

# HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL DESCRIPTION OF THE METHODOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE SYSTEM OF RELIGIO SYMBOLS

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Where a person can speak -

One must also know how to remain silent here

Ludwig Wittgenstein

## Abstract

In the article, the author discusses the theoretical aspects of religious symbols and signs, which are little studied in the system of sociological knowledge with specific methodological conceptual aspects, on the basis of religious-ecological and visual sociological approach. Religious symbols have been analyzed in different contexts in a number of sectoral areas of philosophy and history. However, its periodic transformation has not been systematized in scientific research. Therefore, this article focuses on how the sociological aspects of the problem acquire scientific content on the basis of how they are theoretically and empirically interrelated.

**Keywords:** religious symbols, sanctity, rationality, irrationality, taboo, visual sociology, photography, religious ecology, thinking, observation.

## INTRODUCTION

Symbolic thinking is related to periodic reality in man. When we look around carefully, we feel that we live in a world of symbols hidden in controversy. As we leaf through the book, or follow the reality on social media, we come across symbols that are understandable and important to us. The letters of the alphabet, a combination of words consisting of arithmetic numbers, give rise to a symbolic observation. As we enter the world of symbols, we learn about religious symbols, symbols in medicine, currency, traffic rules, ornamental symbols in the field of art, and special symbols in the

world of computers that we use to receive information.

As the world of humanity (civilization) develops at a rapid pace, many symbols and signs that reveal certain events and processes appear or are felt to be needed. In particular, the information that the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan should have a badge and standard (flag) of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was disseminated during the presidential elections scheduled for October 24, 2021. An amendment was made to the Law "On guarantees of the activity of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan". The law defines the description of the President's

mark and standard (flag), the procedure for their official use is determined by the President

Let us now turn directly from the subject to the subject of religious symbols and signs. "Religious phenomena are naturally divided into two main categories: a) beliefs and b) rituals. The first is a state of mind in which they are present in the imagination; the second is the specific modes of action. There is a significant difference between these two classes of scientific evidence that separates thinking from action" [2; 216]. Mirche Eliade, a well-known theologian of the twentieth century, said, "The symbolic image of contemplation not only attracts the attention of children, writers and ignoramuses, but it also depends on human nature, spoken language and figurative thinking that reflect human nature. Symbols and signs reflect some, more deeply observable aspects of being that do not fit into any way of thinking. It is inappropriate to associate symbols, signs, images, myths and legends with some kind of psychic imagination, which reveals the most hidden aspects of human existence. The study of symbols and signs teaches us a deeper understanding of man in the future" [3; 114].

American sociologist J. Turner connects symbols with rituals and offers a four-way study of its structure:

1) symbolic; 2) valuable; 3) feeling with the body; 4) based on roles. Rituals and ceremonies consist primarily of a set of symbols and signs, and symbols define social behavior as a simple part of rituals in a person's society. Second, symbols provide information about the value system and their hierarchy. Third, if any system of ceremonies is viewed as a sign of purpose, then of course a certain level of scientific religious knowledge is required from the researcher for interpretation.

After more than 20 years of field research and expert inquiries on the chosen topic, we have learned to create a sense of immunity to various myths, myths and supernatural phenomena based on symbols and signs. In the process of research, we analyze the problem, which includes the study of archetypes (K.G.Yung), taboos (Z.Freud) and elements of vandalism

based on ignorance in the sanctuaries, shrines and shrines of Ansar artifacts, artifacts and objects of recent and distant history. , we were able to generate a certain amount of knowledge for research and analysis. Not only ordinary people, but many people claiming to be researchers or scientists do not pay much attention to the environment, due to the perfect mastery of the simplest research methods, theory and methodology, pay as much attention as possible to socio-religious phenomena, especially the process between religion and secularism. experiences such as not giving up, observing reality, skipping changes in periodic-circular situations can be observed at almost every step.

### Materials and methods

In the process of studying the connection between rituals and symbols in the example of sanctuaries and shrines, they can be interpreted not only in some sense as a stage role or masking process of our lives accustomed to social and spiritual calming, but also as a sign of social and cultural innovation of globalization. Therefore, the study of activities based on symbols and signs, to some extent, serves not only to preserve our culture, but also to determine the dynamics of future transformation of identity, the factors of our cultural development as a nation.

All popular religious beliefs, whether simple or complex, have one aspect. They require the classification of real or ideal events that people imagine into two classes, usually defined by two different terms, two mutually opposing types that fully describe the events that take place using secular and religious words. While one side of the world in which we live embodies "holiness" in order to express religious processes, the other is manifested in the core of religious consciousness and thinking, which encompasses aspects of secularism. Beliefs, myths, beliefs, narrations are a system of ideas or concepts that express the nature, characteristics and possibilities of the phenomena of "holiness", the interrelationships in the formation of historical content and the nature of their interaction with secular events. However, we must recognize

that in addition to the so-called "gods" or "spirits" as sacred phenomena, physical objects are also reflected in religious phenomena. To them - some mountain peak or cave, tree, spring, stone, tree branch, old, ancient house, in short, anything can be said to be sacred [4; 217].

In the scientific literature, "holiness" is explained in connection with mysticism. The word "mystic" (from the Greek *mystikós* - secret, secret) - means "to close one's eyes", "to touch on a religious subject." "Mysticism" (secularism) refers to some supernatural, mysterious things and phenomena that "cannot be achieved by simple methods and intellectual aspirations" [5; 18]. In the so-called mysticism in the world, it is emphasized that it is impossible to think about the primary causes, that is, the "Reality" which is the "Truth" in itself. Because it is not the object of pure consciousness or contemplation. It is not possible for a mystic to study the reality being studied in order to understand it using simple methods. Neither philosophy, nor psychology, nor sociology have the ability to reveal its essence through thinking. The ability to see some of its aspects can be achieved only through the eye of the heart, gnosis, "writes the famous mystic Evelyn Underhill [6; 17].

"Religious phenomena naturally fall into two main categories: beliefs and rituals. The first is a state of mind in which they are present in the imagination; the latter are specific modes of action. There is a significant difference between these two classes of facts that separates thinking from action" [6; 217]. They are represented in science in the form of taboos. "In other words, certain types of taboos can be distinguished: 1) natural or direct taboos, which are the result of hidden power (mana), associated with some person or thing; 2) It is also a taboo that arises from the same power, mastered by someone, or indirectly; a) mastered taboo; b) a taboo imposed by a priest, a captain or another person; 3) the taboo that constitutes the middle ground between two other species, that is, when two factors are taken into account, for example, as the male assimilates the female" [7; 386]. As holiness is applied to the environment, the possibilities

of taboo increase. Taboo is gradually finding its expression in reality.

"For us, the meaning of taboo differs in two opposite directions. On the one hand, it means "holy", "sanctified", on the other hand - it means "terrible", "dangerous", "forbidden", "unclean" (jinn, devil). So, something that requires caution is related to taboo. In fact, the taboo is manifested in prohibitions and restrictions. The phrase "sacred fear," which we often use in scientific reasoning, often corresponds to the meaning of taboo" [8; 386].

The study and analysis of religious phenomena plays an important role in the sociology of religion. "Religious events are naturally divided into two main categories and are reflected in beliefs and ceremonies. The first is characterized by the presence of a state of mind in the imagination, while the second is subject to certain modes of action. In the available evidence, there are significant differences between these two approaches that separate thinking from action" [8; 216]. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the characteristics of thinking and imagination when entering into religious relations. In it, as a researcher, we distinguish between important aspects of rationality and irrationality.

As we have noted, taboos are hidden in any religious event. In this sense, based on the identified object, we can distinguish specific types of taboos: 1. Hidden (divine, supernatural, mysterious. K.K.) power ("Mana" - representatives of social anthropology in the scientific literature use the word *mana* "hidden", invisible "state") which is the result of a natural or direct taboo associated with a person or thing (object, thing); 2. An indirect taboo arising from a hidden power, mastered by someone or something. It manifests itself in the following forms: a) assimilated; b) taboo imposed by other persons (priest, captain, etc.).

A taboo that bypasses the middle balance between two opposing species, that is, a combination of two factors, such as the normative prohibitions imposed on one over the other, such as a man appropriating a woman for marriage" [7; 387]. In general, we tend to

ignore taboos set by someone or something around us, some taboos satisfy us, some we are accustomed to pursuing as part of our way of life or thinking. In our view, it is concentrated in daily life as a product of many years of social or historical memory. Along with the laws of nature, it also reflects the ideological relations in the process of constant change of society.

Any social system must adapt to certain conditions in order to survive. If we correctly understand one of these universal conditions, that is, the conditions that meet the total human needs in society, we will have sociological laws. If we can show that a particular institution in a particular society conforms to the social norms of the existing society, we can speak in detail about the "social image and behavior" of that institution. In the scientific literature, institutions are classified as "general" (sociological origin) and "private" (historical origin). It is the task of the sociologist to determine the first case by comparative method, and the task of the historian to determine the second case by means of written sources. In the absence of sources based on written and social research, a cultural anthropologist (ethnologist) can construct hypotheses based on oral discussion.

In this article, we will highlight the theoretical and methodological approaches to the historical transformation and social dynamics of religious symbols and signs in this aspect. It relied on a "religious-ecological" method to organize the scientific process. The high importance of this method in the study of modern theology is recognized by many researchers. The founder of the method of "religious ecology" or religious ecology is the Swedish anthropologist and specialist in the history of religion A. Hultkrants, whose main goal is "to determine the indirect impact of the environment on religion" [9; 63].

The ecological-religious study of a particular area will depend on a number of interrelated views and opinions. First of all, it is based on the geographical environment, that is, the substrate (the basis that forms the basis of an event or situation), which forms the economic

activities of the indigenous population "[10; 3]. For this reason, the coverage of the issue under study was not based solely on information and sources from the library and archives. We went as far as possible to find people who understood or witnessed the essence of the problem, as well as how well they approached their approach to this scientific problem.<sup>1</sup>

The study of religious symbols is covered at different levels in source studies, ethnography, and history, depending on the object of study. Although sociology, especially in the field of social anthropology, has taken a generally scientific conceptual approach to the problem, it has not directly delved into its regional or territorial aspects. "There are three distinctive features in the symbols. These consist of exegetic, operational, and situational parts. The role played by its performers in the system of exegetical ceremonies consists of a set of explanations given by the researcher. In the operational situation - the role, status, status, esoteric (imagining reality through mystical knowledge in people) of people of different ages and genders during ceremonies is understood to represent the performance of roles to the situation, interpretation of events and intrinsic logic. When the researcher evaluates the situation, he or she uses the available information to provide a summary of how the members, ie the participants, feel about the ceremony"[11; 41].

In the study of religious symbols and signs, we have chosen the "visual anthropological approach", a unique method of modern sociology. The visual components of social reality, i.e., the components that are perceived with the naked eye or a keen eye and inevitably have a material basis, significantly affect the perception of the modern world. In the socio-cultural space that surrounds a person, various forms of visual forms (photography, drawings, advertising, cinema, media samples, architecture, sculpture) that transcend the boundaries of artistic creation and have become an integral part of everyday life play an important role. A new ratio of verbal and visual, real and virtual is built, there is a need to develop the visual ability of individuals, the ability to "read" visual symbols.

Today, the communication between people itself is becoming more and more visual in nature. For social researchers, ignoring the visual aspects of reality in the current situation, important social problems and events can lead to the exclusion of science from the scope of study. Understanding this situation in the early years of the 21st century led to a "linguistic turn" in the social sciences, in particular, sociology, cultural studies, social anthropology and philosophy. Filled and enriched in the virtual space, the role of visual images in bringing reality to a modern structure was highlighted and remembered. Today, photography occupies a special place among visual media. In many ways, it was the development of photography and the mass publication of photographic images that led to the rapid enrichment of everyday life with visual images. Based on the object of our study, we show the problem on the basis of visual data, that is, the sociological characteristics of the sanctuary and shrines.

The photograph appears in the mid-nineteenth century and represents a "special place in memory." In the midst of a continuous stream of photographic events, we have the opportunity to "stop" memorable moments in a unique way and, if necessary, try to save them for "eternity". In photographs, we refine symbols and signs that exist or have been rediscovered by us. When we understand reality in photographs, we can document it as important, necessary aspects of sociological past and present socio-cultural development, socio-political mood, ideological and historical roots of some social norms.

The uniqueness of photography lies in the fact that in it the independent, self-valued visual texts of culture are at the same time a means of appearance and study that falls within the boundaries of social reality. Moreover, the object of understanding the problem posed today is often not the task of documenting photographic data, but the lens, i.e., the view, presented on the basis of the gaze and views of its photographic agents as a particular event. Exploring how photographs form representative meanings in a socio-cultural context is becoming a topical issue.

Researchers believe that while using visual methods, it is necessary to raise its scientific status to a higher level. In particular, Russian sociologists E. Rozhdestvenskaya and V. Semenova note that visualization "still has a" marginal "status in fundamental sociology" [12]. However, it can be acknowledged that in European and American sociology, visual methods have already become a symbol of intellectual analysis, a symbol of interpretation and representativeness in modern research. It is useful for today's researcher to be able to easily reflect his or her reflections in visual images, symbols, and patterns. Through media interaction, information that has become the media information and visual world is becoming a major symbol of modern society. Photographs can instantly "explode" any society that is becoming more civilized. Visual observation of social and historical memory through the study of the possibilities of the world in the socio-cultural imagination allows the acquisition of important information.

## Result and discussion

The question arises: Can non-professional images have scientific content in terms of their significance? Judy Weiser, a well-known anthropologist and photographer, says: "As simple images show us the realities of people's daily lives, they give us the impression that they are 'mirroring existing memory.'" It should be noted that the emotional aspects of the images leave a deep imprint on people's hearts and minds with a valuable content, rather than what they see with their eyes and eyes "[13]. Visual images are showing new methodological possibilities as a specific research method in modern sociology. In quantitative research, a programmer can change numbers and figures in one direction or another. In qualitative research, it is not possible to record on paper the emotions, experiences, and situations that the respondent has voiced. But visual images can be placed in articles and books with a whole look. At the same time, images allow a person to think, make decisions, and invent and create something new.

An informed society is teaching people the ability to not only control but also manage information in their minds. As the photos are taken, both adults and children are now trying to embody the human figure as little as possible. Suddenly, as pictures taken without warning spread on the internet, people are realizing that it can have a huge negative impact on people's psyche and health. There is a risk that any image taken in the form of a joke on the phone will appear on social networks at any time. It is therefore impossible not to notice that an internal culture is emerging and evolving in the social space, that it exists in society.

If we study the processes of institutionalization of visual sociology, the first references to it begin in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In particular, from 1896 to 1916, the *American Journal of Sociology* published research and issues related to serious social problems in black and white and, in some cases, color photographs. In general, photographs appear in the mid-nineteenth century. In it, "a special place in memory" began to take shape as a kind of attempt to "stop" and preserve memorable moments in the midst of a continuous flow of events [14]. Therefore, in the sociological understanding of photography can be described as a document that reflects in a sense important aspects of socio-cultural development of the past and present, socio-political mood, ideological processes, social norms.

The uniqueness of photography is that it can be considered as a means of information of social reality, reflecting the memories of the period as a visual text of independent and self-valued events of the existing culture. Many disciplines, including ethnography, art history, and anthropology, compare photographs to documented text based on their research subject. In sociology, visuality is manifested as a socio-cultural world of realities presented on the basis of the views of the people (agents) who photographed this or that event. The analysis of photographs in this context provides representativeness in the combination of historical and social memory.

As we live in a changing world, we can see that the world of personality is rapidly adapting from one social space to another in a short period of time. Photographs are becoming a symbol of bureaucracy. Reports are moving from boring paperwork to visuals. Textbooks and manuals, scientific monographs and even articles are divided into those that are described in photographs. In anthropology and ethnography, an object or culture that is in some sense "unknown" to us is mostly demonstratively presented in visual documents, while in sociology it sheds light on events and relationships that are unique to us and can be easily found around us [15; 17].

The sciences of sociology and social anthropology have in recent years paid close attention to methods of visual research. Manifested in social time and space, the depiction of memories reflected in imaginations has led to an increase in the amount of permanent or temporary visual means. The development of visual sociology and anthropology is enriched by the study of social and ethnocultural heritage, the study of their transformation processes today. While visual research methods directly illuminate the processes of adaptation of man and his social life, it sheds light on the issues of time change, daily life, lifestyle, nostalgia, architecture, and blending with nature.

From a methodological point of view, the question arises for analysis: what should be a priority in photography? What does the context of the visual image have to do with? Is it "for whom" or "why"? The sequence of questions can be continued. But, in our view, it is primarily concerned with perception. When we look indifferently at the diverse world that surrounds us, we see almost nothing. However, if we want to study this world in a purposeful way, we will see that different spaces are hidden, moving, fighting for life. When we look at the world not through it directly, but through the eyes of others, we observe or create vibrating movements. These oscillations sometimes result in useful properties, while sometimes they have limitations. As the boundaries of vibration expand, we become more aware of the problems that arise. In order

to perceive, we focus on the different images of the universe to which we belong (identification), in particular the appearance of human beings as well [15; 93].

## Conclusion

Sociological research requires image interpretation. Let's look for an answer to the question of who owns the right to interpret photographs. In the general case, any interpretation is done by the creator. But in visual research, those around are involved for interpretation. Visual sources include art, documentaries, films, posters, and more. Using pictures, you can describe someone's opinion and analyze the content. The reason is that in the pictures there are emotions, passions, joys, sorrows, worries, sympathy, antipathy, beauty, humility, in short, all the experiences associated with the human psyche and mood.

While using visual resources, the researcher develops creative thinking through imaginative imagination. In doing so, we feel exactly irrational thinking. Based on the research topic, studying the socio-cultural features of religious symbols and signs, we would like to emphasize that religious-ecological approaches and methods of visual research, which are widely used in modern sociology, have a special place. When studying religion and religious relations, it can be acknowledged that he has unique approaches in source studies, history, ethnography, psychology, linguistics. It should also be acknowledged that in sociology, especially in modern sociology, this topic is becoming more relevant, given the globalization of the world, climate change and ecosystems, the impact of the information society on human consciousness and thinking.

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