THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE VIEWS OF ANCIENT EASTERN AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Annotation: This study aims to analyze the philosophical, moral, and political foundations of the ideas of social responsibility advanced by ancient Eastern and Western philosophers. In Eastern philosophy, issues of legislation are emphasized, and the term "responsibility" first appears in the Avesta, the works of the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius, for example, approach these concepts from a distinctly moral perspective. In contrast, Western philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle conceptualize social responsibility within the framework of civic duty, moral choice, and individual freedom. This study compares the approaches of these two philosophical schools, highlighting the role of responsibility in ensuring social order, stability, progress, and harmony. It also examines the influence of ancient perspectives on contemporary social life and their significance in the upbringing of the younger generation. Ultimately, the study reveals the social foundations of each individual's conscious participation in societal development, as well as the basis for their moral and spiritual growth.

Keywords: social responsibility, ancient philosophers, Eastern and Western philosophy, societal progress, morality, civic duty, freedom, individual and society.

Introduction

An individual's responsibility to society can be exercised on an individual, group, or collective level. This responsibility is manifested through the acceptance of a social goal within the framework of a social project. Effective interaction can only be achieved when individuals who begin to act together are able to assess the level of mutual harmony and understand who their interlocutor is. In such activity, participants strive to comprehend each other's inner world— emotions, motives behind behaviors, and attitudes toward significant values. In this process, responsibility is closely linked to care and concern for others. Furthermore, many thinkers place high value on the association of responsibility with respect, emphasizing that it implies accepting a person as they are. Importantly, this form of responsibility should not be confused with fear or obedience.

Literature Review and Methodology

The term responsibility also appears in the Avesta[1], the sacred text of Zoroastrianism, dating back to the 7th–3rd centuries BCE. In addition to this, the text contains reflections on human rights, responsibility, and personal accountability. Several examples from the Avesta illustrate this notion: for instance, if an individual fails to repay a debt on time, he is considered equivalent to someone who breaks into another person's home at night to steal. Moreover, the Avesta prohibits marriage between close relatives, emphasizing the importance of ensuring the birth of a healthy and unblemished generation. If a man is capable of fathering children but refuses to assume familial responsibility, specific punishments are prescribed such as branding his forehead or chaining his waist reflecting the severe societal stance on neglecting personal and familial obligations.

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[1] М.Исҳоқов.Авесто таржимаси.-Тошкент:"Шарқ",2001.-Б.17.

In Eastern philosophy, legal issues also hold particular significance. While many philosophers within this tradition supported concepts related to legal and social responsibility, there were also thinkers who rejected such views. One of the central concerns in Eastern philosophical discourse was the complex relationship between the ruler and the people. For example, the *Avesta*—the sacred text of Zoroastrianism—contains legal foundations for processes involving crime and punishment, ethics, family relations, marriage, property ownership, and financial matters. Acts such as adultery between spouses or cohabitation outside of marriage were considered violations of family norms and were subject to severe penalties.

Additionally, Chapters 13 and 14 of the Vendidad provide detailed regulations on water conservation, its proper use, and protection. It states that crops may be irrigated twice a day, that each farmer is entitled to draw water daily from a canal the width and depth of a spade, and that priests held the authority to oversee water distribution and prevent its pollution. On the matter of spirituality, the Avesta emphasizes not only the necessity of moral respect but also the importance of treating plants and animals with dignity. Furthermore, it underscores that humanity bears a shared responsibility toward all living beings and vegetation. Any individual who violated these directives was subjected to mandatory labor as a form of legal punishment[2].

In the Confucian doctrine that emerged in China during the 6th–5th centuries BCE, several concepts are closely linked to social responsibility. For instance, the notion of humaneness or benevolence is referred to as jen, while the moral norms governing society are denoted by the term li, which encompasses rituals, customs, and appropriate social conduct. These foundational principles in Confucianism underscore the ethical duties of individuals toward one another and the broader society, forming a moral framework aimed at cultivating harmony, respect, and responsible behavior within the social order[3]. In his teachings, Confucius emphasized the importance of demonstrating respect toward elders, particularly among the youth, as a fundamental principle of humaneness. He asserted that loyalty to the ruler was not only a virtue but also a source of peace and stability for the state. According to Confucian thought, when an individual develops a sense of social responsibility, it enables them to live righteously and thereby attain moral and spiritual perfection. In this doctrine, responsibility or more specifically, social responsibilityis regarded as a moral obligation undertaken by a virtuous person to realize noble intentions and righteous actions.

The sense of social responsibility, as conceptualized by Confucius, is not associated with seeking personal gain or advantage from others or society. Rather, it implies a deep understanding of refined knowledge and superior moral standards, and the ability to apply these principles appropriately. Therefore, he declares: "The noble man is concerned with duty; the petty man is concerned with gain." Adhering to these standards is described as the hallmark of a truly noble and responsible individual[4].

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Ijtimoiy mas'uliyat haqidagi qarashlar qadimgi yunon faylasufi Platonning "Qonun" asarida aks ettirilgan bo'lib, unda ta'lim yoshlar mas'uliyatining asosiy tarkibiy qismi sifatida katta rol o'ynaydi va bu jarayonda o'yin nazariyasining dolzarbligi ham e'tirof etiladi. Bu asarda Aflotun

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[2] Сулаймонова Ф. Шарқ ва Ғарб. –Т.: "Ўзбекистон", 1997 . –Б.26

[3] Q.Nazarov.Falsafa asoslari.-Toshkent:O'zbekiston faylasuflari milliy jamiyati,2018.-34 b

[4] О.Жўраев.Конфутсий Ҳикматлар.- Т.: Алишер Навоий номидаги Ўзбекистон Миллий кутубхонаси нашриёти, 2010 . –Б.13

Afinalik, Qliniy, Megill, suhbatiorqali ijtimoiy jamiyatning bir qancha murakkab jihatlarini tushuntirib o'tmoqchi bo'lgan.Ushbu ma'lumotlar haqida asardagi qahramonlardan biri Afinalik izoh keltirgan: "Men shuni aytib tasdiqlayman, hamki, qanday bo'lmasin biror ishda yetuk bo'lishni istagan odam bolalik o'yinlarida yo yerga ishlov berish yohud o'yinchoq uylarni qurishi kerak. Murabbiy ularning har biriga haqiqiysiga o'xshagn mo'jaz, kichkina asbob-uskunaga berish zarur. Xuddi shunga o'xshab ularga zaruriy bilimlarning ibtidosini, boshlanishini o'rgatsin, masalan binokorga- o'lchashlar va gaz cho'pdan foydalanishni, jangchiga- suvoriylikni o'rgatsin, bularning hammasi o'yin sifatida bo'lsin. Bolalar keyinchalik qaysi mashg'ulot bo'yicha kamol topishlari zarur bo'lsa o'shanga yo'naltirishga harakat qilsin.Bola ulg'ayib nimaning bilimdoni bo'lishi va nimada kamolotga erishish zarur bo'lsa o'shanga mehr- muhabbat uyg'otuvchi yetarli tarbiyani, bolaga ilm o'rgatishda eng muhim omil, deb hisoblaymiz.

The concept of social responsibility is reflected in the work *Laws* by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, in which education is portrayed as a fundamental component of instilling responsibility in youth. Notably, the text acknowledges the relevance of play theory in the educational process. Through a dialogue involving the characters the Athenian, Clinias, and Megillus Plato seeks to elucidate various complex aspects of social organization[5].

One of the characters, the Athenian, offers a significant commentary on this subject: "I affirm that if anyone wishes to become truly skilled in any task, he must begin with childhood play be it in working the land or building toy houses. The educator should provide each child with small tools resembling the real ones. Similarly, they should be taught the rudiments of necessary knowledge in a playful manner: for example, teaching a future builder about measurements and the use of reeds, and a future warrior about horsemanship. All of this should take place in the form of games. Children should gradually be directed toward the activity in which they are to excel later in life. We believe that the most critical factor in educating a child is to awaken love and devotion toward the field of knowledge and excellence in which they are to grow[6].

Freedom is a crucial factor in the development of an individual's ability to make autonomous choices and actions. Free will is the essence of the manifestation of such freedom. Thinkers of the ancient world examined various dimensions of responsibility. For instance, the ancient philosopher Plato clearly articulated that a person is a conscious and voluntary creator of their actions and, therefore, must feel accountable for them. He recognized that humans possess the capacity for free choice, which implies the necessity of accepting responsibility for one's decisions and behaviors.

Moreover, Plato viewed the roots of responsibility as embedded in interpersonal relationships—he believed that responsibility imposes certain obligations on individuals ln relation to others, and the fulfillment of these obligations defines their moral accountability. In his teachings, the subjective aspect of responsibility is particularly emphasized. It is widely acknowledged that responsibility includes both personal and legal dimensions. This notion was well understood not only by the ancient Greeks but also remains relevant today. Despite our daily encounters with questions of responsibility, determining who is responsible and for what is not always straightforward.

Aristotle, possibly influenced by the language used in the Athenian courts, explores the concept of responsibility in relation to praise and blame. In his works, he introduces the notion of hekon (acting voluntarily) as a decisive criterion: whether a person's actions were performed voluntarily

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[5] Афлотун.Қонунлар. –Т .: "Янги аср авлоди",2002.-Б.45

[6] Афлотун.Қонунлар. –Т .: "Янги аср авлоди",2002. –В.30

or not. Aristotle examines how and under what conditions individuals may be praised or blamed for their actions or character, analyzing the usage of such terms to clarify the boundaries of moral and legal responsibility [7].

Aristotle's views also share notable similarities with those of other philosophers, particularly in his understanding of freedom as a necessary condition for responsibility. He interprets responsibility as an expression of freedom, particularly through the concept of autonomy. An individual must have the right and the capacity to make decisions and act in accordance with personal reasoning; however, they are also obliged to bear full responsibility for the outcomes of their choices and are not entitled to shift the negative consequences of their actions onto others. In Aristotle's central philosophical views, ethics and politics are defined as domains of action based on human capacity for free decision-making. Nonetheless, he goes beyond the traditional discourse on the relationship between freedom and responsibility, emphasizing that virtue is, above all, a person's attitude toward their obligations and their conscientious fulfillment of duty.

Aristotle's doctrine of voluntary actions is of particular philosophical interest. Although he does not explicitly employ a specific term equivalent to the modern concept of "responsibility," his analysis of voluntariness and culpability reveals a comprehensive phenomenology of responsibility. Through these discussions, Aristotle lays the groundwork for understanding when and why individuals may be held accountable for their actions[8].

According to Aristotle, a person possesses the ability to perform both noble and shameful acts, and their behavior is determined by their character. Consequently, individuals may either be honored or punished by the court depending on their actions. In other words, responsibility implies an awareness of the conditions under which one acts and the expectations placed upon them. However, Aristotle also emphasizes that in certain cases, ignorance can be deemed blameworthy by the court, in which case the individual may be subjected to double punishment.

Regarding responsibility, Aristotle favored not simply imposing punishment for the violation of laws, but rather applying sanctions that restore the proper balance between rights and obligations. In doing so, he presented responsibility as closely intertwined with will and moral upbringing. Moreover, he posed an essential philosophical question: under what conditions can an individual be held accountable for the consequences of their actions, particularly if those actions were the result of ignorance or lack of knowledge? He asserts that when a person is capable of foreseeing the outcomes of their behavior, they must bear responsibility even for acts committed in ignorance [9].

Most importantly, Aristotle approaches the understanding of the relationship between responsibility and civic duties by translating the problem into the realm of practical human relations. In his work Magna Moralia (The Great Ethics), Aristotle provides a profound interpretation of the concept of responsibility within the context of moral virtues, human freedom, and conscious choice. According to his ethical views, responsibility is intrinsically linked to the possession of moral virtues, their deliberate application in practice, and accountability for the consequences of one's actions. Aristotle maintains that every responsible action should contribute to the cultivation of the virtuous individual, and that such personal moral development requires

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[7] Gerard J.Hughes.Aristotle on ethics. –London."Routledge",2001. –P.118.

[8]   M.A.Axmedova.Falsafa.-Toshkent: "O'zbekiston   faylasuflari   milliy   jamiyati nashriyoti",2006.28-bet

[9] С.А.Юлдошев. Антик фалсафа.-Бишкек:"Учкун",1999.Б-128

the establishment of a virtuous state. Thus, for Aristotle, the formation of responsible individuals is inseparable from the construction of a just and morally grounded society[10].

A person's accountability for their actions is determined by their ability to make choices voluntarily and consciously. Responsibility is closely tied to the human capacity for decision-making that stems from freedom; such decisions may be morally good or bad. When an individual makes choices independently, they assume full responsibility for the outcomes of their actions.

Aristotle places moral virtues at the center of his philosophical system. According to him, a responsible person must be morally virtuous. In his philosophy, virtues are interpreted as the "mean" between extremes. For example, courage is the mean between cowardice and recklessness, while generosity is the balanced state between stinginess and extravagance. When a person cultivates these virtues and chooses the path of moderation, they demonstrate morally correct behavior and, in doing so, nurture a sense of responsibility.

According to Aristotle's ethical teachings, justice is the highest virtue and serves as the principal foundation for a deep understanding of responsibility. Justice, in his view, means maintaining fairness in one's relations with others and approaching the rights of each individual with respect [11].

In fulfilling their duties toward society, an individual must practice justice in action and take into account the interests of others. Thus, responsibility is realized through demonstrating fair and righteous conduct toward others. Aristotle defines a virtuous life as the ultimate goal of human existence and emphasizes that a person must fulfill their responsibility through the cultivation of virtue. A virtuous life demands a deep awareness of the consequences of every decision and action, as well as an understanding of the purpose behind each behavior. Within this context, responsibility is associated with one's contribution to both societal and personal well-being through a life of moral excellence.

In Aristotle's Magna Moralia, the concept of responsibility is intrinsically linked to moral virtues, free choice, and justice. According to him, a responsible individual is one who cultivates ethical virtues, makes deliberate and autonomous decisions, and accepts full accountability for their actions [12].

Aristotle considers responsibility to be a fundamental component of a virtuous life, as it ensures the fair and rational fulfillment of one's duties. In Western philosophy, the scope of social issues has traditionally been broader, and such topics were more extensively explored in ancient Greek and Roman thought. The areas of inquiry in these traditions differ significantly from those in Eastern philosophy, both in content and thematic focus.

Within the structure of society, the concept of responsibility not only entails the execution of duties by specific individuals but also encourages full participation as members of the community. This is well illustrated by the teachings of Stoicism. Stoic philosophers emphasized responsibility, freedom, the cultivation of one's inner world, and the importance of forming ethical and aesthetic relationships with the external world. These were regarded as key principles in their philosophical system.

According to Stoic philosophy, the key to living a prosperous life lies in understanding and adhering to the moral laws that are deeply rooted in nature. Since individual actions inevitably

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[10] С.Йўлдошев ва бошқалар. Қадимги ва ўрта аср фалсафаси. –Тошкент."Шарқ",2003. –Б.93.

[11] Арасту. Поэтика. Ахлоқи кабир. Риторика. –Тошкент:" Янги аср авлоди",2011. –Б.12.

[12] С.Йўлдошев ва бошқалар. Қадимги ва ўрта аср фалсафаси. –Тошкент."Шарқ",2003. –Б.104.

influence the broader social processes of the state, Stoicism promotes the idea that each person should be engaged in socially meaningful labor and contribute to the common good[13].

The Stoics emphasized the importance of cultivating personal responsibility and inner moral outlook over withdrawing from the world, highlighting their significance for the well-being of society. Over time, Stoicism evolved to become a dominant philosophical orientation among the upper classes and the nobility, undergoing corresponding transformations. The distinction between internal and external domains—between the voice of the conscience and the harsh realities of the outside world—was more intuitively understood in that era than it often is today.

Roman Stoics, unlike their earlier Greek counterparts, increasingly developed a sense of shared or collective responsibility. To a certain extent, they embraced a universal moral consciousness rooted in cooperative duty. The Stoics became symbols of cosmopolitan unity and humanism, promoting the belief that all people are part of a single moral and cosmological whole. This view was underpinned by a quasi-religious conviction that every human being is interconnected through a universal order, both ethically and metaphysically[14].

The Stoics, particularly those of noble origin, placed responsibility at the forefront of their ethical system. Their valuable guidance on cultivating one's inner world and their firm belief in universal moral standards had a profound influence on the Roman elite. As a result, Stoicism eventually became a distinctive ideological foundation of the Roman Empire.

At the same time, there was a notable shift away from the Cynic tendency toward ascetic withdrawal, especially among the lower classes. Instead, these tendencies were replaced with principles rooted in responsibility and the formation of a strong, dutiful character, aligning with the ideals of a morally upright and civic-minded state. What remained of the original Cynic orientation was the distinction between the inner, private self and the outer, public world.

A prominent example is the Stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius, who, while writing down his inner reflections in solitude, simultaneously remained committed to actively fulfilling his civic responsibilities. This exemplifies the Stoic ideal of harmonizing personal moral introspection with public duty [15]. Responsibility is formed on the basis of the expectations imposed on the individual by society or a social group. The extent to which the individual internalizes these expectations is reflected in their behavior and actions. In the process of personal development, cultivating a sense of responsibility plays a crucial role.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the concept of social responsibility has held a significant place in both Eastern and Western philosophical traditions, albeit with distinct approaches and emphases. In Eastern philosophy, particularly as reflected in the Avesta and Confucian teachings, legal, ethical, and socio-political responsibilities are intricately interwoven. The Avesta laid foundational principles for justice, criminal law, moral conduct, marriage, and property relations, underscoring the legal dimension of responsibility. Similarly, Confucianism introduced interconnected moral constructs such as jen (benevolence) and li (ritual and propriety), which collectively shaped the ethical duties

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[13] Raymond Devettere. Introduction to Virtue ethics Insights of the ancient Greeks. –Washington: "Georgetown University press",2002. –P.127.

[14] William O.Stephans. Stoic ethics Epictetus and Happines as Freedom. –London:"Continuum International publishing group",2007. –P.16.

[15] William O.Stephans. Stoic ethics Epictetus and Happines as Freedom. –London:"Continuum International publishing group",2007. –P.89.

of individuals within society. Meanwhile, the challenge of maintaining balance between the ruler and the people is a recurring theme within Eastern thought, revealing a deep concern for social harmony and just governance. On the other hand, Western philosophy, as seen in Plato's Laws, approached social responsibility through civic engagement and education, highlighting the role of structured learning especially for youth as a vital mechanism for cultivating responsible citizens. Notably, Plato's recognition of the value of play in the educational process underscores a progressive understanding of human development.

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11. Raymond Devettere. Introduction to Virtue ethics Insights of the ancient Greeks. –Washington: "Georgetown University press",2002. –P.127.

12. William O.Stephans. Stoic ethics Epictetus and Happines as Freedom. –London:"Continuum International publishing group",2007. –P.16.