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RELIGIOUS AND SOURCE-STUDY ASPECTS OF MASHKHUR ZHUSIP KOPEULY'S
MANUSCRIPT “DIN TAGYLYMY”

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Abstract. *Introduction.* The article provides a textual and source-based analysis of the manuscript *Din Tagylymy* (“Religious Teachings”) written by the prominent Kazakh educator and representative of Sufi thought, Mashhur Zhusip Kopeuly (1858–1931). *Goals and objectives.* The main focus of the study is to identify the structural, linguistic, and theological features of the manuscript and to determine its significance in the development of Islamic education and Kazakh religious thought. In *Din Tagylymy*, Kopeuly’s Qur’an-based spiritual and didactic reflections, as well as his views on the concept of *Insān al-Kāmil* (the Perfect Human), are systematized and shown in connection with the anthropological ideas of Islamic civilization. *Results.* Textual, source-critical, and hermeneutical methods were applied to reveal the internal coherence and historical authenticity of the work. As a result, Mashhur Zhusip Kopeuly’s *Din Tagylymy* is evaluated as an important manuscript heritage that preserved and transmitted the continuity of Islamic worldview and Sufi tradition within the spiritual culture of the Kazakh people. *Conclusion.* The concept of the “*Insān al-Kāmil*” (Perfect Human) in the Qur’an, the spiritual depth of the Sufi tradition, and the ideas expressed in Mashhur Zhusip’s “*Teachings of Religion*” collectively demonstrate the integrity and continuity of the Kazakh Islamic intellectual tradition. From a scholarly perspective, this highlights the relevance of examining Islamic anthropology, Sufi philosophy, and the Kazakh spiritual heritage in an integrated manner.

Keywords: Mashhur Zhusip Kopeuly, *Din Tagylymy*, textual analysis, source study, manuscript heritage, Islamic education, Kazakh religious thought, Sufi tradition

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МӘШХҮР ЖҮСІП КӨПЕЙҰЛЫНЫҢ «ДІН ТАҒЫЛЫМЫ» ҚОЛЖАЗБАСЫНЫҢ ДІНТАНУЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ ДЕРЕКТАНУЛЫҚ АСПЕКТІЛЕРІ

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Аңдатпа. *Kіріспе.* Мақалада қазақ халқының көрнекті ағартушысы, сопылық ойдың өкілі Мәшхүр Жүсіп Көпейұлының (1858–1931) «Дін тағылымы» атты қолжазбасы мәтінтанулық және деректанулық тұрғыдан талданады. *Зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты мен міндеттері* – қолжазбаның құрылымдық, тілдік және теологиялық ерекшеліктерін анықтау және оның исламдық білім беру мен қазақтың діни ойының дамуындағы орнын айқындау. «Дін тағылымы» еңбегінде Көпейұлының Құранға сүйенген рухани-дидактикалық ойлары мен әл-Инсан әл-Кәмил (кемел адам) ұғымына қатысты көзқарастары жүйеленіп, ислам өркениетінің адамтану идеяларымен сабақтастығы көрсетіледі. Зерттеу барысында мәтінтану, деректану және герменевтикалық талдау әдістері қолданылып, еңбектің мазмұндық тұтастығы мен деректік сенімділігі айқындалды. *Нәтижелер.* Мәшхүр Жүсіп Көпейұлының «Дін тағылымы» шығармасы қазақ халқының рухани мәдениетінде исламдық дүниетаным мен сопылық дәстүр сабақтастығын сақтап жеткізген маңызды қолжазбалық мұра ретінде бағаланды. *Қорытынды.* Құрандағы «инсан-и кәміл» концепциясы, сопылық дәстүрдің рухани тереңдігі және Мәшхүр Жүсіптің «Дін тағылымы» еңбегіндегі ойлары қазақ мұсылмандық ойлау жүйесінің тұтастығы мен сабақтастығын дәлелдейді. Бұл ғылыми тұрғыда исламдық антропологияны, сопылық философияны және қазақ рухани мұрасын тоғыстыра қарастырудың өзектілігін көрсетеді.

Түйін сөздер: Мәшхүр Жүсіп Көпейұлы, «Дін тағылымы», мәтінтанулық талдау, деректанулық зерттеу, қолжазбалық мұра, исламдық білім беру, қазақтың діни ойы, сопылық дәстүр

Алғыс. Мақала Қазақстан Республикасы Ғылым және жоғары білім министрлігінің «Қазақстан тарихы бойынша иллюстрацияланған өмірбаяндық энциклопедия жазу» атты бағдарламалық-нысаналы қаржыландыру (тіркеу нөмірі: BR24993173) аясында дайындалды.

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РЕЛИГИОВЕДЧЕСКИЕ И ИСТОЧНИКОВЕДЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ РУКОПИСИ «ДІН ТАҒЫЛЫМЫ» МАШХУРА ЖУСУПА КОПЕЙУЛЫ

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Аннотация. *Введение.* В статье проводится текстологический и источниковедческий анализ рукописи «Учение религии» выдающегося казахского просветителя и представителя суфийской мысли Машхура Жусупа Копейулы (1858–1931). *Цель и задачи исследования.* Цель исследования определить структурные, языковые и теологические особенности рукописи, а также выявить её значение в развитии исламского образования и казахской религиозной мысли. В труде «Учение религии» систематизированы духовно-дидактические идеи Копейулы, основанные на Коране, и его взгляды на концепцию аль-Инсан аль-Камиль (совершенного человека), показана их связь с антропологическими идеями исламской цивилизации. В ходе исследования применялись методы текстологического, источниковедческого и герменевтического анализа, что позволило выявить содержательную целостность и достоверность источника. *Результаты.* Произведение Машхура Жусупа Копейулы «Учение религии» оценивается как важное рукописное наследие, сохранившее и передавшее преемственность исламского мировоззрения и суфийской традиции в духовной культуре казахского народа. *Выводы.* Концепция «инсан-и камиль» (совершенного человека) в Коране, духовная глубина суфийской традиции и идеи, изложенные Машхуром Жусупом в труде «Учение религии», свидетельствуют о целостности и преемственности казахской мусульманской мыслительной системы. С научной точки зрения это подчёркивает актуальность комплексного изучения исламской антропологии, суфийской философии и казахского духовного наследия.

Ключевые слова: Машхур Жусуп Копейулы, «Учение религии», текстологический анализ, источниковедческое исследование, рукописное наследие, исламское образование, казахская религиозная мысль, суфийская традиция

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Introduction

The problem of the human being has not been the subject of reflection solely among Muslim Sufis; it has also been widely discussed by thinkers and scholars of other religions and cultures beyond Islam. Philosophers, in particular, are known to have devoted special attention to this issue and to have engaged in extensive reflection on it. From the earliest periods of Islamic kalām, various views concerning the human being were articulated, and the idea of the “pure human,” which was juxtaposed with the concept of al-insān al-kāmil, laid the groundwork for the formation of Sufi doctrine in Islam. Today, this concept is expressed as الإنسان الكامل in Arabic, انسان کامل in Persian and Urdu, insān-ı kâmil in Turkish, and kemel adam (“the perfect human”) in Kazakh; in the Islamic Sufi tradition, these designations denote concepts with deep historical roots and broad semantic scope. It is well known that the term was first employed by the renowned Andalusian thinker Muḥyiddīn Ibn ‘Arabī, who lived in the seventh century AH (Mutahhar, 1999). At the same time, there are accounts suggesting that the traditional foundations of this concept can be traced back to the famous thinker Ḥallāj Maṣṣūr, who was born in the city of Bayza in Iran and later lived in Bukhara (Sinanoğlu, 2008). This idea is not confined to the Abrahamic religions alone; in ancient cultures as well, the relationship between the human being and the cosmos was interpreted through the notions of the “microcosm” and the “macrocosm.” The understanding of the human being as a microcosm was articulated in various ways by thinkers from Socrates and his disciple Plato to Aristotle, and subsequently by intellectuals of the Renaissance period. For instance, the issue of the perfect human is specifically addressed in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and in al-Fārābī’s *Classification of the Sciences*.

The problem of the human being has remained a topical issue for society since the time of Adam. Especially in the formation of civilized societies, the essence of the human has been explained through such notions as akhlaq (ethics), “character,” and the “ontological qualities of the human being.” Nevertheless, within the frameworks of the concepts of “world,” bashar (the human as a biological being), and insān (the human as a moral and spiritual being), various assumptions have been proposed in the attempt to understand the human. In kalām, the “perfect human” (al-insān al-kāmil) represents the pinnacle of all virtues that a person can attain, whereas in Sufism it is understood as a perfect relationship between “God, the human, knowledge, and existence”.

In this article, employing hermeneutical and comparative methods, we aim to analyze the ideological foundations of the concept of the perfect human in Qur’anic verses, alongside the works of Islamic thinkers such as al-Fārābī, Yūsuf Balasaghuni, Aḥmad Yasawī, and Mawlānā, as well as the conception of “religious instruction” (Din taḡlymy) found in the manuscript heritage of the Kazakh religious-educational poet, folklorist, and historian Mäshhūr Jüsip Köpeýuly. As a representative of the rich cultural heritage of Central Asia, Köpeýuly not only devoted special attention to the issue of human spiritual and moral development in his poetic works, but also consistently emphasized in his treatises on religious instruction that the spiritual essence of Islam lies not in external rituals, but in inner spiritual purity, justice, and compassion. The ultimate purpose of religious practices, he argues, is to lead the human being toward perfection, purity of the heart, and social responsibility. In this study, the poet’s views on the human being are analyzed on the basis of his poetic works, and their continuity with the Islamic understanding of genuine religiosity and the concept of the “perfect human” is demonstrated. As a result, it is shown that Mäshhūr Jüsip Köpeýuly understood the ultimate aim of religion not merely as external worship, but as inner spiritual purification, social justice, and moral integrity.

This article examines the concept of insān-i kâmil in Qur’anic verses and its manifestation in Mäshhūr Jüsip Köpeýuly’s manuscript *Din taḡlymy* (“Religious Instruction”), as well as the core content of Sūrat al-Mā’ūn. In the course of the study, methods of systematization, description, comparison, historical-philosophical analysis, and hermeneutical interpretation were employed.

In the research process, the concepts of “perfection” and the doctrine of the “perfect human” in Islamic philosophy and Sufi teachings were taken as the primary objects of analysis. This topic was examined from comparative and typological perspectives within the framework of various cultural

and philosophical systems. Particular attention was paid to analyzing the meaning of the concept of al-Insān al-Kāmil in the Qur'an and the ways in which it is interpreted in the works of Mäshhūr Jūsip.

As primary sources, the Qur'an and its classical commentaries (al-Ṭabarī, al-Bayḍāwī, Ibn Kathīr), the works of Muslim thinkers (al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī, Ibn 'Arabī), as well as studies by contemporary scholars (S. H. Nasr, A. Schimmel, A. Qajybay, Q. Düysen) were utilized. These sources provided the basis for elucidating the historical evolution of the concept of the "perfect human," its specific features within the Sufi tradition, and its relevance in contemporary society.

Overall, the combination of the applied methods and the selected body of scholarly works made it possible to conduct a systematic analysis of the concept of the "perfect human" from a Qur'anic perspective and on the basis of the intellectual heritage of Mäshhūr Jūsip Köpeýuly.

Research Methodology

The concept of the "perfect human" constitutes an important object of study within philosophical and Sufi systems of thought concerning human existence and spirituality. From a philosophical perspective, this idea originates in antiquity and was articulated in the works of Plato and Aristotle through the image of the "rational," "just," and "virtuous" human being. It was subsequently developed in the writings of thinkers such as I. Kant, F. Schelling, and G. W. F. Hegel, and further complemented by A. Maslow through his theory of self-actualization.

Discussion

In Islamic philosophy, the works of al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī offer profound analyses of human creation and the paths toward perfection, while within the Sufi tradition the notion of insān-i kāmīl is elaborated in the writings of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Ibn 'Arabī, and Khoja Aḥmad Yasawī, where it describes various stages of spiritual refinement.

In Kazakh spiritual thought, this theme is most clearly articulated through Abai's doctrine of the "complete human" (tolıq adam). In the works of M. Äuezov, M. Myrzakhmetuly, and other scholars, this concept has been examined from moral and Sufi perspectives. Contemporary studies as well (B. Saterşinov, A. Nysanbaev, G. Yesim, among others) consider the idea of the "perfect human" in the continuity between national worldview and Islamic philosophy.

Results

The Qur'ān, revealed for the happiness of humankind, accords profound significance to the creation of the human being and, by portraying it in the most beautiful form, also affirms the human capacity to attain spiritual perfection. In this regard, the concept of aḥsanu taqwīm ("the most beautiful form") constitutes a fundamental foundation: "Indeed, We created the human being in the most beautiful form" (Oñgar, Muratāli, 2020) (al-Tīn 95:4). The expression aḥsanu taqwīm in this verse refers not only to the distinctiveness of the human's external form, but also indicates the potential for the inner spiritual world to develop and reach perfection. It likewise draws attention to such qualities as the ability to think rationally, to speak, to comprehend the essence of things in life, and to possess noble character. Through this, human nature is presented as a comprehensive and integrated structure. This understanding may be linked to Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār's doctrine of "unity" or "wholeness." According to his view, the human being is not merely spirit or soul, nor simply a mechanical combination of body and soul; rather, the human is an indivisible, integral being—a living and dynamic entity endowed with a unique structure (Sinanoğlu, 2000). In accordance with the Mu'tazilite tradition, separating the human into soul and body runs counter to an authentic understanding of human nature. The Qur'anic notion of aḥsanu taqwīm likewise points precisely to this wholeness: human existence is the harmony of body, soul, and spiritual capacities.

In the Qur'ān, a number of categorical descriptors that define the notion of the "perfect human" are frequently encountered, such as muttaqūn (متقون, the God-fearing), al-mu'minīn (المؤمنين, the believers), and al-muḥsinūn (المحسنون, the doers of good, those endowed with beneficence). Within the Islamic worldview, the concept of insān-i kāmīl represents a universal ideal regarded as the highest goal of spiritual maturation and human existence. By clearly affirming the point of perfection

inherent in human creation through the notion of *aḥsanu taqwīm*, the Qur'ān also explicates the paths toward spiritual perfection through a set of defining characteristics. The Qur'ān states, "Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God are the most God-fearing among you" (al-Ḥujurāt 49:13) (Oñgar, Muratāli, 2020), thereby emphasizing that piety constitutes the foremost value of the human being. Likewise, the verse, "Indeed, the believers are those whose hearts tremble when God is mentioned, and when His verses are recited to them, their faith increases, and they place their trust in their Lord" (al-Anfāl 8:2) (Oñgar, Muratāli, 2020), reveals the inner qualities of true believers that lead them toward perfection. In addition, the verse, "Indeed, God loves the *muḥsinūn*" (Āl 'Imrān 3:134) (Oñgar, Muratāli, 2020), indicates that spiritual perfection begins with beneficence and righteous action. Taken together, these attributes constitute the fundamental psycho-spiritual characteristics of the *insān-i kāmīl*: faith (*īmān*), piety (*taqwā*), beneficence, and justice.

Within the Sufi tradition, these principles are closely associated with the notion of *qurbiyyah*, that is, nearness to God. Those who attain divine favor are regarded as saints (*awliyā'*), and the guides of the saints are the prophets. Among all prophets, Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is portrayed as the most perfect exemplar of the *Insān-i Kāmīl*. In this context, the *insān-i kāmīl* emerges as the summit of prophetic mission, spiritual perfection, and moral integrity that serves as a model for humanity.

Thus, the concept of *insān-i kāmīl* may be regarded as the point at which the Qur'ān's ethical, spiritual, and theological teachings converge. It is grounded not only in individual human perfection, but also in social justice and collective responsibility. From this perspective, the Qur'ānic characterizations and the interpretations of the Sufi tradition harmonize with one another and lead to a common conclusion: true perfection consists in a spiritual and moral wholeness attained through faith in God, piety, beneficence, and justice.

In classical exegetical literature, extensive interpretations are offered concerning the notion of the "perfect human." Al-Ṭabarī (838–923), in his work *Jāmi' al-bayān*, interprets the verse of *aḥsanu taqwīm* as the harmony between the human being's physical beauty and spiritual capacities (Ṭabarī, 2001). Al-Bayḍāwī (13th century), in his *Anwār al-tanzīl*, distinguishes the human as a perfected being among other creatures, describing the human as one who walks upright, possesses a beautiful form, embodies the combined qualities of all creation, gathers within himself the resemblances of all possibilities, and is endowed with intellect and consciousness capable of disciplining the lower self (*nafs*), performing righteous deeds, and submitting to God (Bayḍāwī, 1997). Ibn Kathīr (1301–1373), in *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, explains the meaning of the expression *aḥsanu taqwīm* in the verse "Indeed, We created the human being in the most beautiful form" as God's solemnly affirmed promise, namely that God created the human in the most beautiful shape, endowed with the ability to stand upright, and with all bodily organs fashioned in harmonious proportion (Ibn Kathīr, 1998). He further emphasizes that the innate, primordial perfection (*fiṭrah*) granted to the human is complemented by such privileges as intellect, consciousness, and spiritual capacities. This understanding points to its continuity with the Qur'ānic descriptions of the *mu'minūn* and the *muḥsinūn*.

These perspectives also resonate with the doctrine of Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, according to which the human being is an indivisible, integral whole, and true perfection can be attained only when bodily, spiritual, and moral dimensions are considered in unity. Both the Qur'ān and classical exegesis indicate that human perfection is not confined to individual spirituality alone, but is closely linked with social and ethical responsibility. Accordingly, spiritual perfection in the Qur'ān is directly associated with purity of the heart (*qalbun salīm*), patience, justice, and actions beneficial to society.

For example, the Qur'ān states: "On that Day, neither wealth nor children will be of any benefit, except for those who come to God with a sound heart" (al-Shu'arā' 26:88–89) (Oñgar, Muratāli, 2020). This verse attests that the primary characteristic of the perfect human is the purity of the heart. Justice is likewise presented as the core of moral refinement: "Do not deviate from justice. Be just; that is closer to piety" (al-Mā'idah 5:8) (Oñgar, Muratāli, 2020). This principle encompasses not only personal spirituality but also social relations. Thus, the perfect human must be a just, beneficent, and responsible individual. Such an understanding corresponds with Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār's theory of

“unity,” according to which human self-perfection can be achieved only through the harmony of body and soul, as well as the balance between individual existence and social responsibility.

In the Sufi tradition, Qur’anic verses are interpreted not only in their outward (*ẓāhirī*) sense, but also in their inner (*bāṭinī*) spiritual meaning. The principal feature of Sufi exegesis lies in its emphasis on the human relationship with God, the spiritual path, and inner refinement, thereby elucidating the concept of the “perfect human.” From this perspective, Qur’anic expressions such as *aḥsanu taqwīm* (“the most beautiful form”) signify not merely the outward harmony of humankind, but also its potential to attain spiritual and moral perfection.

One of the prominent representatives of this tradition is the Moroccan Sufi scholar Aḥmad ibn ‘Ajība (1747–1809). His Qur’anic commentary *al-Baḥr al-Madīd* is regarded as one of the classical works of Sufi exegetical literature. In this work, the scholar interprets the Qur’anic verse “لقد خلقنا الإنسان في أحسن تقويم” (“Indeed, We created the human being in the most beautiful form”) from two perspectives—its outward aspect (the legal or *sharī’a*-based meaning) and its inward aspect (the spiritual allusion). Approaching the verse through the framework of “response and oath,” he explains that the statement (لقد خلقنا) “Indeed, We created the human being” affirms that God Himself created the human being in a unified inner and outer existence. The phrase (أحسن تقويم) “in the most beautiful form” is interpreted as an oath, signifying that creation was brought into being in the most excellent order and the most harmonious form, perfect both in outward appearance and in inner meaning. God created the human upright, fashioned the bodily organs in perfect proportion, and endowed the human with certain divine attributes—such as power, will, knowledge, life, hearing, sight, and speech. This interpretation is supported by the Prophet Muḥammad’s (peace be upon him) ḥadīth: “Indeed, God created Adam in His image.” Another narration states: “He created him in the image of the Most Merciful.” Ibn ‘Ajība concludes by noting that recounting the wonders of the human being would require a very long exposition (Abū al-‘Abbās, 1998). Accordingly, Aḥmad ibn ‘Ajība analyzes the fourth verse of *Sūrat al-Tīn*—“Indeed, We created the human being in the most beautiful form”—through two principal aspects. The first is the promise of creational perfection: God created the human being with a special status, granting the ability to stand upright, the harmonious proportion of bodily organs, beauty, and balance as outward excellences. In addition, certain divine attributes—power, will, knowledge, life, hearing, sight, and speech—were bestowed upon the human being as a “reflection.” Thus, among all created beings, the human occupies a unique position as a bearer and reflector of divine attributes. The second aspect concerns the fulfillment of this promise through the striving for perfection. These attributes are given to the human being only as potential. The statement “We created [the human] in the most beautiful form” functions, on the one hand, as a promise, and on the other, as a responsibility. Only by actualizing these potentials—through disciplining the *nafs*, refining the intellect, and engaging in spiritual cultivation—can a person truly ascend to the rank of the “perfect human.”

In conclusion, the Qur’anic verse *aḥsanu taqwīm* (“the most beautiful form”) has been interpreted in classical exegetical literature as a foundational principle that affirms the harmony between the human being’s physical beauty and spiritual capacities. Commentators such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Bayḍāwī, and Ibn Kathīr emphasized the harmony and excellence inherent in God’s special creation of the human being, drawing attention not only to outward form but also to the potential for inner spiritual development. These works underscore that creational perfection is inseparably linked with faith, piety, righteous action, and social responsibility. In the Sufi tradition, Qur’anic verses are interpreted not only in their outward (*ẓāhirī*) sense, but also in their inward (*bāṭinī*) meaning, with particular emphasis placed on the human role in knowing God. Sufi scholars such as Aḥmad ibn ‘Ajība understood the verse *aḥsanu taqwīm* as both a divine promise and a human responsibility, stressing that through attributes such as power, will, knowledge, hearing, sight, and speech, the human being reflects divine qualities like a mirror. Just as God governs the eighteen thousand worlds with justice and mercy, so too is the human being obliged, by attaining perfection, to manifest these “minor” divine attributes within oneself. Contemporary scholarship (e.g., F. Morrissey, *Sufism and the Perfect Human*) continues this line of thought, demonstrating that in Sufi literature the human being is perceived not only as a spiritual but also as a physical manifestation of the divine, becoming

a mirror of divine attributes through inner strength and spiritual development. Thus, the shared conclusion of classical exegetical literature and the Sufi tradition is that the Qur'anic concept of the "perfect human" is a universal category encompassing the totality of human existence, social responsibility, and the capacity to reflect divine attributes, rather than being limited to individual spirituality alone.

Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (870–950) is one of the most eminent figures of Islamic philosophy and the Muslim Renaissance. His philosophical legacy is closely connected not only with theological issues, but also with questions of human existence, personal development, and the structural foundations of society. One of his most significant works is the treatise *The Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City*, in which he offers a profound philosophical analysis of the paths leading to human perfection and the conditions necessary for the harmonious development of society.

In this philosophical framework, al-Fārābī—like the Qur'anic exegetical and Sufi traditions that converge on the notion of the "perfect human"—locates perfection within the wholeness of human existence. He elucidates, from a philosophical perspective, that responsibility toward society is realized through the cultivation and refined manifestation of the divine attributes inherent within the human being.

According to al-Fārābī, the essential nature of the human person lies in intellect and spiritual development. In his treatise *The Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City*, he provides a comprehensive analysis of the concept of the "First Being" or the "First Cause." Drawing upon the divine names and attributes, al-Fārābī formulates the following position: "The First Being is the primary cause of the existence of all living beings. He alone is free from deficiency. In all other beings besides Him there exists at least one deficiency, or several deficiencies. As for the First Being, He is free from all such imperfections, for His existence is perfect and surpasses all others in being; there is nothing more perfect than Him, nor has anything preceded Him. In this respect, His existence is the most excellent and the most perfected. Therefore, it is impossible for any trace of non-being or deficiency to affect His existence and rank, for non-being and opposites pertain only to the sublunary world. Non-being, moreover, signifies the absence of what ought to exist. In His case, existence can never be potential, nor is non-existence conceivable. Consequently, He is eternal, and His substance and the existence inherent in His rank are eternal as well. He requires nothing else to sustain His existence; in His eternal being, He is fully sufficient unto Himself and content with the eternity of His own existence. Thus, there is no existence similar to His, nor any rank equal to His, nor will there ever be. Furthermore, His rank is such that He requires no cause for His existence, for He is not material; His being cannot be described as material, nor does it belong to the category of subjecthood. Rather, His existence is free from both matter and subjecthood.

Likewise, He possesses no form, for form exists only in matter. If He had form, His essence would be composed of matter and form; were this the case, His being would consist of parts and would derive from them. In such a situation, His existence would have a cause, and each of His parts, together with the others, would constitute the cause of His existence. Yet it has been established that He is the First Cause. His existence has neither purpose nor intention; otherwise, striving toward such a purpose or intention would itself become the cause of His existence, and He would no longer be the First Cause. Moreover, His existence did not make use of anything prior to Himself, for He is by nature exalted above making use of anything inferior to Him" (Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, 2018).

In this exposition, al-Fārābī emphasizes that no trace of "non-being" can affect the existence of the First Being. His existence is eternal and perfect; therefore, non-being and opposition pertain only to the sublunary world and have no relation to the nature of the First Being. Al-Fārābī further clarifies that the First Being is independent of matter and form. Were form to be attributed to Him, it would imply a relation to matter, which in turn would render His being composite and dependent. In truth, however, the First Being is an indivisible and integral existence, an eternal cause devoid of any composition. Al-Fārābī likewise stresses that the First Being has neither purpose nor intention; the presence of such would indicate a need for an external cause. The First Being, however, is free from all need—He is the primary and ultimate cause whose existence proceeds from Himself alone.

Accordingly, for al-Fārābī, the essence of the human person lies in intellect and spiritual development. He approaches the human being from two complementary perspectives: the pursuit of rational knowledge and the attainment of spiritual refinement. In his view, only by knowing God and by emulating the “beautiful names and attributes” of the First Being does the human being perfect the self and attain true fulfillment. This level represents the summit of philosophical intellect and spiritual perfection. Moreover, al-Fārābī locates the foundation of a happy life not in material satisfaction, but in the knowledge of God and spiritual development. The human being must cultivate the self, advance in knowledge, and adhere to moral values. On this basis, he also defines the harmony of society, describing individuals who are just, intelligent, and endowed with beneficial knowledge as the pillars of the state. By imitating the First Being through self-discipline, the human being seeks to resemble the divine attributes of justice, power, and mercy, thereby fostering spiritual and moral refinement and engaging in virtuous action within social life. The perfection of society, in turn, depends upon the wisdom and moral excellence of each individual. Thus, the idea that “the individual is the mirror of society” finds clear expression in al-Fārābī’s works.

Māshhūr Jüsip Köpeyuly (1858–1931) was a prominent figure in Kazakh religious and educational thought, a scholar who integrated the study of poetry, genealogy, ethnography, and Sufi-Islamic teachings. He was thoroughly trained in the Hanafi-Maturidi school, which developed within the shared intellectual space of Bukhara, Samarkand, and Tashkent, and he purposefully mastered the Naqshbandi spiritual tradition. As a result, his religious and ethical treatises became a unique synthesis of Islamic theology and Kazakh worldview.

The presented manuscript, *Din Tagylymy* / *Din Ta’limi* (“Religious Instruction”), systematically explains the spiritual essence of religion, the significance of worship, and the social responsibilities of Muslims, illuminating the meaning of the perfect human. Within this text, key principles that resonate with the “perfect human” concept are articulated, such as: “religion as guidance,” “knowledge as the companion of action,” “the heart as a mirror of truth,” and “true piety arises from the spiritual state,” all grounded in the Qur’an and Hadith. The author critiques formalistic religiosity and presents the unity of faith and deeds as a holistic spiritual education program, realized through mercy, justice, compassion, zakat and sadaqah, and service to the public good.

The original manuscript is preserved in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Collection of the Central Scientific Library of the Institute of Literature and Art Studies of the Republic of Kazakhstan, folder No. 1171, pages [241^b–251^b]. Written in Chagatai language using the Nastaliq script, the text is structured to correlate Sharia rulings and ethical teachings with Qur’anic exegesis. The treatise begins with a Prophetic Hadith, substantiates its points with Qur’anic verses, addresses spiritual perfection in conjunction with social responsibility, and defines the measure of true piety through purity of heart, mercy, justice, and benevolence. The cover of the manuscript in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Collection notes: “Collected by Māshhūr Jüsip Köpeyev from history, literature, and ethnography, 1920.”

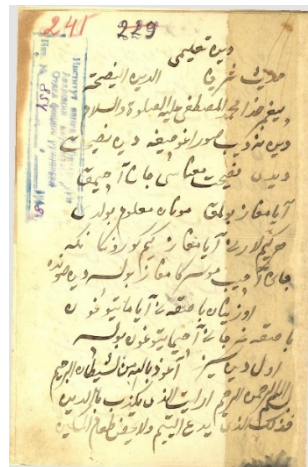


Figure 1. “Folder No. 1171,” page 241

The aforementioned Folder No. 1171, pages [241^b–251^b], contains the work titled *Dīn Ta‘līmī* (“Teachings of Religion”), written in Chagatai language, which describes the spiritual values of Islam. Focusing on the author’s reflections on human existence and spiritual development, the manuscript extensively addresses the unity of religious faith, moral values, and spiritual-social responsibility. The text deeply examines the inner world of a person, the meaning of worship, and duties toward society, based on Qur’anic verses and Prophetic hadiths. Special emphasis is given to the hadith “*Ad-dīn an-nasīḥa*” (“Religion is sincere counsel”). Here, the concept of *nasīḥa* is interpreted as showing compassion for others, mercy, justice, and kindness.

Human nature and spiritual perfection are expressed in the Qur’an through the concept of *ahsan al-taqwīm* (“the most perfect form”). Classical commentators interpret this verse as the harmony of a person’s physical beauty and spiritual abilities, while the Sufi tradition views it in terms of the potential for purity of heart, justice, and the embodiment of divine attributes. Similarly, Al-Farabi connects the essence of the human personality with intellect and spiritual development, asserting that human perfection is achieved through imitation of divine attributes.

Māshhūr Jūsip Köpeyuly’s work *Dīn Ta‘līmī* elaborates on these ideas and contextualizes them within the Kazakh worldview. He recognizes the core of religion as purity of heart and compassion, criticizing formalistic ritualism. According to his explanation, true religiosity is achieved through mercy, justice, service to society, and striving for knowledge, all of which lead to perfection.

In the manuscript sections [1^b–3^b], the essence of religion is described as not lying in external rituals but in *nasīḥa*—compassion and care for others. Māshhūr Jūsip interprets the hadith “*Ad-dīn an-nasīḥa*” as showing mercy and treating others with justice. He explains *nasīḥa* not in the literal sense of advice or sermon but as an expression of heartfelt spiritual compassion. In the Arabic lexicon, *an-nasīḥa* (النصيحة) means to be considerate or merciful, and in his interpretation, it aligns with the Sufi concepts of *ikhhlās* (sincerity) and *rahma* (mercy), which form the core of spiritual education and moral cultivation. Moreover, the author conveys the theological meaning of the hadith in accessible language: “If one does not show compassion to others, one is devoid of religion.” Here, devoid of religion does not mean atheist but refers to a spiritually indifferent person who performs rituals mechanically, lacking the inner essence of faith.

In conclusion, the hadith “*Ad-dīn an-nasīḥa*” represents a fundamental principle encompassing the moral and ethical essence of Islam. According to this teaching, true religiosity manifests through compassion, mercy, and sincere wishing of good for others. Religion is not mere ritual; it is spirit. Spirit is *nasīḥa*, and *nasīḥa* is the aspiration for goodness in the heart and the guidance of society toward virtue. The discussion then connects this understanding to the Qur’anic Sura al-Māghhūn.

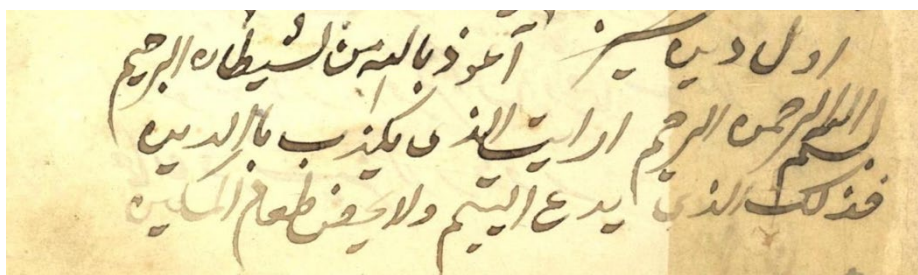


Figure 2. (Sura al-Māghhūn, verses 1–3)

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ (1) فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ (2) وَلَا يَحْضُنْ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ (3)

“Have you seen the one who denies the Day of Judgment (O Muhammad!), who repulses the orphan, drives away the needy, and withholds food from the starving?” (al-Māghhūn 107: 1–3) (Ongar, Mūratali, 2020).

Through this Qur’anic verse—“Do you not see the one who denies the Day of Religion (i.e., the Great Judgment Day before Allah, when ultimate accountability and decisive judgment occur)?”—Māshhūr Jūsīp Köpeyūly highlights the clearest manifestations of opposition to true religion: oppression of orphans, neglect of the needy, injustice toward the weak, and reluctance to propagate moral guidance (*nasīḥah*). He emphasizes that such indifference reflects pride, miserliness, and worldly attachment. For him, social responsibility is inseparable from religion: wealth without compassion is worthless, knowledge without propagation is futile, and piety that ignores orphans and the needy is mere empty formalism.

This conclusion illustrates the inseparable unity of religion and ethics in Islamic thought. True religion is an inner state of faith grounded in sincerity and social benevolence. From this perspective, life is regarded as *ikhtibār*—a test. The truth of one’s blessings is demonstrated by fulfilling the rights of orphans, widows, and the needy. Therefore, religion must manifest not only in rituals such as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage but also in mercy, generosity, and the establishment of social justice.

By labeling those who remain indifferent to such responsibility as “religionless,” Māshhūr Jūsīp signals the state of being deprived of the spirit of faith, unable to reach the level of *ahsan al-taqwīm*. Similarly, in sections [4^b–7^b], he sharply criticizes ritualistic worship devoid of inner spirituality. A person whose inner world has not been imbued with Allah’s attributes—power, will, knowledge, life, hearing, sight, and speech—and who has not been immersed in compassion and benevolence, performs prayers superficially without heartfelt engagement, which is considered hypocrisy. Such worship does not lead to spiritual perfection but exposes duplicity. The author concludes that true worship must be grounded in gratitude and sincere devotion. Furthermore, in sections [8^b–12^b], the perfected Muslim is described not only as a devotee of Allah but also as a beneficial, just, and compassionate member of society. If one does not share wealth or serve the interests of the community, one has not attained full Muslim perfection. Here, the concept of *qalb al-sālim* (a pure heart) is directly linked to social responsibility. In summary, the *Dīn Taḡlīmī* manuscript is directly connected with the concept of the “perfect human” in Islamic thought. According to Māshhūr Jūsīp, the perfect human not only knows Allah in the heart and performs worship sincerely but also establishes justice and compassion in society. His insights remain relevant today as a vital source for spiritual and moral education, social justice, and the ideals of civilizational development.

Human existence and spiritual perfection constitute a central concept in Islamic knowledge and Sufi philosophy. The Qur’anic verse “لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ” (“Indeed, We created man in the best of stature,” *al-Tīn* 95:4) (Ongar, Mūratali, 2020) is interpreted in classical exegeses as a universal principle expressing the harmony between human physical beauty and inner spiritual capacities. In the Sufi tradition, this verse became the hermeneutical foundation for the concept of *Insān-i Kāmil*—the Perfect Human. Furthermore, in Sufi literature, the notion of the Perfect Human is considered on both ontological and cosmological levels. Humans are regarded as God’s vicegerents on Earth, mirrors of His attributes, and creatures who comprehend the meaning of the universe. In the works of Ibn ‘Arabī and his intellectual successors, the perfection of human existence is realized through internalizing the names and attributes of God and attaining knowledge of the Divine. In this sense, the verse “*ahsan al-taqwīm*” signifies not only the physical form of humans but also their potential to achieve spiritual perfection.

Māshhūr Jūsīp Köpeyūly’s *Dīn Taḡlīmī* develops this idea in an ethical and social framework aligned with popular understanding. Drawing on the Prophet’s *ḥadīth* (“*Ad-dīn an-nasīḥah*”—“Religion is [about] sincere counsel”), he links the essence of religion to compassion, justice, benevolence, and social responsibility. For the scholar, true religiosity is not merely ritual worship but an inner moral state (*qalb al-sālim*) realized through assisting those in need, protecting the rights of orphans, and serving society. His statement—“Those who have done nothing for the poor and the needy, whether they perform prayers or not, are all ‘religionless’”—clearly criticizes religious formalism and emphasizes the ethical criteria of spiritual perfection.

The intersection of these two traditions – the Qur’an and Sufi thought – lies in the idea that human perfection is based on heart purity and spiritual sincerity. The Qur’anic concept of *qalb al-sālim* complements Māshhūr Jūsīp’s view that the essence of religion resides in a spiritual state.

However, there is a distinction: in the Qur'an and Sufi tradition, the concept of *Insān-i Kāmil* is primarily metaphysical and ontological (humans as mirrors between the world and God, realizing spiritual cosmic connections), whereas in *Dīn Taḡlīmī*, this idea is developed with a socio-ethical emphasis, directly linked to daily life and social justice.

Thus, the concept of the Perfect Human in the Qur'an and Māshhūr Jūsīp's treatise are fundamentally consonant: humans achieve perfection not only in physical form but also through spiritual, moral, and social responsibility. By adapting the ontological theory of the Perfect Human in Sufi thought to the historical and social context of Kazakh society, Māshhūr Jūsīp created a religious-ethical program. This simultaneously preserves a shared idea within Islamic civilization while highlighting features unique to the Kazakh spiritual worldview.

Conclusion

Overall, the concept of *Insān-i Kāmil* emerges as one of the most profound anthropological and theological notions within Islamic civilization, spanning from the Qur'anic verses to Sufi teachings. The Qur'anic verse "*ahsan al-taqwīm*" (the best stature) highlights the harmonious creation of human existence and its spiritual potential, indicating the possibility of achieving perfection. In classical tafsīr literature, this idea emphasizes the integrity of human physical, spiritual, and moral dimensions, while in the Sufi tradition, it is associated with the human capacity to mirror the attributes of God. These theological and Sufi foundations are further developed from a Kazakh worldview in Māshhūr Jūsīp Köpeyūly's *Dīn Taḡlīmī*. The scholar grounds the essence of religion in heart purity, compassion, and social justice, presenting the nature of the Perfect Human not merely through ritual worship but through socially beneficial action, mercy and benevolence, and the pursuit of knowledge and science. This reflects a contextualized interpretation of the Islamic principle of the "unity of faith and deeds" (*īmān wa-ʿamal*) within the Kazakh steppe. Moreover, Māshhūr Jūsīp's reflections demonstrate the continuity of the Sufi-philosophical tradition in Kazakh spiritual culture. By drawing on the Qur'an and Hadith, he connects the spiritual perfection of human existence with social responsibility, echoing the views of Muslim philosophers such as al-Fārābī, who emphasized that intellectual and spiritual development constitutes the highest essence of the human being. In conclusion, the Qur'anic concept of *Insān-i Kāmil*, the spiritual depth of the Sufi tradition, and the insights presented in Māshhūr Jūsīp's *Dīn Taḡlīmī* collectively affirm the coherence and continuity of Kazakh Muslim thought. This underscores the scholarly significance of examining Islamic anthropology, Sufi philosophy, and Kazakh spiritual heritage in an integrated and contextualized manner.

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