

## THE INTEGRAL CONNECTION BETWEEN EASTERN AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

Qiyom Nazarov

Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Professor

ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
The article analyzes issues related to the interconnectedness of Eastern and Western philosophy.	East, West, Eastern philosophy, Western philosophy, Interrelation of Eastern and Western philosophy.

### Introduction

It is known that the history of philosophy is essentially a part of the history of humanity as a whole, while the history of national philosophy is a component of a specific nation's history. In this sense, understanding the ideas and works of philosophers who are universally acknowledged by all of humanity, as well as examining how particular theories and teachings have guided certain peoples in a specific direction and led to certain outcomes and consequences, is essential. Furthermore, understanding the philosophical meaning of historical events and phenomena, and how concepts and principles that have evolved and developed over time are reflected in contemporary society, is crucial for fulfilling the purpose of philosophy as a discipline.

In this regard, the universal and national aspects of world philosophy, the interconnectedness of national philosophical schools, and the importance of understanding the essence of a particular people's or region's way of thinking require a shift from old paradigms to new perspectives. This involves enriching philosophy with modern content and developing it according to contemporary demands. Initially, it is essential to deeply study universal philosophy, critically analyze the theories and teachings of philosophers from different regions of the world, draw relevant conclusions from modern trends and approaches, and translate important works of world philosophers. These tasks are fundamental and are key objectives in this field

Although the history of world philosophy shows that philosophical thinking from the West, especially Ancient Greece, reveals that Eastern and Western thought were not completely separate or isolated, there are many examples and arguments, particularly regarding the influence of Eastern and Western thought on each other. This interaction includes the influence on our national philosophy, shaped by the worldview of our ancestors. The history of this unique and fascinating process is deeply intertwined with the influence of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy on the thoughts and ideologies of our ancestors.

It can be said that the philosophical Ideas of Ancient Greece and Rome also significantly influenced the ideas and viewpoints in our country, and the connection between these influences and our people's way of thinking requires special attention. Particularly, it is known that the founder of Western philosophy, Thales of Miletus, traveled to Asia in his youth and was well-versed in Zoroastrian teachings, which undoubtedly influenced his worldview. The concept of "everything originates from fire and returns to fire" proposed by Heraclitus is acknowledged to have been influenced by Zoroastrianism. Plato's followers were also well aware of Zoroastrian teachings and, at one point, Plato expressed gratitude to his students by saying, "May we be as good as Zoroaster, I am no more than his humble servant," reflecting his admiration for Zoroastrianism.

It is not a coincidence that the plot of the ancient epic "Alpomish," which has roots dating back nearly three thousand years, shares similarities with the plots of Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey." The ancient narrative of "Alpomish" predates the time of Homer by a significant period. This connection warrants a thorough exploration of the similarities between the "Alpomish" epic and other ancient epic narratives, particularly those from the Sumerians and the Hindus, which also share similarities in their thematic structure.

Moreover, the oldest version of the "Alpomish" plot, which is found in the "Avesta," has elements that were later erased by Alexander the Great. It is not without reason that the removal of these sections is not considered coincidental. It is quite possible that Homer was familiar with the works of Thales, was influenced by his ideas, and adapted this subject matter either from him or his disciples.

Unfortunately, due to the Arab and Mongol invasions and later conquests, there are very few records remaining from the period of the Avesta. The goal of these invasions was to erase any remnants of ancient civilizations. After Alexander, the following invaders continued in this destructive path, systematically erasing everything that did not align with their values, including national traditions and historical memories. This led to a significant alteration of the historical memory of the people. The invaders saw it as their main task to obliterate national values and remove them from the collective memory of the people.

For centuries, this mission was carried out so effectively that those who did not believe that the authentic creators of these ancient artifacts and values were the people themselves, namely those who did not appreciate these values and who instead believed in and served the invaders, became increasingly common.

These sentiments have been ingrained so deeply and systematically that even today, many people living in the area where the epic "Alpomish" was created refuse to acknowledge that the plot of the epic originated in the centuries before the Common Era. These individuals are not only those distant from knowledge but also a significant portion of specialists. In this regard, the famous scholar Al-Biruni, in his work "Monuments of Ancient Peoples," describes how conquerors ruthlessly destroyed all artifacts, and the local population began to emphasize the importance of remembering and preserving these historical traces to prevent their complete disappearance from national memory. Al-Biruni points out that the conquerors, recognizing the significance of this memory, left only those talents that served their interests, encouraging them, while destroying others, a painful reality he insightfully reflected on in his writings.

However, within the former Soviet Union, the history of oral traditions, starting with the Turkic epic that appeared in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and the "Igor's Campaign," was falsely aligned with the "socialist realism" ideology. This narrative wrongly posited that the epic "Alpomish" had only a 1,000-year

history and had emerged in the lower reaches of the SyrDarya around the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, in alignment with party directives. It is indisputable that some articles from the middle of the last century were influenced by these misconceptions.

In the era when our great scholar Al-Biruni lived, much attention was paid to the emergence of the independent Barchin Kingdom in this region and the restoration of ancient artifacts. If we consider that Al-Biruni's work "Monuments of Ancient Peoples," written in a systematic historical style, is a product of that time, it can be logically concluded that the ancient plot of the epic "Alpomish," which has been preserved in our national memory, was indeed revived during that period. The fact that special attention is given to the figure of Barchin in the epic, and that he is elevated to one of the main protagonists, and his name is associated with the title of King Barchin, makes sense both historically and logically from a political point of view without needing further debate.

In recent years, the prominent scholar Katoni's research has also confirmed that several millennia ago, the region along the Amu Darya was home to the Qunqirat tribe, which later moved to the lower part of the region. However, despite the division of the people, the mutual connections between them were never entirely severed. This supports the idea that the political events described in the "Alpomish" epic, particularly those in the Bobotog' and Boysun areas, which depict the division of the people and the migration of some to distant places, reflect the historical situation of our people, encapsulating the traditional saying, "Let the bond not break."

Perhaps one of the reasons for this migration was religious, that is, it could be related to the spread of Buddhism in our land during that time, which led its followers to migrate to other countries. This is also a repetition of a historical event that occurred with the beginning of the Medina period in Islamic history. The Buddha artifacts found by Katoni first in the Surkhandarya region, and later in the lower part of the Amu Darya, where the present-day Qunqirat people still live, support this idea.

In the epic, both those who remained in their ancestral lands and those who migrated referred to themselves as Qunqirat. The passionate verses about the ancestors of the migrating Qunqirat longing for their homeland are not without significance.

It has been nearly 25 years since the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alpomish epic was celebrated in our country, a time when we had not yet gained independence. During that time, the influence of the long-standing "taboos" in the thinking of the previous ideological system still held a certain degree of power, and the new generation of historians had not yet fully developed a philosophical perspective that was entirely in tune with the newly independent Uzbekistan's history.

This is also true, and in this sense, while a nation gains independence, it is difficult for its thinking to become fully independent in a day or a year. This process may take several years, sometimes even decades. During this process, the restoration of historical pages, the renewal of ideas about significant events and their gradual development, and the establishment of historical truths lead to a complex change. In this process, the connection between the fragmented points of the past, the discontinuity chain created by invasions, the continuity principle of historical events, and the emergence of a new philosophical perspective on history are restored.

Today, this process is clearly evident. New opportunities are being created for a new approach to history, a new generation of historians with an independent mindset is forming, and the broken points of our glorious past are being reconnected. The fundamental truths about these points are being restored. In this process, the original roots of Uzbek philosophy, the ancient roots of national thought

reflected in the oral traditions of our people, and the classical artifacts restored in the post-Christian era will undoubtedly also be restored.

History can sometimes be understood not only through historical facts, archaeological evidence, and dates but also through philosophical understanding and logical conclusions. In fact, it is only now that fields such as “Philosophy of History,” “History of Philosophy,” and “Uzbek Philosophy,” which have started to expand in our country, are crucially defined by their social-philosophical essence, vital significance, and pressing tasks.

The thoughts about the historical roots of the connection between Uzbek philosophy and Western philosophy also have their own logic, and the events that occurred in the depths of the periods naturally follow their own specific progression. As we know, before the Common Era, the Jewish people, who had been expelled from their homeland and scattered among the city-states of the Athens alliance and Rome, had caused Christianity to spread. In the early centuries of the Common Era, Christianity became the official state religion within the territory of the Roman Empire. Christian churches and religious education systems spread throughout the empire.

The Christian clergy began to eliminate other schools of thought, education systems, and philosophical teachings within their domain. Initially, the emperors controlled the Christian clergy, but over time, the clergy gained dominance. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE, Emperor Justinian, under their influence, ordered the closure of all philosophical schools. The institutions and buildings of these schools were either destroyed or taken over by the Christians. In 635 CE, the last and most famous library of “Apollo” was burned down.

Gradually, the Christians also took control of the governance, replacing the imperial system with the Papacy system, and they became the sole rulers in Europe. In this region, there was no space left for philosophy and the sciences based on it, and realizing this, around 700 philosophers traveled east. Their various books, amounting to 70 camels in weight, were brought to the court of King Aurangzeb in present-day Iran.

Some experts suggest that “Had Aurangzeb been a person who valued knowledge, and not considered the visitors as enemies and ordered them to be destroyed, Europe would have been completely deprived of its ancient heritage, and no information about it would have survived.”

The Wise Aurangzeb, in contrast, took a completely different path. He showed respect and honor to those who came, providing opportunities for them to live. However, he placed a condition on all of them: they must marry local representatives of the population, establish families, have children, and teach the knowledge they brought to the local youth. Gradually, over several decades, all those who came integrated with the local population, and by their own accord, they fulfilled Aurangzeb’s condition. The philosophical sciences and teachings they brought with them not only began to spread across Iran but also to neighboring regions, becoming famous among intellectuals.

Shortly after the last of the newcomers passed away, the Qur’an was revealed to our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the Arab Caliphate was established. To strengthen the Caliphate, not only religion but also a solid scientific and educational system was necessary. Understanding this, the Caliphs made philosophy one of the core scientific and educational pillars, and it began to fulfill its unique scientific, educational, and ideological functions.

Many works were translated from Greek or Syriac into Arabic, and the period was often referred to as the “Golden Age of Translation.” During that era, anyone who translated a book was given gold equal to the weight of the book. Not only was translation important, but explaining the essence and

significance of philosophy to the people was also greatly valued, and a unique school of commentary was established. Not only commentary but also many classical teachings and original theories were developed by Muslim scholars and philosophers. A new and unique era of development in philosophy emerged. In summary, this dynamic process, which continued up until the time of Ghazali, transformed the term “Philosophy” into “Filosofiya” and “Falsafa,” and it led to the development of this field by its profound scholars. It also contributed to the emergence of many renowned works.

One of the foremost representatives of this school, Farabi, is still recognized today not only in the Islamic world but also in the West as one of the most outstanding scholars in explaining and interpreting Greek philosophy. His philosophical legacy, particularly the development of the “Science of Wisdom,” is one of the main discoveries of this period, and it laid the foundation for the development of philosophy in the regions where Islam spread.

It is important to emphasize that after Ancient Greek philosophy, no region in the world developed a system of thought that was completely distinct, yet continued many of its traditions, eventually creating unique concepts, categories, and principles. These systems of philosophy spread over vast areas and embraced multiple streams and directions. Over the centuries, these systems were refined and gradually evolved, forming the “Science of Wisdom,” which is equivalent to unified philosophical theories and teachings.

The subsequent development of this vibrant philosophy, which began with Farabi, continued through figures such as Al-Biruni, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina, Ibn Arabi, Maturidi, Nasafi, Umar Khayyam, Ulugh Beg, Attar, Navoi, and many other scholars from the East, including the Jadid philosophers who were the most recent representatives in our region, clearly shows the traces and influence of philosophical wisdom.

The teachings and perspectives on this matter, when studied in the context of philosophical thought that evolved in our region, reflect the complex development process that has been ongoing since the times of the Avesta. This historical journey, spanning almost three thousand years, has resulted in the creation of philosophical ideas and teachings that have had significant importance not only in our nation’s history but also in the history of all humanity.

Philosophers like Al-Khwarazmi, Al-Bukhari, Al-Farabi, Al-Farghani, Al-Biruni, Ibn Sina, Mirzo Ulugh Beg, and Alisher Navoi have left an indelible mark in history.

They lived, created, and contributed to the emergence of various philosophical schools, movements, theories, and teachings.

Although this history consists of different periods that differ from one another, its fundamental essence remains unified. It represents the common values left by all the generations and ancestors who lived in this region. In this sense, the analysis of this history is not about geocentrism, Eurocentrism, or the limitations of ethnicity and national pride. Instead, it is about a priceless legacy created by our forefathers, a part of humanity’s intellectual heritage, which must be studied impartially and from which lessons should be drawn, as required by the times.