

The Presentation Of Instructions On Building An Enlightened Society In Abu Nasr Al-Farabi's Socio-Political Views

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Abstract. This article examines Abu Nasr al-Farabi's rich scientific and philosophical legacy, with particular emphasis on his teachings about an enlightened society, humanism, morality, education and upbringing. The paper analyzes how his socio-philosophical views influenced the worldview of later generations of intellectuals, scholars and thinkers, and how these ideas have inspired peoples toward creative and constructive activity over the centuries. The article also highlights that introducing these noble ideas into the consciousness of society, especially into the thinking and worldview of the younger generation, remains one of the most important tasks of the present day.

Keywords: Abu Nasr al-Farabi, enlightened society, science, humanism, peace, happiness, ethics, education and upbringing.

Historically, it is well known that the results of research conducted by Central Asian thinkers, who possessed encyclopedic knowledge, have been widely used in modern science and technology. The scientific heritage and incomparable works of our thinkers are not only the spiritual property of our nation, but also of all humankind. Their views on studying the secrets of science, acquiring knowledge and mastering crafts are among the enduring values of universal civilization. The life experience accumulated from ancient times laid the foundation for the development of modern thought.

The long history of our people testifies that we possess a rich spiritual and cultural heritage and great values that have had a positive impact on the spiritual perfection of humanity. In this regard, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized: "We know very well what a great and glorious past we have and what noble ancestors we have, and we are always proud of this" [1, p. 191]. All of our wise ancestors glorified knowledge and enlightenment and encouraged human beings to be moral, well-educated, patriotic, humane and devoted to their nation. The rich spiritual heritage and great discoveries created by our ancestors are of special importance in shaping and developing the worldview of people, especially that of the younger generation. In forming and developing human qualities in young people, it is necessary to rely on our national and spiritual heritage, because issues of education, upbringing and morality were deeply elaborated in the legacy of our ancestors.

The study of the past of our ancestors, our national and religious traditions, and our spiritual values serves as a theoretical foundation for the national self-awareness of our people and for the formation of an integral worldview among citizens, especially young people, in the development of a democratic, just and law-governed state. Today, the main purpose of reforms in the social and spiritual spheres of our country is to create a basis for the spiritual rise of our people and to cultivate a humane, patriotic and nationally conscious society loyal to national and universal values. It would not be wrong to say that national values were formed in the hearts and minds of our ancestors over thousands of years as the highest values. As the First President Islam Karimov noted, ancient stone inscriptions and written monuments, examples of oral folklore, and thousands of manuscripts preserved in our libraries, which contain valuable works on history, literature, art, politics, morality, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, mineralogy, chemistry, astronomy, architecture, agriculture and other fields, constitute our great spiritual wealth; few nations in the world possess such a vast heritage [2, p. 31].

The great Central Asian philosopher Abu Nasr al-Farabi wrote works on various branches of philosophy. His ideas about science and its types, the classification of sciences, the origin of knowledge and the role of sciences in the development of society are especially noteworthy. In his treatise "On the Origin of the Sciences," the thinker reflects on the emergence of different branches of knowledge. This treatise discusses the science of numbers, astronomy, music and the natural sciences. The installation of monuments in honor

of Ibn Sina in Belgium, Mirzo Ulugbek in Lithuania, Alisher Navoi in Moscow, Tokyo and Baku, and Ahmad al-Fergani in Cairo awakens a boundless sense of pride in the heart of every compatriot [3, pp. 63-64].

Abu Nasr ibn Muhammad ibn Tarkhan ibn Uzlag al-Farabi was a major successor and promoter of ancient philosophy and one of the famous thinkers of the medieval East. He was born in 873 in the village of Farab on the banks of the Syr Darya and died in Damascus in 950. Al-Farabi was deeply knowledgeable about Greek philosophy, science and culture. He translated the works of Greek sages such as Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno, Euclid, Ptolemy and Porphyry and wrote commentaries on them. His contribution to promoting the ideas of Aristotle, especially on the philosophy of nature, was particularly significant. Al-Farabi became so famous that in the Muslim world he was respectfully recognized as the “Aristotle of the East” and the “Second Teacher.” He was one of the first to create a classification of the sciences of his time and authored a number of treatises devoted to this subject.

In general, history shows that interest in ancient Greek philosophy has long been strong in our region. The views of Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Heraclitus and Democritus were studied and promoted with great interest in the East. In the history of philosophy, these scholars were called “Peripatetics.” Among the Peripatetics, Abu Nasr al-Farabi was the most active. According to some sources, al-Farabi wrote in his own hand in the margins of Aristotle’s work “On the Soul”: “I have read this work two hundred times.” He also read many other works by Aristotle dozens and even hundreds of times.

One part of al-Farabi’s scientific heritage consists of his commentaries. These were not merely explanations of the works of other teachers, but independent writings imbued with profound and interesting ideas. Therefore, they should be studied as separate works. Al-Farabi’s works such as “On the Ideal Society” and “On Attaining Happiness” are devoted to the solution of spiritual and philosophical problems. His reflections on humanism, patriotism and the education of the human personality are closely connected with his theoretical lessons on solving social issues.

In his works “The Views of the People of the Virtuous City” and “On Attaining Happiness,” al-Farabi directly raises social problems and develops a systematic approach to their study. In particular, he reveals the sociological foundations of justice, mutual cooperation, the state and its administration, a mature community, free labor, prosperity and the principles of politics.

Abu Nasr al-Farabi compares urban communities with one another and divides them into several types. First, he distinguishes between the mature, virtuous and perfect city and the immature, non-virtuous and base city. According to al-Farabi, it is extremely difficult for the ruler, leader or imam of the virtuous city to possess all twelve qualities: physical soundness and good appearance, understanding, sharp memory, perception, eloquence, thirst for knowledge, moderation in all affairs, love of honesty and hatred of falsehood, nobility, indifference to wealth, justice and firmness. For this reason, he emphasizes that the state should be governed by a group of leaders, each of whom should possess at least three of these qualities. He writes that if one person cannot be found who combines all these qualities, but two people together possess them, one being wise and the other possessing the remaining qualities, then these two should be appointed to lead the virtuous city. If a group of people together possesses these qualities, then this group of virtuous persons should be placed in charge of the country. If the members of this group act together in agreement, each of them can become a virtuous ruler [4, p. 161].

Indeed, one of the important issues in Abu Nasr al-Farabi’s social views is the emergence of human society. While explaining the emergence of human society, al-Farabi exposes the unfounded idea, dominant in some circles of his time, that society arose on the basis of war and violence. In contrast, he puts forward another thesis: human groups appeared as a result of people’s efforts to satisfy their material needs, to preserve their existence and to achieve further perfection.

Al-Farabi seeks to identify the natural causes of the emergence of society. He places the leading significance of material needs at the forefront and thereby provides a more scientific solution to the problem of the origin of society. In his view, human society consists of peoples who differ from one another in language, character and customs. In his work “As-Siyasat al-Madaniyya” (“Civil Politics”), al-Farabi explains the formation of the natural characteristics of different peoples by the geographical conditions in which they live.

Al-Farabi’s doctrine of the structure and administration of the ideal city was shaped by the social development of his age. Beginning in the eighth century, the growth of feudal relations, the expansion of

handicrafts and trade, and the rise of urban culture created the need to put forward the question of a form of state organization capable of responding to these new levels of development.

An important aspect of al-Farabi's political views is his emphasis that the methods of governing the virtuous city and the ignorant city are opposite to one another. He defines the characteristics of the inhabitants of both types of cities and, most importantly, explains the principles for forming the qualities characteristic of the inhabitants of a virtuous city. Discussing in detail the views of the inhabitants of the ignorant city, he writes that they think all beings are opposed to one another and strive to destroy one another [5, pp. 170-171]. Al-Farabi describes such features of the inferior city as a set of animalistic beliefs alien to true humanity.

In the society envisioned by al-Farabi, all people are equal, free and able to engage in the occupation or craft they desire. For this reason, he describes such a city as a civilized society. An interesting aspect of his ideal society is that kings and rulers are elected on free and democratic grounds. Such persons are selected from among the people, and the leader must subordinate his goals and activity to the interests of the people. In "The Virtuous City," al-Farabi states: "If the kingdom meets every requirement but wisdom leaves it, then consider the country without government. The ruler who governs such a country loses his position completely, and the country faces destruction" [6, p. 187].

Issues related to society can also be found in the "Avesta" and in the works of al-Khwarizmi, al-Bukhari, al-Biruni, Mirzo Ulugbek, Alisher Navoi and Babur. However, in the activities and teachings of Abu Nasr al-Farabi and Amir Temur, we observe a theoretical and practical approach to society as an integral social system brought to a high level of development.

In this connection, al-Farabi writes that methods of communicating with citizens and influencing them must be simple and understandable. Otherwise, people will not understand the ruler or will be unable to fulfill his demands. Rulers should resemble a skilled physician who mixes medicine with the patient's favorite and frequently eaten food. Indeed, kindness, love and encouragement are the most important methods of dealing with citizens [7, p. 159].

In the thinker's just and ideal society, great value is attached to people's productive labor, to the possessors of knowledge, their intellect, virtuous morality and life experience. According to al-Farabi, the future of science, human perfection, happiness and the establishment of goodness depend on mutual harmony among people.

In the twenty-first century, the age of high development and modern technologies, the ideas of our thinkers about education and upbringing have not lost their value; rather, the need for them is increasing. According to Abu Nasr al-Farabi, a person cannot reach perfection alone. He must be in contact with others and needs their assistance or relations. In this process, virtues are perfected in human beings. Al-Farabi advances the following idea: "A person reaches perfection through virtues, and a person who has reached perfection is considered happy" [8, p. 38].

In al-Farabi's reflections on society, the "doctrine of violence and coercion" is condemned. In opposition to it, he puts forward the "theory of natural need." According to this theory, people's peaceful coexistence, organization into communities and mutual assistance in daily life are natural signs of the existence of "natural need" in nature and society. In his view, in order to prevent conflicts in society, people must adhere to the principles of humanity and humanism. Humanity itself is the first social source that calls people to harmony. The acquisition of knowledge and science by people is also a source of peace and concord.

In al-Farabi's educational principle, upbringing and life experience stand side by side in human activity and complement one another. In the thinker's view, a person who has not been educated and has no life experience cannot distinguish many serious matters in life and may fail to perceive them properly. Therefore, al-Farabi considered the issue of acquiring a profession together with just division of labor. In his view, a person should first engage in work that interests him, because no single person can master all professions at once.

Al-Farabi also discusses the process of upbringing in his wise sayings. He writes that, depending on a person's character and conduct, upbringing may be carried out by "strict" and "gentle" methods. The main task of education is to prepare students, that is, the people, to search for the ways of attaining happiness. If those being educated show inclination toward learning science and crafts, a "gentle" method should be applied to them. Conversely, if they are self-willed and disobedient, a "strict" method may be applied [9, p. 36]. This idea shows that, for al-Farabi, educating the whole people, equipping them with practical and theoretical

knowledge, and using both methods when necessary constitute the main path to happiness and to making society free and prosperous.

Abu Nasr al-Farabi interprets the concept of morality in a broad sense and calls all people, regardless of religion, belief, race or language, to solidarity and cooperation. He dreams of forming a single and united human community in the world and of acting in the interests of that community and all its citizens.

According to al-Farabi, any state that develops while observing high moral virtues is undoubtedly a force that leads its citizens toward happiness. He states: “The only way to attain happiness is to perform good deeds with good intentions, to rely on virtuous actions, and to restrain oneself from deeds that may bring about vice and unhappiness” [10, p. 12].

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that our ancestors passed through a great and highly complex history and, as a result, created a rich scientific and spiritual heritage. Consequently, we were formed as a nation possessing wisdom and high spirituality. Only such a wise and spiritually mature nation can set before itself the supreme noble goal of building a free and prosperous life. Abu Nasr al-Farabi’s legacy had a great influence on the worldview of later generations of intellectuals, famous scholars and thinkers. Moreover, through al-Farabi and other Eastern thinkers, Europe became acquainted with and benefited from the culture of the ancient world, including its natural-scientific and philosophical ideas. The rich scientific and spiritual heritage of great sages who glorified virtue, their socio-political, moral and humanistic ideas have for centuries called peoples to prosperous life, freedom and constructive work. Instilling these ideas into the consciousness of our people, especially into the thinking and worldview of the younger generation, remains one of the most important tasks of the present day.

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