

Tashkent - The Center of Islamic Civilization

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Abstract. *Tashkent occupies a special place in the socio-economic, cultural and spiritual development of Central Asia and has made a significant contribution to the centuries-old historical and evolutionary processes of development. In this place there are ruins of ancient Kangaroo settlements, in particular architectural monuments built in Tashkent in the Middle Ages, as well as many historical, archaeological and cultural monuments preserved in the city of Tashkent and its surroundings. The article provides information about scientists who lived in Tashkent in the Middle Ages and made a great contribution to the Islamic civilization.*

Key words: *Shash, Ilak, Tashkent, Central Asia, Islamic Civilization, scholars, hadith, Bukhara, Sheibanidov, Barakhan, Kukaldash, Ethnos, Oasis.*

In the Middle Ages, the Shash (Tashkent) oasis was considered influential not only in Transoxiana (Mawarannahr), but also throughout the Muslim world. In historical sources, the oasis, referred to as Chach, Shash, or Tashkent in different periods, held a significant position in connecting Bukhara, Samarkand, as well as the Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya oases of Transoxiana with the cities of Semirechye and East Turkestan [2,166]. The Great Silk Road played a crucial role in the development of foreign trade in the Shash oasis. Branches of the Silk Road passed through the oases of Shash and Ilak. Through this route, the local population maintained constant contact with China in the east, with the peoples of the lower reaches of the Syr Darya, the Aral Sea, and the Volga regions in the northwest, and in the west, through Transoxiana, with all major countries in Afghanistan, India, Iran, and the Near East [3,44].

Sources indicate that there were approximately 30 large cities in the Shash province and 13 in Ilak. Arab geographers reported the existence of 25 or 27 cities in Shash and 13 in Ilak. Istakhri noted that there were 27 cities in Shash and 14 in Ilak. The Arab geographer Al-Muqaddasi (940-1000) stated that there were 34 cities in Shash and 14 in Ilak. The oasis's favorable geographical location at the intersection of international trade routes contributed to its economic and cultural prosperity. The rise during the 9th-16th centuries paved the way for large-scale trade, economic, and cultural development [4,37].

In the 9th-16th centuries, science and culture, especially Islamic sciences, flourished in Central Asia. Such ancient cities of the region as Bukhara, Samarkand, Nasaf (Karshi), Khiva, Termez, Shash (Tashkent) were famous as centers of science and culture in the Islamic world. In particular, many renowned scholars in Islamic sciences such as hadith and fiqh emerged from Tashkent (Shash). Many great scholars who lived and worked in Tashkent in the Middle Ages were known to the world under the nickname "Shoshiy," and in the 16th century under the nickname "Toshkandiy." A comprehensive in-depth study of their life, activities, and scientific and spiritual heritage, along with the study of the history of the Shash oasis, serves to determine the role of these scholars in the development of Islamic science and culture.

In medieval sources, Tashkent is mentioned under the names Chach, Shash, Shashkent, Binkent, Banokat, and Shokhrukhiya. Scholars who were born and worked here or came to Tashkent received the nicknames Chochiy, Shoshiy, Banokatiy. Scholars who lived and worked in the Tashkent oasis are mentioned in history as Iloqiy, while those who worked in the late Middle Ages are more often referred to as Toshkandiy.

The scholars who made Tashkent's name famous throughout the world can be broadly categorized into saints and religious scholars. For instance, Sheikh Abu Bakr Zayniddin Kuyi Orifon Toshkandiy (Sheikh Zayniddin Bobo), Oykhoya ibn Toshkhoja - Zangi Ota, Sheikh Khovandi Tahur, and Khoja Ubaydulloh Ahror Valiy, whom Alisher Navoiy described as "murshidi ofaq" (spiritual guide of the horizons), who came to Shosh at Shahobiddin Suhravardiy's invitation, were among the scholars who attained sainthood. Meanwhile, Abu Bakr Qaffol Shoshiy, who received the title of "Hazrati Imam," Abu Sa'id Haysam ibn Kulayb Shoshiy, known as the trusted hadith scholar "Imam Shoshiy," Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ahmad Shoshiy, who was honored with the titles "Fakhr ul-islam" and "al-Kabir," and others were revered scholars in the Islamic world [5,46].

In the Shash oasis, the names of over 100 scholars from the Middle Ages have been identified. Imam Abdullah ibn Avona Shoshiy, Imam Abu Bakr ibn Ali ibn Homid Shoshiy, Abu Sa'id Iso ibn Solim Shoshiy, Abu Muhammad Ja'far ibn Shuayb Shoshiy, Abu Ishaq Ibrohim ibn Khuzaym Shoshiy, Abu Ali Hasan ibn Sohib ibn Hamid Hofiz Shoshiy, Abulays Nasr ibn Hasan ibn Qosim Shoshiy Tunkatiy, Abu Ishaq Ibrohim ibn Khuzaym ibn Qumayr ibn Khoqon Shoshiy and many other hadith scholars worked and taught in various cities around the world, conducting research in diverse fields of religious sciences in libraries and madrasas.

In the 15th-16th centuries, physicians, calligraphers, and historians played a significant role in the social and intellectual life of the Shash oasis. The renowned historian Abu Sulayman Banokati, who lived in Shash, is famous as "Malik ush-shuara" (King of Poets). His work "Rawdat al-albab fit-tawarikh wal-ansob" ("Garden of the Wise on History and Genealogy") gained popularity under the title "Tarikh-i Banokati." The poet from Chach (Shash), Badriddin Chachi, spent most of his life in India and was awarded the title "Fakhr az-zamon" (Pride of the Age). Alisher Navoi mentions the poet Aloj Shoshi with great respect in his work "Majolis un-nafois."

The 16th-century historian Mirza Muhammad Haydar was born in Tashkent and authored "Tarixi Rashidiy." His mother, Khub Nigar Khanum, was the daughter of Yunus Khan, the ruler of Tashkent, and the aunt of Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur.

Hafiz Kuhaki, a scholar and historian of his time and grandson of Ali Kushchi, who was a student of Mirzo Ulugbek, also lived and worked in Tashkent. He was commonly known as Hafiz Kuyki among the people. His works focused on Arabic language and grammar, logic, and Islamic jurisprudence.

Physicians also practiced in Tashkent. The ophthalmologist Ubaydulla ibn Muhammad Yusuf Kahhol, who lived in the 16th century, was highly renowned. He served as the personal physician to Shaybani Darveshkan, the ruler of Tashkent. Additionally, in the 16th century, healers such as Shah Ali Kahhol and Boqiy Jarroh Toshkandiy were also active [6,113].

Calligraphers have left an indelible mark on the history of Tashkent's culture. For instance, Taftazani's student Jamshid Shashi transcribed Mahmud Zamakhshari's work "Kashshof" in Naskh script in 1358. This rare manuscript is renowned throughout the Islamic world. Abdulvadud ibn Khoja Abdulvasi' Shashi (15th century), known as Abdulvadud Katib, copied the work "Mishkat al-Masabih" by the eminent scholar Abdullah Khatib Tabrizi in Naskh script.

The cultural history of 16th century Tashkent features poets and writers such as Ibadulla Tashkandi, Dardi, Shuhrati Ohangaroni (a student of Hafiz Kuhaki), Muhtaram Tashkandi, Mulloi Tashkandi, and those who were active in subsequent centuries: Marokhi Tashkandi, Vafoi Durmoni, Sodiqi Tashkandi, Abdughaffar Tashkandi, Fathi Tashkandi, Muhammad Tohir Tashkandi, Kulfat, Zoi' Tashkandi, Ulfat, Dilkash, Fazlullah Almai, and Azizullakhan.

At the end of the 15th century and throughout the 16th century, Tashkent's importance grew considerably. The economic and cultural upsurge was evident in the revival of the city's connections

with other craft and trade centers, as well as in the flourishing of construction activities. Large madrasahs, such as the Barak Khan Madrasah and the Kukeldash Madrasah, were built in the 16th century during the reign of the Uzbek sultans. These buildings have survived to the present day.

Tashkent was the administrative and economic center of the surrounding region, a hub for domestic and foreign trade, and a convergence point for caravan routes from other cities and western and eastern provinces. As early as the 16th century, Tashkent was a densely populated city, with a large portion of its inhabitants being merchants and artisans. In the centuries that followed, Tashkent's status continued to rise even further.

During the years of independence, special attention has been paid to the restoration and further development of the rich cultural heritage left by great ancestors. Extensive work is being carried out to restore and improve the shrines of great scholars and saints, and to study their rich scientific and cultural heritage. Many unique Islamic monuments in the country, including mosques and madrasahs such as "Masjidi Kalon," "Shohi Zinda," "Kokgumbaz," "Barakhon," "Muyi Muborak," "Namozgoh," "Hastimom," were renovated. These changes are recognized and highly appreciated by the international community [7,197].

The declaration of Tashkent as the capital of Islamic culture in 2007 by the International Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), one of the structures of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, is further evidence that Uzbekistan, in particular its capital Tashkent, occupies a special place in the history of Islamic civilization. There are specific historical and modern grounds for granting the city of Tashkent this high status.

In recent years, at the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, many good deeds have been done in the religious and educational sphere - the Imam Bukhari International Research Center in Samarkand and the Imam Termizi International Research Center in Termez have been established. Currently, scientific centers named after scholars such as Imam Moturidi and Abu Muin Nasafi, who made invaluable contributions to the development of aqidah and kalam science, are being established to deeply study their vast heritage. These works paved the way for studying the invaluable contribution of great ancestors to the development of Islam and their scientific heritage valued worldwide [8,46].

In Uzbekistan, consistent efforts are being made to preserve national and religious values, and on this basis, to educate the younger generation in the spirit of noble universal ideas. The atmosphere of interethnic and interreligious tolerance is being strengthened, and religious freedom for the multinational population is being ensured. In 2018, the UN General Assembly adopted a special resolution on "Enlightenment and Religious Tolerance," proposed by the President of Uzbekistan. Recently, the US State Department removed Uzbekistan from the list of "countries of particular concern" in the field of religious freedom. This was also a recognition of the country's large-scale democratic reforms.

The Center of Islamic Civilization in Uzbekistan plays a crucial role in studying the rich heritage of great ancestors who made an invaluable contribution to the development of universal civilization, conveying the true essence of religion primarily to the people and the world community, and strengthening the principle of "enlightenment against ignorance" in society.

Based on the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated June 23, 2017, "On Measures to Establish the Center of Islamic Civilization in Uzbekistan under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan" [9], construction of the center's building began in Tashkent. The Center of Islamic Civilization is a three-story building that has now been fully erected. The Center is designed to create conditions for master's and doctoral students of the International Islamic Academy to study. Based on the design by French designers, the "Science" section of the museum exposition is being prepared for demonstration as a model area. This exposition will showcase Uzbekistan's role in historical and modern civilization, as well as the lives and rich scientific heritage of great scholars through infographics, videos, and documentaries.

Special attention is also being paid to enriching the center's scientific potential. To date, its library has acquired 761 manuscripts and lithographic works, about 12,000 printed and 55,000 electronic books, the "East and West" and "Arab Islamic World" collections consisting of 4,923 unique works, numerous films, and historical documents. A 117-volume catalog of world Islamic manuscripts was obtained from the Al-Furqan Foundation in Great Britain. To promote the center's activities internationally, presentations and photo exhibitions titled "Uzbekistan - Pearl of Islamic Culture" were held in countries such as Great Britain, Germany, and France [10].

In conclusion, the Center of Islamic Civilization being constructed in Tashkent has established cooperation with 15 foreign institutions. This establishment will become a sacred place where people learn lessons from the history and heritage of their ancestors. The study of Tashkent's history, the Quran, hadiths, and calligraphy will be implemented. The Center will serve as an invaluable resource for educating the younger generation, nurturing them to become knowledge-loving individuals grounded in patriotism, humanity, and benevolence.

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