

**CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY****Numonjonov Asilbek Nodirjon oqli –**

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This article analyzes the essence of the concepts of culture and civilization in the philosophy of history and their role in the development of humanity. Culture is considered as a complex of material and spiritual values created by society, while civilization is viewed as a process that reflects the level of social organization and technical development of society. In addition, the content of the historical process, the idea of human progress, and the views of Enlightenment thinkers on this issue are discussed. The article also examines the interrelation between culture and civilization and their importance in the development of society.

**Keywords**

culture, civilization, philosophy of history, human development, spiritual values, social development, historical process, enlightenment, rationality, development of society.

In the process of human development, the growth of society, its values, and way of life are closely connected with the concepts of culture and civilization. The philosophy of history studies human history not only as a sequence of events but also as an important theoretical field that explains the spiritual, social, and cultural development of society. From this perspective, the concepts of culture and civilization serve as an important methodological basis for understanding the historical process. Culture represents the complex of material and spiritual values created by humanity, while civilization reflects the processes related to the level of development of society, its social structure, and technological progress.

Within the framework of the philosophy of history, the essence of these concepts, their interrelation, and their role in the development of humanity have been interpreted differently by many thinkers. In some views, culture is interpreted as a phenomenon that reflects the inner spiritual world of society, while civilization is explained as its external, socio-organizational manifestation. Therefore, the issue of culture and civilization is considered one of the most important and debated problems in the philosophy of history.

One of the central problems of the philosophy of history is the idea that the historical process has a specific meaning and content, as well as the essence of the concept of human progress. The earliest notions of the existence of meaning in history were formed within medieval philosophy, during which humanity's movement toward a single purpose was understood from a divine and philosophical perspective. This idea persisted in later centuries and was interpreted in unique ways by representatives of various philosophical currents. In particular, during the Enlightenment, the approach to historical events changed fundamentally: from that point onward, all phenomena began to be evaluated according to the criterion of "rationality." In this regard, the contributions of the French Enlightenment thinker and renowned Encyclopedist Nicolas de Condorcet are invaluable. In his work *Outline of the Historical Development of the Human Mind*, he connects the long-term prospects of human society with the penetration of



reason into all spheres of social life. According to Condorcet's theory, the history of humanity consists of consistent steps toward the expansion of enlightenment and the triumph of reason over ignorance.

Over time, research aimed at defining the content of history took the form of realizing certain social ideals. These ideals varied depending on the era and prevailing ideologies: in some theories, technocratic illusions and the dominance of technology were prioritized, while in others, the establishment of a mass-consumption society or an information-based society was set as the primary goal. Additionally, ideas of a society characterized by general equality, free from private property and exploitation, long remained at the center of philosophical reflection as the essence of the historical process. Although these interpretations were diverse and sometimes even contradictory, each was significant in reflecting the aspirations and social needs of specific segments of society. Such inquiries represent efforts to find a balance between the external (material-technical) achievements of civilization and the internal (spiritual-moral) content of culture.

In the matter of the content of history and the interaction of cultures, the concept proposed by the great 20th-century thinker Karl Jaspers represents one of the deepest and most systematic approaches. Jaspers views the essence of world history in the spiritual connections of eras based on universal human relations. According to him, there exists a unifying "world axis" of human history, the Axial Age, which corresponds to the period between approximately 800 and 200 BCE. During this time, almost simultaneously, great cultures and philosophical doctrines emerged in regions such as India, China, Greece, Iran, and Central Asia.

Jaspers distinguishes four key stages in world history: the emergence of language and the invention of tools; the formation of great ancient civilizations; the spiritual explosion during the Axial Age; and, finally, the modern era associated with scientific and technological progress. In his interpretation, the era of science and technology appears as a continuation of ancient cultures and, at the same time, as a distinct manifestation of their inherent contradictions.

At the current stage of development, marked by human unity and globalization, the issue of the content of history becomes even more relevant. In what is considered the fourth stage, society must develop based on principles worthy of humanity. The guarantor of this unity is the system of law-based states that have completely renounced totalitarianism and regard human rights and freedoms as supreme values. The true essence of history lies in preserving the spiritual traditions and universal cultural treasures formed during the Axial Age and harmonizing them with the achievements of contemporary civilization.

Within the philosophy of history, the gradual development of the concepts of culture and civilization and their interrelation represent one of the most fundamental issues, as the system of views in this area serves to deeply understand the spiritual and material foundations of societal development. Conceptually, although culture and civilization have historically been closely related, philosophically their distinctions reflect two poles of human progress. Culture embodies the inner spiritual world of humans, expressing moral, aesthetic, and religious values, whereas civilization primarily represents the external form of society, including technological achievements, socio-political institutions, and levels of material prosperity.

The interconnection of these concepts in the philosophy of history lies in the fact that every civilization is built upon a certain cultural foundation. However, philosophers have long been concerned that excessive technocratization of civilization can lead to the crisis of culture. It is well known that the cultural and spiritual values of a society constitute the primary force ensuring stability within the historical process; if civilization is considered the "body" of society, culture is its "soul." Analysis of historical civilizations in Uzbekistan and the broader Central Asian region shows that science, culture, and religious-philosophical thought developed in an intertwined manner, giving rise to the phenomenon of Eastern Renaissance. From the perspective



of the philosophy of history, culture is always linked to human creativity and freedom, breathing life into the rigid forms of civilization.

In the context of globalization, the challenge of preserving cultural uniqueness becomes even more acute, as standardized technological and social norms threaten to erase the distinctiveness of national cultures. Therefore, in modern philosophy, intercivilizational dialogue primarily implies intercultural dialogue, recognizing the primacy of spiritual and moral values in shaping humanity's common destiny and solving global problems. Any advanced civilization that loses connection with its spiritual and cultural roots is doomed to internal crisis, as historical experience—from the Roman Empire to great nomadic empires—demonstrates. Accordingly, today's concept of building the foundation of the Third Renaissance is based precisely on synthesizing the achievements of modern civilization with our deep historical culture and rich spiritual heritage, fully aligning with the philosophy of history's most advanced conclusions about progress. Understanding the historical process is not merely studying a sequence of events but philosophically analyzing the complex dialectic between civilization and culture and their role in human development. Only culture prevents humanity from becoming enslaved to technological progress, allowing it to become a true subject of its own history. Thus, the spiritual advancement of culture in harmony with the material progress of civilization constitutes the fundamental guarantee of societal stability.

The historical-philosophical analysis of the concepts of civilization and culture demonstrates their multifaceted and complex nature. The term “civilization” (from Latin *civilis* – civic, pertaining to the state) is interpreted in several key senses within scholarship: first, as a historical stage in human development that follows barbarism, characterized by the emergence of the state, writing, and urbanization; second, as a representation of the integrity of world cultures and universal human unity; third, as a synonym for the concept of “material culture,” encompassing technological and everyday comforts; and fourth, as a criterion for evaluating the unity of the historical process.

Regarding the dynamics of civilizations, Ibn Khaldun was the first to advance scientifically grounded ideas, emphasizing that the emergence, development, and decline of civilizations follow certain historical laws, and that geographic and economic factors significantly influence these processes.

From the mid-18th century onward, the concept of civilization began to be viewed as the level of social development in contrast to human “natural state.” During this period, the idea of social welfare was proposed as the main criterion for the progress of society. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant emphasized that there is a distinct difference between civilization and culture, while Oswald Spengler interpreted this distinction even more sharply. According to Spengler, civilization represents the final stage of cultural development, dominated by technical and mechanical elements, while the natural and vital foundations of culture gradually weaken. Later, scholars such as Pitirim Sorokin and Arnold Toynbee also explained civilization as a certain stage of culture and attempted to study its historical development process.

Ethnographic studies conducted in the 19th–20th centuries further expanded the understanding of the concept of civilization. These studies demonstrated that the spiritual life, customs, economic activities, and cultural heritage of different peoples are extraordinarily rich and diverse. The renowned ethnographer Edward B. Tylor considered the concepts of culture and civilization to be closely related, interpreting them as the totality of knowledge, beliefs, moral norms, legal rules, customs, and practical skills acquired by humanity throughout historical processes.

In the Central Asian region, civilization was primarily manifested in the form of moral values. In this area, the triumph of good over evil, love over hatred, was regarded as a fundamental spiritual criterion. These moral values formed an important foundation of Eastern



civilization, which is why spiritual culture, ethical purity, and human virtues were highly esteemed in the region.

In the process of classifying civilizations, different types are distinguished. For instance, European and non-European civilizations are differentiated. Non-European civilizations are numerous and are described as traditional civilizations. They develop very slowly and are capable of maintaining their established way of life over long periods. European civilization, on the other hand, follows a distinctive path of development and, according to some scholars, represents a unique phenomenon resulting from the transformation of traditional societal culture.

In the typology of civilizations, the cultural-religious unity also holds an important place. Arnold Toynbee and other scholars, when classifying civilizations, emphasized the significance of religion, distinguishing in the modern era Western-Christian, Orthodox-Christian, Islamic, Hindu, and Far Eastern civilizations. According to another classification, based on the level of development of productive forces, civilizations are differentiated into early civilizations, agrarian-craft civilizations, industrial civilizations, and the contemporary post-industrial or information civilization.

Culture, in turn, is considered a vital component of civilization. The term “culture” originates from the Arabic word madina, meaning “city,” and historically was associated with urban lifestyles and the benefits of civilization. In Central Asia, culture primarily developed in the form of moral values, emphasizing spiritual wealth, appreciation of art, and striving for beauty. During the Renaissance period, culture came to be interpreted in connection with the personal development of the individual, closely linked to intellectual and spiritual activities such as science, art, ethics, religion, and philosophy.

In later periods, culture began to be interpreted as a system of values and ideas that organizes social life. In this sense, culture serves as an important factor regulating the social life of society. Its structure is complex, encompassing both stable cultural universals and transient elements that arise under specific historical conditions and may disappear over time. For this reason, culture plays a crucial role in societal development, forming the spiritual foundation of civilization’s progress.

In conclusion, the concepts of culture and civilization constitute an essential theoretical basis for understanding human development. While culture reflects the spiritual life and values of society, civilization represents its social organization and level of material progress. Throughout the historical process, these two concepts have evolved in an interconnected manner, playing a significant role in the formation and advancement of human society.

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