

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC STUDIES

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Abstract: This article analyzes the essence, methodology, and scientific significance of contemporary Islamic studies. It explores the role of Islam in social life based on modern academic approaches and examines the relevance of Islamic studies today, as well as its connection with international scholarly research. The paper also highlights the contribution of modern Islamic studies to cultural, political, and social stability.

Keywords: contemporary Islamic studies, scientific approach, Islam, culture, society, social stability, methodology, relevance.

АКТУАЛЬНОСТЬ СОВРЕМЕННОГО ИСЛАМОВЕДЕНИЯ

Аннотация: В данной статье анализируются сущность, методология и научная значимость современного исламоведения. Исследуется роль ислама в общественной жизни на основе современных научных подходов, рассматривается актуальность исламоведения в наши дни и его связь с международными научными исследованиями. Также освещается вклад современного исламоведения в культурную, политическую и социальную стабильность.

Ключевые слова: Современное исламоведение, научный подход, ислам, культура, общество, социальная стабильность, методология, актуальность.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada zamonaviy islomshunoslikning mazmuni, metodologiyasi va ilmiy ahamiyati tahlil qilinadi. Islomdini va uning ijtimoiy hayotdagi o'рни zamonaviy ilmiy yondashuvlar asosida o'rganilib, islomshunoslik fanining bugungi davrda tutgan o'рни, uni o'rganishning dolzarbligi va xalqaro miqyosdagi ilmiy tadqiqotlar bilan uyg'unligi ko'rib chiqiladi. Shuningdek, zamonaviy islomshunoslikning madaniy, siyosiy va ijtimoiy barqarorlikka qo'shayotgan hissi yoritiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: zamonaviy islomshunoslik, ilmiy yondashuv, islomdini, madaniyat, jamiyat, ijtimoiy barqarorlik, metodologiya, dolzarblik.

Introduction: In today's era of globalization, the role and position of religion—particularly Islam—in social life is growing increasingly important. Islam is being studied not only as a system of religious belief but also as a significant factor in social, political, and cultural life. For this reason, Islamic studies is gaining crucial relevance. Contemporary Islamic studies is a multidisciplinary academic field that encompasses not only religious knowledge but also historical, philosophical, cultural, sociological, and political dimensions. It provides systematic knowledge of the foundations of Islam, its developmental stages, and its current influence and role. In particular, in an era of increasing threats from extremism and radicalism, it is essential to explain the true essence of Islam and to study it scientifically. In addition, contemporary Islamic studies is emerging as an important tool for fostering international academic collaboration, interfaith dialogue, the development of tolerance, and the promotion of social stability. This article examines the essence of contemporary Islamic studies, the necessity of studying it, and its significance for today's society.

Main Body: Islamic studies is the academic exploration of Islam, its history, theological and legal schools, and its ethical, cultural, political, and social principles. While Islamic studies has existed since ancient times, with early Muslim scholars deeply studying disciplines such as the Qur'an, hadith, jurisprudence, exegesis, theology, and Sufism, modern Islamic studies approaches the field with broader and deeper perspectives, adapted to current needs. Today, Islamic studies is a relevant topic not only in religious circles but also in secular academic environments. Many international universities, research centers, and institutions are now active in this field. They study Islamic sources not only from an Islamic perspective but also using historical, philosophical, anthropological, and sociological approaches.

This helps to dispel stereotypes and misconceptions about Islam and promotes religious tolerance among people of various nationalities and beliefs. Islamic studies is a science that examines Islam and all related aspects through a systematic and scholarly approach. The term is widely used in academia, and not only Muslim scholars but also adherents of other religions actively participate in the study of Islam. The field intersects with a range of disciplines, including the Qur'an and hadith studies, history, philosophy, jurisprudence, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and political science. Islamic studies first developed as Muslim scholars interpreted the Qur'an, compiled hadiths, and explored legal issues. At that time, religious knowledge was mainly focused on practice, worship, Sharia, and the cultivation of moral values. Islamic schools (e.g., in Basra, Kufa, Baghdad, Bukhara, and Samarkand) advanced the study of hadith, exegesis, jurisprudence, theology, and linguistics. The 9th–12th centuries are often referred to as the “Golden Age” of Islamic studies. During this era, great scholars such as Imam Bukhari, Imam Tirmidhi, Abu Hanifa, Imam Ghazali, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Biruni not only studied religious sciences but also natural sciences, harmonizing them

with Islamic thought. Another important phase in the history of Islamic studies was the interest shown by Western scholars. From the 12th century onward, European scholars began to study Islam, often using critical or apologetic approaches. During the colonial era (19th–20th centuries), Islamic studies in the West sometimes served political interests. Nevertheless, many fundamental studies were conducted during this period. Although the development of religious sciences was restricted during the Soviet era in Uzbekistan, after independence, Islamic studies entered a new phase. The Uzbek government paid special attention to religious and educational spheres by establishing educational institutions, research centers, and manuscript study institutes. Today, the field is becoming increasingly integrated with modern sciences. Contemporary Islamic studies is a scholarly discipline that investigates Islam and related socio-cultural processes using modern academic methodologies and comprehensive approaches. Its development has been influenced by historical, political, social, and cultural factors. In this age of globalization, cultural convergence, and intensified ideological struggles, the significance of contemporary Islamic studies is growing. Islam is not just a set of rituals, but a comprehensive system covering all aspects of social life. Understanding it deeply is essential to educate well-rounded Muslims, build healthy societies, and promote religious tolerance and social stability. Contemporary Islamic studies emphasizes a scientific approach to studying religious knowledge. This involves both understanding religious sources in their original form and analyzing them in relation to modern social problems. For example, concepts in the Qur'an such as social justice, gender equality, labor, honesty, leadership, and governance should be interpreted in light of today's societal needs, thereby making religious knowledge beneficial to society. One important aspect of contemporary Islamic studies is its role in combating extremism and radicalism. In recent years, certain terrorist groups have misused the name of Islam and distorted its teachings. In such cases, the task of Islamic scholars is to reveal the humane essence of the religion and to correctly interpret principles such as peace, forgiveness, and tolerance found in the Qur'an and Sunnah. This helps shape a healthy religious worldview among the youth and protects them from harmful ideologies. Another feature of contemporary Islamic studies is its interdisciplinary integration. New directions such as religion and psychology, religion and politics, religion and economics, and religion and ecology are emerging. These areas aim to explain the influence of religious knowledge on various aspects of life. For example, Islamic ideas about labor ethics, economic justice, and environmental protection play an important role in addressing modern global issues. Contemporary Islamic studies is particularly relevant in Muslim countries like Uzbekistan. Since independence, major efforts have been made to restore religious heritage, preserve historical monuments, and study the legacy of great

scholarssuch as Imam Bukhari, Imam Tirmidhi, Bahauddin Naqshband, andAbdulkhaliq Gijduvani. Higher education institutions such as the Center for IslamicCivilization,the Imam Bukhari International Research Center, and the ImamTirmidhi ScientificCenter are actively working in this field. These institutions contributetothedevelopment of contemporary Islamic studies, the training of knowledgeableyouth,and the prevention of religious misinterpretations. One of the key missions of modern Islamic studies is to increase religiousliteracyamong the youth and nurture critical thinkers grounded in knowledge. Althoughaccess to religious information online has increased, much of it is unreliable.Therefore, contemporary Islamic studies must verify and evaluate suchinformationand guide young people toward trustworthy sources. In conclusion, Islamic studies has evolved from merely studying religioustextstobecoming a comprehensive academic discipline that significantlycontributestohuman progress. Contemporary Islamic studies aims to adapt this fieldtotheneedsof the 21st century, relate it to global challenges, and turn religious knowledgeintoa tool for social development. The Impact of Contemporary Islamic Studies Today Modernization and Globalization: The 20th and 21st centuries are marked by industrialization, urbanization,technological progress, democracy, and human rights. These processeshavedirectly affected the Muslim world, which now faces the challenge of reconcilingtraditional values with modern demands. Globalization has alsoincreasedtheglobal presence of Islam and attracted the attention of Western societies. Thesedevelopments have laid the foundation for contemporary Islamic studies. Social and Political Conflicts, the Threat of Radicalism: In recent decades, the activities of extremist and terrorist groups usingreligioussslogans have led to widespread misconceptions about Islam. Inthiscontext,scientifically grounded Islamic studies are essential to explain the truenatureofthereligion. As a result, modern Islamic studies has emerged as an intellectualandspiritual response to extremism. Need to Combat Religious Illiteracy and Misinterpretation: In many regions, Islam is superficially understood, or traditional andculturalvalues have drifted from their original meaning. This has ledtoincorrectinterpretations of the religion. Contemporary Islamic studies tackles thisissuewithcritical thinking and scholarly analysis, interpreting texts in context andwithhistorical awareness. The Need for Scientific and Interdisciplinary Approaches: No academic discipline develops in isolation. Islamic studies is nowincreasinglyintegrated with sociology, history, political science, anthropology, andculturalstudies. Scholars not only interpret the Qur'an but also analyze howit isreceived and understood by society. This analytical approach distinguishes modernIslamicstudies from classical religious sciences.

Institutionalization of Islamic Studies: Many universities and research centers are now offering Islamic studiesasanindependent discipline. In Uzbekistan, institutions such as the ImamBukhariInternational Research Center, the International Islamic

Academy of Uzbekistan, the Tashkent Islamic Institute, and the Imam Tirmidhi Scientific Center play key roles in developing this field. Internationally, countries like Egypt (Al-Azhar), Turkey (Ankara and Istanbul universities), Saudi Arabia, Iran, India, and various Western nations are also conducting significant research in this field. Development of Information Technology: The rapid growth of communication tools has made religious information more accessible to the public. Blogs, social media pages, and YouTube channels are introducing new forms of Islamic scholarship. However, the quality of this information varies, so Islamic studies must also operate effectively in digital spaces. Relationship Between Islamic Studies and Human Rights, Gender Issues: Contemporary Islamic studies is directly linked to global issues such as human rights, gender equality, and religious freedom. New interpretations based on the Qur'an and hadith address women's roles in society, minority rights, and fair governance. This positions Islamic studies at the center of vital social and political debates. Conclusion: Contemporary Islamic studies is distinguished by its methodological rigor. Research in this field is based not only on religious arguments but also on historical context, cultural differences, linguistic evolution, and social needs.

Unlike traditional religious education, modern Islamic studies uses critical analysis, interdisciplinary approaches, and empirical research. Qur'anic verses and hadiths are examined critically—studying their historical context, reasons for revelation, and potential applications in contemporary life. As a result, interpretations and legal rulings are revisited. This process is based on the principle of *ijtihad*—independent reasoning and innovative thinking. Today, Islamic studies intersects with many fields, including sociology, history, cultural studies, psychology, political science, and anthropology. Studying a religious concept's impact on society requires more than theological foundations—it also involves sociological surveys, statistics, historical analysis, and political insight. Linguistics plays a crucial role in properly interpreting Islamic texts. Understanding the original meanings of Arabic words and their historical usage helps prevent misinterpretations. Thus, modern Islamic scholars use semantic and contextual analysis extensively. Hadiths and other texts are also studied historically—who transmitted them, under what conditions, and with what degree of reliability. This method draws on the science of narrators (*ilm ar-rijal*).

Modern Islamic studies is no longer confined to books and journals. Podcasts, YouTube channels, social media, and digital libraries are increasingly used to share research findings and combat misinformation. Empirical research also plays a growing role. For instance, surveys on youth religious awareness, mosque attendance, interest in religious education, and susceptibility to radical views are conducted. This approach strengthens Islamic studies as an applied science. Contemporary Islamic studies does not limit itself to isolated topics. It considers religious, social, political, and cultural factors in an integrated system. For example, the rise of radical views in a

region may be linked not just to religious issues but also to economic inequality, social injustice, and political oppression. Such analyses make Islamic studies a social science. In conclusion, contemporary Islamic studies is not merely a field of religious knowledge—it has broad social and cultural significance. It helps promote religious values, ensures social stability, supports human rights, prevents extremism, and fosters intercultural dialogue. Therefore, advancing this field, training qualified specialists, and expanding research should be priorities for every Muslim society.

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