

SECTION 8. HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

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RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL VIEWS OF SHEIKH JEMALEDDIN AFGHANI

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The philosophy of enlightenment, which was formed in Azerbaijan in the 19th century, covered all social levels of society and created the basis for its future development. The intellectual revolution in Azerbaijani culture and literature emerged as a result of the intense spiritual and practical activity of thinkers who were directly related to the enlightenment movement. J. Afghani, who was deeply familiar with both the East and the West, knew well the reasons for the backwardness of the Islamic world, and gave a logical analysis of this in numerous articles and speeches. The development of religious values is possible in an environment of freedom of thought. Freedom of thought conditions the formation of democratic institutions. Freedom of thought, in turn, forms an atmosphere of tolerance in society.

The philosophy of enlightenment constitutes an extremely complex and contradictory stage in the history of Azerbaijani socio-political and philosophical thought in the new era. The philosophy of enlightenment, which was formed in Azerbaijan in the 19th century, covered all social levels of society and created the basis for its future development. The enlightenment, which was formed in the 19th century, in addition to being a literary, socio-political event, was also an important direction in determining the future development directions of Azerbaijani society as an ideological movement. The philosophy of enlightenment, an ideological and ideological movement of the period of transition from feudalism to capitalism, could not develop and take a unique line of development in Azerbaijani society without bringing new shades and changes to the life of society. In this sense, the study of religious and cultural values in the work of Azerbaijani enlighteners from the perspective of modernity is very relevant.

When studying Azerbaijani enlightenment as a system, the following conclusions can be drawn: a) A broad analysis of socio-political processes in the South Caucasus and Azerbaijan in the 19th century clearly explains the reasons and conditions for the emergence of the philosophy of enlightenment at that time; b) The philosophy of enlightenment introduced the new cultural and spiritual values of Western Europe to the traditional Muslim society; c) Despite the late formation of the ideas of enlightenment in Azerbaijan, it had common features that were different from European and Russian enlightenment; d) Azerbaijani enlightenment formed unique national-spiritual and religious values.

The intellectual revolution in Azerbaijani culture and literature emerged as a result of the intense spiritual and practical activity of thinkers directly connected with the Enlightenment movement (M.F. Akhundzadeh, H. Zardabi, A. Bakikhanov, J. Afghani, M.T. Sidqi, etc.).

The Azerbaijani Enlightenment was a universal process, a special way of thinking and cultural experience. The progress of Azerbaijani culture was associated with the successes of the Enlightenment. The essence of the Enlightenment lies in the replacement of the religious cult in society with the cult of science and education ("Cult of Cognition").

J. Afghani also admitted that Europe developed thanks to secular sciences: "Let's take Europe, which influenced the whole world, the British, which conquered India, and France, which occupied Tunisia. These are neither the abilities of the British nor the French. These are simply the abilities of their science" [9, p. 14]. On the other hand, J. Afghani believed in the great stimulating power of Islam in the development of secular sciences. In his opinion, the Islamic religion does not hinder the progress of Muslims at all, on the contrary, it has given a strong impetus to the development of rational thought. "If a Muslim says that my religion contradicts all these sciences, he contradicts his own religion. A person's first education is his religious education, his philosophical outlook is born later" [1, p. 32].

One of the important components in the system of cultural values of Azerbaijani enlightenment is the issues of language, "mother tongue". In order for a nation, a people to maintain its existence on the stage of history, it is necessary to own its mother tongue. Language determines the happiness of every nation. Language must create the basis for the existence of the nation, and the nation must create the basis for the existence of the language. J. Afghani writes: "There is no happiness outside the nation, there is no nation without language. If the language does not satisfy the communication and use needs of every art and profession of the nation, it cannot be considered a language" [9, p. 186].

The issue of language and linguistic unity also interested J. Afghani. The issues of language and style (writing) run like a red line in most of his letters. The thinker attached great importance to the issues of conducting education and upbringing in the native language. J. Afghani notes: “Scholars, as well as scholars, discover the essence of a nation, and its merits, well when education, training, and teaching, as well as the use of subjects and arts by national classes, should be in the language of that nation” [9, p. 189].

He put forward the importance of a number of signs for the implementation of this idea: “Language unity can have all the merits only when something is done to protect and enrich the national language, which is formed from the languages of different individuals” [1, p. 188].

J. Afghani, who was deeply familiar with both the East and the West, was well aware of the reasons for the backwardness of the Islamic world, and gave a logical analysis of this in numerous articles and speeches. "J. Afghani based his teachings on the Holy Quran, considering it a perfect source of sciences, a code of ideas and ethics, and an example of the structure of society. The Holy Quran and science do not contradict each other, but on the contrary, they complement and enrich each other" [2, p. 30].

J. Afghani puts forward the idea of reforming the Islamic religion. Reforming Islam is not understood as revising it. As if he had foreseen that such a misunderstanding might occur in Pan-Islamism, J. Afghani writes: “It is known that our goal in the religious movement is to reform the Islamic religion. The meaning of religious reform is not to add something to the religion that the Messenger of Allah did not bring, and perhaps to destroy the rules of Islam, but perhaps to take what was added to the religion brought by the Messenger of Allah later and by subsequent people and bring it to the light of the era of religious happiness” [3, p. 49].

J. Afghani desired the unity of the democratic ideology of Europe and Islamic spirituality in the Muslim intellectual and wrote that the Muslim intellectual, if at the same time the scholar is fully familiar with the democratic ideologies of Europe, can present modern progressive democratic ideologies based on the teachings of the Quran to the public [1, p. 31]. By the way, we would like to say a few words about the national identity of Sh.J. Afghani

The great ideologist promoted the idea of the unity of the Islamic world. It is no coincidence that the thinker who called for the unity of the Islamic world is considered one of the creators of pan-Islamism. A. Aghaoglu wrote that “the idea of Ittihad-i-Islam saw the world with the emergence of Seyid Jamaledin Afghani” [4]. According to B. Ahmadli, “J. Afghani’s emphasis on unity had certain grounds; since one of the initial factors that created the ideology of pan-Islamism in the Muslim world was religion. This factor could play a major role in mobilizing the Islamic world” [5, p. 202].

The metaphysical existence and integrity of the Islamic world passed precisely through the idea of religious knowledge. The “unity of language” and “unity of religion” of the Islamic world were one of its ideological directions: “Without unity of language, the true essence and vital force of national unity are impossible. Language is the main means of communication between people. One of these is considered to be the linguistic unity, which is also called national unity. The other is religious unity” [3, p. 8].

J. Afghani considered science and Islam to be of the same essence: “If a Muslim says that my religion contradicts all these sciences, he contradicts his own religion” [1, p. 32].

J. Afghani noted that the Islamic religion does not contradict the development of science: “The religion that is very close and very native to science and culture is considered the Islamic religion. There is no contradiction between the development of science and enlightenment and the laws of Islam... If a Muslim says that my religion contradicts all these sciences, he contradicts his own religion. A person’s first education is his religious education, his philosophical outlook is born later...” [3, p. 25].

K. Bunyadzadeh rightly notes that “in the Islamic East, there is still a desire to replace science with religion or to explain science from a religious perspective” [6, p. 112].

In the Azerbaijani enlightenment, the attitude towards religious values takes place in the context of the semiotic conflicts of “religion-science”, “decadence-progress”, “East-Europe (West)”. Some enlighteners noted that Islam was not an obstacle to development, and that Islam did not hinder the study of secular sciences at all. In the words of Seyid Azim Shirvani, by studying sciences, “it is necessary to bring the old world into a new style” [7, vol. 2, p. 197].

While promoting the cult of science in society, the European enlightenment “forgot its connection with spirituality” [6, p. 112]. Although Azerbaijani enlighteners understood and highly appreciated the role of science, they tried to see religious values in unity with scientific values. According to S. Khalilov, “The contradiction between science and religion arises when science goes out of its way to replace faith...” [8, p. 147].

From the analysis of the ideological “matrix” of the Azerbaijani enlightenment, it can be seen that the vectors of scientific and spiritual development are usually associated with the West (with Europe), with European philosophy. Europe is rapidly absorbing and developing with beneficial sciences.

The unity of the Islamic world, Islamic solidarity are reflected in the works of the greatest ideologist of the pan-Islamism movement, Sheikh Jamaledin Afghani. The great thinker believed that one of the most

powerful means of gathering Muslims to one “metaphysical point” (if it is possible to say so!) is religion. “Sheikh Jamaledin Afghani put forward the idea of the unity of Muslims so that the entire Islamic family could survive and justified it with his philosophy of national unity” [3, p. 141].

The true spirit of the Quran is freedom and corresponds to modern ideas. The current lawlessness has nothing to do with Islamic Sharia. These are additions made to Islam by ignorant and ignorant interpreters. Historical evolution and development will correct their mistake. That is, if a Muslim intellectual and scholar is fully familiar with the European democratic ideology, he can present modern progressive democratic ideologies based on the teachings of the Quran to the public.

J. Afghani considered the dialogue of the teachings of the Quran with European democratic principles possible.

The development of religious values is possible in an environment of freedom of thought. Freedom of thought conditions the formation of democratic institutions. Freedom of thought, in turn, forms an atmosphere of tolerance in society. A. Alizadeh rightly notes that since the Islamic legal system is outdated, it cannot fully cover the social life of Muslims. Because it remains helpless in the face of the trends of the modern era with the possibilities it puts forward to solve the problems of the era” [10, pp. 75–84].

New cultural values were one of the factors determining the social development of society. One of the necessary cultural values of the Enlightenment was the science of philosophy, especially European philosophy. In our opinion, since science and education are integral components of culture, philosophy can also be characterized as a European cultural value.

The relevance of philosophy for society is given special importance in the articles and correspondence of two thinkers (M.F. Akhundzadeh and Sh.J. Afghani).

Naturally, not all intellectuals firmly accepted this “love of Europe” and the Western-oriented “concept of progress” of M.F. Akhundzadeh. A number of thinkers, such as A. Bakikhanov and J. Afghani, saw the evolution of society and the individual in a return to classical Islamic values, and even in the revival of Sufi traditions.

The philosopher first tries to study the cause of the problem, to understand the situation created by the problem.

Only philosophical discourse can use the problem as a means of thinking. The development of reflective thinking has the ability to change the individual and society.

J. Afghani recognized the importance of studying “forbidden philosophy and scientific methods” in order to carry out reforms in the Islamic world.

“As long as humanity stands, the struggle between sect and freedom of conscience, as well as religion and philosophy, will not end” [9, p. 215].

Sheikh Jamaledin Afghani also came to the conclusion that the country's progress is impossible without the teaching of philosophy in schools: "The Ottoman state, including Egypt, has been opening schools for the purpose of teaching sciences for 60 years and has not benefited from it even now" [11, p. 29].

J. Afghani particularly emphasized the role and importance of religious education in the formation of a philosophical worldview: "A person's initial education is considered his religious education, and his philosophical worldview is formed later" [1, p. 33]. At the same time, J. Afghani separated religion and philosophy from each other, considering their coming together impossible: No matter what name religions bear, they are all similar to each other. No understanding or reconciliation is possible between religion and philosophy. Religion instills faith and belief in a person.

F. Alekperov justifies the thinker's ideas about the misunderstanding of religion and philosophy in Islamic countries: "Indeed, where philosophy and science are powerless, scholastic religious thinking comes to the fore and in most cases it has caused an unpleasant situation for society. Afghani was right in increasing the philosophical burden of religion rather than the scholastic-mystical meaning" [12, p. 109].

However, in the Middle Ages, in the Eastern tradition, it was possible for philosophy and mystical teachings to appear in a "common context", the philosophical worldview and Sufi practice were intertwined [13, p. 88]. The great thinker also had to admit that although Christianity in Europe overshadowed philosophy for a while, later they found strength in themselves and were able to raise the prestige of philosophy, which gave impetus to their development. But he came to the conclusion that "Islamic countries are still having difficulties in this matter" [9, p. 214].

Islamic discourse, or a critical attitude towards religious values, and religion itself as a whole, constitutes a priority direction of the enlightenment ideology. This problem was studied at different levels in Azerbaijani literary criticism and philosophy of the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. A thinker like J. Afghani perfectly understood the historical role and function of the Islamic religion in the Muslim East. In his worldview, Islam and the Quran were an unchangeable, irreplaceable value. The issue of religious unity and linguistic unity of Muslim peoples was also an important direction of Sh.J. Afghani's enlightenment ideology.

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