

AL-FÂRÂBÎ'S LEGASY AS A HISTORICAL PREMISE OF MODERN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

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*W*hen we think of that the past means for us and why we address to its heritage, we should recognise with necessity that it invisibly is present at us and that the present is anyhow connected with the past. We grow from depths of the past. Our deep, patrimonial communication with it forces us to search for answers to many questions of the present time in the past. Therefore our today's conversation on intercultural dialogue will be connected with the spiritual heritage of Abu Nasr al-Fârâbî.

The modern globalized world – is not stable and full of contradictions, its development is interfaced to rising and falling. In a situation of global crisis the person becomes open to injury, remains in private with many unresolved problems of economic, social and psychological character, tensely feeling the requirement for a support and in the stable basis of human life. It is a problem not only of a separately taken individual, separately taken state or a society, it becomes – a problem of many states and the different countries. It is possible to say that it becomes the universal global problem demanding joint efforts, active contacts and the considered decisions, all without an exception of the countries and the people.

Searches of the answer to the next challenge of our time, necessity of the unification of efforts of the world community, assume the reference to the valueless historical experience of the solving of the fundamental problems of the economic and financial development of a society, adjustment of a dialogue and mutual understanding of cultures and civilizations for joint fruitful actions. It allows to bring up again questions on a role of state regulation in the conditions of spontaneous development of the market, about value of political will of masses and their participation in the state affairs, about necessity of unity and consent in the solving of universal questions, on a role of historical and cultural heritage in the dialogue of civilizations. The actual state of affairs creates today an extremely polemic informative situation, in which the various points of view and positions

on many to questions world development collide with where any country and any state can not remain in and where the role and value of the international dialogue and intercultural dialogue, more than ever, increase. ^[1]

Already now our present shows to us that the contours of the new world are formed in it. They are formed as result inconsistent development in which under the influence of science, technics and new technologies conditions of life of the person in the world extremely change. The new social space is formed and the new historical time of a man's being comes to life. Being compressed and extending, the space and time find other rhythms and other form of pulsation, than it was earlier.

Thanks to the modern kinds of industrial cooperation and the international integration, the changed postindustrial forms of communication and to ways of an information transfer, the space of local life extends to the limits of the world. And the world space, in its turn, is reduced, thanks to new kinds and transportation and communications means. Migration has an unprecedented form and rather increases. It leads to the processes of intercultural communication in the meetings of the representatives of different races, ethnoses, languages and cultures are intensified. Not always and everywhere this process passes smoothly, more likely, has a zigzag form and uneven. It becomes the more difficult for «melting» of cultural influence. That in one in other point of the globe we face the situations of tearing away and aversion on soil cultural-civilization, ethnic, social and other distinctions. And it more and more demands the dialogue adjustment between the countries and the people, understanding of the people each other.

For mankind history numerous integration processes of high level are characteristic, and there is something common between them and the modern processes that does pertinent parallels in history. So, if to return the conversation in the theme declared by me than the historical establishment of the medieval Islamic culture, that became the magnificent epoch in the history of world culture, and Islam as a phenomenon of universal level occurred in close interaction and crossing of various cultures and cultural influences. In the historical interaction and active process of assimilation there were cultures of the countries of the Near and Middle East, North Africa and India, ancient Greece and Rome. The factor, having promoted such intercultural dialogue, there were active communications on the big space of Caliphate also accompanied by difficulties and contradictions. But the very intercultural communications having become the defining in al-Fârâbî's worldview the idea of mutual understanding and the consent have caused his formation as the outstanding thinker of a world rank.

Al-Fârâbî has left to us the fine evidence of intercultural communication and cultural interaction. «We have possibility, – he wrote, – to maintain relations with

all people who have the physical qualities, food and a way of life quite normal ... Today the Arabian state covers all civilized countries, except for those countries as which it is possible to consider purely Greek or Roman, and also those countries which are in the neighbourhood with the last. However, and these people – our neighbours, and we can study their customs and habits. Many Greeks and Byzantines will emigrate and settle in the Arabian state and tell us much about their countries». ^[2]

The medieval Islamic culture wonderfully has melted in itself ideas and values of the different peoples. Islam, in particular at early stages of the formation, comprised considerable potential of interaction of various spiritually-cultural traditions. It has come under the influence of Judaism and Christianity, natural-science views of China and India, antic tradition and local ethnocultural formations. It has the theoretical and spiritual collisions between various philosophical and religious directions and currents. The system of postulates of Islam was differently interpreted by jurists, theologians, philosophers and Sufis, and as any human knowledge, inevitably remained opened. Such circumstances created conditions and constant possibility for discussions, revealing of the general points of view and distinctions in positions on those or others issues of dogmas, a social life, a legal regulation etc.

As reflexion and reaction to this situation we can consider al-Fârâbî's contemplations about the ways of the argument in the environment of the arguing and discussing seminary students resulted by it in its well-known «the Treatise about sights of inhabitants of a virtuous city». In the same key it is possible to interpret the socially significant distinctions underlined by him in ways of truth cognition by the inhabitants of a virtuous city which are set under the influence not only from natural abilities of the person, but also on cultural and social living conditions of a society. Al-Fârâbî's works bear on themselves the expressed print of the polemic and live discussion of the various points of view and author's positions. Though style of a statement in his treatises differs from Plato's and Aristotle's where there are participants both visible (Plato), and hidden (Aristotle) of dialogue, however it is constantly felt presence of an audience, active interlocutors in it. Al-Fârâbî mentions the philosophers, their works, refers to them that favourably distinguishes his philosophical creativity, for example, from creativity of IbnSina. Aphoristic nature and brevity, synthesis and summarizing, the rationality, penetrated by spirituality light are the distinctive features of his works and character of philosophical creativity. Parallels in history, as bridges between the past and the present, help us in solving of our today's problems. The solving considering the modern problems only in the past time, being quite pertinent and not deprived of a rationality basis, it is possible to consider non sufficient. Because each time has its unique appearances and the models of development.

And each time searches for the answers to eternal questions. But in the historical past, both a society, and the individual, can find the sources of spiritual and moral force which are capable to give a stable support and confidence, thanks to which a society and the person could move forward further in search of answers to the challenges of time. It is an inspiring dialogue of the past, both the present, and the future.

The historical past shows the unique process of expansion of the human spirit. The steadfast aspiration of the person to be free was expressed with the greatest completeness in it, to confirm high ideals and values, and, the main thing as al-Fârâbî confirmed is to be happy. Resurrection of the vital values stated once by the great representatives of the human culture, the comprehension of their universal and humanistic maintenance in a new historical context is a necessary problem of historic-philosophical researches. Being an inalienable constituent of the historic-philosophical methodology, this problem aims on the constructive understanding of a spiritual heritage of the past and actualization it in the modern conditions.

For this reason I consider natural and quite proved the philosophic interest to the al-Fârâbî's encyclopedic heritage in which the comprehension of the fundamental universal values and it is planned the approaches to the decision of the major problems of life of the person in the world. His richest heritage represents the unique spiritual support so necessary for revival and restoration true human values. His philosophical thoughts-revelations have left a considerable trace in the history of world philosophy and showed historical experiment of synthesis of ideas of various cultures and civilizations. They have shown an example of realization of equal in rights, partner dialogue of the various philosophic systems. Will not be exaggeration if I tell that the al-Fârâbî's philosophy represents a historical prototype of the modern an intercultural dialogue and model of historically carried out dialogue of cultures of the East and the West.

Ascertaining of the necessity of dialogue in modern conditions is equitable and also lawful. Nevertheless, I will underline it once again, it is far not easy, but a challenge. There is it in force more and more extending and affirming globalization. Becoming more and more organic and at the same time disputed, the modern world fluctuates between theories of bipolarity, on the one hand, and multipolarity, on the other. And in practice it quite often looks as unipolar. High hopes not only in the sphere of culture, policy, economy and the finance, but also sciences, arts, education, spiritually-moral updating, in all spheres of the person live and a society connected with dialogue and its practical realization. My long-term theoretical employment by this problem more and more convince me that only dialogue conducts to true comprehension, only dialogue – a way to mutual

understanding of people with each other. In dialogue with the past the person rises on the highest step of spirituality from which height the sense of communication of the past, the present and the future is found.

Dialogue can be understood differently and thus important not just to declare it, but really to produce, enter it, to realize its time-personal levels and types, to create real structures of objective dialogue. Dialogue can be illusion – meeting of monologues, when positions stay external under the relation to each other. Dialogue can turn to a monologue, imposing of the point of view. There is also such type of dialogue when the opinion of the opponent is taken into consideration, but it does not render influence on our personal position. And, at last, deep existential dialogue when the general field of conversation is formed and is born certain new content, changing personal positions of interlocutors. For to understand is means to fall outside the limits of himself, to change.

What type of dialogue has shown us by Abu Nasr al-Fârâbî? What dialogue was personified by his rich philosophical heritage?

That the al-Fârâbî's philosophy realized certain type of the philosophic intercourse and dialogue, has been fixed in the names-definitions, left to us by history: «the Second Teacher», «commentator of Aristotle». I already repeatedly had to say and write that for so-called al-Fârâbî's «commentator role» is absolutely different, than understanding, characteristic for our time when «commenting» is reduced only to an explanation, or simple retelling of someone's position which are not expressing a personal position of the thinker. There is an important for understanding of essence of al-Fârâbî's dialogue circumstance expressed in «Commenting»: high respect and a piety shown to bearer of truth – the truth great and ancient, the truth obtained from vital source. It is, first.

Secondly, as it follows from al-Fârâbî's logic-methodological reasonings, in particular from treatises «About a generality of views of the two philosophers – Divine Plato and Aristotle» and «Dialectics», «commenting» actually is search of truth by the philosophic creativity for al-Fârâbî. He sees the original sense of searches of truth in the sphere of commonly important and universal concepts when such search appears as process. On this way the meeting of predecessors and followers is inevitable, the past and the present, allies and opponents. And, certainly, this way cannot be overcome without development of a philosophical heritage of Plato and Aristotle.

Truth, according to al-Fârâbî, lies on crossing of different confirmations about a subject. «After all it is authentically known, – he wrote, – that there is no any present weighty, useful and strong arguments, than the evidences of various knowledge on the same thing and association of many opinions in one for the intelligence at all serves for the proof».^[3] Hence, it is necessary to search for truth

in the sphere of speculative reasoning, and it is presented as conformity between different comprehensions about the same subject. «When various minds, – al-Fârâbî underlines, – will converge after reflexion, self-checking, disputes, debate, consideration from opposite sides then anything will not be more true than that belief to which they will come, proving it and unanimously having agreed with it».^[4]

Thus, we can conclude that al-Fârâbî is at the beginnings of philosophical understanding of an object of research through distinctions, overcoming of which leads to identity, the consent and a generality of positions. On the basis of the logic argument al-Fârâbî develops understanding of dialogue as a method of cognition that was initiated by character of the medieval Islamic culture – the culture growing from depths of the Heavenly Word, demanding for the understanding deep argumentation and long reflexions.

Al-Fârâbî considers dialogue not only as an art of the truth cognition and a method of its finding that making his position close to the Ancient Greek philosophy searches. But it rather deepens this cogitative layer. It is shown in al-Fârâbî's philosophy in new understanding of a dialogue as deep basis of the person being which is penetrated by the light of the Supreme, is spiritualized by His love and mercy. The eternal pupil of God and His creation – a man enters the incessant dialogue with the Creator, with that who changes the person and directs him to perfection.^[5]

Dialogue in the medieval Islamic culture – a deep layer of a man's being directed to the tops of divine, where a man, entering the space of intercourse with the world divine, is changed as the personality and bears in himself the moral beginning spiritualized by the divine light. Dialogue- intercourse with God, as well as the comprehension of this transcendental beginning, is put before the person by new senses, the purposes and tasks in all spheres of his vital activity, therefore such dialogue is a constant construction of the new creation of sense by the person.

In al-Fârâbî's philosophy dialogue is directed to a finding of a man's original being, where a voice of reason and belief in creative forces of the person sounds in unison to the heart movable by an appeal to justice and perfection. The philosophical purpose of al-Fârâbî's sociopolitical views consists in search of adequate model of development of a society, corresponded to a man's original being. His ideal of the Virtuous city has been created on the basis of humanistic ideals in which basis the lofty spirituality lies. The same purpose is pursued at the present stage of systemic changes of our world. Al-Fârâbî's appeal to follow simple, but the great truth – can live in the consent, in unity – with his heart, intellect and other people, – is given by an echo in modern appeals to live without military men

and political conflicts, to be uniform, keeping a cultural variety and by dialogue to solve the arisen contradictions.

The al-Fârâbî's philosophy shows to the modern world that at the heart of inter-cultural dialogue deeply humanistic principles lie. Thinker gives a priority to cultural values, shows respect for positions and views of other people, being guided thus only by one purpose – achievement of high truth. His philosophical outlook expresses the culture of consent and tolerance that at all does not mean conformism and absence of a position of principle on significant problems of social and personal development. As his works testify, his point of view was formed on the basis of critical consideration of those views who investigated this or that problem before. Without it, al-Fârâbî considered, the present research activity cannot take place. And the genuine governor is not well-founded, if he does not consider all those «models» and «examples» of social development and moral behaviour, which the inhabitants of both virtuous, and ignorant cities demonstrate.

Whether it is possible to deny actual sounding of these ten centuries of thoughts stated more? I think that this question is purely rhetorical.

Comprehension by the person of as integral part of the world community, open universum and global dialogue becomes distinctive feature of a new millenium. This new historical consciousness naturally comes in the stead of comprehension by the person as inalienable part of the local and closed universum. In this so radically varying picture of the world the tendency, consisting that in place of the western image of the universalism the understanding of possibility of its overcoming by means of a difficult interlacing universalities, created during interaction of the different civilizations and cultures is appreciable. In this space of intercultural interaction there is no place of hegemony and dictatorship. However, in a difficult interlacing of mutual relations in developing universal process there is a problem of preservation of cultural and ethnic identity. Thus not only so-called developing countries, but also more developed have a fear of loss of traditional cultural values.

This fear should not pass in motivation and provocation of the new world conflicts. Each culture is closely connected with national traditions, fixes really significant for a society ethnocultural conditions, and defines concrete conditions of formation of the person. Therefore the processes, occurring in this sphere of human vital activity, are extremely important for the mankind, in particular, so far as it concerns the preservation and development of cultural wealth of each people. Preservation of the cultural identity is the major problem facing to any people. But not less important as show realities of the modern world, there is also all growing requirement of expansion of intercultural contacts, deepening of dialogue of the cultures promoting progress of the universal culture, overcoming

of cultural isolation which in modern conditions can lead to the regressive phenomena in national discourses.

Being based on humanistic principles, dialogue should induce the person to mutual understanding and mutual respect.^[6] Those humanistic ideas that has been put in the Abu Nasr al-Fârâbî's heritage, should become a structure part of modern humanism and in all completeness and on a substantial scale be realized not only in Kazakhstan, in formation of our citizen society, but also in modern world civilization community. I see an important pledge of our future successes and optimistic hopes of a joint life in the big human House under the badge of solidarity, trust and the consent in it.

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