

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY  
SAKARYA UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**RELIGION, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION IN KAZAKHSTAN**

**MASTER DEGREE THESIS**

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Department : Philosophy And Religious Studies**

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**AUGUST – 2017**

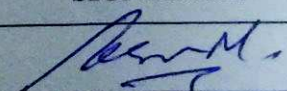
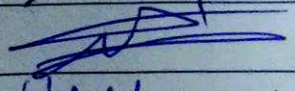
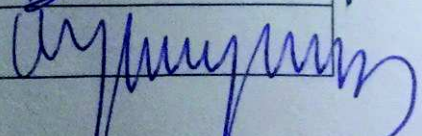
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SAKARYA  
ÜNİVERSİTESİ

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
YÜKSEK LİSANS/DOKTORA İNTİHAL YAZILIM RAPORU BEYAN BELGESİ

Tez Başlığı:

Religious Institutions and Religious  
Education in Kazakhstan

Yukarıda başlığı belirtilen tez çalışmamın toplam 87 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin Sakarya Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Yönetmeliği Madde 28 uyarınca aşağıda belirtilen filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan ve 11.09.2017 tarihinde Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü tarafından şahsıma iletilen Turnitin intihal tespit programı raporuna göre tezimin benzerlik oranı % 20. 'tır.

Uygulanan filtrelemeler:

- 1) Kaynakça hariç
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Öğrenci

(Adı - Soyadı, İmzası, Tarih)

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07.09.17

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## ABBREVIATION

<b>AUCECB</b>	: All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists
<b>CIS</b>	: Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>DUMK</b>	: Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan
<b>EAJC</b>	: Euro-Asian Jewish Congress
<b>ECTS</b>	: European Credit Transfer System
<b>etc</b>	: et cetera
<b>ICCR</b>	: International Center of Cultures and Religions
<b>KNB</b>	: National Security Committee
<b>MBA</b>	: Masters of Business Administration
<b>MES RK</b>	: Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society of the Republic of Kazakhstan MRACS RK: Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society
<b>NEP</b>	: New Economic Policy
<b>NGO</b>	: Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OIC</b>	: Organization of Islamic Cooperation
<b>p</b>	: page
<b>RAC</b>	: Research and Analytical Center for Religious Issues
<b>ROC</b>	: The Russian Orthodox Church
<b>SADUM</b>	: Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan
<b>SBRS</b>	: Secularity and Basics of Religious Studies
<b>UN</b>	: United Nations
<b>USSR</b>	: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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**Tezin Başlığı:** Kazakistan'da Din, Dini Kurumlar ve Din Eğitimi

**Tezin Yazarı:** Zhansaya BADAGULOVA **Danışman:** Yrd. Doç. Dr. Mahmut ZENGİN

**Kabul Tarihi:** Haziran 2017

**Sayfa Sayısı:** vii (ön kısım) + 78 (tez) + 3(ek)

**Anabilimdalı:** Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri

**Bilimdalı:**

Kazak halkının büyük bir çoğunluğu asırlar boyunca Müslüman bir halk olarak yaşamış ve komünizm döneminde de İslam ile olan irtibatını muhafaza etmeye çalışmıştır. 1991 yılında Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyetler Birliği'nden ayrılarak bağımsız bir devlet olması, Kazakistan tarihinde yeni bir dönüm noktası olmuştur. Bu tarihten sonra ülkede din eğitimi verilmeye başlanmıştır. Son 25 yılda din eğitiminin Kazakistan'daki serüveninin incelenmesi, bu süreçte yaşanan gelişmeleri ortaya koyması yönüyle önemli ve anlamlıdır. Bu çalışma, Kazakistan'daki din ve din eğitimi ile ilgili süreçleri incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu kapsamda çalışmada Kazakistan'ın bağımsızlık süreci, ülkenin ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel yapısı, ülkedeki etnik ve dini gruplar ile din eğitiminin kurumsallaşma süreci ele alınmış, yaygın ve örgün din eğitimi uygulamaları değerlendirilmiştir.

Hedeflenen tez çalışmasının konusu, Kazakistan Devleti'nin bağımsızlığını kazandığı tarihten öncesi ve sonrasında gerçekleştirilen din eğitimi faaliyetlerinin incelenmesidir. Çalışmamızın amacı, Kazakistan Devleti'nin eğitim ve öğretim sisteminde din eğitiminin gelişimi, tarihi, sosyal yapıdaki yeri vb. noktaların tespitinin yapılarak, niteliksel anlamda kayıt altına almaktır. Araştırmamız sadece Kazakistan'daki din eğitimi faaliyetleri ile sınırlı tutulacaktır. Tez konusunun araştırma alanı din eğitiminin yapıldığı mekanlar ile bu eğitiminin çeşitli örneklerinin yer aldığı şekillerinde incelemeler yapılacaktır. Din eğitiminin yasak olduğu dönemlerde yapılan eğitim faaliyetleri ile din eğitiminin yasal zeminde faaliyetlerine devam ettiği dönemlerin, geçirmiş olduğu değişimler ve gelişmelerin incelenmesi de bu çalışmanın sınırları içerisinde yer alacaktır. Araştırmada esas olarak literatür incelemesi ve analiz yöntemi kullanılacaktır. Literatür çalışması için Kazakistan'daki kütüphanelerden de istifade edilecektir. Tezimiz, Kazakistan tarihinde din eğitiminin ne şekilde yapıldığı, nasıl yapıldığı; karşılaşılan zorluklar ve din eğitiminin günümüzde geline son noktasını konu edinerek genel bir bilgilendirme ve çerçeve çizecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Din Eğitimi, Kazakistan Tarihi, Eğitim, Dini Kurumlar, Din Öğretimi, Kazakistan'da Din Eğitimi



**Title of the Thesis:** Religion, Religious Institutions And Religious Education In Kazakhstan

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**Supervisor:** Asst. Prof. Mahmut ZENGIN

**Date:** June 2017

**Nu. of pages:** vi + 78 (main body)+3 (App.)

**Department:** Philosophy and Religious Studies

A large majority of Kazakh people lived as Muslim for centuries and tried to maintain their connection with Islam during the Communist era. The declaration of independence in 1991 became the turning point in Kazakhstan's history. The study of religious education in Kazakhstan over the last 25 years is significant regarding revealing the collaboration between Religion and the State. This study aims to offer a closer look at the processes of understanding of religion, religious education and realization of institutions aimed to facilitate collaboration between the State and Religion. In this context, the process of independence of Kazakhstan, economic, social and cultural structures, ethnic and religious groups, and the process of institutionalization of religious education were examined and evaluated.

The main purpose of the study is to describe and give background information on Religion and Religious Education in Kazakhstan before and after independence. The subject of research is Religious education in Kazakhstan and its history, its place in the socio-cultural dimension, its place in education. We plan to study this issue in the actual existence of the situation. The research enables us to revise the new gatherings to the existing material about Religious Education which is provided by Religious Institutions and State. We will use literature study in the collecting and analysis of existing literature on religion and religious literacy in Kazakhstan. Feasibilities of work are determined by full access to information in this issue multilingualism of the researchers which will simplify the task of obtaining information from various sources.

**Keywords:** Kazakhstan, Religious Education, Religious Organizations, Teaching Religion, Religious Education in Kazakhstan

# INTRODUCTION

## Introducing The Study

The problems of the interaction between secular and religious knowledge entered the sphere of education. In the era of non-classical paradigms, science and religion became actual in socio-humanitarian and sociocultural discourses. In this regard, religious education has become the issue in the context of the educational strategy of modern secular Kazakhstan.

Despite scientists' predictions and expectations about an inexorable weakening of religion over last few decades religion as it put Erricker (2010:12-20) has been brought by globalization firmly back to agenda. Worldly we watch the increased influence of religion. Dominant paradigms rejected the importance of religion and claimed its inevitable degradation. Lately, these tendencies to underestimate the power of social sciences and over-relying on technocracy's ideals led to the horrendous events of the XX century. Naturally, after World War Two scientists and humanists were disappointed in seemingly prosperous future promised by technological development and novices. Sociologists could grasp the urge to turn back to the history and find the answers there, which would explain the complexity and the interdependence of relations between religion and reality. Lately, the process of globalization also contributed to the significant changes, which brought international community to the new stage of collaboration at various levels. Therefore, the necessity of religious education as the subject, which aimed to provide comprehensible knowledge about religion, appeared shortly after Second World War and resulted from a variety of socio-cultural factors.

A pluralistic approach in religious instruction has been developing for last few decades (since 1944) when interest in the subject was aroused within Western sociologists and educators. The changes in global society which partly were caused by massive migration and the decolonization of Africa and Asia led to extensive changes on the societal level. The emergence of various religious movements also contributed to the discussion of the significance of the pluralistic approaches in religious education. Global massive migration has significantly changed the heterogeneity of the religious education character. Almost every country experienced the influence of migrations that changes the society. There was a need in a well-judged and timeous response

(Gavroglu, Christianidis, and Nicolaidis, 2013:124). Sociologists discerned the necessity of implementing teaching about religion in the educational system. Therefore, some countries managed gradual shifting and adopting religious situation in the State. In his research, Wright (2005) claimed that without organized religion today it is impossible to deduce the sagacity of culture and politics. Therefore, in the modern world, the necessity of pluralistic approaches in religion became crucial.

As distinct from the world, Post-Soviet Union countries in the early 1990s experienced difficult processes in managing great changes at the societal level. A long-lasting deterring anti-religious ideology of Communist Regime deeply deteriorated people's conscious and the perception of religion. Religious instruction in Kazakhstan due to the Communist Past and religious paradigms dominated in the Soviet Union lacked even and continuous character of a formation. The continuing unfamiliarity with this issue in a short time could lead to the hazardous consequences. Today, almost every country of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) claimed the acceptance of the pluralistic way of teaching religion subject and accepted the counter-extremism policy, except for "Tajikistan and Uzbekistan developing different state policy towards Islam" (Abramson, 2010). The head of the Office of The Ministry Of Culture And Sports Myrzayev (2015) emphasized in his report that ever since religious radicalism imposed the threat on political order in Central Asian countries and Kazakhstan, the numerous attempts to solve the issue which were taken by the Government. Nevertheless, negligence and a belated reaction to the State inevitably led to internal issues, which, in the next place, nowadays generated incompatibilities within Kazakhstan's society.

As Skeie (1995:4) reported in his paper, there would always be debates whether religious education would adequately address the requirement of reality and which values are to be considered to give proper knowledge for students. According to the report of Schreiner (2004:5), religious education has been influenced by the historical context and experiences in each country. In Kazakhstan since 2011 religious education has become the compulsory subject in public schools (after its commencing in 2009 for two consecutive trial years) and optional in universities.

To understand the peculiarities of the development of the religious situation in Kazakhstan regard must be paid to an indeterminable character of historical span had



contributed to the complexity of the situation. It is crucial to keep in mind a historical background of the State when it comes to understanding the forming and deliberating actions concerning religion. The religious situation in Kazakhstan was stipulated by the complexity of historical and socio-economic changes. Olcott (1995:34) in her study about Kazakhs claimed that the first and the principal obstacle which held back Kazakh people from following any world religion was a nomadic character of lifestyle. Self-sufficient Kazakh had plenty of backbreaking labor, which hindered him from a constant attendance the mosque and of any assisted spiritual experience. Moreover, due to the features of roving life, there were few mosque-based settlements on the routes where Kazakh tribes used to pass. Unlike settled Uzbek tribes in the South, for a long time, Islam had little significance for Kazakh. This way, among Kazakh tribes Islam took the in-between position when folk beliefs were still preserved, but active proselytism of Islam started to gain in popularity among indigenous people.

During the process of annexation of Kazakh lands to Russian Empire, Islam's positions in Kazakh steppes experienced relevant success. After the extended period of establishing and strengthening positions along Central Asian regions, Russian authorities decided to give the colonization process a more orderly character. Therefore, Russian and Polish immigrants were sent along the garrisons and rare Kazakh settlements. Sultangaliyeva (1996) affirmed that the Russian Orthodox Church envisaged the assets which will bring the conversion of indigenous people to Christianity and promptly deployed the widespread campaign. Nevertheless, commissions and ardent projects of the Church faced the unexpected resistance from native people who had set aggressively against the Russians and the religion they brought in the steppes. Therefore, the position of Islam grew in momentum from irrelevant and reluctant to more sentient. Despite the restrictions set by Russian Empire on uncontrollable religious education, pan-Islamic mullahs from Ottoman Empire and Kazan mullahs continued to visit settlements and teach basics of Islam. The establishment of Soviet Union entirely has changed the relationship between the Government and the Church. A new order in the steppes stroked severely emerging Kazakh religiousness. The Soviet Union successfully implemented continuous persecution of religious activity in all Central Asian countries, especially in Kazakhstan. This process left an undeniable mark in people conscious.

Finally, a historical period characterized and preceded nowadays reality of Kazakhstan's society is the last decade of the twentieth century is significant in consideration of the whole picture in total. Between the 1990s and 2000s, abnormal religious activity flourished in the society and led to uncontrollable religious education, which had a destructive and disagreeably bellicose effect on the immature State. Thus, Kazakhstan specialists just recently started to work on obtaining experience, shaping legal and normative base, which will allow regulating the interaction between the State and religion.

The religious situation of Kazakhstan determined us to go deep into this issue. Kazakhstan's education system embraces and responds the multitude of the religious, cultural and ethnic diversity of citizens. The Kazakhstan poly-ethnic society forms unique opportunity to establish secularized attitude on teaching religious education, which is appropriate for all students (Kadyralieva et. al, 2014: 912-915). The aim of this study is to define the role and importance of religious education in Kazakhstan, the status of religious institutions. The aim of the research is the attempt to outline scientific perspectives and trails in the past of the religion in Kazakhstan.

### **Objectives Of The Study**

1. To analyze the history of religions in Kazakhstan in pre-colonial period, Soviet era and after Independence;
2. To determine the application of religious education in Kazakhstan;
3. To examine the process of forming of religious structures;
4. To describe the significances of religious institutions in Kazakhstan.

To understand better the problem related to the formation of religious education in Kazakhstan it is crucial to extend research on development of religious education over last three hundred years.

### **Relevance And Actuality Of This Research**

For research to be relevant and actual, it should be of objectiveness in literature study and interpretation. This suggests that the description of the problem will be pertinent and critical. The actuality and relevance of this research should be stated in both general and specific terms.

Firstly, the study of the religious situation in Kazakhstan must include a detailed representation of its historical background. However, there is scarce of coherently-build and relevant resources, which would accurately describe the real content of past events. Thus, this study intends to invoke scientists to take a close look at the nature of religious education of Kazakhstan. In Turkish sources there are two researches on the topic of religious education. In her research on missionary activities in Kazakhstan Abdramova (2011) presented significant findings about religious education, which religious groups or movements tried to preach during the first years of independence in Kazakhstan. In his extensive research Sembi (2014) did a moment picture of religious situation in Kazakhstan: religious structures, religious groups and their history, their activity and financial. Nevertheless, his research was limited to understanding religious education after independence in Kazakhstan. To make our study relevant we put objectives related to religious education in public schools, which requires analyze of overall situation and following explanation of each phase in development of religious situation. We believe that deep analyze of Kazakhstan's religious past and related religious education people received makes the research actual and carries significant difference from the other research on this topic.

Secondly, though Kazakhstan has become an Independent and secular society, the situation of religious education has not undergone substantial changes in last two decades. It is a matter of crucial importance to keep pace with developed countries and upgrade existed incomplete system by taking reasonable actions. This research, therefore, also seeks to determine boundaries of future development of religious education in Kazakhstan.

The points as mentioned above make this study relevant and actual to define terms and give the depiction of the religious situation in Kazakhstan in the past and present.

### **Research Design And Methodology**

A descriptive method is chosen as the research method in this thesis. Official documents were analyzed. The evaluation of past and present records will be obtained by adopting the literature research method, as it is known, sources of documentary research include the study and examination of historical documents such as official documents, laws, declarations, periodical, administrative records, mass media, and research. As primary



sources, official documents including, religious laws, official statements, reports are used in this study.

Also, in this work, the 1993 Constitution of Kazakhstan together with the current Constitution of Kazakhstan, declarations, and declarations of the officials of the Republic of Kazakhstan as the President Nursultan Nazarbaev in official websites and academic publications are used. Besides the laws and decrees, official state programs were also examined. Besides to the primary sources, academic books and international publications treating the issue of religious situation and education in Kazakhstan are used. Documents of the existing literature in Russian, Kazakh, Turkish and English on the subject of religious education, history of religion and laws on religion are also used. Major academic scholars base the argumentation of the thesis on absolute terms. Zaur Dzhaliyev, Muhammediyar Orynbekov, Svat Soucek, Martha Brill, Mariya Omelicheva, Yakov Trofimov are the researchers who are referred in the thesis.

Limitations of the thesis lie in the fact that no part of the study was conducted in Kazakhstan and therefore, no interviews were included in the thesis. Also, this work is limited to the historical background of tribes and populations once lived in vast territories of Central Asia. Moreover, the obstacles sourcing from the limitations due to the translation of documents from Russian or Kazakh to English also prevented us from setting out much more precise final debate within the framework of the issue. The interpretation and the analysis of the data objectively rely on the identity of the author of this thesis. We tried to keep the objectivity as much as possible in the whole process of preparation of the thesis. In the context of this study, methodology refers to the literature study of archives, documents, books and other written materials regarding Kazakhstan's religious situation, history, and religions.

### **Program Of Study**

The aim of this study is to analyze the religious situation in Kazakhstan, determine the importance of religious education throughout the history. The aim of the study is to give information about religion and religious groups in Kazakhstan, and religions education and institutions, and encourage researchers to participate in a discussion of this issue regarding Kazakhstan's society.

This thesis is structured as follows:

The first chapter outlines short description of work and gives background for research objectives.

Chapter two presents information on the present religious situation in Kazakhstan. The independence of Kazakhstan and geographical and physical aspects, demographic structure and ethnic groups, short descriptions about the economic and religious conditions in Kazakhstan are given. In this chapter, we give general information on Kazakhstan's religious structures by emphasizing the peculiarities formed during the long and complicated process of development over the last two hundred years.

Chapter three presents an overview of pre-Soviet and Soviet time's religious policies to provide brief historical information on the issue. It discusses religious policies of the Republic of Kazakhstan, given and studied.

Chapter four explains policies on religious education adopted during the Soviet period and after-Independence period by analyzing religion and religious education. The formal and non-formal educational activities are to be described and evaluated in some details. Also, the institutional process of the religious education in Kazakhstan also is discussed in this paper.

## **CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT KAZAKHSTAN**

Kazakhstan is the second largest country of the former Soviet republics, after Russia, with a population of 17,01 million in 2014 (Committee on Statistics of Kazakhstan, 2014: 12). Kazakhstan shares borders with China, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia.

On October 25, 1990, the “Declaration on State Sovereignty” was adopted and on December 16, 1991, the Supreme Council adopted the Law “On State Independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan” which designated the status of Kazakhstan as an independent, democratic and constitutional state. On December 10, 1991, Nursultan Äbishuly Nazarbayev signed a decree to rename the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

According to official numbers of the 2009 census, the share of the major ethnic groups: Kazakhs 60,47 % of the population (9.540.806), Russians 24,5 % (3.869.661), Uzbeks 2,9 % (463.381), Ukrainians 2,68 % (422.680), Uighurs 1,53 % (241. 946), Tatars 1,4 % (226.803), Germans 1,1 % (220.975), other nationalities 4,5 % (790.240).

As Safavi (1997: 170) commented that Kazakhstan has enormous resources for economic development, a reliable infrastructure that is not performing to its fullest potential, a skilled and low-cost labor force, a relatively stable political system and an emerging business environment which is conducive to investment and growth.

### **1. Geographical Status of Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan stretches over a territory of 2,725,000 km<sup>2</sup> (two time zones) from the lower reaches of the Volga in the west to the foothills of the Altai Mountains in the east and almost 2,000 kilometers from West Siberian lowland in the North to the Kyzylkum desert in the south. Kazakhstan shares borders with China, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia. The total length of the border - 12187 km (Erzhanova, 2011:1).

8500 River flows in the territory of Kazakhstan. The length of seven of them (the longest) is greater than 1000 km, including the Ural and Emba flowing into the Caspian Sea, the Syr Darya, which flows into the Aral Sea and the Irtysh, Ishim, and Tobol, carrying its waters to the Arctic Ocean. In Kazakhstan, 48 thousand lakes: the largest of them - Balkhash, Zaisan, Alakol, and Tengiz. Kazakhstan occupies the northern half and



eastern coast of the Caspian Sea. Deserts and steppes occupy most of the territory of Kazakhstan.

Nowadays, the primary source of economic growth is the exploitation of the country's resource potential. The huge territory of Kazakhstan is rich in minerals. Mining and processing of coal, oil, gas, ferrous and non-ferrous metals play a leading role in the national economy. The primary minerals are ores of non-ferrous and ferrous metals and uranium. In Kazakhstan were explored the world's largest reserves of chromium, vanadium, bismuth, fluorine, iron, etc. Kazakhstan is the second largest in the world reserves of phosphate rock (after Russia), through fields Zhanatas and Karatau. Kazakhstan is the world leader in aluminum production in CIS countries (Bukaeva, 2012:562). Kazakhstan has significant resources of salt and construction timber. The Republic of Kazakhstan is rich in mineral deposits, vast agricultural lands, and significant industrial potential.

## **2. Kazakhstan's Economic and Politic Features**

The Constitution of Kazakhstan, which was adopted on August 30, 1995, proclaimed Kazakhstan an independent, democratic, constitutional state. Kazakhstan is a republic with a presidential form of government. Kazakhstan is a constitutional state with a strong presidency. The president is the head of the republic. The president, moreover, is the commander in chief of the armed forces and has veto right that has been passed by the Parliament. In cases and the manner provided by the Constitution, the president can dissolve parliament; with the consent of Parliament, appoints the Prime Minister and relieve him of his duties; presides over meetings of the Government on especially important issues (Kazakhstan Constitution, 1995, Article 4-8).

The parliament, as the highest representative body, is exercising legislative functions. Kazakhstan has a bicameral Parliament: the Senate (47 members) and the Majilis (67 deputies). The Cabinet of Ministers of Kazakhstan exercises executive power in the country. The Prime Minister is a government body ensuring the supremacy of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the whole territory of the country. The Supreme Court is the highest judicial authority in the State in civil, criminal and other cases under the jurisdiction of the courts of general jurisdiction (Federal Constitutional Law No. 1, 2016).

Internal political development of Kazakhstan is aimed at the creation of a democratic, peaceful, nuclear-free state, the establishment of a strong presidential republic in conditions of political and civic pluralism. Policy and economic reforms in Kazakhstan have a bearing on the economy with diverse forms of ownership. The foreign policy of Kazakhstan is based on the principles of openness, peacefulness, balance and consistency (Sheryazdanova, 2007:8).

The issues of good governance and efficient public service delivery became the key challenges in Kazakhstan. To respond to the problems, the Government gradually localized some of its duties and functions to exercise power through the combinations of political, administrative and fiscal decentralization initiatives. The Constitution of Kazakhstan, which was adopted on August 30, 1995, recognized the system of government that was identified by the Law on Local Representative and Executive Bodies. Higher public authorities in their actions in the economic management of the country should be based on the administrative and territorial units. The local civil service is divided into oblasts (province/region), four main cities (Almaty and Astana, Shymkent and Karaganda), and some towns of the republic. The oblasts and city are the first authorities in their areas, but they are sub-divided into smaller governing units, mainly rayons (towns). There are also auls (villages) in the countryside. Local bodies of state government exist as follows (Makhmutova, 2006: 277): at the oblast-level, there are 14 oblasts and two cities (Almaty and Astana) with a particular status with state government bodies; at the rayon level, there are 160 rayons and 38 cities that have the same status as rayons with state government bodies; at the rural-level, the settlements, auls, and aul districts have only executive bodies.

Today, Kazakhstan has a functioning market economy. Twelve years ago, GDP per capita stood at just over seven hundred dollars, at the end of 2004 it reached two thousand seven hundred dollars, and in 2016 Kazakhstan achieve per capita GDP more than 10.000 US dollars, which shows the significant strengthen of the State.

The financial system of Kazakhstan is recognized as one of the most progressive in Central Asia, and leading international experts confirm this. Kazakhstan was the first among the CIS countries created the National Fund for the sustainable socio-economic development; reduce dependence on unfavorable external factors (Saginbekov et al.,

2014: 1306). Currently, Kazakhstan, according to the World Bank's classification, is included into the group of countries with an average income. Sustained economic growth in Kazakhstan will significantly expand the social orientation of public spending, which indicates the progress safety margin of the national economy (Uchkampirova, 2013:203).

Admittedly, significant progress toward establishing a policy environment conducive to globalization and integration in the world market was made by Kazakhstan in the early years of independence. As a result, the Kazakh government over time introduced several reform initiatives aimed at a successful market-oriented transformation.

### **3. Religious structures in Kazakhstan**

In this part, Kazakhstan religious structure, citizens' attitude on religion, overall situation will be examined and described. In 2009, for the first time since 1937 in Kazakhstan, a census was conducted. Respondents were asked about the attitude towards religion, and 97 % of the population referred themselves to one or another religion. Only 3% of the interviewees stated that either they were unbelievers or refused to answer. Despite the fact of irregular religious practice or absolute absence of following the basic rules of Islam, the overwhelming majority of Kazakhs (63.1% of the population) called themselves Muslims and the majority of Russians (23.7% of the population) were Orthodox Christians. According to the same model, the majority of Germans identified themselves as either Catholics or Protestants, and the vast majority of Poles - as Catholics. According to the 2009 census, 70.19 % of the population are Muslims, 26.17 - Christians, 0.03 - Jews, 0.09 - Buddhists, 0.19 - adherents of other religions, 2.81 - non-believers and 0.51 - refused to answer (Committee on Statistics of Kazakhstan, 2009). Nevertheless, Kulsariyeva (2013:1615) mentions the most devout Muslims in the country are normally ethnic Uzbeks, whereas Kazakh people solely follow the religious tradition.

As of April, 20th, 2017 in Republic of Kazakhstan religious associations operate religious activities via 3.679 religious organizations. Most of the population adheres to Islam and Orthodox, so the number of Muslim religious organizations is 2.570, and the number of Orthodox religious organizations is 333. As a whole, these two faiths make more than half of a total number of all religious associations. In Kazakhstan there are 85



religious associations of the Catholic Church, 7 Judaic, 2 Buddhist, 8 associations of Krishna, 13 religious associations of nonconventional religions (Bakhai, Ahmadiya, munits, etc.), 219 Pentecostal Churches, 181 Evangelical Christians-Baptists organizations, 106 Presbyterian Churches, 60 organizations of Witnesses of Jehovah, 42 Seventh Day Adventists Churches, 26 New Apostolic Churches (Committee on Statistics of Kazakhstan, 2017, 12).

**Table 1**

	<b>Total population</b>	<b>Islam</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	<b>Buddhism</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Non-believers</b>	<b>Refused to specify</b>
Total population	16009597	11239176	4214232	5281	14663	3688	451547	81010
Kazakhs	10096763	9928705	39172	1929	749	1612	98511	26085
Russians	3793764	54277	3476748	1452	730	1011	230935	28611
Uzbeks	456997	452668	1794	34	28	78	1673	722
Ukrainians	333031	3134	302199	108	49	74	24329	3138
Uyghurs	224713	221007	1142	34	33	63	1377	1057
Tatars	204229	162496	20913	47	58	123	16569	4023
Germans	178409	2827	145556	89	66	192	24905	4774
Koreans	100385	5256	49543	211	11446	138	28615	5176
Turks	97015	96172	290	7	6	20	321	199
Azerbaijanis	85292	80864	2139	16	16	24	1586	647
Belarusians	66476	526	59936	25	9	20	5198	762
Dungans	51944	51388	191	4	15	19	179	148
Kurds	38325	37667	203	11	6	9	285	144
Tajiks	36277	35473	331	2	6	30	307	128
Poles	34057	235	30675	14	4	45	2486	598
Chechens	31431	29448	940	6	3	16	653	365
Kyrgyz	23274	22500	206	6	6	4	352	200
Other ethnic groups	157215	54533	82254	1286	1433	210	13266	4233

**Source:** Results Of The 2009 National Population Census Of The Republic Of Kazakhstan, 2011:24.

Religious organizations in Kazakhstan are officially registered as a non-profit and non-governmental organization and obeyed to meet established registration requirements and restrictions on distribution of religious materials, and new rules for opening places of worship according to the Law on Religion. As it states in The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Religious Activity and Religious Associations (2011), religious denominations should be implemented their activities with the cooperation of Ministry

for Religious Affairs and Civil Society. Officially, religious activities are controlled and approved by Ministry. Moreover, all religious associations by certain deadlines need to pass re-registration. Only those denominations, which were given licenses and approvals, have rights to operate legally in Kazakhstan. Otherwise, unregistered religious organizations are to be liquidated and reported at the request of Ministry of Justice. Curanovic (2013: 337) in her extensive research on religious situation in Post-Soviet countries mentions that Spiritual Boards of Islam and the Orthodox Church in Kazakhstan who played key role in providing expedient dialogue between religion and the State do not have the capacity (experience, infrastructure, finances) to act beyond national borders and so their role is limited mostly to domestic affairs (the sphere of social partnership). Therefore, it is the president stands on the front line of religious diplomacy on the international level.

There are official bodies which aim is to control the religious situation in Kazakhstan. The Agency for Religious Affairs was created officially on May 18, 2011, after the abolition of the Committee on Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This process was accompanied with the transfer of Committee's functions, powers and property of this agency (On the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Religious Affairs, Article 44, and subparagraph 3). Earlier in the Republic of Kazakhstan, in the sphere of interaction with religious associations, the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Kazakhstan exercised the authority, also, in the field of interaction with non-governmental organizations.

In 2016 the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society was established to adress global threat imposed by religious extremism and radicalism. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society the Republic of Kazakhstan regulates religious activities in the country. Therefore, as Yermekbayev (2016:1) states in his report there are certain aspects the new Ministry aims to realize:

This [religious stability] will be achieved through our three main responsibilities: ensuring the secularity of our state while protecting the interests of Kazakhstan's religions and individual religious freedoms; strengthening civil society; and putting in place policies to help the development of young people within our country.

In accordance with the established legislation, the Committee exercises functions to formulate and implement the main directions of the state policy in the field of ensuring the rights of citizens to freedom of religion and interaction with religious associations, developing proposals for improving the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, regulating the rights of citizens to freedom of religion.

The Ministry carries out the functions of studying and analyzing the development of the religious situation in the Republic as well as the activities of religious associations' missionaries and religious organizations. The Ministry focus on ensuring the conduct of religious studies, coordinating the activities of local executive bodies of oblasts, cities of national importance and the capital on religious activities and interaction with religious associations and entities who violate the legislation in the sphere of religious activity of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Ministry includes two Centers oriented on providing and ensuring peaceful religious situation in the Republic: Research and Analytical Center on Religious Issues and International Center of Cultures and Religions.

The Research and Analytical Center for Religious Issues (from now on referred to as the RAC) was established by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 72 of January 30, 2007. The Center began its activities under the Committee on Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The state institution was renamed by the Order of the Chairman of the Committee on Religious Affairs from November 7, 2016 No. 1 to the Republican State Institution "Research and Analytical Center for Religious Issues" of the Committee for Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MRACS RK, 2016).

The aim of the Center under the Charter is a scientific, methodological, and information-analytical support of the activities of state bodies in matters of religion. The main subject of the Center's activities is the organization of research and analysis of the development of the religious situation in Kazakhstan, information and analytical, scientific, and methodological support for the activities of state bodies, organizations and citizens in the sphere of state-confessional relations.

The Center performs the following functions: to organize various studies on the analysis of religious situation in Kazakhstan aimed at developing practical recommendations for government agencies; to examine and approve of religious literature of religious organizations during registration period; to conduct studies on religious situation in Kazakhstan; to assist interaction with scientific organizations and educational institutions to conduct joint research on religious issues to ensure that the activities of state bodies; to prepare expert reports related to religious issues and violation of the rights of the citizens.

International Center of Cultures and Religions (hereafter - the ICCR) was established in accordance with the Action Plan for the implementation of the initiatives uttered by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev at the II Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and lately has been transferred to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society.

ICCR contributes to interfaith and intercultural dialogue between the State and the Religion. Moreover, ICCR aims to strengthen unity and interdenominational harmony of Kazakhstani people. ICCR focuses on the realization of the next tasks as carrying scientific research and study on social relations in the field of religion; guaranteeing fruitful cooperation between the State and the Society regarding interfaith relations; assisting the process of spiritual education of the citizens.

ICCR contributes to the successful and reasonable relationship between the State, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), religious institutions and religious organizations thereby being a key factor in the process of establishing interfaith harmony in Kazakhstan.

Notable the State registration of religious associations and regional religious associations is carried out by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

### **3.1. Islamic Institutions**

As stated the representative of the State Committee for Religious Affairs Karashulakov (2015:2) in his report a growing number of Muslim associations, so if in 1991 the number of religious organizations was 68-70 (mosques, madrasas); in the early 2000s has reached more than 1500; then in April 2010 there were already 2383 Islamic



religious institutions (mosques, madrasas). Many historical and cultural monuments and mosques were restored and renovated. Currently, in the country, there are 2,517 Muslim organizations.

Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (DUMK<sup>1</sup>) is the biggest and most influential in the country religious non-governmental organization, which brings together most of the Muslims of Kazakhstan. The chairman of DUMK is Supreme Mufti who elected at the general meeting. His candidacy for Supreme Mufti unofficially should be agreed with the Akorda (the official workplace of the President of Kazakhstan). In 1990, Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM) collapsed, and DUMK was established as an independent association, the first of which was elected chairman Ratbek Haji Nysanbayuly. The role of these central religious authorities such as the Muslim Board or the Orthodox Church in regulating religious activities of Muslim believers in Kazakhstan and in supporting stability in the country is crucial. Representatives of the DUMK are regular participants in all committees and working groups of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan related to religious or other social activities of the Republic. By unspoken rules of all initiatives related to Islamic activities in the country coming from the “bottom” or “top” of society in one way or another should be agreed and be approved by the DUMK, which is a kind of mediator between the Muslim associations and the state.

The first head of independent mufti became Ratbek Haji Nysanbayuly. In 2000, at Republican Muslim Congress Absattar Derbisali Haji was elected as a second Supreme Mufti of Kazakhstan. He worked in this position for almost 13 years. Current Supreme Mufti is Yerzhan Mayamerov.

At the same time, religious-cultural societies contribute a lot to the colorful social life of Kazakhstan. The Muslim women, for example, lead many of fellowships as “The League of Muslim Women of Kazakhstan,” “Association of Fatima”. They are focused on the cultivation of ethnic and religious identity of the peoples of the Muslim tradition, which in practice is distinguished with the re-creation of the traditional patriarchal values of society; their activities have educational and charitable nature. At the head of

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<sup>1</sup> Or another title is Muftiyat of Kazakhstan.

these social movements are, as a rule, people with secular education. One of the first was established in 1990, “The League of Muslim Women of Kazakhstan”, which since 1993 have been publishing the newspaper “Ak Bosaga” (Light Threshold). The objectives of organizations are maintaining national revival of family traditions and providing education for disadvantaged female children. In 1992, the specially created program “Koran courses” were organized by representatives of the movement to teach basics of Islam. Also in these organizations were taught Turkish and Arabic languages (Islam In Kazakhstan, 2016).

Kazakhstan actively participates religious agenda around the world endeavors to bring the meaningful contribution. Kazakhstan joined the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) in 1995, and his delegation took part in all the biggest events of the OIC, such as summits, the meeting of the Foreign Ministers, as well as the annual coordination meeting of the OIC Foreign Ministers in the course of the UN General Assembly (OIC News, 2012).

In June 2011, Kazakhstan within the framework of its presidency of this international organization, Astana put forward a proposal for a long-term program to provide economic and financial assistance to least developed countries of the Islamic world. On 5 February 2012 President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev signed the Law of Kazakhstan “On ratification of the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference”. Thus, President confirmed that the development and strengthening of cooperation with the OIC and the Islamic world are one of the priority directions of domestic and foreign policy (Kazakhstan’s Chairmanship in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2013).

### **3.2. Christian Institutions**

Today, the Orthodox faith is the second largest religion in Kazakhstan (about 28 percent of the population). By 1 January 2003, the Russian Orthodox Church had 222 parishes in the Republic (the number for 1989 was 62) and eight monasteries. In 1991, they were divided into three eparchies (Almaty and Semipalatinsk, Shymkent, and the Urals) by a decision of the Holy Synod. In 1999, the Almaty and Semipalatinsk eparchy were transformed into the Astana and Almaty eparchy that also included the Christian Orthodox structures of Astana, the new capital of Kazakhstan. For a long time, Patriarch

of Moscow and All Russia Alexei II (is the official title of the primate of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). It is often preceded by the honorific “His Holiness”) refused to unite the Orthodox Churches into the single Kazakhstani Exarchate. In 1995, he visited the Republic; it was as late as May 2003 when the Holy Synod passed a decision about a Metropolitan See in Kazakhstan; Metropolitan Methodius (Nemtsov) was appointed as its head.

In recent years, the structural betterment of Orthodoxy in the country was improved significantly. Since 2010, the Metropolitan of Astana and Kazakhstan is Alexander Mogilev. According to official numbers in Kazakhstan, there are 229 religious organizations. Also in the country, there are Armenian Apostolic Churches and eight Old Believer churches (Christianity in Kazakhstan, 2015).

Nowadays ROC holds many activities to educate youth and provide them sufficient help. It should be noted that a specially fixed-head priest has taught the current youth associations working in each of the Orthodox Church for Sunday schools. In February 2012, he held the Congress of Orthodox Youth of the Republic of Kazakhstan, where it was decided to establish Orthodox Youth Movement of Kazakhstan.

Catholicism after independence in Kazakhstan started actively cooperate with the State presenters. During the official visit of the Head of the State Nursultan Nazarbayev to the Vatican in 1998, the Relationship Agreement between Kazakhstan and the Holy See was signed. Starting May 19, 2003, Chairman of the Bishops’ Conference of Kazakhstan is Archbishop-Metropolitan Archdiocese of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the city of Astana is Tomasz Peta Bernard. Today there are 88 Catholic organizations. In the Republic priests from Poland, Italy, Germany, America, and Korea (Karashulakov and Ibrayev, 2014:193) instruct the Catholic Church.

Followers of the Uniate (Greco-Catholic) Church attend Catholic churches, all of them being either settlers from Western Ukraine or their descendants. So far, there are three Uniate Churches in Kazakhstan (in Pavlodar, Astana, and Karaganda). In 1997, the Karaganda Uniate organizations acquired a church of its own, the first in the Republic (Karashulakov and Ibrayev, 2014:180).

There are numbers of Protestant movements as traditional and new movements, which Kazakhstan recognize as parts of Protestant branches. Union Baptist Church of Kazakhstan was established in October 1992 at the Founding Congress of Baptist Churches in the city of Almaty. Previously, Kazakhstan's Baptist Church was a member of AUCECB (All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists) with the center in Moscow, which united many of the former Soviet Union Baptist Church. The greatest number of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (Shlymova et al., 2013:130) presented in Almaty Oblast (24 organizations), Almaty (15 organizations), South Kazakhstan (13 organizations) and Karaganda regions (53 organizations, including 43 branches). Presbyterian Church is 108 associations. Almost every Church has a presbyter and two assistants.

The number of Lutherans in Kazakhstan is declining; in the past, it was popular mainly among the local German population the numerical strength of which is also going down due to objective reasons. By 1 January 1993, there were 152 Lutheran associations in the Republic and by 1 January 2003, there were only 100 of them. Three main Lutheran trends are present in the Republic: the Evangelical Church headed by a bishop; the Lutheran Brotherhood and independent Lutheran associations without a central administration; the followers of the Synod of Missouri. The latter officially registered center in 1998; it has branches in Almaty and several regions; it disseminates religious literature in German, English, and Russian and extends material and spiritual support to the Lutheran community. Evangelical Lutheran Church consists of 13 local religious organizations in Almaty, Akmola, Zhambyl, Karaganda, Kostanai, Pavlodar, East Kazakhstan, North Kazakhstan oblasts and Almaty and Astana. Currently, Bishop Evangelical Lutheran Church is Yuri T. Novgorod. The total number of believers is 800, most of which attend Sunday liturgy and celebrate Church holidays.

In Kazakhstan, Protestants arose in the early 1990s and gave rise to an enormous group of charismatic churches, the largest of which are "New Life" with 38 organizations, "Agape" with 22 organizations and "Source of Life" with 28 organizations.

Active religious associations of "Jehovah's Witnesses" with 60 organizations, the local religious organization "Seventh-day Adventist" with 42 associations appeared in the territory of Kazakhstan in the early of the XX century. Moreover, these religious

associations organize and assist charities, which aimed to help and provide to people in need.

### **3.3. Other Religious Institutions**

Likewise, other religious associations, the first Jews arrived in the steppes with Russian settlers long before the 1940s when thousands of Jews families were exiled to Central Asia. Oreck (2016) mentions in his study about approximately 8,500 Holocaust-fleeing Jews settlers who were exiled during World War Two to Kazakhstan.

The religious life of Jewish community was rehabilitated after obtaining independence. Since 1996, Yeshayah Cohen became the Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan. Since 2002, the newspaper “Shalom” founded by the Jewish Congress of Kazakhstan is published in Kazakhstan.

Researcher of the religious life of Kazakhstan’s denominations Trofimov (2003:4) remarks in the last few decades there was the outflow of Jews from Kazakhstan to Israel. Nevertheless, despite the outflow of the Jewish population, the number of Judaic associations increased by the end of 2010. Early in 2003, there were Judaic associations practically in all regional centers (before 1998 there were four of them: two in Almaty, one in Shymkent and one in Kzyl-Orda). In 1998, a Jewish cultural center was opened in Almaty. It was named after Menahem Shneerson, the Seventh Lubavitch Rabbi. The synagogue, the first newly built one in the post-Soviet period, is named after his father, Levi Itzhak. At the beginning of 2011, there were 26 Jewish religious organizations. According to the re-registration outcomes, today, all Jewish organizations emerged into four local Jewish religious organizations.

Besides traditional beliefs, in Kazakhstan nowadays there are many religious organizations, which represent new religious movements. The spread of these religious movements concurred with the turning point in Kazakhstan society’s life in the 1990s when the breakdown of the Soviet Union broke all fundamental ideological and religious mindsets.

In Kazakhstan, there are such religious organizations as Seventh-day Adventists, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Baha’i Spiritual Association, Moon’s Unification Church (Moonies), Society for Krishna Consciousness, etc.



Today the Society for Krishna Consciousness has spread around the world, namely the United States and Europe. Before re-registration, there was 14 religious association of Krishna. Because of re-registration, currently, in Kazakhstan, operate eight local religious associations Society of Krishna Consciousness.

Another is steadily increasing in the number spiritual center of National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Kazakhstan, which is located in Almaty, considered as one of the most populous in Central Asia. The most influential preachers are descendants from Iran the Gulf States, and Malaysia. At the beginning of 2011, there were 20 religious organizations of the Baha'i denomination. Currently, in Kazakhstan, there are six local religious associations of the Baha'i Faith in Almaty, Akmola, Karaganda and South Kazakhstan oblasts and Astana and Almaty cities.

In his paper about history and development of Buddhism in modern Kazakhstan Azilhanov (2014) mentions "Almaty Won Buddhist Church" which operates in Almaty, the head of which is Palagina Larisa Lvovna. Local Religious Organization, created in 1997, has its specialized religious building actively attended by followers. The founder of Won Buddhism is Pak Chong Bing, better known under the name Sothesan Tedzhonsa (1891-1943), and venerated by Buddhists as the "Buddha of a New Era". "Local Buddhist religious association of West Kazakhstan region" is headed Lyudmila Bykov, who actively proselytizes the basis of Won Buddhism. Today, Kazakhstan has two Buddhist religious organizations, which are located in Almaty and West Kazakhstan region.

Buddhists set up their association in Almaty in 1999. It is a multinational religion, and it unites Buriats, Mongols, and Kalmyks for whom Buddhism is a traditional religion. There are followers of Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Order founded in Japan in the 20th century. A monk of the order Junsei Terasawa visited Almaty twice (in 1994 and 1998) where he met his followers. In 2002, Terasawa organized a peace march across Pakistan and India, which also attracted Buddhists from Kazakhstan to join the campaign.

#### **4. The Law on Religion in Kazakhstan.**

There were few attempts to imply appropriate regulations on religion in Kazakhstan since 1990. The Communist system left the deep mark in people conscious and religious

vacuum was formed in citizens' perception of spiritual life. In the beginning Government (apparently, having no experience and fundamental ideas about the significance of religion in the society) tried to apply a variety of regulations, rules to facilitate the process of returning to religion in Kazakhstan.

The Law on Religion distinguishes that the Republic of Kazakhstan is a democratic secular state that respects the right of all individuals to freedom of opinion, guarantees the equality of citizens regardless of their religion, recognizes the cultural and historical value of religions that are in accordance with the spiritual heritage of the people of Kazakhstan, and the importance of interdenominational harmony, religious tolerance and respect for the religious beliefs of citizens (The Law on Religion of Kazakhstan Republic, 1992).

The Article 22 in Constitution of Republic of Kazakhstan proclaims everyone's right to freedom of conscience. The right to freedom of conscience must not stipulate or limit universal human and civil rights and responsibilities before the State of Kazakhstan.

The process of obtaining independence after the Collapse of Soviet Regime brought inconceivable alterations in religious level of Kazakhstan's society. All world religious organizations and confessions rushed to fill the niches of religious vacuum, in which citizens remained over last few decades. The uncontrollable religious activity gave concerns to the State, and the inevitability to cope with the enormous flow of missionary activity led to executing restrictions.

In Soviet Period in Kazakhstan, the freedom of conscience did not exist in practice. The state was responsible for actions of believers. The state similarly determined the legislative and political parties and fully exercised restrictions on religious organizations. According to Podoprigora (1999:581-587), religious activity was legal only if the religious association was registered with the state organs (as The Provincial Government or Council of Ministers of autonomous republics). Religious believers faced limitations on higher education and a wide variety of jobs and encountered the jeopardy of discrimination treatment without protecting religious rights.

On January 15, 1992, when the Supreme Council of Kazakhstan ratified a law on religion named "On Freedom to Worship and Religious Associations". This regulation,

as it was characterized, passably indicated the certainties of the early 1990s' and the logic of political liberalization. Nevertheless, many experts claim that validation of the law in January 1992 was viable due to underestimation of the seriousness of the role religion plays in people's lives. That law gave freedom to different religious streams on the republic's territory, and the number of strange unknown religious streams had grown. Besides, they began involving local population.

The legislation offered extreme flexibility to various religious streams led to the development of obscure religious activity. The mainstream law did not perceive legitimate impacts to acts performed by statute or inside the domain of the inward self-governance of religious groups, nor does it acknowledge the charge of religious courts.

Therefore, the legislation considered a very liberal and flexible law that brought troubles in the following exercising of it. Barely the law was met positively by supporters of liberal views and was declared the most thoroughly circumvented legislation.

Modern regulation of religious activity in Kazakhstan in the first place was marked by the adoption of the Law on 15 January 1992 "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations". Subsequently, on 11 October 2011, it was replaced and ratified as the Law "On religious activity and religious organizations". A new law on religion in 2011 still raises many questions concerning whether this step was indeed appropriate. In its original form of law on religion (from 15.01.1992) was, according to experts, too liberal and let many destructive sects and non-traditional faiths openly pursue a policy of vigorous augmentation of religious ideas, which threaten the institutions of the secular constitutional state. The current legislation, according to most, has a complete form than the former, but it needs further development. For instance, 7th article of the law "Religious rites and ceremonies", which attributes to the prohibition of departure religious services in state institutions, originated intense debates on the societal level and indicated the necessity of more attentive revision of the Law.

The process of law realization carried enormous blunders even though the values of the democratic order were considered while creating it. International observers highly criticized attempts to alter and modify the law. In 2001, the outline of the law "On amendments and additions to some legislative acts on issues of religious freedom" was

presented in the Parliament. The most important aspect included was the definition of religious extremism, which promoted fully understanding of the subject. However, this law was not ratified, although some of its stipulations became parts of the law "On Countering Extremism" in 2005 and obtained final form only in 2011. This modification marked the beginning of endless debates concerning the religious situation in Kazakhstan on an international level. As it puts one of the observers, Trofimov (2003:6) this amendment was designed to intrude on the nontraditional religions' legal right. This remark would reconfirm two years later in a new attempt to modify the law.

The definition of "traditional" religions for the first time was implied as an amendment to the law "On Freedom of Religion and Religious Associations" in 2005. This way, the State created the base for the differentiation of religious organizations according to their contribution to the spiritual life of citizens. The definition of religious extremism<sup>2</sup> The legal context of Kazakhstan's law was advised to be improved to more precise according to the Shanghai Convention (Alisheva et al., 2015:16). Editorial panel with Alisheva as the head carried extensive research on the legislative development of Law on Religion in Kazakhstan.

New attempt to improve the situation failed and faced harsh comments from international observers. The law "On amendments and additions to certain legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on issues of religious freedom and religious associations" that was adopted by the Majlis on November 26, 2008, recognized to be as contradictory to the Constitution. This action led to negative comments from European institutions and observers. As the main issue was pointed out, the restriction on spreading the faith outside the religious associations was admitted as an irreconcilable and impossible to implement due to internal contradiction.

Finally, on January 17, 2011, at the expanded session of "Nur Otan party", the President of Kazakhstan uttered the declaration concerning of the increase of missionary organizations operated in the country. Following, unclear and uncertain goals of religious associations and possibility to nourish the activity of radical groups demand

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<sup>2</sup> **Religious extremism** – incitement of religious hatred or discord including activity associated with calls to violence, as well as any religious practice that calls for threats to security, life, health, and the morals, rights, and freedoms of citizens.

effective actions. The “Law on Amendments and Additions to Several Legislative Acts on Questions of Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations” would have amended many articles of the 1992 Religion Law, the Code of Administrative Offenses and several other laws. After being declared by Parliament and sent to the President for approval, it will be sent for review by the Constitutional Council. Nevertheless, some experts and observers as Kabak (2015:16) Alisheva (2015:16), and Kolodzinskaya (2015:16) had concerns that the Government by imposing greater influence on religious processes unavoidably causes troubles and inconsistencies in the society due to the expansion of authority and agenda in the religious sphere.

Despite numerous protests on September 22, 2011, the Majilis of the Parliament to reflect the new realities approved the law “On Religious Activity and Religious Associations”. As stated one of the observers Trofimov (2003:3), this move has brought heated debates and discussion on societal and international levels (the OSCE, and some of the Western embassies fiercely protested on the legalization of the new law). The partially active process of entire changing the law resulted in the State's concerns about radical religious activity had started at that period in Central Asia.

On October 13, 2011, the President Nursultan Nazarbayev signed into law a series of amendments and supplements to some Kazakhstan's legal acts (Kazakhstan: New Law on Religion Enacted, 2017), speaking to the issues of freedom of conscience and the activities of religious organizations. The newly passed amendments entered into force on October 24, 2011. Tightening of the religious activity imposed compulsory registration of religious organization to Ministry of Justice. Otherwise, they would be recognized as illegal and penalized by the authorities or even criminalize the membership depending on certain aspects. Moreover, new legislation put certain restrictions on religious education. Since 2011, religious education enabled only with approval from the Ministry of Education.

As it states in the Law (2011), the major novelties of this law are newly established registration requirements for religious organizations, restrictions on distribution of religious materials, and new rules for opening places of worship. Religious organizations will be able to register with Ministry of Justice authorities at the national, regional, or local level if they have at least 5,000, 500, or 50 adult members,



respectively. Unregistered religious activity will be banned and recognized as illegal. The activities of regional and local religious organizations are limited to the geographic area corresponding to their administrative units

There were implied several amendments which fulfillment would allow religious organizations realize their activity:

1. All founders must be Kazakhstan citizens. Missionaries must obtain the invitation from the officially registered organization and must point out the purpose of the visit as leading missionary activity;

2. The law forbids religious group to abuse people's health, be the cause of family breakups, put at risk realization of obligations to the state, and prevent members from leaving the religious community. Moreover, it prohibited to transfer the ownership of property to the leaders of the communities. All religious associations must disclose data to registering authorities;

3. The spreading of religious material is permitted in approved places of worship and first premises;

4. The location of worshipping must be designated at the time of initial registration. Otherwise, it would possibly interdict by the authorities. No place in government building allowed to be used as the prayer room.

Afterward, the State was accused of creating artificial barriers to prevent missionary, which activity would only strengthen with the passing of the time. Worldwide experts claimed 2011 Religion Law already violates many of Kazakhstan's international obligations in the area of freedom of religion or belief, freedom of affiliation and free speech. International observer Corley (2012) stated in his paper that new law violates the legal rights of the citizens. The law caused a violent reaction within all religious organizations: from Jehovah's Witnesses to Muslim religious associations. Even though Astana experienced severe pressure from the public, the amendments to the legislation in 2011 came into effect. Nevertheless, many international observers, and researchers as Curanović claimed that new law does not include apparent inconsistent or contradictions to the main policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The cases as charging illegal religious organizations or discouraging women from wearing the hijab (In

Kazakhstan, 2011) in educational places and government offices occurred in the country and (From Parliament, 2011) were assisted according to the law and on the legal basis. Structures responsible for controlling implementing the Law are "relevant structures" including the Interior Ministry, the National Security Committee (KNB) intelligence agency and the Prosecutor's Office.

Kazakhstan leads fruitful and efficient policy against radicalism, which partially influence and put the restriction on activities of religious education and which might be misunderstood or considered as overly strict by international observers. Obviously, the subject of modifying the Law in accordance with the requirements of modern world and changes is unquestionable and on the agenda. Nevertheless, the perception of Kazakhstan's religious policy has evolved over time. Also, if the legislation on 1992 was received well due to its bendability, nevertheless, it failed consistent implementation in reality. Final Amendment to the Law of September 2011 despite harsh reaction was applied effectively over the last five years.

## **5. Education in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan has a highly centralized top-down system that leaves little political, administrative and fiscal authority to lower levels. This is reflected in the education system, which is characterized by an extensive system of planning and norms. Kazakhstan uses national strategic planning to set out broadly a vision for the country, but also to regulate every aspect of the education system at the central level. Some strategies and planning documents, notably the State Program for Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-20, ensure consistency and guide policymaking.

The Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan plays a crucial role in the outline of education strategies and the development of key initiatives while the Ministry of Education and Science focuses on the design of policies to perform education strategies. Regions (oblasts) and districts (rayons) are responsible for the delivery of education services in schools. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MES RK) control and distributes materials, curriculum, approves books and gives certification for educational centers. These are methodical cabinet and training institutions. Methodical cabinets function in all cities, regional and

district centers. The MES RK (Bekishev, 2011, 89–96) supports training institutions as well as methodological cabinets financially.

The main objectives of the education system in the Republic of Kazakhstan are:

- formation of general scientific and cultural training of students;
- social adaptation of pupils for life in society;
- civic education and love for the country;
- ensuring the needs of society for skilled workers and professionals, retraining and professional development.

The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Article 30) states: “Subjects are ensured free auxiliary training in instructive state foundations. Getting paid training in instructive private foundations on the assumption and in the way recommended by law. The State sets instructive principles of training. The movement of any instructive foundation must conform to these principles.

The education system in Kazakhstan is and administered at the nationwide level overseen by MES RK. Schooling is mandatory for all children. Academic year lasts nine months (from 1 September to 25 May). The education is conducted in three languages: Kazakh, Russian and English. Almost half of all students study in Kazakh (whereas during the Soviet period this number did not reach 20%). The proportion studying in English stands currently at only 1.6% and changes gradually. The proportion studying in Russian stands at 48.7%, and it is declining (Massyrova et. al, 2012). Education System begins with pre-school education, which is provided by Kindergarten and mini-centers, and finishes with various higher educational options. Primary and secondary education is compulsory in Kazakhstan and students are entitled to attend a public school free of charge. Attendance is almost universal at these two levels. In 2010 according to the presidential decree, the country adopted a "State Program on Development of Education from 2011-2020," (the "State Education Program"), which aims to improve the educational system of Kazakhstan in a short period at each level of the educational system.

**Table 2**

Education	School/Level	Grade From	Grade To	Age From	Age To	Years	Notes
Primary	Primary School	1	4	6	10	4	Primary education typically begins at age 6-7 and continues four academic years with two sessions (from 8 AM to 12 PM and 1 PM to 5 PM). Since primary schools belong to the State, all of them are protected by the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
Middle	General School, Gymnasium - Middle	5	9	10	15	5	Middle education typically begins at age 10 to 15 and continues five academic years with two sessions (from 8 AM to 12 PM and 1 PM to 5 PM). The State protects and manages middle education according to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
Secondary	Secondary School, Lyceum, Gymnasium	11	12	15	17	2	Certificate/diploma awarded: Attestat o Srednem Obrazovanii (Certificate of Complete Secondary Education)
Vocational	Professional Lyceum, Vocational School	11	12	15	17	2	Certificate/diploma awarded: Diplom o Srednem Spetsialnom Obrazovanii (Diploma of Secondary Vocational Education)
Vocational	Professional College, Vocational School	10	12	15	19	4	Certificate/diploma awarded: Diplom o Srednem Spetsialnom Obrazovanii (Diploma of Secondary Vocational Education)
Tertiary	Diploma of Specialist, Bachelor					4	4 years of study after graduation from Vocational or High School.
Tertiary	Graduate Education, Master's					2	2 years of study after Bachelor's degree program.
Tertiary	PhD, Doctorate (Doktoratura)					3	Kandidat Nauk (Candidate of Sciences) program normally lasts for three years. Doctor Nauk (Doctor of Science) program duration is not fixed (usually from 5 to 15 years). Doctor of Science academic degree is the highest degree awarded after the public defense of a dissertation also considering publications on research work in scientific magazines.

**Source:** Education System in Kazakhstan, 2012

This table illustrates in short general characteristics by levels. The number of preschool organizations is 8 834 where 4 241 in Kindergarten and 4 593 mini-centers (for a few number of children) is steadily grows with years (Irsaliyev, 2016:81). Attendance in Kindergarten and mini-centers is not compulsory and offered free to the citizens. Five-day preschool educational programs aimed at helping children to prepare for the Primary Education and focus on reading, art, pre-writing, reading and arithmetic. As for today, 7 511 schools are functioning in the country.

In their research Kukeyeva et al. (2014:152) emphasizes that vocational and tertiary [Higher] education is a part of Kazakhstan's model for sustainable development. Technical and vocational education, primary and secondary professional education are acquired in vocational schools, high schools and colleges, and combined with a general education.

Initial vocational training includes training, further training, and retraining of workers, professionals and the unemployed. The country has 184 vocational schools and high schools with 69,483 students. Training skilled workers are carried out in more than 300 specialties. Also, vocational education provides by 779 colleges, and the number of students is 488,926 people.

Institutions of vocational education are represented who have switched to training in the new state standards of secondary vocational education and training plans. Vocational institutions introduced a new mechanism for the formation of the student body and training with full reimbursement of costs on a contractual basis, taking into account the needs of the region's labor force. The opening of new specialties is carried out only in the presence of the customer and the conclusion of the regional employment office.

Higher Education represents by Tertiary system. There are three levels of tertiary education in Kazakhstan: first, Bachelor degree, which lasts four year (or five in case of obtaining Specialist Degree); Master's degree typically is carried out by higher professional education curricula in two areas: scientific and pedagogical study for two years or the profile study for at least one year; Doctoral Degree is a three-year program, which does not meet international standards. The government is presently pursuing a program of National Qualifications Framework which allows students to study with international standards according to ECTS of Boulogne Process (Pak, 2010:42).



Postgraduate education is provided in the master's and doctoral institutions of higher education, residency of higher education institutions and research organizations as well as by giving the international scholarship "Bolashak" training in leading foreign universities for full-time training in accordance with the list of specialties annually maintained in accordance with the enactment of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The profile magistracy realizes professional training programs of postgraduate education for management training for sectors of the economy, medicine, law, education, art, services, and businesses that have in-depth training. To prepare specialists for the business environment institution may implement the MBA programs to the minimum content and level of training requirements within the MBA educational, professional programs are approved by the authorized body in the field of education (Legal information system of Regulatory Legal Acts of RK, 2015).

There are three forms of trainings offered for students: full-time is the most shared and traditional; part-time study usually assumes that the student is two times a year for intensive courses lasting approximately a month, after which the exams; evening form of training, also known as part-time, is that the learning process is transferred to the evening, that is, the student can work during the day (usually), and after 18 hours. Some specialties are not offered in the evening form of training.

There are educational options for students to enroll university. The citizens of Kazakhstan have the right to receive free Bachelor Degree program on a competitive basis (Massyrova et al., 2015:51). Moreover, the State carries the range of projects aimed at increasing the level of youth employment and youth adaptation in labor market are implemented annually with a participation of the civil sector. They include the following projects such as "Zhassyl El" program, student construction and labor initiatives, "Talent Pool" "With Diploma to Village" "Youth Employment Exchange" (Abdikerova et al., 2014: 4487-4492).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **HISTORY OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN KAZAKHSTAN BEFORE AND AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

#### **1. History Of Islam In Kazakhstan**

In the territory of modern Kazakhstan at different periods of its history, a variety of religious beliefs were encountered and confessed. For many centuries, the Eurasian steppe was the center of historical and cultural interactions and contacts of peoples inhabiting it with various religions, predetermining the emergence and active dissemination of world religions. Inter-confessional consent in Kazakhstan relies primarily on Christianity and Islam: Sunni Islam and Christianity, in its three directions - Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism (mainly Lutheranism, Baptism, Mennonism, and Adventism) have a long tradition and rich experience.

Soucek (2000:21-23) in his original work "Inner Asia" mentioned that Central Asian region during the early medieval time was ruled by several suzerains and had exercised several beliefs such as Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, Christianity and Shamanistic cults. Like this, Soucek stresses the importance of the territorial location of Kazakh steppes, which played a crucial role in spreading world religions in Central Asian countries. With the centralization of state power and with the penetration of Islam, there is a gradual formation of ethnic and religious unity, the replacement of Buddhism and Christianity (Nurbayev, 2010:12).

Tengrianism dominated for a long time in Central Asia before world religions. Tengrianism based on the belief in a Creator and probably first appeared in the second century and dominated for many centuries in steppes. Believers worshiped "sky" as the God of Universe. Along Tengrianism there was the place for folk beliefs, which concentration is known as shamanism. In shamanism, animals were sacrificed during funeral rites and on celebrations to express gratefulness to the spirits of ancestors. As in every folk belief, communication with the spirits was supposed to happen when rendered fat of a sacrificed animal was poured on the fire and was ministered by the services of shamans. The Kazakhs believed that separate spirits inhabited the earth (jer-ana), water (su-ana), fire (ot-ana), and each of the animals that they tended, sheep

(shopan-ana), cows (zengi-baba), horses (kambar-ata), and camels (oisal kara) (Olcott, 2010:20). In some accounts such spirits are embodied as a saint or Holy Father who was prayed to when the occasion demanded; for example, prayers to jher-ana were offered in times of ice storms, to su-Ana when there was lack of precipitation, and to the numerous animal spirits when the people were ill or needed renewal (Olcott, 2010:20). Conversely, in Kazakhstan's steppes, the Turkic nomadic tribes were still obeyed to their ethnic religions with strong shamanistic features until the true conversion of the Turks to Islam realized by the great Sufi order in the XII century.

In the XIX century, the so-called “great game” took place between Russia and Great Britain, whose empires were about to meet in Asia. Eventually, this process has changed the religious and ethnic population of Kazakhstan. Soucek (2000:195) has described the Russian conquest of Central Asia as a two-phase process: the first phase was a prolonged gradual takeover of the northern Kazak steppes; the second was a much swifter conquest of the major cities of Southern Central Asia together with the southern parts of Kazakhstan.

Russia hunted to unite its regions through transferring Russian farmers and workers. Therefore, Russia conducted compulsory immigration policy and brought into the steppes different nationalities, including rebels and those who were against reforms. Between the two residents, censuses made in 1897 and 1911 the Russian part of the Central Asian population almost increased three times in number from nearly 700 thousand to more than 1,8 million, while the Kazakh part of the community raised from 6,9 to 8,2 million. However, in the intervening time, the Kazakhs' proportion of the population declined approximately from 90 % to 80 %. (Liubimov, 1914: 234-36). Since that time Kazakhstan's population undergone significant changes.

As previously stated, a political and societal life of Kazakh people closely interrelated with a history of the Russian Empire. The October Revolution, which brought entirely new understanding in the relationship between the Church and the State after the breakdown of Tsarist Russia, became a wholly new stage in the life of the Kazakh (Abdakimov, 1994:138).

After comprising fifteen countries in the Soviet Union, the Bolsheviks with the leader Joseph Stalin started effective and extensive liquidation campaign of all mosques, churches or all religious schools in 1920. Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialistic Republic adopted the Constitution in 1926. After ten years, the Kazakh Autonomy was reorganized into Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, and, in 1937, the new constitution came into force.

Materialistic outlook and ideology of the Party implied holding atheistic attitude and eradication of all religious beliefs. It was a fundamental goal of the Soviet Union to establish the new order in the world. This period covers different periods of state-church relations: from relative religious freedom at the beginning and the end of the Soviet actions to persecution and repressions in between. Religious doctrines were incompatible with communist ideology, and the country actively assisted in the disappearance of religion (Tastanova, 2012:64).

During Soviet period, religious associations were limited and controlled by Government. There was no freedom for education and personal improvement regarding the religious activity. Without legal entities, religious organizations' actions had to be approved by Party. Apparently, all it comes down to the oppression of religious activity, which was explicit not entirely in legislative acts but had more administrative character.

Moreover, during Soviet power division of the state from religion and school from church, the government propagation of atheism up to the collapse of the Soviet Union have left a deep trace in thinking and a life of citizens. This state-party approach was resisted by many parents initiating education of children in the spirit of traditional belief. The youth, thus, had some family possibilities of familiarizing to religions of ancestors (Tastanova, 2012:72). Only with the last Soviet Constitution that was adopted in 1978, all of them contained regulations and amendments regarding religious freedom, but few of them were realized. Ideology had more influence on the system rather than legal conventions

Nowadays the situation in Kazakhstan changes after the obtaining independence. Kazakhstan actively participates conferences and addresses to daily issues related to the religion. In Astana were held two Congresses of The World and Traditional Religions Leaders in 2003 and 2006. Those forums discussed the unique Kazakhstani way of

inter-confessional collaboration. The Kazakhstani model of interrelations is based on democratic principles of equality of public and religious interests, respecting the believers' rights and freedoms, partnership and strives for mutual understanding (Congress of the Leaders of World Religions, 2017).

#### **4.1. Islam In The Steppes Before Russian Conquest**

Obviously, Islam had greater influence in Kazakh steppes resulted in complex political and historic events in Central Asia. Renowned scholar H. Paksoy who hugely contributed the area of Islamic studies defines that the introduction of Islam into Central Asia went through roughly three stages: the force of arms and alms, the scholasticism madrasa and Sufis (Paksoy and Phil, 2000:85). This process was run successfully despite the distance from Arabia, where Islam appeared. Later (i.e., after 622 A.D.), the incredible spreading of Muslim belief in the region caused constant changes in the history of Inner Asia (Soucek, 2000:51). The Samanids have also implemented a strict policy for the jihad and missionary activities of Islam in Turkestan, Semireche and West Sinkiang (Soucek, 2000:70).

Eventually, the majority Turkic lords came to decision to convert themselves and tribes to a new religion. Nevertheless, for a long time, Turkic tribes somehow opposed Islam. The only real contact that most Kazakhs had with Islam seems to have been through the Sufi holy men who moved around the steppe (Olcott, 2010:21). Kazakhs' nomadism hindered people's settlement to practice mosque-based devotion. Sufism was more suitable to the tribal environment, a situation changed and obtained new features. Nevertheless, the Islam of most of the Kazakh sultans and princes appears to have been little more than a basic acceptance of the ascendance of one God, Allah, over all others.

Indeed, Sufism by itself has roots in pre-Islamic times. Sufi Islam allowed practicing somehow non-Islamic practices, singing and using music during the prey or veneration of tombs and traditional places. Due to the mixing of beliefs, Kazakh Sufi Islam diverted from Tajiks and Uzbeks form because they obtained written materials of Iranicised Sufi. The first practitioners of Kazakh Sufi were qojas whose descendance, as they claimed, arrives in Four Righteous Caliphs (Yemelianova, 2014:289).



The first disastrous defeat to Islamic world was the Mongol conquest of Central Asia in the XIII century. Aggressive invasion of Mongols ruined the political and judiciary systems and somehow replaced it with Mongol's code of conduct, *yasa*. It led to conflict in judiciary institutions and weakened the influence of Sunni mullahs on population. A Sufi fraternity in the next place with its less dependence on Islamic court was a spiritual body that held Islamic culture in the Central Asia. A century later, Mongols' elite began to convert to Islam, and Sufi fraternities gained power over the population. From the 10th to the 13th century, Sufi fraternities began to take shape on a massive scale throughout the Islamic world, not least in Central Asia (Lapidus, 2002:138).

Lately, Islam was spread in Altyn Orda Empire. Safargaliev (1960:50) in his work "The collapse of the Golden Horde" observes the roots of Kazakhs came from Altyn Orda. Berke Khan, as one of the most powerful emperor, during his rule mostly used Islam as a useful tool to emerge an internal and external organizational structure to fulfill his political ambitions to control Altyn Orda (Patkanov, 1873:62-63). Nevertheless, for the first time, the study of Islam spread very quickly as believers started to build mosques and madrassas (Seidmukhammed et al., 2015:563).

Gradually Islam was spread all over the steppes. Nevertheless, in the eighteenth-century observers noted almost complete absence of mosques and madrasas in the steppe. While those in Semirechye and southern Kazakhstan did not seem having been rebuilt after the Mongol devastation of the cities. The Kazakhs appear not to have understood Arabic and to have had no direct knowledge of the teachings of the Koran. Although Islam was deeply entrenched in the cities south of the steppe, there was little proselytizing in that period. Due to geographical discoveries merchants stopped trade routes on Silk Way. Because of this isolation, ordinary Kazakhs still kept practicing folk religion (Olcott, 2010:27).

Final acceptance of Islam local conditions was simplified in Central Asia by Hanafite School (Soucek, 2000:84) law that is the most flexible of Sunni schools. In fact, the traditional customary law would go along with the Islamic sharia for many centuries, inclusively Russian colonial rule up and ended after the formation of the Soviet Union (Naumkin, 2005:7).

## **1.2. Islam In The Steppes During Russian Conquest**

In their research Mussabekov and Seisenova (2012:945) advocates the entrance of Kazakh lands in the sphere of Russian influence in XVIII – XIX centuries which has strengthened Islam positions. Kazakh tribes experienced necessity to stand apart from foreign invasion in a daily life of the steppes. The imperial power opened certain possibilities for studying of Islam and Islamic education of people. This campaign aimed at keeping the population of southern suburbs of the Russian empire including Kazakh population from integration with another Muslim world.

Intrusive policies of Tsarist only reinforced the unification of indigenous worldviews with Islam. In nomadic societies, where Islamic faith previously only was considered as a small element in the mosaic of local beliefs, the Russian state displayed a rather liberal approach to Islam (Yemelianova, 2014:284). Therefore, unexpectedly the Orthodox preaching engendered the deepening of Islam within indigenous people during the Conquest.

The general educational system in Central Asia at this time contained maktabas for ages 6-14, led by imams, and madrasas with student houses for older students, where the education was usually run by ishans (Sufi leaders). Almost all education was religious, with very little worldly subjects. The Russian supervision did not impede with this system but in its place built “Russian-Native schools,” which initiated to appeal some learners from the native population (Ayagan et al., 2016:16)

In the issue, in the Bukey Horde, Zhangir Khan by Islamic religion advocated national ideology and moral education in Kazakh society. The prime reason to advocate national religious moral education was to keep away Kazakh children from “russification”. To save Kazakh national culture through a religious discipline introduced school administration invited Russian scholars were expected to assist in realizing qualitative educational process systematically (Ayagan et al., 2016:17).

According to the records of missionaries, the children of wealthy Kazakhs were able to get an education in Islamic religious institutions in Bukhara and Kazan. According to the newspaper “Kazakh” (1917y.) for ten years of existence has known medrese

“Galiya” in Ufa, its graduates of a steel 154 Kazakhs (Suinova and Saktaganova, 2011:105).

It must be mentioned that receiving of religious education in Kazan and cities of Central Asia was still popular as well as a pilgrimage to Mecca, or Turkestan. In the intervening time, missionaries noted smattering of canons of the Koran among Kazakhs (which explains the lack of knowledge of Arabic and Persian), the absence of a profound transformation of the pagan nomad's religious consciousness, the synthesis of Islamic and pagan rites, and conservatism of Muslim education.

The late Governor General's action was targeted to weaken Muslim education by introducing pre-Islamic elements to Kyrgyz [Kazakh] population that was viable and susceptible about education (Egamberdiyev and Ospanova, 2014:316). Such attempts included methods of eulogizing pre-Islamic historical figures and imposing a sense of inferiority also by sending Kazakhs to highly elite Russian military institutions (Hunter, 2004:14). In response, Kazakh religious leaders attempted to bring religious fervor by espousing pan-Turkism. (Farah, 2003:304). In Turkestan, the settled population was multinational and was committed to Islam, while in the steppe - nomadic, Kyrgyz [Kazakh], particularly non-religious, so the Tsarist Office of 1891 had included a special branch of the Office to deal with the spiritual side of local people's life. The sources indicate that the effect of the tsarist's policy on the spiritual life of the population was in spreading Russian education, the promotion of Orthodoxy, the oppression of the Islam” (Sadvakasova, 2016:278). Naturally, the pressure of Russian colonial rule provoked to a general nationalistic awakening, alongside with a religious revival. Islam assumed compatible way to defeat colonial powers and bring reforms that led to the formation of jadid schools under Russian jurisdiction in Central Asia.

### **1.3. Islam In Soviet Kazakhstan**

The October Revolution according to Allabergen (2009:31) indicated a new stage in political development and relationship between the State and the Church. In the mid-1920s religious activities of Muslim people were outlawed, and Islamic education was disrupted and reduced to a few hujras (educational groups) which continued to function illegally only in southern Kazakhstan.

In the beginning, the Bolsheviks attacked Islam and tried to diminish it elsewhere. Nevertheless, pre-1917 Islam features in Central Asia resisted the Soviet assault. Even though the activity led by believers was banned and held informally, the number of unregistered and illegal groups was reasonably high.

At that period overall in Soviet space, complicated economic and political changes were undergone. This perception reflected not only the increasing radicalization of the Soviet public sphere in the late NEP (New Economic Policy) period but also the growing protest of Muslim communities against the various Soviet measures. To search for evidence of direct party orders to liquidate all mosques, or all religious schools, in a given region or the whole of the Soviet Union would be in vain. Rather, the Soviet repression of Islamic education worked “the administration way”: at the beginning of the 1920s, the registration (and re-registration) process for mosques and schools and their personnel was made severe and even dangerous for the applying communities (Tastanova, 2012:76). Existing institutions whose license ran out were closed down “legally”. Afterward, Islamic education was liquidated in the course of political campaigns that supposedly had other targets. Local administrators, as well as Komsomol activists, used all kinds of pretexts to shut down Islamic institutions, many of which were demolished or turned into clubs, cinemas, or storehouses.

Starting since 1930 local madrasahs transformed into a warehouse, and later in the House of Culture. According to residents in 1928-1932, about 100 thousand mullahs in Kazakhstan were repressed. One hundred and three-year former imams of Turkestan in the 1930s left in a hurry Kazakhstan, moving abroad in Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey (Musagulova and Arystanbekova, 2016:188)

As regards Islam, due to the particular place of Islam within citizens, the Bolsheviks were obliged to defuse measures to prevent an ardent reaction from Central Asian nationalities. In the 1940s, during a temporary religious melt due to effects of the Second World War, the Kremlin allowed a limited restoration of ‘official’ Islam in the form of the Kazakhstani branch the (SADUM) with its center in Tashkent in 1943. At this point, Khalid (2008:110) emphasized the organization of SADUM implemented new way to observe and control the religious situation in the region. As a vital part of its

nationality legislative issues, the Soviet government allowed religious recognition and instruction in the schools within the post-war USSR (Omelicheva, 2011:247).

Nevertheless, in the early 50's liberal attitude towards religion was replaced by a new wave of atheist propaganda. Priests and imams were accused of espionage, sabotage, counter-revolutionary activities (Musagulova and Arystanbekova, 2016:187).

Later, faced with this renaissance from within and new competition from abroad, the Soviet Islamic administration fell apart in a fashion that mirrored the collapse of the USSR itself. The Directorate for Central Asia and Kazakhstan in Tashkent turned into an Uzbek Muftiate in 1989 (Kemper, Motika, and Reichmuth, 2009:124).

#### **1.4. Islam In Kazakhstan After Independence**

After the USSR breakup, religious situation in Kazakhstan demanded thoughtful and timely response. Islam played the crucial role during the last century by helping not only Kazakh people to preserve cultural identity but also for many different ethnic groups who confess Islam. Therefore, many citizens appealed to Islam as a guide during harsh period of establishing the State. Today, Islam in Kazakhstan is one of the pillars, which guarantee peaceful coexistence of people and responsible for the providing of the development of interreligious dialogue between citizens.

As stated the representative of the State Committee for Religious Affairs Karashulakov (2015) in his report a growing number of Muslim communities, so if in 1991 the number was 68-70 (mosques, madrasas); in the early 2000s has reached more than 1500; then in April 2010 there were already 2383 Islamic religious organizations (mosques, madrasas). Many historical and cultural monuments and mosques were restored and renovated. Currently, in the country, there are 2,570 Muslim organizations. Today, there are 44 Muslim charitable centers in Kazakhstan.

In 1992, ten thousand students received full scholarships from Turkish Universities. Thanks to this quota, two thousand Kazakh youths have been sent to study at various schools in Turkey. To improve appropriate religious services for the Kazakhs more than 75 imams, between 1992 and 2017, were sent to Turkey and were given necessary training (Burhanov, 2008:74-75).

Nevertheless, the State holds strict control over religious education received in other



countries which confess other schools but Hanafi Sunni schools of fiqh. The potential threat of Middle East countries movements and interpretations of Islamic laws has become the main reason for establishing own religious schools in Kazakhstan (Kalkaman, 2011:187).

## **2. History Of Christianity In Kazakhstan**

### **2.1. Christianity In The Steppes Before Russian Conquest**

Little is known about first Christian brotherhoods and communities. As it was mentioned above some tribes appealed in 1007 to the Nestorian metropolitan city of Merv with the request to be converted to Christian faith with his people. Also, Turkic people of Naiman tribe converted to Christianity, and some of them kept Christian faith up to present days. It is noteworthy that the majority of Semirechensk tombstones that time have an image of the cross with inscriptions in Aramaic and Turkish languages.

In their vast compendium of Catholic history, Vian et al. (2001:10) mentioned medieval historian Biruni refers to the beginning of the III century A.D as the date when first Christians appeared in the territory of Central Asia. Also, historical sources reference to the existence of churches in III–IV centuries. In the early fourth century, the Archdiocese of Nestorian Christians was established in the city of Merv.

In the year 1278, the Holy See endeavored to establish religious structures in the territory of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Altogether, 31 missionary dioceses established in the Far East. After the deaths of Giovanni da Montecorvino (Vian et. al, 2001:10) and the Khan, who gave permission people to follow Catholicism, the situation became problematical. Using religion to counterfeit political alliances, the Khan converted to Islam and oppression of the Christians began. With the 30s of the XIV century, Christians began to be oppressing in the Semireche and Kul'dzha region. The persecution of Christians was continued at the time of Tamerlane. Christian merchants and dwellers tried to leave those lands and settled in China or in Christian countries where they felt safer.

Lately, the spread of Christianity drastically declined in the steppes and reappeared a few centuries later when political situation has changed in Kazakhstan's steppes. The Orthodox Church, nevertheless, among all denominations remained the strongest due to

the strong connection with Russian Empire. The appearance of Catholicism, Protestantism and New Protestant Movements arrived in the steppes related to mass migration undergone in the region over last two centuries.

## **2.2. History Of Orthodox Church In Kazakhstan**

The story of Orthodoxy in Kazakhstan is associated initially with military settlements have arisen as a result of the annexation of Kazakhstan to Russia. In the beginning, only Russian soldiers who were arriving to serve in garrisons held the Orthodox faith. In the south, the first military parables (small churches, houses of worship) appeared in 1866 in Shymkent settlement and Turkestan. Tsarist Government never interfered spiritual life of the indigenous population. Nevertheless, the Church foresaw ways to convert the Kazakhs to Christianity. The Church envisaged that as soon as the steppes had been brought under control, it would be able to undertake missions aimed at converting the Kazakhs (Peyrouse, 2008:397).

The Russian Orthodox Church, despite the records, which included information about relevantly friendly relationships between Orthodox and Muslim in the 19th century, continually attempted to persuade Tsarist Government to announce Islam as a threat to the Russian Empire. Even though the authorities still did not welcome the idea of converting Muslim zones to Christianity, some missionaries dedicated their lives to preach in the steppes. Certain aspects of mutual conversion in religion contained interesting facts regarding the activity of eparchies and their members in Kazakhstan.

With the proselytism activity, the construction of churches in the southern part of Kazakhstan began in the 80s of the nineteenth century and 1901 in Syrdarya region, there already were eight temples. In 1881, the decree of Holy Synod of Russian Orthodox Church, according to Reverend Peter the name of the Bishop of Tomsk and Semipalatinsk, the opening of Kyrgyz Mission was authorized in Semipalatinsk region, with the subordination of its central Altai mission (Mitropolitan District of RK, 2013).

In 1898, the mission had found the center in Semipalatinsk and organized several missionary mills. The activities of priests consisted of trips to the villages (auls) with the preaching of Gospel in the Kazakh language, the construction of mission churches, the dispensation of schools for children, teaching that was carried out in the Kazakh and

Russian languages. Kyrgyz Mission Active work continued until 1917 when the atheistic government stopped it.

A unique role in the life of the Orthodox Church in Central Asia was destined to play monasticism. Three monasteries were formed in Turkestan Diocese: Holy Trinity Monastery on the shore of Lake Issyk-Kul, the St. Nicholas Convent near Tashkent and Verny Seraphim Iver convent. The decision to create a first missionary monastery on the shores of Lake Issyk-Kul was erected in 1881 by the memorandum of Bishop Alexander (Kulchytsky). The monastery was dedicated in honor of Holy Trinity as Bishop Alexander visit to Issyk-Kul coincided with this holiday. At the monastery there was a shelter, which brought 36 boys, orphans. The school was arranged for them. Abode carried out charitable activities, as conducted extensive farming (Mitropolitan District of RK, 2016).

The intense confrontation of the Bolsheviks with the Orthodox Church took place in the earliest periods of the establishment of the Soviet Union. During the next few decades, the Orthodox Church almost entirely was eradicated in Kazakhstan. There were the same processes Islam undergone in the 1920s and 1930s as withdrawal religious communities and religious buildings from the society. Churches, religious schools, pilgrimage and religious festivals were banned. A significant part of religious buildings, especially in rural areas, were turned into buildings for common usage (Musagulova and Arystanbekova, 2016:190),

Actual restoration of the Orthodox life in Kazakhstan according to Abdakimov (1994:156) began in 1945. After World War Two, Metropolitan Nicholas established Almaty diocese and he marked the new stage of the Orthodox Church development in Kazakhstan territories. The activity of the Orthodox Church steadily started to expand. In 1956, 55 parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church operated in Kazakhstan. In consecutive years, the Orthodox Church along with other religions underwent periods of activations and declines. Nevertheless, a genuine revival of the Orthodox Church started after gaining independence. The recognition of freedom of conscience allowed the faithful to return to full-fledged spiritual life.

Today, the Orthodox faith is the second largest religion in Kazakhstan (about 28 percent of the population). By 1 January 2003, the Russian Orthodox Church had 222 parishes

in the Republic (the number for 1989 was 62) and eight monasteries. In 1991, they were divided into three eparchies (Almaty and Semipalatinsk, Shymkent, and the Urals) by a decision of the Holy Synod. In 1999, the Almaty and Semipalatinsk eparchies were transformed into the Astana and Almaty eparchy; the first also was included the Christian Orthodox structures of Astana, the new capital of Kazakhstan. For a long time, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexei II (is the official title of the primate of the Russian Orthodox Church. It is often preceded by the honorific “His Holiness”) refused to unite the Orthodox Churches into the single Kazakhstani Exarchate. In 1995, he visited the Republic; it was as late as May 2003 when the Holy Synod passed a decision about a Metropolitan See in Kazakhstan; Metropolitan Methodius (Nemtsov) was appointed as its head.

### **2.3. History Of Catholicism In Kazakhstan**

New religions spread in Kazakh steppes, which came with the settlers and refugees of Tsarist Russia. Exiled Poles constituted the majority of the Catholic population of Northern Kazakhstan. At that time “Pole” and “Catholic” were virtually synonymous. At the turn of XIX and XX centuries, there were several settlements of German immigrants-Catholics in Kazakhstan. According to some reports, the Catholic parishes of northwestern Kazakhstan were part of the established in 1848, the Diocese of Tiraspol, with its center in the city of Saratov. More than 10000 exiles were placed in Western Siberia after the Polish uprising of 1863-1864. The record from Archives has lists of people, expelled from Poland for participation in rebellion in 1863. Among the deportees to Kazakhstan were sent the priests who have received relatively lenient sentences for lack of evidence. Since 1898 in the regional center, there was Omsk Roman-Catholic charity that focused on assisting the Catholic population of the steppe region. The purpose of the society was to improve material and moral conditions of Catholic poor. The charity provided people with reading rooms, libraries, open schools, canteens, lodging houses, dormitories, homes, hospitals, and other facilities (Aldan, 2006: 233-234).

During the First World War, a considerable number of prisoners of war and refugees who were Catholics arrived in Kazakhstan. Some Catholic parishes in Kazakhstan were quite numerous at that time. In his extensive study, Tserokh (2005:185) exposes

relevant data on the past events on real numbers of believers settled in Kazakhstan's steppes.

The revitalization of Catholic parishes occurred after the Edict of Toleration of Nikolay II on April 17, 1905, according to which Catholic Church was equalized partially in rights with the Orthodox and no longer needed the permission from Orthodox Church to open new parishes. Since 1915-1916 in the steppe, it was possible to send clergy to remote areas and meet religious needs of believers.

After October 1917, Catholic Church along with other religions has experienced the most severe persecution. There was the almost complete destruction of the Catholic Church and its administrative structures in USSR. The surviving priests were sent to labor camps and exile.

The Stalinist repressions also known as the Great Purge (1936-1938) has led to the exile of a vast number of Catholics, mostly Germans, Ukrainians and Poles by nationality to Kazakhstan and camps where many of them died. Many of the priests who have served their sentence in camps after their release continued to serve in local Catholics in Kazakhstan. In 1958-1959, there were first attempts to register a parish in Tselinograd: the faithful bought a house and gathered all the necessary documents, but the initiator was accused falsely of bribing officials. He was arrested, the house confiscated.

The victory came in 1977 in the form of an official registration and permission to build a church. The church was completed in 1978. It was as late as 1979 that the community registered itself, bought premises and converted them into a church. There are many more examples.

Dynamics of the Number of Registered Catholic Churches in Kazakhstan:

**Table 3**

Year	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1982	1984	1990
Number Of Communities	1	1	2	7	9	11	18	35	42

**Source:** The Catholic Church In Kazakhstan, 2001, p.3.



In 1998, during the official visit of the Head of the State Nursultan Nazarbayev to the Vatican was made the Relationship Agreement between Kazakhstan and the Holy See, signed on 24 September 1998.

Kazakhstan has the Catholic Church province (Archdiocese), the center of which is the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Maria Santissima in Astana. There are 88 Catholic communities functioning, five of which are branches of the Greek Catholic Church of Kazakhstan (MRACS RK, 2016).

#### **2.4. History Of Protestantism In Kazakhstan**

Besides Islam, in the steppe spread new religion, which came with the settlers and refugees of Tsarist Russia? Few records were found in archives about precise numbers of Protestants who arrived into the steppes before the twentieth century. First Baptist preachers appeared in Kazakhstan in the late XIX century. Kazakhstan's Baptists differed from Lutherans and Mennonites by initial orientation to Slavic population, following causing extreme dissatisfaction to representatives of Orthodox clergy.

Records about Mennonites appeared first in the second half of the XIX century in the province. The Governor-General Kaufman paid particular attention to the involvement of Mennonites in the south of Kazakhstan starting from the 1870s. The Tsarist administration believed that the Mennonites were able to raise the economy of the border regions quickly, to create efficient agriculture (Mandryk, 2010:978). By the end of the XIX major Mennonite settlements existed near Pavlodar Aulie-Ata and other places.

Adventists came to the Kazakhstan in the first years of the XX century. Till 1902 Adventist community operated in Ust-Kamenogorsk, Semey, Rozhdestvenka village of Akmola region, and in Kostanai region (Ivanov and Trofimov, 1999: 123-142).

With the formation of the Protestant population began to appear the first forms of elementary education of children: home schooling, occupation pastors confirmatory during the detours of their parishes, Church schools. On the territory of Akmola region, actively opening schools occurred in 1909-1911, some schools were opened in Pavlodar, Petropavlovsk, Akmolinsk districts. In October 1910, he began a private Mennonite school in Petropavlovsk. The classes began to visit the 12 children. By the

beginning of the 1915-1916 academic year on the territory of the Steppe existed 34 German schools is approved by the Trustee of the school district, including in Pavlodar province - 10, and 9 Lutheran-Mennonite schools (Trofimov, 2003:6).

As every religious denomination in the early Soviet Union period, Protestantism experienced cruel eradication. The establishment of Soviet Union caused the outbreak of large-scale atheist campaign 1917. In the case of Protestants, in her research "Religious organizations of Kazakhstan" Shlymova et. al (2013:111) stated the fact of the early years of the Soviet regime (1921-28), Kazakhstan Protestants suffered massive repression. During the period of repressions, only three pastors of the Lutheran Church survived of almost two thousand pastors.

Nevertheless, certain loosening of strict control in respect of faith began only in years of Second World War. A continuous renewal of religious life in the Baptist community could be observed since the late 40s. Most Baptists were Germans. After easing policy against unwanted people and religions - from the mid-50s in the country were formed a community of Lutheran Church, Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Adventists, Mennonites. For a long time, they forced to act illegally. The first congregation of Lutheran Church was registered in Akmolinsk (now Astana) in 1955. The authorities are extremely reluctant to register religious groups. However, their numbers were steadily increasing. Since 1961, part of Baptist congregations has joined Union of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.

Most of the Mennonite communities in the middle of the XX century entered All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. Nevertheless, the first autonomous Mennonite church with 700 believers was registered officially in 1970. By the time of the collapse of the USSR, 109 communities of Evangelical Christians-Baptists were recorded in Kazakhstan, which was two times more than some Muslim mosque (Dzhunusbayeva, 2015:2).

In the 1990s after the Soviet Union collapsed, there was growing of religious movements, and many denominations arrived from different countries to preach their faith. Union Baptist Church of Kazakhstan was established in October 1992 at the Founding Congress of Baptist Churches in the city of Almaty. Previously, Kazakhstan's Baptist Church was a member of AUCECB (All-Union Council of Evangelical

Christians-Baptists) with the center in Moscow, which united many of the former Soviet Union Baptist Church.

The number of Lutherans in Kazakhstan is declining; in the past, it was popular mainly among the local German population the numerical strength of which is also going down due to objective reasons. By 1 January 1993, there were 152 Lutheran communities in the Republic and by 1 January 2003, there were only 100 of them. Three main Lutheran trends are present in the Republic: the Evangelical Church headed by a bishop: the Lutheran Brotherhood and independent Lutheran communities without a central administration: the followers of the Synod of Missouri. The latter officially registered their center in 1998; it has branches in Almaty and several regions; it disseminates religious literature in German, English, and Russian and extends material and spiritual support to the Lutheran community Shlymova et. al (2013:111).

In the compendium on the process of religious expertise in Kazakhstan, Danilenko (2009:120) gives the following data on the groups of Protestants in Kazakhstan. According to official numbers, the largest Protestant religious unity is Evangelical Christians-Baptists with 105 organizations. Among them, there are centralized structures as Churches of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists with only 68 organizations and 27 independent Baptist churches function autonomously. The greatest number of Evangelical Christians-Baptists presented in Almaty Oblast with 24 organizations, Almaty with 15 organizations, South Kazakhstan with 13 organizations and in Karaganda regions with 53 organizations.

Also, New Protestant Movements arose in the early 1990s and gave rise to an enormous group of charismatic churches. They grow by representatives of the people for whom Protestantism is not a traditional religion. As a result, as of 1 January 2011, the number of Pentecostal churches reached 97, Presbyterian - 239, charismatic – 306 (Shlymova et. al, 2013:121).

Protestant associations maintain close links with coreligionists abroad and receive humanitarian aid. They actively organize various international conferences, festivals, meetings, work with young people and other groups. Thus, Protestantism in Kazakhstan includes both denominations have a long history (Lutherans, Mennonites, Baptists and

others), as well as new, non-traditional communities, primarily representing Pentecostal, Presbyterian, and charismatic flow.

### **3. History Of Judaism In Kazakhstan**

Some archeological records about Jew religious communities in the territory of Kazakhstan referred to a small number of Jewish synagogues, which were found along Silk Way in the pre-Medieval period (Esim et al., 2007:79). Because of unstable political and religious situation in Central Asia, little known about Jew settlers or believers in the steppes.

Likewise, other religious groups, Jews arrived in the steppes with Russian settlers long before the 1940s when thousands of Jews families were exiled to Central Asia. In his report about Jewish history in Kazakhstan Praisman (2005) mentions the existence of resources about first arrivals referred to Jewish settlers in the city of Verny (Almaty today) after giving the fortress town status in 1867. By the end of 1870 in Verny was formed Jewish community of the town. On the territory of Kazakhstan settled only those Jews who had the right to live outside of sedentary settlements. There were many doctors among the Jews who lived in the territory of Kazakhstan in the early XX century; also pharmacists, owners of industrial and commercial enterprises.

Synagogues working in Almaty, Shymkent, Turkestan, Kyzyl-Orda in Soviet times remained legal. The Jewish population has increased both due to young people coming from small towns to participate five-year plans and due to a large number of political exiles sent to Kazakhstan between the 20s and 30s of XX century (EAJC, 2016).

Oreck (2016) mentions in his study about approximately 8,500 Holocaust-fleeing Jews settlers who were exiled during World War II to Kazakhstan. The first synagogue in Kazakhstan appeared before the revolution, the oldest of which is preserved in Semipalatinsk. At present, there are synagogues in the cities of Astana, Almaty, Aktobe, Petropavlovsk, Pavlodar and others.

The religious life of Jewish community was rehabilitated after obtaining independence. Since 1996, Yeshayah Cohen became the Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan. In Kazakhstan published the newspaper “Shalom” founded by the Jewish Congress of Kazakhstan since 2002.

Researcher of the religious life of Kazakhstan’s denominations Trofimov (2003:7)

remarks in the last few decades there was the outflow of Jews from Kazakhstan to Israel. Nevertheless, despite the outflow of the Jewish population, the number of Judaic communities increased by the end of 2010. Early in 2003, there were Judaic communities practically in all regional centers (before 1998 there were four of them: two in Almaty, one in Shymkent and one in Kzyl-Orda). In 1998, a Jewish cultural center was opened in Almaty. It was named after Menahem Shneerson, the Seventh Lubavitch Rabbi. The synagogue, the first newly built one in the post-Soviet period, is named after his father, Levi Itzhak. At the beginning of 2011, there were 26 Jewish religious associations. According to the re-registration outcomes, today, all Jewish organizations emerged into four local Jewish religious associations.

Today, between approximately 3,300 Jews live in Kazakhstan. They are predominately Russian-speaking and identify with Russian culture. Nearly 2,000 are Bukharian and Tat (Caucasian Mountain Jews). Jewish communities are spread out across this vast country in places such as Karaganda, Chimkent, Astana, Semipalatinsk, Kokchetav, Dzhambul (Chabad in Kazakhstan, 2016).

When it comes to observation of nowadays-religious situation strong influence of Soviet regime is obvious. There is no one dominant religion because the country has been a place of migration and deportation of many peoples with a variety of different religious faiths. Moreover, the intense struggle against religion during the Soviet period has produced a predominantly secularized society (Podoprighora, 2008:10-20). Nevertheless, religion has a strong influence in the country during various periods of its history, and this has resulted in the underdevelopment of religious institutions and state-church relationships.

### CHAPTER 3: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

In recent years, there were outraged debates whether religious education should be a compulsory discrete subject in curriculum. According to observations of studies, different curricula exist in countries, so the content of the subject varies. Therefore, the decision to teach the subject as partly confessional, secular or faith-based is considered by peculiarities of the region of the country or the type of the school (Lähnemann and Schreiner, 2009:4). The dismissive attitude hinders the provision of comprehensive religious education to the subject, which existed as an exceptional case in the modern school system (Dinham and Shaw, 2015:257-260).

Interpretation of secular education as one with anti-religious character is fallacious, and less probably will lead to religious freedom. To set up right starting points, we should give full record what secular and religious education implies. Secular education is free from the pressure of the religious organizations; it does not aim to offer of training ministers of religious worship or to impose any religion for students to follow. Respectively, religious education is based on the certain religious doctrine that includes acquiring knowledge about any religious denomination, religious practice, and culture. It also somehow intends to form personal features of the student. Such education presented by next streams as teaching religion, giving professional education and offering religious-cultural education. The latter does not intend to show the specific knowledge of any denomination or to convert student to follow any religion (Erpay and Jandarbek (2015:4).

In this chapter, we will discuss official and non-official religious education in Kazakhstan. We will focus on nowadays conditions and activity of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Also, religious activity, financial support, and interrelations with the State will be discussed and be given in the context of this study. In this part, we will discuss main stages of the establishment and the development of religious education as the subject and the matter in Kazakhstan's society. Subsequently, official and non-official religious instruction in Kazakhstan, in this study their history, initial points and the process of formation will be considered.

Kazakhstan holds the strict interpretation of secularism, which is also reflected in school instruction. "Secularity and Basics of Religious Studies" subject is taught only for one



year, in grade 9th. The Ministry did not make any comment on the extension of tuition period. School education plays a crucial role in promoting a climate of religious tolerance. The matter of the subject "Religious Studies" in universities is the systematic study of religion as part of culture. It is outlined to familiarize students with the diversity of beliefs and cultural traditions in the past and the modern world. The importance of religious education that scientific and religious knowledge provides an opportunity to obtain reliable information about religious organizations of Kazakhstan and their activity. Moreover, this subject's aim is actual discussion and the implement of non-confessional approach in teaching about religion's role in society (Smagulov, 2015).

As distinct from the world, Post-Soviet Union countries in the early 1990s experienced. Therefore, the formation of religious instruction in Kazakhstan lacks consistent and continuous character. In fact, with time overlooked religious education leads to the dangerous consequences (MES RK, 2010).

Nevertheless, in Kazakhstan, as it stated in studies, all the problems have roots in the scarcity of researchers and fundamental works in the religious study of the whole (Erpay and Jandarbek, 2015:34-35). Such appalling situation challenges the competence of Kazakhstan's educational system to deal with increasing influence of religion on society. There are difficulties as the importance competence of teachers in lower secondary schools, inferring the "Secularity and Basics of Religious Studies" (SBRS) subject in the curriculum, its modification of resources and textbooks implementation of holistic approaches, which need thoughtful consideration.

### **1. Formal Religious Education**

From the first days of independence, uncontrolled religious education was opened to all comers in a significant number of private and missionary activities. In the light of recent socio-cultural changes and realities, Kazakhstan's Government recognized the necessity of institutions to regulate the relationship and collaboration between religion and public society. Therefore, as it stated, one of the observers Lebedev (2013:3) teaching religion became a critical point, which caused numerous questions in Kazakhstan's society. Even though citizens of Kazakhstan are acutely aware of the significance of religious literacy, but the process of solving the problem still does not meet satisfactory level

(Nadirova et al., 2015:4)

Only now Kazakhstan specialists work on gaining experience, shaping legal and normative base which will allow stable interaction between educational system and religion (Smagulov, 2015), which would mold a healthy religious outlook of pupils and prevent inconsistencies in curricula. Moreover, the openness of education administration to the development of SBRS subject enables the formation of a broader framework of studies and analyses. Despite the implementation of final draft on National Instruction on the SBRS subject in 2015 (Myrzayev, 2015), curricula reforms need constant revision and renewal of resources.

### **1.1. Religious Education in Public Schools**

In Kazakhstan, the process of implementation SBRS subject in school system was initiated in 2009 (the course was piloted for the second consecutive year), and it showed the high demand for in-depth study and appropriate adjustments regarding the development of the educational policy. In Kazakhstan since 2011, educational administrations include SBRS subject as a compulsory discrete subject in schools and as optional in universities. As for today, the subject of “Secularity and Basics of Religious Studies” in public schools is taught by teachers of social sciences (history, cultural studies, and basics of law).

Moreover, the pluralistic approach of teaching demands comprehensive and objective works in teaching religion help students understand the history of world religions and promote peaceful co-existence (Barabanov and Grigorenko, 2013:92-96). The topic of religion appears to meet with high interest from students curious to learn more about other people believes. The SBRS takes place within the premises of schools and does not include visiting places of devotion or religious sites.

### **1.2. Curriculum and Textbooks for Religious Education**

Another important aspect of teaching religion is writing of an appropriate textbook for students. The writing and of new textbooks is one of the fundamental issues in religious education in Kazakhstan since there was no practice of preparing materials in this field by present instructors and educators. As Rymarz and Engebretson (2005:59) sum up in their study about the importance of the textbook in teaching religion: An excellent

religious education textbook can certainly help to improve the work of less qualified and experienced teachers; it cannot substitute for academic knowledge, experience, and teaching expertise. After the two-year pilot experiment in 2011, the Government officially put Religious Education under control and started to manage curriculum and allocation processes. Due to the ambiguity of the subject learning about religions and specialty there were contentious debates within specialists, educational agencies on the societal level and within academic circles in Kazakhstan. Many other problems as lack of examined methodology, lack of a clear consensus or the large variety of irrelevant textbooks, etc. severely hinder the improvement of the overall development of religious instruction in public schools.

As Erpay and Jandarbek (2015:7) stress in their research there were many attempts on the part of different writers to offer an appropriate book for schools. Writers as Dosym Omarov or Artur Artemiev offered books about the history of religions, which eventually were rejected after examinations due to the non-objectivity of religious knowledge, and lack of non-confessional perspectives.

In January 2010, the first textbook “Secularity and Basics of Religious Studies” with the leader author G. Esim, was introduced to schools. At that time, it was the only textbook available to provide teaching the “Secularity and Basics of Religious Studies” subject. Eventually, Ministry of Education and Science after examination refused to accept the textbook. The failure of the former manual presented by G. Esim was caused by many reasons. The main problem of the textbook was its objectivity – it supposed to inform 9th-grade students different world religions in a neutral way but the chapter on “New Religious Movements” – the textbook had slightly deviate tone. Instead of assuming a warning for pupils, this section was interpreted as overly alerting and nontraditional.

According to Myrzayev (2015) textbooks prepared by of D. Kenzhetay (officially approved as academician responsible for SBRS subject textbooks) will be used for teaching in 2016-2017 academic years. In comparison with G. Esim's textbook, the new textbook has some advantages. There were presented exact notes concerning materials allowed learners to form proper religious outlook. Therefore, National Instruction on the SBRS subject in schools started the second phase of implementation in September 2016 with newly introduced Curriculum. The Ministry is responsible for creating National

Curriculum, which all public schools are obliged to follow. Nevertheless, some corrections and suggestions might be accepted from the Office of Education of each oblast (administrative division). Secondary education is the responsibility of oblast and district administrators.

“Secularity and Basics of Religious Studies covers the range of topics and knowledge. In the teaching of the subject, the non-confessional approach was approved as compulsory according to the Decree of the Ministry. The SBRS is focused on giving students a systematic knowledge of the importance of religion, its history and role in the society; forming an idea of religion from the position of secularism; teaching tolerance skills in the comparing of the basics of different religious faiths and religious knowledge; explaining to students the meanings of world outlook, cultural and moral religions. Approximately 8 hours are dedicated to forming the healthy religious perspective of students; the rest is distributed between teaching world religions, new religious movements and religious situation in Kazakhstan. The course is aimed to provide adequate and profound knowledge about beliefs, rituals, holy leaders, places, moral values, etc. in the past and nowadays of every world religion as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism (MES RK, 2010). More hours were allocated for Islamic culture and influence of Islam on Kazakh philosophers and Kazakh history. The non-confessional approach in teaching and curriculum are meant to reflect the reality of Kazakhstan and its religious peculiarities.

Finally, National Instruction on this subject in schools started the second phase of implementation in September 2016 with newly presented Curriculum. Accordingly, the exhortation of religion has the influence on the formation of the religious culture of youth, and it is required to perform the following tasks:

- Individual electronic textbooks and manuals in the Kazakh language are to be prepared under the control of the Religious Affairs Committee for educational purposes;

- The basis of religion along with national traditions and spiritual heritage will be explained for students;

- The cultural knowledge of students are to strengthen by parallel explanation of relevant concepts;

- The interrelationship between the State, family, and society that related to religious education and religious culture will be taught youth and adults;

- Students to gain reasonable comprehension of religious diversity will be informed and explained about traditional and non-traditional religions (MES RK, 2010).

### **1.3. Teacher Training for Religious Education**

For a long time, there was no appropriate institution responsible for religious education in Kazakhstan in the 1990s, besides “*Ahmet Yesevi University*” which started teaching “Religion and Freedom of Thought” program in 1991. Starting from 1999 in “*Al-Farabi Kazakh National University*” and from 2002 in “*Eurasian National University*” prepared religion experts in the sphere of world religions. In 2002, “*Buketov Karaganda State University*” also offered courses in Religious Studies for both bachelor and master programs. In universities for students, the course was offered as a main course (Religious Studies) or elective course (History of Religions, World Religions, etc.). There were attempts to implement a broad range of classes to prepare specialists in the different field. Nevertheless, due to lack of Teaching Staff and materials, these attempts failed in a short term. Today in six universities there is only “Religious Studies” course, and two of universities offer “Theology” course for students (Kartabayeva, Soltyeva, and Beisegulova, 2015:292-294).

There are only six universities, which approved officially to provide religious education and offer appropriate secular religious education: there are “*Eurasian National University*” and “*Kazakh National University*”, “*Karaganda State University*”, and “*Kazakh-Turkish University*”, which mutually operates in Kazakhstan and Turkey; two private universities “*Nur-Mubarak Egyptian University of Islamic Culture*” and “*The University of Foreign Languages and Professional Career*”<sup>3</sup>.

In their study Kartabayeva, Soltyeva and Beisegulova (2015:292-294) emphasized the importance of religious education, which a new subject for Kazakhstan and the fundamental problem of the subject arises from the fact that university courses mostly focused on research rather than pedagogical aspects of "Religious Studies" course. Due

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<sup>3</sup> Indeed, all universities in Kazakhstan under the State control, some of them might have title of National or State.

to a poor initial presentation of the subject and the ambiguity of the definition of specialty prospective students were deterred from choosing "Religious Studies". According to official numbers annually, there are only 530 graduate students in Kazakhstan.

However, there was neither standardized religious education training for teachers nor unified curriculum for public schools until 2011 in Kazakhstan. Also, only couple years ago "*Ahmet Yesevi University*" and "*Al-Farabi University*" offered courses for teachers of religious education that would prepare qualified teachers for public schools to provide appropriate comprehension of religious diversity for pupils. Aitaly (2013:202-205) emphasized in his analysis of the issue that the teacher does not propagate religion but analyzes it. The teacher's task is to familiarize students with different approaches and positions, and at the same time teacher supposed not to act controversy with representatives of theology and atheism; a teacher should cherish the feelings of both believers and non-believing students; a teacher should contribute to the outlook of students concerning religion. The implementation of this subject will help a teacher to avoid the formation of dogmatic and authoritarian tendencies in Kazakhstan.

Most of the problems have rooted from the scarcity of research and theoretical works in the religious studies of the whole. Scrutiny in selecting materials regarding SBRS textbooks is essential and always requires careful study. Therefore, to provide appropriate religious education, yet having inextricable difficulties and lack of Teaching Staff at schools, it is crucial to concentrate on preparing comprehensive textbooks. Thus, such appalling situation challenges the competence of Kazakhstan's educational system to deal with the increasing influence of religion on society.

In contrast, other researchers denote professional training teachers of SBRS above all the challenges (Duisembekova, 2013:564; Kartabayeva, Soltyeva and Beisegulova 2015:293). This resulted in the shortage of SBRS teachers, whose social needs should be fulfilled. The minimum of working hours hinders professionals who hold a diploma in this field from starting a career at the school. Since the subject is taught once per week (one hour) there are 34 hours allotted to the "Secularity and Basics of Religious Studies". Respectively, even a teacher (graduated with "Religious Studies" diploma) who has 2-3 year experience receives a monthly salary of 55.000 tenges. Annually the



number of graduate students hardly reaches 550, and respectively alumni prefer to enroll to better-paid structures as prisons, ministries, intelligence agencies.

The SBRS teachers training, as one of the most crucial points, still endangers various discussions and controversies among scholars and observers (Lebedev, 2013:6; Smagulov, 2011:64; Erpay and Jandarbek, 2015:4). Initial and in-service training activity of SBRS teachers demands operative actions from education administrators (Smagulov, 2011:61). Current teachers, in fact, have difficulties in overcoming a cursory view of subject (since teaching about religion is an unprecedented phenomenon for them individually), understanding the religious background of pupils, assessing their previous knowledge and experience, and relating all of it to study materials and techniques for depth-analysis and estimation on students' performance.

The Offices of Education in each administrative division organize workshops and seminars to support teachers to widen their knowledge and share experience in teaching religious education and presentation of educational materials. Moreover, the State universities entirely try to assist teachers to expand their knowledge on religion and on appropriate techniques of teaching religion. Smagulov (2015) in his study mentioned the workshops organized with the support of "Center of Religious Studies" of Astana are significantly contributed to the lack of professional training.

Therefore, Kazakhstan educational system undergoes many complicated processes related to religious education. Problems mentioned above determine researchers to go deeper into the study of interrelations between religion and education.

## **2. Non-Formal Religious Education**

As for religious education, only spiritual centers have the right to create educational institutions. The state bans religious groups to teach religion in public schools. Homeschooling is allowed only in certain circumstances as parenting a child with special needs. Parents may enlist children in supplemental religious education schools regulated by registered religious organizations. State law recognizes the existence and rightful position of such schools only in the case when schools obtain an appropriate license from the MES RK (2011).

Only a few of numerous religious, educational institutions have licenses because of the very strict requirements for most religious units: the group must own a building, medical and food facilities, and receive a favourable recommendation from MRACS RK. The state bodies do not welcome unlicensed religious, educational activity, as well as other forms of private religious education such as Sunday schools.

As Achilov and Shaykhutdinov (2011:3-5) put in his extensive research about Islamic education in Central Asia permissive state regulation of religion and religious education may be crucial and right strategic policy to sustain transitional stages of religious education in Kazakhstan.

Non-formal educational institutions in Kazakhstan consist a substantial part of the school system. Currently, in the country, there are only 15 religious, educational institutions: two Christian (Orthodox Theological Seminary in Almaty and Catholic Seminary of Mary, Mother of the Church) and 13 Islamic educational institutions (9 madrasas which maintained college status, 2 High Schools, and two educational centers). As for 2013, the total number of introductory courses and Sunday schools was 397 (334 of them are Islamic, 44 of Orthodox, 15 of Protestant, and 4 Catholic schools). Unlike National Universities, these educational institutions offer the confessional approach to learning religion. Only four of them are obtained status of official Universities: "Orthodox Theological Seminary" in Almaty and "Catholic Seminary of Mary, Mother of the Church", "Nur-Mubarak Egyptian University of Islamic Culture" controlled by Ministry for Religious and Civil Society Affairs and "Higher Education Islamic Institution" controlled by DUMK (MRACS, 2013).

### **3. Islamic Institutions**

Considering the highest prevalence of Islam, it is logical to expect us to focus more on Islamic education and its features. In 1990s, DUMK founded "Higher Education Islamic Institution" with a two-year education in Almaty, which distributed imams in mosques of the country. However, official registration of the institution was approved only in 2002. training courses for lower-ranking clergy were held in some mosques. DUMK actively address issues of religious training of highly qualified workers (Qazaqstan mûsîlmandarı dini basqarması, 2017).

*At Higher Education Islamic Institution*, as of January 1, 1997, first-year and second-

year students were learning the basis of Islam and Arabic Language. Note that the training is four years, but the entire 3rd and 4th years students had the practice in mosques. Naturally, at that time a little number of graduate students was insufficient for the high number of mosques. Therefore, many mullahs knew little Arabic, and the Koran was practically not read. The process of learning Koran was limited to scamming surah (International Center Of Cultures And Religions, 2015). One of the consequences of obtaining a religious “independence” was the formation of the first in the history of independent Kazakhstan's DUMK in 1990. Preparing appropriate personnel was the primary challenge to Muftiat. According to reports in Zhambyl Oblast until 1991 the only institution was functioning, which could provide comprehensible education for imams. At that times, Saudi Arabia offered free programs for Salafi Muslims from Kazakhstan. However, this policy without organized implementation brought negative results and led to unfavorable outcomes as lack of skilled clerics, the deficit in well-developed ideology and confession (Nurbayev, 2010:16).

The decision on construction of the institution “Nur-Mubarak” was adopted at the meeting of the two presidents during the visit of President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev to Egypt. As for higher Islamic education, the first official University that offered qualified education was "Nur-Mubarak University” in 2001. July 2, 2003, Agreement on the establishment of the “Egyptian University of Islamic Culture Nur-Mubarak” was ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Also, the University was granted a license of the Ministry of Education and Science. Today, "Nur-Mubarak University" is a school that trains qualified imams, Islamic studies, religious studies, teachers of Arabic language and literature, translators and scientists.

The preparatory program continues for eight months. The majority of subjects in "Islamic Studies" specialty does not relate to religious disciplines (59 out of 129 credits respectively). Among them mandatory - Taharat, Namaz and Fasting conditions (fiqh), Hadith, Zyakat and Hajj, and elective - Legacy, Ethics of Fatwas, Objectives of Islamic philosophy, Modern Tafsir Directions, Religious Sermons, Islamic sects and madhhabs and others. In the program of "Theology" from 129 credits, 60 credits are for religious studies. Among the compulsory subjects mostly the subject, which taught with non-confessional approaches History of Religion, Fundamentals of Religious Law, Modern

non-traditional Religious Movements, Religious Philosophy, Sociology of Religion (Nadirova et al., 2015:5).

Kazakhstan prepared the state standard on specialty "Islamic Studies" and in June 2011, it was officially introduced in the classifier of Higher and Postgraduate Education Specialties of the country. It is believed by Kazakh authorities the approach makes it possible for Islam on the ideological level, to prevent and neutralize the arguments based on generating manifestations of religious radicalism. At the same time, Islam in Kazakhstan is recognized as the body, which has "an increasing role in the consolidation of society", which development is liable due to the full support of political power.

In the 1990s three madrassas of 9 ("Ushkonyr," "Shymkent," "Saryagash", etc.) received the status of the college. Today all of them recognized as official colleges. Today, there are nine madrasas in various provinces registered with the MES RK and DUMK. Madrasas operate in Astana, Chimkent, Almaty, Oral, Pavlodar, Aktöbe, Shamalgan, Saryagash, Taraz. The main aim of establishing madrasas was only to train religious officials. In 2007, "Astana Madrasah" was opened in Kazakhstan's capital city Astana and "Shymkent Madrasa" was opened in Shymkent city. Also in 2008, "Damalgan Madrasa" in Almaty city, "Oral Madrasa" in Oral city, "Ebu Bekir Syddyk Madrasa" in Pavlodar city and "Aktöbe Madrasa" in Aktöbe city were established; in 2009 "Abu Hanifa Madrasah" in the city of Almaty, "Saryagash Madrasa" in the town of Shirkent city. All madrasas have permits to conduct religious education. The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan registered Madrasas in 2012 as final decision to give madrasas official status of educational places, which became equal to vocational education.

The teaching process and curriculum are carried out by the laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The teaching is conducted by specialists from Turkey, and universities, which offer theological education in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The Madrasa College, along with religious subjects also teaches secular subjects. Students who have graduated from the Madrasa College may work not only in religion but also in the public sphere. These vocational schools are similar to Turkish Imam Hatip Schools (Kalkaman, 2011:191).

#### **4. Orthodox Institutions**

According to Trofimov (2003:6), Almaty Orthodox Theological Seminary was established as the higher religious education institution for training clergy, choir directors and psalmists to the parishes of the Orthodox Church of Kazakhstan. The history of the seminary started in 1991 when the decision of the Holy Synod on January 29 in Almaty opened the Diocesan Seminary. Initially, the school was located at Holy Nicholas Cathedral, Almaty, and in the beginning assumed only a two-year training period.

From 2001 until 2010, the Seminary had the status of Academy. Lately, the first entrance exams in the newly established Seminary were held on September 2010. In the first year of full-time and correspondence department of thirty-eight students were admitted from different cities and dioceses of the Orthodox Church of Kazakhstan. Lately, the term of study at the seminary on the pastoral office has changed, and educational tuition was extended up to 5 years (preparatory course + 4-year bachelor).

As Rysbekova (2015:212) acknowledges in her study of the Orthodox Church in Kazakhstan, educational programs combine undergraduate subjects approved by the Training Committee of the Russian Orthodox Church and discipline taught-specific educational standards of the Republic of Kazakhstan. During the entire period of study, students study the main body of theological sciences, including Doctrinal Discipline, Biblical Studies, Church History, Ancient and Modern Languages.

Seminary Students regularly participate in all Kazakhstan and diocesan projects. Also, Seminary actively cooperates with the religious educational institutions of Russia.

Males, aged 17 to 35 years, the Orthodox faith, bachelor, or who are in the first marriage, and have a general upper secondary education are allowed to start the school. On Regency branch, female students also are accepted who are orthodox with high school and skill of church singing. The reference from the priest is required for admission to the seminary (Mitropolitan Distrift, 2016).

#### **5. Catholic Institutions**

In 1991, in Karaganda was established an official center of “Apostol Administration of Kazakhstan and Central Asia” which had the responsibility of all Central Asian

countries which had Catholic believers. Catholic Churches of Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan were controlled from Karaganda. In 2015 the construction of the Main Church in Karaganda was completed. It is one of the largest dioceses of Kazakhstan. With time Karaganda is becoming the religious and cultural center of the Catholic Church of Kazakhstan. “Theological Seminary Mary - Mother of the Church” in Karaganda is so far the only institution in the whole of Central Asia.

However, the official date of the birth of educational center was July 16, 1998, when his Holiness John Paul Lenga inaugurated the seminary, entrusting it under a special maternal care Virgin Mary - Mother of the Church (Muratbayev et. al, 2015:19-22). A full course of studies in the seminary lasts six years. The study is organized as follows: 4 years of Theology, two years of Philosophy (graduated school), and another year of the practice in example course (elective course), during which the seminarians more intimately acquainted with the life of the community and the activities of parish priests. The primary objective of the course is to give the candidates a human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation to prepare worthy ministers of the Church by the norms of Vatican II Ecumenical Council and the instructions of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. Educational programs combine undergraduate subjects approved by the Training Committee of the Catholic Church and discipline taught-specific educational standards of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Seminary offers the next courses as Liturgy, Bible Studies, History of Catholic Church and Theology (The Catholic Church In Karaganda, 2017).

## **6. Protestant Institutions And Other Religions Or Religious Movements' Institutions**

Protestant and New Protestant movements do not have any official religion establishments in the level of higher education. Religious organizations conduct Sunday schools in the body of The Union of Baptist Churches of Kazakhstan or their parishes. "Grace", "New Life", "Agape" and "Bethlehem" communities have played a major role in conducting active missionary activities by Evangelist Christians since 1990 in Kazakhstan. Along with charitable work, new Protestant religious groups were opening educational centers, which were also focused on converting Kazakh children. As parts



of missionary activities there were offering free English courses. Educators were using widely biblical texts and translation of religious books as learning materials. For example, – the book “Kazaq Isa Çoban” was used in courses to teach children in Kazakh language about Jesus Christ (Shlymova et. al, 2013:116).

As Danilenko (2009:121-122) stated in his extensive research, Union of Baptist Churches of Kazakhstan was established in October 1992 at the Founding Congress of Baptist Churches in the city of Almaty up to nowadays functioned as official Institution which responsible for Pedagogy and Methodology of Christian education. Union Baptist Church of Kazakhstan was organized to coordinate, to assist the churches in matters of missionary work, spiritual education, publications, and acquisition of religious literature, social service; as an aid in issues of spiritual care for the representation to external and society. The Department of Pedagogy and methodology of elementary Christian Education - if there is a need to improve the level of teaching the Bible to children or teenagers - is ready to help. The education at faculties allows students to gain the knowledge and develop skills in the following areas.

According to recent reports, despite the strict constraints cast by State, The Union of Baptist Churches of Kazakhstan managed to register the educational institution, which still in demand to comply educational standards of the Republic of Kazakhstan since it has no official accreditation. Maksim Maksimov was the founder of the church named “New Life” in 1991 and opened the Bible High School. Nearly 5000 students were studying here. Students who finish Bible high school could work in Churches. Today basic theological subjects are taught at “*Bible High School*” (Библейский Институт): Overview of Old and New Testament, Dogmatic, History of Christianity, Counseling, Psalms, Acts of the Apostles, Christian ethics, principles of the gospel. All departments of Institute are working in part-time courses. Students must arrive at the Institute 4 times a year, musicians three times a year or for a 2-week session. So, the program allows students to complete the course of training on the job in the service of the Church and production. Terms of training on the training received brothers and sisters (All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, 2017).

Other less populous religious organizations also lead Sunday Schools in their parishes. For example, there are few Judaic schools and educational centers as “Ohel Levi

Yizkhok” or “Or Avner”, which provide youth programs and teach basics of Jewish belief. There are some religious, educational programs in other religious organizations, which give people historical details and knowledge about their beliefs. For instance, the Society for Krishna Consciousness provides “Foundation” program to learn basics of sacral texts (MRACS RK, 2017).



## CONCLUSION

This research attempted to examine religious education activities in Kazakhstan. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and independence, Kazakhstan took very serious steps in political, social, religious, cultural and economic fields in a short time. Despite significant improvements in educational sphere, that the improvement in religious education and teaching have not experienced much development.

After accepting the constitutional provisions, the Republic of Kazakhstan declared that the political rights and the administration in the country are in its possession and declared the political independence of the democratic state by determining the domestic and foreign policy. Kazakhstan has one of the advanced economic position in Central Asia. Kazakhstan exports energy resources such as petroleum, natural gas and coal. It can be said that Kazakhstan is also highly developed in agriculture and animal farming. Considerable changes in the social structure of Kazakhstan as well as the demographic structure were experienced over the last three decades. In the beginning extreme outflow was observed in 1990s, nevertheless, according to the latest data the population of republic grows steadily and has reached 18 million in 2017.

Religion in Kazakhstan is an important factor influencing and directing the morality, history, political, social and cultural structure of a society. Today, over 120 ethnic groups live in Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, ethnic groups live peacefully in the country, thus, interfaith relations are harmonized and supported by citizens.

Due to historical and political events of the few four hundred years, religion in Kazakhstan takes different and unique form as mental state and traditional customs, which are followed widely by people to nowadays. After examining religious institutions in Kazakhstan, it can be said that religious education emerged after independence. In Kazakhstan, despite the fact that Islam is not a religion of state, it has been observed that there is a significant increase in the number of places reserved for worship by Muslim people. There are also many religious schools and courses for Christians, Jewish, Korean, and for many other ethnic and religious groups.

In 1990s Kazakhstan issued new laws on freedom of religion and conscience. The concepts of religion and religious institutions have been given new rights in world

standards, taking into consideration the principle of secularism. In Kazakhstan Religious Renaissance brought different religious cults and movements, including Islamic radical groups as Salafism, Hizbu't-tahrir, which imposed political threat on the State. Considering growing activity of religious associations, many effective attempts were taken in order to stabilize the situation in Kazakhstan. In 2016 the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society was established which is to regulate religious activity in the State.

With the passage of time, the State decided to emerge widespread religious education in the society to provide the citizens with appropriate knowledge about religions presented in Kazakhstan. Besides non-formal religious education, which is organized by DUMK, ROC and other religious associations, in 2009 the Ministry Of Culture And Sports launched the SBRS subject in 9<sup>th</sup> grade for two consecutive years to make available religious knowledge for youth. In 2011 the subject obtained compulsory status and widespread campaign on creating curriculum and coping with the teachers' training courses was launched in accordance with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society. It was the need to achieve a religious stability to restore the weakness sourced from historical and political events of new State.

Today, there are six formal universities in Kazakhstan, which offer the courses in Religious Studies or Theology: "Eurasian National University" and "Kazakh National University", "Karaganda State University", "Kazakh-Turkish University", "Nur-Mubarak Egyptian University of Islamic Culture" and "The University of Foreign Languages and Professional Career".

In general, it is possible to say that the religious education in Kazakhstan lack the widespread and organized structure, trained teachers and appropriate materials. Therefore, even the institutions both formal and non-formal, which responsible for providing and revising religious education, need further development, internal changes and revision themselves.

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## APPENDICES

### Education System in Kazakhstan

Education	School/Level	Grade From	Grade To	Age From	Age To	Years	Notes
Primary	Primary School	1	4	6	10	4	Primary education typically begins at age 6-7 and continues four academic years with two sessions (from 8 AM to 12 PM and 1 PM to 5 PM). Since primary schools belong to the State, all of them are protected by the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
Middle	General School, Gymnasium - Middle	5	9	10	15	5	Middle education typically begins at age 10 to 15 and continues five academic years with two sessions (from 8 AM to 12 PM and 1 PM to 5 PM). The State protects and manages middle education according to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
Secondary	Secondary School, Lyceum, Gymnasium	11	12	15	17	2	Certificate/diploma awarded: Attestat o Srednem Obrazovanii (Certificate of Complete Secondary Education)
Vocational	Professional Lyceum, Vocational School	11	12	15	17	2	Certificate/diploma awarded: Diplom o Srednem Spetsialnom Obrazovanii (Diploma of Secondary Vocational Education)
Vocational	Professional College, Vocational School	10	12	15	19	4	Certificate/diploma awarded: Diplom o Srednem Spetsialnom Obrazovanii (Diploma of Secondary Vocational Education)
Tertiary	Diploma of Specialist, Bachelor					4	4 years of study after graduation from Vocational or High School.
Tertiary	Graduate Education, Master's					2	2 years of study after Bachelor's degree program.
Tertiary	PhD, Doctorate (Doktoratura)					3	Kandidat Nauk (Candidate of Sciences) program normally lasts for three years. Doctor Nauk (Doctor of Science) program duration is not fixed (usually from 5 to 15 years). Doctor of Science academic degree is the highest degree awarded after the public defense of a dissertation also considering publications on research work in scientific magazines.

## Results Of The 2009 National Population Census Of The Republic Of Kazakhstan

	<b>Total population</b>	<b>Islam</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	<b>Buddhism</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Non-believers</b>	<b>Refused to specify</b>
Total population	16009597	11239176	4214232	5281	14663	3688	451547	81010
Kazakhs	10096763	9928705	39172	1929	749	1612	98511	26085
Russians	3793764	54277	3476748	1452	730	1011	230935	28611
Uzbeks	456997	452668	1794	34	28	78	1673	722
Ukrainians	333031	3134	302199	108	49	74	24329	3138
Uyghurs	224713	221007	1142	34	33	63	1377	1057
Tatars	204229	162496	20913	47	58	123	16569	4023
Germans	178409	2827	145556	89	66	192	24905	4774
Koreans	100385	5256	49543	211	11446	138	28615	5176
Turks	97015	96172	290	7	6	20	321	199
Azerbaijanis	85292	80864	2139	16	16	24	1586	647
Belarusians	66476	526	59936	25	9	20	5198	762
Dungans	51944	51388	191	4	15	19	179	148
Kurds	38325	37667	203	11	6	9	285	144
Tajiks	36277	35473	331	2	6	30	307	128
Poles	34057	235	30675	14	4	45	2486	598
Chechens	31431	29448	940	6	3	16	653	365
Kyrgyz	23274	22500	206	6	6	4	352	200
Other ethnic groups	157215	54533	82254	1286	1433	210	13266	4233

## Типовая учебная программа по курсу «Светскость и основы религиоведения» для 9 класса уровня основного среднего образования

### 1. Пояснительная записка:

1. Учебная программа была разработана в соответствии с государственным общеобязательным стандартом среднего образования (начальное, основное среднее, общее среднее образование), утвержденным постановлением Правительства Республики Казахстан от 23 августа 2012 года № 1080.

2. Суть и значение предмета «Светскость и основы религиоведения» состоят в принятии его как составляющего элемента формирования научно-обоснованных основ обеспечения устойчивого развития и как первоисточника, определяющего исторические, культурные и духовные ценности современного общества. Предмет «Светскость и основы религиоведения» является структурным компонентом социально-гуманитарных и обществоведческих знаний в системе среднего образования.

3. Современная политика Казахстана направлена на укрепление межэтнического, межконфессионального уважения и толерантности между многочисленными этносами и культурами в стране, достижение согласия и дружбы между ними, формирование целостной системы духовно-нравственных ценностей.

4. Знание истории взаимоотношений религии и государства, религии и культуры, религии и цивилизации является проявлением познания духовности многовекового опыта человечества.

5. Известные казахские мыслители - аль-Фараби, Ходжа Ахмет Иасауи, Абай, Ыбырай, Шакарим в своих духовных наследиях, на основе исторического разума и практики, показали роль и место религии в истории государства и всестороннем развитии личности.

6. Цель обучения предмета:

1) довести до обучающихся принцип светскости как ценности и научить принимать его суть как важного фактора стабильности государства, научить изучать и понимать религию на фоне светскости;

2) дать всестороннее знание о свободе совести, об истории и современном состоянии мировых и традиционных религий, о новых религиозных движениях, деструктивных религиозных течениях и запрещенных религиозных организациях;

3) научить учащихся не принимать идеологию экстремизма, терроризма и религиозного радикализма, на основе духовно-нравственных ценностей воспитывать у них чувство толерантности и формировать гуманистическое мировоззрение.

7. Задачи обучения предмета:

1) дать обучающимся системные знания о значении религии, ее истории и роли в обществе;

2) формировать представление о светскости как об основе государственности и независимости, вооружить учащихся знанием в данном направлении;

3) с позиции светскости формировать навыки сравнения основ религиозного сознания, религиозной веры, религиозного познания и религиозного воспитания;

4) разъяснять учащимся значения мировоззренческих, культурных и нравственных религий;

5) формировать навыки уважения свободы совести и навыки светского отношения к религиозным течениям современного общества, прививать основы толерантности;

6) показать межнациональное и межконфессиональное согласие Казахстана в ключе светскости, воспитывать у обучающихся чувство гражданской зрелости и ответственности;

7) разъяснять опасность идеологий религиозного радикализма и глобальных проявлений экстремизма, терроризма для национальной безопасности, для принципов светскости и для

общественной стабильности, воспитывать чувство уважения к положениям светского государства;

8) сформировать у учащихся культуру и навыки критического анализа и оценивания, сравнения материалов религиозной литературы, электронных ресурсов и средств массовой информации;

9) разъяснять важность правовой грамотности в общественной жизни и воспитывать стремление к постоянному ее повышению, воспитывать уважение к правам и свободам человека и граждан Республики Казахстан.

В рамках освоения учебных материалов, предложенных программой, предусмотрено установление принципов преемственности и межпредметной связи с предметами «История Казахстана», «Всемирная история», «Человек. Общество. Право», «История развития межэтнических отношений», «Казахская литература», «Искусство» и курсом «Абайтану».

8. Объем учебной нагрузки: 9 класс - 1 (один) час в неделю, 34 часа в учебном году.

## 2. Базовое содержание учебного предмета:

9. Содержание учебного предмета включает в себя следующие темы:

1) введение: предмет курса «Светскость и основы религиоведения» (1 час);

2) светскость и светское государство: определение понятия, ее значение и характер. Светское государство и религия. Основы светской этики. Принципы светскости в системе образования (3 часа);

3) значение религии, ее определение, социальное предназначение, генезис, классификация. Структура и функции религии. Формирование и развитие науки о религии - религиоведения. Основные религиозные понятия, институты. Религия как духовно-культурный феномен (2 часа);

4) источники и исторические формы религии. Формы древних верований и национальные религии. Религии в Древнем Египте, Греции, Риме. Индуизм. Конфуцианство. Даосизм. Синтоизм. Иудаизм. Танах и Талмуд. Божество. Роль божества в древне-тюркском мировоззрении (3 часа);

5) мировые религии. Буддизм: основы учения, история, практика (опыт) и регионы распространения. Основные направления буддизма (1 час);

6) христианство: основы вероучения, история, практика (опыт) и регионы распространения. Иисус Христос и Евангелие. Основные направления христианства (православие, католицизм, протестантизм). Христианство в современном мире (4 часа);

7) ислам: основы вероучения, история, практика (опыт) и регионы распространения. Пророк Мухаммед. Сакральная книга Коран. Направления в исламе. Основные школы мусульманского права (*мазхабы*). Исторические условия распространения и укоренения в Казахстане ханафитской богословско-правовой школы. Ее связанность с национальной культурой. Школы суфизма. Ислам, наука и культура (5 часов);

8) религии в Казахстане. Ислам в Казахстане: распространение ислама в Казахстане. Религиозная философия Ходжа Ахмета Иасауи (хикметы). Роль ислама в формировании и развитии казахской государственности. Ислам в XX веке и в современном Казахстане. Распространение в Казахстане ханафитских правовых норм и практики (3 часа);

9) распространение христианства в Казахстане. Православная церковь в Казахстане. Католицизм и протестантизм в Казахстане. Культура христианства в Казахстане (2 часа);

10) культура ислама в Казахстане. Исламское архитектурно-монументальное искусство в Казахстане. Памятники исламской рукописной культуры. Философско-просветительские и религиозные взгляды ал-Фараби, Жусупа Баласагуни, Махмуда Кашгари, Ахмета Йугинеки,

Хусам ад-дина Сыгнаки. Богословы XIX-XX вв. Духовное наследие Абая и Шакарима (3 часа);

11) новые религиозные движения. Учение, формы и особенности новых религиозных движений. Дилемма новых религиозных движений и традиционных религиозных систем: познавательные, психологические и бытовые противоречия. Признаки и последствия деятельности деструктивных течений. Запрещенные религиозные объединения. Религиозный экстремизм и терроризм: определение, признаки проявления и последствия. Терроризм - чуждое для религии явление. Опасность религиозного экстремизма и терроризма для национальной безопасности (3 часа);

12) Казахстан - страна межрелигиозного мира и согласия. Религиозное законодательство Республики Казахстан. Светскость - платформа государственной системы и национальной безопасности. Понятие о свободе религиозного вероисповедания. Платформа межрелигиозного согласия и диалога в современном Казахстане (3 часа);

13) политика Президента Республики Казахстан Н.А. Назарбаева по установлению межрелигиозного диалога, мира и согласия в Казахстане и мировом сообществе (1 часа).

### **3. Требования к уровню подготовки учащихся:**

10. Предметные результаты.

По окончании 9-го класса обучающиеся должны знать:

- 1) основные религиозные понятия;
- 2) соотношения между светскими и религиозными понятиями;
- 3) историю религии и особенности вероисповедания;
- 4) специфические черты новых религиозных течений;
- 5) опасности экстремизма и терроризма;
- 6) казахско-мусульманские познавательные мысли;
- 7) взаимоотношения между государством, культурой и религиозными объединениями в республике;

8) политику Президента Республики Казахстан Н.А. Назарбаева по укреплению межконфессионального согласия, сохранению общественной стабильности, проявлению уважительного отношения к истинным религиозным чувствам верующих в стране и мировом сообществе.

11. Личностные результаты.

Обучающиеся должны:

- 1) познать основы межконфессионального уважения и толерантности;
- 2) понять сущность отношений между государством, религиозными объединениями и культурой;
- 3) уметь различать религиозное сознание, религиозную веру, религиозный опыт и религиозную мысль;
- 4) понимать мировоззренческую и познавательную миссию религии и веры в жизни общества;
- 5) познать и уметь объяснять морально-этические ценности религии;
- 6) сознавать опасность идеологий религиозного радикализма и глобальных проявлений экстремизма, терроризма;
- 7) знать особенности проявления нетрадиционных течений экстремистского и террористического характера;
- 8) уметь различать религию и науку, светскость и право, религию и псевдорелигиозные течения.

## 12. Системно-деятельностные результаты.

Обучающиеся должны:

- 1) овладеть важными сведениями и системными знаниями в области религиоведения;
- 2) овладеть культурой и способностями критического анализа информации;
- 3) ориентироваться и уметь анализировать полученную информацию, использовать ее при выполнении учебно-творческих проектов и других видов исследовательских работ;
- 4) сформировать иммунитет против влияния идеологий и практики экстремистских, террористических религиозных групп и течений;
- 5) быть готовым к дискуссиям, обмену мнений по вопросам религии, быть осведомленным по особенностям разных культур и религиозных систем.





## **Sample curriculum At the rate "Secularity and the basics of religious studies" For grade 9 of basic secondary education**

### **1. Explanatory note:**

1. The curriculum was developed in accordance with the state compulsory standard of secondary education (primary, basic secondary, general secondary education), approved by Decree Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated August 23, 2012, No. 1080.

2. The essence and importance of the subject "Secularity and the basics of religious studies" consist in its acceptance as an element of the formation of scientifically grounded bases for ensuring sustainable development and as the primary source that determines the historical, cultural and spiritual values of modern society. The subject "Secularity and the basics of religious studies" is a structural component of socio-humanitarian and social knowledge in the secondary education system.

3. The modern policy of Kazakhstan is aimed at strengthening interethnic, inter-confessional respect and tolerance between numerous ethnic groups and cultures in the country, reaching agreement and friendship between them, forming an integral system of spiritual and moral values.

4. Knowledge of the history of the relationship between religion and the state, religion and culture, religion and civilization is a manifestation of the spirituality of the centuries-old experience of mankind.

5. Known Kazakh thinkers - al-Farabi, Khoja Ahmet Yassawi, Abay, Ybyray, Shakarim in their spiritual heritage, based on historical reason and practice, showed the role and place of religion in the history of the state and the all-round development of the individual.

6. Objective of the subject:

1) to bring to the students the principle of secularism as a value and to teach to accept its essence as an important factor of state stability, to teach to study and understand religion against the background of secularism;

2) to give comprehensive knowledge of freedom of conscience, the history and current state of world and traditional religions, new religious movements, destructive religious movements and prohibited religious organizations;

3) to teach students not to accept the ideology of extremism, terrorism and religious radicalism, on the basis of spiritual and moral values, to educate them in a sense of tolerance and form a humanistic worldview.

7. Objectives of the subject:

1) give the students a systematic knowledge of the importance of religion, its history and role in society;

2) to form an idea of secularism as a basis for statehood and independence, to equip students with knowledge in this direction;

3) from the position of secularism, to form the skills of comparing the basics of religious consciousness, religious faith, religious knowledge and religious upbringing;

4) to explain to students the meanings of world outlook, cultural and moral religions;

5) to form the skills of respect for freedom of conscience and skills of secular attitude to the religious trends of modern society, to instil the foundations of tolerance;

6) to show the interethnic and inter-confessional consent of Kazakhstan in the key of secularism, to educate students about the sense of civic maturity and responsibility;

7) explain the danger of ideologies of religious radicalism and global manifestations of extremism, terrorism for national security, for the principles of secularism and for social stability, to cultivate a

sense of respect for the provisions of a secular state;

8) to form students' culture and skills of critical analysis and evaluation, comparing materials of religious literature, electronic resources and the media;

9) to explain the importance of legal literacy in public life and to educate the desire for its continuous improvement, to cultivate respect for the rights and freedoms of the individual and citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

As part of the development of educational materials proposed by the program, it is envisaged to establish the principles of continuity and intersubject communication with the subjects "History of Kazakhstan", "World History", "Man. Society. Law", "History of the development of interethnic relations", "Kazakh literature", "Art" and the course "Abaytanu".

8. The volume of training load: 9 class - 1 (one) hour per week, 34 hours in the school year.

## **2. Basic content of the subject:**

9. The contents of the subject matter include the following topics:

1) introduction: the subject of the course "Secularity and the basics of religious studies" (1 hour);

2) secularism and secular state: definition of the concept, its meaning and character. Secular state and religion. Fundamentals of secular ethics. Principles of secularism in the education system (3 hours);

3) the importance of religion, its definition, social purpose, genesis, classification. Structure and functions of religion. Formation and development of the science of religion - religious studies. Basic religious concepts, institutions. Religion as a spiritual and cultural phenomenon (2 hours);

4) sources and historical forms of religion. Forms of ancient beliefs and the national religion. Religions in Ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome. Hinduism. Confucianism. Taoism. Shintoism. Judaism. Tanakh and the Talmud. Deity. The role of the deity in the ancient Turkic worldview (3 hours);

5) world religions. Buddhism: the fundamentals of learning, history, practice (experience) and regions of distribution. The main directions of Buddhism (1 hour);

6) Christianity: the foundations of dogma, history, practice (experience) and regions of distribution. Jesus Christ and the Gospel. The main directions of Christianity (Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism). Christianity in the modern world (4 hours);

7) Islam: the fundamentals of dogma, history, practice (experience) and regions of distribution. The Prophet Muhammad. The sacred book of the Koran. Directions in Islam. Basic schools of Islamic law (*sects*). Historical conditions for the spread and establishment in Kazakhstan of the Hanafi theological school. Its connection with the national culture. School of Sufism. Islam, science and culture (5 hours);

8) religion in Kazakhstan. Islam in Kazakhstan: the spread of Islam in Kazakhstan. Religious philosophy of Khodja Ahmet Iasau (Hikmet). The role of Islam in the formation and development of Kazakh statehood. Islam in the XX century and in modern Kazakhstan. Dissemination of Hanafi law norms and practices in Kazakhstan (3 hours);

9) the spread of Christianity in Kazakhstan. Orthodox Church in Kazakhstan. Catholicism and Protestantism in Kazakhstan. Culture of Christianity in Kazakhstan (2 hours);

10) the culture of Islam in Kazakhstan. Islamic architectural and monumental art in Kazakhstan. Monuments of Islamic manuscript culture. Philosophical-educational and religious views of al-Farabi, Zhusup Balasaguni, Mahmud Kashgari, Ahmet Yugineki, Husam ad-din Sygnaki. Theologians of XIX-XX centuries. The spiritual heritage of Abai and Shakarim (3 hours);

11) new religious movements. Teaching, forms and features of new religious movements. The

dilemma of new religious movements and traditional religious systems: cognitive, psychological and everyday contradictions. Signs and consequences of destructive currents. Prohibited religious associations. Religious extremism and terrorism: definition, signs of manifestation and consequences. Terrorism is a phenomenon alien to religion. The danger of religious extremism and terrorism for national security (3 hours);

12) Kazakhstan is a country of interreligious peace and harmony. Religious legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Secularism is the platform of the state system and national security. The concept of freedom of religious belief. The platform of interreligious harmony and dialogue in modern Kazakhstan (3 hours);

13) the policy of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan NA. Nazarbayev on the establishment of interreligious dialogue, peace and harmony in Kazakhstan and the world community (1 hour).

### **3. Requirements for the level of preparation of students:**

10. Subject results.

At the end of the 9th grade, students should know:

- 1) basic religious concepts;
- 2) the relationship between secular and religious concepts;
- 3) the history of religion and religion;
- 4) the specific features of the new religious trends;
- 5) the dangers of extremism and terrorism;
- 6) Kazakh-Muslim cognitive thoughts;
- 7) the relationship between the state, culture and religious associations in the republic;
- 8) the policy of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan NA. Nazarbayev to strengthen inter-confessional accord, preserve public stability, show respect for the true religious feelings of believers in the country and the world community.

11. Personal results.

Students should:

- 1) to learn the basics of interreligious respect and tolerance;
- 2) understand the essence of relations between the state, religious Associations and culture;
- 3) be able to distinguish between religious consciousness, religious faith, religious experience and religious thought;
- 4) understand the world outlook and cognitive mission of religion and faith in the life of society;
- 5) to know and be able to explain the moral and ethical values of religion;
- 6) realize the danger of ideologies of religious radicalism and global manifestations of extremism, terrorism;
- 7) to know the peculiarities of the manifestation of unconventional extremist and terrorist movements;
- 8) be able to distinguish between religion and science, secularism and law, religion and pseudo-religious trends.

12. System-activity results.

Students should:

- 1) master important information and systematic knowledge in the field of religious studies;
- 2) master the culture and abilities of critical information analysis;
- 3) to orientate and be able to analyze the information received, use it in the implementation of educational and creative projects and other types of research work;

4) to form immunity against the influence of ideologies and practices of extremist, terrorist religious groups and trends;

5) be ready for discussions, exchange of opinions on religious issues, be aware of the peculiarities of different cultures and religious systems.

