

ISSUES OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES AND SPIRITUAL AND MORAL EDUCATION IN EASTERN PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

This article explores the development of socio-philosophical thought among the peoples of the East, with a particular focus on Central Asia. It critically examines the Eurocentric tendencies in Western philosophical literature that historically marginalized Eastern philosophical contributions. The paper highlights the rich intellectual heritage of Eastern civilizations, including Chinese Confucianism and Islamic philosophy, and emphasizes their significant impact on global philosophical and scientific progress. Prominent thinkers such as Confucius, Lao Tzu, Ibn Khaldun, and others are discussed for their contributions to ethics, education, and socio-political thought. The decline of the first Renaissance in Central Asia due to Mongol invasions and the transition from rationalism to mysticism in Islamic philosophy are also analyzed. The article concludes by calling for a more balanced and inclusive understanding of the shared intellectual history of humanity.

Keywords: Eastern philosophy, Central Asia, Confucius, Ibn Khaldun, Islamic philosophy, Eurocentrism, cultural heritage, Confucianism, Kalam, Mu'tazilites, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, scientific development, Mongol invasion, East-West dialogue.

Introduction

The study of the specific features of the development of the socio-philosophical thought of the peoples of the East, in particular, Central Asia, has been in the constant attention of scientists and philosophers. It is the same today. But it is difficult to perform this task without analyzing the opinions expressed by some authors in the West who try to falsify the rich philosophical heritage of the peoples of the East.

Issues such as "Eastern culture", "Western culture", and the relationship between them are often raised in Western philosophical literature. There are even ideologues who do not want Eastern and Western civilization to co-exist. In general, there are two approaches to this issue. The first is an objective approach to the issues of cultural development of Eastern and Western nations. The second is to exaggerate the importance of Western culture and underestimate the importance of Eastern culture.

Both of these approaches have a long history. The roots of Eurocentrism actually go back to pitting Greco-Roman civilization against "barbarians". Plato expressed the opinion that scientific knowledge is unique to the Hellenes, and the Egyptians and Phoenicians are only interested in



profit. Diogenes said that non-Greeks, i.e. barbarians, never had philosophy and never will. Socrates also put forward the idea of ideological conquest of the East. Aristotle, by “primary barbarian,” meant Asians who were inclined to craftsmanship. This is exactly the same as the Panhellenic doctrine.

In his work, the Stagirite advised King Alexander to treat the barbarians (the inhabitants of Iran and Central Asia) as enemies, as if they were animals and plants, and the Greeks as if they were geniuses, as if they were geniuses. Alexander the Great’s attempt to create a world empire was also influenced by Panhellenic ideas. The Greeks looked at the East, Iran, and Central Asia with curiosity and interest.

In the Middle Ages, Eurocentrism became the ideology of the Catholic Church - Rome and the “teachings” of the pope were considered the spiritual and educational center of the whole world [1:133].

MAIN PART

The opposition of Eastern and Western cultures is also found in later periods of Western development. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, in his "Lectures on the Philosophy of History," used the terms "East," "Greece," "Rome," and "Germanic world." He explains his idea that Europe is the only region suitable for true freedom of the spirit by a geographical factor: the true stage for world history, that is, the favorable region, is its north.

The ancient East is the cradle of philosophical and divine teachings. All religions are the main sources of scientific and philosophical thought. This applies, first of all, to the East. It is not without reason that prophets, saints, great scholars, wise thinkers have emerged from this land. All peoples of the world are inclined and capable of philosophical observation, philosophical culture. They are philosophers to a certain extent, depending on their way of life and thinking. The inclination to philosophy is given by God. People are “doomed” to follow their desires and pursue philosophical reflections. From birth, a person is a socio-philosophical being, because he strives to live together with others, in cooperation. In this sense, the very concept of “man” is a philosophical term.

Like other peoples, the socio-philosophical thought of the peoples of Central Asia has developed as a new worldview, in harmony with the demands and needs of the development of society. The East is the homeland of great thinkers and wise philosophers. This is a divine gift to humanity. In this regard, it is worth paying attention to the history of Chinese wisdom alone. Because Chinese wise men have a special place in the development of Eastern philosophy. Today's China is also famous for its rich history and thinkers who have made an invaluable contribution to the development of world civilization. It is known that China was the largest center of civilization in the millennium BC, that is, the ancient world. Its three thousand-year history is a testament to this.

In particular, the current during this period, China has undergone significant positive changes in all areas. The strengthening of relations between the Uzbek and Chinese peoples is fully in their interests. The erection of a majestic statue of the great philosopher Confucius in Samarkand brought our peoples even closer together, creating ample opportunities for studying the ideas of the great sage, which are similar to our national values. The publication in 2019 in the PRC of the book “President Shavkat Mirziyoyev - the Architect of the Reform Era in Uzbekistan” was



of great importance in raising cooperative relations between the two countries to a new level. The great sage Confucius, who lived almost twenty-seven centuries ago, and the invaluable spiritual heritage left by his numerous disciples and followers in later times have not lost their value to this day. Confucianism is a living teaching that is known and popular not only in China, but throughout the world. Confucius lived almost a century before the great Greek philosopher Socrates, which is why he can be called the “Father of the Science of Wisdom.” Confucius, who belonged to a noble family, was born in 551 BC and lived for 72 years. His real name was Kun Szi, and his followers called him Kun Fu-tzu. This nickname meant “respected teacher Kun” [2:32].

In the 17th century, Jesuit missionaries who visited China were devoted to his teachings and called him Confucius in order to spread them widely in Europe. Like the Greek philosopher Socrates, he also expressed his teachings only orally. All of his works known to us were written down by Confucius' disciples. The reason why Confucius' teachings have spread throughout the world and are still alive today is because of its humanistic essence and high moral ideas. The great sage believes that Heaven is a force, a supreme truth, the cause of all people on earth. Society must live by the law of Heaven, because Heaven is good by its nature, it always strives for goodness. Like all beings in the universe, the fate of man depends on the heavenly power - Heaven. On Earth, in human society, the law of zhen, that is, humanity, is in effect. In order for people to obey this law, they must first learn it thoroughly, that is, a person must follow li (order, rule) - the norms, rules of social morality, traditional rituals, and understand their place in society. Confucius's thoughts on issues of spiritual education are especially important. According to him, two opposing principles constantly struggle in human nature: li - rationality, creativity and qi - weakness, weakness. The first principle (li) gives rise to positive virtues in a person, the desire for goodness, while the second (qi) means giving in to emotional temptations. Li - creativity, qi - a tendency to destruction. Without li, there will be no order in society, it will fall into decay. According to Confucius, in the achievement of perfection of a person, not his reputation and position in society, but primarily his human qualities and character are of decisive importance. The family also plays a high role in upbringing. The main work of the wise man, “Conversations and Reflections” (Lun Yu), is a source full of wisdom, and its conclusions have become an invaluable asset to the treasury of world philosophical thought. Human philosophy, love for people, humanity are the main ideas of Confucian philosophy. The teachings of the great philosopher Confucius are highly valued in Uzbekistan, as they are all over the world. Especially today, when reforms are gaining momentum in the continuous education system, the introduction of the thinker's ideas into the system is considered an innovative approach. The fact that classes at each level of the continuous education system are organized on the basis of the great Confucius' principle “I heard - I forgot, I saw - I remembered, I did - I understood” ensures high results. Its meaning is that if the lessons are organized in the form of a full lecture, they will not be effective, if they are organized on the basis of demonstration, they will be imprinted in the memory, if the participants complete the task, they will have a complete idea of the topic and the lesson will achieve its goal. Of course, philosophers lived and worked in ancient China even before Confucius. One of them was Lao Tzu (real name Li Er, “Lao Tzu” means Teacher Lao), with whom Confucius met and received advice. However, no one in the ancient East influenced the development of philosophical thought as much as Confucius and led to the development of



hundreds of followers. One of such followers was the famous sage Mo Tzu (480-400 BC), who highly valued the role of knowledge and justice in human development [3:654].

“Even if all the wealth of the country were collected, it would not be equal in value to the wise and intelligent,” he said. Justice is the product of the concerted work of people. The philosopher compares its solution to the rebuilding of a wall. To rebuild the wall, everyone does what they can: someone lays bricks, someone carries mud, and someone else measures out a single even layer of bricks. This wall is built and completed. The foundation of justice is also restored in the same way: everyone conscientiously fulfills their duty.

Another major representative of Confucianism, the sage Mencius (372-289 BC), outlined 12 rules for successfully governing the country. In particular, his sayings such as “A humane ruler will not have an opponent”, “Citizens can be forced to obey by force, but their hearts cannot be subdued. Subduing citizens through kindness and generosity awakens feelings of joy in their hearts and people demonstrate true obedience”, and “To capture a citizen is to conquer his heart” are noteworthy [2;104-107].

The views of the sage Xun Tzu (313-235 BC), who promoted the ideas of humanism, on the nature and capabilities of the human heart are also valuable. In his opinion, the heart is the owner of the body and the ruler of wisdom. It gives orders to the body. A person whose heart is restless will not feel the taste of food, no matter how delicious it is, nor will he be able to feel the ringing of a bell, no matter how beautiful it is, and his eyes will not be able to enjoy this beauty, even if his eyes see clothes decorated with beautiful patterns. If a person's heart is calm and happy, his eyes will be happy, and even if the melodies do not sound as pleasant as usual, his heart will be at peace.

The teachings of Confucius will never lose their relevance. Because humanity exists, it needs spiritual perfection. In the education of a person, the need for the spiritual past, the example of scholars, and the legacy of great thinkers will continue to grow.

In the ancient and medieval East, science and religion were intertwined, complementing and enriching each other. It is known from history that the 13th-14th centuries in the history of Central Asia, Khorasan and Iran are considered a period of brutal rule by the Mongol invaders. This period has been studied in detail by scholars, of course. However, we believe that it is appropriate to cite historical evidence that this invasion hindered the development of science, culture and philosophy, hindered the development of philosophical thought in the region, in short, destroyed the first Renaissance that had settled in the region.

As is known, Islamic culture was created by Arabs, Iranians, Mervs, Egyptians, Turks and other peoples. The socio-political and scientific-philosophical thought of the peoples of Central Asia existed in close connection with the philosophy and science of this era, and to a certain extent, having adopted the advanced aspects of the philosophy and science of the Arab peoples, it also exerted its influence on this development. In this connection, the Arabic language plays a unique unifying role.

At the beginning of the 9th century, during the Caliphate of Al-Ma'mun, Baghdad became the center of many schools and libraries. Many caliphs patronized the development of scientific knowledge. The sayings they uttered, such as "Knowledge is the adornment of man", "The ink of the wise is better than the blood of the ignorant", have survived to our time. The establishment of the second center of Muslim enlightenment on the Iberian Peninsula, in particular in Cordón,



in the 10th century AD, also had a special significance in the development of science and culture. Thus, Muslim science and philosophy developed in both Eastern and Western directions. Islamic philosophy is based on experience and differs sharply from European ones in terms of natural and scientific knowledge. This can be seen from the development of special sciences that are the basis of Islamic teachings, for example, geography. The Muslim scholar Abulfeda (1273-1331) proved that if two people set out on a journey to circumnavigate the globe at the same time and meet at the starting point, one of them will be one day ahead of the calendar, and the other one will be one day behind. It is worth noting that Ferdinand Magellan, when he circumnavigated the globe in 1522, witnessed this phenomenon with his own eyes, which amazed Europeans.

In the field of astronomy, a science close to geography, the ancient East also became a land of worldly discoveries. It is known that the works of the ancient world's scientists, including Ptolemy, on astronomy have been preserved and have reached us thanks to the efforts of Muslim scientists. It is known from history that an astronomical observatory was established in the state of Al-Ma'mun. In 879, the great scientist Al-Botaney corrected errors in the astronomical calculations of Hippocrates. The astronomer Al-Zufi determined the location and magnitudes of stars in the 10th century. The services of Muslim scientists in the field of mathematics are also enormous. They introduced Arabic numerals into arithmetic and geometry, and translated the works of Euclid into Arabic. In the 13th century, the thinker Nasir-id-din dealt with Euclid's postulates about parallel lines. In the Islamic world, not only geography, astronomy, mathematics, geometry, but also physics developed. In the 12th century, Muslim physicists determined the relative weights of about 50 objects. These figures are distinguished by their extreme accuracy. Al-Ghazin (965-1038), who was engaged in optics, revealed the laws of reflection and refraction of light, studied the anatomy of the eye, and the physiology of vision. In the field of chemistry, Muslim alchemists became supporters of the theory of the transformation of elements, which was the most important scientific innovation. Many alchemists proved that they were unrivaled in the preparation of various aromatic and flavored substances - ointments, elixirs, and syrups. Unique achievements were achieved in the development of the humanities. It is especially worth noting the scientific and philosophical heritage of Ibn Khaldun (born in 1332 in Tunisia and died in 1406 in Cairo), a man of encyclopedic knowledge. He worked in the fields of philosophy, history, geography, ethnography, and jurisprudence. Some researchers also call Ibn Khaldun the first sociologist. A man of great knowledge of his time, Ibn Khaldun put forward the idea that social development proceeds from the top down, reflecting the development of production. His famous work, *Al-Muqaddimah*, "had a huge impact on the formation of socio-political thought in the countries of the East and the West, both in his time and in the modern era" [3;428] and is a philosophical work that has retained its value to this day. Many of the philosopher's principles and conclusions are consistent with the conclusions of modern philosophy and sociology.

Ibn Khaldun was the first economist to discover the secrets of value and to know that its substance (essence) is in labor. He put forward his views on the substance of labor 4 centuries before Marx. In 1370, he wrote a 4-volume work on Arab history called "The Book of Lessons and the Life of the Arabs, Persians, Barbarians and Their Contemporaries." It shows the periodicity of the development of Muslim states, describes the geography, ethnography, history, economics and sociology of the Islamic world.



Ibn Khaldun developed the idea of the evolutionary development of the organic and inorganic world in his works. The scientist opposed the discrimination of black people. He explained that the blackness of the body is not a miracle of "predestined destiny", but a condition that arose as a result of the formation of anthropological species under the influence of climate (modern ethnic anthropology also takes this point of view). Ibn Khaldun was able to see the consequences of racial discrimination as early as the 13th century.

In his works "The History of the Whole World" and "Introduction to the Philosophy of History", the thinker dreamed of building a just society. "Ibn Khaldun explained that imams, in addition to leading the worship of believers and Muslims, also have a special place in worldly affairs, in fully revealing the content and essence of cultural and social society. This is of particular importance in achieving human happiness in both worlds" [4;264].

Ibn Khaldun is a thinker who had a significant impact on the spiritual development of the peoples of the East and the West. His works have been translated into various languages by Arab, Asian and European scholars and have not lost their value even now. With the clarity of his philosophical observations, Ibn Khaldun occupies a special place in the classical philosophy of the Middle Ages. He shone like a star in the aura of Muslim social thought. Unfortunately, the thinker was unable to create his own school, and his ideas did not spread widely. Because at that time, mysticism began a large-scale attack on rationalism. Muslim theology, as in the early stages of its development, did not turn to philosophy, and from the 14th century it completely moved away from philosophy. At this time, when the great figures of the Renaissance were searching for scientific ideas, favorable conditions arose for Europeans to get acquainted with the works of Ibn Khaldun. In addition, North Africa was very close to the south of Europe and was economically very close to it, especially to Italy. In Italy, social relations were developing rapidly, philosophy, literature, art, socio-political ideas were flourishing, in a word, the Renaissance, that is, the Age of Awakening, had begun. Pisans, Genoese, Venetians began to settle in the port cities of the Maghreb. Thus, the scientific and philosophical works of Muslim scholars such as Ibn Khaldun were widely distributed among Europeans. History shows that Islamic philosophy - "Kalam" - played an important role in spiritual development. The Kalam is the doctrine of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and its supporters were called Mutakallim.

The Kalam emerged at the beginning of the 8th century, confirming the divine precepts of the Islamic religion and becoming the ideological pillar of this religion. The Kalam, as a doctrine, reflects on the essence, characteristics of God, and the possible conditions of things according to Islamic precepts. This was an indication that the Mutakallim were opposed to verbal wisdom. In this sense, the Kalam emerged as a religious philosophy.

The Mutakallim, who were skeptical of some of the tenets of Islam, were called "Mu'tazilites," that is, those who deviated from the traditional precepts of Islam. Later, the Mu'tazilites became free-thinking Muslims, "Muhammadan rationalists." They fought against the orthodoxy and put forward the idea that man is free in will, that he is responsible for his own destiny, and that God accepts human freedom from the standpoint of justice.

Thus, the need for God to be just is contrasted with human freedom. Along with purifying the concept of "God" from anthropomorphism (imagining Gods in human form) and recognizing his absolute unity, the Mu'tazilites also denied the concept of the plurality of signs (attributes) of



God. In their opinion, in the end, one can conclude that "God exists." Such "ideal shallowness" was also opposed to orthodox views. However, the Mu'tazilites denied the idea of the eternity of the world and the immutability of its laws. They insisted that their ideas were unchangeable and absolute truth. They put forward the sharp slogan: "Whoever is not a Mu'tazilite is an atheist." Especially during the reign of the three Abbasid rulers, the position of the Mu'tazilites became much stronger, and this rule was strengthened by coercive measures. At that time, "the caliphs felt the need for an ideological weapon to combat religious and political opposition movements (foreigners, Shiites, etc.). Therefore, Caliph Ma'mun (813-833) declared the Mu'tazilite doctrine the state religion" [5;333].

In the tenth century, the scholar Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari (873-935) attempted to support the orthodox belief by introducing some rational elements. However, the innovations he introduced were not of great importance. For example, he vigorously defended the idea of magic, sorcery, and belief in divine miracles, which had long been rejected by the Mu'tazilites, and he came to the conclusion that the Mu'tazilite beliefs were incompatible with the foundations of Islam, and he completely changed his views.

Al-Ash'ari's supporters also denied the idea of the eternity of the world and its laws. The free will of God not only created the world, but also directly influenced its events. Every event occurs by the will of God. The properties of things do not arise by themselves, but arise by the grace of God.

Al-Ash'ari distinguishes between positive and negative accidents (for example, life and death, movement and stillness, etc.). Shadows do not exist because of a lack of light, but because of God's grace. If we dip a piece of cloth in black paint, it does not become black because of the paint, but because God has given it the black color at that moment. There is no connection between cause and effect. Lawfulness is a simple custom established by God. God can cancel this custom whenever he wants or create a miracle.

Al-Ash'ari wrote about a hundred works. In particular, his works such as "Ibana" (Explanation), "Risala il-Ahli al-Sagr" (Letters to the People of the Borderlands), "Maqalat ul-Islamiyyin" (Words of Muslims), "Luma" (Shine) became famous.

Orthodox believers were initially skeptical about giving a rational impetus to the religious establishment. "You should run away from the Word like a lion," they said. However, later religious organizations began to appreciate the mutakallim for their courageous actions in defending orthodoxy from any "atheists." Gradually, two directions emerged in Muslim philosophy: the eastern (Al-Kindi, Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, etc.) in the 10th and 11th centuries, and the western (Ibn Tufail, Ibn Rushd, etc.) currents in the 12th century.

The wave of religious beliefs and teachings went precisely from East to West. Philosophy itself began to take on a religious, and in some cases mystical, character. The strengthening of economic relations with the peoples of the Ancient East was an important factor in the cultural rise of the peoples of Europe.

Humanity began to realize the powerful power of religious and secular ideas over time. The great Einstein believed that no true religion can exist without knowledge of the world, because religious power is connected with the observation of the Universe, and he said the aphorism that "natural science without religion is lame, and religion without natural science is blind."

Religion and philosophical teachings have given impetus to many historical movements. The



influence of religious beliefs and philosophy covers everything from major socio-political events to the depths of the human soul. Modern reality has made it possible to understand the true essence of religion. Religion is the most personal of all forms of human activity. The individual is a high example of humanity, surrounded by sacred feelings.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion from the above, it should be noted that, **firstly**, two approaches have been established in the West regarding the relationship between Eastern and Western science, philosophy and spirituality: the first is to objectively illuminate the place and role of the peoples of the East and the West in the development of world civilization, and the second is to exaggerate the West and belittle the East. **Secondly**, Islamic science and philosophy had a great influence on the socio-philosophical thought and scientific development of the peoples of Europe, and later of other regions. The best traditions of European science and philosophy of the Middle Ages were formed under the influence of the Muslim world. **Thirdly**, the influence of Neoplatonism and Aristotelianism was strong in the strengthening of religious and philosophical views in the East. This trend created the basis for the formation of models of spiritual values of the first Renaissance in the Central Asian region. **Fourth**, Central Asia, a hotbed of philosophical and theological teachings, lived in difficult conditions for 150-200 years due to the rule of barbarians. The region suffered not only economically, but also spiritually and educationally. This led to the collapse of the first Renaissance in the region.

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