

## THE HERMENEUTIC ASPECTS OF STATE AND SOCIETY RELATIONS IN AGAHI'S PHILOSOPHY

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**Abstract:** This article provides a hermeneutic analysis of the interpretation of state–society relations in the works of Agahi, a prominent representative of the 19th-century Khorezm intellectual and cultural milieu. The study examines the dialectics of state and society in social philosophy, the principles of political legitimacy and justice, and the semantic layers through which these concepts are expressed in Agahi's texts. The hermeneutic approach reveals the intrinsic connection between governance, the moral responsibility of the ruler, public consent, and societal well-being in Agahi's philosophical outlook.

**Keywords:** Agahi, state, society, hermeneutics, social philosophy, justice, legitimacy, moral responsibility.

### INTRODUCTION

The issue of relations between the state and society is one of the oldest and most enduring conceptual problems in human thought. The process of explaining its philosophical nature emerged at the intersection of various intellectual traditions of the East and West, and is closely connected with political ontology, moral norms, legitimacy, and the interpretation of the nature of authority. In Eastern thought—particularly in the works of thinkers such as Farabi, Ibn Sina, Yusuf Khash Hajib, and Nizamulmulk—the essence of the state is interpreted through principles such as governing society on the basis of justice, ensuring the moral perfection of the individual, and exercising authority grounded in ethical responsibility [1, 144–147]; [15, 46]. In the Western philosophical tradition, Aristotle's view of the state as a “natural phenomenon,” Hobbes's concept of the state as an “artificial mechanism ensuring security,” Rousseau's idea of authority as an “expression of the general will,” and Hegel's interpretation of the state as an “embodiment of the objective spirit” led to the formation of diverse paradigms [5, 810]; [14, 113].

The intellectual life of 19th-century Khorezm reflects a unique synthesis of these philosophical processes. In Khorezm's historical and cultural environment, artistic expression, historiography, political reflection, and religious-spiritual thought were harmoniously interwoven, and Muhammad Riza Agahi emerges as a prominent representative of this synthesis. A distinctive feature of Agahi's creative approach is that when describing historical events, he does not confine himself to mere narration; rather, he interprets the moral, political, and spiritual meaning behind these events, encouraging not simply the “reading” of history but its “understanding.” This very characteristic makes Agahi's texts some of the most suitable sources for hermeneutic analysis.

### METHODOLOGY

The methodological foundation of this research consists of an integration of hermeneutic, philological, historical-contextual, and comparative-philosophical approaches. Agahi's works possess a multilayered discursive structure in which historical descriptions appear alongside



political-ethical evaluations, religious-metaphysical symbols, poetic structures, and philosophical generalizations. Therefore, examining his writings solely through a historical lens is insufficient; uncovering their inner meaning requires a comprehensive set of interpretive methods rooted in hermeneutics.

The study employs hermeneutic interpretation as the primary method, supplemented by comparative-philosophical analysis, historical-contextual investigation, conceptual analysis, and discursive analysis.

## RESULTS

At the foundation of Agahi's conception of the state lies the idea of divine legitimacy. The ruler's ascent to power is not interpreted as the result of human will, but as an expression of divine decree. This idea is vividly reflected in the following couplet from "Gulshani davlat":

"Karamdin birovga berur shohlik...

Birovdin olur saltanat davlatin..." [9, 9]

This verse establishes the ontological basis of kingship. Hermeneutic analysis shows that beyond its literal meaning, the couplet also carries political-ethical significance: the divine origin of authority implies that it is not given for negligence, tyranny, or selfish ambition, but for serving society. Moreover, the stability of state authority is linked to the ruler's recognition of his responsibility before the divine order. This interpretation aligns with Farabi's conception of the ruler as a "virtuous person," whose moral duties guide the governance of the state [1, 148].

The second foundational category of the state in Agahi's works is justice. Justice is presented not merely as a personal virtue of the ruler but as the central criterion of the entire political structure of the state:

"Adolat tarozusini qildi tuz,

Tuzarda mamolik ishin quydi yuz." [9, 28]

The meaning of this couplet corresponds to Aristotle's doctrine that "justice is the order of society." The semantic core of the concept of justice in both Eastern and Western traditions is similar: the proper functioning of society requires that justice be established as a normative principle. Agahi expresses this even more profoundly: "Mamolikni adolat birla obod..." [9, 7]. This line emphasizes that the prosperity and stability of the state depend on justice. In contemporary political philosophy, Rawls's definition of justice as "the first virtue of social institutions" semantically correlates with Agahi's views [7, 204].



Another important finding of the research is that, in Agahi's view, the success of the state is directly connected to the moral character of the ruler. He believes that the ruler's immorality, tyranny, or indifference leads to the decline of the state:

“O'ziga shior ayladi dodu adl” [9, 28]

This idea aligns with Nizamulmulk's discussions in Siyosatnama about the ethical responsibilities of rulers, though Agahi's formulation is enriched with poetic and stylistic force.

One of the most sensitive issues in the state–society relationship, in Agahi's interpretation, is popular consent. According to him, although a ruler may possess divine legitimacy, the “earthly stability” of his authority depends on the moral support of the people:

“Xaloyiq ... sadoqatu aqidat tilin bu duo zamzemasiga ayrdilar.” [9, 22]

From a modern political science perspective, this conveys the idea of a “social resource of legitimacy.” While there are parallels with Rousseau's concept of the “general will,” Agahi's approach is deepened by religious-ethical interpretation.

Agahi's political thought continues the Eastern philosophical tradition but enriches it with the historical context of his own era.

## DISCUSSION

Agahi's conception of the relationship between the state and society is multilayered, formed through the unity of historical reality and philosophical-poetic reflection. The analysis highlights that these relations are intricately connected with fundamental categories such as justice, the virtue of the ruler, divine legitimacy, and popular consent. The findings show that Agahi's thought is rooted in the rich traditions of Eastern political philosophy, yet he reinterprets these principles in light of the political conditions of his time, creating a distinctive and original political-philosophical doctrine.

At the foundation of Agahi's views on the nature of state authority lies the concept of divine legitimacy. According to him, kingship does not arise from social status, wealth, power, or lineage; it originates from divine will and appears as a manifestation of destiny. This idea is expressed in Riyozi ud-davla:

“Gar gado ham ersa olam ichra sultonlik topar,

Har kishigakim aning altofidin yetsa madad.”



This couplet reveals Agahi's ontological understanding of authority: power is given by God and taken by God; thus, authority is not a privilege but a test. Agahi, therefore, portrays political authority as a metaphysically grounded phenomenon, which is reminiscent of Farabi's view of the ruler as an agent who carries out the divine order, though Agahi expresses this idea in a poetic manner.

Justice stands at the center of Agahi's doctrine. In his view, justice is not only a personal virtue of the ruler but the principle that ensures the stability of the political order and maintains the internal balance of society:

“To talab tariyqning qat’ida bo‘lib komil,  
Komi dil bila sayri olami haqiqat qil.  
Qolmasun desang to‘lmay yeru ko‘k savobingdan,  
Hech yong‘a mayl etmay hukm aro adolat qil.” [8, 343]

This couplet emphasizes the connection between justice and the prosperity of the state. The semantic content of the verse suggests that justice is simultaneously a social norm, a political principle, and an ethical requirement for governance—making it the central category of Agahi's political philosophy.

The ruler's moral qualities directly determine the strength of the state. Traits such as wisdom, fairness, compassion, and restraint are consistently highlighted by Agahi as essential. This aligns with Nizamulmulk's “Siyosatnama”, though Agahi illustrates these ideas through concrete historical examples.

One of the most delicate aspects of Agahi's political philosophy is the role of public approval. Although authority may be divinely granted, Agahi argues that its worldly stability depends on the moral support and consent of the people. While this notion resembles modern theories of communicative legitimacy, in Agahi's framework it is infused with religious-ethical meaning.

Agahi also warns that injustice leads to the collapse of the state. A passage from Zubdat ut-tavorix states: “...zulm tig‘i bila ko‘p begunoh fuqaroni qatlg‘a yetkurur...” [10, 161]

This indicates that injustice results not only in social suffering but also in political and institutional decay. Tyranny weakens the ruler, terrorizes society, and destabilizes the political system.

Overall, the analysis shows that Agahi's system consists of three interconnected philosophical dimensions:

1. Divine dimension — authority originates from God.
2. Ethical dimension — the ruler must be just.



3. Social dimension — the state relies on the people's consent.

## CONCLUSION

The philosophical content of Agahi's interpretation of state and society is deep, complex, and multilayered. Through hermeneutic, philological, historical-contextual, and comparative analyses, the present study reconstructs these layers and reveals the internal conceptual connections within his works. Agahi's writings—especially *Gulshani davlat* and *Zubdat ut-tavorix*—are unique sources that elucidate the nature of the state, the role of society, the moral responsibility of rulers, the political and spiritual functions of justice, and the significance of public consent as a source of legitimacy.

The study leads to several conclusions:

- a) Agahi does not separate divinity and historicity in interpreting the state; instead, he views them as two components of a unified conceptual system.
- b) Justice is the normative foundation of state order and social stability.
- c) The moral character of the ruler is a decisive factor in the success of governance.
- d) Society is an active moral force, not a passive object of governance.
- e) The state has a spiritual function, protecting society from disorder, injustice, and moral decay.
- f) Agahi modernizes classical Eastern political ideas by integrating them with the socio-political realities of his time.

Thus, Agahi's legacy offers universal principles concerning the relationship between the state and society. In his view:

- the state is the organizational form of moral order;
- society is the social expression of this order;
- the ruler is the agent who implements justice.

His philosophical model is distinguished by the harmonious integration of historical, religious, political, and moral dimensions.

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