

Adil Abdullah
Al-Falah

HEYDAR ALIYEV

AND
NATIONAL-
SPIRITUAL
VALUES

ADIL ABDULLAH AL-FALAH

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Bismillahir-Rəhmanir-Rəhim!



Many-sided political, social and diplomatic activity of the creator of the modern history of Azerbaijan and the politician of worldwide scale Heydar Aliyev has been a subject of research, both within the country and abroad; ever-living in reminiscences of those who had once been fortunate enough to meet this genius.

In this respect, worthy mentioning of a staunch friend of Azerbaijan, First Deputy Minister of Kuwait for Islam and Vakfs, Chairman of the Asian Muslims Committee, Dr. Adil Al-Falah.

First-hand acquaintance with his work devoted to Heydar Aliyev makes it possible to infer that Dr. A. Al-Falah not only kept up with our nationwide leader but also thrashed out works, declarations, statements and speeches of Heydar Aliyev.

Contributing to the importance of the present work is its having been written in Arabic and thus available to broader circles of multi-million Arab readers and public opinion to familiarize themselves with titanic activity of Heydar Aliyev.

It would be appropriate to say a few words about the author. From the very outset of our country's independence, Dr. Adil Al-Falah has backed Azerbaijan, done his best to assist in solving the Karabakh problem, put forward initiatives aimed at protecting the righteous cause of the Azerbaijani people, arranged Kuwaiti government's gratuitous aid to refugees and forced migrants.

It should be noted that Dr. Adil Al-Falah took an active part in arranging several international conferences and symposia held in Georgia and Azerbaijan, made substantial and interesting reports devoted to the urgent problems of independent Republics.

With great life experience, impartial and independent views on world problems, Dr. Adil Al-Falah enjoys great prestige and authority

not only in Kuwait but in Azerbaijan as well.

The current work presents our nationwide leader Heydar Aliyev as connoisseur of Koran and Islamic sciences, traces back Aliyev's views on Islamic morality and spiritual values as referred to appropriate fragments from Koran, stressing his particular erudition in theological sciences.

Dr. Adil Al-Falah carried out a thorough analysis of Aliyev's speeches and reports to authoritative international forums, conferences, held in Baku and other places worldwide, his meetings and discussions with world leaders. Following the results of his analysis, Dr. Al-Falah lays a special emphasis on Aliyev's selfless love to his people, land, religion; the author shows that Heydar Aliyev harshly criticized double standard policies pursued by some great powers with respect to major political problems.

In his book Dr. Al-Falah concentrates on secular, religious and philosophical views of Heydar Aliyev as inferring that the glorious son of Azerbaijan who devoted all his life for the prosperity of his motherland, was proficient not only in the Islamic spirituality and roots of the Azerbaijani people, but also in the history of other major religions, their main precepts and spiritual values. In debating over religious themes, H. Aliyev was skilful in keeping up the conversation either as ordinary men or theologians, proving his worth as expert in religion.

The author shows that Heydar Aliyev rebuffed those who tried to pin a label of terrorism and extremism on Islam as saying that the Islamic religion and Koran reject any violence, oppression and force. To corroborate his views, he referred to respective fragments from Koran, cited adequate examples and thus once again demonstrated his love and belief in Islam.

Al-Falah knew Heydar Aliyev very well, so it was no mere chance that he cited instances from Aliyev's meetings and talks with believers during various religious events and festivities, visits to Taza-Pir and Bibi-Heybat mosques.

As viewed by the author, forming the pivot of all the conferences and symposia held in Azerbaijan was Heydar Aliyev's idea that the Islamic civilization heralded peace and tranquility on the globe and that Azerbaijan was an integral part of the Islamic world.

The author spared much space and time to Heydar Aliyev's stand on the Karabakh issue, his denunciation of double standard approaches, his unmasking statements at various international forums. Al-Falah did not conceal his admiration for Aliyev's genius as politician. According to Al-Falah, our nationwide leader harshly criticized western politicians who gave themselves out to be advocates of democracy and human rights protection activists and concurrently shut their eyes to the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan, occupation of our lands and ban-

ishment of above 1 million of Azerbaijani refugees from their homes, violation of their human rights and freedoms.

Touching upon the educational, mobilizing and unifying nature of Islam, the author points out that Aliyev paid an appropriate attention to the matter. In particular, the author refers to a statement by President made during his visit to Taza-Pir mosque on the occasion of Movlud holiday: "Islam as religion of Prophet Aleyhissalam and the entire Islamic world is the highest ever source of morality for the Azerbaijani people". Indeed, Aliyev considered Islam to be an exemplar model not only for Azerbaijanis but all the nations residing in the Islamic world.

In author's opinion, being proficient in Islamic sciences, Heydar Aliyev was well aware of psychological effect of Islam as well. It was his proficiency in this sphere that enabled him to analyze world developments properly and give logically-grounded explanations to moral and spiritual distortions.

Heydar Aliyev unmasked those on the post-Soviet space and in the West, apprehensive of growing impact and authority of Islam, who tried to prove that Islam paved the way to souls of humans by means of "dagger".

With reference to Koran postulate that "There is no compulsion in religion" (Al-Bagara, 256), Al-Falah stressed that Aliyev was absolutely right as saying: "Muslims keep their religion inside their souls, so religion is present in every family, every home. Traditions and habits, regulations and mode of life have lived for centuries and even in the Soviet times they surpassed new laws, traditions and habits". Our nationwide leader emphasized that Communist ideas were implanted forcibly, through the use of violence; therefore it was not surprising that after the 70-year rule the Communist ideology collapsed in no time, went to pieces. In the meanwhile, the Islamic ideas did survive and keep on living and prospering in Azerbaijan for 1400 years; despite all hardships and privations, they guarded Azerbaijani believers from any misfortunes and evils throughout centuries. Sharing Aliyev's view that "no power can prevent humans from returning to their roots and beliefs", Al-Falah reaffirms that thousands of people have the other day adopted the Islamic religion.

Connoisseur in the theologian sciences, Fikh and Sharia, Al-Falah focuses on Heydar Aliyev's awareness in this field. Through quoting Koran and Sunnah, Al-Falah gives his commentaries to the conceptions and superiorities of Islam against the background of Aliyev's religious activity aimed at restoring Islamic moral values in Azerbaijan.

Al-Falah also sees greatness of Aliyev in his views on globalization. Thus, supportive of the current world-scale modernization processes, Heydar Aliyev concurrently opposed any attempts to weaken national and spiritual values, historical past and traditions. Al-Falah

assessed Aliyev's statement at Taza-Pir mosque that "Our religion is progressive and Islam has for centuries corroborated this fact; this religion is of universal nature" as worthy rebuff to those who tried to prove that Islam is allegedly an obstacle to the progress and hampers the implementation of democratic ideas.

To author's thinking, as a great political figure Heydar Aliyev was at the same time a scientist with excellent analytical mind; skilful in political games played under slogans of democracy, human freedoms and rights. Heydar Aliyev saw no confrontation between Islam and modernity; on the contrary, he repeatedly emphasized the possibility of solving contemporary world's problems on the basis of Islamic principles: justice, equality and respect for human dignity.

Highly appreciating Aliyev's references to Koran and Rasulu (s) Hadiths, Al-Falah personally certified his great erudition and retentive memory. He adds that when Aliyev talked with a specialist, the latter believed he was expert in this sphere. In other words, he wielded universal knowledge and erudition.

While addressing the 1st forum of Republic's Youth, he called young people to adopt universal knowledge, Islamic values, return to our roots, love Motherland to comply with the commandment of Prophet Aleyhissalam "Love for Motherland means Faith".

Al-Falah narrates in his book about services of Aliyev in the successful oil strategy, advancement of Azerbaijan toward the market economy, building of Azerbaijani statehood and normal religious relations, erection of mosques, churches, synagogues, other of places of worship, establishment of cooperation between the state and the religion, creation of tolerance between different faiths and confessions, etc, other services of this intellectual in turning his Motherland into powerful state.

In holding that Aliyev enjoyed great authority in the Islamic world, the author stressed that as member of numerous international organizations Azerbaijan took an active part in the work of the OIC, which has always backed the righteous cause of our country in the Karabakh question; Al-Falah also emphasized importance of meetings between Aliyev and leaders of the Islamic world to expand further relations with the Islamic countries. The author showed that financial organizations of these countries played an important role in developing the Azerbaijani economy.

The author of the book laid a special emphasis on the contribution of Azerbaijani scholars and poets to the creation and prosperity of the Islamic civilization. Mentioning names of Nizami, Nasimi, Nasiraddin Tusi, Qatran Tabrizi, Shihabaddin Suhrawardi, the author holds that the Azerbaijani culture is an integral part of the Islamic culture and the world civilization.

Acquaintance with Dr. Al-Falah's book makes it possible to infer that the author, with his special respect and infinite honor to the immortal leader of Azerbaijan, using a special means of expression threw light on unprecedented personal qualities of this extraordinary and uncommon personality.

It should also be noted that the book by Dr. Adil Al-Falah dedicated to the genius of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev is an invaluable and worthy contribution to the Azerbaijan-Kuwait friendship.

Vas-salamu aleykum va rahmatullahi va barakatuhu

Sheikh-ul-Islam ALLAHSHUKUR PASHAZADEH,
Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor.



"Taza Pir" Mosque.



Introduction

I took an interest in the former Soviet region since 1991, after the disintegration of the Soviet Empire. It is generally known that former Soviet Muslim nations have made a great contribution to the Islamic culture and world civilization. Today it is essential to restore their ties with the Islamic world and expand relations with the Muslim countries. With that end in view, since 1993 we have started implementing various projects generically titled as "Continuation of Cultural Ties with Offspring of Imam al-Bukhari". Our purpose was not to merely welcome independence of the countries of the region but also secure and strengthen their independence, render them material and spiritual aid. To be sure, it was crucial to start well thought-out work, therefore, we founded in the regions of the Republic Azerbaijan the offices and representations of the Committee for Asian Muslims, subordinated to the International Islamic Charity Organization. A Committee's mission to Azerbaijan was officially registered in 1999. Our responsibilities are to assist orphans, indigent families, refugees, support infrastructures, development projects, help university teachers and students with professional business trips, arrange, jointly with local organizations, various conferences etc. and thus maintain relations between our sisters and brothers.

Like many others, I associate Azerbaijani's name with Heydar Aliyev who

long headed the country. He worked his way up and held top positions under the most unpropitious conditions of the Soviet regime. In the sequel, he confessed that as a Muslim he had been subjected to unceasing discrimination. However, despite all difficulties, he had never renounced his religious convictions. On the contrary, when meditating upon pressures against Muslim peoples he was so much imbued with grandeur of the ancient religion that his entourage felt it keenly. Heydar Aliyev's people clearly felt his affection toward his native religion. I had repeatedly met this uncommon person, and every time I had increasingly become convinced of my view.

I first met with late Heydar Aliyev in 1996 during the first international conference patronized by President and arranged by the Committee for Asian Muslims to render a material aid to refugees and forced migrants. Mr. President told the conference:

"We, Azerbaijanis, are happy to visit holy places we worship. On the invitation of King of Saudi Arabia I visited in 1994 the two holy cities of the Kingdom. I consider my visiting holy cities of Mecca, Kaaba and Medina as the most important and happiest days in my lifetime. I believe that impressions we have got there would help us to get out of all difficulties and torments we suffer."

Since then, my admiration for this brilliant human and public figure has immensely increased. I was also delighted with his grandeur, deep mind and political wisdom. It is not astonishing that I was so greatly impressed by this person: it was a political figure that lived greater part of his life under merci-less Soviet dictatorship and yet succeeded to make such sincere and pro-found statements. As a whole, the Communist regime imposed a ban on religious convictions, particularly the Islamic religion. A top official, who witnessed consequences of the ban and experienced related hardships, spoke of his religious convictions with great pride and love. An eloquent testimony to the fact is his deeds and life-long activities. Was not it Heydar Aliyev who made the greatest contribution to the prosperity and accelerated development of his country under the Soviet regime? Was not it far-sighted activity of Heydar Aliyev who gave an impetus to today's progress in modern Azerbaijan? No, he had never given his preference to transitional, superficial tendencies; instead, he laid emphasis on well thought-out, long-term projects aimed at the prosperity of his nation. It was no mere coincidence that in the



Solemn swearing in ceremony.

period of country's independence he had been skilful in running political processes, saving Azerbaijan from the civil war and disintegration, chaos and disorder and leading it to economic growth. All these once again confirm his wisdom as political leader, his affiliation to the native people and land.

When pondering over Azerbaijan, I witnessed features which distinguished it from other neighboring countries and the Muslim world as a whole. Every time I visit Azerbaijan my first impression remains unaltered and even intensifies. Below-cited are the distinctive features as follows:

- **religious tolerance.** Representatives of all confessions residing in Azerbaijan feel no inconveniences arising from their beliefs; they co-exist peacefully and are not discriminated along religious lines. Armenia having occupied lands of Azerbaijan, exterminated peaceful population, banished people from their places of residence notwithstanding, above 35,000 Armenians do live in Azerbaijan, unaffected and unharmed. These facts suffice to once again confirm a level of cultural and humanistic tolerance of the Azerbaijani people;

- **tolerance between sects.** There are different sects in Azerbaijan; however, there is no confrontation between them. Regrettably, the Muslim world suffers much from intra-religious strives. However, there is no problem of intrareligious confrontation in the country thanks to perspicacity and steadfastness, of the founder of modern Azerbaijan - Heydar Aliyev. It is also a religious



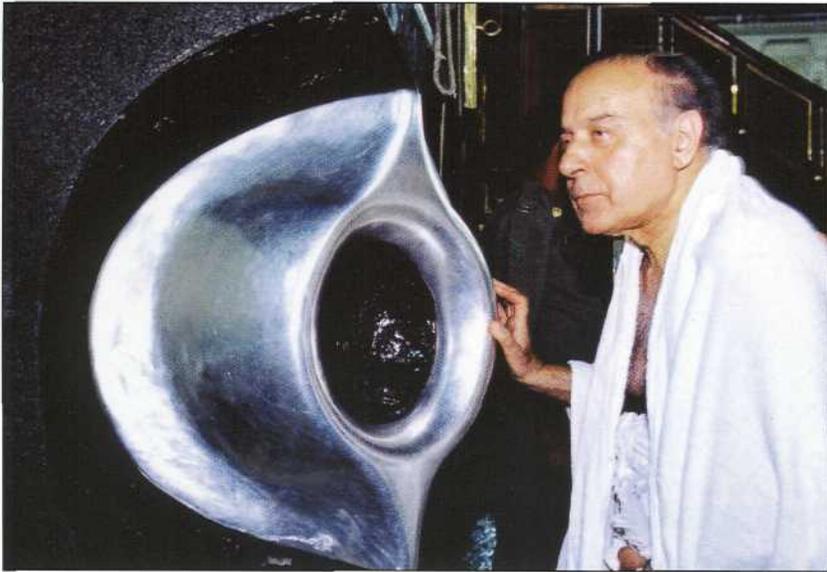
During solemn swearing in ceremony.

experience of country's spiritual leader that contributed to the lack of intra-religious confrontation;

- **order and tranquility.** As compared with other countries worldwide, a human feels much more comfortable and safe in Azerbaijan. This country is notable for its hospitality, respect for their guests and, as a whole, atmosphere of friendliness and benevolence. By the way, this peculiarity is also typical for Arabs and their traditions. For this reason, we face no difficulties when making friends with Azerbaijanis, and we, Arabs, have got scores of Azerbaijani friends;

- **culture of communication and behavior.** When walking across Azerbaijan and getting in touch with Azerbaijanis, a foreigner is greatly impressed by gentle manners and behavioral habits of local residents.

Azerbaijan is a progressive country with high culture. Distinctive features of these people are high intellectual abilities, aspiration for technical progress and improved living conditions; infinite tolerance. These Azerbaijani people are wise to endure all possible hardships, torments and privations. A peaceable disposition is inherent in the nature of the Azerbaijani people. This people's hallmark is to avoid confrontation, clashes and, instead, create confidential, friendly relations between humans. Azerbaijan maintains close ties both with the West and East. Azerbaijan is an active member of the Muslim world



In front of the Black Stone.

Organization of Islamic Conference. At the same time, the country is a member of the EC. It is advantageous geographical location of Azerbaijan that enables it to imbibe achievements and success of the Oriental and Occidental cultures. As is seen, the country disposes of wide opportunities for integration and mutual dialogue between the West and East. Results of global, strategic benefits of the country are clearly traced in the political picture of the Republic, including its culture and living standards.

Beyond any doubts, there are scores of factors that account for all these religious, cultural, psychological, social and political tendencies in the life of the country. A special emphasis has to be laid on public administration and political will of Heydar Aliyev that played a crucial role in Azerbaijan's destiny. Indeed, it was Heydar Aliyev who made a valuable contribution to the public administration and state building. Today, we are witnessing results of his incredible efforts.

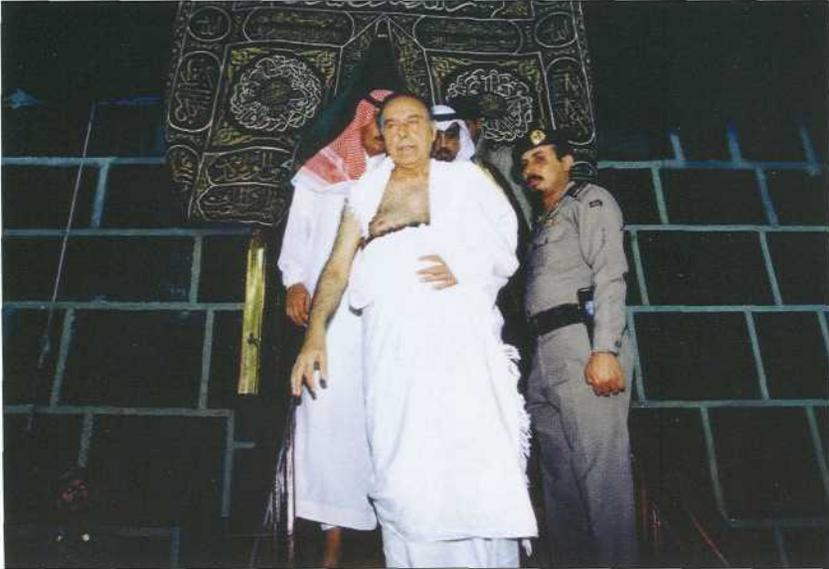
Finally, I would like to share another impression about Azerbaijan. Following my close contacts with this splendid and beneficial country I came to the conclusion that Azerbaijan is much alike my native Kuwait and even double of it. Territories of the both countries are small; however, their natural resources are huge. It is the Most High who granted our countries oil and sea. Both countries have been subjected to aggression, forced migration from



Visiting Holy Kaaba.

native lands. Despite this, the both countries are hospitable and generous. For this reason, Azerbaijan takes a particular place in my heart. I wish this country to advance toward progress and prosperity, restore its territorial integrity, order and tranquility.

It was also Heydar Aliyev who inspired my love for Azerbaijan. I witnessed President Heydar Aliyev at various international conferences, listened to his interesting reports and statements, highly appreciated his declarations, which I consider to be a guiding star for generations to come. A concept of the present book came as a result of my impressions about Azerbaijan. The most attractive feature of Heydar Aliyev with his richest life and political experience is his adherence to his native religion and convictions. His remarkable feature is that the above-mentioned forms an integral part of his activity as statesman. He was right in stressing the necessity of the Islamic religion and values, indicating Azerbaijani people's belonging to the Islamic civilization. It is a well thought-out and comprehensive contribution of the epoch's most experienced political figure to the prosperity of Azerbaijan, we have to safe-guard and thus to preserve his wise political heritage. The book endeavors to throw light on various aspects of multilateral political activity of President. It would be appropriate for the entire Islamic world to benefit from the school and experience of Heydar Aliyev.



Visiting Holy Kaaba.

Heydar Aliyev with his charisma, steadfastness and fortitude, strong will and personal integrity took top positions in the security and power system of the then world's one of the two mighty powers of the XX century. An analysis carried out by the French "Figaro" in 1984, dealing with economic and political crisis in the USSR, mentioned the name of Heydar Aliyev as saying that Kremlin would unlikely to agree with his candidature as one of the lead-ers of the USSR, because he was native of Azerbaijan and, ever worse, Muslim.

As is known, along with Socialist slogans within the Soviet Empire ideology, there was developed atheistic propaganda directed, primarily, against Islam. Heydar Aliyev closely watched the nature and targets of this propagan-da and as devoted representative of his native people eye-witnessed all particulars of this struggle. Straight after the tragic 20 January 1990 events Heydar Aliyev was among the first political figures to have seceded from the Communist Party and protested against atrocities of the Soviet Army with respect to the Azerbaijani people. Even better, in the first year of his advent to power in Azerbaijan he made a hajj to Mecca and Medina. It was not only the return of the great statesman of Azerbaijan, wise by experience of years' long political activity, to his roots but also a triumph of Allah wisdom and truth.

Despite attempts of the Soviet ideological machinery and political propa-



Laying the foundation of the Bibiheybat mosque.

ganda to strengthen, in every possible way, positions of atheism, it was Truth that destroyed any mentioning of atheism. It was Allah's mercy and benevolence that saved Heydar Aliyev from this evil. In 1997, while at Medina he wrote in the Book of Glory a phrase as follows:

"Thanks to Allah I have fulfilled my long-awaited dream. This historical event has excited great enthusiasm and tranquility in my soul. I have realized Allah's greatness and grandeur!"

These words are an eloquent testimony to the might and wisdom of Allah. He grants belief to his beloved, reward to those advocating tolerance, wisdom, science and knowledge, He is aware of what is there inside a human's soul. Koran says:

"Allah owns everything in the heavens and on earth. If you unveil or conceal what is inside your soul, Allah will recover from you. He will grant and He will punish. He is All-Mighty!" (al-Bagara, 284).

The same verse mentions:

"He grants wisdom to whom He wants to. Those with wisdom do they have scores of benefits. Clever people only can realize this."

When Heydar Aliyev returned to the power in the first years of country's independence, Azerbaijan was experiencing hard and difficult days in its his-



Official trip abroad.

ry. Notable for its rich energy resources, profitable geographical and political location and huge human potential, the newly independent Republic faced crisis tendencies as follows: foreign aggression, disintegration of the old political-ideological system, power vacuum, tendencies toward disorders and chaos, despair in society, disbelief, and confusion, moral and psychological uncertainties. An experienced and wise political figure was required to direct his abilities, political experience and intellect to the neutralization of external pressures, removal of intra-state strife and chaos, creation of national and spiritual integrity and unity environment, restoration of self-belief in the nation. In personifying all the necessary political, public and spiritual properties, Heydar Aliyev proved to be a figure to remedy, in a logical order, the difficulties and problems.

Located at the juncture of Europe and Asia, and oriental and occidental cultures, the Azerbaijan Republic has always been in the focus of attention of mighty powers and closest neighbours. So, a well thought-out and balanced political line was required to meet interests of the country adequately.

When adjusted for the new world order, leaders of Azerbaijan had to establish appropriate relations both with the West and Europe, as well as Russia, Near East and Asia with special emphasis on the Islamic countries. With his great experience of activity within the system of the Soviet



The speech at the 8th summit of the leaders of the Organization of Islamic Conference member states.

Communist Party, Heydar Aliyev attached great importance to the oriental mentality and values, national and spiritual properties. At the same time, he was pragmatic in catching the modernity and realities of the present. Along with balanced political line aimed at getting Azerbaijan out of the hardest crisis, he made important steps to set Azerbaijan in its national and spiritual roots having been suppressed as a result of the years-long Soviet dominance. He had done much practical work to put forward religious and spiritual values of Islam, restore theoretical principles of Muslim creed and further develop and formulate steps on this track. On the other hand, he contributed to the creation of social-political, scientific and cultural foundations to thus establish, strengthen, and expand multilateral ties between Azerbaijan and eastern countries, particularly, Arab and Muslim ones.

In general, there was a great need in the concept of national rebirth against the background of total crisis that embraced Azerbaijan in the reviewed period. This concept should rest, on the one hand, on national traditions and religious-spiritual values, and present-day views and principles of modernity, on the other. In other words, Azerbaijan should not lag behind democratic and globalization processes, should secure its national culture and image, spiritual values and at the same time establish relations with other cultures and beliefs. The historical necessity accounts for balanced and properly weighed steps to solve this complex and significant task. Following the collapse of the



Return from official trip.

Soviet ideology the Azerbaijani people returned to its national and spiritual values with special emphasis on Islamic ones. For this reason, the leader of Azerbaijan initiated a step aimed at entering appropriate relationship with the Islamic world. Below-cited are some views on the subject:

1. Islam as religious creed of the Azerbaijani people is an integral part of the national culture.
2. Religion comes out as a serious factor of national, spiritual and moral integrity of society.
3. There is need in adequate regulation of relations between the religion and the state under modern circumstances.
4. One of the major conditions of the new international relations is a mutual understanding between religions and peoples.

In general, Islam has been reputed as one of the most significant and valuable national spiritual attributes of the Azerbaijani people, so it is essential to care for this invaluable spiritual factor to thus safeguard political and economic independence, national image and existence of the country on the international arena. As was the case with all other initiatives, Heydar Aliyev had been skilful in coping with all theoretical aspects of the matter, directing it in the right line, regulating its practical mechanism. President had repeated-

ly met with religious and spiritual figures, made visits to holy places and 22 mosques, addressed the nation during religious ceremonies and holi-ykdays, personally partook in some ceremonies and contacted with ministers of religion. He approached religious matters with great attention and sensitivity; in doing so he was not an onlooker but active participant of all processes. He made important steps toward identification of Islam's place in modern Azerbaijan, regulation of religious relations in the right direction to remove alien ideological trends, non-traditional religious distinctions and prevent hostile activities of missionary organizations and put an end to provoca-tions against Islam. His purpose was obvious: to lay down principles of strong and unshakeable statehood and create a sound and spiritually powerful state in Azerbaijan. A nation with healthy and mighty statehood is in position to solve any problems, build its brilliant future to comply with present-day development and progress tendencies.



PART I.

COLLAPSE OF THE USSR, BANKRUPTCY OF ATHEISM AND RETURN TO ISLAM



**In the Soviet epoch of ban on our religion, each pious
Azerbaijani
secretly kept inside his soul. Today, the independent
Azerbaijan
Republic and its citizens are integral part of the Muslim
world
and Umma.**

HEYDAR ALIYEV





Opening ceremony of the Heydar Mosque in Mingachevir.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was accompanied by the bankruptcy of ideological principles of the huge Communist Empire, including the atheism. The former Soviet Muslim republics had an opportunity to return to their historical roots and glorious past, including their religions and traditional faiths. For many years, the Muslim peoples have been deprived of their native creeds; instead, they were faced with alien ideologies and standards, foreign systems of values and spiritual concepts. However, all these attempts were futile and incapable of shaking national beliefs and centuries-long traditions. Despite incessant pressures, these peoples contrived to preserve and safeguard their religious values and ceremonies, which they kept on performing secretly and perpetually. A radical rehabilitation of the political and ideological climate, gaining of independence, fundamental changes in all the spheres of social life, including economy, enabled former Soviet Muslim republics to restore their historical memory, renovate their mode of life to comply with modern requirements. However, this restructuring was accompanied by large-scale problems to be solved immediately. Hence, it was necessary to appropriately realize and perceive tasks the countries faced with.

Importance of adequate steps to attain the goal is clearly traced on the example of Azerbaijan. The country steered for independence, for the above-mentioned social and ideological transformations, formation of the new public and spiritual values. However, these processes were fraught with countless problems which called for their resolution. The newly independent

A Republic was deficient in political will and adequate competence. As a result, chaotic tendencies and disturbances in the life of the country ate appreciably intensified. In early 1990 s, Azerbaijan experienced hard social, economical and spiritual crisis. Further complicating the case were some unfavorable factors and tendencies. In particular, a notorious neighbour began laying incessant territorial claims to Azerbaijan, involving it in war and combat activities, even occupying 20 % of country's territory, banishing approximately 1 million Azerbaijani refugees from their places of residence.

The real state of affairs was deplorable. Urgent, immediate steps were required to get Azerbaijan out of this crisis, encourage and inspire the nation to new initiatives, new enthusiasm. It was a matter of paramount importance. Otherwise, the nation could have lost its long-awaited independence and split into separate parts.

Under these intolerable circumstances, Heydar Aliyev came to power again. The Azerbaijani people welcomed his return to the country; in fact, it was the people who demanded Aliyev's advent in Azerbaijan to rescue the nation from disaster. In other words, the country was in bad need of this phenomenal personality, and it was the historical moment that accounted for his return.

Heydar Aliyev was one of the most experienced and authoritative statesman of the Soviet epoch, well versed in nuances of the Soviet power hierarchy, nature and peculiarities of the Communist and atheist ideology. For many years, he headed Azerbaijan and glorified his country worldwide. He was one of the leaders of the former Soviet Union. It was not surprising that he enjoyed great authority on the Commonwealth of Independent States' space. The entire globe recognized his contribution in world affairs and knew him as a great politician and leader of the country. The abovementioned factor played a crucial role in acquainting Azerbaijan to the world, bringing it into the geopolitical scene. Heydar Aliyev was famous not only for his previous political services to the nation but also for his perception of epoch novelties and modernity. This had always been an integral part of his personality. He had always realized a rhythm of impetuously changing world, caught the momentum and behaved wisely and conformably to circumstances. When on 20 January 1990, the Soviet army invaded Baku and arranged massacres and atrocities in the capital of the Republic, he did not hesitate in accusing the Soviet power and Communist Party of committing unprecedented crimes and bringing information about these crimes to world public opinion's notice. When adjusted for the fact that the state security services were shadowing Heydar Aliyev, we can

image how bravely he behaved and acted even despite risks threatening his life and safety. However, he was not terrified of anybody and any- 27 thing; without a moment's hesitation he went down into trenches to afe, encourage Azerbaijani soldiers who opposed the enemy. Afterwards, he returned to his native land - Nakhchivan, managed it skilfully under hard and difficult conditions of the blockade. Thanks to his heroic efforts, the enemy failed to capture this small region. This was a brilliant page in Heydar Aliyev's political autobiography. Note that his Nakhchivan case was an absolutely new ordeal in his political experience. And it was his Nakhchivan historical activities that added new impetus and strength to Aliyev's subsequent political steps, accounted for his successful and far-sighted ability to foresee consequences of political actions. However, it was a matter of the nearest future.

In the 1990 s, the situation increasingly aggr"3ted. For this reason, the Azerbaijani intellectuals turned their eyes upon Heydar Aliyev. There was no other way out of the situation, there was no alternative to Heydar Aliyev in Azerbaijan. Everyone knew and realized this circumstance. And Heydar Aliyev responded adequately to the call of the nation. Great efforts and endeavors were made to remedy the situation, self-sacrifice and dedication required to return faith to the nation, people and state. And the people made no mistake in choosing Heydar Aliyev. As is seen, Allah took care of Azerbaijan, drove the nation out of the impasse.

Heydar Aliyev faced with increasingly complex tasks: to lay down princi-ples of legal state, market economy and democratic society. On this track, it was essential to get the state and the society merged integrally with the culture and the spirituality. It was also essential to rely on historical roots and memory, self-esteem in all the areas. Heydar Aliyev personified traits of truly leader with political and ideological foundation to comply both with traditional and modern requirements. He was successful in appropriately adopting mentality and psychology of the nation, ways to the development of the concept of new life structure. In doing so, Heydar Aliyev managed to solve, both strategic and tactical problems in the right direction.

Relation to the religion and comprehension of the significance of religious values formed integral part of the conceptual political views on the epoch and time. This integrity and unity accounted for success of the concept. The religion lays down foundations of spiritual values of the national culture and spirit. Also, the religion comes into the forefront, and a contemporary human being increasingly relies on religion values to live his life righteously, with belief in his soul. Following the country's independence, popular masses



Sheikh-ul-Islam is being presented with high award.

increasingly tended toward the religion. Further facilitating the case was abolition of all restrictions on administering religious rites; erection of mosques and establishment of respective institutions. Beyond any doubts, it is encouraging tendency, yet, there are still certain difficulties and problems to be solved. Some people realized the return to the religion as a fashion, while the true faith does not blend with the fashion. The true faith stems from the inner necessity. For this reason, the return to the religion is to be sincere and based on righteous principles. It is our major purpose, and it is this factor that accounted for contents of religion-related theses of Heydar Aliyev.

When running the independent Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev closely watched current developments, treated various religious matters with great attention and care. It was no mere coincidence that religion-related statements and actions take an important place in his practical and scientific activities. As head of the state and skilful politician, Aliyev approached consistently to the religion in terms of the historical past and modernity as well. His practical steps and profound thoughts on the religion were interrelated, supplemented each other and found their parallel in his activities as great political figure of the epoch.

During his regular meetings with theologians, in his statements Heydar Aliyev repeatedly recalled about negative experience of his country in the religious sphere, bitter truths of the Soviet past. In doing so, he tried to unmask



Visiting Mir Movsum Agha's tomb.

delusions and called to avoid mistakes of the recent past.

Heydar Aliyev eye-witnessed the events of the epoch, so his words and calls were convincing and truthful. The fact that a statesman of the Soviet epoch harshly criticized atheist ideology and particularly attacks against Islam helps comprehend inevitable failure and bankruptcy of all attempts to discredit religious values and principles. The analysis of the political and social picture of the epoch makes it possible to draw two conclusions: bankruptcy of atheist attempts to discredit Islam was attributable to the inconsistency of the Soviet ideological system, on the one hand, and ability of religious sentiments and Islamic spiritual values to survive, on the other.

As is known, the atheism takes a particular place within the Soviet ideology. Inspired by scientific-technological progress and broad opportunities, Soviet propagandists carried out activities aimed at disseminating disbelief in Allah. However, neither 70-year old ideology, nor atheistic propaganda saved the Soviet Empire from disintegration and collapse. Some political experts expressed their views and explanations on the reasons of the collapse of the Soviet system. Their views have much in common: it was the deepest economic crisis and related political chaos that led to the catastrophe. Of interest is the fact that commentaries by Heydar Aliyev stressed, along with the above-mentioned reasons, an ideological factor as well. It may be concluded that deceptively powerful and strong Soviet ideology was based on absolute-



Meeting with believers at Taza-Pir mosque.

ly corrupt and false principles. For this reason, the defeat of this ideology and its propagandists was inevitable, and the collapse of this pseudo-giant came as a result of All-Mighty punishment.

While at Taza-Pir mosque on 5 September 1993, prior to his election President of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, attending a ceremony of Prophet Birthday, unveiled reasons of Azerbaijani people's alienation from their sacred faith, detailed about particulars of the atheistic policy of the Soviets, underscored deplorable consequences of this political line. Beyond any doubts, it was the Soviet ideological system that was to blame for estrangement of not only Azerbaijan but all former Soviet Muslim republics from their native faiths, and Heydar Aliyev always stressed this fact. Figuratively, this fact might be interpreted as Allah's ordeal in a broader religious-philosophical aspect:

"For long span of time, the Azerbaijani people have been deprived of their religion. It is very pitiful fact for us. However, it depended neither on you, nor us. Maybe, it is Allah's matter. And it is an ordeal to prove that when the humans consign their faith to oblivion, there immediately commence distress and calamities, and instead, when they return to their roots, a realm of happiness reigns."

Formulation of the question in this manner seems to be substantiated and adequately grounded from religious point of view. As is known, Koran repeatedly stresses that ordeals are sent from above to test humans. Thus, verses



Meeting with believers at Taza Pir mosque.

155-157 (*al-Bagara*) call for patience as saying that Allah will then forgive them for their sins and grant them His mercy. In all appearances, the Azerbaijani Muslims as people within the structure of the Soviet Empire were also tested by Allah, and His love for them enabled Azerbaijanis to return to their sacred faith. As a rule, those rejecting their primordial faith are doomed to countless calamities and deprivations. But if they find strength enough to return to the righteous path, they will be welcomed and happy.

This is clearly traced in the case of Azerbaijan. The return of Azerbaijan to its native religion resulted in enthusiasm and spiritual rebirth of Azerbaijanis. When touching upon the Soviet ideology and particularly anti-religious and anti-Islamic propaganda, Heydar Aliyev always stressed the necessity of the return to the traditional religious and spiritual values. A wise and far-sighted politician Heydar Aliyev underlined the need for revival and development of Azerbaijani society, restoration of its national and spiritual integrity, self-confidence of the nation.

In his reports and statements, President of Azerbaijan Republic reminded of hardships and torments the people of Azerbaijan had experienced when being estranged from their native spiritual values and faith. The point was not about aspiration to disorganize and upset the nation, though emotional and psychological experience also played an important role in the process. However, the purpose is global: mentioning of the bitter truths of the recent



In the mosque.

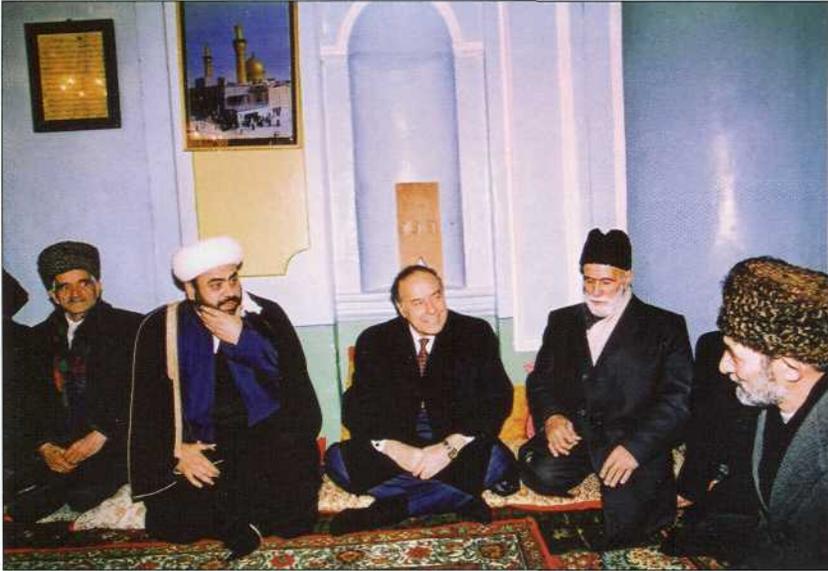
past is to avoid the recurrence of errors. In his report to the 1-2 October 1998 Baku international conference "**Modernity and Religious-Spiritual Values**"

Heydar Aliyev detailed about total and incessant struggle against the religion in the Soviet times as stressing that this struggle was directed against the whole humanity, not a nation taken separately:

"It is known that for 70 years we have been deprived of our religion and related spiritual values under the Communist regime. The greatest ever damage of the Communist ideology to the mankind was 70-year long prop-aganda against the religion, prohibition and distortion of religious values."

Unmasking of the Soviet period experience helped understand and comprehend all the depth of the anti-religious prop-aganda, its deplorable results for humanity. This opinion of the world's prominent politician and authoritative figure proved to be a guaranty that this would never be repeated in the coun-try Heydar Aliyev headed. When adjusted for Aliyev's greatest role in the life of his people and the country, his above-mentioned statement could be applied as recommendation to the next generation of leaders of Azerbaijan.

By the way, of interest is another aspect of the problem as well. Merciless struggle of the Soviet power against the religion stemmed from the very nature of the socialist ideology. However, the bitter experience makes it possible to believe that the Soviet ideology, in an effort to discredit the religion, sought to exalt their leaders. Perhaps, for this reason the Soviet power with particular cru-



At Mashtagha mosque.

ely fought against the religion, especially Islam. The point was that the Islamic religion, Koran called to rely on Allah only and rejected idolatry. With special emphasis on humans as Allah's servants, Koran underscores the necessity of worshipping Him only and to ask for help from Him only. (*al-Fateha*, 5)

The Soviet ideology banned the religion, on the one hand, and tried to distort its main provisions, on the other to thus discredit it among the public. Heydar Aliyev did not ignore this circumstance as explaining helplessness of the Soviet atheist propaganda by this factor as well. During the above-men-tioned international conference Heydar Aliyev again stressed that despite all attempts to suppress and exterminate religious sentiments, the Soviet ideological system failed to attain its goal and remove Islamic truths from the people's memory. Cited as example, he referred to the case as follows:

"At the same time, the history is illustrative that the faith and particularly the Islamic religion, is so great and powerful that neither ideology nor power is in position to get even with it and the 70-year long history reaffirms this".

Noteworthy is the fact that it was the prominent Soviet politician, experi-enced and wise statesman not ordinary historian and researcher, who succeeded to prove that no ideology or ruler, nor power or another force could have coped with Islamic spiritual might. These words and firm resolution came from the life experience, and proved to be very convincing for the public opinion.



Meeting with pilgrims.

Koran unveils vain hopes of disbelievers and heretics in their aspiration to combat Islam. Those opposing the religion are trying to extinguish the divine brilliance are doomed to failure:

"They want to put out Allah's light (Islamic religion, Koran), however, He does not let them do these. Allah wants to complete His light, though unbelievers dislike" (Repentance, 32).

In his report to the 9-11 December 1998 Baku international conference "**The Islamic Civilization in the Caucasus**" President Heydar Aliyev touched upon obvious and latent aspects of the Soviet ideological struggle against the religion. He drew attention of the audience to the fact that the failure of the struggle against Islam was natural and well-grounded as saying that religious sentiments had enormous effect on the life and morality of the people:

"Over 70 years the religion was banned and the atheism propagated in the Soviet Union. The struggle against the religion was furious; the religion was rejected to form foundation of the Communist ideology. We have lived this period and today after Azerbaijan has gained its sovereignty, in a short while the religion, including Islam, has restored its position and we realized the depth of its roots in Azerbaijani society."

Heydar Aliyev was successful in depicting the objective picture of the historical experience, for this reason his analysis was convincing and plausible. As a whole, his judgments were based on facts and logical sequence:



Getting acquainted with the religious literature exhibition.

"In a short while, it became obvious that if the Communist ideology had had ruled not 70, even 170 years, it would have failed to separate humans from the Islamic religion. It is fact. At the same time, the above-stated is an eloquent testimony to the might of Islam."

Thus, Heydar Aliyev always demonstrated the might and grandeur of the Islamic religion:

"For 70 years, they tried to separate our people from the Islamic religion. As you know, we lived in terms of the atheist propaganda and education under the Soviet rule. Despite this, our people has never felt estranged from its religion, kept it in heart and soul. This once again confirms the might of the Islamic religion" (*excerpt from a speech of Heydar Aliyev during his meeting with Ayatollah Seyid Ali Khameneyi*).

Here Heydar Aliyev deals with an important aspect of the religious psychology as saying that an affiliation of a human being to Allah is born in his soul. It is the soul that gives impetus to the communication between Allah and a human being. According to Koran, Allah is aware of what is happening in human's soul (*al-Maida*, 7). Allah placed the faith inside the soul and enriched it with the faith (*al-Hujurat*, 7). According to Islam, the souls of pious people are reputed to be Allah house.

In the Soviet period, persons at the top of political power and senior Communist Party functionaries could not be religious figures. The leader of



Presenting memorable gift.

Azerbaijan reminded of this fact as noting that he had never ignored or forgotten Allah. Even better, he had always kept his faith inside his soul.

When addressing a ceremony on the occasion of opening of a mosque in Nakhchivan, Heydar Aliyev also touched upon this ticklish matter as saying that he held top positions in the Soviet Union power hierarchy, so he had to be far from religion or other faith. In spite of the fact that he held top positions in the higher echelons of power and Communist Party, Allah had always stayed in his soul, however, he could not manifest his feeling openly. All these aroused torments in his emotional experience. In recognizing the historical truth the leader of Azerbaijan clearly felt spiritual and psychological sentiment. In doing so, he attached attention to the spiritual damage, which anti-Islamic propaganda caused to the Muslim religion. Of particular interest are his views on the subject he declared during the 9-11 December 1998 Baku international conference titled "**The Islamic Civilization in the Caucasus**":

"The generation which came up in the Soviet period must have underes-timated spiritual values of the Islamic religion, its deepest roots and influ-ence in the life on the nation due to intensive anti-religious propaganda. We ourselves could not comprehend this, and I concede this fact".

Words of the Azerbaijan leader help realized some major historical truths of the epoch. First, the Soviet ideological and political system was eager to alienate Muslims from their religion, profound spiritual values, and Islamic



Along with religious clergy of the North Caucasus.

education. Soviet ideologists were afraid of the magnetic force of Islamic values, since the latter could weaken the influence of the Soviet ideology in society. Heydar Aliyev reaffirmed that we were deliberately estranged from these values. On the other hand, in combating the Islamic religion Bolsheviks applied both to ideological and political propaganda methods, prevented broader popular masses from getting religious education. They distorted Islamic values, forcibly rooted out religious institutions, mosques, holy places and instead constructed ugly, formless buildings, granaries and warehouses. They even exploded mosques and holy places. In doing so, they pursued an aim to fully uproot any mentioning of mosques and religious attributes from the memory of the generation to come. Mosques, minarets, religious institutions and buildings in many places of Azerbaijan were destroyed or used for economic purposes. The new generation was unaware of these plans. On the other hand, spiritual leaders and theologians were persecuted, and those who agreed to renounce their belief were given the so-called book of atheist. Bolsheviks annihilated not only Koran and Islamic sacred books written in Arab script, but also numerous scientific, philosophical, historical and literary works. As a matter of fact, Bolsheviks did their best to delete from historical memory of the nation any mentioning of Islam.

In his statements and speeches Heydar Aliyev had repeatedly confessed this fact. While visiting Bibi-Heybat mosque in 1994, he reminded the audience of atrocities committed by Bolsheviks, their destruction of this holy

place. It was decided to build a new mosque in this place. The mosque 38 was completed in May 1998 and President attended an opening ceremony as saying that neither physical force nor political and ideological pressures could avert people from their spiritual faiths.

When speaking to the 1-2 October 1998 Baku international conference held by the scientific-religious council of Caucasian Muslims Board, President Heydar Aliyev declared as follows:

"You can imagine how sacred and divine this place is! In the 8th century there was a grave of Hazrati Hokuma. At one time, the people erected a mosque above this grave, which later on turned into a place of pilgrimage. Note that in 1933 this place, sacred not only for Azerbaijanis, but also Muslims from many countries, was blown up and fully destroyed. The mosque was razed to the ground; however, these people did not cease coming here. Bibi-Heybat mosque, we call it "Pir", has always been a place of pilgrimage for Muslims, who worshipped this place, praying".

Heydar Aliyev also touched upon other problems. Thus, he again reminded that in the Soviet period as a result of merciless struggle against Islam, hundreds of mosques and Pirs were destroyed. When Azerbaijan gained its independence, there had been just 18 mosques in the country. However, in a short period of time above 1 000 new mosques have been built over the past 7 years. He summed up as saying:

"Currently operating in Azerbaijan is above 1000 mosques. Today, everyone can come to Allah house and express his wishes there, so it is no mere coincidence that numerous mosques have been built unassisted by the government, state or private structure. This is an eloquent testimony to my words".

President Heydar Aliyev engrossed audience's attention to another aspect of anti-Islamic propaganda. Communists did their utmost to make the people forget their religious, national and spiritual belonging. To attain their goal, Bolsheviks applied a word "Soviet people" signifying that all peoples residing in the territory of the Soviet Union belonged to the so-called "Soviet people".

PART II.

DOUBLE STANDARDS AND DISCRIMINATION



**Is it just where the four Resolutions of the UN Security Council
demanding Armenian armed forces to liberate occupied
Azerbaijani lands are ignored?**

HEYDAR ALIYEV





Together with the participants of the international symposium "Islamic Civilization in the Caucasus".

One component of the religious policy of the Soviet Union was atheistic propaganda, and another component was double standard and partiality. Heydar Aliyev expressed interesting views on the subject as stressing that the Soviet ideology was primarily aimed against Islam. During the above-mentioned 9-11 December 1998 Baku international conference "**The Islamic Civilization in the Caucasus**" Heydar Aliyev noted:

"A special propaganda was carried on against Islam in the reviewed period within the framework of the Communist ideology".

Then Heydar Aliyev touched upon other processes he witnessed in the said period:

"As you know, in that period I was engaged in solving important nationwide problems. Sometimes I thought why attitudes were so different and hostile to various religions while the religion is universal, so the authorities should have treated religions regardless of their affiliation".

This prominent public and political figure, using his logical and purposeful mind, was successful in discovering the hostile nature of attitudes of Soviet political figures with respect to Islam. He stressed that they had been guided by social-political, moral-spiritual and psychological motives in propagating double standard and partial attitudes in regard of Muslims. He clarified his position as follows:

"The propaganda work against the Islamic religion took a special place 42 in the atheistic propaganda of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In the Soviet epoch, there was an idea that Islam posed a particular threat to the Soviet power, while Christianity was not so dangerous for the Soviet peoples".

Of interest the fact that political and ideological directives of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were kept secret. In other words, the questions of atheistic propaganda were discussed at all Plenums and Congresses, special meetings of Republican Party Committees. However, official documents stressed the necessity of carrying on a special propaganda work against Islam and its tenets. Within the framework of the closed Soviet system these questions were indicated secretly and put into practices confidentially. These top secret documents were known to those who held the highest positions in the echelons of power. As one of those at the top of power and authoritative Communist Party functionary, Heydar Aliyev was well aware of these documents. He said:

"What I am telling you now, I saw with my own eyes. I mean top secret ideological documents".

Indeed, there were various rumors about this information in society; it was President who first confirmed truths about it among popular masses. He added:

"A political line of the Communist ideology directed to pursuing partiality with respect to religions and discriminating them was indicative that there had been good religion and there was bad religion, and Islam was bad religion".

From this it follows: first, through the atheist propaganda the Soviet power tried to annihilate largely the Islamic religion; second, Islam possessed utterly powerful moral-spiritual, religious and psychological might, therefore, the Communist ideologists, frightened by the might of Islam, did their best to discredit this religion in the public consciousness; third, the public opinion of the country was well aware of the partial political line aimed against Islam.

A negative attitude toward Islam openly manifested itself in scientific-research works. The works devoted to the Islamic culture were mostly carried on in the Centre - Moscow. Experts analyzing the classical heritage tried to avoid religious questions, distorted the historical reality. Ever worse, some researchers contrived to discover anti-religious motifs in the works of some Muslim philosophers, writers and poets.

Of interest is the fact that in the Soviet times Koran had been translated into Russian only. Other Soviet Muslim peoples had no opportunity to read it in original or in their native languages. Heydar Aliyev explained reasons of this policy as follows:

"Why has Koran been translated into Russian, but not into Azeri? Because the Soviet authorities banned Azerbaijanis to use Koran. They believed that Koran having been translated into Russian, so that Christians could learn it. If translated into Azeri, Azerbaijanis would intensify their tendency toward Islam, that's the problem".

As is seen, the Soviet ideologists put forward a task to avert Muslims from their native religious roots. The double standards and partial attitudes with respect to Islam is a matter of particular importance. In the 1990 s Armenians occupied not only Nagorno Karabakh but also 7 neighboring regions, i.e. 20% of the territory of Azerbaijan. From now on, Azerbaijan has to face double standards not only from Russia as heir of the Soviet Union but also from the Western countries, including the United States. Instead of condemning Armenia for its aggression against Azerbaijan and calling it to liberate occupied lands, these countries prefer to persuade Azerbaijan to make concessions, in other words, reconcile with the fact of occupation. The Azerbaijani public opinion has already formulated its attitude to the double standards propagated by western politicians, and it was Heydar Aliyev who first presented this position to the world public opinion on the basis of well-grounded and specific facts. During his numerous meetings with leaders of the United States, European, Asian and Eastern countries, diplomats and delegations of the Minsk group of OSCE Heydar Aliyev harshly criticized double standards policy, called them to approach to the issue on the basis of international legal standards to comply with righteous cause of Azerbaijan when adjusted for sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Adherents of Islam, Azerbaijanis recognized international forces as backing the aggressor from solidarity and liking for Armenians, their Christian co-religionists. An impression is that the double standards and partiality with respect to Islam and Muslims typical for the Soviet epoch are applied in modern times in new forms and nuances.

When addressing the 8th Summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference Summit held on 10 December 1997 in Tehran, Heydar Aliyev stressed that the OIC proved to be a single international structure that condemned aggressive, occupational policy of Armenia against Azerbaijan. He thanked the OIC



At the 10th convention of the Caucasus Muslims.

for political-diplomatic, material and moral support shown to the Azerbaijani people.

A fragment of his speech said as follows:

"The Azerbaijani people need solidarity and spiritual-material aid from Muslim countries. Using support from its Diasporas in America and Europe, as well as Russia, Armenia is receiving spiritual, political, economic and military aid from these countries".

President of Azerbaijan Republic ascertained with bitterness that in the late 20-th in early the 21-st century there continued conflicts and wars on the globe, including religious confrontation and clashes. He stressed the inadmissibility of such a situation. During the international conference "The Islamic Civilization in the Caucasus" President Heydar Aliyev underscored that "from religious point of view, no enmity, confrontation or war is admissible. It is imperative to put an end to all these clashes and enmity in late 20-th early the 21-st century".

"We have to confess that a military aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan that started 10 years ago has evolved into a big war and combat operations of the parties. As a consequence, Azerbaijanis-adherents of the Islam religion have been banished from the territory of Armenia".

Heydar Aliyev is a person who makes his statements plainly, and when speaking about Caucasian realities he draws a comparison between the past



Award presentation ceremony for the memorizers of Koran.

and the present of the current processes. In doing so he puts in the forefront injustices and enmities against Azerbaijanis as Muslims. During his meeting with participants of the said conference he indicated:

"There are presently three independent states in the Caucasus: Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. 500,000 Azerbaijani Muslims reside in Georgia, as well as Adjarians and representatives of other Muslim peoples. From times immemorial there resided Azerbaijanis, other Muslims on the territory of Armenia. Western Azerbaijan included Irevan, Geycha, Vedibasar and Zangezur provinces populated by Muslims, Azerbaijanis, etc. Regretfully, Muslims had to abandon these territories. If the point is about the Islamic civilization, we must tell the truth".

World's authoritative politician did not confine himself with Azerbaijan and Caucasus; he also referred to facts of double standards and partiality on the international arena, stressing the problems which arose from the use of double standards. At the same time he resolutely turned down negative propaganda methods being applied for sometime past against Islam and Muslims world-wide. Heydar Aliyev repeatedly underlined inadmissibility of such a political line.

The Aliyev's stand on the issue is quite transparent and logical. An important aspect of the problem is that some circles benefit from the use of notions



While holding conversation with Iranian religious leader, Ayatollah Seyid Ali Khamenei.

like **"fundamentalism"**, **"extremism"**, and **"fanaticism"**. He pointed out that these tendencies openly manifested themselves on the international arena:

"Today, some world centers disseminate views on "Islamic fundamentalism", Islamic extremism" and "Islamic fanaticism". I think that our Sacred Book Koran has never laid down principles of fundamentalism. We adopt Islamic culture and spiritual values as set forth in our Sacred Book. It is a great sin to distort what is written in Koran".

This wise and far-sighted personality was well aware of what had been behind accusations against the Islamic religion. It is known that this kind of propaganda has widely been spread over the past 20-30 years on the global scale. Some political circles of world's great powers, unwilling to decline from their colonization plans, are anxious about political and ideological revival of the Islamic world, its struggle for independence and sovereignty. Simultaneously, the Islamic factor played an important role in shaping self-identification psychology and national consciousness in some Muslim countries. At the same time Islam comes out as major regulating factor in drawing countries of the East, Africa and Asia nearer, in consolidating their unity. For this reason the western circles, hostile to the East and Islamic civilization, resort to the above mentioned methods of propaganda to shape a negative image in the world public opinion.



At the international symposium dedicated to the issue of "Islamic Civilization in the Caucasus"

The leader of Azerbaijan took categorical and inflexible stand on the issue and referred to Koran to substantiate his point of view as saying that there had never been anything like fundamentalism. In other words, enemies of Islam slander and distort it. Heydar Aliyev accentuated the fact that under Islamic values and culture we mean values and cultures as set forth in Koran. If somebody, in an attempt to distort Koran, misinterprets its dicta and talk slanderously about Sacred Book, he will sin against the truth. Koran says:

"He who reads this Book adequately, shall he believe in It. He who denies It, shall he be punished in this world and the beyond". (*al-Bagara*, 21)

Following the tragic 11 September events, accusations against Islam increasingly intensified and a notion of "terrorism" was introduced into the political propaganda lexicon. President of Republic Azerbaijan expressed his scientifically substantiated stand on the subject as saying that Islam and terrorism were incompatible; on the contrary, Islam and Koran reject any kind of violence and injustice. He again condemned double standards and partiality against Muslims on the international arena. As an integral part of the Muslim world, Azerbaijan rejected any groundless accusations of violence and terrorism. Several scientific conferences, seminars and round tables were held in Baku to discuss the issue. Speaking at these meetings, representatives of Azerbaijani intelligentsia, theologians, politicians and writers put forward an

idea that the Islamic civilization has always called for peace, justice, 48 tranquility and universal values. All these meetings and conferences rested on Heydar Aliyev's concepts. Long before, he accentuated the danger of ethnic separatism and terrorism in Azerbaijan and indifferent attitude of the international structures to the fact. He insisted on inadmissibility of double standards and partiality in terrorism and violence matters. He earnestly demonstrated that statements of some foreign structures about human rights and democracy were based on double standards, so he called them to approach things from objective, impartial and fundamental position. His consistency and reasoning often nonplused representative of international structures and organizations. If the point was about human rights, Heydar Aliyev asked them you explain why human rights and statuses of approx. 1 million Azerbaijanis - Muslims, forcibly banished from their native places, were violated and the international public opinion did nothing to reinstate their rights? - His opponents made helpless gestures, incapable of giving distinct answer. Along with his efforts to consistently protect interests of his people and the state, he condemned those who followed the double standard policies and administered injustices and hostile attitude to the Islamic world.



PART III.

ISLAM AS A SOURCE OF MORAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES



It is momentous event in the life of the independent Azerbaijan that our people may freely confess its native religion and make Hajj to the holy places of Islam.

HEYDAR ALIYEV





Meeting with the author of the book.

The Islamic religion is reputed to be a model of rich and perfect civilization. It is distinguished by its indisputable moral and spiritual values. Note that the human morality takes a major place in the world religions, including Christianity and Buddhism. From this point of view, Islam is notable for more comprehensive and universal moral qualities, respect for human personality. Great historical personalities, non-Muslims - philosophers, scholars and theologians referred to Islam as treasure-house of humanity and morality. Both from individual moral qualities and education, family relations and moral spiritual standpoints, Islam plays a key role in the life of sound and healthy society. Fed by Koran and Sunnah, Islam excels most ideological schools in its integrity, perfection and beauty. Islam has lived millennium old historical experience, subjected to attacks of numerous political, ideological and psychological trends, physically and morally pressured; however, it gained victory and survived to comply with spiritual and moral model of the epoch. Being perpetually pressured by the Soviet political and ideological might, persecuted by Soviet intelligence services and total propaganda machine notwithstanding, Islam has survived, while the Soviet moral school - collapsed. The dissolution of the USSR put an end to the Soviet moral ideology and deleted it from social consciousness. Throughout the human history and civilization, the most important question for human beings was moral and spiritual standards and related

environment. The mankind has always been anxious for prosperity and peace existence. To meet their growing needs, the mankind created new projects and conceptions, introduced new economic and technical achievements, advanced toward technological progress. When comparing modernity with the Middle Ages and antiquity, one can easily trace back mankind's advancement toward development and better life.

These improvements and development embraced all spheres of everyday life, social conditions, social institutions and political power, all areas of public and individual life of society. Despite this progress, the humanity has always faced great difficulties in establishing moral and spiritual mode of life. A paradoxical situation arose: no material and scientific - technological progress can contribute to the moral and spiritual health of society. Even application of laws and punitive measures cannot avert humans from evil and bad deeds. Islam does not confine itself to regulating relations between humans, society and state; it makes people responsible for their deeds to All-Mighty. Hence, while the humanity bears material responsibility before society and world public, it bears spiritual responsibility before Allah. Koran and Islam do not impose distractions on material life of mankind; it lays an emphasis on moral and spiritual values to be guided in public life, moral and spiritual values secure humans from temptations caused by material interest and envies. A human being is insatiable, even if he disposes of innumerable and countless welfare and riches, he from time to time resorts to various immoral and bad deeds to earn as much as possible. The Islam culture puts in the forefront healthy, noble values in an attempt to bring up people and make them healthier. Those opposing Islam allege that Islam tries to avert people from material-economical development and spiritual life. This is a false approach. Koran and Prophet invite all human beings to join fruits grown by Allah. An important aspect has to be taken into account here: the humanity should act in accordance with its real needs, not infringe rights of other people, and assist those who are in bad need to comply with Allah justice.

The western ideological-psychological trends impose no restrictions on material-secular needs of people, considering it necessary to apply every possible means to attain material profits. Meanwhile, Islam recommends observing moral and spiritual criteria and avoiding infringement of somebody's rights when earning its living.

According to Islam, a human being has to be guided by his responsibility

to Allah, not only police, power or ruler. It is temptation that makes a human being to tell the lie to the police and authorities; however, he is sure to be punished in the Heavens.

The most important aim of the religious teaching is to educate people to comply with established values and procedures. This is a hallmark of Islam, and Prophet expressed his view on the subject as follows:

"I have come to glorify universal human values".

Along with wisdom, might and science, Koran lays an emphasis on the following aspect: it leads people to the right path and lofty spirituality. Islam and Koran are treasure of human and moral spiritual values, school of justice: "Everyone is responsible for his deeds" (*al-Bagara*, 134,139); "Everyone is to blame for mistakes he has made" (*an-Nisa*, 111; *al-En'am*, 164).

Islam invites people to commit good deeds, decline from bad deeds; it glorifies human grandeur; inspires him patience, resoluteness, generosity, self-sacrifice, modesty, honesty, pride, bravery, all-forgiveness. With its lofty universal morality and humanism, Islam did not confine itself with the Arabian Peninsula only: it stretched to Spain in the West, Philippines in the East; to Europe and America.

It was Heydar Aliyev who took into consideration the importance of spiritual and moral values of Islam for destinies of his own native people. He knew it very well that Islam had has and will play a key role in the spiritual and moral integration of Azerbaijanis. The leader of Azerbaijan considered Islam to be an integral part of the Azerbaijani national culture.

In the first years of gaining independence of Azerbaijan he had been successful in demonstrating right directions of Islam propaganda in Azerbaijan. On 5 September 1993, addressing an audience at Taza-Pir on the occasion of Prophet's birthday he said:

"Islam is the highest moral source of the Azerbaijani people, entire most Muslim world".

In saying so, President meant universal spiritual significance of Islam, its importance not only for Azerbaijanis and other Muslims, but also for entire mankind. Azerbaijan is a part of the Islamic world, while the latter is a part of the world's humanity, and there is integral interrelation between them. To speak in global terms, Heydar Aliyev considers the Islamic culture to be a model for the mankind as a whole.

While addressing a conference titled "**Modernity and National-Spiritual**



Together with Georgian Patriarch and Katalikos Iliya II.

Values", he pointed out that all the world's religions do propagandize elevated spiritual values. As is known, humans in the history of mankind have always drawn their traditions and customs from religious values and concepts. In doing so, a vexed point is clarified here. Thus, some world cultures originate in religious roots. As a matter of fact, the religion is a teaching stemming from the system of beliefs of humans. Main purpose of the faith is to create belief in Allah in the sole of a human being. Serving this purpose are religious dicta and guidelines. To believe in Allah is to adopt morality and spiritual values. The same principles are shaped in the family and society in the form of moral system of behavior and legal actions. In Islam, this question is more pronounced. When worshipping Allah, a Muslim is willing to follow the righteous path, so another purpose of the faith is to regulate human's morality. Therefore, a good deed contributes to human's perfection, and, instead, bad deeds are not welcomed, according to Islam. Koran unifies those who believe and those who commit good deeds. (*al-Bagara: 25, 62, al-Imran: 57, an-Nisa: 57, 122, al-Maida: 9, 69, ar-Ra'd: 29, Ibrahim: 23 etc.*).

Heydar Aliyev was not expert in Islamic studies; however, he disposed of huge information, profound psychological and analytical abilities. In parallel with being a great politician and experienced sociologist, he skillfully analyzed processes taking places in society, particularly reasons and results of spiritu-



While receiving the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexy II.

al al and moral phenomena, even forecast future developments. He approached to each question from historical point of view, never forgot about lessons of the past when evaluating future perspectives.

In recalling spiritual values of the Islamic culture and their contribution to the world civilization, he pointed out:

"When tracing back our past history, we are pleased to say that the religion has for centuries played an important role in the history of humanity; brought happiness, peace and tranquility to humans. Islam is a religion disposing of elevated spiritual values. Contribution of Islam to the world culture and civilization, its recommendations and particularly spiritual values are unprecedented".

In doing so, Heydar Aliyev clarified some moot points. First, while the Soviet ideology presented Islam as superstition and prejudices to have played a negative role in the history, Heydar Aliyev on, the contrary, stressed its greatest importance in the past history of humanity. Second, a religion as an accumulation of spiritual values presented peace and tranquility to the mankind. The Islamic religion sprang up as a system of value to propogate benevolence, fraternity and equality among human beings.

When comparing the past Soviet and today's social-political western models, Russian sociologist B.Yerasov inferred that none of these models managed to ere-



Together with the king of Saudi Arabia, Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud.

ate a world order based on justice and peace. For this reason, the mankind would, from time to time, resort to the Orient, particularly spiritual values of the Islamic civilization. This kind of conclusions is also made by European scientists. As a consequence, bloody slashes, confrontation and violence going on in this globalizing world pose a threat to the cause of peace and tranquility. Meanwhile, Islam is a universal teaching, which relies on law and justice and thus contributes to the creation of mutual understanding, benevolence and fraternity among peoples.

In the Soviet epoch, propagandists of the regime were seeking to discredit noble values of the Islamic civilization as insisting that Islam had allegedly conquered the world by force of dagger and violence. The Heydar Aliyev's above-mentioned statements reaffirmed vanity of these attempts. A Koran fragment (*al-Bagara*, 256) said that there is no violence within the religion. As a whole, the religion and the faith take their own place in human's soul. The faith merges with the spirit and the soul. This cannot be inspired forcibly, nor shall be withdrawn forcibly.

President of Azerbaijan Republic expressed his view on the subject as follows:

"Muslims should keep their faith inside their souls. The religion did exist in every family, every house and its values, traditions and regulations proved to be stronger than laws and new rules and orders as established by the Soviet power".

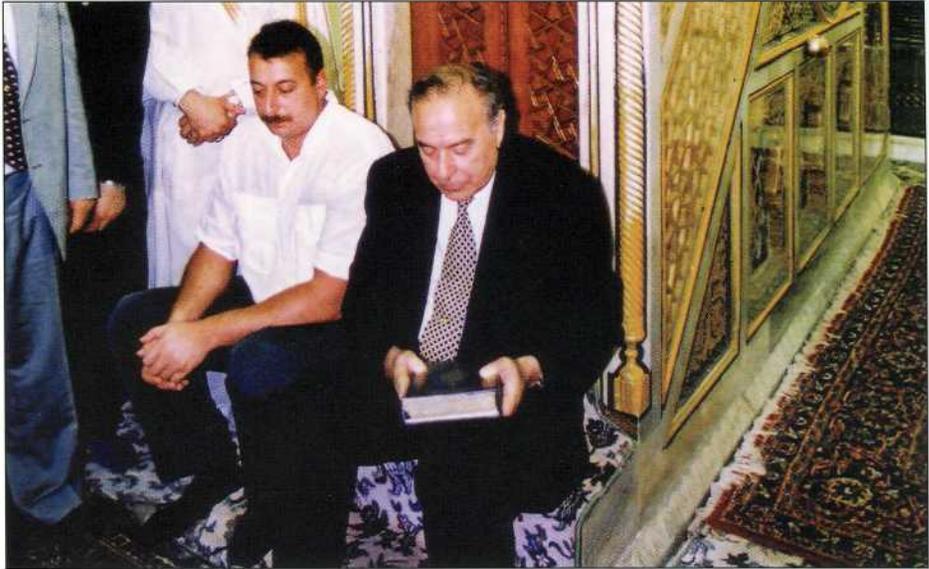


Meeting with the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayid Al-Hihayyan.

Heydar Aliyev's opinion and conclusions are logical and instructive: despite all prohibitions, propaganda and pressures, the might and strength of the Islamic culture failed to be oppressed and deleted from the memory of people. Azerbaijani leader eye-witnessed the real state of affairs during the Soviet regime. All administrative levers of pressure and anti-religious propaganda proved to be useless remained on paper only, turning into mere bureaucratic arbitrariness. However, Islamic values and related virtues kept on living inside the hearts of humans and burst out under new historical conditions. Heydar Aliyev explained reasons of revival and its psychological and intrinsic roots as follows:

"The point is that the religion and particularly our Islamic religion with advices and prescriptions as set forth in Koran and Hazrati Mohammad Prophet have excellent properties, fully consistent with the Azerbaijani's people internal morality and life; so all these traditions and regulations passed from generation to generation and no prohibitions could prevent it".

In saying so, Heydar Aliyev was successful in analyzing social and psychological might and persuasiveness of the religious values, specifically Islamic ones, and their impact on the mankind. A question arises: What are the reasons of 15-century long existence of Islam, its power and attractiveness for humanity in all the stages of its development? An answer to the question is quite logical and comprehensive.



At the holy Prophet's Mosque in Medina.

First of all, the Islamic values are in line with mankind's requirements, answer its internal wishes. On the other hand, these spiritual values stood firm against centuries-long tests and called people toward happiness. Ideological pressures of great powers resting on their military, political, economical and financial pillars notwithstanding, the Islamic religion contrived to survive preserve its grandeur and universal human nature, which have currently come up renewed and even stronger than before: the number of Muslims is growing interruptedly. It is no mere coincidence that Heydar Aliyev repeatedly stressed futility of any attempts, prohibitions and obstacles to strangle Islam.

Heydar Aliyev considered the religion and the faith to be major means for human perfection, and Koran played a crucial role on this track. He consistently called his people to confess Islam to follow the righteous path.

On 26 August 1999, during a ceremony on the occasion of Movlud holiday being held at Taza-Pir mosque, President pointed out:

"For centuries, the Islamic religion has formed spiritual principles of our faith, played an important role in the life of Muslims worldwide. All Koran dicta form the pivot of our advancement toward Allah. I believe that we, Azerbaijanis, shall never separate from our faith, our religion and build the future society based on Islamic spiritual principles".



Ceremonial welcoming by Moroccan king Hasan II.

Of interest are some important aspects of the matter. As is known, Koran is the Sacred Book for all Muslims to lead people on the righteous path. Koran is the Ray to illuminate the to Allah (*an-Nisa*, 174; *al-Araf*, 157); to declare about everything (*an-Nahl*, 189). Koran shows the righteous path to those who are seeking to become closer to righteousness and elevated spirituality (*al-Bagara*, 185; *al-Arar*, 52, 203; *Yunus*, 57; *an-Nahl*, 64). The path leading to Allah is righteous and those following this path may reach spirituality. This path is titled in Koran as "siratul-mustagim" (*al-Fatiha*, 6; *al-Bagara*, 142,213; *al-Imran*, 101; *an-Nisa*, 175; *al-En'am*, 39,88, etc.).

Islam leads humans to science, education, purification, spiritual perfection, righteousness, justice. Thanks to its elevated purposes, the Islamic civilization keeps on propagandizing its centuries-long principles in the new world.

Basic moral, spiritual and intellectual properties of Islam on the world scale can be summed up as follows:

- Invitation to science and education.

The most frequently used word in Koran next to Allah is "science". "**May connoisseurs and ignorants be equal?**" - An answer to this simple question is given in az-Zumar, 9: "Invitation to good deeds and refusal from bad deeds".

- Spiritual purity and health of human body.

- Respect to parents and elders; care for relatives, neighbours and others.



At the summit of the leaders of OIC member states.

- Aid to helpless and needy people.
- Protection of justice and law, struggle against violence.
- Benevolence and charity.
- Encouragement of confidence and faith in oneself.
- Education of love for motherland.

The leader of Azerbaijan welcomes Islamic values and Koran dicta as the most righteous path his native people's prosperity. The point is that those who experienced misfortunes are capable of gaining success. As is known from history, Mahatma Gandhi was the one who showed his people the path to spiritual and religious values. The same is true of the leader of Pakistan Iqbal Lahor who showed his people the way to freedom.

The major problem of Azerbaijan is the occupation of 20 % of country's lands, and Heydar Aliyev did his utmost to strengthen a feeling of national-spir-itual integrity and confidence to get his people out of the impasse. For this to happen, it is essential to rely on Islamic spiritual values. Heydar Aliyev noted:

"Should our spirituality be strong, we, Azerbaijanis and Muslims concur-rently, would be able to educate loyalty to our motherland, deeds, spiritual and moral values. For this reason, it is essential to call people for righteous path and pure deeds to comply with Koran prescriptions".



The Chairman of the OIC Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu while presenting memorial medal.

A hadith tell that the love for motherland is half of the faith. Believers do love their motherland with all fibers of their soul. During the battle of Badr, an army headed by Mohammad was weak and not numerous; however, with Allah's mercy Muslims triumphed, because they possessed strong spirituality and proximity to Allah.

On the occasion of lid al-Adha on 8 April 1998, President Aliyev attended a ceremony held at Mir Movsum-agma pir and defined Islamic values as national and spiritual wealth of Azerbaijanis:

"Our nation has a millennium old history, and for centuries we have been professing the Islamic religion. Islam is our native religion. National and spiritual values of our people, traditions of our religion are our national wealth".

In spite of the fact that the Azerbaijani people has for centuries been subjected to numerous violence and deprivations, the survival of people's spiritual values has been accounted for by the Islamic culture and its spirituality:

"This is to say that our traditions, spiritual, national and religious values are immortal to live henceforth".

In his subsequent statements Heydar Aliyev once again stressed that the purpose of all ceremonies is to return to the spirituality:

"The purpose of all our national and religious traditions is to add the 62 purity and health to the nation".

When speaking about the Islamic rites, the leader of Azerbaijan arrested attention on their nature and moral importance. On the occasion on lid al-Adha, he once again unveiled the philosophy of religious ceremonies:

"lid al-Adha is not a mere sacrificing and congratulating each other. Today, human beings are thinking over their life, returning to their primordial spirituality, reestimating their spirituality and thus becoming purer".

oran unites worship and practical activity to supplement each other. Al-Bagara, 177, says as follows:

Being pious does not mean to turn your eyes to the east and west. Being pious is believing in Allah, in the last day, in angels, in Holy Book, in Prophets; rendering aid to orphans, indigents, wayfarers, slaves. These are those who are truthful and pious in their faith and words".



PART IV.

ISLAM AND MODERNITY



*The Islamic religion has never been hostile to other religions,
for all of these religions come from Allah.*

HEYDAR ALIYEV





Restoration of religious monuments is always in the centre of attention.

It is large-scale globalization processes and new geo-political world order and related complex conditions that set new tasks before different peoples and nations, countries and regions, religions and cultures. Each person, country and civilization strives not to lag behind the progress, tries to take its place within this complex and difficult processes, and protects itself against possible challenges. Of interest here are revival and development of the Islamic civilization, its impact on the world processes and future prospects. Islam is capable of playing a crucial role in the development of the civilization and enrichment of universal values.

As the last divine faith, Islam is notable for its perfection, comprehensive and universal nature. This religion is distinct from other world beliefs by some characteristic features:

First, Islam does not confine itself to propagating religious rites and Sharia prescriptions. Islam is a teaching, which contributes to the development of humans and society, satisfaction of their spiritual needs. Islam puts forward principles, regulations and recommendations arising from social-legal and economic relations, moral and behavioral models, characteristic of individual-family-society interconnection.

Second, according to Islam, a human being is responsible both before

Allah, himself and other people. Despite human status in society, his position and posts, economic conditions and national affiliation and religion, all people are equal before Allah, law and justice. Each person bears responsibility for his actions. Human beings may excel each other in their moral and spiritual dignities.

Third, Islam leads humans from ignorance to perfection, is eager to reform society and improve it, advance toward progress and prosperity. Islam is based on divine justice, and under this principle strives to stand out as a criterion of justice and truth. No ruler or sovereign is entitled to violate rights of an ordinary worker or a peasant. Social regulations and patterns of behavior, as set forth in Islam and Koran, are consistent with international human rights and standards.

Islam is an innovative and progressing teaching. However, some western politicians and analysts are anxious about the revival of Islam, its growing impact on international life and protection of rights of Muslims worldwide. Proceeding from their hegemonic psychology, they take hostile attitude to Islam, charge Muslims against incompatibility with principles of democracy and modern development.

Having closely watched all the above-cited processes, the leader of Azerbaijan categorically rejected all groundless accusations against the Islamic religion. As far back as in the first years of his Presidential office, he addressed an audience on the occasion of Movlud holiday as saying:

"Our religion is progressive. For centuries the Islamic religion has proven its worth as progressive teaching, urging believers to advance toward progress and universal values".

Two aspects are of interest here. First, for centuries, Islam has been reputed as progressive teaching; second, Islam is a teaching which played a great role in the history of world civilization. This religion cannot be removed from development process going on the world arena.

In 1991-1993, lands of Azerbaijan had been occupied by Armenian aggressors, and the country faced great difficulties. To justify their bad deeds and excuse occupation of Muslim land, Armenian aggressors tried to persuade the world public opinion that they had captured these lands with a view of creating a security belt around Armenia. They alleged that Azerbaijani Muslims as fundamentalists tried to oppress civilized Armenian Christians.



Visiting the sacred Koran exhibition.

The leader of Azerbaijan responded to these fabrications and slanders as stressing that Muslims had always been peace-loving and progress-minded:

"The Islamic religion has never called as for aggression and occupation of foreign lands. We are peace-loving nation. Our religion inspires sentiments of friendship, brotherhood, peace and reconciliation. It is neither Azerbaijani people, or Muslims, nor Islamic religion to blame for the war. This is an aggressive war being waged against us. We are protecting our lands".

Among important developments going on the world arena today there is a struggle for democratic changes and human rights. The purpose of the democracy is to establish an appropriate power to comply with people's choice; create a legal state guided by adequate laws and regulations; insure freedom and human rights and finally create a healthy social environment.

Main purpose of the new world order is to ensure economic development and social prosperity, create fair democratic society. It is natural that all positive endeavors arising from the democracy are welcomed by most peoples and countries. However, the newly independent states are anxious about attempts of some countries to carry on colonization policy, arrange disorders and thus hold of natural wealth and recourses of these countries. On the other hand, misinterpretation of "freedom" and "democracy" notions has a negative effect on morality and spirituality of humans and society.



Meeting with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak.

Parallel with being experienced politician, the leader of Azerbaijan was a skillful sociologist and psychologist. For this reason, he distinguished between genuine democracy and pseudo-democracy. Heydar Aliyev considered it necessary to act on the international arena to ensure democratic changes, freedoms and human rights. In doing so, he did not ignore negative and controversial aspects of the process, stressed the necessity of solving related problems. He approached the problem in a typical complex, integrative manner. From this point of view, it would be appropriate to cite a fragment from his report to the "Modernity and National Spiritual Values":

"In the end of the 20-th century, the mankind is faced with great threats, conflicts, confrontations and challenges. Together with activities aimed at developing social and political processes, improving the democracy and protecting human rights, there are also negative tendencies. And most of them are related to the human spirituality".

In depicting political processes going on the modern international arena, Heydar Aliyev expressed his concern about some negative tendencies, which began prevailing on a world-scale. An emphasis on the democracy and human rights protection is a positive tendency, while trends toward waging wars and unleashing conflicts are a negative tendency. There are also cases where the democracy and freedoms are distorted or employed deliberately for attaining a spe-



While receiving delegates from Kuwait.

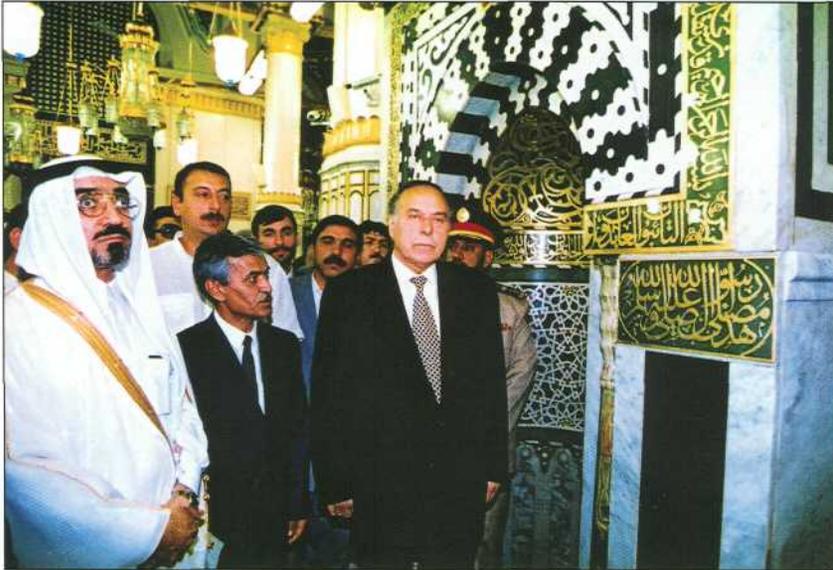
cial goal. In particular, some great powers, under various pretexts, seek to capture natural and national wealth and recourses of poorer countries to thus subordinate them. On the other hand, these powers are intriguing to sow discord in the newly independent states with poorly developed social and political systems, yet, eager to consolidate their national integrity and statehood. These powers are seeking to provoke processes, adverse to the freedom and moral and spiritual principles.

The most important thing is that Heydar Aliyev strives to identify reasons of negative tendencies in the present-day state of the world civilization. He tends to believe that negative trends can be removed through purification of spirituality and morality. To violate rights of other peoples, capture their lands and seize their mineral resources - all these go back to excessive appetites of aggressors. For this reason, Prophet Aleyhisallam stressed the necessity of combating (jihad) these negative trends.

This wise leader of Azerbaijan recommends applying to Islam to fill the gap:

"This culture embraces a greater portion of the world civilization. Throughout the human history this teaching contributed to the rise of spiritual values of humans and at the same time served the development of civilization, peace and tranquility".

In accentuating historical services of Islam to the world civilization, Heydar Aliyev singled out three parameters of the phenomenon:



Visiting Holy Mosque of the Prophet.

- spiritual development of the mankind,
- progress and development in the world,
- ensuring of peace and tranquility.

The above-mentioned is of particular significance for the present world. It may be inferred that the modernity and Islam do not contradict each other, on the contrary, the principles of the Islamic religion do help solve major problems of the modernity. Heydar Aliyev keeps on saying:

"We must employ religious and spiritual values to give impetus to the world development. Religious and spiritual values lead us to the progress, prosperity. The Islamic spiritual values have always urged people to go ahead".

Some ideologists and politicians of the eastern countries explain backwardness of Muslims countries as compared with developed western and European states by the impact of the Islamic religion. These ideologists may be found both in the West and the East. This hostile and wrong propaganda is designed to discredit Muslims and their culture, to discourage eastern people and make them dependent on other states. This propaganda is based on the treacherous idea: If you want to progress, you should decline from Islam.

This propaganda campaign of foreigners started as far back as in the 18-th century and was largely directed to discrediting Islamic values and propagating



Perpetuation.

prejudices and superstitions. In doing so, the western powers tried to colonize Muslim countries. With due regard, this propaganda has amended its methods to comply with modern requirements.

The leader of Azerbaijan responded to this propaganda as declaring that Islam does not drag people back, instead, it urges humans to follow the path of progress and prosperity. He compares Islam with a divine brilliance and lights. Koran strongly insists that this religion leads humans to the righteous path. To Heydar Aliyev's thinking, the Islamic religion lays an emphasis on sciences, education and enlightenment:

"Islam urges humans to get educated, join cultures, comply with modern requirements, apply every possible effort to improve living conditions of the nation, raise material and spiritual life of society".

Some moot points are clarified: Islam is supportive of science and education, and adverse to superstition and prejudices. As is known, Koran starts with a word "Read".

A fragment from Koran says:

1. Oh, Prophet! Read Koran!
2. Oh, Prophet! Your Creator is the greatest mercy giver!
3. He learnt to use (write) a pen!



Meeting with a group of delegates from Kuwait.

4. He taught knowledge to a human.

In various fragments of Koran there are ideas about education and sciences. Hadiths assert that it is essential to learn sciences and, if necessary, one should go to India and China and study there to the death. In short, Islam has always backed science and, hence, Muslims are capable of studying modern technologies and thus improving their living conditions and advancing toward progress. At the same time, Muslims should not forget about their religious and spiritual roots. Scientific progress and spirituality supplement each other, contribute to the creation of healthy and cultural environment.

Heydar Aliyev wished the Islamic countries to show greater activity in the present-day development processes. While addressing the 10 December 1997 OIC Summit in Tehran, the President of Azerbaijan Republic indicated his position as follows:

"Muslim peoples and countries have to face complex processes going on the international world arena. On the one hand, sciences and technologies are developing impetuously; new concepts and technologies are being invented. On the other hand, scores of people suffer from starvation, poverty and illiteracy. For this reason, we must follow the path of progress to reach the level of developed countries".



Solemn swearing-in ceremony of the President of Azerbaijan Republic Ilham Aliyev.

Heydar Aliyev describes a contradictory picture of the modern world: on the one hand, there is scientific and technological progress and social and economic prosperity; on the other hand, illiteracy and poverty reign. These obstacles make it no possible to live in harmony and tranquility. In realizing the problems of Muslim countries, the President of Azerbaijan Republic showed the way out of the crisis as saying that Muslims are able to reach heights of modern progress. There are wide opportunities to attain this goal, but it is imperative to work as much as possible, sparing no pains on this track.

This nation-wide leader drew no distinctions between the past and modernity, he saw a dialectic relation between them. Millennium-old cultural heritage and national-spiritual values do form today's integrity and essence of the present generation and predetermine their future. It is essential for each people to remain loyal to its past and concurrently keep pace with the present day and thus hold its proper place in the history of humanity. Heydar Aliyev believed that the nation he headed should be in step with the modern development models, scientific and technological progress, economic and social prosperity. In doing so, he never set the modernity against the religious and spiritual values; or religious values and national traditions against the progress. To his thinking, one cannot set the modernity and progress against national roots, moral, spiritual and religious values. At the same time, an emphasis on the national and religious roots was not contrary to the modern technological progress.



At Iftar table.

From this point of view, the leader of Azerbaijan called the present-day generation of the country to follow the righteous path. He paid a great attention to directing new social and spiritual environment along proper path and called to apply to Islam to prevent negative tendencies in society. Following the dissolution of the USSR, no new ideological and spiritual values found their places in Azerbaijan. On the one hand, there survived atheistic atmosphere; on the other hand, there were spread irresponsible and frivolous conceptions from the West, which threatened the spiritual and moral health of Azerbaijani society. In noticing these tendencies in the education of the youth, Heydar Aliyev stressed the necessity of resting on national, religious and spiritual roots of the people. On 2 February 1998, addressing a meeting of the Azerbaijani youth, he made the following statement:

"National, cultural and spiritual values of our people have, for centuries, contributed to the education of our intellectuals in the spirit of high morality. We are proud that our national, religious and spiritual traditions and values are reflective of the highest possible spirituality. The most important thing for the youth is to be loyal to its roots and glorious past".

Hence, it is imperative to be adherent to national, spiritual and religious values to be properly educated and find one's place in this life. However, one should not confine oneself to this goal only in the modern world.

President stressed:



At Iftar table.

"We live in the contemporary world. Azerbaijan is free, independent and open country, maintain bilateral relations with countries worldwide. For this reason, the synthesis between our national and spiritual values and universal values contributes to the enrichment of our people's spirituality, and this will be henceforth as well".

Heydar Aliyev defines this synthesis of values as Azerbaijan's future strategic way. At the same time he draws attention to a major issue:

"When advancing on this path, one cannot commit mistakes, contrary to our spirituality, society, morality of our youth".

This was a significant moment, since the youth in an effort to keep pace with the modern world, frivolously adapt themselves to the entertainment centers rather than to the technological and economic progress. When deciding on the closing of night clubs, casinos and other entertainment places, he, in the first turn, took care of the moral values of the youth. He explained his decision as follows:

"My decision is directed to protecting the health of my people and society. In doing so, I want you, young people, to be drawn into lofty and healthy moral education".

As is known, a strong competition is underway in the modern world: countries and peoples pay a special attention to economic aspects of vital activity

not to lag behind developed countries. Moral and spiritual values are 76 relegated to the background as compared with economic interests. Sometimes, a desire to derive maximum profits supersedes moral and spiritual values. It is very dangerous, and young people resort to Freudism and Machiavellism to meet their pragmatic interests. In this case, economic interests prevail over spiritual and moral purposes, so it is no mere coincidence that the wild capitalism of the West came as a result of such psychology.

Of particular importance is the formation of market economy in newly independent Azerbaijan in the right direction. Heydar Aliyev also considered it necessary to take into account all positive aspects of morality and spirituality.

In raising positive aspects of the development of market economy and proprietorship, President pointed out that this factor may lead to negative consequences for the life of society. He recommended:

"Through the development of market economy, free economic relations and the creation of proprietorship in Azerbaijan, we cannot forget about our spiritual values to rest on".

The point here is about the ensuring social justice, typical for national and religious traditions of Azerbaijanis; benevolent activity of well-to-do strata; prevention of confrontation between the poor and rich. It is natural that these questions are referred to in Islam.



PART V.

RELIGION-STATE AND ISLAM-DEMOCRACY RELATIONS



*As Muslim, I am happy to have visited Holy City of Medina,
sacred Islamic monuments, Prophet Mohammad's Tomb and
Mosque.*

HEYDAR ALIYEV





Together with Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazadeh.

Relations between the religion and the state, Islam and the democracy take a particular place within the modern world. The return to Islam, revival of this spiritually rich civilization, and formation of new Islamic movements in Muslim countries and worldwide are indicative that relations between the religion and the state, Islam and the democracy tend toward civil regulations. The problem is that some world centers, adverse to Islam, are apprehensive of consolidation of Islamic values in the life of society and trying to discredit them in every possible way. They interpret Islam as hostile to the statehood and democracy.

Organization of social and political processes in Muslim countries is accompanied by confrontation and clashes between them, following which the both conflicting parties suffer. As is known, relations between the religion and the state are improperly regulated in some Muslim countries. For this reason, the state begins opposing the religion and believers; in turn, religious structures start confronting the state. Profiting by the situation, external forces take the intuitive to pursue their interests in the affected country. It is indispensable for Azerbaijan, currently facing numerous problems, to avoid such confrontation and clashes.

From the outset, Heydar Aliyev was successful in establishing harmonious relations between the religion and the state. On 5 September 1993 during his visiting Taza-Pir mosque on the occasion of Movlud Holiday, Heydar Aliyev stressed the following:

"We welcome the current development of Islam, and we are committed to using all opportunities to observe our religious rites and create all necessary conditions for the development of Islam".

Creator and builder of relations between the modern state and the religion touch upon another question as well: a universal nature of Islam as compared with other religions, its well-disposed attitude to other religions. One of the most ungrounded accusations against Islam is its alleged fundamentalist character. The very nature of Islam once again proves unsubstantiated and groundless reproaches of faultfinders.

Heydar Aliyev clearly and plainly explains the situation:

"Azerbaijan Republic is a country with multi-national composition. Together with Azerbaijanis, there reside representatives of other nationalities and religions. Guided by principles of democracy and justice, the Azerbaijani state provides all possible opportunities to peoples on its territory, regardless of their nationality, religion, language, race, political affiliation. Each of them is free.

Koran is indicative that Islam holds the greatest respect to other religions and strives to establish friendly relations with them".

At the same time he considered it necessary for religious trends to respect each other, avoid confrontation against Islam:

"In protecting our religion and securing it against pressures, hostile to our morality and spirituality, we are committed to avoiding any aggression against any nation and individual. We have always treated each nation and religion with great respect. This is order of Allah and recommendation of Prophet Mohammad Aleyhisallam".

It is very important in the modern times to develop dialogue, respect and communication between the religion and peoples. The same is true for Azerbaijan. An overwhelming majority of Azerbaijan's population is Muslims. However, there reside peoples who profess other faiths as well. Historically, the Azerbaijan Republic has always been notable for its religious tolerance. In expressing his attitude to this question, Heydar Aliyev pointed out:

"A distinctive feature of Azerbaijan is that representatives of numerous peoples live here, and there are all necessary conditions for them to profess their faiths.



President of Azerbaijan Republik Ilham Aliyev together with the President of Turkey Ahmet Necdet Sezer.

All religions have always called humans for good spirituality and righteous path. Most population of Azerbaijan is composed of Azerbaijanis, who profess Islam. At the same time, there reside representatives of Christianity, Orthodox Church, and Judaism. These facts are illustrative of the realities of our country, Azerbaijan's tolerance to other religions".

Noteworthy is the fact that on 13 May 1998, during his meeting with representatives of various faiths, Heydar Aliyev touched upon a very important issue. In explaining the tolerance with the very nature of Islam, he noted:

"In their attitudes to other religions, Azerbaijanis have always demonstrated their tolerance, since it is Koran and Prophet Mohammed Aleyhisallam who instructed us to behave in this manner".

Indeed, a fragment from Koran (al-Bagara, 213) stressed that all individual belong to one and the same community. Other fragments also refer to Holy Script, Torah, and Bible. An eloquent testimony is al-Bagara (89, 91, 97); al-Imran (47); al-Maida (48); al-En'am (92), etc.

In his another statement President again referred to the tolerance of Islam as compared with other religions:

"There are great religions worldwide. Each of them takes its own place within the religious system. We, Azerbaijanis, are proud of our Islamic



While receivingq Georgan Patriarch and Katalikos Iliya II.

religion; at the same time we have never demonstrated negative attitudes or hostility to other religions.

In general, a hallmark of Islam is co-existence and tolerant attitude to other religions".

These words by Heydar Aliyev are an answer to those taking hostile attitude to Islam.

Three aspects of the matter are deserving attention:

1. It is quite natural that there are different faiths in the world and each of them take its own place within the system of values.
2. Azerbaijanis are proud of being Muslims.
3. Muslims are eager to live in peace and mutual understanding with other religions.

Then he emphasized the necessity of mutual respect between different religions and cultures:

"We believe that all humans, irresposible of their religions and cultures, should respect representatives of other religions and spiritual values".

This statement of the experienced politician has its own political and psychological background. Thus, some developed countries speak with condescension to eastern peoples; look down on their religions and cultures. In the meanwhile, all of us are equal to Allah. As Surah 23 says: "*Allah does not like arrogance*".



While receiving Vatican cardinal Krushentse Seteni.

While addressing Taza-Pir Movlud Holiday participants, Heydar Aliyev stressed the unity between all divine religions as follows:

"The Islamic religion has never been hostile to other religions. Because all of them come from Allah".

This statement by Heydar Aliyev blends with Koran dicta. For instance, al-Bagara, 136, says:

"Oh, believers! (to Judaists and Christians)! We believe in Allah, in Koran, Ibrahim, Ismail, Iskhak, Yagub and their children (al-Asbat), in Moses, in all Prophets sent by Creator. We have never distinguished between them. We are Muslims who worship Allah only".

Surah 139 emphasized that Allah is Lord both for us and you.

It has to be kept in mind that the significance of democratic values in terms of globalizing world is great, so it is inadmissible to draw distinctions between religions along their religious affiliation. The leader of Azerbaijan approached the issue from standpoint of international legal norms and human rights protection. He considered it necessary to inform that, along with dialogue and peace between peoples, nations and religions, Islam remains to be faithful to universal principles and values.



President of Azerbaijan Republic Ilham Aliyev together with religious clergy.

One of the most topical and even fashionable subjects being discussed at social, political and ideological levels is the democracy. The democracy is a kind of government; it is shaped on the basis of people's will and choice; it secures supremacy of the law; civic, fair and harmonious relations in society; it is designed to protect human freedoms and rights; ensure economic and social progress, as well as country's national security. Literally, this word means "power of people", i.e. a system, elected and backed by the people to meet its needs. Today, this term is respected and recognized by most nations.

As a matter of fact, supreme principles of the democracy find their parallel in the very nature of the Islamic civilization. For this reason, those setting Islam against the democracy are deeply mistaken. Based on Koran and Sunnah, Islamic thinkers put forward a type of society, which provided for equality both of peasants and rulers before the law, justice and fairness, elevated moral and spiritual values. Such a society should be governed by mind, wisdom and morality. It was Farabi, Ibn Khaldun, Masudi, Nizami Ganjavi and Nasiraddin Tusi and other thinkers who defined major principles of this fair and virtuous society.

As is known, the Islamic school of legality and law is one of the world's most fundamental and sound teachings. The Islamic sociology and legal school calls to approach human rights irrespective of religious, racial and



While receiving delegates of Molokan community.

ethic distinctions to ensure social justice on the global scale. However, circles, hostile to Islam, allege that this teaching is inconsistent with the principles of the democracy. On the other hand, in some cases they prefer to distort principles of the democracy and freedom, present them as chaotic mixture of different concepts and thus sow discord in society. Some western modernists allege that if a society is governed by laws, there is now need in morality. Meanwhile, even ideal laws and democratic principles can easily be violated in the society, deficient in morality and spirituality. It is only elevated morality and spirituality that urge people to comply with laws governing the life of society. When touching upon this concept, the leader of Azerbaijan expressed his view in a laconic manner:

"The democracy means high culture".

Indeed, the democracy, in its classic and genuine meaning, has to be governed by cultural and civilized laws based on mind and wisdom. The democracy is not a collection of declarative slogans, i.e. the situation is not restricted by the declaration of democratic principles and method of government. The most important thing is the execution of these laws and principles, so an intellectual environment based on lofty morality is required to ensure proper execution of the law. Hence, the absence of morality and spirituality means the absence of democracy. For this reason, Heydar Aliyev concluded his thesis as follows:



President of Azerbaijan Republic Ilham Aliyev getting acquainted with renovations at Taza-Pir mosque.

"It is essential to comply with Islamic spiritual values and principles to contribute to the creation of lofty culture and spirituality within the hearts of each Azerbaijanis, the education of young people in the spirit of elevated morality".

He strongly insisted on the necessity of proper realization and comprehension of the democracy and the freedom as saying that it is necessary to unite them with spirituality:

"The problem is that some people, organizations and groups regard the democracy as arbitrariness, non-obedience to the law".

Subsequently, the leader of Azerbaijan touched upon a sensitive aspect of the religion - state relations. The question is about the secular character of the state structure. In some countries, the separation of the state from the religion, i.e. the secularism and Laicism leads to misunderstanding and confusion. Note that the secularism is widely spread in the Christian world, so in the Middle Ages the ecclesiastical power often prevailed over the state as an independent structure.

Meanwhile, the mosque has never prevailed over the state within the history of the Islamic civilization. On the other hand, there has never been demonstration of force between the state and religious structures in the



At Taza-Pir mosque.

Islamic world. In order to solve confrontation and related clashes between the church and the state in Christian countries, it is essential to separate the state from the religion, i.e. return to the problem of secularism. Under the secular state, some politicians rely on the secularism as basis and thus tend to deliberately create confrontation between the religion and the state.

This situation is largely typical for newly independent Islamic countries, which failed to form proper social and political structures. As farsighted political figure, approaching religious views and sentiments with great respect, Heydar Aliyev was successful in leading religious - state relations in Azerbaijan in the righteous path to comply with national interests, civil solidarity and moral - spiritual unity of the nation. Let's consider his statement:

"Our state is secular. However, we are not separated from the religion. The state and the religion closely collaborate with each other. We believe that Islam in Azerbaijan would inculcate its wonderful spiritual values in the citizens of Azerbaijan. In educating citizens of Azerbaijan on the basis of Islamic spiritual values, the Azerbaijani society will become increasingly stronger with its spiritual principles, and humans will understand deeper all freedoms granted by the democracy".

Heydar Aliyev considers it necessary to create close partnership between

the state and the religion to bring up Azerbaijanis in the Islamic spirit. 88 Where the spirituality is high, humans easily adapt themselves to the democracy and freedoms. As is seen, the leader of Azerbaijan tends to consider the spirituality as major means to solve all problems of society. For this reason, he believes Islam to be a source of rich and reliable spiritual values. The religion and the humanity, Islam and the society are integral like body and soul. A spirituality-deficient human is composed of mere soul. Heydar Aliyev comes to the conclusion that there are no deep contradictions between the democracy and spiritual-religious values. On 2 February 1998, addressing the nation on the occasion of lid al-Adha, the leader of Azerbaijan noted:

"In general, we are building a democratic, legal state in Azerbaijan. We have embarked upon this path to continue it henceforth. Along with this, we shall apply all universal values, consistent with the national mentality and spirituality of our people, but we shall never decline from our religion, traditions and customs. There is no contradiction in what I am saying. On the contrary, there is integral relation between concepts I have indicated here. From this point of view, as President of Azerbaijan I am doing my best to ensure the development of the religion".

As a whole, the leader of Azerbaijan strongly insisted on employing the democracy, advantages of the legal state, economic and technological progress to meet the interests of his people. He noted that Azerbaijani Muslims would never decline from their religion, so there is no need to look for any contradiction in his words.

In general, Heydar Aliyev could not imagine the bright future of his people in isolation from the Islamic culture and the national-religious values.



PART VI.

HEYDAR ALIYEV AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD



When visiting Kaaba, I asked Allah to care for the Azerbaijani people, save our people from misfortunes, enable them to live happily and prosperously in their independent state.

HEYDAR ALIYEV





President of Azerbaijan Republic Ilham Aliyev treats religious relics with care.

Like other Caucasian Republics, Azerbaijan as member of the EC maintains close ties with other international and western structures and organizations. At the same time, Azerbaijan is an integral part of the Orient and the Islamic world. In the beginning of its independent political life, Azerbaijan established diplomatic, economic, political and cultural relations with a number of Muslim countries. In 1991, Azerbaijan Republic became a member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). In association with the OIC, bilateral relations with other Islamic countries, Azerbaijan did its best to solve existing problems, specifically the Karabakh problem and related deplorable conditions of approx. 1 million refugees and forced migrants banished from their native lands. Heydar Aliyev attached a particular importance to the development of relations between Azerbaijan and the Islamic world. Note that from the very outset of Azerbaijan's independence he tried to deepen these relations.

As is known, the greatest problem of Azerbaijan is the occupation of 20 % of its territory and social conditions of 1 million refugees and forced migrants. The international structures, despite their efforts, have failed so far to solve the problem. Ever worse, some western powers as shareholders in "the deal of the century" do pursue the policy of double standards with respect to Azerbaijan.

Till the 11 September developments, the US Congress kept in force 92 Amendment 907, which prohibited a humanitarian aid to Azerbaijan. However, the situation changed after Azerbaijan sent its military forces to Afghanistan and Iraq, following which the country began receiving a humanitarian aid, though very insignificant as compared with that shown to Georgia and Armenia. According to official statistics, since 1992 the United States has allocated \$ 2 billion to Tbilisi and Yerevan; and \$ 25-30 million to Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh in 1997. Under such circumstances, the leaders of Azerbaijan have to make changes in their foreign political line to carry on more balanced policy, especially in the relations with the countries of the East and Asia, Muslim countries as well. Heydar Aliyev had repeatedly unveiled the double, unfair standards being applied by the West with respect to Azerbaijan. He was the person, capable of plainly declaring, both at diplomatic and other levels, all the concealed aspects of the double policy.

As far back as in April 1993, the 21st Meeting of the OIC Foreign Ministers adopted a resolution, which harshly condemned the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan. A slightly after Heydar Aliyev's coming to power on 23 November 1993 the resolution had again been put on the agenda of UN General Assembly.

Relations between Azerbaijan and the OIC started expanding after the talks having been held in November 1994 between Heydar Aliyev and Secretary General of this organization, Dr. Hamid Al-Gabidi. In December of the same year, President of Azerbaijan Republic attended the Summit of the OIC in Casablanca. On the eve of the Summit he defined OIC activities as follows:

"Islamic countries form a greater portion of the world. It numbers above 1 billion. Profiting by general potentialities of these countries, the OIC is actively involved in the international processes and tries to solve specific problems of these countries".

In his report to the Summit, President of Azerbaijan Republic drew Islamic world's attention to the obstacles which impede the development of Muslim countries and showed ways out of the crisis. In particular, he suggested rendering necessary assistance and mutual aid, removing the threat of their disintegration and put forward the necessity of their unification and solidarity.

At the same time, Heydar Aliyev harshly condemned Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan, highly appreciated material and spiritual aid of the Islamic countries to 1 million Azerbaijani refugees and forced migrants. To his

thinking, the OIC was the only international organization to help Azerbaijan and protect its interests.

During the Summit Heydar Aliyev had meetings with leaders of W Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Iran and other Muslim countries. The parties discussed bilateral and multilateral relations. During his meeting with Emir of Kuwait Jabir Ahmad as-Sabah the head of Azerbaijan stressed the necessity of further expansion of ties between the two countries. During his meeting with leader of Palestine Yasir Arafat President of Azerbaijan Republic highly appreciated heroic struggle of the Palestine people for its independence.

Subsequently, as a result of Heydar Aliyev's political and diplomatic activity the relations between Azerbaijan Republic and Islamic countries went into a new stage of their development. Thus, relations were established with the Islamic Development Bank. On 25 September 1996 the IDB held an international conference in Baku, which discussed investment problems. Since then, collaboration between Azerbaijan Republic and the IDB intensified. The IDB invested in some economic projects in Azerbaijan, rendered a material aid to Muslim refugees in Azerbaijan Republic, helped to build schools and other educational institutions.

On 9-11 December 1997, the leader of Azerbaijan Republic attended the 8th Summit of the OIC and delivered a speech. He also had meetings with leaders of some Islamic countries. In his statements and speeches Heydar Aliyev stressed the importance of strengthening solidarity and cooperation between all Islamic countries. In particular, he emphasized the need of expanding multilateral cooperation and solidarity between them, carrying on joint political and diplomatic steps to solve problems these countries faced with.

He laid an emphasis on the necessity of developing ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, UAE, Kuwait.

Relations between Azerbaijan Republic and Kuwait are developing dynamically. Heydar Aliyev had first met with Emir of Kuwait Jabir Ahmad as-Sabah during the 1994 Casablanca Summit. On 28 May 1995, a group of friendship Azerbaijan-Kuwait was set up. On 20-22 September of the same year, a delegation of Kuwait headed by Vice-Speaker of this country's Majlis Saleh Yusif al-Fadallah arrived in Baku. As a result of these mutual visits, relations between the two countries increasingly intensified.



During the meeting with Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Muhammad as-Sabah.

It is necessary to single out activities in Azerbaijan Republic of the Committee for Asian Muslims under the Islamic Charitable Society headquartered in Kuwait. In the end of 1995, the Committee was officially registered in Baku and rendered humanitarian aid to Karabakh refugees. Note that the CAM is also patronizing orphans and homeless children.

Besides, the same Committee is engaged in the development of sciences, education and culture in Azerbaijan. For some time past, political and diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait have been expanding; Embassies of the two countries began functioning. All these contributed to further consolidation of political, economic and cultural relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait.

In general, Heydar Aliyev considered relations between Azerbaijan and the Islamic world from two basic points of view. First, expansion of political, economic, cultural, and humanitarian relations between Azerbaijan and other Muslim countries; second, deepening of relations between Azerbaijan and all peoples belonging to the Islamic world, consolidation of unity and solidarity between them.

The leader of Azerbaijan considered it necessary to expand bilateral and regional collaboration with separate Islamic countries, protect interests of Muslims on the international arena.

Heydar Aliyev was gravely concerned about the future destiny of the



During meeting with the President of Azerbaijan Republic Ilham Aliyev.

Islamic world. With their glorious historical past, scientific and spiritual heritage, the present-day political, social and economic problems of the Islamic world, their struggle for independence and sovereign rights were in the focus of attention of this great and outstanding politician. He showed greater interest in joining the development projects of the Islamic countries within the framework of universal values.

During his meetings with leaders of the Islamic world, Heydar Aliyev stressed prospects of the development of the Muslim world, necessity of keeping in pace with modern requirements. In doing so, he relied on dicta of Koran as saying that Azerbaijan has been advancing toward bright future under recommendations of Koran and Prophet Aleyhisallam.

The national leader of Azerbaijan wanted to see his native country as progressive and advanced Islamic centre. He regretted that in the Soviet times the principles of Islamic studies had been ignored and forgotten and instead suggested to revive this sphere. He considered it necessary to set up a Centre for Islamic Studies in Azerbaijan to thus educate and return to the national spiritual roots of the nation.

"Azerbaijan is a bridge between Asia, Occidental and Oriental civilizations".

In saying so, Heydar Aliyev meant Azerbaijan to be a model for the rest of the world.



Receiving delegates from Bahrain.

To keep in pace with the European technologies, economic and social progress and at the same time keep intact its spiritual image, strive for Islamization, nationalization and renovation - all these were recommendations of Heydar Aliyev to his people. It may be inferred that in the person of Heydar Aliyev, the theory and practice merged together.

Perpetually in contact with theologians, the leader of Azerbaijan is reputed to be politician capable of putting forward both conceptions and ways of their implementation. He was leader of the country capable of formulating a question properly, defining its prospects, showing directions of complying with his mission and responsibilities.

A unity between word and deed is an important condition of success. Of particular importance is leader's ability to get in touch with popular masses. Both in the Soviet epoch and during the independence of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev had always been in contact with people, sought to solve its problems, took a lively interest in its needs, and adopted decisions consistent with human desires.

As is known, in the first years of its independence Azerbaijan Republic faced numerous military, political, social, economic and public problems. The Caucasian region turned into a place of intense geopolitical struggle of great powers. Azerbaijan was subjected to aggression, so drastic steps were needed to restore within the country. Under these difficult circumstances, the head of the



While receiving ambassadors of the Muslim countries.

state had, day and night, been engaged in solving various problems of his native land. Despite intensive working regime, Heydar Aliyev found an opportunity to familiarize himself closely with the religious situation in the country, choose right methods of coping with problems, and take practical steps on this track. As was the case in other matters, Heydar Aliyev as genuine statesman took an active part in solving these problems. He visited holy places, mosques and shrines, met there with believers, made statements, attended conferences and meetings put forward his recommendations aimed at resolving religious problems.

The leader of Azerbaijan attended practically all religious ceremonies and holidays, paid visits to holy places, congratulated Muslims on the occasion of their holidays.

While at Taza-Pir mosque on 5 September 1993, Aliyev met with Muslims and congratulated them on the occasion of Movlud bayram. He discussed with Muslims problems of the Islamic religion and values, made valuable remarks on the role of the religion in the life of the Azerbaijani people. He also congratulated the audience with the revival of independence, rebirth of national and spiritual values.

In summer 1994, Heydar Aliyev made a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, these holy centers of Islam. On 21 May 1994, President of Azerbaijan Republic visited Bibi-Heybat mosque and met there with believers to congratulate them on the occasion of lid al-Adha. As is known, this holy place was



While receiving delegates from Kuwait.

destroyed by Bolsheviks in the 1930s. He addressed Muslims as promising to restore this mosque complex in the earliest possible time, and he fulfilled his promise. The construction of the complex was carried out at the expense of state budget and came to an end in 1998. Note that the leader of Azerbaijan personally supervised the construction operations. This step by Heydar Aliyev might be assessed as support of the head of the state for Islamic revival in Azerbaijan.

President of Azerbaijan Republic repeatedly addressed Muslims via TV and radio to congratulate them on the occasion of religious holidays and ceremonies; but he did not confine himself to these steps only. He attended practically all religious ceremonies, holidays, rites, visited holy places and shrines, congratulated them on the occasion of Movlud, Gurban and Ramadan holidays, met with believers, listened to them, exchanged views with Muslims, discussed various problems. Heydar Aliyev repeatedly visited Taza-Pir and Mir Movsumagha, other places of pilgrimage, made there substantial statements, stressed the importance of the Islamic religion in the life of the Azerbaijani people, revival its national and spiritual values.

Besides, he had meetings with leaders of Islam, Christianity and other religions, discussed with them problems of dialogue and mutual respect between different systems of faith. It was his intensive activity on this track that no confrontation along the religious lines took place in Azerbaijan. It was



President of Heydar Aliyev Foundation, goodwill ambassador to UNESCO and ISESCO, member of parliament Mehriban Aliyeva while receiving Georgian Patriarch and Katalikos Iliya II.

no mere coincidence that international organizations have repeatedly confirmed the religions tolerance in Azerbaijan.

Meetings of Heydar Aliyev with religious leaders, his active participation in religious ceremonies, his care for revival of national and spiritual values is an eloquent testimony to his services to the Azerbaijani nation. He made a great contribution not only to the revival of social, political and economic life of the country, but also to the rebirth of cultural and spiritual values. It should be noted that Heydar Aliyev had also been skilful in making exact and precise forecasts; he foresaw future developments and perfect models of perspective social and economic development; he perceived ways of religious and spiritual revival of society. The reason was that he had always been contact with various strata of the population, eye-witnessed his people's problems, closely watch public opinion, moral and psychological climate of society. He solved all the problems in close association with popular masses.

During his meetings with theologians and believers he discussed with them the historical past of Islam in Azerbaijan as stressing that in the Soviet epoch Azerbaijanis were kept far away from the Islamic values. He also touched upon some previously secret and concealed fragments from the Soviet history, recommended Muslims to be more active, especially as the situation favored good intentions.

The fact the Heydar Aliyev had direct contacts with believers, visited

mosques and holy places, contributed to the revival and development of Islam in Azerbaijan, and encouraged Muslims psychologically. However, some alien and hostile forces began operating in Azerbaijan, carrying on anti-Islamic propaganda and, as a result, there arose a threat to the integrity of the Islamic religion in the country. They alleged that Islamic fanatics were preparing to seize the power in Azerbaijan. In accordance with his theoretical and ideological views, Heydar Aliyev went along with his Muslim brothers, theologians and believers and did not alienate them from problems of society; on the contrary, he did his best to be in close contact with them to jointly overcome religious, state and political differences.

It was close collaboration and integral relations between believers, theologians and Islamic-minded groups that guaranteed them protection of their interests and rights to comply with the Constitution and laws of Azerbaijan Republic. In other word, they became an integral part of Azerbaijani people and society. On the other hand, the spiritual and moral climate in the country has improved, so the Islamic values do play their positive role in the life of the country. That is to say to keep pace with the modern technological progress, social and economic development, legal and civic advancement presently going on the globe. The modernity does not imply declining from its primordial national, religious and spiritual values. During his meetings with theologians, leader of Azerbaijan repeatedly stressed that "we have chosen the democratic development model, however, this does not mean that the democracy is estranged from morality, and the state from spiritual values". Let's consider his major thesis:

"Throughout the history, the Islamic religion has always backed the life of Azerbaijanis, Muslims. Today, it keeps on backing and will back them".

Historically, the Islamic religion has always cared for national and spiritual integrity of the Muslim world, struggled against aliens, aggressors and colonizers, protected its independence and the very being. Resting on Islamic values, Muslims have been successful in preserving their will and integrity, joining the world progress and solving their destiny independently.



PART VII.

ISLAM AND AZERBAIJANI CULTURE



Thank Allah, I have attained my dream. When making Hajj to Mecca, I realized that the Islamic religion is based on universal philosophical and scientific principles.

HEYDAR ALIYEV



'Shahidlar' mosque



Doctor Adil al-Falah at the Presidium of the international conference in Baku.

Islam began spreading in Azerbaijan since the 7th century, and most peoples residing in the territory of Azerbaijan adopted this religion, welcomed Islamic values, traditions and ceremonies as their native culture. With its profound spiritual roots, the Islamic values had a great influence on all the spheres of public life, commencing from everyday life and ending with philosophical views and convictions. The history of the Azerbaijani culture, like other Muslim peoples, is reputed to be an integral part both of the national culture and that of the universal Muslim civilization.

Separate spheres of the Azerbaijani culture, including literature, arts, architecture; science: medicine, philosophy, astrology, law, theory of music, etc. belong not only to Azerbaijan but to the entire Islamic world. In other words, scholars and workers of culture of Azerbaijan greatly contributed to the enrichment of the Islamic civilization. Azerbaijani scholars, philosophers, fatihs, writers and poets wrote their works in Arab and thus played a crucial role in the prosperity of the Islamic education.

Works of the most Azerbaijani writers and poets are integrally related to the Islamic values. Heydar Aliyev had always stressed, together with the role of the Islamic religion, the importance of the Islamic culture in the life of Azerbaijan. Touching upon the role of the Islamic culture in the development of the Caucasus, President of Azerbaijan Republic, addressing the international conference entitled "**Islamic Civilization in the Caucasus**", pointed out that Azerbaijan played a particular role in drawing peoples residing in the north of the Caucasus to the Islamic religion and culture.

Recalling the centuries-long history of the Islamic culture in Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev noted:

"The Islamic religion began spreading in Azerbaijan since the 7th century and formed a basis of the national and spiritual values of the Azerbaijani people. Our centuries-long history of Islam is very rich. Today, we are proud to say that the greatest sons of Azerbaijan Nizami, Nasimi, Tusi, Gatran Tabrizi, Fuzuli etc. all made invaluable contributions to the development of world civilization and enriched Islamic culture".

Addressing a 1996 jubilee of the great poet of Azerbaijan Mohammad Fuzuli, devoted to his 500-anniversary, Heydar Aliyev made numerous reports to the symposia and conferences, meeting with intellectuals, which stressed that over 1400 years the culture and literature of Azerbaijan had been fed by the values of the Islamic world and civilization. He regretfully confessed that the 70-years of the Soviet power in Azerbaijan caused innumerable damage to the centuries-long achievements; luckily, the subsequent developments helped the nation return to its glorious historical past.

The leader of Azerbaijan was right in attracting attention of the



From right: Patriarch of All Russia Alexy II, Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Republic Artur Rasizadeh, Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazadeh and State Adviser for national issues Hidayat Orujov.

world public opinion to the riches of the Islamic period in the history of Azerbaijan. These riches manifested themselves in the development of sciences, literatures and culture.

The great Azerbaijani scholar Nasiraddin Tusi wrote scores of works in mathematics, geometry, astrology, logic, theology, philosophy, etc. He wrote most of his works in Arab. Thus, his works on Euclid's geometry, Ptolemaic geography were written in Arab. Of particular scientific importance are his commentaries on Avicenna's "*Al-Isharat vat - Tanhibat*" work, which played a crucial role in the history of philosophy.

Founder of Ishraq philosophy Shihabaddin Suhrawardi wrote most of his works in Arab. He was one of the most brilliant philosophers of his epoch.

It has to be kept in mind that Islamic values formed the subject-matter of the works by Azerbaijani writers and poets. Suffice it to mention the names of Khagani, Nizami, Sheikh Mahmud Shabustari, Mohammad Fuzuli, Imadaddin Nasimi, as well as



Religious clergy continue Heydar Aliyev's tradition of tolerance.

names of outstanding figures of the subsequent epochs -Abulgasim Nabati, Ashug Alasgar and Huseyn Javid. Note that Javid was exiled to Siberia in the 1930s. On the initiative of Heydar Aliyev his grave was taken from Siberia and buried in native Nakhchivan as far back as in the Soviet times. Some dramatic works by Javid, specifically "*Sheikh Sanaa*" and "*Prophet*" were created in the Islamic spirit.

Islamic spiritual values found their parallel in their works of some Azerbaijani poets and writers. Thus, Nizami, Fuzuli, Shah Ismayil Khatai, Saib Tabrizi, Abulgasim Nabati glorified justice and divine love.

Mosques and other religious complexes, shrines and holy places, calligraphic works, manuscripts - all of them are imbued with the Islamic spirit and artistic aesthetics.

Heydar Aliyev highly appreciated Islamic spiritual values, consistent with scientific - philosophical and artistic - aesthetical world outlook and taking a particular place in the history of Azerbaijani



Author of the book, Dr. Adil Al-Falah together with Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazadeh.

science, literature and arts. He always focused on the necessity of celebrating jubilees of Azerbaijani classics and publishing their works.

First of all, President of Azerbaijan Republic concentrated on elevated morality, universal human ideas, pure moral and spiritual values reflected in the works of Azerbaijani classics to adapt them to the present-day realities of the country. He had repeatedly put forward the fact that Azerbaijani culture was enriched by the Islamic values. He proudly confessed this fact as saying that it was necessary to keep on propagandizing the glorious Islamic historical past in the modern cultures and artistic works. The leader of Azerbaijan was well aware that the national and spiritual roots of the nation were largely based on sciences, literature and arts. For this reason, Heydar Aliyev considered it very important to secure and protect national and spiritual values of Azerbaijan to properly employ them in joining the modern development processes and creating the new civilization. In this respect, the Islamic values are the most significant and imperative factor. As viewed by Heydar

Aliyev, since the 7th century, the culture of the Azerbaijani people had been shaping on the Islamic space, so this culture proved to be an integral part of the great Islamic civilization.

It is impossible to imagine the national Azerbaijani culture in isolation from universal Islamic and human civilizations.





DOCTOR ADEL ABDULLAH AL-FALAH

Was born in 1953 in the State of Kuwait. In 1997 he completed the faculty of literature of Kuwait University at the specialty of Psychology and Sociology and acquired the degree of Lisans. In 1982 he completed the magistracy of Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the specialty of Islamic Information-Television. He held different public positions in the State of Kuwait, was the head of public and educational organizations, including religious institutions. From 1992 he holds the position of Deputy Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in the State of Kuwait.

He is the author of many works and articles in the field of Islamic information medium. He is the Chairman of Asia Muslims Committee. The Baku Branch of the Committee has been functioning in Azerbaijan during many years, making humanitarian aid for refugees, displaced people and orphan families.

Doctor Adel al-Falah played significant part in his country in supporting the position in line with the interests of Azerbaijan in the matter of Nagorniy Qarabah in Azerbaijan-Armenian conflict.

He is married and has 10 children.