A. NYSANBAEV

THE APPEARING AND ESSENCE OF THE CONCEPT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING IN THE DOMAIN OF CROSS-CULTURAL DIALODYE

In the context of globalization and the development of multi-polar interdependent world, it is mutual understanding that is becoming a necessary condition of fruitful dialogue between cultures and civilizations, countries and nations, which are building together a new system of the world epoch. With this in mind, it is extremely important to study and reconsider the experience of reciprocal understanding accumulated in the heritage of the first Teacher of the East who had laid grounds and developed the conceptual basis of understanding and also realized the programme of understanding and the philosophy of dialogue in his works turning to the cultural traditions of Antiquity, those of the Muslim East and the Turkic world.

Dialogue implies rapport and mutual acceptance of cultural experience of other people. Dialogue is a factor to change one's inner world, to expand the horizons of cognition and make discoveries.

The key idea that I'd like to stress is that Kazakhstan was bound to be at the crossroads of world civilizations between Europe and Asia, the fact determined by demographic and cultural reasons rather than geographic ones. Hence, in its position, it is a Eurasian country, a constituent of the Eurasian civilization.

At first glance it may seem that it would be natural for Kazakhstan's development to enter the Turkic-Islamic world, because the country is connected with it by common national roots, language and century-long traditions and customs. However, in contrast to our eastern neighbors, the forms of purely Muslim culture are unlikely to dominate in Kazakhstan.

In ancient times, various religions were professed and could peacefully coexist in the Kazakh steppe including Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Tengriism, the major belief of Turkic peoples that was for them almost as significant as Islam. It should be emphasized that in Eurasian space, two greatest denominations — Islam and Christianity — have coexisted for centuries, religions which were practised by two super-ethnic groups: Turanian and Slavic. At that period it was the dialogue of religions and beliefs that was the form of their interaction.

At present all necessary conditions have been created in Kazakhstan for the dialogue as a means of national and civil consolidation; steady and dynamic economic development has been maintained; democratic institutes and those of civil society are being established; the strategy of industrial innovations is being implemented; stability, security and independence of the young state is being strengthened in the context of globalization. Such are cultural and historical foundations for inter-confessional communication and spiritual concord in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

We can distinguish several types of the dialogue: dialogue as the sum of monologues, where partners are not involved in the essence of what everyone says — it is only a superficial, formal dialogue. There may be a different situation where partners listen to each other, but each still hold their own opinion. And finally, there is one more type of dialogue, the most preferable one in order to achieve the consent where partners not only listen to one another, but both change, revealing something that had been unknown before they entered the dialogue. It is this new content that helps reach a sound, existential agreement of the parties and their interests that means spiritual and moral understanding.

It is possible to describe these types of dialogue in a number of terms: acceptance of otherness as one's own, perceiving otherness as something alien and perceiving otherness as something different. The first type of agreement suggests either ignoring partner's otherness or, instead, adapting to their experience (assimilation). The second type means refusal to accept the other's views and values which implies the

interpretation of the 'alien's' tone as negative. Finally, the third variant most closely matches the desired agreement: the sides recognize each other's otherness and interpret it with positive evaluation without losing their own identity. To be different means to be particularly attractive and to possess specific resources of consent.

I am very attracted to the interpretation of philosophy by Italian philosopher Nicola Abbagnano. He treats philosophy as a dialogue of free people, and considers the life of the man in the world ethical.

There is no drastic confrontation between Western and Eastern philosophy either metaphysically or ontologically any longer. Philosophy is a true dialogue of free people. The dialogue that implies freedom leads to closer philosophical understanding.

The philosophy of mutual understanding is a basic and very promising direction in modern Kazakh philosophy. Its origins are primarily found in Kazakhs' traditional wisdom and in the teachings of al-Farabi. Having imbibed these transcendental ethical values through its spiritual experience, modern Kazakh philosophy combines spiritual potential of the East and West, of Asia and Europe.

The first Teacher of the East, great al-Farabi laid the foundations for the philosophy of mutual understanding, following the principle of tolerance to wards other cultures, religions and spiritual practices. He joined a constructive dialogue between the philosophy of antiquity and the Middle Ages, of Islam, Christianity and Judaism and easily entered the modern discourse of Kazakh philosophy of mutual understanding. In his teachings, al-Farabi disclosed unlimited opportunities for integrated communicative dialogue between completely different spiritual and intellectual worlds. The principle of mutual understanding as a way to learn the semantic space of philosophical ancient heritage allowed him to develop the dialogical nature of philosophy and to understand it as a dialogue of free, equal spiritual and intellectual practices. Through

the prism of al-Farabi's philosophical heritage, the great communicative meaning of the philosophy of mutual understanding becomes clear.

The phenomenon of mutual understanding is an ontological foundation for the development of open dialogue of national philosophies and contemporary philosophical discourses that reveals the uniqueness of the world through the unique ways of philosophical reflection.

People often ask me what I mean by the philosophy of mutual understanding, and sometimes they are genuinely surprised that such philosophy is possible at all. I believe that the development of philosophy in the context of mutual understanding goes in line with the schools that combine and contain the best that had been produced by European and Eastern traditions, everything that belongs to the depository of the world philosophy, where the East and the West meet in the understanding of the eternal, everlasting meaning of existence.

Al-Farabi and his philosophical experience is unique because he managed to uncover the meaning and value of the idea of mutual understanding between Greek and Islamic philosophy. It does not seem possible to prove their influence on each other, nor is it necessary. But what matters is the fact that there is consolidated intellectual space of mutual understanding whose origins go back to philosophy which is globally acknowledged. Guided by this experience, today we are developing in Kazakhstan full-fledged dialogical philosophy of mutual understanding necessary in the era of ever-growing globalization.

At present, the formation of consolidated space for a dialogue between cultures and civilizations, where the desired and the necessary consent can be acquired, becomes a priority of social and cultural arrangement in the world full of contradictions and conflicts. Dialogue as a form of mutual understanding, cooperation and coexistence is a real alternative to violence, domination, supremacy and monopoly.

Objective historical tendency to build a new multi-polar human community faces persistent resistance of the forces that are reluctant to see the decentralized and harmonized world and impose their position and political will on other countries and peoples. In fact, it is historically outdated practice of supporting the alleged consent, pseudo-freedom and quasi-democracy by eliminating true, inner harmony and democratic liberties. Dialogue of cultures and civilizations can be a powerful barrier against such policy, and can demonstrate the opportunities and ways to structure the world differently and to achieve genuine understanding and agreement.

We have come to the conclusion that agreement is of urgency on a global scale. We should achieve it through and thanks to differences in individual and ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, its impetus should not come from the outside, but it is a consequence of internal impulses, a sound dialogue and intercultural communication. One can argue that the modern community is still far from such an

agreement, since in the unipolar world; only one superpower reigns and dominates for the time being. However, reality proves to be different. Significant counterbalance is being formed in the form of the European Union uniting

25 states, as well as other integrative unions — the common economic space of Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus. Besides, speaking of the culture of agreement, we design the future rather than maintain the status quo. Such is the mission of the theory: to draw a vector into the future, so that it could determine the present.

When speaking of integration and harmony, we mean inter-ethnic and

Cross-cultural interaction in the first place. Being a poly-ethnic and multicultural state, Kazakhstan views this situation as the most important asset, which broadens the range of possibilities for the country's development. Over 130 ethnic groups and 46 confessions live in peace and harmony here, without any discord and collision. In many respects, it is a great merit of the Kazakh ethnic group, which has traditionally demonstrated high tolerance consciousness.

Agreement can be reached not by concealing and regulating conflicts and difficulties but by resolving them. The prospect of cultural harmony and coexistence of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan, the development of tolerance is primarily connected with the interaction of the two ethnic groups — Kazakh and Russian — dominant in the country. They both have a solid base for a profound intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. This includes long-standing traditions of strong Eurasian brotherhood, the spirit of reciprocity and collectivism, centuries-old communications in the field of economy, culture and politics. Kazakhs and Russians have steady mental ties, too; these are the universals that determine the type and national character of both ethnic groups: the inclination to collectivism, similar attitudes towards women, and definite interpretation of power.

It is of great importance for us to study the issue of Kazakhstan's participation in the dialogue of cultures and civilizations, it seeking and finding the national idea, aimed at consolidation of poly-ethnic society with the dominating Kazakh ethnic group at its centre. Dialogue of religions and cultures is necessary in order to solve peacefully domestic and external problems of modern Kazakhstan. To achieve these goals we must study international and national practice of organizing and conducting a constructive dialogue of cultures and civilizations. The instructive practice of Kazakhstan in conferencing three Congresses of leaders of the world and traditional religions in 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012 would be of use.

However, past centuries and especially the twentieth century which ended not erelong have vividly demonstrated or rather brought up a stringent necessity not only to learn to understand and imbibe certain branches of knowledge but, which is more, to come to mutual understanding between people, their worldviews and cultures. Former assumptions based on subject-object and intra-object relations which originated in Western and Eastern traditions are gradually replaced by a new vision and the growing tendency to develop cross- cultural dialogue between people.

In the context of globalization, dialogue becomes a problem rather than a topic, and the problem is so complex and vital that it penetrates all spheres of modern life in our interdependent world full of conflicts. Well-grounded concern over the future is voiced today in terms of urgent necessity of the dialogue between ethnic groups, nations, states; people and government; modernity and traditions of social development; philosophy and science; science and religion; the dialogue between traditional and alternative religious beliefs; inter- denomination and intra-denomination dialogue; the dialogue of the teacher and the student, the educator and the educate, etc. These are but a few sides and aspects of the vital problem of dialogue, mutual understanding and agreement. They have always existed but it is only in the age of globalization of the 21st century that they have become as topical as have never been before. The reason for it is that the problem arising in a particular sphere of life or in a separate region is inevitably echoed in other spheres and regions, so local difficulties and contradictions trigger global ones.

From the generalized cultural and philosophical point of view, the problem of making a new world order takes the form of the essential constructive dialogue and civilized relations between the West and the East. It is common knowledge that the West and the East are two opposite types of the world outlook, two different attitudes, two different existences in the world, two contending typological forms of culture: functional and speculative, intellectual and poetic, rationalized and expressive, actively progressist and moderately conservative, pragmatic and ecological.

So, keeping in mind the development of a consistent, equal and constructive dialogue between the East and the West, their balanced, considered and harmonized interaction, their mutual enrichment, one

can say that new integrated philosophy of mutual understanding is the true philosophy of the future aimed at solving the problems and tasks posed by the past for the sake of the present and future, for the sake of the worthy life of the humankind in the new millennium.

It would be no exaggeration to state that the targeted philosophy of mutual understanding has already existed archetypically in the form of traditional Kazakh philosophy, which can be considered its prototype and even model, and nowadays in the form of free philosophy of Kazakhstan. Anyway, neither Kazakh nor Kazakhstani philosophy is predominantly or absolutely of the Western or Eastern cultural and historical nature. It is a Eurasian philosophy and therefore, it can combine advantages of the West and East, of Europe and Asia. As for its worldview, ideological potential and content, national philosophy has absorbed the pathos of mutual respect of cultures intertwined in it, the spirit of togetherness, eager openness to influences and achievements of other cultures. Hence, there is every reason to be proud of the national philosophical culture of understanding, but the fact also entails a responsibility to preserve and fully actualize its humanistic potential on the part of all those who care and create culture.

In promoting the dialogue and integration of the East and the West, in advancing the dialogue of cultures, nations, ideologies, all spheres of culture take active part: politics, science, religion, etc. This adds to the fact that the range of problems and issues is so wide. It is impossible to speak of mutual understanding, if some fundamentally important aspect is omitted.

As for the stages of this mutually enriching cultural integration, they can be described in the following way. The original community (unity) of the human race is replaced by the differentiation of cultures, ethnic groups, types of contacts with the world; later the modern world searches for ways of mutual understanding and mutual consent of different interests. This leads to a dialogue and through it to real knowledge and understanding of other cultures comes. This process involves mutual exchange of values necessary for life and the development of cultural interaction, and spiritually common humankind, truly equal human brotherhood is formed on this basis.

Of course, in order to achieve this noble goal, it is necessary that the dialogue itself should pass successive stages or phases, leading to understanding and agreement. The first indispensable step-phase or its condition is mutual trust of parties entering a dialogue. Through the trust and skilful combination of mutual interests and openness, the partners get to know each other and, as a consequence, inspire mutual respect and interest, because every culture possesses values that are sure to arouse interest and respect, and hence, the dialogue naturally grows into a close and mutually beneficial cooperation directed to achieve certain common goals.

It should be emphasized that when speaking about the space of intercultural dialogue, about the need to achieve mutual understanding, harmony and unity, we mean realistic dialogue, that is, the one in which parties can hear, or at least try to hear each other. We view understanding not only as a theoretical, mental acquisition of the material from another culture, but as its heartfelt recognition. Agreement for us is not a formal and imposed contract which prescribes 'tolerance' to each other, but sincere understanding and acceptance of common goals and objectives. Most importantly, we understand unity neither as a unification or dissolution of one culture in another, nor as their mutual absorption, 'annihilation', nor as artificial preservation of the existing cultural diversity. Unity, if viewed from a dialectical and sense-bearing position rather than from a formal one, is nothing but mutually creative relationship enriching all communicating parties (such is for example, the true unity of man and God, man and man, culture and other culture, etc.). In other words, we understand unity as an inner harmonious cohesion of diversity, diversity in unity, and, therefore, as the development of diversity. Indeed, development is only possible through mutual creative enrichment, interaction of diverse parts of the whole; otherwise diversity is not going to develop and may break apart.

As demonstrated by the sad events of recent years, isolationist claims, requirements of closed and static monoculture lead to extreme and, indeed, agonizing form of some 'originality by all possible means, at whatever cost', i.e. to radicalism, extremism, terrorism, bigotry on the global scale. But such culture is deprived of the reviving force of true humanity, openness, tolerance, trust, amicable learning and shared work. For culture, in the strict sense of the word, is practical and objective manifestation and embodiment of spirituality — the moral nature of man. A reverse and unfortunately not uncommon case in today's world is when culture becomes an end in itself, bare spiritless mastery, the pursuit of external forms, or the desire of their conservation. These are cases of culture devoid of spirituality. And the latter turns into so-called anti-culture.

Such understanding of the issue of philosophy of the dialogue between the East and the West in the context of globalization brings hope and confidence which makes it possible to say that, first, the peculiarity of Kazakhstani (Eurasian in spirit) philosophy allows it to enter the vast cultural and civilizational space of the world and engage in the dialogue of confessions, cultures and civilizations. Second, such involvement in the new cultural and historical dimension can encourage the culture of the Kazakhs to broaden their limits by accepting the dialogue with other cultures. This process will facilitate better understanding of our own culture and ability to meet competition. That means being able to reach new heights of world achievements. Third, the new model of globalization involves such a creative open cross-confessional and cross-cultural dialogue, which, on the one hand, allows joining the global information network and, on the other, preserving our national identity, national dignity, individuality and uniqueness of the national 'vision of the world.

The beginning of the 21st century made it clear that contemporary communication should be understood as a dialogue paradigm of the modern world community. Anthropological context of communication in the age of globalization becomes more important, because today it is necessary not only to develop the history of humankind, but also the human history. This is possible through the dialogue in which different personalities, different cultures and different national visions of the world are recognized. It is only after the purpose of understanding is achieved through our interaction that communication becomes authentic.

The whole tolerance issue is built around the phenomenon of understanding and agreement, which can be achieved through a profound personal dialogue. Personality in philosophy is always present and manifests itself as a tolerant personality always ready for communication through the dialogue. I believe that only personality-oriented philosophy is capable of fulfilling universal consensus which is possible through preserving, permitting and encouraging differences. Agreement involves preservation and facilitation of diversity, and therefore is based not on suppression and violence, but on inner understanding, spiritual attraction, rapprochement of national characters and mentality. Viewed in this way, agreement is introduced in the context of mutual understanding. It opens way to discovering the experience of learning the truth that is beyond the area controlled by a scientific method. Mutual understanding cannot be reduced to rational explanatory procedures, it presupposes emotions, expression, intuition, wisdom of life. Personality-oriented philosophy awakens creativity, free thinking, and since philosophy has personal meaning and personal character it brings personality co-existence into the world as well as co-existence and diversity of cultures.

One can say with confidence that freedom, tolerance, dialogue and mutual understanding are dominant values of the contemporary globalizing world. Their assertion both in theory and in practice is a guarantee that the humanity will save life on the Earth and enhance spiritual forces of kindness and mercy.

Резюме

Нысанбаев А. Мәдениетаралық сұхбат кеңістігіндегі өзара түсінісу концептісі

Мақалада сұхбат және өзара түсінісу ұғымдарының мәні мен маңызы анықталады. Әсіресе жаһандану жағдайында олардың дүниетанымдық және әдіснамалық рөлі қатты артып отыр. Сонымен бірге қазіргі көпэтностық қоғамның рухани келісімінің негізі ретіндегі өзара түсінісу философиясының мүмкіндіктері біршама зерттеледі.

Резюме

Нысанбаев А. Концепт взаимопонимания в пространстве межкультурного диалога

В статье анализируются сущность, значение понятий диалога и взаимопонимания. Автор подчеркивает, что в условиях глобализации особенно сильно возрастает их мировоззренческая и методологическая роль. Кроме того, в статье раскрываются возможности философии взаимопонимания современного полиэтнического общества.