

RITUALISM IN ISLAM AND ITS SOCIAL ESSENCE

[Following is a translation of an article by A. Alimukhamedov in the Russian-language journal Obshchestvennyye nauki v Uzbekistane (Social Sciences in Uzbekistan), Tashkent, No 3, 1966, pp 16-21.]

As with other world religions -- Buddhism and Christianity -- Islam is a product of the class society. The cause for its appearance is to be found in that great historical change which occurred on the Arabian Peninsula at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century, in connection with the decay of the primitive-communal structure [of society] and transition of the Arabs to a class society. As in the formation of the ideologies of Christianity and Buddhism, the historical movement which produced Islam also took on a religious coloration [see Note].

[Note]: See K. Marx and F. Engels, O religii (On Religion), Moscow, State Publishing House for Political Literature, 1955, page 185.

Being a monotheistic religion, Islam differs from the old, spontaneously formed tribal and national religions by the fact that it was created "more or less artificially," consciously, as the ideology of the ruling class that was being formed.

In terms of its social essence, Islam in no way differs from other religions, being an "opium for the people," "a fantastic reflection in the minds of the people of those external forces which rule them in their daily life, a reflection in which terrestrial forces take on the form of supernatural forces ([Note]: *ibid*, page 113)," and one of the forms of spiritual oppression.