

EASTERN RENAISSANCE AS A PARADIGM OF CULTURE

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Abstract

This article examines the phenomenon of the Eastern Renaissance as a unique cultural paradigm that shaped the spiritual, scientific, and philosophical development of the peoples of Central Asia. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between Islamic civilization and ancient and Eastern traditions, the role of Muslim scholars in shaping the foundations of modern science, and the

development and influence of Sufism as a spiritual and moral movement. It is shown that through the ideas of humanism, labor, knowledge, and self-improvement, the Eastern Renaissance became one of the highest manifestations of world culture, significantly influencing the development of science, literature, philosophy, and art.

Keywords:

Eastern Renaissance, culture, Islamic civilization, Sufism, spiritual heritage, Central Asia, humanism, science, philosophy, Akhmed Yassawi, Biruni, Ibn Sina.

Introduction

The world's cultural horizons are continually expanding. Today, in the 21st century, we understand and appreciate not only classical antiquity. Western European and Eastern medieval art, Byzantine music and iconography, African sculpture and Fayum portraits, Persian miniatures and Incan art, the flourishing of Muslim culture, and much more—all of this has become the cultural heritage of humanity.

We study the works of ancient philosophers, read the books of writers, and admire the works of artists from whom we are separated by thousands of kilometers, centuries, and even millennia. We can understand what is alien to us, what is absent from us, and even what is opposed to us. By understanding other cultures, we contribute to the enrichment of our own national culture.

At the beginning of the 21st century, we are reviving what was created on our land over centuries. It was forgotten for a number of reasons, and today we are giving this priceless heritage a second life. This understanding of "revival" is linked specifically to a return to our national cultural roots. In a book by the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, it was written, "From the first days of our

independence, the most important task has been the revival of the vast, priceless cultural heritage that our ancestors created over many centuries."

So, today. At the beginning of the 21st century, we are reviving what has been created in our land over centuries. It was forgotten for a number of reasons, and today we are giving this priceless heritage a second life. This understanding of "revival" is linked specifically to a return to our national cultural roots. Here, revival is understood as a second wind that culture has acquired. It did not return to its roots, it did not recall the culture of ancient lore, but rather soared above its previous level of culture, reaching unprecedented heights. Revival is a soaring of the spirit that has occurred in all spheres of culture. This is a rise of the national spirit. It is in this context that scholars examine the characteristics of regional revivals. G. Nunuoidze – Georgian, V. Chaloyan – Armenian, R. Mollov – Turkish, A. Geng – Korean, N. Konrad – Chinese.

Since cultural studies is an applied philosophy, we view the Renaissance that took place in Central Asian culture as a dialectic of common and specific aspects. We will focus on the common aspects. The culture of this period developed according to the general laws of cultural development, i.e., it developed and functioned as a complex, open, and self-organizing system. Cultural development was nonlinear and nonequilibrium. It included two stages: the 10th-11th centuries, and then the 14th-15th centuries. And this is one of its characteristics. The culture of Maverounnahr in the first period, being an open system, experienced the impact of Arab influence first, and then Mongol.

Of course, one cannot paint the multifaceted process of one culture's influence on another with a single brush. The Arab influence was not entirely beneficial. It accelerated the development of feudal relations, stimulated the formation of a

centralized state, enriched spiritual culture with a new religious idea and language, introduced Greek philosophical thought, and created a new aesthetic and morality.

But in the fire of the Arab invasion, most of the treasures created by the peoples of Khorezm and Maveria Unnahr perished. Temples were destroyed, monuments of fiction and scientific literature in the Sogdian language were burned, irrigation structures were ruined, and people were driven into slavery.

Although Arab missionary work was imported to Central Asia, it may have become a catalyst for the subsequent synthesis of Greek scientific and philosophical thought, Persian history, and Central Asian medicine and mathematics. After all, of the 500 mathematicians of that time, 75% lived in Khorezm, Fergana, and Shash.

What did Genghis Khan's invasion bring? His vision of the total extermination of non-Mongols and the methods by which this vision was implemented led to a humanitarian and environmental catastrophe. Never before had history witnessed such ferocity. It was a central doctrine: ferocity was characteristic of the legal culture. Fellow tribesmen were punished with death for lying, desecrating water, stealing, and disobeying their elders.

When the Mongol yoke was broken, Amir Timur called on his people "to learn to value the position in life and the dignity of every person." This is why Mongol roots were not uprooted from life. Tolerance fostered a dialogue between cultures. Mongolian traditions were preserved in everyday life; even weddings were celebrated in the Mongolian style if one of the newlyweds belonged to the Mongolian culture.

Timur was called "the last Palladin of Islam," i.e., an adherent of the Muslim code. He revered Sharia, but the laws of Genghis Khan became the basis of jurisdiction. The tax system, currency, and military organization remained Mongolian.

The third general pattern of cultural development is its self-organization. This is especially evident in the analysis of spiritual culture. Under the Samanids, scholars were highly respected; they were even exempted from the obligation to kiss the ground before the sovereign. A monumental style was introduced into artistic culture. A magnificent Samanid mausoleum was built. The authorities favored not only scholars but also poets and writers, which later gave rise to the culture of Sufism and its central idea of the perfect man. Islam received its theoretical foundation as a religious movement in the 11th-10th centuries. Islam encourages the acquisition of good knowledge and its dissemination, considering this one of the most favorable paths to attaining Paradise. It also warns against ignorance and laziness, and forbids the unjustified concealment of knowledge, as it is the property of all Muslims. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught his companions: "He is not my follower who does not show respect to his elders, does not treat his juniors with mercy, and does not give scholars their due" (Ahmad), "Verily, scholars are the heirs of the prophets..." (Abu Dawud) (1).

The unusually rapid development of modern science and new technologies is undoubtedly due to the influence of Islamic civilization. It became the cradle of a number of scientific disciplines and fields, and also produced many renowned scientists. As C.H. Haskins states: "Muslims initiated the fundamental research that became the foundation of modern science. If you look at the 'Dictionary of Aeronautics' Technical Terms,' you'll find that 60% of the stars described there have Arabic names."(2)

For a long time, the works of early Muslim scholars remained the primary source of scientific knowledge, informing the entire Western world, and Renaissance Europe in particular. Many of these works formed the basis of the curricula of European universities.

The British statesman and diplomat Markaz Dufferin wrote: "Europe owes its rebirth from the darkness of the Middle Ages largely to Muslim science, Muslim art, and Muslim literature..." (3)

Muslim scholars explored the scientific knowledge that originated in India, China, and Ancient Greece, then translated, processed, systematized, and expanded it in various scientific centers of the Islamic world. From there, it was adopted by Eastern Europe. Furthermore, Muslim scholars became the founders of new scientific disciplines and fields, achieving outstanding results in all fields of technology, science, and intellectual pursuits.

The following prominent Muslim scholars made important contributions to this process:

- Al-Khwarizmi (780-850) – mathematician, founder of algebra and several branches of mathematics. According to some researchers, Al-Khwarizmi is the greatest mathematician of all time.
- Biruni (973-1048) – Central Asian polymath. His works cover mathematics, astronomy, physics, botany, geography, general geology, mineralogy, ethnography, history, and chronology. The German orientalist E. Sachau called Biruni "the greatest intellectual in human history."

- Ibn Rushd (Latin: Averroes, 1226-1198) Andalusian (Spanish) philosopher and physician, expert in Islamic law and mathematics.
- Ibn al-Nafis (1213-1188) A great scholar in the fields of medicine, Islamic law, logic, and Arabic philology. He was called the father of the sciences of his time.
- Amar ibn Ali al-Mawsili ibn Isa al-Kahhal (10th century) – a great Cairo scientist in the field of ophthalmology.
- Ibn al-Haytham (965-1039) – an outstanding mathematician, physicist, astronomer, and physician. He is considered one of the founders of the experimental method in science.
- Abu Baq Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi, Latinized name Rasis, Rhazes (865-925) – an Iranian polymath, physician, alchemist, and philosopher.
- Abdul-Latif al-Baghdad (1168-1231) and Abu'l-Qasim Khalaf ibn Abbas az-Zahrawi – outstanding scientists in the field of dentistry.
- Sharif al-Idrisi (1100-1165) – a geographer, traveler, and renowned world mapper.

These are just a few of the names of a large constellation of remarkable Muslim scholars who made an undeniable contribution to the development of science and technology. Many of them have been undeservedly forgotten, their contributions undervalued, or their works attributed to others.

From the late 11th to early 11th centuries, a specific religious orientation of the Muslim religion – Sufism – began to play a special role in the spiritual life of the peoples of Central Asia. The word "Sufism" comes from the Arabic "sufi," meaning "wearer of woolen clothes." "Suf" means wool, hence the hair shirt – a spongy fabric worn as a symbol of asceticism. According to Birkney, the word "Sufism" comes from the Greek "sophos," meaning "sage," which also signifies a person who has

embarked on the path of spiritual approach to the Almighty. This word translates from Arabic as "intelligent," "knowledgeable," or "believer." Islamic scholars believe that Sufism or tasawwuf (mysticism) is the general name for the teachings of Sufis—saints who attained the highest level of perfection in their knowledge of Allah. They saw the purpose of life as directed self-improvement toward attaining Truth or the Almighty.

Taking into account all of the above, we can conclude that Sufism is a mystical movement within Islam that originated in the 11th century in what is now Iran and Syria. It spread eastward to northern China and Indonesia, and westward through North Africa to Spain. According to other sources, the Sufism movement arose in the early 10th century in Arabia and gradually spread to other countries.

A number of natural questions arise:

1. Why did mystical teachings conquer the world in such a short time?

The fact is that mysticism in the Middle Ages was a progressive factor in the cultural life of the era.

2. What is the essence of Sufism?

The essence of Sufism boiled down to the assertion that everything in nature is the creation of the divine. Man is the most perfect creation of the Almighty and is called to strive for the union of the Soul with Truth (i.e., with God).

3. What is the appeal of mysticism? The fact is that mysticism was viewed as divine logic. It offered the opportunity to connect with Truth through revelation, vision.

4. Why did Sufism and the need for mystical knowledge arise?

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) led a very modest lifestyle, wore ordinary clothing, and interacted with the poor. Sufism, however, calls for asceticism, a solitary life, renunciation of the goods of this mortal world, and a preference for a way of life in the name of God. One of the main tenets of this teaching was the need for preachers to live solely by their own labor, while being pure and honest in all things.

Upon coming to power, Osman began to impose different values: trade, not morality, became the foundation of society. Luxury became the highest value. The people and the official clergy, who supported the government, began to hold different views on spirituality. It was then that wandering preachers appeared, teaching Muslims how to cleanse their souls from worldly filth and vanity. They called for asceticism. In many countries, Sufism emerged with condemnations of greed, cruelty, and social fraud.

The Sufi movement encountered fierce resistance from official Islamic leaders. For many Sufis, life ended tragically. Therefore, they hid their thoughts behind symbols or paid with terrible torture for speaking out frankly. For saying, "I am the truth," Hallaj was crucified, then beheaded, hung from the gate behind which he lectured, and then burned. He introduced the idea of human deification into Sufism, which reflected the humanism of the teaching. Azakir, who was beheaded and burned in public, introduced the idea of the manifestation of the true essence through its opposite. The Arakani threw his son's head to the door, and then hanged him.

Sufi Shibli (11th century) said: "There is no difference between me and Hallaj, yet I was considered mad, and I escaped." Hallaj's unmasking was his undoing. The Sufi motto became "the wise among the mad." They drowned many of their manuscripts in rivers or buried them in the ground. Only encrypted poetry remained. Their

commandments read: "Forget everything you have read. Destroy everything you have written."

The fundamental philosophical ideas of Sufism were already formulated by the 10th century by the Egyptian Zunun al-Mi'ri and the Baghdadian Muhasibi. They were systematized in the teachings of the Spaniard Ibn Arabi (15th century). In the 10th and 11th centuries, Sufi orders and brotherhoods began to emerge, with followers uniting around the teachings of one Sufi sheikh, where youth were introduced to wisdom, and monasteries were founded. In the 11th century, as a result of Ghazali's reformist activities, Orthodox Islam recognized Sufism, but its persecution continued. By the 14th century, there were more than 35 orders, which, while sharing a common theoretical foundation, differed in details and nuances.

In the late 9th and early 11th centuries, Sufism became widespread and developed in Central Asia thanks to the teachings of religious thinkers such as Hakim at-Termizi, Abu Khaliq Gijduvani, Akhmed Yasawi, Najmiddin Kubro, and others. These Sufi scholars developed a doctrine of attaining the comprehension of God, which could be achieved mystically through asceticism, self-improvement, and meditation. Sufism acquired new characteristics in the context of Central Asia. Here, Islam encountered and was enriched by Zoroastrian, Buddhist, and Christian traditions, as well as philosophical ideas. "Sufism, having come to Central Asia through contact with Buddhism," writes the leading scholar of Islam, I. Goldzier, "also adopted from this circle ideas, thoughts, and goals for the explanation of which the Neo-Platonic rudiments of Sufism prove insufficient. The disappearance of individuality, its dissolution into nothingness, harks back to the idea of nirvana." All this led to Islam's impact on the cultural life of the peoples of Central Asia being more mitigated and mediated by the culture that had developed there at the time of

the spread of Islam. Sufi teachings entailed a renunciation of earthly goods—living honestly, righteously, and earning one's bread through one's own labor. Sufism spread very quickly here and earned high respect in Muslim society. Drawing on the wisdom of the Quran and the Hadith, and relying on the principles of Sharia, they called for moral purity and the pursuit of knowledge, opposing stingy and vile people, ignorance, selfishness, debauchery, theft, and bribery, and defending the rights of the common people. Sufis were primarily from the common people and strove for honesty, integrity, generosity, and dedicated themselves to serving others, especially the needy and orphans. Sufism entered and enriched the spiritual life of the Muslim East and greatly influenced the development of science, culture, and literature among the peoples of Central Asia. Inspired by Sufism, poets and writers celebrated and promoted the ideas of humanism, justice, and the pursuit of knowledge in their works.

The founder of the early Sufism movement in Central Asia was Yusuf Hamadani. In Merv and Bukhara, he built schools and madrassas where he promoted Sufism, righteous labor, and humility before fate.

Abduhalik Gijduvani, a faithful follower of Hamadani's teachings, extolled honest labor in his works and called for creativity and mastery of various crafts, emphasizing that this is precisely what Allah demands. In the 11th-15th centuries, three main Sophian teachings emerged and developed in Central Asia: Yassaviyya, Kubravia, and Naqshbandiya. They created fertile ground for the emergence and development of many other Sufi teachings, groups, and brotherhoods.

The founder of the Yasavi Turkic branch of Sufi teaching was Khoja Akhmed Yasavi. Yasavi was educated by his grandfather, a sheikh, and in the Sufi school of Yusuf Hamadoni. From the age of 63, he led an ascetic lifestyle.

In his teachings, he combined the Islamic worldview with folk traditions. The main idea of his teaching, in addition to preaching Islam and Sharia, was the perfection of man through education along the path of justice. He condemned ignorance, greed, and the pursuit of wealth, and called for charity. In his poems, he exalted the Almighty, called for charity, urged young people to honest work, compassion, and integrity in their relationships with others, and exposed the base actions of people. His teachings are set forth in his work, "Divan Hikmatov," and are a unique monument of Turkic literature. Written in expressive vernacular, this work is artistic and didactic in nature.

Over the course of many centuries, the teachings of "Yassaviya" created an entire school of unique asceticism. It served as a spiritual source for Sufi ideas and spread among the peoples of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the Volga region, and Turkey. His book, "Divan Hikmatov," has been translated into many languages: English, French, Spanish, Italian, Greek, and others.

Another Sufi figure, Namiddin Kubro, founded his own school, "Kubraviya." He rejected asceticism, calling for hard work and the pursuit of life's blessings in order to achieve perfection. He urged people to love and defend their homeland, and he died with arms in hand during the Mongol invasion.

The Kubrawiyya teachings spread to Kharezm, Mawareunnahr, Afghanistan, Northern India, Turkey, Iran, and other countries.

One of the most influential representatives of Sufism was Bahauddin Naqshband. He was the founder of the Naqshbandiyya school and called on people to engage in righteous work. At the core of his teachings was a conscientious desire to live simply, modestly, and without excess. Naqshband set an example for his students through his work. He defined his life's credo with this couplet:

"Your soul must always be with God,
And your hand must always be at work."

The Naqshbandiyya teachings became widespread in many countries of the Middle East and Near East and were highly valued by Amir Temur, Jami, Navoi, and Babur.

The learned thinkers of Central Asia recognized the fact that a person, with the help of their mind, is capable of mastering any science and believed in great abilities. Humanity. Their works contain invaluable information about spiritual culture, traditions, and norms of intellectual, moral, aesthetic, physical, and labor-based education and training of young people.

Abu Rayhan Biruni believed that a young person's personality is formed through work and that only true labor fosters high human qualities, while the process of learning and acquiring knowledge is labor that requires much effort, time, and patience.

As a keen connoisseur of the child's soul, Ibn Sina created his own system of education, which emphasizes moral issues, the central part of which is the human calling to work and leave a positive legacy. Ibn Sina was interested in Sufi teachings and expressed his own assessment of Sufi philosophy. As a natural scientist, he sought to eliminate the barrier between God and nature. Ibn Sina highly valued morality and selflessness in Sufi activity. In his book "Instructions and Advice," which he wrote shortly before his death, he provided a scientific explanation for miracles. Sufis' abilities include healing through touch, clairvoyance, levitation, and tunnel vision. "Obsession and spiritual purity sharpen his concentration and give him the ability to become a mirror set before the Truth."

For fourteen centuries, the teachings of Sufism remained active, despite the fact that its ideas were used by different ideologists at different times. Sufis were drawn into jihad and popular uprisings; there were distortions of the teachings, prohibitions, and struggles against Sufism.

Despite all the difficulties, the idea of spiritual perfection embedded in Sufism had a tremendous influence on the development of science, literature, poetry, music, decorative arts, and architecture.

Thomas Arnold, studying the Quran and the ideas and teachings of the Sufis, said that "a sense of justice is one of the most beautiful ideals of Islam. In this religion, he discovered the same operative life principles spoken of in the Quran. And these principles are not mystical, "And a practical code of conduct for every day, applicable to the entire world..." (4)

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to note that the great scholars of Central Asia made an invaluable contribution to the development of global scientific and philosophical thought. Thanks to them, continuity in the development of science has been preserved. They currently occupy an important place in the chain of development of world culture.

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