

PHILOSOPHY AND COGNITION

DOI 10.51582/interconf.7-8.10.2021.015

Nuriyeva Kamala Agagul

Ph.D. in philosophy sciences

ANAS, National Museum of Azerbaijan literature named after Nizami Ganjevi,

Republic of Azerbaijan

THE CONCEPT OF AN IDEAL SOCIETY IN NIZAMI GANJEVI'S POEM «ISKENDERNAME»

***Abstract.** Throughout history, the concept of an “ideal society” and the idea of an ideal state structure have been the focus of attention of philosophers and poets. One of the first who gave a description of a utopian society in the Muslim east was Abu Nasr al-Farabi. After him, the idea of an “ideal society” was presented in his five poems by the Azerbaijani poet-philosopher of the XII century, Nizami Ganjavi. Almost all the works of the great Azerbaijani thinker Nizami Ganjavi are imbued with the idea of an ideal society, an ideal state and an ideal ruler. But a special place it is occupied by his last poem from “Hamse” – “Iskendername”. This article gives a brief summary of Nizami's philosophical thoughts about an ideal society, about an ideal ruler, mainly based on the poem “Iskendername”.*

***Keywords:** ideal society, ideal state, Nizami Ganjavi, ideal human, “Iskendername, utopian society*

The idea of an ideal society is reflected in religious, philosophical, ethnographic, literary monuments, in particular in the Avesta, where the most important principle was the triad - “a good thought, a good word, a good deed.” The Avesta describes the eternal struggle of good against evil and the indispensable victory of good over evil; the creation of an ideal society appears as the result of the victory of good over evil. These key ideas of the Avesta in one form or another were reflected in the works of many philosophers and poets of antiquity, the Middle Ages and modern times.

A special place in the history of culture is occupied by the utopian teachings of the East and the West about the ideal state structure of a happy society. These

teachings have also achieved high development in the region of the countries of the Islamic East, in particular in the legacy of such thinkers as Farabi (IX century), Nizami (XII century), Nasireddin Tusi (XIII century). It is also characteristic that the idea of a social utopia as something unrealizable was criticized by Ibn Khaldun (XIV century). [1, p.66]. In the region of the culture of the Muslim East, Abu Nasir Farabi (870-950), known in the history of Islamic philosophy as a philosopher of Turkic origin, was one of the first who gave a description of a utopian society, a "virtuous city", developing an idea similar to Plato's teaching about the state.

In the XX century, the utopian doctrine of an ideal society in the homeland of Nizami, in Azerbaijan, was developed by the thinker Ahmed bey Aghaoglu in his work "The Country of Free People", which depicts an ideal society, an ideal state structure, its principles, as well as the conditions necessary for the existence of such a state.

Almost all the works of the great Azerbaijani thinker Nizami Ganjavi are imbued with the idea of an ideal society, an ideal state and an ideal ruler. In the poem "Treasury of Mysteries", the thinker calls on cruel rulers to justice and wisdom, in the poem "Leyli and Majnun" – calls society to humanism and justice, and in "Iskendername", further developing the idea of a just, happy state, he writes about "the country of the happy". Nizami gives a description of a utopian society against the background of the division of society into two opposite parts: one is the wild cannibals Yajuji and Majuji, who sweep everything in their path, turning it into ruins; the other is the inhabitants of the "paradise city", where everything delights Iskender (Alexander the great). Freedom reigns here. The inhabitants of this country are people with a pure soul and good deeds. The idea of a utopian state, an equal and free society, the equality of people, was praise in the works of Nizami long before the utopias of Saint Simon, Fourier and Campanella appeared.

Throughout his work, the poet reflected on the problem of social justice, and we can safely say that this idea is the golden feature of Nizami's work. The poet's poems, on the one hand, give artistic and aesthetic nutrition, on the other-enrich thinking. In other words, Nizami's works have not only artistic, but also deep philosophical content. The poems vividly pose the questions of man, humanity, and

his spirituality. According to the poet, “every individual is valuable because he is a piece of his nation: it is a blessing. To reject this blessing means to reject the nation” [2, p.284]. In order not to be in “blasphemy” and “wrong nation”, Nizami demands from the individual selflessness in the name of society. [3, p.207]. Seeing the dignity of a person in the work of society, the poet-philosopher teaches that social life can be regulated only through unity, mutual support and assistance of individuals. He gives his opinion on this issue in wise parables and poetic metaphors. “In order to benefit someone else” Nizami advises a person to “light a candle” [4, 222], if a person joins people and is useful to them, he will be happy both in this world and the afterlife.

One of the most important lines of Nizami's philosophy is the problem of social justice. This is not accidental; it follows from the extraordinary importance that the poet attached to the human factor. All his poems are devoted to this factor, he tried to prove that the path of an ideal society lies in social justice. His thoughts are expressed primarily in the idea of a just shah/ruler. Starting with the "The Treasury of Mysteries", this idea develops and reaches its peak in "Iskendername". In almost all of Nizami's poems, the main character is the images of the shah, the ruler. From the first poem to the last work, there are various types of characters of the ruler – just, tyrant, wise, etc.. The stories “Treasury of Mysteries” feature Firudin, Anushirvan, Sanjar, generalized characters called “Shah”: in “Khosrov and Shirin” - Khosrov, Shirin, Khosrov's father, Makhinbanu; in “Leyli and Majnun” both main characters are children of tribal leaders; in “Seven beauties” - the main character Bahram Shah; in “Iskendername” – Iskender (Alexander the great). All this indicates that the images of the Shah are not random in Nizami's work. He acts as the main figures of the poet's social worldview. The images of the shah created by the poet in the “The Treasury of Mysteries” are the initial versions of the subsequent image of the perfect shah. Nizami, improving both artistically and philosophically, increased the philosophical and cognitive load of his images, enriched the artistic symbolism. The characters of the perfect ruler created by Nizami - Khosrov, Bahram, Iskender - express different degrees of reality of the idea of a just ruler. At the end of the poem, we see all three heroes as perfect people, just rulers. But the path along which

they go to this perfection, and the level of perfection are not the same, are not equal. The young prince Khosrow, brought up by Shirin's love, becomes a perfect man and a shah. This line develops throughout the poem. Bahram is a prince who is prone to dissolute lifestyle at the beginning of the composition. Throughout the poem, the improvement of his personality under the influence of various means is described.

But the most ideal of the characters of the righteous Shah in Nizami's work is Iskander/Alexander. Alexander, who at first was a warrior, a commander, rises to a philosopher, even a prophet. The image of Alexander differs from the images of his other rulers. Nizami created him on another level as the bearer of an absolute ideal. However, it is absolutely not means that, this character isolated from the previous rulers, but represents the final stage of the evolution of Nizami's philosophical worldview. “Unlike the previous just rulers, Alexander is a conqueror, a philosopher, even a prophet. Nizami united force, wisdom, and divine power in one person”. [5, p.144]

One of the important points of Nizami's works is that the poet does not just express his opinion about an ideal ruler or an ideal society, does not show a ready-made ideal, but also represents the path to this ideal. If we consider that Nizami dedicated each of his works to the ruler, we can say that for Nizami his goal was also to show the rulers of his time the ways of improvement. When we accept Nizami's poems not as separate works, but as a whole, we clearly see that the poet begins with an ideal ruler and moves on to the idea of an ideal, utopian society. At the end of “Iqbalnama”, the second part of the poem “Iskandernama”, which consisting of two parts, there is a scene of the “paradise city”.

Covering various epics, stories, parables and wisdom "Iskendername", where history and legend are intertwined in likeness of Nizami, ends with a scene of this “paradise city”. Alexander, moving towards Greece after overcoming the Yajuji-Mejuji disaster, meets the legendary city on the way – a well-maintained, cheerful and prosperous place, like a paradise: no walls made of stone, no gates made of iron or wood. They do not have locks on the doors of shops, despite the fact that they are full... Alexander, who enters the city with several people, is impressed by the view he sees.

The people with a smiling face meets Alexander and those who are next to him with respect and pleasure. They bring him to the palace, show respect.

Thinking about the social structure of this “Paradise City”, Alexander said himself: “If I had met these people before, I would not absolutely have seen the need to travel the world from beginning to end. I would step aside and worship God. My custom would be the same as these rules, and my religion would not differ from this religion”. [6, p.591]

An ideal system sought by the “Prophet” Alexander is the social structure that philosopher Nizami, wishes to come true without a doubt.

The ideal shah Alexander, which is the pinnacle of the evolution of the character of the ruler, is complemented by the concept of an ideal society. The ideal society described by the poet is very small compared to the description of the ideal ruler in the poem “Iskendername”. In this ideal society, there is no ruler, society is governed by itself. It was a new look at the socio-political structure of the world. Throughout his work, Nizami dreamed, imagined a society in which order and harmony reigned. By leading Alexander to such a society, the poet reveals his utopian ideas. Raising Alexander to the level of a prophet, Nizami meets his hero with various groups of people. Through Alexander, he justifies some, saves others from tyrants, punishes others, etc. In other words, in each group that Alexander encounters, he has a specific mission. Then he meets a society where he is not needed either as a ruler, as a philosopher, or as a prophet. In a society where justice is ideally ensured, there is no need even for an ideal leader. From this point of view, the utopian society of Nizami differs from a number of concepts of the utopian state, the utopian society before and after him. In a society where property does not need protection, where the indicator of morality is at a high level, a peaceful attitude towards outsiders, the first indicator of its moral quality is that they are religious, that is, they serve God. The second superior qualities are honesty, the absence of lies:

We are a weak tribe, but also a religious one...

We don't have to deal with a crooked life,

We do not recognize any other way even the right one...

We never lie,
to us are also invisible crooked dreams. [6, p.588]

After getting acquainted with the life of these people, Alexander understands that his prophetic mission is over. This story presents a society in which the poet admires even the ruler. And Nizami has a specific formula: only worship Allah, observe the rules established by him, do not deviate from Sharia. In other words, the reason for the ideal society is that its people are ideally God-fearing. As God is at the height of all beings, the society that follows his commands is at the height of other societies.

People are forced to live in a form of society and this is due to two main reasons: 1) since each person needs another, then all people are in the same position; 2) the activity of people united in society in order to meet each other's needs serves as the foundation for achieving perfection.

So, the idea of a social utopia in different centuries and among different peoples, in the presence of a certain similarity, nevertheless differed in their own unique features, which is why they entered the history of culture.

References:

1. Кулизаде З. Социальная утопия Востока и добродетельный город Аль-Фараби // Аль-Фараби и развитие науки и культуры стран Востока: Тезисы докладов. Алма-Ата, 1975
2. Nizami Gəncəvi. Yeddi gözəl. Bakı – Yazıçı, - 1983. 355 səh.
3. Rəsulzadə M.Ə. Azərbaycan şairi Nizami – Bakı – Azərneşr, 1991, - 232 səh.
4. Nizami Gəncəvi. Xosov və Şirin. Bakı – Yazıçı, - 1983. 401 səh.
5. Əkrərov R. Nizami Gəncəvinin tibbi-fəlsəfi və sosial-ekoloji görüşləri – Bakı: Mütərcim, 2004. – 176 səh.
6. Nizami Gəncəvi. Isgəndərnamə. Bakı – Lider – 2004. 689 səh.