Zeitschrift: Asiatische Studien : Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Asiengesellschaft = Études asiatiques : revue de la Société Suisse-Asie

Herausgeber: Schweizerische Asiengesellschaft

Band: 67 (2013)

Heft: 3

Artikel: Valiulla Iakupov's tatar islamic traditionalism

Autor: Bustanov, Alfrid K. / Kemper, Michael

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-391484

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Mehr erfahren

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. En savoir plus

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. Find out more

Download PDF: 11.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, https://www.e-periodica.ch

VALIULLA IAKUPOV'S TATAR ISLAMIC TRADITIONALISM

Alfrid K. Bustanov and Michael Kemper, University of Amsterdam

Abstract

In this article we analyze the concept of "traditional Islam" in the writings of the Tatar scholar Valiulla Iakupov (1963–2012). We discuss Iakupov's interpretation of the history of Tatar Islam, his views on "Wahhabism" (which he condemned in strongest terms), and on state-Islam relations in contemporary Russia, as well as his ideas about the relation between Islamic authority and secular science. Against the background of this content analysis, we then proceed to analyze Iakupov's religious language, especially his use of Arabic-origin loanwords and their Russian equivalents of Church Slavonic origin, and also his creative coinage of new religious terms. While Iakupov was above all known as a proponent of the use of Tatar as Russia's major language for Islam, we argue that Iakupov also made a significant contribution to the development of "Islamo-Russian" as the new religious idiom of Muslims in the Russian-speaking world.

1. Introduction

This paper discusses life and work of the prominent Tatar theologian Valiulla Iakupov (1963–2012), a person whom many saw as the "grey eminence" in the Tatarstan Muftiate. Iakupov was a staunch opponent of what is in Russia often subsumed under the term "Wahhabism", that is, of all Salafi trends in Islam which are critical of the theological, legal and Sufi "traditional" schools and brotherhoods in the country, and which are believed to have been "imported" from the Arab World, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey. Against these and other "foreign" trends, Iakupov propagated, and developed, the so-called "traditional" Tatar theological tradition.

Iakupov's personality and his enormous output of Islamic literature are still awaiting a comprehensive scholarly analysis. What we attempt to achieve in this article is to discuss Iakupov's role in the post-Soviet revival of Islam in Tatarstan, his basic concepts of Islamic "traditionalism", and especially his personal "style" of exposition, that is, how he expressed Islamic contents in the post-

Soviet discourse on Islam, in the Russian language.[1] This contribution is part of a larger project on the emergence of a new "Russian Islamic sociolect", a specific Russian language of Islam in the contemporary Russian Federation that accompanies the emergence of an all-Russian (in the sense of *rossiiskii*) Islamic discourse which transcends ethnic boundaries.[2] We suggest that this sociolect consists of a cluster of individual "styles" of how to write about Islam in the Russian language, with specific repertoires of Arabic/Islamic loanwords, on the one hand, but also with terms that are of Church Slavonic origin, and thus developing in close contact with the Christian-Orthodox religious discourse in Russia, on the other. While Iakupov was a staunch defender of the use of Tatar for Islamic texts, he himself wrote several of his major works in Russian, and thus actively contributed to the development of "Islamic Russian". We suggest that Iakupov maintained a special place in this Russian Islamic discourse because he drew from at least three different linguistic repertoires (which we refer to as "Russianism", "Arabism", and "Academism") that other contemporary Islamic authors in Russia usually do not mix that easily. We will analyse these features separately and then discuss how Iakupov's "style mix" related to the contents of his messages, to see how form and content reflect the publication strategies of the author.

Unfortunately this paper is already an obituary: on July 19, 2012 Valiulla-Hazrat was shot dead on the streets of Kazan by unknown assailants. On that same day, his superior, the Mufti of Tatarstan, Ildus Faizov, also became victim of a car bomb attack which he, however, survived with serious injuries. There are many rumours in Kazan as to why exactly Iakupov was eliminated, and who benefitted from his removal. At any event, the Russian authorities responded to the two attacks with a large-scale campaign of arrests. Several special operations resulted in the killing of individuals who were held responsible for the atrocious attacks, including a certain Amir Muhammad, leader of a self-proclaimed group of "Tatarstan mujahidin" connected to the so-called Caucasus Emirate (*Imarat Kavkaz*) of the Chechen underground radical Dokku Umarov, and one Robert Valeev, who lost his life when his apartment in Kazan was stormed by the

1 Iakupov's text production in the Tatar language will not be discussed here in detail. See in this context FRANK, Allen J.: *Tatar Islamic Texts*. Hyattsville: Dunwoody Press, 2008.

2 For an outline of this project, see BUSTANOV, Alfrid K. / Michael KEMPER (eds.): *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language: Studies on Texts from European Russia, the North Caucasus and West Siberia*. Amsterdam: Pegasus, 2012.

police.[3] Faizov has in the meantime been replaced by a very young Mufti, Kamil Samigullin, who tries to navigate between the various factions.[4]

2. Iakupov's Religious and Academic Career

Valiulla Makhmutovich Iakupov (b. 1963 in a village of Ufa region, Bashkortostan) started his career as a secular scientist: his first degree (from the Kirov-Institute in Kazan, 1987) was in chemical engineering. He then got involved in the Tatar national movement,[5] and became a leading activist in its Islamic wing. Already in 1990, he established *Iman*, which soon became the most popular Islamic publishing house in Tatarstan and perhaps in the whole of the Russian Federation. In 1992, he was appointed imam of the Apanaev mosque in the Old Tatar neighbourhood of Kazan, a position that he held until the end of his life; in the same year, Iakupov started an Islamic newspaper by the same name of *Iman*, in the Tatar language, and initially even in Arabic script. From 1993 to 1996, he also served as rector of the recently re-established Muhammadiyya *madrasa* in Kazan; however, in those early years, the *madrasa* was still struggling for the return of the historical Muhammadiyya building, and classes (largely held by Arab teachers sent by the Tayba Foundation, with instruction given in Arabic

3 On 4 August 2012, Amir Muhammad and his "Tatarstan Mujahidin" released a video in which they "renewed" their *bay'a* to Dokku Umarov; on 18 October, the group posted another video which shows the burial of Amir Muhammad, reportedly taking place on 23 Dhu l-Qa'da / 9 October. See:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boBExXsoJ74> (30 July 2013); and:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceXzmwpEjcQ> (last visited 14 May 2013, no longer online).
For the street fight of 24 October leading to the death of Robert Valeev, whom the authorities identified as the actual killer of Iakupov, see:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=fvwp&v=PDhETIHEpEI&NR=1> (last visited 30 July 2013).

4 WELIEVA, Landysh: "Five Cornerstones of Kamil Samigullin's Policy." *The Kazan Times*, 28 March 2013; see:
<http://kazantimes.com/politics/five-cornerstones-of-kamil-samigullins-policy> (last visited 30 July 2013).

5 On the Tatar national movement, see BILZ, Marlies: *Tatarstan in der Transformation: Nationaler Diskurs und Politische Praxis, 1988–1994*. Stuttgart, 2007.

with the help of translators)[6] were held at various places, including in Iakupov's Apanaevskaia mosque. With his enormous energy, Iakupov was thus a veritable pioneer and central figure in the bottom-up re-establishment of Tatarstan's Islamic infrastructure,[7] not only in the fields of preaching and teaching, but also in Islamic publishing and journalism.

Around 1998, the self-made man Iakupov became an Islamic official: he accepted the position of deputy Mufti of Tatarstan, with a portfolio first for *waqf*s (1998–2008), then for relations to state structures, and finally for education (2011–12). Many regarded him as the conceptual thinker behind the Muftiate, as the major authority in the struggle against "Salafi-Wahhabi views", which, as he wrote himself, "were dominant among the clergy [of the Republic of Tatarstan] since the early 1990s".[8] Iakupov saw it as his task to provide the "Tatar clergy" with a solid foundation beyond Salafism, in the form of a national theological edifice that he called "Ḥanafī traditionalism" (*khanafitskii traditsionalizm*).

It is important to note here that in the early post-Soviet years, "Islamic traditionalism" still had a rather bad image: it was usually linked to the anti-intellectual village Islam of the Soviet period, and to the so-called Qadīmīs (the followers of "blind imitation") of the late imperial age. (In part 6 below, we will return to the perceived opposition of "progressive Jadidism" and "reactionary Qadimism" in Tatar Islamic thought). Thus Iakupov's task was to make "traditionalism" popular, and to raise it to a higher intellectual level. With "his" publishing house *Iman* in his luggage, Iakupov soon turned out to be the right man for bringing "traditionalism" into harmony with a professed rational approach to Islam.

Important for this success was that next to his work as theologian, publisher, educator and religious manager, Iakupov also continued his academic career. According to his autobiography, he took distance learning courses in history at Kazan State (today: Federal) University. In 2003, he was matriculated

6 ADYGAMOV, R.G.: "Na puti k istine i sovershenstvu." In: *Medrese "Mukhammadiia": preemstvennost' traditsii. Materialy nauchnoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi 125-letiiu medrese "Mukhammadiia" i 150-letiiu G. Barudi, 25 oktiabria 2007 g.*, otv. red. i sost. V.M. Iakupov. Kazan: Izdatel'stvo DUM RT, 2008, pp. 64–71.

7 USMANOVA, Dilyara / Ilnur MINNULLIN / Rafik MUKHAMETSHIN: "Islamic Education in Soviet and post-Soviet Tatarstan." In: KEMPER, Michael / Raoul MOTIKA / Stefan REICHMUTH (eds.): *Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and Its Successor States.* London; New York: 2009, pp. 21–66, esp. 50–63.

8 IAKUPOV, Valiulla: *Islam v Tatarstane v 1990-e gody*. Kazan: Iman, 2005, p. 94.

at the Russian Academy of Public Administration (a cadre factory in Moscow), and in the following year he obtained a PhD at Kazan University, with a thesis on the topic of state-Islam relations (in the discipline of "theory of politics/ history/methodology of political sciences").[9] A strong grounding in the academic tradition of Islamic studies was an important asset for Iakupov's project. It is therefore no wonder that in most of his publications we find a serious scholarly apparatus, with references to leading academic scholars of Islam in the secular Oriental research centers of St. Petersburg (Stanislav M. Prozorov) and Moscow (Vitalii V. Naumkin, Vladimir O. Bobrovnikov, Aleksei Malashenko, Iurii D. Arapov, and many others).[10] When asked about the relationship between the Islamic authorities in Tatarstan and the St. Petersburg school of classical Oriental Studies, Iakupov's reply was that "for us they are just like people from heaven (*nebozhiteli*). We have no specialists of that level [in Tatarstan]".[11] This combination of Islamic knowledge with, as we shall see, solid Russian scholarship in the Marxist and then post-Soviet academic tradition distinguished Iakupov not only from most Soviet and post-Soviet Tatar imams (whose knowledge was often limited to conducting the ritual), but also from the younger generation of Islamic students who obtained their professional religious education in Islamic institutions abroad.

As a self-made man between the academic and the religious and political fields, Iakupov underwent several subsequent self-transformations. The most important among these was his "conversion" from a convinced Komsomol functionary[12] to an activist of Islam (that is, a recovering of the religion of his ancestors), and then to the specifically Tatar version of it. But Iakupov was also a characteristic product of his time in so far as he was Russian-educated and made a conscious effort to learn Tatar; according to the Tatar scholar of Islam Azat Akhunov (who knew him for many years), in the first years of his Islamic activities Iakupov neither spoke nor wrote Tatar.[13] From the early 1990s onwards he linked his engagement for Islam with an advocacy for the use of Tatar, and even for its "Islamization", by returning to the Arabic script.

9 Biographical sketch in: IAKUPOV, Valiulla: *Islam segodnia*. Kazan: Iman, 1432/ 2011, pp. 384–386.

10 IAKUPOV, Valiulla: *Anti-islam (o raskol'nicheskoi sushchnosti vakhkhabitov-reformatorov)*. Kazan: Iman, 1427/ 2006, p. 9, footnote 1; p. 23.

11 Interview with Valiulla Iakupov by Alfrid K. Bustanov, Kazan, 30 March 2011.

12 Documents on Iakupov's communist past are on display in the Iakupov museum that was recently opened in the Apanaevskaia mosque in Kazan.

13 Interview with Azat Akhunov by Alfrid K. Bustanov, Kazan, 9 January 2013.

Iakupov's transformations are also reflected in his personal appearance. On photographs of 1989–1991 he was still cleanly shaven, and dressed in Soviet/western style; but from 1992 onwards he grew a mighty beard, and at times appeared in public in Islamic/Arabic dress.[14] After 1998, the long "Wahhabi-looking" beard became severely trimmed, and it also seems that Iakupov lost weight. What underlines the dynamic fluidity of those first post-Soviet years and of the "rediscovery of Islam" is that Iakupov also changed his personal name several times: in 1992 he signed the first number of the (Arabic-script!) newspaper *Iman* with "Vinerulla Yagkup" (in Cyrillic Tatar), which, it seems, was back then already a self-made pen-name, seemingly derived from his original, non-Islamic given name Vener. Later he switched again, from Vinerulla to Valiulla; whether this new name was chosen because of the Arabic meaning ("Friend of Allah", with the Arabic term *wali* perhaps expressing sympathy for Sufi shaykhs) is a matter of speculation. At any event, Iakupov's language and identity changes went hand in hand with the gradual emergence of his national / ethnic interpretation of Islam.

3. The Iman Publishing House

Iakupov's most visible heritage in Russia is the enormous output of the publishing house that he set up in 1990 and directed since then. *Iman* ("Faith") stood out on the Russian Islamic book market: it produced more than a thousand titles, in both Russian and Tatar (with slightly more Tatar than Russian titles).[15] As far as we can judge, all of these publications were formally edited by Iakupov. The usual format of *Iman* publications was little brochures (14 x 20cm, mostly of 50 to 100 pages), printed on cheap paper and in low technical quality. After Islamic literature had practically been non-existent in the late Soviet period, the little *Iman* publications made a huge contribution to the availability of basic Islamic knowledge. The pocket-size *Iman* booklets were sold for an almost symbolic price at makeshift religious kiosks, and sent in huge masses to many mosques in

14 See photos in: IAKUPOV, Valiulla: *Islam v Tatarstane v 1990-e gody*. Kazan: Iman, 2005.

15 For a list of publications in Tatar and Russian languages, see: *"Iman" näshriyatï kitaplarï katalogï*. Kazan: Iman, 2011).

Tatarstan and all over the Russian Federation, where they were distributed among the local Tatar population; and this format is still very popular today.[16]

Iman's first titles, in the early 1990s, comprised prayer guides, rules for the reading of the Quran, expositions of Islamic ethics and family life, and similar basic literature on the regulations of Islam, by many different authors. *Iman* also paid much attention to the "small" genres of the Tatar Islamic tradition, including poetic eulogies of the Prophet (Arabic *munājāt*; Tatar *mönäjätlär*) and invocations of Allah (*du'ā*/ *doga*), as well as small compilations of sermons and prayers (including one of 1993 that included texts of Tatar *abystai*s, that is, of Muslim women who in the Soviet period took on the role of religious leaders).[17] Some of the first Sufi publications in post-Soviet Tatarstan were also produced by *Iman*, in the form of a Naqshbandiyya litany of saints, the *Khatm-i khwājagān*.[18] Also published were the works of the eminent Islamic authority Gabdulkhaq Samatov (1930–2009), the Ufa Muslim Spiritual Administration's long-time *qadi* for Tatarstan.[19] Samatov tried to uphold the continuity of the spiritual chain of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi brotherhood (*ṭarīqa*) in Tatarstan, against the widespread assumption that Sufism had completely disappeared in the Soviet era.[20] Samatov seems to have been one of Iakupov's close contacts in the Islamic wing of the Tatar National Movement of the early 1990s, and one of his teachers.

In addition, *Iman* published booklets on how to read and write (reformed) Arabic-script "Old Tatar" (that is, the vernacular as it was written in Russia before the double alphabet change in the 1920s and 1930s, to Latin and then to Cyrillic),[21] as well as Arabic language aids. These first publications were often translations from the Turkish or Arabic into Tatar or Russian. Equally important were re-editions (in Arabic script) as well as modern Tatar or Russian transla-

16 Similar popular brochures (in Tatar and Russian) are being published by Idris Galiautdin, imam of the Tauba mosque in Naberezhnye Chelny; these publications we found not only in bookshops in Tatarstan but also in Dagestan.

17 ISXAQÏY, R.: *Xaj säfäre. Dogalar.* Kazan: Iman, 1993; ZAKIROVA, R.: *Ärvaxlarïbïznï shatlandïrïyq (ille berenche könendä ütkärelüche tägziya mäjlese).* Kazan: Iman, 2002. See the English translation of the latter item in FRANK, *Tatar Islamic Texts*, pp. 221–234.

18 *Xatem xuja häm doga-i xatem.* Kazan: Iman, 1996, 1997.

19 On this prominent Tatar religious figure see: *Xalïk küngelendäge Gabdelxaq xäzrät.* Kazan: Surgut, 2010; FRANK, *Tatar Islamic Texts*, pp. xx–xxii.

20 SAMATOV, Gabdelxaq: *Millätebezdä Islam dine.* Kazan: Iman, 1998.

21 For these alphabet changes, see BALDAUF, Ingeborg: *Schriftreform und Schriftwechsel bei den muslimischen Russland- und Sowjettürken (1850–1937): Ein Symptom ideengeschichtlicher und kulturpolitischer Entwicklungen.* Budapest: 1993.

tions of pre-revolutionary Islamic works, including classics like Aḥmad Hādī Maqṣūdī's (d. 1941) *'Ibādat-i islāmiyya* as well as his basic reading compendium *Mu'allim-i awwal* (which were reprinted, as simple xeroxes or in Cyrillic transcription, probably already since the late 1980s). While most *Iman* titles were published in 200 copies, a few bestsellers reportedly had print runs of up to 25.000.[22] While these publications were based on pre-revolutionary prints, *Iman* would later also publish Tatar or Russian translations of Tatar or Arabic works that had only been preserved in manuscript form, thus making a serious (although perhaps not always very professional) contribution to the exploration of Tatar Islamic literature.[23]

Yet the early years of post-Soviet Islamic printing were not only a period in which Tatar Muslims rediscovered their own Islamic heritage; they were also a time in which they began to explore the global market of Islam. This is reflected in the fact that among the early *Iman* publications we also find Islamic authors who would later be regarded as representatives of "foreign threats". Thus Iakupov published Ayatollah Khomeini and other Shii authors next to the Pakistani Sunni Abū l-A'lā al-Mawdūdī, as well as authors that are held in high regard by Salafis (like Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya)[24] in a line with the classical standard literature of the Hanafi school of law (like Aḥmad al-Qudūrī's [d. 1037] *Mukhtaṣar*).[25] In the 2000s this broad colorful spectrum was reduced to "traditional" titles, mostly of the Hanafi trend, and often of Tatarstani provenance. Also published were strong anti-"Wahhabi" polemics, both of contemporary and of historical authors.[26]

Another outstanding hallmark of *Iman*, right from the start, was that it also published Tatar and Russian academic literature on Islam and Islamic literature. Several well-known and highly respected historians published their works in

22 *"Iman" näshriyatï kitaplarï katalogï* . Kazan: Iman, 2011.

23 Examples are UTYZ IMIANI, Abd ar-Rakhim ['Abdarraḥīm al-Ūtiz al-Īmānī, d. 1834]: *Zhemchuzhiny raziasnenii. Dzhavakhir al'-baian [Jawāhīr al-bayān]*. Transl. R. ADYGAMOV. Kazan: Iman, 2003; UTYZ IMIANI, Abd ar-Rakhim: *Traktat o vydelke kozhi (Risalia dibaga) [Risāla dibīgha]*. Transl. R. ADYGAMOV. Kazan: Iman, 2003; as well as hitherto unpublished works by Muḥammad-'Alī Chūqrī.

24 AL'-DZHAUZIIA, Ibn Kaiiim: *Prorocheskaia meditsina Islama. Chast' pervaia. At-tybb an-Nabavi*. Kazan: Iman, 2001.

25 Iakupov himself gave an overview of the spectrum of *Iman* publications in his *Islam segodnia*, pp. 232–239.

26 AL-DZHAVZI, Imam Gabdurakhman Abu al-Khasan: *Bor'ba s somneniiami antropomorfistov (Dafg shubakh at-tashbikh [Daf' shubah al-tashbīh]*. Transl. R. ADYGAMOV. Kazan: Iman, 2006.

Iman, among them Damir Iskhakov (a leading intellectual of the Tatar national movement) and Iakh"ia Abdullin (1920–2006, a major representative of Tatar "Mirasism", a concept to which we will return below), and later also other authors who in their scholarly and popular-academic writings contributed to the propagation of the Tatar Islamic heritage. These contemporary scholars – also including Rafik Mukhametshin, Aidar Iuzeev, and Aidar Khabudtinov – obviously saw publishing with *Iman* as a valuable alternative to the state-run publishing houses in Kazan.[27] The result is an intriguing contact zone between religion and academic life.

4. Iakupov's Tatar Traditional Islam

It is only from 2000 onwards that Iakupov began to produce a significant amount of "own" texts. Altogether, he authored at least 57 *Iman* publications, of which 35 in Russian and 22 in Tatar. Next to small brochures of the format described above[28], these titles comprised at least nine hard-cover books (including one edited volume). Broadly speaking, these book publications can be divided into two groups: documentary studies of the development of the Islamic movement and the religious elite in the 1990s and 2000s (with personal memories and valuable photographic material),[29] on the one hand, and Iakupov's own conceptual

27 ISKHAKOV, Damir: *Fenomen tatarskogo dzhadidizma: vvedenie k sotsiokul'turnomu osmysleniiu*. Kazan: Iman, 1997; articles by Iakh"ia ABDULLIN and his colleagues from the "Obshchestvennaia mysl'" section of the Institute of History, Language and Literature in *Islam v Povolzh'e: istoriia i problemy izucheniia. Materialy nauchnoi konferentsii 1989 goda, posviashchennoi 1100-letiiu (po khidzhre) ofitsial'nogo priniatiia Islama Volzhskoi Bulgarii*. Kazan: Iman, 2000, with Abdullin also on the editorial board; MUKHAMETSHIN, Rafik: *Islam v tatarskoi obshchestvennoi mysli nachala XX veka*. Kazan: Iman, 2000; IUZEEV, Aidar: *Tatarskaia filosofskaia mysl' kontsa XVIII–XIX vekov*. Kazan: Iman, 1996; KHABUTDINOV, Aidar: *Millet Orenburgskogo dukhovnogo sobraniia v kontse XVIII-XIX vekakh*. Kazan: Iman, 2000.

28 Among these brochure publications we find: IAKUPOV, Valiulla: *Vakhkhabizm: ponimanie kornei i rolevykh modelei islamskogo ekstremizma*. Kazan: Iman, 2005; IAKUPOV, *Deiatel'nost' DUM RT v 2002 godu*. Kazan: Iman, 2005; YAKUPOV, Veliulla: *Hanefi Mezhebi, onun anlamı ve güncelligi*. Kazan: Iman, 2005; IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam (o raskol'nicheskoi sushchnosti vakhkhabito-reformatorov)*. Kazan: Iman, 2006.

29 IAKUPOV, Valiulla: *Islam v Tatarstane v 1990-e gody*. Kazan: Iman, 2005; *Medrese "Mukhammadiia": preemstvennost' traditsii. Materialy nauchnoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi 125-letiiu medrese "Mukhammadiia" i 150-letiiu G. Barudi, 25 oktiabria 2007 g.*,

reflections of Islam, on the other.[30] According to the words of the rector of the Russian Islamic University in Kazan, Prof. Dr. Rafik Mukhametshin, Iakupov produced his publications very quickly and with much enthusiasm.[31]

Almost all of Iakupov's publications since 2000 display a strong anti-"Wahhabi" tone and reveal the search for "Tatar traditional Islam". The attempt to construct a "patriotic", "national" form of Islam is of course a broader post-Soviet phenomenon that can also be observed in the Muslim-majority republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus. It requires a strong methodological differentiation between a non-registered, "non-official", "imported", "dangerous", and therefore "bad" Islam, on the one hand, and the "traditional" (home-grown) and "officially registered", that is, "good" Islam, on the other. In the eyes of many observers, such a differentiation is an artificial enterprise; and in the post-Soviet reality accusations of being "non-traditional" can easily be used to indiscriminately repress not only all radical Salafi-minded groups (lumped together under the catch-all term "Wahhabi") but also communities that have no clear political agenda, like the South Asian Tablighis and Turkish Muslim lay movements of the Nurcu and Gülen type. Iakupov often attacked all of these "foreign" trends in one breath.[32] Against these foreign interpretations of Islam stands "traditional Tatar Islam" (*traditsionnyi tatarskii islam*), as the form of Islam that is

> traditional for the Tatars, conforming to their mentality – and that means, it is progressive; it was maintained over the millennia – and that means, it is true, correct, and the best that the Tatars can ever get.[33]
>
> Only among the Tatars has the Prophetic Islam (*prorocheskii islam*) been preserved in its special purity, and therefore we [Tatars] are the carriers of the best [Islam], the owners of the special model.[34]

---

otv. red. i sost. V. M. Iakupov. Kazan: Izdatel'stvo DUM RT, 2008; IAKUPOV, Valiulla: *Imamy goroda Kazani*. Kazan: Iman, 1429/2008; IAKUPOV: *Izge Kazan beleshmä*. Kazan: Iman, 1426/2005; IAKUPOV: *Tatarstan imam-khatïyblarï (shahädätnamäle ("ukazlï") ruxaniyat)*. Kazan: Iman, 1426/ 2005; IAKUPOV: *Möftilärebez*. Kazan: Iman, 1425/2005.

30 YAGQUB, Väliulla xäzrät: *Islam aslïna qaytu*. Kazan: Iman, 2006; IAKUPOV, Valiulla: *K prorocheskomu islamu*. Kazan: Iman, 2006; IAKUPOV, Valiulla: *Islam segodnia*. Kazan: Iman, 2011.

31 Interview with Rafik Mukhametshin by Alfrid K. Bustanov, Kazan, 18 January 2013.

32 IAKUPOV: *K prorocheskomu islamu*, pp. 346–407.

33 IAKUPOV, Valiulla: *Mera islama (K problemu adekvatnogo konkretno-istoricheskogo ponimaniia vechnykh shariatskikh istin)*. Kazan: Iman, 1425/ 2004, p. 10.

34 IAKUPOV: *Mera islama*, p. 21.

Let us now briefly discuss a few issues that occupied a central place in Iakupov's "Tatar-Islamic" edifice. These are: (a) the place of Bulghar for the Islamization of the Volga Tatars and the role of the Hanafi school of Islamic law (*madhhab*), (b) the struggle between the 19th- and early 20th-century Islamic modernists (Jadīdīs) and their "traditional" opponents, the so-called Qadīmīs, (c) the challenge of "Wahhabism" and the defense of Sufism, and (d) Islam-state relations in Russia. Debates on these issues unfolded against the background of a considerable fragmentation of the post-Soviet Islamic establishment, with Iakupov's Tatarstani Muftiate being located between the old (Imperial, Soviet and post-Soviet) Muslim Spiritual Administration in Ufa (since 1980 headed by Talgat Tadzhutdin) and the more recent Muftiate in Moscow (directed by Tadzhutdin's former disciple – and now rival – Ravil' Gainutdin). All of these Muftiates work under considerable political pressure from the republican and central authorities, and under close scrutiny by the media.[35]

5. Bulghar and Hanafism

The centerpiece of Iakupov's distinct Tatar Islamic identity is the ancient city of Bulghar, south of Kazan. From Ibn Faḍlān's Arabic travel report we know that the Bulghar rulers adhered to Islam already in the 10th century;[36] in the 13th century Bulghar was destroyed by the Mongols, and later on Kazan took over its functions as the Islamic center of the Volga-Urals. Still, local shrine catalogs and hagiographic narratives show that also in the 18th and 19th centuries the ruins of Bulghar were still an important place of Islamic pilgrimage; according to the legends expressed in these sources, it was the Prophet Muhammad himself who sent three of his companions (*ṣaḥāba*) to Bulghar, so that Islam in the Volga region goes back to the miracles of these saints and their descendants. This religious continuity is accompanied by the conviction that the Tatars of today are also genetically linked to the people of Bulghar.

35 For overviews of the various Muftiates and the polemics among them, see SILANT'EV, Roman A. (ed.): *Islam v sovremennoi Rossii. Entsiklopediia.* Moscow: 2008; and KEMPER: "Mufti Ravil Gainutdin: The Translation of Islam into a Language of Patriotism and Humanism." In: BUSTANOV / KEMPER (eds.): *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language*, pp. 105–142.

36 See, for instance, ZEKI, A.: *Validi Togan, Ibn Fadlân's Reisebericht.* Abhandlungen der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Bd. 24, 3; Leipzig: 1939, pp. 45ff.

Valiulla Iakupov (under whose editorship the major work of the Bulghar hagiographic circle, the *Tavārīkh-i bulghāriyya*, was published in modern Tatar transcription)[37] provided a straightforward defense of these hagiographies as historical reality. From a scientific viewpoint, this claim is untenable; as Allen Frank has shown, the Bulghar legends contain a significant amount of historical contradictions, and already in the second half of the 19th century Muslim scholars of the Volga-Urals like Shihābaddīn al-Marjānī (d. 1889) (whose theological works were also republished under Iakupov's directorship!) were mocking the many historical confusions in the *Tavārīkh-i bulghāriyya*.[38] Still, for Iakupov the *ṣaḥāba* were of utmost importance to prove that Tatar Islam is not just a derivation of another region's Islam (e.g. of Central Asian origin), not imported at a later point but going back directly to the person of Muhammad. In one of his small publications for popular usage – in fact, a modern guide for Bulghar pilgrims –, Iakupov uses emotional arguments for the belief in the early Islamization of Bulghar: he defends the importance of Bulghar's shrines and towers as a "true relic" (*podlinnaia relikviia*) that fills the Tatar visitor with awe and awareness for his religious and ethnic roots. Such relics, he wrote, are very important in the era of science and technology.[39] The *ṣaḥāba* conversion narrative would provide an argument for the claim that Islam came to the Tatars before it got corrupted under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties in the Middle East. By contrast, in his more academic 2011 book *Islam segodnia* ("Islam Today") Iakupov seems to realize that the *ṣaḥāba* stories are not convincing, and does not insist on their veracity; still, here too he uses the old age of Tatar Islam (testified by Ibn Faḍlān's 922 report) to argue that Islam survived among the Tatars in its purest and most authentic form, before "Quranic Islam" (*koranicheskii islam*) was "strangled by the embrace of the hypocrite Arab tribal leadership".[40]

Neither the *ṣaḥāba* legends nor the Ibn Faḍlān report explain the emergence of Hanafism among the Volga Muslims. For defending the Ḥanafī legal school

37 MÖSLIMI: *Tävarixï bolgarïya (Bolgar tarixï)*, prepared for publication and annotated by Sälim Gïyläjetdinov, edited by V. Yagqubov. Kazan: Iman, 1999), 100 pp.

38 FRANK, Allen J.: *Islamic Historiography and 'Bulghar' Identity among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia* (Leiden, 1998). Interestingly, Iakupov served as one of the scientific editors of the Russian translation of Frank's work that appeared in Kazan in 2008: Allen Frank, *Islamskaia istoriografiia i "bulgarskaia" identichnost' tatar i bashkir v Rossii*. Kazan: Rossiiskii islamskii universitet, 2008).

39 IAKUPOV, Valiulla: *Ziiarat [poseshchenie] sviatogo Bulgara*. Kazan: *Iman* 1431/2010), p. 7.

40 IAKUPOV, *Islam segodnia*, pp. 51–52; 95.

as the correct choice of Russia's Tatars, Iakupov therefore has to take recourse to intrinsic qualities that he ascribes to the Hanafi *madhhab*.

> Hanafism stands out as a liberal conception; it is precisely in Hanafism that preference is given to the method of *ra'y* (reflection) over the literalism of the other *madhhab*s; important is the principle of *qiyās* (analogy), which is again a purely rational mental instrument: an expression of the scientific approach that [Hanafism and Islam] also share with the humanities.[41]

And:

> It is time to understand that the Islamic SCIENCES [sic], the *shariat* disciplines, are a scientific activity, with approaches that are equal to those in the humanities.[42]

With other words, the defense of the Ḥanafiyya is based on its "liberalism" and its scientific methodology, its alleged philological approach to the Islamic sources. Religious and secular philological studies are united in this school. – What we observe here is that Iakupov's translation of the Arabic terms *ra'y* and *qiyās* is largely correct, but that he takes their meanings out of the religious sphere and places them into a secular context, as "purely rational" methods. As Iakupov has it, the Tatar scholars have always been tolerant, "innovative" (*novatorskie*, a term that would smack of *bid'a* from a Salafi viewpoint), and progressive.[43]

6. Jadidism and Qadimism

Generally, *ra'y* can mean a scholar's use of his own preference when he has to choose between two possible solutions to a legal case in question; and this agency of the Ḥanafī scholar is often being regarded as a reflection of the customary law practice that was still largely in place in Abū Ḥanīfa's (d. 767) lifetime (an issue that would not quite fit with Iakupov's claim that the Ḥanafī Tatars were always very Sharia-minded). *Qiyās* is the use of analogy to find the unknown solution for one issue by comparing it with the known solution for a similar case. In this latter meaning *qiyās* (as one of the four pillars of Islamic law, according

41 IAKUPOV: *Tatarskoe "bogoiskatel'stvo" i prorocheskii islam*. Kazan: Iman, 2003/ 1424, p. 7.

42 IAKUPOV: *Tatarskoe "bogoiskatel'stvo"*, pp. 32–33.

43 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 18.

to the consensus established after Shāfiʿī [d. 820]) is largely identical with *ijtihād*. With the debate on *ijtihād*, however, Iakupov moves into another minefield, namely the dispute between the Jadīdīs and the Qadīmīs.

In the Volga area, this discourse on the permissibility of *ijtihād* began in the early 19th century, when the Tatar scholar ʿAbdannaṣīr al-Qūrṣāwī (d. 1812) first formulated his defense of *ijtihād* in Islamic law and theology, as a critique of what he regarded as the corruption of Islam by unlawful human speculation (in the form of *kalām*). In the 1870s, the issue was again brought to the fore by Marjānī, who basically shared Qūrṣāwī's points of view; and then in the following decades by many Jadīdīs. Many conservative scholars opposed such a call for *ijtihād*, and Islamic reform in general; these scholars are often referred to as Qadīmīs, as "adherents of the old" (including traditional pedagogical methods).[44]

Since the 1960s and 1970s, several historians in Soviet Tatarstan rediscovered the Jadīdīs as a valuable part of the Tatar cultural heritage ("*miras*"). Marxist scholars like Iakh"ia Abdullin came up with a conceptual framework (which we, for the sake of simplicity, call "Mirasism")[45] in which the religious writings of some Tatar Islamic scholars and intellectuals (especially of the Jadīdīs and their two forerunners, Qūrṣāwī and Marjānī) could be seen, from a Marxist perspective, as expressions of a progressive development towards rationalism, secularism, and "democratic thinking". By contrast, the so-called Qadīmīs were regarded as an expression of stagnation and backwardness, of "obscurantism" (especially if Sufis were involved) and the "blind following of the school masters", that is, *taqlīd*. This dualism – good Jadīdīs versus bad Qadīmīs, investigative *ijtihād* versus dumb *taqlīd* – has remained popular ever since, with *taqlīd* being regarded as equivalent to a rejection of modernization in general; and there have only been few attempts to "rehabilitate" the Qadīmīs from their bad image.[46] In the 1990s, one leading Tatar historian, Rafael' Khaki-

44 For the debates around Qūrṣāwī and Marjānī see KEMPER, Michael: *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, 1789–1889: Der islamische Diskurs unter russischer Herrschaft*. Berlin 1998; KEMPER, Michael: *Sufii i uchenye v Tatarstane i Bashkortostane, 1789–1889: Islamskii diskurs pod russkim gospodstvom*. Transl. by Iskander GILYAZOV. Kazan: Idel'-Press, 2008.

45 DUDOIGNON, Stéphane: "Djadidisme, mirasisme, islamisme." *Cahiers du Monde russe* vol. XXXVI (1–2), 1996: 13–40; LAZZERINI, E.J.: "Tatarovedenie and the 'New Historiography' in the Soviet Union: Revising the Interpretation of the Tatar-Russian Relationship." *Slavic Review*, 40, 4 (1981): 625–635.

46 MUKHAMETSHIN, Rafik: *Tatarskii traditsionalism: osobennosti i formy proiavleniia*. Kazan, 2005; DUDOIGNON, Stéphane: "La question scolaire à Boukhara et au Turkestan russe, du 'premier renouveau' à la soviétisation (fin du XVIIIe siècle–1937)." *Cahiers du Monde*

mov, even declared Tatar Jadidism to be a blueprint for a modern, liberal "Euro-Islam", which he tried to promote as the official Islam of Tatarstan's Muslims.[47]

This black-and-white dichotomy must have been a dilemma to Iakupov; he rejected Khakimov's Jadīdī "Euro-Islam" as the artificial brain-child of an academic politician,[48] but to take, in response, only the Qadīmī heritage of the Tatars as the new model for "traditionalism" would smack of anti-intellectualism. What we suggest here is that Iakupov found a very elegant solution to this problem: he regarded both the Jadīdīs and the Qadīmīs as valuable parts of the Tatar Islamic heritage. This is basically a dialectic approach: the acceptance that the two movements are just different sides of one and the same "progressive" trajectory.

At the same time, Iakupov tried to soften the contradictions between the two. He thus claimed that even Shihābaddīn Marjānī had a strong affection for the site of Bulghar[49] (not mentioning that Marjānī was a fervent critic of the Bulghar hagiographies and the *ṣaḥāba* narratives), and that Marjānī was also a staunch defender of the veracity of Hanafism[50] (while his preference for *ijtihād* actually challenged the strong *madhhab* boundaries). This attempt to unite opposites is also reflected in the publishing program of *Iman*, which comprised leading Jadīd thinkers (as well as Qūrṣāwī and Marjānī's major theological works in which they called for *ijtihād*)[51], but also Qadīmī literature directed against any reforms.[52] This approach amounts to a clear attack on authors like

---

russe vol. XXXVI (1–2), 1996: 133–210. See also the recent monograph by FRANK, Allen J.: *Bukhara and the Muslims of Russia: Sufism, Education, and the Paradox of Islamic Prestige*. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012.

47 KHAKIM, Rafael': *Ternistyi put' k svobode (Sochineniia. 1998–2007)*. Kazan: 2007, e.g. pp. 276–284; KHAKIM, Rafael: *Where is Our Mecca? (Manifest of Euroislam)*. <http://www.kazanfed.ru/en/authors/khakimov/;
KHAKIM, R.: *Dzhadidizm (reformirovannyi islam)*. Kazan: 2010.

48 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, pp. 30–31.

49 IAKUPOV: *Ziiarat [poseshchenie] sviatogo Bulgara*, p. 6.

50 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 18.

51 QURSAVI, Gabdennasïyr: *Keshelärne tugrï yulga kündärü (Äl-irshad lil-gïybad) [al-Irshād lil-'ibād]*. Tatar translation from the Arabic by Zäynep MAQSUDOVA. Kazan: Iman, 1999; MÄRJANI, Shihabetdin xäzrätläre: *Nazuratul xaq* [*Nāẓūrat al-haqq*]. Translated from the Arabic by D. SHAIMURZIN, ed. by V. IAKUPOV. Kazan: Iman, 2001. Also Marjānī's major historical works were edited in Russian translation.

52 AL-KAZANI, Giladzhuddin ibn Mukhiddin as-Sardavi: *Stal'noi klinok protiv novoi metodiki (Nusul al-khadida fi khiliafi al-usul al-dzhadida)* [*al-Nuṣūl al-ḥadīda fī khilāf al-uṣūl al-jadīda*]. Kazan: Iman, 2004.

Iakh"ia Abdullin, who only regarded the pro-*ijtihād* Qūrṣāwī-Marjānī-Jadīdī line of thought as worthy of respect. Iakupov writes:

> People believe that Qūrṣāwī was more liberal than all the other scholars, for he emphasized the necessity of absolute *ijtihād*.[53] But this is symptomatic nonsense, if you wish: a myth: the degree to which a scholar follows *ijtihād* is being regarded as a degree of liberalism. But why should *ijtihād* and liberalism be connected at all?[54]

What we see here is that in Iakupov's conception the Ḥanafī *madhhab* is by nature liberal because of its use of *qiyās* (= *ijtihād*), but that *ijtihād* becomes questionable when it leaves the accepted boundaries of the *madhhab*, for this would no longer be liberal. While arguing against the Mirasist simplifications, Iakupov still follows their major lines of reasoning; he accepts the generally positive, "liberal" character of *qiyās/ijtihād*, and just transfers it from the 19th-century Jadīdīs to the Ḥanafī school in general. What "liberal" is supposed to mean remains vague; seemingly this concept is meant to express the idea of progress, tolerance, and lack of religious fanaticism – which are the core values of "Tatar traditionalism" in Iakupov's vision.

7. "Wahhabism" and Sufism

Iakupov identified "Wahhabism" as a foreign element that was imported from abroad, especially from Saudi-Arabia and the Gulf states. In his polemic writings, he depicts Saudi-Arabia as a satellite of the United States; this brings together his fervent attacks on Salafism with his staunch critique of what he regards as Western materialism and Western global hegemony.[55]

One very widespread way of debunking Salafism / "Wahhabism" in Russia is the accusation of "literalism". Iakupov, too, uses this line of argumentation, and takes the issue of the localization of Allah as an example. The debate starts with the Quranic phrase *thumma istawā 'alā l-'arsh*,[56] which can be translated as

53 The concept of absolute *ijtihād*, *ijtihād muṭlaq* means that a scholar has the right to leave the framework of his *madhhab* if his *ijtihād* brought him to such a solution. In fact, Iakupov erred here, for Qūrṣāwī was no advocate of such an *ijtihād muṭlaq*, but continued to profess his adherence to the Ḥanafī school.

54 IAKUPOV: *Tatarskoe "bogoiskatel'stvo"*, p. 24.

55 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 251.

56 Qur'an, 7:54; and variations of the same verse: 2:29; 10:3; 13:2; 20:5, 59; 32:4, 41:11, 57:4.

"and then [i.e., after the creation of Heaven and Earth,] [Allah] established Himself on the Throne". Iakupov claims that the "Wahhabis" would take this Quranic verse as a proof for maintaining that Allah "sits down", which would reveal their anthropomorphic interpretation of God. In response, Iakupov comes up with a very peculiar comparison:

> The phrase *Allāh istawā* must be translated as "Allah is above [Russian: *prevyshe*] the throne", just like in the phrase "Deutschland über alles", which means "Germany must be above everything else", not in the sense of moving it onto something, for it is not in the Himalayas.[57]

Such an argumentation, and this particular comparison, has of course nothing in common with the traditional Islamic methods of Quranic commentary (*tafsīr*); it rather reflects the author's Marxist thinking and his Soviet higher education, coupled with a sense for provocation. Marxist patterns also appear in Iakupov's frequent use of expressions like "objectively", and "objective data", and in a certain predilection for statistics. In some cases he even quotes Karl Marx and refers to the example of Lenin![58]

In Iakupov's writings, "Wahhabis" further appear as "sectarians" and *raskolniki* (the latter term historically referring to the Russian Old Believers who refused to follow the mid-17th-century Orthodox Church reforms). And while the "Wahhabis" claim to be the adherents of pure monotheism, Iakupov accuses them of having introduced a "holy trinity" into Islam, namely that of Heaven, Throne, and "bodily God";[59] and in the "Wahhabi" aversion to shrine visits Iakupov sees an Indian and Buddhist influence, in one article, or a borrowing from Zoroastrianism, on another occasion.[60] Similarly, according to Iakupov, the "Wahhabis" insist that any Islamic marriage (*nikāḥ*) be conducted in a mosque; this demand, so Iakupov, has no basis in the Islamic tradition and amounts to a "Christianization" of *nikāḥ*.[61] Such allegations are of course meant to turn the "Wahhabi" claim of the purity of their Islamic message upside-down. Striking is also that these kinds of arguments were not uncommon in Soviet ethnographic literature, where scholars constantly attempted to single out "remnants of the pre-Islamic past" in the contemporary Islamic practice, and where Islam was

57 IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam*, p. 16.

58 IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam*, p. 15; IAKUPOV, *Mera Islama*, p. 16.

59 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 254.

60 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 87; IAKUPOV, *Anti-islam*, p. 15.

61 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 264–265.

largely understood as an eclectic mix of pre-existing elements.[62] It is therefore perhaps not completely off the mark to argue that an important element of Iakupov's argumentation follows the epistemology of Soviet anti-religious ethnography. After all, Islamic and Soviet modes of thinking were not so very different, as Iakupov observed himself:

> The collective Soviet thinking, *which was somehow close to the Muslim mentality*, is [now] being washed away under the aggressive influence of Western civilization; and individualist, protestant ethics are being implanted [in its stead].[63]

Other important authorities of "traditional" Islam in the Russian Federation come from the camp of the Sufi brotherhoods; the most well-known representative of these was undoubtedly the Daghestani Shaykh Said-Afandi Chirkeevskii, who also became victim of Islamic terrorism in the same summer of 2012 (though apparently independently from Iakupov's murder).[64] At least one work of Said-Afandi was also published by *Iman*, in Tatar translation.[65] Valiulla Iakupov's relation to Sufism is indeed positive; still, he does not seem to have committed himself publicly to one *ṭarīqa*, or to one specific Sufi master. When discussing Sufism he recognized and respected the place of Said-Afandi's combined Naqshbandiyya / Shādhiliyya group in Daghestan, and the various Kunta-Hajji branches of the Qādiriyya in Chechnya, but he did not argue for a revival of a specific *ṭarīqa* in Tatarstan.[66] To be sure, Iakupov was very much in favor of restoring popular Sufi practices, including the shrine pilgrimage and collective Quran recitations (*khatm*), with the subsequent dedication (Tatar: *baghïshlau*) of the spiritual award to the spirits of great ancestors and Sufi masters.[67] But this is beyond the *ṭarīqa*s, and more in the field of national custom: Iakupov emphasized that it was "the emotional specifics of the national character of the Tatars [which] made the Naqshbandiyya *ṭarīqa* so popular; this is so because

62 DEWEESE, Devin: "Survival Strategies: Reflections on the Notion of Religious 'Survivals' in Soviet Ethnographic Studies of Muslim Religious Life in Central Asia." In: MÜHLFRIED, F. / S. SOKOLOVSKIY (eds.): *Exploring the Edge of Empire: Soviet Era Anthropology in the Caucasus and Central Asia*. Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia, 2011, pp. 35–58.

63 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 276 [italics added].

64 For Said-Afandi's attack on the "Wahhabis" see KEMPER, M.: "The Discourse of Said-Afandi, Daghestan's Foremost Sufi Master." In: BUSTANOV / KEMPER (eds.): *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language*, pp. 167–218.

65 EL-CHIRKAVI, Säyed äfände: *Bäräkätle belemnär khäzinäse*. Kazan: Iman, 2006.

66 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 29.

67 Interview with Valiulla Iakupov by Alfrid K. Bustanov, Kazan, 30 March 2011.

this trend of Sufism prefers the 'silent' *dhikr*, which is carried out without movements of the body, and it rejects the practice of singing like in a choir [during the ritual of the remembrance of Allah], and it stimulates the strict following of the *shariat*."[68] Needless to say, this reasoning – that Tatars are "quiet" by nature and therefore chose the "silent" form of commemoration, not the "loud" *dhikr* – amounts to a gross simplification of the complexity of Sufi practices and ignores the specific debates on the *dhikr* forms that were developed by Muslims in the Russian Empire since the 19th century.[69]

8. Islam and the Russian State

Another important component of Russia's contemporary Islamic discourse is the "inter-faith dialogue" between the major Muftiates and, above all, the Russian Orthodox Church. In his later works Iakupov goes a long way to demonstrate that Tatar Islam and Russian Orthodoxy have always lived in peace, and that they have a lot in common; at one place he seems to indicate that Qūrṣāwī and the Jadīdīs might have been stimulated not by Islamic reformists from the Middle East but by thinkers of the Russian Orthodox Church who, in the 18th century, already emphasized the necessity of returning to the holy texts.[70] He even finds that the notorious Russian Orthodox missionaries of the Kazan Spiritual Academy at times made valuable contributions to the study of the Tatars.

This discourse on Islamic-Orthodox relations is embedded in a broader profession of loyalty towards the Russian state. Iakupov argues that Islam is completely depending on state support: in his view the Sharia is "etatist" in nature, meaning that it always needs a state to support it. As Islam has no church, the role of the church used to be played by the state, either directly or via special institutions like the Muftiates that began to be established in Tsarist Russia under Catherine the Great.

68 IAKUPOV: *Tatarskoe "bogoiskatel'stvo"*, pp. 20–21.

69 For Central Asia, see BABADZHANOV, B.M. / S.A. MUKHAMMADAMINOV: *Sobranie fetv po obosnovaniiu zikra dzhakhra i sama'*. Almaty; Tashkent: Daik Press, 2008; for the North Caucasus, see KEMPER, M.: "Khālidiyya Networks in Daghestan and the Question of *Jihād*." *Die Welt des Islams* 42, 1 (2002): 41–71; for Tatarstan, KEMPER: *Sufis und Gelehrte*, pp. 82–124 passim.

70 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 16.

> Islam, since its very appearance, has been formed as a state religion; accordingly, Islam cannot stay remote from the state but to the contrary, our religion can only exist fully in close cooperation with the state.[71]

Iakupov is not openly suggesting that the Russian Federation should accept Islam as a state religion; but the state is admonished to accept its responsibility for the development of Islam. Without state intervention, so Iakupov, Russia's Islamic scene is not capable of bringing its own affairs in order.[72] The state should support Islamic education (e.g. by giving accreditation to Arabic / Islamic courses at schools) and prevent "Wahhabi" takeovers: in fact, according to Iakupov, several Muftiates – especially in Siberia – "serve the interests of Russia's geopolitical enemies", and their leaders must be replaced by "patriotic clergy".[73] For a representative of Islam, these statements are rather straightforward. The goal is to create an attractive "Russian-Federation-Islam" (*rossiiskii islam*) which will embody Islam "in secular forms".[74] At many occasions, Iakupov implies that this requires the end of the divisions between the various Muslim organizations in Russia, a unification of the sixty-odd Muftiates in the Russian Federation. With this vision, Iakupov seems to suggest that the state should create an Islamic equivalent to the highly hierarchical Russian Orthodox Church, perhaps with a "Muslim Patriarch" on top of the pyramid.

9. Valiulla Iakupov's "Russian Islamic Language"

Our brief overview of Iakupov's major lines of argumentation already revealed numerous examples for the terminology and style that the author employed in his programmatic texts. In this last section we would like to look at Iakupov's writings from a linguistic perspective, by using a model that we explored in 2012 with a number of Russian-language texts written by other Islamic authorities.

In that experiment we selected the writings of several Muftis, preachers and Islamic intellectuals and tried to find out whether one can speak of the emergence of a common "Islamic Russian", that is, of a specific sociolect that all

71 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 27.
72 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, pp. 19–22.
73 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 272.
74 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 54.

participants in the contemporary discourse of Islam in Russia share. We paid particular attention to the introduction of Arabic / Islamic loan words into the Russian language, to the use of Russian religious terms that originate from the context of the Russian Orthodox Church, and to the use of Western sociological terminology. Roughly speaking, our case studies revealed that contemporary "Islamo-Russian" comprises at least three "variants", or styles: one style we label "Arabism" (because it is characterized by the massive use of Arabic loanwords without Russian translation), the second style we suggest to call "Russianism" (because its adherents attempt to avoid Arabic loanwords for Islamic terms, and search for Russian religious equivalents instead), and the third variant we described as "Academism" (because it contains significant secular Marxist or Western academic repertoires). Important to note is that each of these three "variants" of Islamic Russian is used not by one single camp of the broad Islamic spectrum in Russia but by *several* of them, in fact: by competitors and enemy pairs. Thus Sufis and Salafis alike tend to use huge amounts of Arabisms; Russia's competing Muftis tend to use the "Russianism" variant (avoiding Arabisms and appropriating existing Russian terms instead); and the sociological parlance of "Academism" is especially widespread among intellectual projects of Islam, including not only Tatar "Mirasism"/"Euro-Islam" (as mentioned above) but also a number of Russian converts to Islam who attack each other on the question whether ultra-orthodox Sunnism or radical Shiism will eventually save Russia. Finally, we observed that some Islamic authors develop techniques of code-switching in order to reach out to different audiences and readers.[75] Where on this spectrum would we have to locate the "style" of Valiulla Iakupov?

There are many instances where Iakupov appropriated Russian terms of Church Slavonic provenance for Islamic meanings, as for example when he uses the "Islamic credo" (*islamskoe kredo*) in parallel to the Arabic term *'aqīda*. But a larger part of Iakupov's "Russianisms" seems to have roots in the Soviet discourse of Islam, in the "administrative" language of the Council for Religious Affairs (many items of which have by now become almost standard usage). Thus Iakupov constantly refers to the religious leaders of Islam as "servants of the cult" (*sluzhiteli kul'ta, sviashchennosluzhiteli*), or as "clergy" (*dukhovenstvo*);

75 BUSTANOV / KEMPER (eds.): *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language*; KEMPER M. / A. BUSTANOV: "Islam i russkii iazyk: sotsiolingvisticheskie aspekty stanovleniia obshcherossiiskogo islamskogo diskursa." In: *Kazanksoe islamovedenie* 2013 (1), forthcoming.

and the religious practice itself is the "religious cult".[76] The same Soviet connection is obvious in his reflections on "Muslim sectarianism" (*musul'manskoe sektanstvo*), "heresies" (*eresy*), "split-off sects" (*raskol'nicheskie sekty*), "cult-related buildings" (*kul'tovye zdaniia*), and "core community of the mosques" (*aktivy pri mechetiakh*). This whole set of terminology was characteristic for the official documents and statements of the Soviet Muftiates and the state organs that directed them; what characterizes this pool of terms is that it emphasizes not religion (the religious dogma, or the religious practice and experience) but, in a very dry form, the administration and control of religion by state bodies.[77] The same language could also be found in the Soviet anti-religious literature.[78] Iakupov's borrowings might not be a coincidence: and as one of his co-workers mentioned in an interview, in the Perestroika years Russia's Muslims turned to atheistic and anti-religious literature to obtain basic information on their religion.[79]

Other Russian terms in Iakupov's personal discourse can be understood as a form of "Christianizing" Islamic concepts; and these are often cases where one would have expected a strong Tatar influence, and thus Tatar Islamic loanwords of Arabic origin. We find these elements in phrases like "from the arsenal of God-service the Tatars pay special attention to the dua [*du'ā*], which they create both individually and in congregation" (*iz arsenala bogopoklonenii tatary vydeliaiut dua, kotoroe tvoriat kak individual'no, tak i soborno*); here both *bogopoklonenie* (lit. "bowing to God") and *soborno* ("in congregation") appear as obvious borrowings from Russian Orthodox parlance.[80] As we see here, the prayer (*molitva*) is not "done" or "read", as other authors of Tatar provenance would have it,[81] but "created" (from Russian *tvorit'*), which speaks of a Christian origin (there is no analogy in the Islamic terminology). Note also that Iakupov's form *dua* ("invocation of Allah") is closer to the academic transliteration (which would be *du'ā*) than to the Tatar vernacular form (*doga*). And terms derived

76 IAKUPOV: *Islam v Tatarstane*, pp. 4, 6, 26; IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam*, p. 4.

77 For the terminology of Soviet Islamic Russian see in particular KEMPER, M. / Sh. SHIKHALIEV: "Administrative Islam: Two Soviet Fatwas from the North Caucasus." In: BUSTANOV / KEMPER (eds.): *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language*, pp. 55–102.

78 For example *Populiarnye lektsii po ateizmu* (Moscow, 1962), pp. 250–274.

79 Interview with Nail' Garipov by Alfrid K. Bustanov, Kazan, 14 January 2013.

80 IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam*, p. 29. Cf. his usage of *tvorit' namaz* on p. 34.

81 For example: BUSTANOV, A.: "Rafail' Valishin's 'Anti-Wahhabi' Sufi Traditionalism." In: BUSTANOV / KEMPER (eds.): *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language*, p. 255. Still, Iakupov uses the Tatar variant of "to read namaz" in other publications: IAKUPOV: *Islam v Tatarstane*, p. 32; IAKUPOV: *Mera islama*, p. 4.

from (or related to) the Russian *sobor* ["cathedral"] have already become mainstream in Russian Islamic texts; thus also Iakupov would speak of the *sobornaia mechet'*, in place of the Arabic *dzhuma* [*jum'a*] *mechet'*. The postulate of the "communal character" (*sobornost'*) of Islam, this "true collectivism"[82] (again possibly derived from a Marxist framework) in Valiulla Iakupov's narrative underlines that there is only one correct way of practicing Islam (which would exclude the Salafis who perform the prayer in a slightly different manner, by raising their hands more than once).[83]

In his attempt to find appropriate Russian terms (also in compounds like "Islamic Orthodoxy" [*islamskaia ortodoksiia*] and "commonly accepted Sharia" [*obshchepriznannyi shariat*]),[84] Iakupov comes close to the style of the well-known Moscow imam Shamil' Aliautdinov (b. 1974), who in his sermons also refers to the "canons (*kanony*) of Islam", and who in his writings says he offers the "canonically" approved theological decisions.[85] Taken from a Christian context, these expressions are obviously meant to replace terms from the word field of Arabic *ijmā'*, i.e. the "consensus" of the Muslim scholars on a certain issue. The effect of using "canonical" instead of "consensus" is of course that the legal decision in question is being presented as an inflexible law, as the only "correct" way of Islam for all times (whereas "consensus" would emphasize the open negotiation act). For both authors, such linguistic choices are pretty natural: just like Shamil' Aliautdinov explains that his translation of the meaning of the Quran is above all addressing readers who formulate their thoughts in the Russian language,[86] so also Valiulla Iakupov uses Christian analogies in order to make Islamic problems understandable "for a reader educated in a Christianocentric educational space (*v khristianotsentrichnom obrazovatel'nom prostranstve*)".[87] Both authors also have no problems in referring to non-Islamic authors, including the classics of Russian literature (e.g. Chekhov and Tolstoi in the writings of Aliautdinov, Saltykov-Shchedrin for Iakupov) and European socio-

82 IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam*, p. 29

83 In the original *bestolkovoe mel'teshenie nenuzhnykh dopolnitel'nykh zhestov*; IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam*, p. 30.

84 IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam*, p. 6; IAKUPOV: *Islam v Tatarstane*, p. 33.

85 BUSTANOV, A.: "Beyond the Ethnic Traditions: Shamil' Aliautdinov's Muslim Guide to Success." In: BUSTANOV / KEMPER (eds): *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language*, p. 150.

86 See the subtitle for his book: ALIAUTDINOV, Sh.: *Sviashchennyi Koran: Smysly. Bogoslovskii perevod.* St Petersburg: Dilia, 2012.

87 IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam*, p. 22.

logists. But while both authors use the same linguistic instruments, they maintain very different views; Aliautdinov repeatedly rejected the idea of a special "Tatar Islam" that was so dear to Iakupov, and its claim to veracity; while Iakupov, when we asked him whether he would count the energetic Aliautdinov among the leaders of the Muslims in the Russian Federation, gave a negative reply.[88] This of course confirms our observation, mentioned above, that pairs of opponents within the Islamic discourse often employ similar linguistic instruments and techniques, in order to reach out not only to their followers but also to their adversaries. In fact, the joint use of a given Islamo-Russian style or variant seems to keep the overall Islamic discourse together.[89]

10. Code-switching to "Arabism"

While Iakupov thus put much emphasis on the translation of Islamic terms into Russian (e.g. *etot mir* for Arabic *dunyā*, "this world"; *zapretnoe* and *dozvolennoe* for *ḥarām* and *ḥalāl*),[90] in some of his writings we also find passages where ample use is being made of loanwords, like for instance in the following defense of the *madhhab* system, and of the Ḥanafiyya in particular:

> For this reason there is the important and topical task that we have to fulfil, namely that when *ḥadīth*s and *ḥukm*s of a *madhhab* are in contradiction, we follow the *ḥukm*s of the *imām*s of the *fiqh*, because there is the danger of falling into the sin [Russian *grekh*!] of following an abrogated *ḥadīth*, even more so as Abū Ḥanīfa, being a [representative of the] *ṭābi'īn*, operated exclusively [with *ḥadīth* material] from the reliable *sunna*.[91]

Such passages with many untranslated Arabic loan words might result from insufficient editorial work; and indeed, some brochures of Iakupov's production remind us of the "wild" popular Islamic *samizdat* publications of certain village

88 Interview with Valiulla Iakupov by Alfrid K. Bustanov, Kazan, 30 March 2011.

89 KEMPER: "Comparative Conclusion: 'Islamic Russian' as a New Sociolect?" In: BUSTANOV / KEMPER (eds.): *Islamic Authority and the Russian Language*, pp. 403–416.

90 IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam*, p. 9.

91 IAKUPOV: *Mera islama*, p. 41. Original: «Поэтому так важна и актуальна для нас задача при противоречии хадисов и хукмов мазхаба, следовать хукмам имамов фикха, т.к. есть опасность впадения в грех следования отмененному хадису, тем более, что Абу Ханифа, будучи табигином, оперировал исключительно достоверной сунной». Note that here the Arabic letter *'ayn* is rendered in a Tatar form, as [g].

preachers (as for instance the Siberian Tatar Rafail' Valishin (1956–2012) whose style we analysed elsewhere).[92] Probably the omission of Russian equivalents or explanations occurred rather automatically, in a style close to the spoken form of "Islamo-Russian" that comes naturally in disputes and conversations among specialists. Seemingly the author expected that his readers were already sufficiently acquainted with the Islamic vocabulary so that Russian synomyms for *ḥukm* ("judgment"), *sunna* and *ḥadīth*, but also for *ṭābi'īn* ("successor of the successors of the Prophet") were not necessary if the author wrote this passage for "insiders". In addition, "Arabism", as the massive use / creation of Arabic loanwords for concepts that could also be expressed through Russian equivalents, might also serve the purpose to demonstrate the author's good knowledge of Arabic and Islam, and to elevate his scholarly status in the eyes of the readers. What is interesting in the quote above is that between all these Arabisms, Iakupov still used a Christian Orthodox concept, namely the term *grekh* "sin". This text passage thus provides a good example for code-switching, from the dominant style "Russianism" to "Arabism" and back.

11. Arabic-Russian Fusions

Next to "Russianisms" and "Arabisms", Iakupov also frequently uses what one might regard as modern media terminology, e.g. when he refers to the current Arab Spring as a *pereformatirovanie* ("re-formatting") of the Arabic World.[93] More striking are neologisms and new phrases that he creates on the basis of words of Arabic and Russian/European origins. Thus we find rather innovative word connections like *tsikl namaza* (in the sense of "performance of all parts of one particular prayer"), *rabstvo khadisovedeniia* ("the servitude to the *ḥadīth* sciences", a critique of the Wahhabis' obsession with *ḥadīth*), *vakhkhabitskii kholding* ("Wahhabi holding", the idea that Wahhabis set up huge networks not only in the religious sphere but also in economy and politics), *koranicheskie medzhlisy* ("private gatherings of Muslims for reading the Quran"),[94] *revaivalizatsiia islama* ("Islamic revivalism"), *prorocheskii islam* ("Prophetic Islam"),

92 BUSTANOV: "Rafail' Valishin's "Anti-Wahhabi" Sufi Traditionalism," p. 235.

93 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 54.

94 YAGQUB, Valiulla: *Märxümnärgä yardäm itü turïnda*. Kazan: Iman, 1426/ 2005, p. 15; IAKUPOV: *O pomoshchi dusham umershikh*. Kazan: Iman, 1426/ 2005), p. 16.

ramochnaia shariatskaia norma ("Sharī'a framework")[95], *arsenal bogopoklonenii* ("forms of divine service"), *fikkhicheskii pliuralizm* ("pluralism in Islamic law") and *pravovernyi khanafitskii mazkhabicheskii islam* ("Orthodox Ḥanafī Madhhabī Islam").[96] A striking case of creatively mixing church repertoires with Western sociology language is also *primordial'naia grekhovnost'* ("the concept of the primordial / eternal sin"), which Iakupov ascribed to the "Wahhabis".[97]

These neologisms serve multiple functions in Valiulla Iakupov's narratives. On the one hand, they clearly demonstrate Iakupov's desire to fit Islamic phenomena into the framework of Western social sciences. In fact, he is bringing Arabic words into the Russian academic framework, turning, for example, the concept of legal pluralism (which usually refers to the co-existence of several legal systems in one particular community) into what he calls *fiqh* pluralism (*fikkhicheskii pliuralizm*, meaning the mutual recognition of the four Sunni *madhhab*s). On the other hand, as a well-educated author with a solid grounding in Russian classics, Iakupov tried to create colourful labels for the topics in question, to formulate short and clear designations for complex social phenomena.

12. Conclusion: Form and Content in Iakupov's Programmatic Writings

Valiulla Iakupov's style of writing on Islamic topics was diverse and not without contradictions. Thus while Iakupov strove to protect Tatar culture and the use of the Tatar language in the mosques, his own texts are full of borrowings from Christian terminology, and his target audience is, to a large degree, Russian-speaking and Soviet-educated. Iakupov regularly used Arabic words, but he converted them into an academic jargon that is close to media language. This diversity in style can be explained by the author's attempt to reach out to several audiences. First of all, Iakupov appealed to the state, demanding support and direct state intervention against the "foreign threats". Accordingly, some of Iakupov's texts are full of administrative vocabulary that is very familiar to state officials, and of religious "Russianisms" that are close to Church officials. Second, as a member of the Tatar scholarly community, Iakupov also targeted

95 IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam*, p. 29.
96 IAKUPOV: *Mera islama*, p. 41.
97 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 279.

academic circles in Kazan, whether secular, religious, or mixed. Finally, another strategy presupposed the usage of the oversimplified "bad Islam / good Islam" dichotomy: while defining and defending Tatar "traditional" Islam, Valiulla Iakupov was forced to express himself in terms clear not only to the Salafis (who share the black-and-white perspective) but also to the broader public that demands clear-cut answers to complex questions, and that is not willing to engage in a discussion of nuances.

A key for understanding these linguistic and discursive complexities is that Iakupov shared specific discursive techniques with those whom he attacked in his writings. In our article, we observed this with the examples of "Mirasism" (which Iakupov attacked for their simplifications, but whose simplifications he also appropriated when it was useful, as seen in the issue of "liberalism" and *ijtihād*), of "Wahhabism" (whose obsession with Islamic purity he adopts by turning it against them), and finally in the comparison with Moscow Imam Aliautdinov, whose style of rendering Islamic concepts in Russian is very close to that of Iakupov, although Aliautdinov, as a universalist, feels no sympathies for a "national" brand of Islam.

Interestingly, when Iakupov creatively appropriated and adapted terms from a Christian context, he did that in full awareness. As he noted in the context of his employment of the words "church" and "clergy" in Islamic contexts, "when using the Russian language we are forced to use a number of terms that obtain some special nuanced meanings when used with respect to Islam; they should not be read in the Orthodox meaning."[98] What we see here is that Iakupov fully realized the implications of his language use. Furthermore, he also reflected upon the language strategies of his opponents, the "Wahhabis", and pointed out that their preference for the Russian language leads to a gradual Russification of Russia's Muslims; the "Salafitization" of the youth comes via enforcing the use of the Russian language in the mosques.[99] What Iakupov does not fully spell out here – but what he must have realized as well – is that also he himself made a significant contribution to the development and propagation of the new Russian Islamic language.

98 IAKUPOV: *Islam segodnia*, p. 20.

99 IAKUPOV: *Mera islama*, p. 4; IAKUPOV: *Anti-islam*, p. 34.