

*A. NYSANBAYEV***AL-FARABI AS THE BINDING THREAD BETWEEN  
KAZAKH, TURKISH AND IRANIAN CULTURES**

The entrance of humanity into the third millennium was marked by complex and dramatic processes' strengthening and deepening, which affect all spheres of human vital activity. Contemporary stage of social development is characterized by process of globalization that has a direct and essential effect both on development of different countries and states and on life of each individual. This process, which radically changes economic and geopolitical map of the world, noticeably changes contemporary civilization, obtains ambiguous evaluation in the different places of the world causing contradictory reaction within different stratas of society beginning from unconditional adoption and ending with an unconditional rejection. Comprehension of the process of globalization found its reflection on pages of periodicals and fundamental scientific publications, television and radio channels generating many discussions. International forums and conferences are devoted to this problem. Ever more Globalization is advanced into the number of leading tendencies, which cause contemporary world development. As other countries, the countries of the Middle East and Central Asia including the Islamic republic of Iran and the Republic Kazakhstan are involved into in the active world-wide processes experiencing all complexities and contradictions referred to the process of globalization.

Globalization as per its definition has a set of semantic values, those are: general propagation of market relations; global monetary imperialism, unlimited power of dollar and dollar capital; both expansion and aggravation of ecological problems; both standardization of life standard and unification of culture and so forth. Danger in unification of culture is the reason for the greatest concern in comparison with economic and political aspects of globalization, since it affects to foundations and bases of human existence.

The culture being closely connected to national traditions of people expresses a special feature of each ethnos, covers entire totality of the values of society, concentrates the ethnic and cultural states

that are actually significant for the society, determines behavior of its members, specific conditions for personality development. Therefore the processes proceeding in this sphere of human vital activity are extremely important for planetary association, in particular, when the discussion deals with retention and development of original cultural wealth of each people. Retention of cultural identity is the most important challenge of every people. It is being actualized especially nowadays when, according to points of view of some social scientists, processes of globalization caused possibility of appearance of a certain new planetary civilization with its own scale of values, which threatens to absorb entire cultural variety. But the need being ever increasing for expansion of international and intercultural contacts deepening a confessional and cultural dialogue that facilitates the progress of general human culture, overcoming cultural reserve, which can lead to regressive phenomena in original national cultures under contemporary conditions is no less important as shows the realia of contemporary conflicting world.

Search for ways for solving this complex issue also is in plane of reference to spiritual experience of humanity, fruitful ideas of past in order to achieve philosophical comprehension and generalization of present. Renaissance of these ideas under a new life conditions, comprehension in a new context of their general human and humanistic content is a necessary stage of historical self-reflection of any people. Contemporary interest for studies of past is natural therefore, which in comprehension of fundamental human values took place and rudiments of contemporary concepts of human being and society appeared, which help to re-comprehend their state in the context of issues of humanism and justice, ideal of public life.

The history of humanity already shows a numerous examples when constructive dialogue of different cultures lead to new philosophical systems development that fruitfully realize general human ideas of humanism and justice. One of them is the philosophical

system of Abu Nasr al-Farabi (870-950), the most important thinker of the Middle Ages, born in the ancient Otrar land of the Kazakhs, but realized his creative potential in cultural atmosphere of the many-sided Islamic culture that absorbed trend of creative power of many cultures: Greek and Arab, Iranian and Indian, Turkic etc. Al-Farabi with inherent encyclopaedism demonstrates the historical experience of synthesis of ideas and traditions of different cultures and civilizations presenting a vivid example of successful realization of equal dialogue of different value systems, which among an important place belongs to the values of Turkic nomad world and Iranian culture. Therefore his creation takes its special place in the spiritual culture as of Kazakh people as of Iranian one.

The factor, which contributed to this kind of constructive dialogue, was a unique special feature of the medieval culture of Arab caliphate, within the framework of which the formation al-Farabi as the thinker of world rank took place. This culture amazingly remelted the ideas and values of different peoples had its world acknowledgement and respect in many respects due to an enormous influence, which the Iranian civilization and its culture had to it sources of the those are outlined to the fourth millenium B.C. Hardly the Islamic culture could have its golden age without this contribution that was introduced by urban culture of Baghdad, Bukhara, Samarkand, Herat, Rey, Isfakhan, Shiraza and Tebriz beginning with the VIII century and practically to the XVII century. In all these cities the craft and skill, science and literature, architecture and calligraphy have developed being characteristic for the culture of Islam. In all these cities was a strong influence of ancient Iranian culture at the same time, which was inherited from the times of supremacy of Persian empires. Baghdad, which was the residence of Islamic caliphs from 750 through 1258, was based by caliph Mansur healed by a chief healer Gundeshapura and, therefore, begun to attract the Iranian scientists into his native capital, number of these scientists with his successors continued to grow. Abbasids did not only married to Iranian women, also they contributed to new cultural collaboration development, which in the key role in the sciences was to Arabs. The sciences were referred to a language, such as theology, poetry, law. Nevertheless, as for other ethnoses, to Persians, in the first place, the role was given in the natural-science and applied sciences that were named by

the Arabs as «strange». Mamun, the great-grandson of Mansur, whose wife and mother were Iranian, had founded «The House of Wisdom» which could be compared in its cultural value with the Alexandrine «Museyon» only created by Ptolemy for thousands years thus far. Many works of the Ancient Greek philosophers were translated into the Arabic language for «The House of Wisdom».

As the geographical location of Iran contributed to its value as a mediator in the commercial and cultural relations between Europe and Asia, since it is located at the plateau connecting India, Central Asia, Middle East and Europe; so the geographical location of the Kazakh steppe contributed to commercial and cultural interaction of the West and East, since the Great Silk Way lay on its territory giving al-Farabi to the world. Silk and paper from China, gold and spices from India, horses and skin from the Central Asia were moved through the territory of Iran crossing the Mediterranean Sea. Through the territory of Kazakhstan caravans loaded by goods and nomad- cattle-breeders also were active mediators in the exchange of cultural values. The ancient cities Sygnak, Sauran, Taraz, Yassy, Balasagun, Otrar grew in steppe in proportion to caravan ways' passing, became well-known to the world by their highly developed culture and outstanding figures, who glorified al-Farabi, Dulati, Hodja Akhmet Yasavi, Balasaguni, etc.

There are considerable common between the cultures of Kazakh and Iranian peoples, and name of al-Farabi is equally highly appreciated both in Kazakhstan and in Iran.

As it is known, the views of al-Farabi were formed under effect of spiritual atmosphere of religious Islamic society reflecting its basic issues and nature of numerous disputes referred to one or another question. Philosophical problems al-Farabi had been developed within discussions with representatives of Sunnite traditionalism undergoing the influence of Iranian and Turkic cultures, being developed in problematic field of elaboration the ideological complex. There were different disputes in regards with God and attitude toward it of a human in Islam from the first centuries caused by difficult points of Islamic dogma, their various interpretation and absence in Islam the legalized religious dogmas.

In middle of the VII century, in the epoch of Baghdad caliphate, in the medieval Islamic culture the influence of the representatives of the Iranian

culture is strengthened, which of inherent component was Shiizm. As asserted by V.K. Chaloyan, «the Iranians perceived Islam without having lost its national originality in this case. The Iranians-shiites were characterized not by their cult rites only, but also by their philosophical understanding of the religion of Islam. Shiizm, which absorbed a mythology as well as the religious traditions of the country contradicted to Arab orthodox Islam»<sup>1</sup>.

One of a unique religious form extended in the Iranian culture was Sufism or Islamic mysticism, which solved the problem of faith with help of intuition, heart, contemplations exerting influence on the artistic literature and philosophy. The theological concept of Sufism based on the neo-Platonic theory of emanation, which then overgrows into pantheism, had represented its own interpretation of religious dogmas that strengthened even more the debatable nature of Islamic spiritual culture.

It is known that a role in the development of the ideas of rationalism and ideological played by Mutazilism attempting to answer questions about God from the rationalistic positions is based on the philosophy of East peripatetics. One of the first founders of Mutazilism was native to Iran Vasyf Ibn-Ata (699-748), at the basis of study of whom the tendency to connect justice of God with responsibility of human, with his freedom of will.

The researchers of al-Farabi's inheritance consider that the Shiite world outlook had an effect on the sociopolitical study of al-Farabi about the society, Mutazilism - to the rationalism of the world outlook of a thinker, and he has been frequently characterized as a philosopher that binds Sufism and Ancient Greek philosophy into a single one. E. I. Rozental considers that al-Farabi had his life spent as Sufi being caused by its moral position, realized in the political philosophy, in his ideal of society order. Originality and uniqueness of philosophy of al-Farabi are in historically actual content of epoch, refracted in the view of al-Farabi of the world and human being. First of all, in the river bed of rationalism, in an attempt at the rational understanding and explanation of God as original cause, his creations, and for this very reason, being located in the problematic field, assigned by religious consciousness and being the same on his final goals, philosophical view of al-Farabi, on the

one side, was closely to theological views of epoch, but, on the other side, differing in the method of the solution, it was not reduced to fideism and religious views of traditionalists.

The uniqueness of philosophical views of al-Farabi has their roots also in the value system of traditional Turkic culture, which made a weighty contribution to a rich spiritual culture of caliphate. As it is known, al-Farabi is a descendant from the Turkic medium. Although the large period of his life had passed within the borders of Arab caliphate, in his creation a line of historical continuity with the spiritual culture of his people is outlined, which is one of the amazing creations of human mind and heart.

Abu Nasr had obtained the foundations of philosophical and scientific knowledge in the city Otrar, where he had a chance to get familiar with philosophical and scientific works in the richest library of those times. In IX - X Otrar was a big political and cultural center. It was located in the most ancient center of permanent residency, irrigational agriculture and urban civilization of Kazakhstan. Different beliefs had got their acceptance elsewhere here: Shamanism, Zoroastrianism, Nestorianism, Manichaeism, and Buddhism. Since VIII century, when South Kazakhstan was a part of the Arab caliphate, the wide expansion of Islam begins that changed considerably the content of spiritual culture of peoples in this area.

Al-Farabi was introduced to the intellectual values of the Turkic culture, the brightest representative of which he was himself, specifically here. The majority of Farabi-scientists recognize the fact that influence of the traditions of Turkic culture on the views of thinker development, but, unfortunately, there are no large-scale generalizing scientific studies at those times, that could have traced this influence on his creation. The world view of each person is a system of spiritual-practical mastery of reality, which inside moral ideals, psychological and aesthetical relation to the surrounding world is represented in the totality of knowledge and persuasion. The Turkic culture, representative of which by his birth is al-Farabi, produced its ideological orientators and primary categories, principles of existence and realized values of universe<sup>2</sup>. These values specify the development of a personality in many respects. If to proceed from this thesis, then a creation of al-Farabi has actually

<sup>1</sup> Chaloyan V.K. *Vostok i Zapad (East and West)*. Moscow: Nauka, 1979. P. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Orynbekov M.S. *Predphilosophia protokazakhov (Pre-philosophy of the proto-Kazakhs)*. Almaty, 1994. P. 110-111.

the achievements of the Turkic nomad culture as one of its prerequisites.

The influence of traditional Turkic ideology on the philosophical views of al-Farabi, as the researchers see it, is in its ontological concept with substantiation of an idea of the Original Nature. Since traditional is the religion of ancient Turks - Tengrianism had strongly expressed tendency toward monotheism, then al-Farabi's thought that the Original Nature is «made with deity» in «virtuous community» which can be treated as an expressed influence of Tengrianism on understanding the Original Nature in al-Farabi's philosophy, where it is one of the manifestations of Tengri, what differs al-Farabi from the Islamic understanding of God in this respect<sup>3</sup>. The Turkic influence is revealed by the researchers not only in understanding of the Sky by al-Farabi as the original reason of the universe, but also in the music as the harmony of universe, in understanding of the other world and problem of requital, in the characteristic aspiration of the socio-ethic concept of the thinker to eudemonism<sup>4</sup>.

The distinguishing feature of traditional Turkic world outlook is the syncretism, which covers all types of people thinking and does not belong either to religious or to philosophical forms of consciousness, being an original compromise between different ideological directions and existing in the consciousness of people in the form of common sense, reason, wisdom of people. The traditional world outlook of the Turk was a syncretic alloy of Islam with rites of ancient beliefs and cults defined as «double faith», in the epoch of al-Farabi in particular. This syncretism of thought existed due to the ritual complexes filling-up the daily life of the Turks. This favoured to interaction of different points of view and constant spiritual renovation. Exactly the work of al-Farabi is the proof of this synthesis of cultural phenomena.

Thus, it is possible to accept thesis regarding the fact that the Turkic and Iranian sources of al-Farabi's legacy had an effect on setting many issues in the study of the thinker. They were the foundation of expressed spirit of freethinking, «cheerful» ideology of al-Farabi. Evidently it is possible to recognize their influence on setting and solution of problem of the relationship of faith and reason, philosophy and religion in the work of the philosopher. This is the central

problem of the medieval epoch, and not only of the latter. As cleft the world to theists and atheists, it is urgent in the present stage of social and political development of Kazakhstan and Iran. The solution of this problem is necessary for the adjusting of constructive and promising dialogue between atheists and those who believe, between the representatives of different religious confessions, especially Islam and Christianity. Sharpness and actuality of this issue had been demonstrated by passed the international conference «Globalization and the dialogue of confessions in the countries of Central Asia» held in June 2002 in Almaty, where the prominent scientists of Kazakhstan, Iran, Russia, Uzbekistan and other countries participated. It is objective that this issue could not be examined without the legacy of al-Farabi as per its status. The priority of rationality, which is presented in the philosophy of the thinker, brought him to the specific understanding of philosophy as the most ideal form of knowledge. The meaning of philosophy of al-Farabi is so great that he sees the standard of morals and virtuosity in it. Religion is true only if it is preached by means of philosophy, otherwise it is false. The al-Farabi's solution of issue in the conceptual plan on the way of dual truth gave a theoretical key for solving an issue of philosophy and religions, their place in the culture and society not only to the Eastern peripatetics, but also to the contemporary theoretical thought.

In the ethics of al-Farabi is possible to find an influence of Mutazilism setting and solution of the problem of godly predestination and freedom of choice and will of human being, requirements of religious and moral perfection. Also it is possible to see the influence of traditional ethics of intra-ancestral contact, characteristic for the Turkic culture in it, which placed the issues of discrimination of the good and the evil, the fate, the happiness and the misfortune and which in the phenomenon of «wise man» was revealed, who condenses in himself an entire spiritual experience and knowledge of people, lightened by the halo of universal gratitude, that is being a personification of the high criteria of morals. Harmonious synthesis of these ideas with ethical views of antique world allowed to create the first sociopolitical concept of the medieval Moslem East based on the system of moral duty to the Second

<sup>3</sup> Naslediye al-Farabi i Mirovaya Kultura (al-Farabi's inheritance and the World Culture). Almaty, 2002. P. 282-283.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. P. 375-379, 284-285.

Teacher. Philosophy of al-Farabi bore a vividly expressed humanistic directivity postulating moral freeing a human and need for creating possibilities for his self-realization by society.

The legacy of al-Farabi absorbed the best features of Turkic and Iranian cultures predetermined further development of philosophy in the East and West in many respects, being an example of the harmonious synthesis of different cultural traditions on the basis of the priority of general human values. His study left a significant contribution into the history of the world philosophy and attracts stable interest of philosophers and sociologists up to now, in particular on his historical native land.

The active study of the legacy of great compatriot began at the end of the 60s of the past century in Kazakhstan. The scientists of Kazakhstan had a great interest towards creative legacy of al-Farabi studying him in several directions. Introduction into the scientific revolution of al-Farabi's tractates was the basic challenge of the first direction. The noticeable contribution of the scientists of Kazakhstan such as: A.Kh.Kasymzhanov, E.D.Kharenko, L.Osherovich, K.Kh. Tadzhiikova, A.Kubesov, etc. was into this work. In 1970 «Philosophical tractates» of al-Farabi were published. In 1973 «Socio-ethic tractates» of al-Farabi were published. Further, in the following sequence, other volumes of al-Farabi were published: «Logical tractates» (1975), «Mathematical tractates» (1972), «Commentary to «Almagest of Ptolemy» (1975), «Historico-philosophical tractates» (1985), «Natural-science tractates» (1987), «Tractates about music and poetry» (1993) and finally «The chosen tractates» (1994), study of which made it possible to represent the volume of the legacy of this great thinker, whose work can be named as an encyclopedia of the medieval science. Since 2003 the Institute of Philosophy and Political Science of MES of the RK under the management of corresponding member of the NAS of the RK A.N.Nysanbayev will continue he work on the tractates' translation of the thinker within the framework of the new scientific research project.

Long-standing work on translation into Kazakh and Russian and publication of the tractates of al-Farabi was along with the great research work on the study of his rich cultural legacy, which was accomplished into two stages. The first stage is characterized by the integral enlightening the encyclopaedic issues of legacy of al-Farabi. Integral image of al-Farabi as great thinker and scientist in

the entire depth and completeness was recreated during work on this cycle: sources of philosophical views are revealed, analysis of content of his philosophy, its essence, intercommunication and influence on subsequent development of philosophical thought is given. The basic purpose of this work was the initial comprehensive enlightening the views of al-Farabi in order to introduce them into the scientific turnover. They have accomplished their task, aperture basic features of the world outlook of the Second Teacher, which in unique map of all issues of that historical epoch was found, such as: view to the world and human, structure of society, sense of existence, skill and religion, philosophy and science, on virtue and reason. Al-Farabi appears in these works as fighter for the cultural education, assertion of new humanism and humaneness.

At the same time need for more deep resolving the issues of historico-philosophical process, need for the thorough study of separate aspects of many-sided work of al-Farabi were designated. This was a task of the second stage of a study of the legacy of Abu Nasr al-Farabi. The following researchers attempted to accomplish this task in their time: A.S. Ivanov, A.K. Kubesov, A.U. Urazbekov, G.B. Shaymukhambetova, N.S. Kirabayev, S.K. Satybekova, A.N. Taukelev, G.S. Sapargaliyev. Gnoseological, ethic, sociopolitical and other views of the philosopher are analyzed in their studies.

During a long period of time a sector, and then a department of the eastern philosophy and Farabi studies of the Institute of Philosophy and Political Science has been making the great research work on systematic study of the legacy of al-Farabi, the results of which were found in their reflection in the following collective monographs, made by M.S.Burabayev, A.M.Kenizarin, G.K.Kurmangaliyeva, etc.: «About the logical study of al-Farabi», Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1982; «Social, ethic and aesthetic views of al-Farabi», Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1984; «Issues of existence and knowledge in the philosophy of al-Farabi», Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1988; «Philosophy of Abu Nasr Al-Farabi», Almaty, 1998; «Cultural inheritance of al-Farabi: history and present», Almaty, 2001. These works are dedicated to a disclosure of the issues of existence, logicgnoseological foundations of philosophy of al-Farabi, issue of antique philosophical foundations, socio-ethic problems of the thinker, problem of relationship of philosophy of al-Farabi and the Islamic world outlook.

Further development of studies of Farabi as a priority direction is determined by ideological situation radically changed, change of philosophical paradigm, and requires an output to the new categorial level of study of his work. This is a task of the nearest future, the possibility of fulfillment of which is ensured by extensive scientific literature on the works of al-Farabi, and by expanding historiographic base as well. As Kazakhstan philosophers consider, the penetration «into the essence of thoughts-revelations of Farabi reveals many-sided and multilevel cultural world in there», not being terminated, not being closed and completed. Further study of the legacy of al-Farabi should be, most likely, to be directed as follows: development of role and value of Islamic world outlook in the philosophy of al-Farabi; study of influence of traditions the pre-Islamic spiritual culture of the Near and Middle East on the formation of entire eastern peripatetism; analysis of conceptual diagram of philosophy of al-Farabi in eastern peripatetism; a comparative study of the philosophy of eastern peripatetism and the Medieval Christian philosophy; comparative analysis of study of legacy of al-Farabi in the countries of West and East; a comparative study of philosophy of al-Farabi and philosophical systems of traditional societies, etc. Undoubted merits of the previous works give a confidence in the fact that a solution of these most important issues is possible to be made very soon.

Kazakhstani philosophers emphasize comparativistics, comparative analysis of the fundamental bases of his philosophy with other philosophical systems in further studies of legacy of al-Farabi, as well as comparative study of the work of al-Farabi along with the cultural inheritance of representatives of different cultures. This is the spirit of times, since the powerful integration processes involved complex contemporary world place the need of realizing that fact in front of the philosophers that «Determination of specific character of its own spirituality and thus of a national identity requires the correlation of the culture with something different, outstanding...»<sup>5</sup>. This is why the comparativistics is a recently leading direction of humanitarian knowledge. It is reasoned by the need of search for fundamental bases of general human values that enable to facilitate mutual understanding

between the representatives of different cultures, remove hostility and confrontation, incomprehension between the peoples and contribute to progress of society.

In the light of this it is significant and interesting to Kazakhstani scientists of Farabi legacy to realize creative contact with the scientists-philosophers of the Islamic Republic of Iran into the sphere of interests which enters the study of the legacy of great Islamic philosopher Abu Nasr al-Farabi, whose work found its niche in the cultures of both the Kazakh and the Iranian peoples. President of Iran Seyid Mukhammad Khatami emphasizes in his book «Dialogue of civilizations: way to mutual understanding» enormous contribution and merit in this of al-Farabi, analyzing the formation of Islamic philosophy, asserting that he «is predecessor and a guiding star for all dealing with it (Islamic philosophy) in the Moslem world. Although there were made many discoveries in the philosophy and the natural sciences after him, firstly, his superiority consists in the fact that he was the first in all fields of knowledge; in the second, everything, which was created after him, was constructed on basis already opened by him»<sup>6</sup>.

This evaluation of significance of many-sided legacy of al-Farabi representing an entire Academy of Sciences as per contemporary measures actualizes a need for joint studies of Kazakhstan and Iranian philosophers in the region of studying Farabi's legacy even more. As it appears, the foundation of this collaboration was founded by the reports presented by Iranian scientists Gulyam Khoseyn Ibrakhim Dinani, Gulam Reza A'vani, Mekhdi Sanai at the international congress «The legacy of al-Farabi and the world culture» held in September 2000 in Almaty. The tendency of the above-mentioned international collaboration has to be continued in various directions. A new scientific magazine «al-Farabi» being published for the first time from the first quarter of 2003 and with the financial support of the cultural representation of the embassy of the Islamic republic of Iran in the Republic Kazakhstan, this scientific magazine will become the contemporary binding thread of Kazakh and Iranian cultures. New joint scientific research project for conducting the comparative study of legacy of al-Farabi in Iran and Kazakhstan would

<sup>5</sup> Bog-Chelovek-Obshchestvo v traditsionnykh kulturah: put' k vzaimoponimaniyu. (God-Individual-Society in the traditional cultures: way to mutual understanding). Moscow: Nauka, 1993. P. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Seyid Mukhammad Khatami «Dialogue of civilizations: way to mutual understanding». Almaty, 2002. P. 201.

make it possible to continue and strengthen our collaboration as well, to avoid one-sided and non-objective evaluation of his views, to open the new horizons, whereas it is essential to enrich the experience of scientific activity in the field of historical-philosophical research in both countries<sup>7</sup>.

Specifically such world-wide historical personalities as al-Farabi can enable to raise their voice in centuries in order to contribute to mutual understanding and dialogue of cultures and civilizations. This name as if the united stem of the eternally green tree, which interlaces Persian-speaking and Turkic-speaking cultures under conditions of globalization. Al-Farabi, our great ancestor, tightly binds the remarkable cultures of Iran and Kazakhstan.

#### Резюме

Мақала әл-Фарабидің философиялық танымын пайымдауға арналған. Автор әл-Фарабидің философиялық көзқарастары ислам қоғамының рухани ауқымында қалыптасып, сүннишілдік дәстүрімен қатар иран мәдениетінің ықпалында және олармен пікірталаста дамығанына назар аударады.

#### Резюме

Статья посвящена анализу философских воззрений Аль-Фараби, которые формировались под влиянием духовной атмосферы исламского общества, отражая его основную проблематику и характер многочисленных споров. Автор статьи подчеркивает, что философская проблематика аль-Фараби разрабатывалась в дискуссиях с представителями суннитского традиционализма, испытывая на себе влияние иранской и тюркской культур.

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<sup>7</sup> *Nysanbayev A. Stanovleniye Islamskoi Filosofii v Kazakhstane (Development of the Islamic Philosophy in Kazakhstan). Almaty, 2000; Nysanbayev A. Kazakhstan: Cultural Inheritance and Social Transformation. Washington, 2004.*