

# SOCIO-LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN OUR COUNTRY

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## Abstract

This article focuses on the concept of education in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the concept of religious and secular education, the right and basis of education, opportunities for religious education, the analysis of the legal framework of religious and secular education, as well as activities in the field of religious education.

**Keywords:** Education, science, knowledge, religious education, religious values, combination of secular and religious education, continuing education, compulsory education, denomination, qualified personnel.

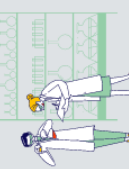
## Introduction

The territory of Uzbekistan has been a center of science for thousands of years, attracting students of science. In addition to natural sciences, religious sciences were taught in numerous schools and madrasas operating in this area. Today, the issue of religious enlightenment, the right knowledge and understanding of religion among our people, especially young people, is more relevant than ever.

On June 19 of this year, in the presence of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, issues of religious and educational direction were considered. It was emphasized that in a short period of time, Uzbekistan has created a comprehensive system for training qualified personnel in the religious and educational sphere, scientific research centers have begun to study and popularize the rich heritage of our scientists, it is necessary to widely study and popularize the works of great thinkers among the population, especially among our youth. After all, these works reflect the true essence of Islam, the humanistic ideas of our sacred religion. This is especially relevant in the current critical period, when various forces in the world are trying to distort the essence of religion and mislead young people from the true path<sup>1</sup>. In our country, as in other spheres of public life, religious relations, including the sphere of religious education, are regulated from a legal standpoint. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the laws “On Education”, “On Freedom of conscience and religious organizations” and a number of other legislative acts are aimed at regulating relations in this area.

Article 50 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan stipulates that everyone has the right to education, that the state ensures the development of the system of continuous education, its various types and forms, state and non-state educational organizations, that the state creates

<sup>1</sup> Issues of the religious and educational direction were considered.// <https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/7331>



conditions for the development of preschool education and upbringing, that the state guarantees free general secondary education and primary vocational education, and that secondary education is mandatory.

The Law “On Education”, recognizing the principle of secular nature of the education system, defines education as a systematic process aimed at providing students with deep theoretical knowledge, skills and practical skills, as well as the formation of their general educational and professional knowledge, skills and abilities, and the development of their abilities<sup>2</sup>. The right to education shall be guaranteed equally for all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, personal and social status, the right to education shall be ensured by: development of educational organizations; support of innovative activities and training programs in educational organizations; implementation of educational programs with the use of innovative technologies in the system of pre-academic vocational and professional training, as well as the provision of educational services in the system of pre-academic vocational training and retraining in the system of secondary vocational training.

Uzbekistan is a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country, and at present, general secondary education in the country is conducted in seven languages. The conduct of general secondary education in local languages, guaranteed by the Constitution, along with ensuring respect for the languages, customs and traditions of all nationalities and peoples residing in the country, creates broad opportunities for their development.

If we analyze the words “education”, “knowledge” “science”, they are similar in meaning to each other. According to the explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language, the word “education” (Arabic – “teaching”, “giving knowledge”, “information”) is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and abilities, the main means of preparing a person for life and work. In the second year of the dictionary, the explanation given to the word “science” (Arabic – “knowledge”, “theory”) is knowledge, skills, and information that is achieved through study and research, analysis<sup>3</sup>. In practice, the word “science” is used in relation to conducting more fundamental research, in-depth study and analysis of any source, as well as the study and analysis of religious sources, the word “education” differs in that it is aimed at teaching a certain subject or its sections to certain age categories based on standards established by the state.

In the teachings of the holy religion of Islam, it is established that acquiring knowledge is obligatory, and it is said that “Scientists are the heirs of the prophets”. Acquiring knowledge is considered precious in this world and an honor in the hereafter. The first word of the first revealed verse in the Holy Qur’an is also the word “Iqra” – “read”, and Islamic teachings call people to acquire knowledge.

For centuries, renowned hadith scholars and Qur’anic exegetes in the Islamic world have devoted their lives to learning and propagating knowledge. The famous jurist Abu Laith Samarkandi said: “Know that it is obligatory for every Muslim, male and female, to acquire

<sup>2</sup> Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Education, Article 4 <https://lex.uz/docs/5013007?ONDATE=29.11.2023%2001>

<sup>3</sup> Explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language. – 5 volumes. – V:4. – T.: “National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan” State Scientific Publishing House, 2020. – P.27.

knowledge to the extent that they understand matters necessary for their religion, such as ablution, prayer, and other rulings of Sharia, as well as things essential for their daily lives”.<sup>4</sup> Secular and religious education in the Republic of Uzbekistan is based on certain regulatory documents, and its specific requirements and procedures are established. Specifically, the law “On Education” identifies seven types of education, which include:

- Preschool education and upbringing;
- general secondary and secondary specialized education;
- professional education; higher education;
- postgraduate education;
- retraining and advanced training of personnel;
- Extracurricular education.

These types of education are organized according to the established procedure based on state educational standards. In preschool educational institutions, groups can be arranged by age categories or mixed-age categories. Non-state preschool educational institutions accept children from the age of two, while state preschool educational institutions admit children from three to seven years old. General secondary education is organized continuously in general secondary educational institutions, starting from the age of seven, and is carried out for eleven mandatory years.

The education system in the Republic of Uzbekistan is separated from religion, and the inclusion of religious subjects in the educational programs of the education system is not allowed. The right of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan to secular education shall be ensured regardless of their attitude to religion<sup>5</sup>. The separation of religious educational institutions, organizations, and associations from the state implies their existence as a separate institution in civil society. Therefore, it is necessary to study, study, and determine their place and relationships with the state and other civil society institutions.

The “Passport for licensing the activities of religious educational institutions” is provided in Appendix 23 of the Regulation, which was approved by Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 80 (February, 2022). This Regulation establishes a unified procedure for licensing certain types of activities through a special electronic system.

This document states that the licensing authority for religious educational institutions is the Committee for Religious Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, that an application for a license is submitted, the application must include the name and organizational and legal form of the legal entity, its mailing address, place of activity, name of the banking institution and bank account, telephone number, VAT number, email address (if any), the reason for filling out the application (obtaining a new license, re-issuance), the license applicant's consent to comply with the requirements and conditions of the license; a petition from the central governing body of religious organizations for the Republic of Uzbekistan; a passport of a religious educational institution in the form approved by the Committee for Religious Affairs of the Republic of

<sup>4</sup> Abū Laith Samarqandī. *Bustān al-‘ārifīn*. <https://islom.uz/>

<sup>5</sup> Article 8 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations. <https://lex.uz/docs/5491534>

Uzbekistan; documents confirming the right of ownership or other property rights to the premises (premises) where the licensed activity is carried out, as well as the compliance of the specified premises (premises) with the established requirements; number and date of the conclusions of the territorial departments and departments of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Sanitary and Epidemiological Wellbeing, and Public Health Service on the compliance of existing buildings and premises with the requirements of fire safety regulations and sanitary and hygienic standards; educational concept, curricula and programs; documents confirming the availability of material resources (or their specific source) necessary to ensure the educational process; a list of religious educational institutions, including foreign religious educational institutions, whose graduates may be employed to teach religious subjects; it is stipulated that copies of documents on the religious education of persons teaching religious subjects must be provided.

There are also specific requirements and conditions for obtaining a license. These conditions require that the license applicant have buildings (premises) belonging to him with property or other property rights that meet the established requirements for carrying out the licensed activity; teaching religious subjects in accordance with the educational concept, curricula and programs agreed with the Committee for Religious Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan; not allowing the education of minors against their will, the will of their parents or legal representatives, the promotion of war, violence, proselytism and any missionary activity in the educational process, the violation of the country's security and socio-political stability, the legal and spiritual foundations of society, civil peace, interethnic and interreligious harmony, the dissemination of incorrect information about Uzbekistan and the distortion of its historical, cultural and spiritual wealth; teaching religious subjects in religious educational institutions by persons with religious education; periodic certification of persons teaching religious subjects within the terms agreed with the Committee for Religious Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan; It provides for the teaching of secular subjects in accordance with the state educational standards and requirements established in the Republic of Uzbekistan; the availability of the necessary financial resources (or their specific sources) to ensure the educational process; the provision of necessary information related to the implementation of licensed activities at the request of the Committee for Religious Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan; the need to use religious literature published abroad and that has passed theological expertise in the established manner in the educational process.

The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On providing social support and benefits for further improvement of spiritual and educational work and activities in the field of religion" (August 23, 2003), provided that, taking into account the educational standards, curricula introduced in Islamic institutes and secondary specialized Islamic educational institutions and the fact that students receive religious and secular knowledge in accordance with adopted state norms, diplomas awarded to graduates of these educational institutions will be recognized as state educational documents and graduates will be granted the right to continue their studies in the state higher education system. Currently, a total of 16 religious denominations are officially registered in our country, and the number of religious

organizations is 2367 (01.10.2024). Currently, 10 Islamic secondary specialized educational institutions (2 for women), 4 Higher Islamic religious educational institutions, 1 Russian Orthodox Church seminary and 1 full Evangelical Christian Church seminary are operating.

The procedure for registering religious organizations is carried out on the basis of Appendix No. 12 to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On further improving the system of providing public services for issuing a conclusion” No. 169 (March 29, 2024).

Education in religious educational institutions is permitted only after completing eleven years of continuous, compulsory general secondary education in general secondary educational institutions. Private religious education is restricted by law, and religious educational institutions are required to teach secular subjects in accordance with state educational standards and requirements established in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

There is a high desire among the public to receive religious education, and the existing coverage of religious education does not meet the needs of the population. This, in turn, contributes to the fact that young people and various segments of the population, along with receiving religious education in unauthorized forms (“hujras”), receive education in various religious educational institutions in foreign countries.

It is known that in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the law enshrines the right of a minor child to be raised by his/her parents, to ensure his/her interests, to achieve comprehensive development, and to respect human values. However, despite this, there are cases of parents grossly violating the requirements of the law, leaving their minor children without legal guardianship and supervision in order to receive religious education both in the territory of Uzbekistan and abroad. The diversity of sects and trends in religions, the high frequency of ideological use of religion in some foreign countries, and the emergence of views alien to ancient religious values in the religious worldview of young people are leading to changes in their spirituality and worldview.

At the same time, there are cases of a lack of deep understanding of the essence and content of pure religious values among the population, susceptibility to various alien ideas, misunderstanding the balance of world and religious relations in society, inability to integrate into society through deep devotion to religion, and disregard for existing values through isolation or, conversely, modernization.

These circumstances are the basis for determining the measures of responsibility for non-fulfillment of obligations to bring up and educate children according to Article 47 of the Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Administrative Responsibility, and according to Article 47<sup>6</sup> for leaving a child unattended in the territory of a foreign state.

Events taking place in the world and in our country, analysis of the socio-political situation require an increase in the effectiveness of activities in the religious and educational sphere and the creation of a unified system for training qualified personnel. Based on these requirements and needs, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Measures for the Fundamental Improvement of Activities in the Religious and Educational Sphere” (April 16, 2018) was adopted.

The decree established the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, a leading educational and research institution specializing in providing religious and secular education, to: form the conscious thinking of young people based on in-depth study of the rich cultural heritage of our ancestors, who made an invaluable contribution to Islamic and world civilization; increase the level of awareness of the population, especially young people, about the true essence and goals of destructive alien ideas that equate religion with violence and bloodshed; create an atmosphere of intolerance in society towards ideas that are alien to our national and religious values; further increase the sense of responsibility and participation of representatives of the religious and educational sphere in ensuring tolerance, mutual respect, kindness, peace and harmony, and the stability of the socio-spiritual environment in society; strengthen information and analytical activities aimed at early identification and prevention of factors that may pose a threat to the stability of the socio-spiritual environment and freedom of belief in our society in the context of globalization; priorities such as improving the quality of education based on the development of the harmony of religious and secular knowledge, creating an integrated system of training, retraining and upgrading the qualifications of qualified personnel in the religious and educational sphere.

Based on the above studies, it is necessary to further improve cooperation between state and civil society institutions and achieve the expected results by coordinating religious education activities, bringing together and harmonizing regulatory documents related to religious education; introducing norms related to the regulation of religious education into the law on education, taking into account the fact that secular subjects are also included in the programs of 16 religious educational institutions of various confessions based on state standards; improving the preparation of educational and popular literature that reflects national and religious values and provides educational, educational and developmental skills to a wide range of readers, including students and young people. For in Uzbekistan, which is connected to the global social network and is becoming more integrated into the global community in all spheres, it is possible to develop civil society institutions and ensure the future of the country through the upbringing of the younger generation in the spirit of harmony of national, religious and universal values, a system of religious and secular education in accordance with the demands of the time and the needs of the population.

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