

## Interview Seitakhmetova N., Toktarbekova L. with Professor of United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), Doctor of Sociological Sciences Zabirova Aigul\*



*Aigul Zabirova - Doctor of Sociological Sciences, Professor of United Arab Emirates University (UAEU). Her research and writing focuses on Identity Policy in post-soviet space, urbanization and migration in Central Asia.*

*For many years she has examined the Power, Identity's Policy and Modernist Architecture in Kazakhstan. Her current research investigates how households in Central Asia, confronted by different economic, political and national environment try to achieve sustainable livelihoods.*

**1. Aigul Tleubaevna, you are a well-known scientist, intellectual, and the most famous sociologist of Kazakhstan. Your contribution to the preservation of national sociology is invaluable. Your ideas and your creativity are distinguished by originality and creativity. The scope of your interests is multifaceted, you deal with the problems of identity, social construction, tolerance, and problems that are ontological for a person and society. Today, much is written and talked about the crisis of the humanities, including the crisis in sociology, that it has ceased to be a science, having become a method, a tool for identifying certain processes, and sociological boutiques are now engaged in sociology. Fulfillment of orders for sociological research from different organizations most often has quantitative content, but soci-**

**ety needs research that provides solutions, recommendations, and algorithms. Can domestic sociology contribute to the construction of social reality on the basis of its research? Don't you think that the time of quantitative measurements should replace deeper qualitative ones?**

Sociology is not just a science it is both a method and a practice. Of course, using sociology merely as an empirical tool does not give us a full understanding of its significance. I would say that sociology has a mission, it lies in the enlightenment of society. Information and interpretation of the problems of modern society thanks to sociology become understandable to society, moreover, public consciousness and public opinion are formed, and how sociological methods are used, a relevant picture of modern social problems will be presented. Of course, the crisis in the humanities, about which much is said and written, has also affected the sphere of sociology. It concerns methodology. The transition from classical to post-non-classical methodologies is generally associated with a change in perspectives on sociological problems. If until quite recently sociology was only a science or a methodology for solving ideological and political issues, today it is acquiring a managerial status, i.e. it is widely used in the management of social policy, culture, and science. No doubt that qualitative and quantitative measurements in sociology are a single methodology, however, everything depends on the quality of sociological interpretation: trends, frames, foresight, forecasts, and most importantly, an assessment of the real situation.

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Of course, if we use philosophical language and understand the quantitative and qualitative categories of form and content, then we can recall the words of the classic that no form can replace content, but not in sociology.

Today, quantitative methods are even simulating social consciousness, their constructive correlation, and quantitative and qualitative nature is necessary.

**2. Most recently, you lectured at one of the most prestigious Kazakh Institutes of Research Design. The topic is not new to foreign humanitarian discourse, but new to us. Your presentation sounds completely new. You open here the topic of creative thinking as design - the thinking necessary for the creative research process. Philosophical problems of thinking are a trend today. Aigul Tleubaevna, what will the development of design thinking give as a methodological setting in the study of the problem and as a model of the culture of thought of a modern person?**

Design thinking contributes to the development of the process of creative thinking and the formation and awakening of a culture of thought. We are not talking about clip thinking, we are talking about the creative process in mental constructions. Cartesian: "Cogito ergo sum!", in my opinion, is very relevant in design thinking because by thought we mean construction, a model of thinking, and most importantly, it is critical reflection, which, on the one hand, constructs a model of thought, on the other hand, it contributes to its deconstruction, and then reassembling it into a coherent concept.

**3. In post-accustomed, post-normal times, according to the definition of the intellectual of the Islamic World, the British scientist Sardar, a new reality is constructed in which the old cognitive, methodological settings do not work. The need for non-linear attitudes, the deconstruction of rigid rationality - is it a challenge of the times or an ontological need of a modern person?**

Postnormal Times - we live in them and will live this is a reality. The post-COVID time,

which we are now rethinking, has changed our attitude toward many things. Naturally, the formation of the scientific sphere has changed and will continue to change Jürgen Habermas. Rigid rationality and rigid pragmatism are not relevant today. I adhere to the concept of, I am for communicative rationality in post-normal times as well.

**4. You are a professor at one of the most prestigious universities in the UAE - United Arab Emirates University (UAEU). You have your own concept of professional and individual education. Here is an Islamic country, how is the Islamic component integrated into the teaching of the humanities, sociology, and philosophy?**

Every good university has a special mission. Our university is one of the prestigious universities, the mission of which is not just to educate, and professionalize, but to educate a person. Of course, we provide high-quality professional education to our students so that they are in demand as specialists, but it is more important for us that they come out of the university walls as individuals. In this context, the importance of the Islamic component, which spiritualizes any secular education, is of great importance.

**5. Do you share the ways of philosophizing between Islamic and Western people? Are these different forms of reflection or different models of life?**

It is difficult to give a definite answer to your question. Rather, they are different, the Western person thinks, rather "deductively, while the Eastern person connects these ways of thinking: from induction to deduction and vice versa. Undoubtedly, Eastern societies are sharpened on traditions, "polished" by time and being, parting with which is very painful, but using the example of the UAE, one can just talk about the integration of tradition into modernity, their inclusiveness.

Eastern and Western reflections are like facets of world culture, philosophy, and science, and I am for their existence. Let there be East and there be West, and there be forms and patterns of thought.

**6. In your opinion, can Islamic philosophy meet the needs of a modern person**

***living in a network labyrinth, an inexhaustible world of information?***

Islamic philosophy, in my opinion, meets the needs of modern man, for several reasons:

1. The problem of faith and knowledge, solved by Islamic philosophers as the unity of religion and science, is relevant to post-non-classical scientific research, since the concept of non-binary interaction of faith and knowledge is close to modern man, when he cannot strictly separate religion and science, but solve problems of a fundamental nature with the help of rational and irrational methods of knowledge.

2. Islamic philosophy is always a critical reflection aimed at understanding the world and oneself. To reflect and understand its essence, isn't it modern and timely?

**7. You have had studies on tolerance and intolerance. Your recommendations on the formation of tolerant consciousness in society are very relevant. The theme of tolerance, despite the remark of the famous scientist Heid that tolerance is becoming an elusive virtue, remains the basis of communication between cultures and societies. Islamic tolerance has a long and successful history. In your opinion, is**

**it shaped by tradition or a global need? And do you consider tolerance a necessary condition for communicative co-creation? What is the uniqueness of the Islamic model of tolerance in the UAE?**

Tolerance, of course, is an ambivalent and contradictory concept. It is criticized, accepted, and approved. Unlike critics of tolerance, I adhere to the understanding of its necessity in society. But what are the limits of tolerance, should they be?

And who draws the demarcation between tolerant and intolerant? A culture of tolerance is needed in society, it needs to be educated and instilled. For example, there are many models of tolerance in societies, one of the special ones is the model of Islamic tolerance in the UAE, it is probably the secret of the successful life of the UAE, the secret of its personal and social development. Its essence lies in the acceptance of the diversity of cultures and models of life through the prism of the spiritual component of Islam.

**Aigul Tleubaevna, thank you very much for your interview, what would you wish our readers?**

Creativity and critical reflection!

***Translated by Ph.D. Sharonova Y.***