

The Study Of The Problem Of Altruism

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Abstract: The issue of altruism is one of the most relevant directions that has been studied extensively in psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and philosophy. This concept is connected with a person's placing others' interests above their own, providing selfless help, and feeling social responsibility, and its essence has attracted scholars' attention since ancient times. Historical sources interpret altruistic actions as an important social value for the development of human society, and in different periods the causes, motives, and forms of manifestation of such behavior have been consistently analyzed.

Keywords: Empathy; intrinsic motives; social perception; moral values; emotional regulation; altruistic behavior; interpersonal relationships; individual traits; moral values; psychological mechanisms.

Introduction: In psychological research on altruism, the main focus is on revealing its psychological mechanisms. Studies view empathy, intrinsic motives, social perception, moral values, and emotional regulation as central factors in the formation of altruistic behavior. In particular, a person's interaction with the social environment and their acceptance of its norms play an important role in understanding the socio-psychological roots of altruism. From this perspective, altruism is explained as a complex type of behavior that develops under the influence of both the individual characteristics of the human psyche and the social environment.

In sociology, altruism is analyzed as a mechanism that ensures mutual interdependence among members of society and supports social solidarity. Within this approach, an individual's tendency to help others is regarded not only as a personal trait but also as a fundamental value that helps maintain the stability of the social system. In pedagogical research, altruism is studied as an effective means of shaping moral values in the upbringing of the younger generation, developing cooperation within a group, and increasing social responsibility. Therefore, special attention should be paid to cultivating altruistic behavior within the educational process.

An evolutionary approach is also widely applied in the study of altruism. According to this perspective,

altruistic actions formed as a biological instinct and represent one of the mechanisms of human survival and the preservation of offspring. For example, parental care for a child or mutual help within a community is interpreted as instinctive behavior strengthened through natural selection.

Today, the problem of altruism remains one of the most relevant issues in contemporary psychology. In conditions of globalization, intensified competition, and increasing interpersonal conflicts, strengthening altruistic values in society is seen as a guarantee of social stability. Research indicates that the development of altruism has a positive effect on mental health, reduces stress, and strengthens trust in interpersonal relationships.

From a scientific standpoint, the issue of altruism began to be studied for the first time in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists. However, history shows that Eastern civilization paid attention to human upbringing and personal development much earlier. Although the term "altruism" was not used as a distinct socio-psychological concept in the works of Eastern thinkers, their writings and manuscripts contain profound socio-psychological reflections on personality formation, social relations, analysis of positive and negative traits, and the cultivation of a perfect human being. Their views on spiritual and moral development, encouraging youth toward good deeds, and shaping

positive qualities in society have not lost their relevance even today. For instance, Abu Nasr al-Farabi's *The Virtuous City*, Yusuf Khos Khojib's *Qutadghu Bilig*, Jalal al-Din Davani's *On Child Upbringing*, Kaykovus's *Qabusnama*, and Alisher Navoi's *Mahbub ul-qulub* widely discuss etiquette and morality, guiding youth onto the right path, humanism, and serving the interests of society. These ideas remain highly significant for directing young people toward socially beneficial activity and represent one of the methodological foundations for the development of scholarship.

The cultivation of behavior based on altruistic motives in an individual is also reflected in ancient sacred sources. For example, in one of the oldest written sources, the *Avesta*, the idea is advanced to "teach a child to think good thoughts, speak good words, and do good deeds." In its meaning, these three principles express the roots of altruistic values. Good thoughts refer to shaping a person's thinking and enabling them to distinguish between good and evil. Good words imply sincerity, compassion, and support in interpersonal relationships. Good deeds, in turn, mean carrying out beneficial actions in social life and extending a helping hand to others. Therefore, the concept of goodness can be regarded as an Eastern interpretation of altruistic behavior. The true essence of goodness lies in doing beneficial acts for others and providing help; it is considered the source of all virtue.

In the key sources of Islamic teaching—the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*—along with guidance on youth upbringing, manners and morality, conscience, faith, and belief, highly valuable instructions are also given about doing good and helping others. In particular, verse 77 of *Surah Al-Qasas* states: "Do good as Allah has done good to you." Likewise, verse 177 of *Surah Al-Baqarah* provides a broad explanation of righteousness, interpreting true goodness as spending from what one loves on relatives, orphans, the poor, travelers, beggars, and for freeing slaves. The meaning of these verses shows that Islamic teaching calls a person to provide direct assistance to others and to engage in charitable acts. Another supporting verse is 215 of *Surah Al-Baqarah*: "Whatever good you spend is for parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, and travelers." In this teaching, the figure of the one who gives support represents the key characteristics of an altruistic person. Giving one's wealth to those in need and showing kindness to them without seeking any benefit in return is a truly altruistic trait.

Sacred sources also place special emphasis on establishing generosity in people. Verse 39 of *Surah Saba'* says: "Whatever you give in charity sincerely to those in need, Allah will replace it." Verse 92 of *Surah*

Al 'Imran states: "You will never attain righteousness until you spend from what you love." Thus, generosity is a virtue based on the principle of not withholding what one has from others. From this point of view, generosity can be evaluated as an Eastern interpretation of altruism, because a generous person, like an altruist, is always ready to help others.

The *Hadith* literature also strongly promotes helping others. For example, in a *hadith* narrated by Imam Muslim and Imam Ahmad, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever relieves a believer of one of the hardships of this world, Allah will relieve him of the hardships of the Hereafter. Whoever helps a person in difficulty, Allah will help him in this world and the next. Whoever conceals the faults of a believer, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and the next. As long as a servant strives to help another, Allah will help him." [163] In another *hadith* narrated by Imam Muslim from Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Help your brother whether he is an oppressor or the oppressed." One of the companions asked: "O Messenger of Allah, we help the oppressed, but how can we help the oppressor?" The Prophet replied: "By preventing him from oppression—this is your help to him."

In our view, altruistic values have been presented in sacred sources since the earliest periods of human thought, and they represent one of the main mechanisms for guiding a person toward goodness. The principles of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds instill in human consciousness the choice of good, appreciation of kindness, and practical assistance for the benefit of society. These principles were later reinforced in religious teachings as well, where doing good, generosity, and helping others were interpreted as an inseparable part of human moral perfection. The content of sacred verses and *hadiths* shows that a person's willingness to give up part of their wealth to help those in need and to ease their hardships is among the highest manifestations of altruism. The virtues of generosity, kindness, and helpfulness ensure not only a person's social development but also their spiritual elevation. In this process, the individual acts in the interests of others above their own, thereby strengthening solidarity, harmony, and stability in society. Thus, sacred sources describe altruism as one of the oldest and most effective psychological mechanisms that ensure a person's spiritual purification, social responsibility, and moral growth.

In the works of Eastern thinkers, behavior grounded in altruistic motives is interpreted from the perspective of educating a morally mature, perfected person. In particular, the great scholar Abu Nasr al-Farabi, in his

socio-psychological views, revealed subtle aspects of the relationship between the individual and society. At the center of his socio-psychological teaching lies the problem of forming the “perfect human being.” According to al-Farabi, a person is inherently a social being and can attain maturity only within society and through interpersonal relations. His ideas related to altruism can be found in his treatise *On the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City*. In this work, he compares the virtuous city to a healthy body and emphasizes that all its “organs” must support one another [90]. In the scholar’s interpretation, a person cannot achieve perfection alone; rather, they need contact with others and require their assistance and cooperation. Al-Farabi stresses that the inhabitants of a virtuous city must support each other in difficult situations. Thus, in his view, society can rise to the level of a truly virtuous and noble city only when behavior based on altruistic motives is dominant.

Another great encyclopedic scholar of the East, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, attached great importance to the harmony of knowledge and morality in personal development. In his interpretation, the human being is a constructive and creative force on earth. Therefore, one should possess qualities that bring benefit to one’s homeland and people, such as goodness, truthfulness, nobility, generosity, compassion, sincerity, and friendly relations. Al-Biruni defined a person’s moral character and behavior through the criteria of good and evil. He emphasized that “the triumph of goodness and achieving it are not easy; this path requires great effort, patience, perseverance, strong will, and a high moral stance. A person attains maturity only through constant struggle.”

According to al-Biruni, a person is capable of controlling their passions, transforming them, and turning negative aspects into positive traits. By using methods described in moral writings, one can eliminate vices and gradually strive toward perfection. A learner who seeks good conduct and takes exemplary people as a model first comes to understand their own capabilities and correctly determine their place in the community. Since a human being is a conscious creature, they rise through self-education, imitation, and learning from examples. The scholar also regarded nobility and generosity as the most important qualities that lead a person to maturity. In his view, the foundation of nobility and generosity is goodness, and this represents a highest expression of valuing a person as a human being.

From the reflections above, it is clear that al-Biruni, in developing altruism in a person, first of all emphasized the importance of self-education and interpersonal relationships. In this way, Eastern scholars, through

their views, deeply highlighted the significance of altruistic values in personal perfection and social progress.

According to Abu Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna), all beings in the world, by their very nature, strive toward perfection, and this striving is essentially based on goodness. In his view, caring for a child, instilling purity, fostering a sense of responsibility, and developing friendly relationships are important factors in shaping the child into a mature person. These qualities help form humanistic feelings in the child’s heart. Ibn Sina lists various moral qualities in human behavior and explains their influence on the psyche from a socio-psychological perspective. For example, he interprets generosity as a human force that helps those in need, humility as a means of preventing excessive self-exaltation, and friendly relations as a source that ensures mutual care and cooperation.

The thinker also emphasizes that “ten things are the source of all virtues.” These include speaking truthfully and acting rightly; engaging in honest and pure labor; treating everyone with justice; not surrendering excessively to desires; conversing with scholars and the virtuous; giving due respect to elders; showing compassion to the young; valuing true and sincere friendship; not forgetting to help those in need and to give them support; and offering advice to the ignorant. On this basis, it can be said that in the formation of altruistic behavior, the emergence of moral concepts, their expression through words, and their gradual transformation into real practical actions are of great importance. Ibn Sina also notes that the family’s role is incomparable in the appearance of positive or negative traits in a child’s behavior. The family environment is a decisive force in shaping a person’s behavioral model.

In the issue of personal development, another major thinker is Yusuf Khos Khojib, who in his famous work *Qutadghu Bilig* provides an in-depth analysis of moral relations in society. In his view, historically it was only knowledgeable people who performed good deeds, pursued just policies, and served to cleanse people from vice. Therefore, he considered knowledge and wisdom to be the main condition for human perfection. In Yusuf Khos Khojib’s views, all good actions are grounded in “goodness,” whereas bad actions are rooted in “ignorance” and “selfishness.” He emphasizes that a person remains eternal in life through two things: first, good character; and second, good words and deeds.

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