

**Секция «Востоковедение, африканистика»**

**The idea of "Gender equality" in the works of modern Iranian theologians**

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In the article will be discussed the gender discourse and the idea of “Gender equality” in the works of modern Iranian theologians. Article will show that Iranian theologians of Ithna’asharia Shia Islam are not opposed to the idea of “Gender equality”. Instead, they are defining that term in a different way. “Equality” of western world and especially of western feminists, Iranian theologians describe as a “similarity of rights”. They claim that true equality between the genders can be achieved by the Sharia laws.

The Western World usually condemns Islam for being a source of gender discrimination in the Islamic countries. “Gender equality” is perceived as a part of modernization and the societies which lack that equality are described as non-modern. In the 20-th century while Iranian modern intellectuals were discussing the positive and negative aspects of modernization, Iranian theologians were trying to prove that “Gender Equality” was not a modern idea, but was rooted in the Sharia laws.

The discourse of gender was used as a tool and as a symbol of modernization by the Iranian Shah (Moghissi,1999 ,p.88 ). The emancipation of Iranian women was among the first steps taken by Reza Shah Pahlavi toward the modernization of the country. The part of the reforms in the framework of the “White revolution” was dedicated to the women’s rights: including the right of suffrage and public unveiling (Sedghi,2007, p.133). But can we assume that “the Veil” is a symbol of women’s oppression and the unveiling is a sign of “Gender equality”.

Iranian ayatollahs have quite interesting answers to those questions. For them “Gender equality” is quite different idea. Idea ,that can be gained through the Islam.

During the second part of the the 20-th century ayatollahs were using “gender “as a revolutionary discourse (Shehadeh, 2003,p.81). Some books dedicated to “women’s” questions were written by the prominent ayatollah Mortaza Mutahhari (Mutahhari, 1981).In these books Mutahhari writes that “equality of rights” in the west is easily confused with the similarity of rights.(Mutahhari, 1981,p.11)

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