

## THE PHENOMENON OF FREEDOM IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANCIENT EAST

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**Abstract.** *The article shades light on the role and influence of oriental philosophical traditional views on the development of man, the process of his spiritual self-realization, formation of spiritual values from the point of view of the concepts of modern philosophy. The philosophical analysis of the phenomenon of individual freedom in ancient philosophy, in particular, classical Indian yoga, has been carried out. Practical methods of achieving the liberation of consciousness offered by the yoga system are analyzed. It is noted that the value of yoga as a spiritual teaching lies precisely in its effective practical method of self-perfection. Awareness of universal unity implies depersonalization as a way towards liberation and the emergence of a new state of consciousness, to which the true reality is revealed - the deep unity of all things. Emphasis is placed on spiritual freedom as a basic concept in social philosophical cognition in classical Indian yoga and oriental philosophy.*

**Keywords:** *liberation of consciousness, spiritual values, spiritual freedom, yoga, being, personality, enlightenment, Buddhism, nirvana.*

**Introduction.** The problem of the influence of spiritual values on human development is very urgent. The system of spiritual values, spiritual freedom influences the formation of various qualities of a person's personality. Nowadays, the development of world culture tends to bring cultures closer together and establish ways of intercultural communication. Philosophers, cultural scientists and art critics while studying the cultural heritage of the ancient world, try to solve the problems that arise in the modern world by resorting to traditional value systems, such as antiquity, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism.

Freedom as a factor of cultural identity is one component of the study of freedom that is complex and multidimensional. The authors of the article are convinced that the problem of freedom is as much a concern for philosophers as for poets are the theme of love, for lawyers - justice, for aesthetes - beauty, for farmers - harvest, for doctors - health.

Throughout the history of the development of philosophical thought, various and interesting concepts of freedom were formed, reflecting the public opinion of its time. In his work «Lectures on the History of Philosophy», Hegel wrote that world history is nothing but the development of freedom. Speaking about the complexity of freedom, Hegel wrote: "About no other idea it can be so rightly stated that it is well defined, meaningful, and at the same time connected with the greatest misunderstanding" [2,324]. Free will is inherent in man both as a natural and as a social being. However, its practical implementation is often at odds with the conditions provided by society, with traditions and stereotypes, moral requirements and religious taboos. Freedom implies the possibility of free choice and free action, while society often restricts or denies this choice. So the question of freedom is a question of the foundations of philosophy itself.

**Purpose** of this work is to identify the peculiarities of interpretation of the

theme of freedom in the ancient philosophical tradition.

**Methods.** Authors used descriptive, analytical, and hermeneutical methods to explore the topic of freedom. The work is based on the unity of dialectical, historical and idiographic approaches.

**Analysis of recent researches and publications.** The originality of Eastern philosophy and its definition of the problem of freedom attracted the attention of many philosophers, including: P. Lebedev, Ma Zing Ya, V. Malyavin, P. Movchan, Y. Starostina, Hon Shu Ping, Shi Jun, E. Clive. Specificity of the Eastern type of thinking and its difference from the Western perception of the world, in particular, K.-Jung. M. Eliade, analyzing the connection between freedom and immortality, noted that for the East these concepts are synonymous, they are interpreted through a merger with the world's absolute beginning. Freedom is won by the efforts of the individual's consciousness [6]. Regardless of whether or not external reality is accepted as the only true reality, the truth is that the existence of man in this world, his activity and the results of this activity are so small that in the face of what precedes it and the further infinite nothingness can be easily equated to zero, to nothing.

**Results.** The position of Western European philosophy has historically been linked to the anthropological isolation and the individualization of consciousness. Due to this, the concept of personality was formed - a key category of humanism in its traditional interpretation. Philosophy is a way of being conscious of a mature personality whose main purpose and value is freedom - freedom is consciousness which derives its power in knowing and understanding the highest principles of being, in a tolerant stance toward the whole diversity of life. Philosophy works first and foremost on the formation of the world outlook of man, on his becoming a unique person. In accordance with the principles of tolerance, it focuses consciousness on a plu-

ralistic, flexible perception of reality in all its multivariance, helping to restore the disturbed harmony of life.

In the Oriental tradition, human identification occurs through freedom as liberation in the broadest sense. It contains cultural, religious and philosophical implications. For example, in Indian philosophy, there is a notion that there is no particular, final state that could be termed "freedom". There is a gradual and consistent "liberation" that never ceases, the liberation as a process of transition from a more dependent state from certain external factors and one's own internal states to less dependent ones (ultimately, to complete independence), and ways to achieve such a state. In Indian philosophy, there is a special term denoting liberation as Moksha. Its main meaning is that one should free oneself from the infinite wheel of rebirths, for whatever body a person receives at the next birth, in every existence of life is still filled with untold suffering.

According to the general conception of Indian philosophy, what is called the psyche, soul or individual atman does not collapse with the death of the physical body of a living being, but is reborn, finding refuge in another body. The transition from one body to another is by the law of karma. Man is not a passive object of external actions, a puppet in the hands of unknown forces, but as the creator of his own destiny, he is able to create himself, and not only in another fleeting form of being, but also in eternity.

A factor of cultural identification in the Indian religious and philosophical system is also yoga. The word "yoga" is often translated from Sanskrit as "taming" or "oneness." Some of its elements appear in the early Upanishads, but have reached a sufficiently complete form in Pat Anjali's Yoga Sutras and Bhagavag-gita. If the first source refers to the release as fullness and absolute inactivity, the second emphasizes the need for action, but with complete disinterest in its results. "The devoted, by leaving the fruits

of action receives the perfect world" [1,109]. He who "restrained his senses, heart and mind, who strives for higher freedom, estranged from desires, fear and anger - is free forever" [1,110]. In both cases, consciousness seems to fade away, becoming impartial. The radically transformed consciousness will see its own, pure image, in the mirror of which the spiritual essence of the world - the divine Purusha - will be reflected and thus the higher levels of ascension to freedom will be achieved. The union of what has been torn apart in the limited forms of being, and the attainment of the state of Samadhi will signify final liberation as a merger with the one, eternal, fundamental foundation of all things.

Liberation is not only about letting go of any kind, but also about putting on a new burden, new responsibilities and tasks. The meaning of imposing this new burden, which is at the same time the purpose of yoga, is to get rid of the illusion of the world, as well as of the deception about oneself and one's position in the world. Liberation is understood primarily as liberation of consciousness. Everything that causes its opacity should be cleansed.

Unlike the Western tradition, where activity is aimed at transforming the world, the Oriental tradition looks at the world as a given, the intervention in which should be minimal. Therefore, the activities of man directed mainly to themselves: not outside, but within. Cognition and transformation, changing one's own attitude to the world, transforms, above all, one's own spiritual world is the main task. As a result of these changes, the individual transforms himself into a whole personality. Freedom, then, is not about getting rid of the burden, but being able to choose what is voluntarily accepted for a specific, meaningful purpose. The liberation of consciousness (spirit) in the practice of classical Indian yoga is perceived as the main spiritual purpose, meaning of life and moral duty of man.

Classical yoga understands freedom, liberation and the achievement of complete separation of the spiritual consciousness of the Higher Self from the consciousness of the personal - that is, the lower Self. The Higher Self is the Universal Consciousness or the transcendent Spectator. The liberated spiritual aspects of consciousness remain completely unchanged and are in their own subjectivity. There is no concept of "eternity of change" for them. [3,199]

Thus, Indian society demonstrates its belonging to a distinct, distinctive, original culture that has overcome India's territorial borders and spread throughout the world. Cultural identity in this situation is associated with a certain type of cultural memory, in which understanding of freedom is reduced to the release of consciousness, the denial of individual being in favor of the transcendental, universal. The liberation of consciousness in classical yoga is a way of the spirit to another reality that exists outside of time and space of the limited natural world. It is a return to the origins of the Absolute Spiritual Being.

In order to control consciousness, and therefore to achieve liberation, impartiality is required, that is, lack of sensual passions and indifference to sensual pleasure, because constant pleasures give rise to the dependence of the psyche on sensory things. Instead of controlling consciousness, a closed circle of constant urges are obtained. But to achieve impartiality through the practice of enjoyment is impossible, because constant enjoyment enhances the attraction to sensual objects and, at the same time, enhance the experience of feelings of pleasure. But trying to achieve peace through enjoyment is like trying to fill a vessel without a bottom. Liberation is the termination of the union of spirit and matter (in man), that is, the separation of the Spectator - the Universal Consciousness from the instrument of his experience - the personal "ego" [3,124].

**Discussion.** Thus, at the heart of the spiritual system of yoga, the highest purpose is the liberation of human spirit from the power of matter, which means the return of consciousness to its original primary source - the Cosmic Super consciousness. This goal is achieved through yoga, which is understood as a spiritual method or spiritual practice. The value of yoga as a spiritual teaching lies precisely in its effective practical method of self-perfection. Yoga, unlike other teachings, not only considers spiritual perfection, calls for it, but also indicates how one can lift one's spirit to a higher state and find a higher Being. Oriental cultural and philosophical tradition solved a twofold task: to save a person from the fear of nothingness and being - the fear of eternity. Could it be something third? In Indian philosophy, an attempt is made to show this third - through human existence, through human being. What is present here is that, later in Western philosophy, it has been called existential moment, existence as freedom.

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### ФЕНОМЕН СВОБОДИ У ФІЛОСОФІЇ ДАВНЬОГО СХОДУ

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**Анотація.** У статті висвітлюється роль та вплив східно-філософських традиційних поглядів на розвиток людини, процес її духовної самореалізації, формування духовних цінностей з погляду сучасної філософії. Проведено філософський аналіз явища індивідуальної свободи в античній філософії, зокрема, класичної індійської йоги. Проаналізовано практичні методи досягнення звільнення свідомості, запропоновані системою йоги. Зазначається, що значення йоги як духовного вчення полягає саме в її ефективному практичному методі самовдосконалення. Усвідомлення універсальної єдності передбачає деперсоналізацію як шлях до визволення та виникнення нового стану свідомості, до якого розкривається справжня реальність - глибока єдність усіх речей. Акцентовано увагу на духовній свободі як базовій концепції соціального філософського пізнання в класичній індійській йозі та східній філософії.

**Ключові слова:** звільнення свідомості, духовні цінності, духовна свобода, йога, буття, особистість, просвітлення, буддизм, нірвана.