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THE PROBLEM OF MAN IN ANCIENT EASTERN PHILOSOPHY

Ergashev Ozodbek Shavkatovich

**Senior Lecturer of the "Humanities" Department,
Andijan State Technical Institute**

Abstract: This article explores one of the main themes of philosophy: the human being, including their essence, nature, place in the world, function, and the significance of their social and natural existence. The views of representatives from Eastern philosophical schools, scholars, and various trends on this subject are presented, along with examples from legends.

Keywords: philosophy, human, essence, being, esoteric thinking, mythology, religion, Avesta, Rigveda, Confucius, Elamite civilization.

The most ancient foundations of views about humans are products of a mythological worldview, which remained the lifeblood of perspectives on the roots of humanity not only in ancient times but also up to the beginning of the 1st century. Most scholars who study humans and related knowledge consider myths (legends) to be the basis of primary understanding.[1.48]

Mythology (Greek: mythos - tale, myth, legend, and logos - word) is a systematically organized system of mythological concepts created by a specific people, a collection of myths. For example, Greek mythology, Indian mythology, Uzbek mythology.

The foundation of mythology consists of myths about the origin of ancient humans, the universe, celestial bodies, objects, and phenomena.

In Europe, extensive research is being conducted on the study of antiquity, which is considered the birthplace of mythology, and the first teachings about humans and their socialization are based on these studies.[2.186]

In this regard, L.A. Gogotishvili states: "Turning away from mythology means renouncing social sentiment, for only mythology can provide the values necessary for today".[3.45] – he says. Regarding this opinion, we can say that mythology is a form of social consciousness that embodies the intuitive spiritual power inherent in man.

The first philosophy, that is, the first stage in the history of human philosophical culture, is inextricably linked with the mythological worldview, which began long before antiquity, in the ancient East, that is, in Ancient Egypt, Babylon, Central Asia, India, and China. This worldview is distinguished by the global nature of its subject, the syncretism and monolithicity of the structure of knowledge, as well as a completely mysterious nature. [4.162]

Thus, the views about man, his socio-historical stages, as well as the idea that man is the center of the universe, are more relevant not only to the West,



but also to the East. The wisdom of the Vedas, the teachings of the Avesta, and the religious teachings of Egypt and Babylon are considered much older than those originating in Greece.

Our ancient history bears witness to the fact that the aspirations and will of our people have found expression in humanistic and progressive ideas. It is known that, in accordance with the spirit of the times and the needs, interests, aspirations, and dreams of the people, these ideas manifested themselves sometimes in noble concepts associated with goodness and justice, sometimes with a powerful state and a just ruler, and at other times with the perfect individual and an enlightened society. [5.42]

It would be correct to say that initially, this was embodied in the vital idea that found its interpretation in the Avesta in ancient times. It was this very dream that led to the principle of "Good thought, good word, and good deed" taking firm root in the thinking and lifestyle of the people. In this way, the protection of goodness and humanism became an important component of our people's mentality and spirituality, and the main direction of their life's activities. [6.16]

At the end of the 4th millennium BC and the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC, the cultures of ancient Babylon and ancient Egypt reached the pinnacle of their development. The legends that emerged during this period incorporated themes related to the origin of humankind and its spiritual and moral world. Among these are "The Song of the Harpist," "A Conversation of a Man Disillusioned with Life and His Soul," and "The Master and Slave's Questions and Answers About the Meaning of Life."

The earliest written monuments of the East contain the first teachings about the universe and mankind, and their origins. For example, in the Rigveda (an ancient Indian literary monument dating back to the second half of the eleventh millennium BC), the section entitled "Hymn to Purusha" describes the origin of the universe, emphasizing the primacy of human essence. According to this text, the universe (purusha) originated from man. Additionally, the "Vedas," which provide insights into the philosophical views of ancient Indians regarding the emergence of humankind, were created approximately between 1500 and 600 BC. [7.144]

Also, in the territory of the Ancient East, the most important processes related to the beginning of the development of human civilization and culture took place in the 10th-7th millennia BC. During this period, various forms and spheres of cultural activity emerged in the East. Writing, literature, art, science, and the first world religion - Buddhism - appeared. Without this initial process, it is difficult to imagine all subsequent development of human culture.

The concept of the Ancient East does not correspond to modern concepts of the East. After all, the ancient East encompassed a vast region of the globe



from Egypt to China, and in this area, starting from the 7th millennium BC, the first civilization in human history began to emerge. The civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and China were the oldest and largest cultures. Under the influence of these cultures, the civilizations of Urartu, Phoenicia, Hittite, and Elam were formed, which had a significant impact on the history of human culture. [8.60]

According to I.P. Weinberg, the culture of the ancient East fulfilled "a great mission as the initial discoverer and founder": developing writing and constructing the foundation of statehood, creating conditions for the coexistence of people differing in their ethnic, professional, property, and social status.

"Nothing is as precious as a sweet life." The Mesopotamians' views on a joyful life are also depicted in the epic "Gilgamesh." They were more interested in personal life issues. The Sanskrit translation of karma means "activity" (fate). Determining the content of this concept is complex. Karma is inherited from a person's previous life and manifests itself in the content and activities of their present life, determining the quality of the future material form. It is impossible to change Karma through repentance or prayers for forgiveness of sins; it only determines a person's moral character. At the same time, for every Hindu and Buddhist, it is essential to focus on self-knowledge and self-perfection, determining one's spiritual state, and maintaining the purity of one's karma.

This does not mean that religions in India encourage renouncing life and activity, but rather they promote indifference to worldly concerns. The entire essence of Indian culture is rooted in the idea of maintaining a balance between the external and the internal, the temporary and the eternal. [9.137]

A distinctive feature of Chinese culture is that since ancient times, the mystical aspects of religions have been considered secondary to morality, and the defining idea in culture has been the great "moral-social-political order" sanctioned by Heaven.

For millennia, the teachings of the great thinker Confucius, who lived from 551-479 BCE, have been considered the main spiritual, moral, and ideological source of Chinese culture and civilization. All the most important aspects that determine the "character" of any civilization - the principles of life, forms of state and social organization, and generally accepted moral norms and values - were formed in China under the influence of Confucianism. [10.228]

The concept of "Mandate of Heaven" was developed by Confucius in a new way of thinking, in which social morality plays a central role and shapes political culture. Ideals such as respect for traditions, a strong sense of duty, high moral standards, dedication to society, constant pursuit of truth, faith, and nobility served as guiding principles for those who aspired to rule others.



These ideals, embodied in Confucianism as the main pillar of the state, were complemented by Daoism, the second great philosophical doctrine that emerged in China. Daoism reflects on the problems of life, nature, and universality. While Confucianism focuses on a person's social activity, Daoism reflects on their spiritual life and worldview. Daoism captured the main ideas of ancient Chinese thought and enriched world culture with new life. Its core concepts include: the dualistic nature of the world based on the "yin-yang" principles; "wuxing" - matter composed of five basic elements (earth, water, fire, metal, and wood); and the constantly changing nature of the world, indicating that the basic elements are in a perpetual state of qualitative transformation.

The ancient civilization of the East gave rise to many crucial innovations in both material and spiritual spheres. In particular, the 2nd millennium BC is characterized by a process of spiritual upheavals. During this period, two principles first emerged: universal human unity and the spiritual independence of the individual. The freedom of ideas began, upon which people built their lives. The renowned Sufi scholar N. Komilov, in his views, pays special attention to how the subsequent stages of human evolution are illuminated: "I abandoned the physical form and became a plant, I left the plant form and turned into an animal. I gave up being an animal and became a human. Well... why should I be afraid after all, having abandoned everything... I haven't lost anything! Now I want to completely abandon humanity... so that I can grow wings like angels. But I have to transcend angels too. Because 'Every creature faces destruction' (as stated in the Quran). Let me soar once more beyond being an angel, let me become something the mind cannot fathom. Then I will disappear like a melody into the abyss of nothingness, and then let God say: everything will return to me".[11.12]

Ancient Eastern civilization began earlier than Western civilization. Greek culture flourished under the influence of ancient Eastern culture, a fact acknowledged by the Hellenes themselves. As a result of these influences, a period emerged when the synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures gave rise to Hellenistic culture: the ancient East left us with immortal treasures. These include the epics "Gilgamesh" and "Mahabharata," the dramas of Kalidasa and the symbolic fables of Zhuangzi, the Egyptian pyramids and the Great Wall of China, among others. Despite numerous doubts about whether some of this unique heritage was truly created by human hands or intellect, humanity is recognized as the owner and inheritor of such a magnificent legacy, destined to carry it forward.



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