

ABSTRACT
of the thesis of Karybayeva Ainur on the topic
«Socio-psychological aspects of religious destructiveness manifestation»
submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
in the specialty «6D020600 – Religious Studies»

General characteristics of the work. The dissertation is devoted to the study of religious destructivism and the socio-psychological aspects of the manifestation of this phenomenon. The study elucidates the essence, content, and distinctive features of religious destructivism, examines the principal approaches to the investigation of the phenomenon under consideration, and explores its place in contemporary society. Attention is paid to the social and psychological factors influencing the spread of religious destructiveness. The role of the social environment, society, and interpersonal relations in the manifestation of destructive religious attitudes is analyzed. The dissertation also examines the psychological factors contributing to an individual's involvement in destructive religious groups, as well as the mechanisms of psychological influence employed within such groups. The research is aimed at developing a deeper understanding of the causes underlying the spread of religious destructivism and identifying effective strategies for its prevention in modern society.

The relevance of the chosen topic is conditioned by a worldview crisis brought about by the transformation and weakening of the fundamental foundations of religious studies knowledge during the post-Soviet, post-socialist, and post-communist periods, thereby necessitating a reconsideration of both theoretical and ideological approaches and the practical aspects of human activity. In this context, the issue of the socio-psychological aspects of the manifestation of religious destructivism acquires particular significance and requires a comprehensive philosophical and religious-studies interpretation. Religious destructivism and its underlying preconditions emerged and existed at earlier stages of societal development; however, the phenomenon of destructiveness acquired its scientific definition only within the context of industrial civilization. This was обусловлено, on the one hand, by the expansion of humanity's transformative capacities and, on the other hand, by the formation of decentered subjectivity. Under these conditions, both the forms of manifestation of destructiveness and the mechanisms of its actualization and self-realization undergo transformation, thereby necessitating a new theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of destructivism against the background of religious and worldview-based orientations.

Unfortunately, the problem under consideration has not yet received an independent scientific definition within the system of religious studies and remains insufficiently developed both theoretically and methodologically. In most cases, this phenomenon is interpreted through the dichotomy of good and evil, assuming a predominantly moral and ethical character and being limited to a simple acknowledgment of the coexistence of constructive and destructive principles within the individual, which accompany humanity throughout its historical development and each person's individual life. Contemporary destructive religious organizations actively employ methods of psychological influence and consciousness manipulation,

thereby increasing the risk of individuals becoming involved in antisocial and destructive practices. In this regard, a comprehensive study of the socio-psychological prerequisites of religious destructivism, as well as the development of effective preventive measures and psychological technologies aimed at counteracting this phenomenon, is of particular relevance. The study of this issue is of considerable importance for understanding contemporary religious processes and for ensuring the psychological and social security of society.

The degree of scholarly development of the dissertation topic. The term and concept of destructiveness were introduced into philosophical discourse by Erich Fromm in his work *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. Numerous aspects of the understanding of the phenomenon of destructiveness are reflected in the philosophical movements of the twentieth century, including philosophical anthropology, psychoanalysis, Russian philosophy, and existentialism.

The classical representatives of philosophical anthropology – Max Scheler, Helmuth Plessner, and Arnold Gehlen – provided a general characterization of the formation and specificity of human existence and human nature, which they regarded as fundamentally destructive in essence. This is reflected in Max Scheler's theory of the opposition between vitality and spirit within the human being, Helmuth Plessner's theory of positionality, and Arnold Gehlen's anthropological theory.

The study of aggression as a biologically innate manifestation of evil was undertaken by Konrad Lorenz. Psychoanalysis, as one of the most significant sources for understanding destructiveness, represented by its founders – Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Wilhelm Reich, Alfred Adler, and others – as well as by numerous followers and representatives of various neo-Freudian schools, including Eric Berne, Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, and Erik Erikson, actively addressed the analysis of the so-called «dark» aspects of human nature. Their works examine issues related to the existential foundations of destructiveness, understood as conflicts of various kinds – biological and cultural – and outline the problematic nature of destructiveness as possessing both positive and negative dimensions. Examples include Sigmund Freud's struggle between the life and death instincts», Wilhelm Reich's concept of «character armor», Carl Gustav Jung's notion of the «shadow of the persona», Alfred Adler's «inferiority complex», Karen Horney's concept of the «basic conflict», and Eric Berne's theory of games and life scripts.

Destructiveness is also examined in the context of the realization of freedom within the framework of the metaphysical anthropology of Russian thinkers such as Fyodor Dostoevsky, Nikolai Berdyaev, Semyon Frank, and Lev Shestov.

Kazakhstani scholars, including A.D. Kurmanalieva, D.S. Utebayeva, Sh.S. Rysbekova, G.G. Telebayev, K.M. Borbasova, K.A. Zatov, and others, have investigated this issue through the prism of religious identification and national security.

The object of the dissertation work is the specific features of religious destructivism.

The subject of the dissertation research comprises the philosophical and religious-studies, socio-psychological aspects, and the diverse forms of manifestation of religious destructivism.

The purpose and objectives of the research. The purpose of the dissertation is to conduct a comprehensive study of the socio-psychological aspects of the manifestation of religious destructivism.

- to achieve this goal, the following objectives were formulated:
- to conduct a theoretical and methodological analysis of the phenomenon of religious destructivism, to clarify the content of the concepts of «religious destructivism», «religious deviation», and «religious consciousness», as well as to determine the boundaries of their scientific interrelation;
- to investigate the essence and specific features of conceptions of religious destructivism within the context of philosophical and religious-studies discourse;
- to identify the principal socio-psychological determinants of religious destructivism;
- to determine the social prerequisites for the emergence of religious destructivism within the contemporary socio-cultural environment;
- to analyze the social specificity of religious deviation and its influence on the processes of individual social adaptation;
- to determine the role of social institutions in preventing manifestations of religious destructivism;
- to analyze the psychological aspects of religious destructivism and identify the substantive characteristics of this issue;
- to investigate the psychological mechanisms of religious deviation, as well as the forms and methods of manipulative influence employed in destructive religious practices;
- to identify psychological technologies and methods for the prevention of religious destructivism.

The theoretical and methodological foundations of the research. The methodological framework of the dissertation is based on structural-functional, ontological-metaphysical, and deconstructive approaches. Their application makes it possible to reveal the essence of religious destructivism, the mechanisms of its functioning, and the forms of its manifestation in contemporary society. A comparative analysis enables the identification of both common and distinctive features of various forms of religious deviation and radicalization.

The study employs theoretical, empirical, and statistical research methods. The theoretical analysis of philosophical, religious-studies, and socio-psychological literature makes it possible to clarify the essence of religious destructivism and refine the terminological framework of the research. Statistical methods ensure the processing and generalization of the obtained data, as well as the formulation of the principal conclusions of the study.

Scientific novelty of the research. The scientific novelty of the dissertation lies in the fact that the present study is among the first scholarly works to identify and examine the socio-psychological aspects of the manifestation of the phenomenon of religious destructivism. The innovative character of the dissertation is reflected in its comprehensive and multi-level analysis of religious destructivism, the characterization of typological models of destructiveness, the analysis of the structural and functional features of the psychological aspects of the manifestation of religious destructivism,

and the identification of the principal trends and specific features of the development of the phenomenon of religious destructivism, as well as the risks associated with it.

The main provisions submitted for defense (substantiated scientific hypotheses and other conclusions constituting the novelty of the research):

1. It has been established that within philosophical-religious and socio-psychological discourse, the concept of religious destructivism lacks a unified theoretical and methodological interpretation, since in various research approaches it is identified with religious deviation, radicalism, fanaticism, or extremism, which complicates its independent scientific definition.

2. Religious destructivism constitutes an object of philosophical and religious-studies analysis as a form of deformation of religious consciousness and behavior, characterized by its destructive impact on an individual's value system, social relations, and societal stability.

3. The principal socio-psychological determinants of religious destructivism include crises of personal and social identity, worldview uncertainty, social isolation, individual psychological vulnerability, as well as mechanisms of group pressure and manipulative influence.

4. The emergence of religious destructivism in contemporary society is conditioned by a combination of social prerequisites, including the crisis of traditional social institutions, the digitalization of the communicative sphere, the growth of social uncertainty, the marginalization of certain social groups, and the spread of destructive informational practices.

5. Religious deviation represents a form of antisocial behavior associated with the violation of generally accepted social norms and values.

6. It has been established that reducing the risk of the spread of religious destructivism depends on the effective functioning of social institutions – including the family, the educational system, religious organizations, and state structures – which ensure the formation of stable worldview and value orientations within the individual.

7. Religious destructivism represents a form of psychological deformation of the individual in which, under the influence of destructive religious attitudes, value orientations are transformed, the level of critical thinking is reduced, and dependency on the religious group is formed.

8. The manipulative practices employed by destructive religious organizations are based on methods of psychological mind control aimed at suppressing individual autonomy, limiting the critical evaluation of information, and reinforcing dependence on the influencing environment.

9. The effectiveness of the prevention of religious destructivism increases through the application of psychological technologies aimed at developing critical thinking, psychological resilience, and the ability to recognize manipulative influence.

The theoretical significance of the research lies in the fact that the scientific conclusions obtained and the conceptual reconstruction carried out in the study of the specific features and functions of religion and religious destructivism, based on the works of Kazakhstani and foreign scholars, may serve as a theoretical foundation for further research in the sociology and psychology of religion. The findings may also be

applied in academic, scientific, and methodological work aimed at the comprehensive study of the activities of destructive religious organizations.

The practical significance of the research is manifested in several areas:

- the application of the research findings in the development of measures for the prevention of religious destructivism;
- the use of the dissertation materials in the teaching of religious studies, philosophy, psychology of religion, and sociology of religion;
- the application of the research conclusions in informational and explanatory activities related to issues of religion and the activities of religious organizations;
- the use of the research results in the work of state bodies and organizations engaged in the prevention of religious radicalism and extremism.

The results of the study may be utilized in scientific, educational, and practical activities related to the study and prevention of manifestations of religious destructivism.

Approbation and publication of research results. The findings of the dissertation research have been published in fifteen scholarly articles, including seven articles in journals recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, one article published in a journal indexed in the Scopus database, and seven articles published in the proceedings of international conferences.

Structure and scope of the dissertation. In accordance with the purpose, objectives, and logical structure of the research content, the dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, nine subsections, a conclusion, and a bibliography of sources used.

The total length of the dissertation research comprises 145 pages.