

AL-FARABI'S PHILOSOPHY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract. This article is written to demonstrate how the philosopher Al-Farabi conceptually imagined the key features of an ideal governor of his time. His understanding of the concepts of leader, power, state linked to creating a happy society is discussed in paper.

In Al-Farabi's views, politics should be related to morality and ethics rather than to power. A basic political idea of al-Farabi to be applied in the present context is his fundamental idea of the ethical society. The idea of creating an ethical state is more central for al-Farabi than his theory construction. His concept of ethics means striving for true happiness by being a virtuous member of ethical society. Therefore, in his political philosophy, the core valuable idea is a moral principles and a process of implementing the ethics in real life rather than imagined and potential results. Instead, it is more rationalistic to create an ethical society, oriented to these ideals. Ethical societies are more resilient during political, economic and social crisis than unethical ones. If the state can guarantee the morality and ethics for citizens by laws or systems, the stability of political order would not be the outmost and central issue at all. Moreover, when citizens before anything agree on the nature of being good and bad, political conflicts rarely happen; then social harmony will become a reality more likely.

According to philosopher, for achieving the level of a rationalist happiness, the Governor must convince people to live a conscious life, by reasonably responding to their social environment. The ability to communicate well and direct people to those actions through which the common good is achieved is more essential.

Keywords: Al-Farabi, political, philosophy, public administration, Central Asia, society.

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала философ әл-Фарабидің идеалды басшының айрықша қасиеттерін концептуалды түрде қалай түсініп сипаттағанын көрсетуге арналған. Ғұлама бақытты қоғам құру мақсатын көздейтін басшы, билік, мемлекет басқару туралы түсініктерін кеңінен сипаттайды.

Әл-Фарабидің пікірінше, саясат билікпен емес, алдымен мораль мен этикамен тығыз байланысты. Бұл тұрғыдағы әл-Фараби саясатының негізгі өзегі — этикалық қоғам туралы іргелі идеясы болып табылады. Әл-Фараби үшін өз теориясын жүзеге асырудан гөрі этикалық мемлекет құру идеалы маңыздырақ. Оның этика тұжырымдамасы ізгі қоғамға айналу арқылы шынайы бақытқа ұмтылуды білдіреді. Сонымен, әл-Фарабидің саяси философиясы бойынша, басты назар қиялдағы мүмкін нәтижелерден гөрі этиканы жүзеге асырудың моралдық негіздері мен процесіне шоғырлану қажет. Ғалымның ойынша, бұл идеалдарға бағытталған этикалық қоғам құру өте маңызды қажеттілік. Этикалық қоғамдар саяси, экономикалық және әлеуметтік дағдарыстарға әдеп деңгейі төмен қоғамдарға қарағанда төзімдірек келеді. Егер мемлекет өз азаматтарының мораль мен этикаға сәйкестігін заңдар немесе жүйелер арқылы қамтамасыз ете алса, саяси биліктің тұрақтылығы мемлекеттің ең маңызды және орталық мәселесі болмас еді. Оның үстіне, барлық азаматтар ненің жақсы, ненің жаман екендігі туралы алдын-ала мәмілеге келген жағдайда, саяси қақтығыстар азайып, қоғамдық келісім шындыққа айналу ықтималы күшейеді. Философтың түсінігінде саясат билік ұғымынан гөрі, этикамен мен моральмен тығыз байланысты.

Философтың ойынша, рационалды бақыт пен парасаттылық деңгейіне жету үшін басқарушы тұлға көпшілікті саналы өмір сүруге көндіре отырып, әлеуметтік ортаға ақылмен жауап беруі тиіс. Ең бастысы, қарым-қатынас жасай білу және адамдарды ортақ игілікке жұмылдырып, қол жеткізетін қимылдарға бағыттау.

Түйін сөздер: Әл-Фараби, саясат, философия, мемлекеттік басқару, Орталық Азия, қоғам.

Аннотация. Данная статья призвана продемонстрировать концептуальное понимание философа Аль-Фараби в описании отличительных особенностей идеального правителя. В статье дается его интерпретация концепций лидера, власти, государства с точки зрения создания счастливого общества.

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По мнению Аль-Фараби, политика, прежде всего, должна рассматриваться с точки зрения морали и этики, а не власти. Базовая политическая концепция аль-Фараби применительно к современному контексту заключается в его фундаментальной идее об этическом обществе. Идея создания этического государства для аль-Фараби более центральна, чем развитие его теории. Его концепция этики означает стремление к истинному счастью через становление достойного члена добродетельного общества. Таким образом, согласно его политической философии, основная ценная идея — это моральные основания и процесс воплощения этики в реальной жизни, а не воображаемые, потенциальные результаты. Вместо этого, более рационалистично строить этическое общество, ориентированное на эти идеалы. Этические общества более устойчивы перед лицом политического, экономического и социального кризисов по сравнению с неэтичными. Если государство может гарантировать соответствие своих граждан принципам морали и этике через законы или системы, стабильность политической власти не была бы столь важным и центральным вопросом государства. Более того, когда все граждане, прежде всего, приходят к договоренности о том, что хорошо, а что плохо, политических конфликтов станет меньше. Таким образом, социальная гармония с большей вероятностью станет реальностью.

В интерпретации философа политика больше связана с этикой и моралью, чем с самой концепцией власти. По его мнению, чтобы достичь уровня рационального счастья, правитель должен убедить граждан жить осознанной жизнью и разумно реагировать на социальное окружение. Важнее умение коммуницировать и направлять людей на те действия, посредством которых достигается общее благо.

Ключевые слова: Аль-Фараби, политика, философия, государственное управление, Центральная Азия, общество.

Historical Introduction

Frederick Starr, a Western author and researcher of Central Asia, the homeland of Al-Farabi, claimed in his recent works that Central Asia for a very long time ago was deservedly considered as an economic and cultural center of Eurasia or even a wider old world. As he wrote in his prominent book titled "Lost Enlightenment: Central Asia's Golden Age from the Arab Conquest to Tamerlane" (2017. Alpina Publisher: 574 pages), "Maps focused on Europe or Asia depict Central Asia as a distant periphery...the satellite image presents this place as it has been since nearly two millennia: Central Asia is at the very center of Eurasia and is a hub of all kinds of communications. The region, which many persistently view as peripheral and backward, has been for centuries the center of politics and economics, as well as of science and philosophy in the whole continent"[1]. The book tells us the story of rise and fall of one of the most vibrant intellectual and cultural tradition centers in the Islamic world. The author posits that the "Muslim Renaissance" in the 9th-12th centuries related to Central Asia, where Al-Farabi emerged and produced his brilliant ideas during that controversial time.

Central Asia was, above all, a mix of the Turkic Persian and Arabic worlds, home of religions such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, and Islam. It is also the region that has given the world many technological innovations, the most important of which are advanced irrigation

systems; without them, farming and existence of a large population would not be possible in that region. The medieval Muslim dynasties, in which Al-Farabi lived, were a center of political interactions and cultural exchange. Arab, Persian, Turkic, Indian, Chinese, Christian, Greek cultures spread their political, religious, and philosophical teachings in Muslim East. Al-Farabi tried to respond to the deep political, philosophical, and social contradictions of his time.

Al-Farabi lived in a period of socio-political, cultural and ideological divisions during medieval Abbasid and Samanid dynasties. Al-Farabi contributed to the spread of free philosophical ideas in the Muslim East and tried to respond to the political and social crisis and questions of his time [2]. His erudition was in his courageous attempt to resolve the most controversial political and philosophical issues in that epoch. Thus, he laid the foundations of the social and political philosophy of the Arab-Muslim world. Later European and Arab scholars recognized his progressive influence and intellectual legacy which shows the political and social conditions of his time. Al-Farabi's innovation lies in digesting all the conflicting political views and bringing them into a common organic system philosophy.

The basic questions we are concerned about are as follows: What are the most preeminent characteristics of an ideal governor? What direction does a society head towards when a governor on the top does not have these characteristics? What underlies the current crisis management in states, cities, and societies? The great thinker

Abu Nasr al-Farabi asked these questions back in the Middle Ages. According to al-Farabi, the answer to these questions should be sought not in economy and politics, but much deeper – in ethical and moral sides of a society and the governor. Al-Farabi is convinced that the formation of ethical people should be the purpose of society, rulers, and education system. The next key question to answer is what can we learn from Al-Farabi today? What should new civil society look like? How to promote self-development of modern humanity?

Methods and Materials

The methodology of research is based on historical analysis and political philosophy, as well as comparative methods and principles of scientific knowledge and reliability, methods of qualitative research analysis in social sciences. During research process and designing of the paper the authors used different kinds of literature and resources. We tried to encompass the previous authors from Soviet, Kazakh, and foreign scholars who presented wider perspectives on political thoughts of Al-Farabi which somehow could be related to public administration. Primarily, structural basis of theoretical analysis articulated in this article was taken from the older publications of authors designed during their previous research works at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. Besides, the international publications from academic journals of Islamic Studies, were also considered and used at length.

Discussion and Results

As Al-Farabi posits a society composed of moral citizens is a virtuous society. "Al-Madinah al-Fadilah" (the Virtuous City) is an idealistic state system with the features of political and moral organization that ensures that the state can meet all the existing challenges. It is a perfect society based on the virtues in which the pursuit of knowledge and moral qualities such as prudence, courage, moderation, and justice prevail.

Al-Farabi is an author of "Civil Politics", "About Happiness", "Book on Civil Society", "Book on the Attitude of Benevolent City Residents" and other widely known political works. In these books the thinker broadly describes his understanding of the first leader, power, state management, and

creating a happy society in the above-mentioned works. According to the philosopher, a person who can lead a civil society should have common sense and deep insight. Because he/she is determined to find out the causes and effects of many things. This determination helps to regulate ways to get rid of suffering, to critically evaluate the possibility of achieving wealth, and serves a common goal.

Al-Farabi in his "Civil Politics" emphasizes that it is not personal qualities that strengthen the state and raise society, but their system and social orientation as well as their position on things happening there. The most special good of human being is mastered by intelligence. Through the activity of intelligence, purposefulness takes shape, ways to achieve the goal are identified, and means to achieve it are supplemented [3].

The whole personality of a human being, life skills and relations are the leading initiative and driving force of social order. In political life, the weight that falls on the soul and spiritual strength of the person who leads the state is more important and personal. Al-Farabi proposed some political requirements for citizens to achieve happiness:

- 1) complete fulfillment of obligations;
- 2) starting actions with faith that lead to the goal;
- 3) mobilizing the power of practical mind and the ability to start with the goal;
- 4) desire to reach the highest level of quality in social life;
- 5) improving relations between people.

An Ideal Governor

According to Al-Farabi, one can be a good governor based on the perfection of his/her personality, it is the supporting and driving force of political life. The goals of the governor, who intends to succeed in life and create favorable conditions for the city residents to live well are as follows:

- a) being able to appreciate the will of a subordinate;
- b) satisfying the needs of residents, giving them freedom;
- c) being able to restrain one's personal desires if possible, etc.

Al-Farabi emphasized that in order to succeed in administration, one should know who to imitate by paying attention to his/her words and thoughts when doing something or making a decision. Such a personal quality is

an inexhaustible ability and never-ending service. Its main guarantee is to keep the activity and good behavior [4]. Accustoming to a certain good action, improving a good habit is the art and example of improving a person. Also, it is recommended that the governor should be guided by morality in the art of management and should abide by rational scope and rules. According to Al-Farabi, a governor should have the following qualities: wisdom, great shrewdness, eloquence, good imagination, ability to lead a fight. In the event of a war, the ability to be a leader and manage state affairs is of great importance.

The governor combines various actions to achieve a goal, he/she shows that there is good and virtue for his people, and contributes to the strengthening of communication and relations. The governor has a habit of justice and benevolence in his behavior, and takes the happiness of residents as his life's business. The most respectable among the mayors are those who do not demand anything but respect the residents of the city. For example, when the governor gives them wealth, he/she does not ask them to pay for it, or does not ask them to give a pleasure, but only wishes for respect and esteem, both in word and deed. Governor only wants the people to remember his/her name and not forget it for a long time after his/her death. Though, Al-Farabi concludes that governor's main goal is not to be respected, get wealth, and enjoy it, but rather to spread good things that lead to happiness [5].

At the same time, the mayor should be guided by the qualities of wisdom, openness and intelligence, the ability to listen others' opinions and prove the correctness of thoughts in the art of governance. Then the governor's character and habits will rise to a highest professional level. A person who combines virtues and natural abilities, who knows how to bring laws and principles, could be a leader.

Al-Farabi calls the rule of the governor as a rule of law. The key goal in governance is to reach the truth, give charity to city residents, and do good deeds. The mayor teaches and coordinates such a good intention, desire, sincerity in action to each resident. In turn, such a leader unites people and country, protects the honor of citizen, leads the people to a happy life. This leader is dominated by noble virtue. Because

goodness in thought is the main condition for managing people [6]. In the opinion of the philosopher, there are two types of governance: one of them actually strengthens actions, behavior, and will that lead to happiness, and this is good governance. Cities and nations subject to such governance are good cities and nations.

The second type of governance reinforces actions and qualities in cities that achieve imaginary happiness that is not happiness in reality, and governance there will be the governance of ignorance. Al-Farabi advises the first leader to avoid the second type of management. Because this method leads the residents to a false, imaginary happiness. In his work "Achieving Happiness" the medieval scholar said that the governor's authority and ability are not the same. Success of future leaders will consist of the following processes: being wise, knowing laws, rules, and customs; being able to establish and implement order, making laws; mastering the art of management, smart using the power.

The first leader, according Al-Farabi, is the most respected and chosen person among people [7]. The leader is not limited to basic knowledge well-known to the general population. The first leader and his/her advisers should be citizens with good qualities and knowledge. Every citizen who has civil power must make an effort to meet the needs of society members. He wrote that a supreme ruler must have nine natural qualities. The leader should have a well-developed physique; good analytical skills; able to speak correctly and eloquently; be restrained from pleasure or wealth; inclined to truth; avoid obscene actions; be intolerant of injustice and oppression; and a brave man. The last and most important feature of leadership is the union with the supreme intelligence; then his/her every action will lead to happiness. Al-Farabi finds these qualities in an ideal leadership personality of the Prophet Muhammad [8].

Al-Farabi admits that possessors of those nine virtues are rare; he advocated the need to find a person with at least six or five qualities out of these nine traits. He concluded that if there is no one meets these requirements, in this case, two or more people having together of these qualities should rule the city. Again, his main concern is not power, but humanity and morality. Ethics is the key indicator of political unity in

al-Farabi's thought. Instead of a pragmatic position, he perceives morality as the basic standard in governance. Moreover, al-Farabi emphasizes the necessity of ethical principles in the ruler's personality [9].

An idealist concept functions as a decisive boundary of a particular thought or beyond a particular philosophy. It can be established as an important mentality of people in a city or a country. This philosophy can provide basic principles to which the people should hold fast. It is possible to create a public administration system based on Al-Farabi's practical political philosophy. In addition, Al-Farabi explains that education is essential in cultivating a skilled person who can achieve happiness, and this is the common interest of the inhabitants of the ideal city. This idea helps the current government to understand the importance of education in the frame of the national identity.

In order to achieve the level of a real rational being, the Governor must convince the inhabitants to live a conscious life, and to relate reasonably to their social reality. The ability to communicate well and direct people to those actions through which the good is achieved. A citizen in a virtuous city is a central value. Each citizen or person is important to the Governor, but not for his/her social position, because of being a value regardless of social status.

In terms of Al-Farabi's concept of ethics, it is necessary to strive for true happiness in order to become a virtuous city. Therefore, the full implementation of al-Farabi's political philosophy is not so much necessary for the country [10]. Instead, it is more significant to create an ethical society, oriented to these ideals. Ethical societies are more resilient in the face of political, economic and social problems than unethical societies. If the state can guarantee the morality and ethics of its citizens, the stability of political system will not be the first problem of the country. Moreover, when all citizens know good and bad with a priori knowledge, political conflict rarely occurs; thus, social harmony is more likely. In Al-Farabi's understanding, politics is closely related to ethics (morality) rather than power.

Sure, his concept of virtuous city is an idealistic model. In political reality the ignorant city is more realistic. There is a potential ability to improve governance through education and upbringing. Society could develop intellectual activity [11]. Not

only personal experiences of a person are crucial, but also the participation of state is also of great importance. An important role is played by the intellect, will and intentions. Improvement occurs through knowledge and conscious work. With the help of professional strength, a person masters art and craft. With the help of mental power, human beings use thinking and reasoning on what should be done or not be done.

By all of these ideas Al-Farabi aimed to establish a unity, an order and a justice in society [11]. He proposed two solutions: the first is the unity of ideas, the second is the unity of society. He affirmed the unity of truth despite the multitude of schools.

Conclusions

Al-Farabi's political philosophy can play a general role as the solid principle that a modern country should follow in politics. An important aspect of Al-Farabi's political activities in the modern era is his fundamental idea, that is, building an ethical society. Meanwhile, the basic problem of modern politics is concentrated on state power. The very idea of creating an ethical society is more important than the issue of power.

Today we need the idea of the happy society that Al-Farabi longed for, as well as the art of management, knowledge, and approach that he promoted. The image of the leader created by Al-Farabi could be a model. Today it is necessary to improve public administration and system of government, as well as to educate members of society to virtue and ethics. His philosophy based on the predominance of reason is needed.

The humanistic concept of the Al-Farabi of Society of Virtue is certainly compatible with the human-centered model of public administration recently promoted in Kazakhstan. According to him, the main goal of education is to teach a person to overcome negative qualities and promote the formation of positive qualities. In this regard, it should be noted that the "Doctrine of Personal and Professional Attributes of Civil Servants" developed by the Agency of Civil Servants of Kazakhstan partly presupposes the intellectual and ethical virtues highlighted by Abu Nasr Al-Farabi.

As philosopher said, politics is related to morality and ethics rather than to power. The relevance of Al-Farabi's political philosophy to the present context is his

fundamental idea of the ethical society. The important than his theory construction. idea of creating an ethical state is more

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