

Dr. Ramiz ZEKAJ

## TURKEY AND REVIVAL OF ISLAM

One of the main problems, which has engaged both Turkish and foreign Turkologues for almost 250 years in the field of Turkish history, has been the origin and meaning of the word “Turk”, the characteristics of the Turkish people and their homeland. Scholars have presented a variety of viewpoints depending on their particular area of interest and the periods, which they deal with.

The unfounded views of some medieval European researchers related to Mongoloid origin of Turks have been discussed since in the beginning of the twentieth century. The truth of the matter has been discovered through studies carried out in the last 20 or 25 years of the last century passed on bones found in *kurgan*, in the tombs built in the ancient Turkish territories in Asia. However, it should be noted that the Turks have not had any connection to the history of Mongolia linguistically, culturally or even racially, neither had they as regards to the concepts of their faith or law and government. Also, similarities in linguistic and facial features of Turks with Mongolians living in and some parts of Asia are the products of hereditary relations and continuous ethnologic and linguistic contacts made during long cohabitation period.

Initially, Islam was accepted by Turkish people in those lands, which were already put under the rule of the Islamic. The first of these lands was Transoxania, which was partly occupied by Kutejbe bin Muslim, who was trying to disseminate Islam while taking necessary measures to bring the occupied territories under his strong military control.

The most early and pronounced role of the Turks in the Islamic world is encountered during the reign of Abbasids' State. Since the time of Caliph Al-Me'mun they played an important role in the suppression of insurgences as well as in carrying out of military

expeditions against the Byzantine.

Acceptance of Islam by the Turks was an event that would play a very important role in their fate. Acceptance of a new religion or civilization is always important in the history of a nation since it introduces a series of spiritual, social and intellectual changes and developments. History is full of examples of nations that reach extraordinary heights in material progress and spiritual development through acceptance of a new faith. On the other hand, examples of the misery endurance and facing with national extinction are seen to be caused by the same reason. Turkish history is abundant evidence for what a change of faith could bring in the life of a nation. Prior to acceptance of Islam, Turks have been in contact with a religion such as Buddhism, Manichaeism, Judaism and Christianity, which they had accepted partly, although most of them had remained loyal to their religion based on worship of Gök - Tanrı (Lord of Heaven). As the other beliefs listed above did not harmonize with customs and ways of life of Turks, they were apt to destroy Turkish tribal identity and the national conscience within a short period of time.

The Islamic concept of law and order were so well in harmony with the traditional Turkish customs as Turks preserved their national identity; unlike Hungarians, Bulgarians, Khazars and Phocaeans, none of the Turkish tribes that had accepted Islam, did not lose its national identity. In other words, because of Islam, Muslim Turks, wherever they may have been distributed, have been able to maintain their national existence. This effect of Islam was manifested in every sphere of human activity from state's management to art, culture etc. by becoming a source of inspiration in creating numerous works of eternal beauty. Today all the Turks (with the exception of 1-2 millions) numbering nearly 150 000 000 have embraced Islam as their religion and Islam has become the character of a national belief for Turks for over nine centuries.