

THE PHENOMENON OF PEACE IN QOBUSNAMA AS A MORAL PRINCIPLE

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Abstract: Qobusnama is, from beginning to end, a didactic work, a collection of moral instructions presented as the advice of an elder to a young man, primarily addressed to those engaged in service or destined for rulership and political responsibility. In general, the work describes the social life of the aristocracy and outlines the principles of kingship, as well as court customs, traditions, and discipline. It emphasizes that royal justice, the peace of the subjects, and the proper conduct of soldiers and officials are ensured through obedience and prudent governance. Qobusnama is a unique work on political ethics. It justifies defensive war but does not advocate aggressive campaigns against neighboring states. Its central idea is that a ruler must always remain aware of broader political developments, show no fear in the face of potential conflict, and protect the people, offering guidance that was considered appropriate for its time.

Keywords: spirituality, culture, religion, society, morality, justice, knowledge, politeness, wisdom, peace, moral maturity

Qobusnoma is an integral spiritual and political treasure of Eastern culture. It has had a profound influence on the cultural thought and spiritual life of the people of Central Asia. This can be explained by several factors. First, bilingualism, the practice of reading and writing in two languages, was common in both Movarounnahr and Herat. The work was written in Persian (not in ancient Pahlavi; Kaykovus himself advised that if one writes a book, it should not be in ancient Pahlavi, as it would not be understood by the people). Persian was even the official language of the Bukhara Emirate. To this day, there remains among the local population a group of people of Iranian origin who strongly adhere to their religious and cultural traditions, and various social groups, such as sayyids and khojas, have become integrated through kinship ties, forming a peaceful and cohesive society, which is a positive phenomenon. However, it is regrettable that many young and middle-aged people today are unaware of their historical roots [1].

In Qobusnoma, the paths of a ruler's spiritual and moral elevation are not explicitly outlined; unlike the teachings of a saint guiding disciples toward self-perfection, the idea of completely suppressing the ego is absent. Instead, the work promotes the regulation of the ego and a form of rulership grounded in moderation and ethical conduct, what may be described as the concept of a “regulated ego”. If Kaykovus's Qobusnoma is compared with *Al-Adab al-Mufrad* by Imam al-Bukhari or *Shama'il Muhammadiyah* by Al-Tirmidhi, it becomes evident that Qobusnoma is relatively weak and less authoritative as a religious source. In contrast, the aforementioned works are regarded as authentic (*sahih* or *hasan-sahih*) within the Muslim tradition. Therefore, Qobusnoma should be understood not as a text intended to implement religious principles in state politics, but rather as a work offering practical advice and guidance on the customs and practices of rulership.

In other words, Qobusnoma presents itself as a guide to attaining the throne, preserving it, and exercising the intellect required to govern a state. In this work, the image of the ruler is portrayed as that of an ordinary person who maintains a moderate attitude toward religion. If Jalaluddin Rumi's *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi* is intended for all Muslims, offering a universal spiritual program of devotion and providing readers with moral elevation and spiritual nourishment, then Qobusnoma, by contrast, proposes a way of life derived purely from political wisdom, intended exclusively for rulers and a

select group of high-ranking elites. Qobusnoma was not written for the common people. For this reason, we may say that Kaykavus’s Qobusnoma represents a systematic conception of the ideal ruler [2].

In some of his reflections, Kaykavus expressed ideas similar to those of Niccolo Machiavelli, such as the notion that “the end justifies the means”, a view that undoubtedly points to the root of many unjust rulings. Nevertheless, Kaykavus consistently urged those who hold political power to govern with justice and, through counsel, demonstrates the methods and principles for establishing the phenomenon of the just ruler, drawing on history, the realities of his time, and ethical values. We may therefore say that Qobusnoma serves, for its era, as a foundational work on statecraft and political counsel.

Kaykovus, in his admonitions, emphasized the transience of this world, while urging gratitude for its blessings as one lives through it. He explained that the people (raiyat) are entrusted to the authority of the ruler, and that rulers should learn the principles of governance from the prophets. He compared this to God’s revelation of Islam through the prophets, suggesting that the ruler acts as an intermediary in delivering blessings to the people with justice and equality. He advised as follows: “The justice of sustenance (rizq) and blessings lies in this: that provision should be given to the one for whom it is destined, so that they may partake of it. For the sake of justice in blessings, all people were created, and all blessings were made for them. Therefore, it was necessary to govern the people with justice, sound policy, and proper upbringing. However, to govern without guidance would be flawed. For if those who receive sustenance, lacking justice and proper upbringing, fail to recognize gratitude and appreciation toward the provider, then the fault lies with the provider who left them without knowledge... For this reason, He sent prophets among the people, to show them the way, to teach them the proper manner of consuming sustenance, and to instruct them in expressing gratitude to the provider” [1].

Another social issue that has remained constant across all times and eras is also highlighted in the work, namely, the relationship between old age and youth; more specifically, that between father and son. The author criticized young people for considering themselves wise and for disregarding the advice of elders, particularly a son’s failure to heed his father’s counsel, and partly attributes this to the characteristics of youth [3].

The work also strongly advocates the acquisition of a craft or skill, even for princes. Kaykovus compared a person without a skill to a bush without shade. He urged young people to learn a craft and, through it, to gain recognition in society. He stated that true greatness among people derives from intellect and wisdom, “not from lineage or rank”. He further emphasized that “a craft is learned only when not even an hour is wasted”. The work convincingly demonstrates that a person’s status is elevated through skill.

Kaykovus wrote: “Do not be stingy with kind words; if people do not hear gentle speech, they will become arrogant due to wealth and worldly possessions” [1]. Thus, the ruler’s duty is to speak kindly to the people and to dispel the arrogance in their hearts by guiding them toward religion and the Hereafter; it is only through such words that peace in society can be sustainably maintained.

Kaykovus emphasized that advice and moral instruction should be received in youth, since in old age one may no longer be able to benefit from counsel. He stated: “All of these things you should read and learn in your youth”. Kaykovus wrote: “O my child, no matter how young you are, let your mind be old”. At the same time, he advised making provisions for livelihood in youth and using them wisely in old age.

According to Eastern etiquette, attendants are also encouraged to include both elders and young people in their gatherings, since “the elderly know many things that the young do not”. He further

called for respecting elders, refraining from speaking about them unnecessarily, and addressing them with politeness and humility [4].

It is not considered good practice for people to joke excessively, whether among their peers or among strangers, as it may displease someone or hurt their feelings. In particular, one should never make jokes about a person in their presence, this is regarded as bad character, characteristic of those who lack dignity and integrity, and a source of ignorance and discord. Kaykovus wrote that “jesting (humor) is the prelude to corruption”. Such behavior often arises from the ignorance of many young men, but it ultimately works against their own interests and is a sign of moral deficiency.

In conclusion, the work Qobusnoma stands as an important monument of Eastern political and moral thought, offering a profound and systematic exposition of the principles of kingship and state governance. The work particularly emphasizes that a ruler must act on the basis of justice, kindness, intellect, and life experience. Kaykovus does not limit political authority merely to its preservation; rather, he advances the idea of harmonizing it with high ethical standards and humanism. In addition, issues such as the upbringing of youth, the acquisition of skills, respect for elders, and the maintenance of social balance within society also occupy an important place. In this regard, the work is significant not only for rulers but also for the development of society as a whole, and even today it is valued as a source of political wisdom and moral maturity.

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