

## ANNOTATION

**of the dissertation by Akhmetova Indira Abdigazymovna, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the Educational Program “8D02201 – Philosophy”, on the topic “Volunteerism in the Value System of the Kazakh Steppe (Experience of Philosophical and Ethical Discourse)”.**

The research work is devoted to the philosophical and ethical comprehension of the phenomenon of volunteerism within the value system of the Kazakh Steppe. It examines the place of volunteerism in philosophical and ethical discourse and analyzes the features of its formation in the historical, cultural, and social context of Kazakh society. The purpose of the study is to achieve a deep understanding of the concept of volunteerism in the traditional worldview of the Kazakh people, to trace its origins in the spiritual and social experience of the Turkic period, and to identify how, under the influence of Islamic civilization, volunteerism became enriched with moral and ethical content and evolved as part of the spiritual and moral heritage. In addition, the study aims to reinterpret the significance of traditional values in the context of globalization and to determine the sociocultural relevance of the phenomenon of volunteerism in modern society.

**Relevance of the Research Topic.** Volunteerism represents a phenomenon that reflects the most noble and moral aspirations of the human being. In the context of modern globalization, the significance of national borders is gradually losing its former rigidity, and the world is increasingly becoming an interdependent system in which the problems of one state can affect the entire global community. The modern era is a time of profound spiritual and social transformations. Globalization processes exert a direct influence on human existence, worldview, and systems of values, prompting a rethinking of traditional moral foundations. Under these circumstances, such concepts as social responsibility, altruism, solidarity, and mutual assistance acquire special importance, intensifying the need for philosophical and ethical comprehension of the phenomenon of volunteerism.

In the traditional spiritual system of the Kazakh people, the phenomenon of volunteerism has deep historical roots. As early as the Turkic period, the principles of mutual assistance, collective responsibility, unity, and brotherhood were formed, based on communal relations that can be regarded as the earliest ontological and social forms of volunteerism. Under the influence of Islamic civilization, this concept acquired spiritual and ethical content, being enriched with the categories of sadaqa (charity), beneficence, and virtuous deeds. As a result, the tradition of volunteerism in the Kazakh Steppe became an integral part of national existence and cultural identity.

However, in the era of globalization, the processes of cultural homogenization, the strengthening of individualism, the weakening of spiritual values, and, in particular, the declining interest of youth in traditional worldviews necessitate a renewed understanding of the essence of volunteerism. Under such conditions, volunteerism

should be viewed not only as a social practice but also as a spiritual and cultural phenomenon, revealing its philosophical, axiological, and worldview foundations.

In modern Kazakhstan, the institutional development of the volunteer movement and the growing civic engagement of youth increase the importance of analyzing this phenomenon within the context of the national philosophical discourse. Identifying the continuity between the traditional spiritual values of the Kazakh people and the modern culture of volunteerism determines both the theoretical and practical significance of this research.

The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, noted in one of his speeches: “Volunteerism is a social phenomenon that originates from the historical essence of our people and today plays an important role in strengthening civil society. Volunteerism is the unity of actions and thoughts in the name of a common cause. Volunteerism is a genuine trait of character and tradition of our people”. This idea testifies that volunteerism is not an external borrowing but, on the contrary, an inherent quality of Kazakh culture – a readiness to help, to show compassion, and to unite for the common good.

Furthermore, the Head of State, quoting the wise words of the great Abai – “Act in such a way that your benefit brings good to many” – calls for a profound understanding of the social significance and moral foundations of volunteer activity. In this context, volunteerism appears not merely as a form of social assistance but as an expression of civic engagement, spiritual responsibility, and national identity.

All of the above, as well as the consideration of the phenomenon of volunteerism within the context of the value system of the Kazakh Steppe, the historical and spiritual experience, and modern socio-humanitarian transformations, determines the relevance of this research, which is aimed at a deep philosophical and ethical comprehension of the essence of volunteerism, as well as at revealing its meaning and potential in contemporary Kazakhstani society.

**Object of the research:** volunteerism within the value system of the Kazakh Steppe and its philosophical and ethical foundations.

**Subject of the research:** the philosophical and ethical content of the phenomenon of volunteerism as formed in the worldview of the Kazakh people, its manifestation within the system of traditional values, and its place in modern society.

**Purpose of the research:** philosophical and ethical comprehension of the essence of the phenomenon of volunteerism in the context of the value and socio-cultural system of the Kazakh Steppe, as well as the determination of its spiritual, moral, and socio-cultural significance.

**To achieve the stated purpose, the following research objectives were defined:**

- To conduct a philosophical analysis of the ontological, axiological, and ethical foundations of the phenomenon of volunteerism;
- To identify the value and spiritual characteristics of volunteerism during the Turkic period;

- To analyze the ideas of volunteerism and charity in the works of Turkic-Muslim thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Yusuf Balasaguni, Ahmad Yugnaki, Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, and others;
- To determine the historical continuity and value significance of the ideas of volunteerism preserved in the spiritual heritage of the Kazakh people;
- To identify the dynamics of the development of the institutionalization of volunteerism in Kazakhstan and the socio-philosophical factors influencing it;
- To reveal the worldview content of the traditions of volunteerism as one of the key phenomena defining the national code of the Kazakh people;
- Based on the analysis of sociological research results among youth, to evaluate the activities of volunteer organizations.

**Research Methods.** This study is aimed at a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon of volunteerism in its philosophical, social, and ethical dimensions. Theoretical foundations are based on fundamental concepts of philosophical anthropology, social philosophy, cultural studies, and ethics. To analyze the historical formation and evolution of the concept of volunteerism, historical-philosophical and historical-logical methods were applied, which made it possible to identify the cultural and social transformations of volunteer practices in Kazakh society.

Within the framework of the hermeneutical approach, an in-depth interpretation of texts and discourses devoted to the phenomenon of volunteerism was conducted. Using sociological and anthropological methods, the study determined the place and significance of volunteer activities in modern society. To reveal the content of the research, methods of description, presentation, observation, comparison, induction, and deduction were applied, aimed at systematizing and analyzing empirical data.

In addition, through comparative textual and structural analysis, the essence, content, and influence of the concept of volunteerism on Kazakh society were examined. Based on a systemic approach, the study made it possible to reveal not only the historical and cultural significance of the phenomenon of volunteerism but also its socio-institutional role. The chosen methodological principles ensured a comprehensive analysis of the research object and clarification of its theoretical significance.

### **Theoretical Foundation and Degree of Problem Development.**

The theoretical basis of the study consists of ontological concepts of philosophy and modern approaches in the social and human sciences devoted to the study of the phenomenon of volunteerism. From an ontological point of view, volunteerism is considered an integral aspect of human existence, manifested in the self-realization of the individual, the awareness of one's place in society, and the expression of care for others.

Kazakhstani research is mainly focused on the study of youth social activity, civic responsibility, and spiritual orientation. Empirical data show that most volunteers associate their activities with charity, spiritual values, and public support. At the same time, their motivation clearly reflects the influence of national traditions and cultural

values. However, contemporary studies tend to focus on separate aspects: psychologists view volunteerism as a phenomenon of personal development; sociologists analyze it through the lens of social institutions; cultural scholars interpret it in the context of traditions and value dimensions; and social work specialists view it as a practice of providing assistance. Due to the insufficient integration of these interdisciplinary approaches, there arises a need for a comprehensive philosophical understanding of the ontological essence of volunteerism.

In this context, the present research aims to reveal the role of volunteerism in preserving national values and ensuring the spiritual and cultural development of Kazakhstani society.

**Research Hypothesis:** It is assumed that within the system of cultural and spiritual values of the Kazakh Steppe, the phenomenon of volunteerism was formed as an ethical and social phenomenon ensuring harmony between the individual and society. The concept of volunteerism is closely connected with the traditions of humanism, generosity, and mutual assistance, constituting an integral part of Kazakh spirituality. The preservation and revival of these traditions in the context of modern society can serve as an important cultural and moral mechanism for strengthening the national spiritual code and promoting the development of civil society.

**Scientific Novelty of the Research:**

- The phenomenon of volunteerism within the system of traditional values of the Kazakh Steppe has been comprehensively studied for the first time within the framework of philosophical and ethical discourse. The research provides an opportunity to consider volunteerism not only as a form of social activity or civic engagement but also as a profound spiritual and cultural value.

- The scientific novelty is reflected in the systemic and philosophical analysis of the value-based and spiritual aspects of volunteerism at the intersection of the Turkic era and Islamic civilization. In this context, ancient Turkic inscriptions and Islamic traditions of charity (zakat, sadaqa, waqf, brotherly mutual assistance) are examined as historical and philosophical foundations of volunteerism, with their socio-cultural significance concretized.

- The historical, cultural, worldview, and ethical features of the experience of volunteerism in Kazakh society have been identified. In particular, the interrelation of volunteerism with such traditional forms of mutual aid as asar, at suyek beru, alapa, aq alyp shygu, zhylu, erulik, kogendik, keusen, qudayy qonaq, qonaqzhailyq, and shulen tartu has been established.

- A new philosophical perspective on the socio-cultural and spiritual values of the Kazakh people is proposed through the prism of the phenomenon of volunteerism. This approach enables a deeper understanding of the moral and ethical foundations of the national worldview.

- The potential of volunteerism in preserving national values and strengthening cultural identity under conditions of globalization has been determined. In this respect,

volunteerism is viewed as a value that ensures spiritual unity and intergenerational continuity in modern society.

### **Main Results and Provisions to be Defended:**

- The phenomenon of volunteerism is closely connected with the ontological structure of human existence and is philosophically substantiated as a manifestation of free will, a sense of responsibility, and moral orientation. Volunteerism represents a form of realizing freedom through action.

- As an axiological phenomenon, volunteerism reflects moral and humanistic values. Its core value foundations include altruism, compassion, solidarity, and the aspiration to act for the common good.

- The phenomenon of volunteerism in the Kazakh Steppe originates from the ancient Turkic period and has become an integral part of social life. In the value system of Turkic peoples, such qualities as heroism, selflessness, intertribal mutual assistance, and hospitality shaped the archetypal forms of volunteerism.

- The integration of Islamic civilization into Kazakh society enriched the value content of volunteer institutions, complementing them with new religious and ethical foundations. Forms such as sadaqa, zakat, waqf, and charitable activity became spiritual and religious expressions of voluntary assistance and transformed into instruments of social justice and compassion.

- In traditional Kazakh society, volunteerism constituted the spiritual core of the socio-cultural space. Forms of social practice such as mutual aid among relatives, asar, collection of assistance (zhylu zhinau), and care for orphans and widows ensured unity and mutual support within the community.

- The manifestations of volunteerism in the Kazakh Steppe occupy a special place in the system of social solidarity and moral education as an essential component of the national code and cultural identity. These traditions form the historical foundation of the modern volunteer movement and contribute to preserving national distinctiveness amid globalization.

- In Kazakhstan, the process of institutionalizing volunteer activity is taking place gradually; however, its position within the legal, organizational, and educational systems still requires systemic support and improvement. At the same time, government programs and non-governmental organizations play a key role in activating this process.

- The results of a comparative sociological study conducted among youth in Kazakhstan and Turkey revealed that cultural factors have a significant influence on young people's motivation and attitudes toward volunteerism. The engagement of youth with social values and spiritual renewal through volunteerism contributes to strengthening national identity.

The obtained results allow for a deeper understanding of the social and cultural significance of volunteerism and provide a basis for considering its development within the context of scientific analysis and social practice.

**Practical Significance of the Research:** The results of the study can contribute to the deepening of fundamental scientific knowledge in the fields of philosophy, ethics,

and cultural studies. In addition, the integration of the ideas of volunteerism into the modern system of education and upbringing, as well as into the activities of public organizations and social programs, expands the practical applicability of the obtained results.

This research possesses significant potential for use in the educational process. Its results can be implemented as an elective course within the following educational programs: “6B02201 – Philosophy” (discipline “Social Philosophy”), “6B02202 – Religious Studies” (discipline “Morality and Religion”), and “6B11401 – Social Work” (discipline “Volunteer Activity in Social Work”). Such a course will enable students to master the philosophical, social, and cultural foundations of volunteerism, thereby contributing to their professional training, spiritual development, and the formation of civic responsibility.

Within the framework of scientific cooperation with the Faculty of Health Sciences of Gazi University, Republic of Türkiye, Department of Social Work, the research results on the social-philosophical study of the phenomenon of volunteerism have been integrated into the educational and scientific practice of this department at the international level. This collaboration contributes to promoting the values of volunteerism, improving the quality of research in the field of social work, and fostering the development of international scientific relations and academic integration.

This dissertation represents an important philosophical and ethical study of the phenomenon of volunteerism in the context of the traditional values of the Kazakh Steppe and the experience of modern civil society. The results of the research can serve as a scientific basis for the development of the volunteer movement in Kazakhstan, for strengthening historical consciousness and patriotic values among youth, as well as for enhancing the level of social responsibility. Furthermore, the findings and recommendations can be utilized to improve the activities of the National Volunteer Network, to support the implementation of the Roadmap for the Development and Support of Volunteerism for 2024–2026, and to advance state programs and the university education system through the integration of the ethical foundations of volunteerism.

**Relevance of the Research to Scientific and Research Programs.** The findings of this study provide a scientific basis for interpreting a number of objectives outlined in national programs and strategic documents aimed at developing volunteerism. In particular, the theoretical conclusions of the research can methodologically strengthen the directions defined by the National Volunteer Network, the Roadmap for the Development and Support of Volunteerism for 2024–2026, as well as government programs focused on youth policy and the development of civil society. The content of the study aligns with the university’s scientific strategy in the humanities, expands the theoretical foundation for understanding social processes, and can be applied to improve practical mechanisms for supporting volunteer activities.

**Structure of the Research.** The research work consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of references, and appendices.

**Approbation and Validation of Research Results.** A total of 23 scientific papers have been published on the topic of the dissertation. Among them, 6 articles were published in journals recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (such as “Adam Alemi” – a philosophical and socio-humanitarian journal, and the “Bulletin of E.A. Buketov Karaganda University”). 5 articles were published in the proceedings of international scientific conferences held in Kazakhstan. 12 papers and abstracts were published in the proceedings of scientific conferences abroad, including in Turkey, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Canada. In addition, three monographs on the research topic were published in English and Turkish (in Turkey and France).