acts of the Apostles and their letters also stimulated the formation and development of ascetic views and practices. Similarly, in the development of asceticism in Islam, the hadiths of the Prophet (pbuh) and the lives of the Companions and followers served as models.

3. Sources related to Christian asceticism have been observed since IV-V centuries. The sources of this period began to be written by religious leaders, and they gave instructions on ascetic practices, relying mainly on the holy source of Christianity - the Bible. In the sources of later periods, theoretical and practical studies were conducted on asceticism and ascetic practices. In the Middle Ages, more philosophers studied Christian asceticism and analyzed asceticism philosophically and as a religious phenomenon. In modern studies, historians, theologians, theologians, as well as sociologists who are interested in this topic have conducted research on the foundations, essence, and impact of asceticism on the development of society.

### References:

1. Корпачев П.А. Аскетизм в христианстве I века. //Вестник Челябинского государственного университета, 2016. – С. 29
2. Корпачев П.А. Аскетическая традиция в христианстве до появления монашества. Научно-технические ведомости СПбГПУ, 2017. – С.129
3. The word “monk” (Gk. monos - solitude, living alone) is used for a celibate person who, according to Christianity, has renounced the world and devoted himself to the worship of God. Monks believe that they pray for an individual, and at the same time, for all of humanity. These people devote themselves completely to the service of people and renounce the world.

4. Saint Anthony spent more than 20 years in the desert on the banks of the Nile and lived completely alone. He was influenced by Matthew 19:21 and chose this path. Twice a year, some of his friends brought food to Antony and in return took it from baskets made by Antony. As Antony's unusual lifestyle spread throughout Egypt, the number of people who visited him increased. Some settled near Antony and asked him to teach him the secrets of asceticism. In 305, Antony and his followers founded the first monastic system.