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## The concept of labor in the history of social thought

**Abstract.** *The article is devoted to the consideration and analysis of the phenomenon of labor in the historical and philosophical context. The article shows the spiritual and moral foundations of human labor activity, changes and transformation of labor relations throughout history, civilizational and ethno-confessional differences in the organization of economic activity and production. The analysis of labor as a moral category is carried out on the basis of an appeal to the concepts of prominent scientists and thinkers. Thus, the interpretation of labor in the framework of the ancient and Christian worldview is considered from the understanding of labor as a punishment for original sin to its assessment as a godly mission, where it is ontological characteristic of human life. The concept of labor in the theological teaching of Thomas Aquinas is analyzed in detail. Further, in the conditions of the formation of capitalism, a society of commodity-money relations in the XVIII-XIX centuries there are significant changes in social status and the way of work. In these historical circumstances labor becomes a commodity. Particular attention is paid to the interpretation of the problems of labor in national philosophies. In the development of Russian social thought in this aspect, one can single out the ideas of S.N. Bulgakov, who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, analyzing the origins and spiritual factors of the formation of Russian entrepreneurship, finds its connection with the religiosity of the Old Believers. Kazakh thinkers also attached great importance to the concept of labor. Great Abai, emphasizing the role and importance of labor in the formation of the individual and the development of society, reflected this in his famous «Words of Edification». In modern conditions, among the works of Kazakh researchers, where the problems of labor are considered, one can point to the monograph by Omar Zhalel «Hareket». It focuses on etymological differences in word usage, used in the analysis of the work.*

**Key words:** *labor; labor activity; spiritual value; good; hareket; work ethics; axiology of labor; commodity; commodity-money relations; theory of surplus value.*

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## **Introduction**

Solving the problems of building an industrial-innovative economy at the present stage requires the intensification of all types of human labor activity. All values of world civilization, all economic and cultural wealth are created by the efforts of human labor. But labor is not only an economic category, but also a moral value. Through labor, a person creates both the objective world of culture and creates himself, realizes the inherent creative and intellectual capabilities. Being one of the necessary factors of socialization, labor allows us to actualize the essential characteristics of each person and to construct the living space of his being. It is labor that allows a person to find his true place and purpose in society.

## **Methods**

In the analysis of the stated problems, the following methods were used: comparative-historical, analytical, typological, dialectical, hermeneutic.

## **Discussion**

Comprehension of the concept of labor can be found throughout the development of social thought. In the period of antiquity, simple economic work seemed to be an occupation unworthy of free citizens. As you know, the flourishing of Greek civilization was based on the hard, low-skilled labor of slaves. Valor in the eyes of the Hellenic aristocracy consisted not in labor, but in contemplation, noble idleness. Physical labor was viewed as a burden, like torment. A free citizen of an ancient polis is a politician, warrior, participant or spectator of sports competitions, a visitor to friendly feasts, theaters or schools of thought. Only for agricultural work was it considered a worthy occupation, which was determined by the very way of the ancient economy. Further, under the conditions of the Roman Empire, the tendency for idle pastime intensifies, where commoners demanded not opportunities for productive labor, but «bread

and shows.» Thus, ancient society did not develop a positive work ethic. Labor at this time was perceived as a punishment. That is why the image of Sisyphus was formed in ancient Greek culture. However, it should be noted that in this era, emphasis was placed on the importance of intellectual work.

Understanding of the phenomenon of labor continued in the conditions of the Christian Middle Ages. We can say that Christianity has changed the negative attitude to work inherent in pagan ancient culture [1]. Labor began to be understood as a positive good, as a godly deed. In general, medieval civilization can be characterized as a civilization of labor. In the very initial postulates of Christianity, one can find the sources of a positive assessment of labor. «Eat your bread in the sweat of your brow» - says the Gospel. The Apostle Paul taught: «If anyone does not want to work, neither do he eat» [2].

In this context, the «theology of labor» of Thomas Aquinas can be mentioned. In contrast to the ideas of antiquity, St. Thomas argued that work is pleasing to God, and idleness does not contribute to spiritual improvement. God himself, in his interpretations, acted as the «first artisan», the architect of the world. Thomas Aquinas states labor as the only legitimate source of property and wealth. It can be said that the rudiments of what was later called the labor theory of value are found in the writings of the greatest theologian of the Middle Ages. Thomas Aquinas is one of the creators of the social utopias of the Middle Ages. The ideal of society for him was a closed state based on a natural agrarian economy. Therefore, in such a society, according to Thomas, there should be as few commercial and monetary transactions as possible, which he assessed as an unrighteous evil. Only in productive labor did he see a godly source of income, while wealth appropriated by merchants and usurers, who do not create any material goods and values, is sinful. Therefore, this kind of «unearned» income should be prohibited in a society based on Christian values. St. Thomas caused usury. Christianity teaches to help another person out of love for one's neighbor. Usurers violate this postulate. Charging interest

is devilish enrichment. It is achieved without any visible labor. The argumentation of Thomas Aquinas against usury seems to be interesting. When trying to justify their income, usually moneylenders appeal to the time factor, where time is equal to the surplus they receive as a result of the money loan. Opposing them, Thomas focuses on the fact that time is a common good, given by God to people for the same use. And the usurers sell this free gift of God, so their business is undoubtedly sinful. Thomas Aquinas develops a similar line of reasoning in evaluating trade and pricing. In his opinion, the fair price should be constant, independent of the ratio of supply and demand. Merchants can add a premium only for the labor invested in the delivery and movement of goods [3].

It is well known that medieval culture emphasized the ritual side of religious life; most of the time of the year, medieval people devoted to various church holidays and carnivals. Therefore, the emerging urban bourgeoisie regarded this model of life as unproductive and unworthy idleness. In the XVI - XVII centuries teachings began to appear that conveyed the need for hard work and practical activity, mastering a variety of crafts. An example of this is the ideas of F. Bacon in the «Great Restoration of Sciences» [4]. Undoubtedly, the famous work of F. Bacon is devoted to the development of sciences and education. But more broadly, this is a new look at a person, an emphasis on his productive and creative abilities, allowing to change natural and social reality. As is known from the biblical stories, by repentant labor, the reviving humanity was granted by God the opportunity to create an ordered civilization in which the living conditions of a person would be improved to a certain extent. In this regard, the emphasis was placed on the labor principle in the spiritual organization of human nature, an active approach to professional and social life. The ultimate reward for these efforts was to return man to dominion over nature, which was the main motive of the Great Restoration. Therefore, the model for youth should not be theologians, but representatives of practical professions, such as miners, metallurgists, artisans. The gap

between scholars and practitioners is an essential evil of the legacy of the period of scholasticism that must be overcome.

The formation of a society of commodity-money relations in the 18th-19th centuries leads to a change in the social status and image of labor. Under these conditions, labor becomes a commodity. With the dominance of the traditional agrarian type of production, the market was an auxiliary instrument of economic life. The capitalist type of economy creates developed markets not only for goods and services, but also for labor, land and capital. In the previous period, under the conditions of the guild system, relations in the sphere of production were regulated not by the market, but by the rules and customs of the guild and the city. Labor was protected from becoming an object of sale and purchase by numerous laws on workshops, artisans, the poor, etc. Until the end of the 18th century the question of the formation of a free labor market has not yet arisen in any country. It should be noted that labor is not an ordinary commodity. A product is an item produced for sale in the market. And labor, like land, is not produced for sale. Labor is nothing more than human beings themselves in their life. But the capitalist type of economy does not tolerate limitations in its functioning, therefore the principles of the market apply to the sphere of labor. A labor market is emerging. Thus, under capitalism, in order to maintain the production process itself, labor was forced to turn into a commodity. This is the origin of the social drama of the industrial revolution. In the future, its influence on the life of the people was very destructive. Labor relations of the capitalist system are analyzed in detail by K. Marx in his concept of alienated labor [5]. However, it should be noted that Marx's conclusions and assessments refer to the classical capitalism of the 19th century. From a modern point of view, capitalism has shown its «vitality», the ability to modify and adapt. And of course, private interest and personal motivation are the main factors in the labor relations of any society and the efficiency of its economy. Nevertheless, it should be noted that diligence as a principle of traditional morality and professionalism as a virtue of modernity are equally eroded in post-industrial society.

The problem of labor is reflected in national philosophies as well. For example, the famous Russian thinker S.N. Bulgakov, analyzing the origins and spiritual factors of the formation of Russian entrepreneurship, finds connections with the religiosity of the Old Believers. In this context, he draws attention to the essential difference between Russian and Western capitalism, which, as you know, is based on the values of Protestantism. According to S.N. Bulgakov, Orthodoxy has no less spiritual potential for the development of entrepreneurial activity, has powerful means of educating the individual, developing her sense of responsibility and duty [6].

The ideas of S.N. Bulgakov about the civilizational differences in the organization of human labor activity are interesting. In this context, he draws attention to the fact that the basis of the bourgeois industry is Protestant ethics, and the basis of agriculture is the Orthodox worldview. According to MR Eloyan, Father Sergiy interpreted «agriculture» in a generalized sense, as receiving all kinds of benefits from the land, from bread to mineral resources [7, p.187]. It seems that the modern countries of Eurasia, living off the export of oil and gas, Bulgakov would attribute to the «agricultural» civilization. S.N. Bulgakov criticized the representatives of classical political economy for the fact that they did not see the difference between the extractive and processing economy and mistakenly reduced the economic laws of industrial production to agricultural societies. The philosopher believed that in agriculture «soil productivity» is more important than labor productivity. Therefore, the price of agricultural products cannot be measured by the amount of labor expended. According to Bulgakov, the law of surplus value is ineffective for the regulation of agricultural economy. In addition, the following ideas of the Russian thinker seem to be very interesting and relevant. They are about the moral superiority of agricultural labor over industrial; the insignificance of the factor of division of labor and cooperation in agriculture; the advantages of manual labor and “shovel culture” over machine culture; about «the need to reduce the average

size of the economy.» According to Bulgakov, the economically optimal form is the «individual peasant farm», which, at the same time, forms the historical basis of the country's wealth and moral power. The peasant community is not only a form of labor organization, but also a means of preserving the moral and ethical values of the people.

The problem of labor and management is reflected in the works of the outstanding Turkic thinkers Al-Farabi, Y. Balasaguni, M. Kashgari and others. In the Words of Edification, the great Abai points out the role of painstaking, hard work in the formation of a person; the need and importance for Kazakhs to borrow the socio-cultural experience of other peoples for successful development in the future. The thinker foresightedly saw that extensive livestock raising as a type of economic management was exhausting its resources and could become a brake on the future civilizational development of the people. The outstanding Kazakh educator Sh.Ualikhanov analyzed the existing traditional culture of management and ruling in his works. Standing for the evolutionary type of development, Shokan, at the same time, pointed to the need for an organic combination of traditional and innovative in the management system, which would take into account the specifics of mentality and national psychology.

In modern conditions, among the works of Kazakh researchers, where the problem of labor is considered, one can point to the monograph by Omar Zhalel «Hareket». In particular, he points to the following: “Although in our [ethnic] word usage, the synonymous concepts of reket, hareket» of Arabic origin, Abay, Mashhur Zhusup, Shakarim emphasized their semantic difference ... And for the first time in Kazakh literature, this difference can be seen in Abai's poem, beginning with the words «... Restless, shameless, sloth ...». Abay applies the concept of «kareket» to the designation of cunning, insidious efforts in achieving certain goals by a person, and the concept of «hareket» is used by him to designate a good struggle on the path of life «[8, 73-74]. And in our opinion, such a use of the term «hareket» should be applicable in modern times to the content and forms of national entrepreneurship.



Pointing to the negative consequences of laziness in human nature, the great Abai wrote: "All people are ruined by three things that need to be eliminated in oneself in every possible way: the first is ignorance, the second is laziness, the third is evil ... Laziness is the enemy of everything creative in a person... irresponsibility, lack of will, shamelessness and poverty ... all this stems from human laziness ... «[9].

Then Shakarim echoes Abai in verse: "From laziness - sloppiness in everything, sloppiness is the root of ignorance, one comes from the other ... and destroys the human race ..." [10]. The outstanding Kazakh thinker and ethnographer Mashhur Zhusup Kopeev noted that in ancient times it was believed that the cause of poverty is human vices, i.e. stubbornness, laziness and long sleep. Thus, Kazakh thinkers from time immemorial have emphasized that persistent, honest work to create material wealth is one of the moral pillars of mankind. The problem of labor was also reflected in the verbal forms of culture, Kazakh sayings and proverbs: «A man without work is sad, the share is bitter», «A loafer has a life without prospects», «A workaholic's sheep bears twins», «A man is honored by labor, the earth is glorious by fertility», "Don't blame life without the fruits of labor, don't be angry without shelter," and so on.

It should be noted that in the Kazakh traditional worldview, achievements realized as a result of hard and painstaking work and diligence had a special moral status. On this occasion, Abai notes: «A young man who sells his labor is revered more than an old man who speculates on his authority (merit).» The outstanding educator Ybyrai Altynsarin writes: "If you are poor, stay away from theft, God will help you, work hard!" [11]. They are echoed by Akhmet Baitursynov, emphasizing that human efforts, aspirations and efforts are needed to achieve wealth and capital.

It is obvious that these conclusions of our thinkers are associated with the well-established view of the role of labor in the value system of Kazakhs. In the traditional worldview, labor has, first of all, a human, anthropological dimension. This is evidenced by Kazakh proverbs and sayings: «Respect by work, veneration by age»,

«A man is glorious for work as the earth is valuable for fertility», «Work glorifies man», «If you do not work, do not reproach others; if there is no shelter, do not blame the wind», «Labor paints a person, and a person glorifies the era», «Labor gives birth to heroes, heroes glorify the country.»

In the Kazakh traditional worldview, it is work that is assigned the role of a tool for personal development. This can also be seen from the content of numerous phraseological units: «If you are friendly with difficulty, you will not lag behind your generation», «Work skillfully from a young age», «Seven arts are not enough for Dzhigit» (Kazakh: a young man), «Labor requires perseverance», «Confident in work - confident in yourself «,» Labor has ennobled a man «,» Labor is the essence of man, knowledge is his two wings «,» A man has a short day without work, his fate is hard «,» A hardworking sleep is not enough «,» A hard worker is light on his feet, a lazy sleep is not for the future «,» Not adapted to work, useless for the homeland «,» Labor is a dear mother. «

In the traditional ethics of Kazakhs, great attention is paid to honest work: wealth should be acquired only in a righteous way. The rest is "haram" (not right). Wealth in the word usage of the Kazakh people is defined as the accumulated property and abundance, as well as the basis of life, its source. It should be noted that Kazakhs do not have a negative attitude to wealth, but subject to its accumulation through honest, persistent, painstaking labor: "At the heart of wealth is immeasurable labor, the source of poverty is utter laziness", "If you work, you will not become a man, come to me (for advice) ... you will strive, but you will not get rich, come to me (for advice) .... «,» Tie your belt tighter and get to work «,» If you work, you will not die (of hunger), you will overcome laziness, then you will conquer yourself «,» Labor is the father, the earth is the mother «,» Wealth is not for the future if it is acquired unrighteously; power is meaningless if it does not serve the good". The concepts of good and good are closely related to this interpretation of the origin of wealth. "Wealth is good" is a category in the traditional culture of Kazakhs, which includes a system of ideas

about the material well-being of an individual, collective, and society. «Wealth acquired without labor is like illness without treatment.» How can we not recall the «magic of the golden calf», «the vicious circle of money-grubbing and love of money» found in many other world cultures and religious systems?! Another proverb says, «The unrighteous wealth of the villainous oppressor is not for the benefit of his descendants.» That is, only material wealth accumulated by righteous labor and honest intentions becomes wealth-good. “Wealth is not a goal, poverty is not a vice” says the age-old wisdom of a great people, teaching equally to all the vicissitudes of a person’s life path. Wealth is not a goal, but only a means for the implementation of universal humanistic values, for achieving the ideal of social harmony. And the role of labor in this is indisputable.

One of the most significant worldview categories of Kazakh national self-awareness is the concept of «Yrys». Yrys stands for the essence of the use of material goods in the earthly world. Concerning Yrys, Kazakh wisdom reads: «Do not shirk from work, do not frighten Yrys», «The inactive will be without Yrys», «The earth is the spring of Yrys, labor is his support», «The one who came in for nothing will be without Yrys», «A man who wakes up early in the morning Yrys blessed, the woman awakened at dawn is beautiful with one more deed.» At the same time, it is especially emphasized that a person should initially develop an attitude to earn a living by honest labor, and only then will he achieve success and Yrys.

Gender aspects can also be found in the work ethic of Kazakhs. It is well known that in the XIII-XIV centuries the law of Genghis Khan «Zhasak» was in force in the Golden Horde. In one of the sections of this law, the responsibilities of a woman in the family are described in detail, with particular emphasis on the fact that a man is only allowed to hunt and fight. However, in the traditional ethics of family relations, we find the following saying: «In the field I am a warrior, mercilessly crushing the enemy, but in the house I am short-tempered and courteous.» This once again emphasizes the social status of a woman as a keeper of the hearth, a careful and reverent

attitude towards her among the Kazakhs. Kazakhs define the place of a man in the family and society as follows: “A noble husband with strangers is a warrior, a slave in the house; the unlucky husband in the family is a tyrant and a loafer. « Thus, labor is everywhere the measure of humanity.

Kazakh thinkers emphasized the importance of hard, fruitful work in achieving material well-being based on the principles of social justice. Unfortunately, such attitudes were shaken by the Soviet government with its attitudes towards equalizing justice «equality in poverty.» Thus, an appeal to the national spiritual heritage can be very promising in the analysis and interpretation of the problems of labor in the context of the modern development of society.

### **Results**

While analyzing the concept of labor in the historical and philosophical aspect, the authors obtained the following results:

- shows the genesis in the understanding of the phenomenon of labor in the framework of the development of Western European philosophical thought - from understanding it as a punishment and curse to a godly deed and vocation;
- on the basis of the concept of the outstanding Russian thinker S.N. Bulgakov, a close connection between the sphere of work and the ethnopsychological characteristics of a particular people is demonstrated;
- the analysis of the concept of labor based on the spiritual heritage of the Kazakh people was carried out.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, the analysis of the concept of labor in the historical and philosophical context allows us to comprehend the moral value of labor as a source of civilizational development of society, actualizes the problem of labor in modern conditions. Such an analysis seems to be very significant in the context of the industrial and innovative development of our country since it reveals the spiritual and moral origins and motivation of a person’s labor activity.

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### Қоғамдық ой тарихындағы еңбек концепті

**Аңдатпа.** Мақала еңбек құбылысын тарихи-философиялық тұрғыдан қарастырады және талданады. Мақалада адамның еңбек қызметінің рухани-адамгершілік негіздері, еңбек қатынастарының тарих барысындағы өзгерістері мен трансформациялары, экономикалық қызмет пен өндірісті ұйымдастырудағы өркениеттік және этноконфессиялық айырмашылықтар көрсетілген. Этикалық категория ретінде еңбекті талдау көрнекті ғалымдар мен ойшылдардың тұжырымдамаларына жүгіну негізінде жүзеге асырылады. Еңбек ежелгі және христиан дүниетанымы шеңберінде, еңбекті алғашқы күнә үшін жаза ретінде түсінуден бастап, адам өмірінің негізгі онтологиялық сипаттамасы және Құдайға қызмет ететін миссия ретінде бағалауға дейін түсіндірілген. Фома Аквинскийдің теологиялық ілімінде еңбек ұғымы жан-жақты талданған. Әрі қарай, капитализмнің қалыптасу жағдайында XVIII-XIX ғғ. тауар-ақша қатынастары қоғамында еңбектің әлеуметтік мәртебесінде түбегейлі өзгерістер байқалады. Осы тарихи жағдайларда еңбек тауарға айналады. Мақалада ұлттық философияларда еңбек мәселелерін түсіндіруге ерекше назар аударылған. Осы тұрғыдан ресейлік қоғамдық ойдың дамуында С.Н. Булгаковты ерекше атап өтуге болады. XX ғасырдың басында ол орыс кәсіпкерлігінің бастаулары мен қалыптасуының рухани факторларын талдай отырып, оны ескі сенімдегілердің діндарлығымен байланыстырады. Қазақ ойшылдары да еңбек ұғымына үлкен мән берген. Ұлы Абай еңбектің жеке тұлғаны қалыптастыру мен қоғамды дамытудағы рөлі мен маңызын атап өтіп, мұны өзінің әйгілі «Қара сөздерінде» көрсетті. Қазіргі жағдайда еңбек проблемалары қарастырылатын қазақ зерттеушілерінің еңбектерінің ішінде Омар Жәлелдің «Харекет» монографиясын атап өтуге болады, ол еңбек әлемін талдауда пайдаланылатын сөз қолдануындағы этимологиялық айырмашылықтарды талдайды.

**Түйін сөздер:** еңбек; еңбек қатынастары; харекет; байлық; дәулет; рухани құндылық; еңбек этикасы; еңбек аксиологиясы; тауар; тауар-ақша қатынасы.

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### **Концепт труда в истории социальной мысли**

**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена рассмотрению и анализу феномена труда в историко-философском контексте. Показаны духовно-нравственные основы трудовой деятельности человека, изменения и трансформации трудовых отношений на протяжении истории, цивилизационные и этноконфессиональные различия в организации экономической деятельности и производства. Анализ труда как нравственной категории осуществлен на основе обращения к концепциям выдающихся ученых и мыслителей. Так, рассмотрена интерпретация труда в рамках античного и христианского мировоззрения: от понимания труда как наказания за первородный грех до его оценки как богоугодной миссии, выступающей базовой онтологической характеристикой бытия человека. Подробно проанализирован концепт труда в теологическом учении Фомы Аквинского. Далее, в условиях становления капитализма, общества товарно-денежных отношений в XVIII-XIX вв., происходят значительные изменения социального статуса и образа труда. В этих исторических обстоятельствах труд превращается в товар. Особое внимание в статье уделено интерпретации проблематики труда в национальных философиях. В развитии русской общественной мысли в этом аспекте можно выделить идеи С.Н. Булгакова, который ещё в начале XX века, анализируя истоки и духовные факторы формирования русского предпринимательства, находит его связи с религиозностью старообрядчества. Большое значение концепту труда придавали и казахские мыслители. Великий Абай, подчеркивая роль и значение труда в становлении личности и развитии общества, отразил это в своих знаменитых «Словах назидания». В современных работах казахских исследователей, рассматривающих проблематику труда, можно выделить монографию Омара Жалела «Харекет», где сделан акцент на этимологических различиях в словоупотреблении, используемом при анализе сферы труда.

**Ключевые слова:** труд; трудовая деятельность; духовная ценность; благо; харекет; трудовая этика; аксиология труда; товар; товарно-денежные отношения; теория прибавочной стоимости.

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