



ISSUES OF SOCIAL LIFE AND CHANGES IN CONSCIOUSNESS IN EASTERN PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

As emphasized by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sh. M. Mirziyoyev: “The unique and invaluable scientific and spiritual heritage of our great ancestors must become a vital program of action for us. This eternal legacy should always be by our side, constantly giving us strength and inspiration.” [1] The study of human history shows that the earliest past of humankind, along with its first material and spiritual cultural issues, laid the foundation for the development of the East. Composure, resolving any situation or problem through peace, dialogue and discussion, preserving what one has and creating what is lacking; acknowledging and adhering to the principle that the essence and basis of life is consistent daily labour, showing special kindness to parents and children, taking into account the interconnection between generations, being aware that life is transient and that accumulating wealth often leads not to positive but negative outcomes; and understanding that even if one attains riches, fame or high positions, a human being does not become superior to the heavens knowing how to restrain oneself at all times these are qualities characteristic of the peoples of the East.

Such roots of the East are defined by its place in the history of humankind. The East is the cradle that nurtured humanity from infancy to maturity. This kind of educational mission requires caution, openness, consistency, and a gradual, step-by-step approach.

The history and culture of the ancient peoples of the East their earliest political, legal, religious, artistic, philosophical views and perceptions are reflected in the works of ancient philosophers, in archaeological sources, and in the oral folklore of the people, legends, myths, epics, and narratives.



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The earliest philosophical notions emerged in Babylonia one of the most ancient countries of the East at the beginning of the fourth millennium BCE. Even at that time, although people's attitudes and interests regarding the various events and processes occurring in the world were simple, superficial and primitive in form, their reflections contained the manifestation of philosophical thought. This may serve as proof of our assertion that philosophy or philosophical consciousness began to take shape earlier than the formal discipline of philosophy itself.

One of the most renowned works of ancient Babylonian literature is The Epic of Gilgamesh. In it, the idea that earth, water, air and warmth are the eternal sources of human life and existence is conveyed through Gilgamesh's adventures in search of the water of life. The work narrates human suffering, the necessity for people to live in accordance with natural laws, and their enduring aspiration to understand the mysteries of life and death.

In the Babylonian legend of Gilgamesh, the ancient peoples' hopes and wishes for happiness and prosperity, health and endurance, for overcoming death and attaining eternal life for finding the "water of life," plants, various fruits and minerals that confer immortality find vivid expression.

There also exist works expressing the ancient Babylonians' philosophical ideas about the absolute, irreconcilable oppositions between good and evil, virtue and vice, wealth and poverty, freedom and humiliation, The Tale of the Suffering Saint and The Master's Dialogue with a Slave. In the first of these epics early philosophical notions and ideas are set out about happiness and misfortune, justice and injustice, their causes and possible remedies. In the latter, the conflict between master and slave is conveyed through a forceful dialogue. According to the story, whenever the master finds cause to justifiably and firmly refuse the slave's demands, he becomes annoyed and finally asks, "Well then, what is best now?" The slave replies boldly and mockingly: "We should cut off both my head and your head and throw them into the river. That would be best. Is there anyone so great as to reach the heavens or to cover the whole earth?" Enraged, the master shouts at the slave, "O slave, I want to kill you and force you to leave me first." In reply the slave warns him, "To speak the truth, my master, they will live only three days after me." [2]



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Based on the demands posed by the development of production and the needs of human practical activity, the necessity to understand the nature of natural phenomena and to make use of them in social life gradually intensified in Babylonia. The need to measure the quantity and weight of goods and products, to determine the number of laborers, to establish the dimensions of buildings, and to calculate land areas led to the emergence of arithmetic and geometry, as well as the calendar. This, in turn, required people to possess certain knowledge in the field of astronomy. The Babylonians had long been familiar with the sundial, the solar indicator, and the division of the day into twelve parts. According to ancient sources, alongside mathematics, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, medicine, history and philology, music, visual arts, and astronomy also began to develop in Babylonia. [3] It is well known that the above-mentioned circumstances in the history of philosophy led to the emergence — as part of its structure and primarily of a practical nature of independent sciences, a process known as the differentiation of sciences. In our view, this phenomenon may be interpreted as the manifestation of philosophical consciousness within the practical activity of human beings in the East.

As Abu Rayhan Biruni notes in his work *India*, by as early as the 1st century CE in India, sciences such as medicine, mathematics, astrology, religion, chemistry, music, poetry, history, art, and philosophy had already developed. [4]

Especially in India — a land endowed with a unique natural environment, generous soil, and a remarkable world of wildlife and medicine — philosophy and philosophical consciousness emerged and developed from ancient times. Famous works such as *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and *Kalila and Dimna* belong to this heritage.

These works, which are treasures of sublime aesthetics and eternal wisdom, vividly reflect the customs and traditions of the Indian people, their morals and culture, religion and history, national values, as well as their socio-political, legal, artistic, philosophical, and religious views.

These rare works, in turn, serve as primary sources for studying ancient Indian philosophy and for understanding the progressive ideas and universal human values put forward within them.



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In each of the priceless monuments of Indian culture and philosophy, important and beneficial philosophical ideas, insights, parables, proverbs, and sayings are expressed about wisdom and reason, justice, integrity, honesty, purity, diligence, national harmony, truthfulness, and keeping promises as well as the necessity of resisting oppression and violence, betrayal and hypocrisy, greed and avarice, intrigue and fraud, selfishness and duplicity. Without a doubt, they possess both national and universal significance in the social and spiritual life of society.

In studying the earliest philosophy of India from the first millennium BCE, the collections of religious legends known as the Vedas, the two great epic poems Ramayana and Mahabharata as well as Abu Rayhan Biruni's India hold great importance.

“The sacred book of India known as the Veda means ‘knowledge of the unknown.’ The Hindus say that the Veda is the word spoken from the mouth of the supreme deity, Brahma.” [4]

The Veda consists of four major sections called Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda. In each of these sections, a specific philosophical idea is put forward.

The Vedas provide extensive information for studying the religion, myths, customs, poetry, and early philosophical concepts and knowledge of the Indian people.

The earliest religious-philosophical schools interpreting the teachings of the Vedas are Mimamsa and Vedanta. Both of these schools regard the Vedas as sacred scriptures and demand that people fully adhere to them in life. However, alongside religious views, they also address purely philosophical issues. For example, the Mimamsa school pays great attention to questions of knowledge. It raises issues related to sensory cognition and its source, logic.

In ancient Indian philosophy, the Charvaka school holds a special place. The philosophy of Charvaka emerged in the 6th century BCE. According to the teachings of the representatives of the Charvaka philosophy, the universe is material. The material world is composed of four elements — water, air, earth, and fire. Organic nature, including humans, is formed from the combination of these material elements. What makes humans distinctive is that they are primarily rational beings. According to Charvaka doctrine, a person is capable of



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understanding the objects and phenomena of the external world through reason and the senses. The Charvaka school introduced many philosophical problems and attempted to solve them. This indicates that philosophical thought was already considerably developed in ancient India.

It should be emphasized that Uzbekistan possesses not only a rich history but also an elevated philosophical heritage. This heritage is reflected in the people's oral creativity, legends and tales, epics, the Avesta sources, various religious beliefs, mythological views, customs and traditions of daily life, and rituals — all of which express the national spirit, worldview, and identity of the people. Through these, one can discern the fundamental ideas of this nation's philosophy of life, its aspirations and cherished hopes.

The Avesta is the earliest major work in which the historical and philosophical thought of our nation is fully embodied.

The Avesta also contains information on the philosophy of nature, history, ethics, and medicine. In essence, this book is a collection of our people's natural-philosophical knowledge, moral and political guidance, laws, and legal notions a hymn and tribute to the values that glorify, deify, and sanctify the human being and nature. It is a compendium of our nation's ancient beliefs, moral views, religious-philosophical and political concepts and doctrines, scientific knowledge of nature, poetry and artistry, and rich oral creativity preserved first in oral form more than three thousand years ago, and later committed to writing. [5]

In conclusion, firstly, the views in Eastern philosophy concerning changes in social life and consciousness serve as an important spiritual heritage and value for deeply understanding that the social transformations taking place in our lives today are closely linked to philosophical awareness. Secondly, relying on this spiritual legacy and applying it to social and philosophical life while taking into account the changes occurring in modern sciences plays a crucial role in its renewal.

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