

RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS (AWQAF) WELTH OF MUSLIM'S COMMUNITY

Endowments (*awqaf*) are and have traditionally been Islamic institutions in the form movable wealth and real estate donated with a testament from various humanitarians with large and generous heart.

The wealth of endowments was forever growing:

1. By testamentary charities.
2. By the construction of religious buildings of worship, by trustees, whom for their maintenance, the payment of the imam, the muezzin and teachers in their dependency and maintenance, built shops, houses, donated land, meadows, vineyards, livestock, money, etc..
- 3). By earnings from rented properties, affecting the growth of financial income of facilities and *Dar al-Ifta* districts and the Albanian Muslim Community.

The example was given by the Prophet Muhammad, who built the first mosque, an example that was later followed by other believers in the Islamic world.

In Shkodra the first religious endowment was the construction of the mosque of Hunqari from Bayazit I in 1478. With the rule of the Ottoman Empire, they began to grow. In time in Shkodra were built 100 mosques, 40 in town and 60 in the village. This was stretched was in the whole circle.

Initially there was no financial gain, but with the growth of the facilities the income began to increase, since depending on the facility, charities built shops and left other properties for their maintenance.

The definition of religious endowment, in Arabic is called "waqf", which means forbidden, locked, immobile. In religious

terminology, *waqf* means the maintaining of an asset and expense of its benefit in the way of Allah. (Source: Fikh ul-Sunneh 4/330). In the *hadith* states: "Use its territory as endowment. Not to be sold nor inherited or donated, but use its profits. "

Waqfs have been various types of properties donated by charities, but also by sultans, grand viziers, etc., from the lands that the sultan donated in the area of Rragam and Zadrime in Shkodra. Amongst our earlier papers, that of 1530's of Ali Bega who donated shrine to the mosque in Alibegaj neighborhood in Shkodra, of Mustafa Pasha in 1967, with their liquidation by the state.

In *waqfs* were allowed to make investment in order to increase the income as follows:

1) Provision of facility rental. 2) The granting of the lease with two values. 3) Letting for a long period. 4) Partnership between the shrine and the investor.

Waqf property has and is still being used mainly for Islamic institutions, charity, help for the poor and generally of this nature. They also serve to maintain the cult objects, the *madrasas*, etc...

Waqfs initially were run by Shaikh Islam of Istanbul and after the declaration of Independence of Albania, in 1912 it broke away from his lead and in 1916 took over the operation of High Court of *Shariah* based in Shkodra. With the creation of the General Directorate of *Waqfs* in 1916, in 1917 it audited the full documentation and profits that were to be drawn from it.

For this purpose along with the General Directorate, was appointed clerk in local areas of *Dar al-Ifta* for this purpose.

In 1967, *waqfs* were fully abated by a decision of the Presidium of the National Assembly of RFSSH.

After 1990, the allowance of religious beliefs and organization of their institutions worked and are working on reclaiming the objects of worship and the previous property. Also are being constructed objects of worship and are being donated by charitable Muslims from their *waqfs* and for this purpose were organized its bodies.