



The Idea of Justice and A Just Society In Eastern Thought

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Abstract: This article explores the concept of justice and the idea of a just society in Eastern thought, focusing on philosophical, ethical, and socio-political perspectives. It analyzes the views of prominent Eastern thinkers and highlights how justice is understood as harmony, balance, and moral responsibility within society. Special attention is given to the role of ethical norms, spiritual values, and governance principles in shaping a fair and stable social order. The study also examines the relevance of traditional Eastern ideas of justice in the context of modern societal development. The findings suggest that Eastern thought provides a holistic and value-oriented approach to justice, emphasizing collective well-being and moral integrity

Keywords: Justice, Just Society, Eastern Thought, Ethics, Philosophy, Social Harmony, Moral Values, Governance Principles

Introduction

Throughout the history of human civilization, the idea of justice has occupied a special place as one of the most fundamental moral and ethical criteria of social life. Justice is not merely a legal or political concept; it represents a core philosophical principle that regulates relations between individuals and society, ensuring social stability and harmony. In this regard, the notion of building a just society has consistently remained one of the central themes in Eastern philosophical thought.

Eastern scholars interpreted justice as an essential condition for human perfection, effective governance, and societal development. In their works, the concept of justice is closely intertwined with morality, spirituality, social responsibility, and the duty of authority toward the people. From the perspective of Eastern thinkers, the idea of a just society is determined not only by the supremacy of laws but also by the wisdom of leadership, the moral maturity of the population, and adherence to the principles of social equality.

In Eastern philosophy, justice is inseparably connected with the inner moral development of the individual and serves to maintain a balance between personal interests and the common good. Scholars regarded justice as a fundamental factor ensuring peace, social cohesion, and stability within society, while oppression and inequality were viewed as the primary causes of social decline. Consequently, the concept of a just society was advanced in Eastern thought as an ideal model of social organization.

This article provides a philosophical and scholarly analysis of Eastern scholars' views on justice and the just society. It also reveals the relevance and significance of their ideas for contemporary social development and the ongoing process of building a just state in the modern world.

Methodology

This study is aimed at providing a philosophical and scholarly analysis of Eastern thinkers' views on justice and the concept of a just society. The research is based on a comprehensive and systematic approach, employing a range of general scientific and specialized research methods. The methodological framework relies on the examination of historical and philosophical sources, their critical analysis, and comparative interpretation in relation to contemporary socio-philosophical processes.

In the course of the research, the methods of historicism and logical analysis were applied to reveal the historical conditions under which Eastern thinkers' views on justice were formed, as well as the internal logical structure of their philosophical concepts. The methods of analysis and synthesis were used to systematize the content, core ideas, and socio-philosophical significance of the concept of justice as presented in the works of Eastern scholars.

In addition, a comparative-philosophical method was employed to compare the perspectives of various Eastern thinkers, identifying both their common features and distinctive aspects regarding the idea of a just society. Through a logical-abstract approach, the philosophical essence of justice and its role in ensuring social stability and societal development were theoretically substantiated.

Furthermore, the source-study method was utilized to conduct an in-depth examination of the works of Eastern scholars, relevant academic research, and contemporary literature in philosophy and the social sciences. Based on the methods of induction and deduction, general scientific conclusions were derived from specific observations and analytical findings.

This methodological approach made it possible to comprehensively examine Eastern scholars' views on justice and a just society, to relate their theoretical legacy to the processes of modern social development, and to formulate scientifically grounded conclusions.

Result and Discussion

In the course of the study, the views of Eastern scholars on justice and the concept of a just society were analyzed from philosophical, ethical, and socio-political perspectives. The examined sources demonstrate that, within Eastern thought, justice is regarded as a central principle of social life and is interpreted as a fundamental condition for human perfection, effective governance, and social stability.

Only through adherence to the principles of social justice within society is it possible to form individuals capable of meeting the demands of their time. For this reason, it is emphasized that "the idea of justice must encompass all spheres of social life".

The emergence of conceptions of justice is closely linked to the development of the division of labor and the rise of private property. The earliest ideas of justice can be traced back to Zoroastrianism, which appeared in the early centuries of the first millennium BCE.

In Zoroastrian doctrine, the world is interpreted as a constant struggle between two eternal forces: good and evil, light and darkness, justice and injustice. The sacred text of Zoroastrianism, the *Avesta*, places particular emphasis on universal principles and the principle of justice as a foundation of human spirituality and practical activity. In this doctrine, Ahura Mazda, the legendary deity symbolizing goodness, light, perfection, and free thought, occupies a central place. According to Zoroaster, individuals must follow the forces of goodness and light, distinguish good from evil and justice from injustice, and throughout their lives remain aligned with Ahura Mazda. Human participation in the triumph of goodness is manifested through one's way of life, moral character, social activity, and adherence to the principle of "good thoughts, good words, and good deeds".

Zoroastrian teachings exerted a certain influence on the ancient Greek philosophers' reflections on justice. However, Greek philosophers did not interpret justice as a universal category; consequently, the existence of slavery was often justified as compatible with justice in their works. Nevertheless, these thinkers advanced ideas of eternal justice, while injustice was regarded as a product of human imperfection. It was argued that as humanity increasingly comprehends and studies the true essence of justice, justice itself gradually becomes established within society.

In Islamic thought, the concept of justice is not limited solely to norms and measures; rather, it encompasses compassion, benevolence, care for others, loyalty to oneself and society, and acts of charity toward the poor and vulnerable. Thus, justice in Islam is understood as a comprehensive moral and social principle that integrates ethical conduct, social responsibility, and spiritual values.

In discussing the scientific and theoretical foundations of the concept of justice, it is impossible to overlook the positive views of Central Asian thinkers on social justice, which has been one of the most pressing issues of human society. The progressive ideas of great scholars and philosophers of the past concerning a just social order were not only of significant importance in their own historical periods, but also remain consonant with the urgent challenges of the present time.

The origins of these ideas can be traced to the sacred book *Avesta*, a world-renowned cultural and philosophical monument that embodies the accumulated knowledge, wisdom, and experience of many generations of Eastern and Western peoples.

In his work *The Virtuous City (Al-Madina al-Fadila)*, Al-Farabi emphasized that "in order to build a just society within the state, it is necessary to know how to defend it and govern it wisely, as well as to show people the ways to avoid evil and strive for goodness. The governing skill of the ruler is the path to achieving universal happiness." He further argued that "a just state must be governed by an enlightened ruler who serves as a leader of morality and justice and meets strict ethical requirements through personal virtue. Such rulers do not possess absolute power; rather, they are selected from among the people as the most noble, tested, and worthy individuals for leadership. Therefore, these leaders ensure full freedom for their constituents and protect them from external threats".

Abu Nasr al-Farabi was among the first thinkers to attempt to link the origins of the concept of justice directly to social life. In *The Virtuous City*, he analyzed justice in relation

to the historical stages of human societal development. He argued that natural human needs lie at the foundation of social formation, and that the harmonization of these needs leads to the emergence of a sense of justice. According to al-Farabi, “human virtues bestow strength, beauty, and prosperity upon beneficial things”.

While defining the concept of justice, al-Farabi also highlighted that at a certain stage of historical development, the emergence of private property led to social inequalities. This, in turn, necessitated the establishment of balance within social relations, which became an objective demand of social life.

Among Eastern thinkers, al-Biruni made a significant contribution to the theoretical understanding of social life, social processes, and public opinion in his works *Monuments of Past Generations* and *India*. In the introduction to his work *Mineralogy*, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni presented valuable reflections on human beings and their social status, responsibility toward society, personal nobility, social processes, and social justice.

Al-Biruni emphasized that, as a principle of justice in governing the state and society, it is essential to take into account and give due consideration to the diverse opinions of individuals belonging to different social strata, as such inclusivity contributes to social development. He argued that genuine progress in state governance emerges only when administrative processes are free from injustice, noting rhetorically that “how can one place trust in something whose contradictions are evident”.

In the sphere of financial governance, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni advanced an idea that was remarkably progressive for his time: contrary to the prevailing views of rulers and their supporters, society should not serve the monarch; rather, the monarch must serve society. He asserted that “the essence of administration and governance does not lie in the exercise of oppression, but in protecting the rights of those who suffer from tyranny, sacrificing one’s own comfort for the peace of others. This entails physical exertion in safeguarding families, their lives, and their property”.

Al-Biruni’s views on society and the human being are grounded in profound reflection and humanistic principles. His recognition of social processes and the role of material factors in the life of society and individuals played a significant role in shaping his thought. He made a substantial contribution to the promotion of strong humanistic traditions within the worldview of progressive Central Asian thinkers of the medieval period.

According to Sahibqiran Amir Temur Gurkani, “I governed state affairs on the basis of the laws and regulations of the realm. By relying on established rules and ordinances, I firmly maintained my rank and authority within the state. Amirs, viziers, soldiers, and subjects each served in accordance with their respective positions and ranks, remaining satisfied with their status and making no claims beyond it”.

Addressing the necessity of building a just society, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan has emphasized that the lofty ideas embodied in the wise sayings of the great Sahibqiran Amir Temur—inscribed on the portal of the Ak-Saray Palace in Shahrissabz as “Justice is the foundation of the state and the ruler’s guiding principle”—as well as in the counsel of Alisher Navoi, who urged, “Do not commit oppression; be just and build for the

people the fortress of justice," have become the foundation of contemporary efforts aimed at elevating human dignity to the highest level.

Throughout his activities, Amir Temur adopted justice as his principal guiding program. In his *Tuzuks*, he wrote: "Amir Temur commanded that, in the collection of taxes and revenues from the population, care must be taken not to impose excessive hardship or plunge the country into poverty. For the devastation of the populace leads to the impoverishment of the state treasury; the depletion of the treasury causes the dispersal of the army; and the disintegration of the army, in turn, results in the weakening of the state."

Amir Temur developed a comprehensive and just system that served as the primary source of state revenue. Its main principles included the following:

Determining tax rates by taking into account the economic capacity of taxpayers and calculating taxes based on actual harvest yields and income.

Providing incentives to taxpayers by granting tax exemptions or reductions to those who reclaimed new lands, revitalized abandoned territories, or engaged in entrepreneurial and artisanal activities.

Prohibiting the collection of taxes and levies from the population before the harvest had fully ripened.

Collecting taxes through respectful communication, avoiding the use of coercion or force against taxpayers.

Preventing the imposition of taxes not stipulated by law and prohibiting the arbitrary "creation" of additional taxes.

Every state develops on the basis of its society's historical, cultural, spiritual, and moral heritage. Such harmony elevates social development to new stages and expands the factors determining its future prospects. Every nation has contributed its share to the invaluable treasury of world culture, and within this heritage, the contribution of Eastern countries—particularly the peoples of Central Asia—occupies a distinctive place. Accordingly, it is not an exaggeration to state that in the views and ideas of medieval thinkers, spirituality and social justice were interpreted in close interrelation.

Justice represents one of the universal characteristics of social relations. As justice functions as a measure of social evaluation, it is closely connected with the concept of equality. As society develops and relatively autonomous forms of social and spiritual life take shape, various contextual interpretations of justice initially emerge and subsequently acquire independent significance.

The concept of justice is inherently harmonious with human nature, for the human disposition instinctively resists all forms of oppression. In elaborating on the compatibility of justice with human nature and the intrinsic human inclination toward justice, al-Maturidi argues that God has presented truthfulness, wisdom, and justice as beautiful in the perception of human reason, while portraying oppression, lack of wisdom, and falsehood as reprehensible. According to al-Maturidi, justice has been instilled in human hearts as a noble and valuable principle, whereas oppression has been rendered ugly and devoid of worth.

The interpretation of justice as being in harmony with human nature constitutes one of the principal intellectual orientations in Eastern and Islamic philosophy. Humanity's natural resistance to injustice and its inner inclination toward justice have long been regarded as fundamental anthropological truths. In this respect, al-Maturidi's doctrine assigns a distinctive place to justice, viewing it not merely as a normative principle regulating social order, but as an innate human need rooted in human nature itself.

According to al-Maturidi, the perception of justice as virtuous and oppression as vicious is not imposed upon human consciousness through external coercion or social constructions; rather, it is embedded within the unique rational and spiritual essence of the human being. Within this framework, the primacy of justice as a value is associated with the principle of *husn wa qubh al-'aql* (the rational discernment of good and evil), which holds that the recognition of moral goodness and evilness is grounded in the natural capacities of human reason.

Al-Maturidi's characterization of justice as "sublime and valuable" and oppression as "ugly and worthless" underscores the ontological status of justice. Justice is interpreted as a fundamental principle that ensures social stability and regulates moral norms, whereas oppression is understood as a destructive force that undermines the internal harmony of society.

These ideas resonate strongly with contemporary social philosophy, particularly with the normative conception of justice. The interpretation of justice as an "innate value" provides a philosophical foundation for such concepts as human rights, equality, social responsibility, and social order. Al-Maturidi's views demonstrate that the aspiration toward justice constitutes one of the essential needs defining the individual's place within society and represents an inseparable component not only of social systems but also of the moral foundation of the human personality.

The practical implementation of social justice is intrinsically linked to the political, economic, and cultural systems of society, as well as to the formation and functioning of social institutions. In essence, social justice manifests itself through the basic structure of society, which is regarded as the principal subject of justice. The existence of a set of minimum norms and rules necessary for the proper functioning of this structure is therefore of crucial importance.

Research indicates that the consistent realization of social justice in practice is closely connected with the presence of a certain political will. In the absence of political forces that actively support the principles of justice, these ideals cannot acquire real practical effectiveness. As evidence of this, historical sources cite the views advanced by Amir Temur, who stated: "Through openness and compassion, I won the trust of the people. I conducted affairs on the basis of justice and sought to distance myself from all forms of oppression and violence".

Similarly, the head of state emphasizes the significance of the concept of justice inherited from our great ancestors in contemporary public administration, noting: "The wisdom inscribed by our forefather Sahibqiran Amir Temur on the portal of the Ak-Saray Palace in Shahrisabz — 'Justice is the foundation of the state and the guiding principle of the

ruler' — as well as the counsel of our forefather Alisher Navoi, who urged, 'Do not commit oppression, do not abandon fairness; build for the people the palace of justice, that is, the fortress of justice,' have today become a solid foundation for our practical efforts to elevate human dignity".

These historical perspectives demonstrate that the idea of social justice is not merely a theoretical construct, but a fundamental principle that plays a decisive role in political will, state governance, and the functioning of social institutions. It emerges as a core idea that defines human dignity, social stability, and the moral–normative foundations of public administration.

The results of the analysis show that Eastern thinkers regarded justice not simply as a legal norm, but as a profound moral and spiritual value. In their views, justice is inseparably connected with the individual's inner world, conscience, and sense of responsibility, serving as a guarantee of order and harmony within society. A just society, in turn, is portrayed as an ideal social structure formed on the basis of equality, mutual respect, and social responsibility among individuals.

The analysis of Eastern scholars' works further reveals that the idea of a just society is grounded in the principle of mutual responsibility between authority and the people. It is emphasized that when justice does not occupy a dominant position in state governance, oppression, social inequality, and moral decline inevitably arise. For this reason, thinkers consistently advanced just governance as a crucial condition for social well-being and sustainable development.

Finally, the analysis demonstrates that within Eastern thought, justice is understood as a universal principle that ensures a balance between individual and collective interests. The establishment of a just society is shown to be achievable not solely through laws and external mechanisms of control, but primarily through the moral maturity, education, and upbringing of individuals. This perspective underscores the continuing relevance of Eastern scholars' views for contemporary society.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the views of Eastern scholars on justice and the concept of a just society occupy a significant philosophical and social position in the development of human thought. Eastern thinkers interpreted justice not merely as a legal or political norm, but as a fundamental value inherent in human nature that ensures social stability and moral perfection.

The analysis reveals that within Eastern philosophical thought, justice is inseparably linked to the individual's inner moral maturity, conscience, and sense of responsibility, and is regarded as a core principle that maintains balance and harmony in social relations. In Zoroastrianism, Islamic philosophy, and in the teachings of thinkers such as al-Farabi, al-Biruni, al-Maturidi, and Amir Timur, justice is viewed as a driving force of social development, whereas oppression and inequality are identified as factors leading to social decline.

The study further confirms that the idea of a just society in Eastern thought is grounded in the principle of mutual responsibility between authority and the people. Only under conditions where justice occupies a dominant position in state governance can social stability, economic development, and moral advancement be ensured. This underscores the significance of justice not only as an ethical value but also as a political and institutional principle.

Moreover, al-Maturidi's interpretation of justice as being in harmony with human nature provides a conceptual link between justice and modern notions such as human rights, equality, and social responsibility. This perspective allows justice to be understood not as a product of external coercion, but as an innate value embedded within human consciousness.

In conclusion, the views of Eastern scholars on justice and a just society remain highly relevant in the context of contemporary globalization and socio-political transformations. This intellectual heritage can serve as an important theoretical and methodological foundation for building a just state, upholding human dignity, and achieving sustainable social development in the modern world.

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