

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE AND CULTURE DURING THE EASTERN RENAISSANCE

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### ABSTRACT

The first medieval civilization in the East had a positive effect on the whole West, and the civilization formed in the West had a positive effect on the development of the East, and at the same time civilizations played a positive role in the rapprochement of nations, peoples and countries. The interaction and enrichment of Western and Eastern civilizations is an important spiritual factor in human development. In the Eastern civilization, values that are inherently humane in nature ensure stability in the development of world civilizations.

In particular, revealing the influence and significance of the Muslim historical and philosophical heritage of the IX-XV centuries, Eastern, and more precisely the medieval and Renaissance thinkers in European philosophical thought will undoubtedly serve to educate our people, especially the youth. In the development of world science, the masterpieces of Central Asian thinkers Abu Nasr Farabi, Ibn Sino, Abu Rayhan Beruni and many of our ancestors were our national and spiritual values, and without their incomparable scientific and enlightenment discoveries, science would have fallen into a state of misery. History proves this point. **Keywords:** "Renaissance", awakening, Muslim renaissance, Islamic theology, mysticism, sect, Islamic philosophy.

## Introduction

The term "Renaissance" (or "Uyg'onish" in Uzbek) is a conventional designation for the period in the Near and Middle Eastern countries, covering the 9th to 15th centuries. This period is characterized by a remarkable flourishing of spirituality and enlightenment. It was a time when scholars, brilliant poets, and great statesmen emerged. Therefore, Renaissance – the era of awakening – in terms of culture, spirituality, and enlightenment, fundamentally represents a secular, humanistic worldview, with a focus on the ancient cultural heritage, signifying its revival. The views of the Renaissance figures were distinguished by a belief in the unlimited potential of humanity, its willpower, and intellect.

The word "Renaissance" means "awakening" or "rebuilding." In this context, it is natural to ask the following question: If the Renaissance in Europe was primarily a revival of the ancient Greek spiritual heritage in its original form and content, following the centuries of dominance by scholasticism and religious fanaticism in the early Middle Ages, what did the awakening in the Islamic world consist of, and how should it be understood? With the publication of A. Mes' book on this subject, the question began to be raised in Western scholarship as well. According to Rekendover, in one of his early publications, the term "Renaissance" was used in connection with the profound cultural changes that took place in the "Muslim Empire" during that period, specifically related to the Islamic world's interaction with ancient culture.

One of the Western scholars, particularly the German orientalist I. Fyuk, defines the essence of the Muslim Renaissance as "primarily a revival of the Hellenistic tradition before Islam." In our view, the important and interesting conclusion drawn by Western scholars regarding the content and essence of the historical and cultural phenomenon known as the Muslim Renaissance was first proposed by R. Fry. According to him, the Renaissance, which flourished in the 10th and 11th centuries, was related to the general

cultural rise and prosperity in the regions of Iran and Central Asia, and should not be entirely linked to the revival of ancient Greek culture, particularly in terms of science.

At this point, another important fact, as emphasized by J. Muhammad, is: "If the first phase of the European Renaissance began in the 14th century in Italy, why, several hundred years earlier—during the 9th to 12th centuries—did the first Renaissance of the Muslim East occur? (There is some ambiguity in this matter as well: firstly, this Renaissance actually begins in the 8th century, because the intellectual awakening and rise in the history of Islam essentially started in that century. Philosophical schools within the framework of Islamic thought—such as Mu'tazila, Ash'ari, and Maturidi kalam (Islamic theology), as well as Sufism and the philosophy of mysticism (Islamic theosophy)—emerged during this period. Secondly, this Renaissance was not a phenomenon belonging to all Eastern nations and countries, but was confined to the Muslim East.) The first phase of this great rise and flourishing—why is it that no one, especially the Westerners, ever thinks about it? The East has always acknowledged what it received from the West. This can be seen from the philosophical treatises of Farabi and Ibn Sina, and the commentaries Ibn Rushd wrote on Aristotle's works. However, for some reason, the Western world has always tried to hide it, avoid it, or pretend it doesn't exist."

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

The highest flourishing of Arab-Muslim civilization—the "Islamic Renaissance"—coincides with a period when the political power of Islam weakened, and life became more pragmatic and grounded. During the religious wars, rulers who had gained wealth and resources began using them for their gardens, palaces, and other estate developments after becoming independent from the high authority of the Baghdad Caliphate. These rulers started to gather poets, philosophers, and scholars who not only studied Islamic doctrine but also were knowledgeable in ancient Greek, Roman-Christian, and Persian traditions. All of this contributed to the increase in enlightened and educated individuals and led to the flourishing of culture.

At the same time, the 9th to 11th centuries were a period of great achievements and significant scientific discoveries in the history of Muslim science and culture, and this period is recognized by some researchers as the "Golden Age" of Eastern science and culture. During that time, the regions of Mawarannahr and Khorasan, which were part of the Arab Caliphate, played a key role in fostering and driving the cultural and intellectual rise. This conclusion is primarily explained by the fact that the majority of the thinkers involved in this intellectual rise were the sons of this land.

The land of Mawarannahr was considered a renowned center of knowledge and culture in the medieval Muslim East. The scientific legacy of great scholars such as Al-Khwarizmi, Al-Fergani, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Biruni, Zamakhshari, and other notable intellectuals who emerged from our homeland has rightfully become a universal heritage. During the Soviet era, a one-sided approach was taken towards the scientific legacy of these scholars, but with the advent of independence, the activities and scientific heritage of these great figures began to be studied in depth from all perspectives.

Our country is also the homeland of hadith scholars, theologians, and representatives of Sufism who made a significant contribution to the development of Islam. During the Soviet era, the names of figures such as Imam al-Bukhari, Imam at-Tirmidhi, Hakim at-Tirmidhi, Imam al-Maturidi, Abdulkhaliq Gijduvani, Burhaniddin Margilani, Bahauddin Naqshband, Qaffol Shoshi, Khoja Akhror, and other religious leaders were nearly forgotten. The contribution of orientalists and historians in restoring their revered names and introducing their works to the public and our people has been significant. Indeed, these scholars demonstrated great dedication in showcasing the profound spiritual power of Islam, our ancestors' sacred religion, on the path to achieving goodness and perfection. If we look at history, it is known that as a result of the formation of Islam in the 7th century on the Arabian Peninsula, profound changes occurred in the social and cultural life of the countries within the influence of the Arab caliphate. This process can primarily be evaluated in terms of the role of Islam in establishing a state centered on the Arabian Peninsula. The scattered Arab tribes of that

time, despite facing many difficulties, were united only under the influence of Islam. It was under a specific ideology that this unification process led to the creation of a powerful state. In turn, this power created favorable conditions for the conquest of other regions. The vast empire known as the Arab caliphate included not only the Arabian Peninsula but also all the countries of the Near and Middle East, North Africa, Spain, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. During the Abbasid period, the city of Baghdad was founded. This city became not only the political center of the caliphate but also the economic, spiritual-educational, and scientific center of the empire. The Abbasid caliphs, such as Mansur (754-776), Harun al-Rashid (786-809), and al-Ma'mun (813-833), paid great attention to knowledge and education. For instance, the establishment of the prominent scientific center, "Bayt al-Hikma" (House of Wisdom), gathered renowned scholars, philosophers, physicians, astrologers, musicians, architects, and engineers of the time. During this period, cultural and scientific-philosophical works in various fields such as mathematics, astronomy, logic, alchemy, geometry, history, and medicine, written in languages such as Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Persian, Sanskrit, and others, were translated into Arabic. Ancient Greek philosophers' works, such as Ptolemy's "Almagest," Euclid's geometry, and several works of Plato and Aristotle, were translated into Arabic. Particularly, the translation of Aristotle's works on logic led to a complete transformation of the worldview of the intellectuals in Baghdad. As J. Muhammad pointed out, "The inertia of the Eastern Renaissance began to illuminate the West: this was a logical continuation of the Renaissance that had originated in the East and reached its high levels. Western poets, writers, and philosophers began to engage with, on the one hand, Aristotle's metaphysics and Plato's idealism, and on the other hand, the philosophical heritage of al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd. They also started to turn to the foundations of Christianity, the schools of patristics and scholasticism in theology, and, on the other hand, the life-giving ideas of Islam, Islamic rational thought—kalam philosophy—and Islamic irrational thought—Sufism and its philosophy."

According to M. Qodirov, the research that initiated the study of Islamic philosophy was the book "The Age of Aristotle: A Critique of the Translations of Greek Documents into Arabic" by Alambe Jourdan, published in 1819. This book revealed the influence of Islamic philosophy on Western philosophy, particularly on Latin teachings. In 1852, Ernest Renan's book "Ibn Rushd and His Philosophy" was published. In 1859, Solomon Munk published "A Compendium of Jewish and Arab Philosophy," which has remained significant until today. At the beginning of the 20th century, De Boer's "History of Philosophy in Islam" was published in German in 1901 and translated into English in 1903. In 1922, De Lasi Oleari's book "Islamic Thought and Its Place in History" was published.

In 1957, a book titled "*Muslim Philosophy of Andalusia*" was published by Cruz Hernandez. In 1962, a book titled "*Islamic Philosophy and Theology*" was released, authored by Montgomery Watt. In 1964, Henri Corbin's "*History of Islamic Philosophy*" was published. In 1970, Mojed Fakhri's "*Philosophical Thought in the Islamic World*" was published in English by the American University in Beirut. This book was later translated into Persian in Tehran in 1983 by Nasrullo Pur Javodi.

The formation of Islam led to fundamental changes in the spiritual and cultural life of the countries within the influence of the Arab Caliphate. This process can mainly be evaluated through the role of Islam in the establishment of a centralized state on the Arabian Peninsula. This is because the scattered Arab tribes of that era were unified under the influence of Islam. This unification process led to the creation of a strong government, which, in turn, facilitated the conquest of other territories. This vast empire, known as the Arab Caliphate, included not only the Arabian Peninsula but also all the countries of the Near and Middle East, North Africa, Spain, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Subsequently, special attention was given to strengthening the state's spiritual and cultural life, which led to the establishment of the *Bayt al-Hikma* (House of Wisdom) as a scientific center. Through the effective work of this scientific institution, significant advancements were made in the fields of philosophy and natural sciences. As a result of

the progress in this scientific worldview, not only were the sacred sources of Islam studied from a scientific perspective, but also new dominant directions in classical philosophical thought were established.

The uniqueness and historical significance of the worldviews of Central Asian thinkers such as Abu Nasr al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Abu Abdullah al-Khwarizmi lie in the fact that they were formed through the interaction of the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, and the Quran. During the era of the autocratic regime, the teachings of medieval Muslim philosophers were often evaluated from a Marxist-Leninist philosophical perspective, where only their materialistic aspects were praised, and their religious elements were dismissed as “idealistic.” Therefore, it is considered more appropriate to understand medieval Muslim philosophy as the philosophy created by philosophers who wrote in Arabic.

The study of the teachings of philosophers who wrote in Arabic has been more widely conducted in the field of philosophy compared to the studies of Sufism, jurisprudence, hadith, and theology. However, alongside portraying these philosophers as materialists and atheists, it became a common tradition to divide philosophers into “bourgeois” and “proletariat,” and as a result, to reject their “idealistic” conclusions as irrelevant. Therefore, today, the task of providing a fair portrayal of the heritage of our Central Asian ancestors and restoring the spiritual values of our people has become an even more pressing issue for our scholars and philosophers.

Thus, it is crucial and urgent to study the philosophy of our ancestors, using the achievements of world philosophers and all available resources, not limiting ourselves to ideology, but rather creating an objective image of each philosopher and uncovering the truth. In this regard, studying the philosophical views of medieval Islamic philosophers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Bajjah, and thinkers like al-Ghazali places great responsibility on the shoulders of our scholars. Special and serious research on the issues of Islamic philosophy is required. To fully comprehend the

essence of these factors, even dozens or hundreds of scientific studies may not suffice, because the contribution of Islamic philosophers to the development of philosophical knowledge is globally acknowledged.

In general, in the sacred book of Islam, the Qur'an, we find remarkable ideas, views, philosophical and spiritual-ethical principles and teachings. Alongside the laws and rules of Sharia, the Qur'an also addresses moral perfection, culture, spirituality, knowledge, values, honesty, purity, faith, trust, sincerity, and conscience. We can see that no issue related to these aspects is left unaddressed. In Islam, worldly matters—those that every country and nation faces daily—take a central role, as they serve to educate the individual and uplift society.

## CONCLUSION

In Islam, there are such remarkable ideas, views, teachings, and philosophical, ethical, cultural, and spiritual principles and guidelines that it is essential and important to rely on and base practical activities upon them. The foundations of Islam, Sharia, and the laws and regulations contain numerous issues related to moral perfection, culture, spirituality, values, honesty, purity, faith, belief, trust, and sincerity. In the teachings formed and developed on the basis of Islamic doctrines, many ideas revolve around purifying the human heart and soul, living a lawful life, and being pure both outwardly and inwardly. In Sufism, ethics, purity of the heart, knowledge, and true human beauty are defined as essential elements.

In this context, the concept of "*tariqat*" holds special significance. The word "*tariqat*", like "*sharia*", means "path." However, this term refers more specifically to the spiritual education of an individual. Unlike Sharia, *tariqat* is based on the inner spiritual state of a person and represents the path most suitable for them.

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