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THE RELIGIOUS-PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PERSONALITY–SOCIETY RELATIONSHIP IN THE TEACHINGS OF ABU NASR AL-FARABI

This article explores the religious-philosophical foundations of the relationship between personality and society in the teachings of Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, one of the most influential thinkers of the Islamic intellectual tradition. The research is situated within the context of contemporary society efforts to foster spiritual and cultural revival. The primary aim is to examine how Al-Farabi's philosophical anthropology and political thought can inform modern concepts of personal development and social harmony. The work investigates Al-Farabi's understanding of human nature, rationality, and ethical formation within the framework of his metaphysical, psychological, and political teachings. Special attention is given to the role of religion in his concept of the virtuous city, as a symbolic expression of philosophical truth, and the ethical interdependence between the individual and the community. Methodologically, the research employs a comparative-analytical approach that synthesizes classical Arabic sources, modern philosophical interpretations, and socio-cultural analysis relevant to contemporary world. Through a critical study of primary texts and scholarly commentaries, the research uncovers the underlying principles of Al-Farabi's philosophy that are applicable to present-day issues of nation-building and spiritual values. The findings demonstrate that Al-Farabi's integration of reason and revelation, personal ethics and collective well-being, offers a valuable model for shaping culturally rooted, morally grounded societies. This work contributes to the fields of Islamic philosophy, ethics, and political theory, and has practical implications for educational and ideological policy-making in modern society.

Keywords: Theology, Wajibul-Wujud, Ethical and Moral Values, Religion and Reason, Virtuous Society

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Ўбу Насыр әл-Фарабидің іліміндегі тұлға-қоғам қатынасының діни-философиялық негіздері

Бұл мақала исламдық интеллектуалдық дәстүрдің ең ықпалды ойшылдарының бірі Әбу Насыр әл-Фарабидің іліміндегі тұлға мен қоғам арасындағы қарым-қатынастың діни-философиялық негіздерін қарастырады. Зерттеу қазіргі қоғамда рухани және мәдени жаңғыруды жандандыруға бағытталған үдерістер аясында жүргізіледі. Зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты – әл-Фарабидің философиялық антропологиясы мен саяси ойлары қазіргі заманғы жеке тұлғаның дамуы мен қоғамдық үйлесімділік ұғымдарына ықпал ету деңгейіне талдау жасау. Бұл еңбекте әл-Фарабидің адам табиғаты, ақыл-парасаты және этикалық қалыптасуы жөніндегі көзқарастары оның метафизикалық, психологиялық және саяси ілімдері шеңберінде зерттеледі. Ерекше назар діннің философиялық ақиқаттың символдық көрінісі ретіндегі кемел (қайырымды) қала тұжырымындағы рөліне және жеке адам мен қоғам арасындағы этикалық өзара тәуелділікке аударылады. Зерттеу әдістемесі классикалық араб дереккөздері, заманауи философиялық интерпретациялар және қазіргі әлемге қатысты әлеуметтік-мәдени талдау элементтерін біріктіретін салыстырмалы-аналитикалық тәсілді қамтиды. Басты мәтіндер мен ғылыми түсіндірмелерді сын тұрғысынан зерделеу арқылы зерттеу әл-Фарабидің қазіргі замандағы интеллектуалды ұлт қалыптастыру және рухани құндылықтар мәселелеріне қатысты қолдануға болатын философиялық қағидаттарын ашады. Зерттеу нәтижелері әл-Фарабидің ақыл мен уахиды, жеке этика мен қоғамдық игілікті ұштастыруы мәдени тамыры терең, адамгершілікке негізделген қоғам қалыптастыруда маңызды үлгі бола алатынын көрсетеді. Бұл еңбек ислам философиясы, этикасы және саяси теориясы салаларына үлес қосып қана қоймай, сонымен қатар қазіргі қоғамдағы білім беру мен идеологиялық саясат жүргізу ісіне де нақты практикалық маңызы бар.

Түйін сөздер: теология, уәжіб әл-ужуд, этикалық және моральдық құндылықтар, дін мен ақыл, кемел қоғам

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Религиозно-философские основы взаимоотношений личности и общества в учении Абу Насра аль-Фараби

В данной статье рассматриваются религиозно-философские основы взаимоотношений личности и общества в учении Абу Насра Аль-Фараби, одного из самых влиятельных мыслителей исламской интеллектуальной традиции. Работа исследуется в контексте современных усилий общества, направленных на духовное и культурное возрождение. Основная цель исследования – проанализировать, каким образом философская антропология и политическая мысль аль-Фараби могут обогатить современные представления о личностном развитии и общественной гармонии. В исследовании изучается понимание аль-Фараби человеческой природы, рациональности и этического формирования в рамках его метафизических, психологических и политических учений. Особое внимание уделяется роли религии в его концепции добродетельного города как символического выражения философской истины, а также этической взаимозависимости между личностью и обществом. С методологической точки зрения работа опирается на сравнительно-аналитический подход, объединяющий классические арабские источники, современные философские интерпретации и социокультурный анализ, актуальный для современного мира. Через критический анализ первоисточников и научных комментариев исследование раскрывает основные принципы философии аль-Фараби, применимые к современным вопросам нациестроительства и духовных ценностей. Результаты показывают, что интеграция разума и откровения, личной этики и коллективного блага у аль-Фараби представляет собой цельную модель формирования культурно укоренённых и морально ориентированных обществ. Это исследование вносит вклад в развитие исламской философии, этики и политической теории, а также имеет практическое значение для разработки образовательной и идеологической политики в условиях современности.

Ключевые слова: теология, уаджиб аль-ваджуд, этические и моральные ценности, религия и разум, добродетельное общество

Introduction

One of the main directions of the national personnel training program in our country is the training of free-thinking, spiritually elevated, independent, and active personnel, along with instilling national ideology in their worldview. In this regard, the significance of national and universal values, spiritual heritage, is incomparable. As President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized: “In the current era, when the great power of our people is in full swing, it would be true to say that the foundation for a new awakening – the Third Renaissance – is being laid in Uzbekistan. Because today’s Uzbekistan is not yesterday’s Uzbekistan. Today’s people are not yesterday’s people” (Speech by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the solemn ceremony dedicated to the twenty-ninth anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020).

In this sense, along with studying advanced foreign experience for building a just society and a state governed by the rule of law, the wisdom and knowledge created by the masters of our national heritage are a factor that inspires the spirit and aspiration to

implement the conceptual idea “From National Revival to National Progress”.

From this point of view, the study and promotion of the rich spiritual heritage of Central Asia is the main issue for the younger generation and the general public. The thoughts and ideas of the incomparable thinker of the East, Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, are also unique, meaning that religion is necessary for governing society, and its main task is to serve society and human happiness. The scholar believes that different religions can exist in one state, among peoples, without opposing religions to each other. Al-Farabi does not place religion above the interests of people and the state; on the contrary, he says that religion helps in the implementation of the tasks of the state and society. As Md. Ali Azad (2023) notes in his work that the thinker promoted the integration of philosophy and religion for the greater benefit of society and the state.

Justification of the choice of the topic, goals and objectives

The increasing need in contemporary society to

restore moral and spiritual values determines the relevance of studying the religious-philosophical foundations of the relationship between personality and society in Abu Nasr Al-Farabi's teachings. With the focus on national identity, cultural revitalization, and moral leadership, Al-Farabi's philosophical legacy is a valuable source of knowledge. His integration of politics, ethics, and religion provides a timeless framework for comprehending the deep connection between societal well-being and individual moral growth. "The increasing need in contemporary society to restore moral and spiritual values determines the relevance of studying the religious-philosophical foundations of the relationship between personality and society in Abu Nasr Al-Farabi's teachings (Suleimenov & Nurgaliev, 2019).

Al-Farabi's ideas on the human being, society, and state are examined in this study in order to highlight how these concepts can support modern nation-building and spiritual-ethical education, including the main objectives as:

Exploring Al-Farabi's conception of the virtuous city and the ideal human being;

Examining the role of religion and reason in the development of ethical society;

Identifying the relevance of Al-Farabi's thought for modern educational and ideological practices. These frameworks provide a powerful tool for comprehending the deep connection between societal well-being and individual moral growth (Azzuhri, 2022).

This topic was chosen because it addresses fundamental philosophical issues while offering concrete insights for cultivating culturally grounded, ethically sound communities in the modern Islamic world where the authors consider the importance of Al-Farabi's perspective on the interplay between religion and politics and evaluate his philosophical contributions to the advancement of both individual spirituality and societal well-being (Steiris, Nuryшева, Konayeva, 2019).

Scientific Research Methodology

Based on a comparative-analytical methodology, this study searches at Abu Nasr Al-Farabi's teachings on the religious and the philosophical basis of the personality-society relationship. The study includes a thorough examination of Al-Farabi's original classical Arabic writings, particularly "The Virtuous City," "Attainment of Happiness," and "Uyūn al-Masā'il," as well as current academic interpretations in Islamic political theory and phi-

losophy. A historical-contextual approach is used to situate Al-Farabi's concepts within the broader development of Islamic thought and medieval philosophy. Additionally, socio-cultural analysis is used to assess how well Al-Farabi's theories apply to current problems, especially when it comes to spiritual and cultural revival. Together, textual hermeneutics, thematic categorization, and critical reading of sources form the methodological framework that reveals the ethical and logical framework of Al-Farabi's ideal society. In Al-Farabi's philosophy, the synthesis of classical and modern viewpoints enables a nuanced understanding of the relationship between individual growth and societal well-being, offering useful insights for current discourses on education, ideology, and nation-building.

Results and discussion

Within Al-Farabi's intellectual legacy, particular attention is given to themes of individual growth, society, and the relationship between the person and the collective. When examining the classification of his works, it becomes evident that his insights into political science – referred to as "the science of the city" or "city administration," known in Arabic as 'ilm al-madani – alongside his contributions to jurisprudence (fiqh) and Islamic theology ('ilm al-kalām), were notably advanced for his era. His philosophical doctrine is therefore marked by a rational approach, coherent argumentation, and logical consistency in addressing social, ethical, and political questions.

Despite the intellectual constraints of the medieval period, Al-Farabi formulated a comprehensive theory regarding the emergence of human society, its fundamental nature, and its intended purpose. He also articulated a structured and scientifically grounded vision of how states should be governed. He rejected the rigid, one-sided views of his time on the emergence and development of human communities and society, revealing the natural and social reasons for the emergence of society. "Every person is created by nature in such a way that he needs many things to live and achieve the highest level of maturity, he cannot acquire such things by himself, he needs a community of people to possess them," he writes in his work "The Virtuous City" (Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, 1993: 186).

According to Al-Farabi, urban society represents the most developed and refined form of social organization. In his writings, the term "city" is frequently employed to signify not only a physical

settlement but also broader concepts such as “society” or even the “state.” He argues that if the ultimate aim of human existence is the attainment of happiness and well-being, then this ideal can only be fulfilled within and through the framework of a functioning society. To achieve happiness, a person must achieve perfection, society must provide them with all possible assistance in this regard, in other words, society must create sufficient conditions for achieving humanity’s highest and ultimate goal (Suleymenov, Kassymbayev, 2020).

In order to attain this elevated condition, an individual must possess education, moral refinement, respect for others, compassion, and a strong sense of justice. Based on this understanding, Al-Farabi presents profound and enduring ideas concerning the cultivation of both society and the individual, underscoring their importance and the characteristics of a truly advanced community. In particular, in his “Treatise on the Ways to Achieve Happiness,” he presents the following considerations: “For the inhabitants of city-states to achieve happiness in both worlds, they must master three types of virtues and applied arts (crafts). In particular, theoretical qualities (Fazoili nazariya); qualities in thinking, that is, thinking (Fazoili fikriya)”; moral qualities (Fazoili xulqiya); applied arts (Sinoati amaliya);

Theoretical qualities are knowledge that indicates what existing things are, and they consist of the following: Initial knowledge, the origin of which is unknown to a person, and knowledge that people acquire through thinking, education, study, and research (Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, 1973: 277).

According to Al-Farabi, influence and reaction in society are the most powerful factors determining interpersonal relations. In other words, in society, the relationships between people, their actions, are of paramount importance and strongly influence others.

As Al-Farabi writes in his work “Fundamentals of Matters” the soul is the primary essence – the substance, which is the true nature of man. However, the soul is distributed to the organs of bodies, and the One who gives form to living beings, the Creator, bestows it (the soul) upon the formed bodies. The form that receives the soul is the body, which is the material essence – substance. It is called a body. The nafs (soul), located in one of the parts of the body, more precisely within the heart, is the first receiver of the soul. Plato also confirms that the soul exists both before and after the body, and the soul does not exist before the body. Nafs (soul) does not move from one body to another (i.e., supporters

of the doctrine of tanosuh) as the consistence in the study of Imanbayeva, Zh., Kuranbek, A. and Ryskiyeva, A. (2020) takes into consideration the notion that the soul is a part of only one body and the idea of opposition to beliefs (tanasukh).

After the death of the body, the soul either enjoys or suffers. Such different states of souls depend on how their possessor lived in this world. Necessity and justice demand this. This is like how a person who keeps their body clean maintains good health and avoids various ailments. However, unfortunately, many people who are addicted to materialism pay attention to the cleanliness of their bodies but disregard the pollution of their souls. The true essence of the *Vajib al-Wujud* is not similar to the essence of bodies. It cannot be compared to existence, because the definition of existence is related to “thing,” and “thing” is related to the definition of a body. Regarding the obligation of existence, one can only say that its existence is due to its necessity. *Vajib al-wujud* has no gender, species differences, definition, or proof. On the contrary, it is proof of all existence. He is eternal and eternal in His essence, He is free from nonexistence, He is not knowing. It cannot not exist, it has no need for anything in its eternal existence, it has no need to transition from one state to another (Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, 1987: 231).

The First Existent is not contingent upon anything external; it is indivisible and absolutely one. Concepts such as quantity, number, time, and space—which are properties of material things—do not apply to Him, as He does not possess a physical form. In this respect, He is entirely unique, and His existence is self-sufficient, relying on nothing outside of Himself. Its true essence is free from the concepts of substance, form, sex, variety, and species. There is no contradiction to it. It itself is purity, purity. He is known by pure reason, and He is unique in that all of this is embodied in Him. He is the Owner of Wisdom, the Ever-Living, the Eternal. He possesses inexhaustible power and will. It possesses the highest degree of beauty, grandeur, and perfection. Inexhaustible joy and happiness are in his true nature. He is the first lover and the first beloved (Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, 1987: 232).

Everything that exists is from Him, and everything that exists has His seal, and therefore they exist. All existence comes from Him in a certain order, which testifies to His existence. Every existing thing, receiving existence from Him, forms separate unified levels. The First Existence did not create things in existence according to our desires and needs, because it needs nothing and no one. At

the same time, nothing that He brings into existence emerges randomly or without intention. All things depend on His will and cannot exist independently of it. The Necessary Being (Wājib al-Wujūd) has created a hierarchy of blessings and levels of existence as a way of manifesting or expressing Himself. Therefore, true knowledge lies in understanding the causes behind the existence of things.

The knowledge of the Vojib al-Wujud about existing things is not temporary, but eternal. The existence of all beings in the universe is due to Him. Because of it, all beings cannot be non-existent. He is the first Musabbib – Creator, Cause, and the cause of other causes as well. The reason for the existence of His creations is not in them themselves, but He Himself is the cause of His existence. There is no intermediary between Him and His creation. What He first created can be the cause of the existence of other things. He is the sole originator of His own actions, and these actions are free from any imperfection. All acts emanate from within Him, as He is their ultimate and flawless source.

The first emanation from the First Existant is the First Intellect, which is singular in number. Although this first creation is subject to change, and from it multiplicity arises, it is considered a contingent being in its essence. However, due to its eternal nature and self-awareness—its knowledge of its own essence and eternal existence—it attains the status of a necessary existent in a derivative sense. The multiplicity existing in the primary intellect is not eternal, because the possibility of its existence comes from the primary intellect, and from the Eternity it receives a certain type of existence.

Because the primary intellect is from the First Existant and because it knows the Eternity, another, active intellect occurs, and it also contains multiplicity, as mentioned above. Due to the fact that the first intellect – the possible being – exists and knows the origin, a higher celestial sphere with a specific substance and form, a soul, has arisen. The higher celestial sphere and its form create two more things – another celestial sphere and the living beings within it. In his work “Arou ahli madinatul-fozila” (“Thoughts of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City”), Al-Farabi discusses the ways to achieve spiritual perfection in this dream (utopian) city, analysing the “virtuous society” based on Al-Farabi’s idea. This well reveals the city (state/society) as a social structure and its important function in ensuring human happiness (Azerbaiyev & Nurmanbetova, 2016).

“The virtuous must also know what the city of

virtuous people, its inhabitants, and the happiness that their hearts attain are. They also need to know what will happen to the souls of virtuous cities and their inhabitants in the afterlife after their death, how some will face misfortune and disaster, while others will perish, and what the inhabitants of virtuous cities will achieve and be protected from in the afterlife.

All this can be learned in two ways: firstly, if the above-mentioned phenomena are embedded in the human heart and soul as they actually exist, then in the hearts of others, this knowledge arises on the basis of comparison or imitation, and some people acquire this knowledge in their hearts because they themselves feel these things” (Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, 1993: 167).

According to Al-Farabi, religious belief consists not only of religious worship and knowledge of religious doctrines (in reality, these also require deep knowledge), but also that virtuous people, that is, those striving for spiritual perfection, must know things that exist outside of materiality (spiritual beings, angels, concepts related to justice, conscience, enlightenment, and spirituality), their qualities, as well as their levels up to the Active Intellect and the qualities of each of them. Virtuous (spiritually perfect) people must also know how man was created, the properties of the soul (which entered his body), how the Active Intellect illuminated the human soul, how, thanks to this illuminated light, the first concepts (i.e., the basic concepts that distinguish humans from animals) appeared in man (such as justice, mercy, conscience, honor, living honestly, purely), what it means to obey the will of Allah and in what it is (Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, 1993: 167). Here we see that Al-Farabi thought in the sciences of theology and metaphysics in the manner of Mu’tazilite scholars. That is, all people are commanded to do good by Allah. However, while committing sinful acts or abstaining from evil deeds, mastering the sciences, or becoming a bribe-taker, thief, or adulterer depends on a person’s will and desire, and acts freely, in other places, Al-Farabi shows that the erroneous views characteristic of the inhabitants of cities of misguided, profit-seeking, and ignorant people depend on how to use this freedom. During Al-Farabi’s time and later, in the science of Sharia – fiqh and kalam, in the science of theology, based on the Quran and hadiths, actions leading to true happiness and religious rulings were determined about the mistakes of those who went astray thinking that sins are also happiness.

The wise men of the city of virtues learn these

things through proof or through intuition. People who trust and follow the wise learn these things just as the wise know them. Some learn these things by imitating others' perceptions. Such people, by nature or by habit, do not possess the ability to understand spiritual knowledge as it actually exists. Both of these concepts are sources of knowledge, but the knowledge of the wise is certainly the best. People who know things and phenomena through imitation through others' imaginations also know them to varying degrees. The knowledge of some of them about an object or phenomenon is similar or close to that object or phenomenon itself. The knowledge of others is far removed from that thing or phenomenon. Some people's knowledge is quite far from that thing or phenomenon, others' knowledge is very far from that thing (or phenomenon or quality), and still others' knowledge is infinitely far from the thing, phenomenon (or quality).

Every people's or city's population's perceptions of objects and phenomena are familiar to them. Even in the most popular (widespread) perceptions of certain creatures among some peoples, there are varying degrees of difference. Because each nation understands and reflects that thing or phenomenon in its own way. Therefore, although the different peoples of virtuous cities believe in one (the True God) and strive for one happiness and one goal (for example, to be worthy of paradise in the afterlife), their religions may be different.

Once these (common to different peoples) creatures are known with appropriate evidence, there will be no room for disputes about these creatures, no disputes based on false wisdom, no disputes arising from not understanding the true nature of a thing and having a false understanding of it (Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, 1993: 168).

In his work "The Virtuous City," Al-Farabi again criticizes the erroneous views of the inhabitants of ignorant and misguided cities. We call cities whose citizens' beliefs are based on incorrect worldviews ignorant or misguided cities. Some of the inhabitants of such a city of misguided people think this way: some creatures are opposed to each other and strive to destroy each other. Each of these creatures possesses a hidden power under living conditions, through which it protects itself from opposing creatures and preserves its own species from extinction. In the conditions of existence, it also possesses such power by means of which it eliminates what is against it and creates in its place a being similar to itself. Ultimately, the human being possesses the unique capacity to utilize various

resources in order to continually create favorable living conditions.

Many living beings, by virtue of their innate abilities, are able to overcome challenges posed by adversaries. In this way, each creature in the universe strives to enhance its own conditions of life, often through competition with or the elimination of other beings.

In this work ("Arou ahli madinatul-fozila"), Al-Farabi deeply reveals one of the negative characteristics of bourgeois society in the past, his time, and the future – the essence of individualism.

It seems to us that all beings in the universe are created only to improve their living conditions, to eliminate all other beings that do not benefit them but harm them, only to ensure their own better existence. We see many animals in life who attack many animals, attacking them to harm and destroy them even if it doesn't bring them proper benefit. As if each of them, for the sake of his own existence in the world, is harmed by the existence of other creatures, as if the very existence of this animal is harmful to him, we encounter animals that naturally strive to destroy others. Even if a creature does not intend to destroy other creatures, it tries to exploit them for its own benefit. Some species have similar relationships with other species. Even beings of the same species have such relationships with each other. These creatures are created in such a way that they constantly fight against each other and are hostile to one another. The strongest ones are more perfectly structured than the others. The victors also try to destroy each other, as if other beings are imperfect, as if their existence is harmful to them, or as if others were created only to serve them (like slaves), all of them try to exploit each other (Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, 1993: 170).

Al-Farabi writes that most people think that there is no order or consistency in these phenomena, that there are no different levels of beings (in these behaviors); they think that various characteristics of these beings manifest chaotically, that they do not live as they know them. Such behaviors and characteristics of many creatures we have observed and known to us are manifested (for certain reasons).

The relationship between the body and the soul (nafs), and the intellectual perfection of man can be explained, based on Al-Farabi's profound vision of the highest intellectual and spiritual capacities, which he regards as the very essence of human nature (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2022). According to him, human perfection does not lie in physical desires or in the sensory faculties shared

with animals, but rather in the cultivation of the intellect and spirit, which truly define humanity. Al-Farabi notes, "Every animal possesses a body, sensory faculties, and the capacity to perceive material objects; through these faculties, animals seek to preserve the well-being of their bodies and sensations." This observation underscores the distinction between animal and human natures, emphasizing that human excellence is rooted in rational and spiritual development: "but humans have a desire to know the reasons for the existence of sensually perceived things (why, for what purpose) and to know the causes of all things and phenomena on Earth. An animal does not have such an aspiration" (Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, 1993: 57).

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that Al-Farabi's worldview is free from religious superstition and is grounded in a profound understanding of freedom of thought and belief. He regarded Islam and the Qur'an not merely as religious texts, but as foundational sources of ethical guidance and intellectual development (Hosseinienskandian & Rajabnezhad-

ian, 2021; Hafizah & Kharisman, 2024). Al-Farabi emphasized the harmonization of reason and revelation, highlighting that true religion supports the rational and moral advancement of society rather than obstructing it. He opposed those who misused religious doctrines for personal gain or to perpetuate ignorance and dogmatism.

For Al-Farabi, the cultivation of the human intellect and soul was paramount, and he believed that individuals are ennobled through the pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, and virtue. He asserted that human perfection lies in the development of rational faculties and moral character, both of which are essential for achieving individual happiness and contributing to a virtuous society. His philosophical system presents a holistic model in which personal growth and societal well-being are interdependent.

Thus, Al-Farabi's teachings remain profoundly relevant to contemporary efforts toward ethical nation-building, intercultural dialogue, and the creation of spiritually enriched, intellectually vibrant communities. His legacy serves as an enduring guide for integrating moral values and rational inquiry in the development of just and enlightened societies.

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