

# Structural Analysis of the Mythological Consciousness of the Peoples of the East

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**ABSTRACT:** In modern conditions of the global development of civilization, when humanity is faced with the problem of choosing new strategies for survival, interest in traditional oriental teachings is growing, since it was in them that special attention was paid to the issues of spiritual perfection of a person, his moral values as a priority and the main condition for the development of his being and meaning all life.

In the formation of traditional oriental philosophical teachings, the epic occupies a central place. Each mythological worldview as a manifestation of spirituality already has its own central and highest moral values, which are carried out through the prism of the idea of the struggle between good and evil, axiological judgments «permissible» and «unacceptable».

At the same time, the history of philosophy and culture is important, as well as the mythological worldview of each nation cannot be considered in isolation from each other. Since they are an organic part of the entire world civilization. In this regard, this article studies the epic traditions of the Eastern peoples in the context of the formation of their value consciousness, identifies their common features and characteristics.

**KEYWORD:** Mythological consciousness, epic traditions of the peoples of the East, the idea of the struggle between good and evil, axiological judgments «permissible» and «unacceptable».

## INTRODUCTION

It is known that the epic<sup>1</sup>, it is a work of art oral or written form, expressing the heroic past of the people, dreams and hopes in the manner of the story. These works gradually became fine works of art of a poetic and prosaic genre. In lyrical works, reality is described in the context of the ideal, the worldview of reality in the epic, when the lyrical hero or Creator reflects his emotions through spiritual feelings.

The basis of epic works was ancient mythology. Mythology – is a special form of human consciousness, a way of preserving traditions in the constantly changing reality. In mythology, the Cosmos appears as a whole, formed by the interaction and mutual transformations of the living and

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the dead, conscious and spontaneous, man and the environment. <sup>ii</sup> Mythology includes folk tales (myths, epics, etc.) and it is the first stage of a holistic perception of the picture of the world, the relationship of man and nature, natural and social phenomena. Thus, it is an early form of human consciousness.

### 1. EPIC - IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FORMATION OF VALUE CONSCIOUSNESS

Mythology – is a special form of human consciousness, a way of preserving traditions in the constantly changing reality. Protagoras also claimed that Zeus gave people «shame and truth» so that they could get out of the natural state and live peacefully in society.

The deep philosophy of the myth was created by the Italian scientist Giambattista Vico. In his classic essay «The Founding of a new science about the General nature of Nations», published in 1725, he calls the mythology of the «divine poetry» (from which then arises the heroic poetry of the Homeric type), and associates its identity with undeveloped and specific forms of thought based on sensuous concreteness, emotionality and the richness of the imagination. His philosophy of myth contained in the germ of almost all the major future directions in the study of mythology.

Vico put forward the theory of the progressive development of mankind through the cyclical development of individual nations, according to which any nation goes through three stages, and then it dies or breaks up and there comes a period of New Barbarism, when people wander through the Great Forest of the Earth, for example, the period of New Barbarity came after the invasion of the Germans to the Roman Empire. If at the first stage priests appear everywhere, then at the second stage – hercules and heroes. If there are three centuries, that they correspond to the three kinds of manners. People were religious at first, then angry, then helpful and ready to do their duty. Three types of law: divine, law of power, legislative. Three types of boards:

- Theocratic rule, when priests rule.
- Aristocratic rule, when a rule is notable.
- Human rule when people have equal rights.<sup>iii</sup>

The important conclusions of the scientist include the following ideas: The image of government should correspond to the nature of managed people. This Axiom shows that by the nature of human civil things, the Public School of Princes – is the Morality of Nations.<sup>iv</sup> At the end of his work, he writes: «from all considered in this Work can, in the end, to make such a conclusion that our Science is inseparably carries with him Zeal in Piety, and the one who is not pious, he truly cannot be Wise.<sup>v</sup> That is, the concepts of «piety» and «wisdom» are considered to be the main interrelated priorities of social progress.

Developing the ideas of Giambattista Vico, the German philosopher Herder considered mythology as part of the poetic wealth created by the people, folk wisdom. Myths draw its poetry, national identity.

*The representative of the romantic philosophy of the myth – Schelling, interpreted the myth mainly as an aesthetic phenomenon. In the philosophical system of Schelling mythology takes place as if between nature and art; polytheistic mythology is the deification of natural phenomena through fantasy, the symbolism of nature.*

Later, in England, as a result of the first scientific steps in comparative Ethnography, the so-called anthropological or evolutionist school was formed (Taylor, E. Lang, Spencer, etc.). According to

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Taylor, mythology arose in the process of finding a primitive man the answer to his questions about strange phenomena. Mythology was thus identified with a kind of rational «primitive science». With the development of cultural mythology, as if completely deprived of any independent value, reduced errors and remnants, only the naive, pre-scientific way of explaining the world.

The structuralism theory of myth was developed by French ethnologist Claude Levi-Strauss, founder of so-called structural anthropology, in which mythology was viewed as primitive «long-term thinking» (but not illogical).

The representative of the French sociological school L. Levi-Brul focused on social psychology, emphasizing the qualitative specifics of the psychology of society. Collective representations (namely, the mythological representation of) are, he believes, a matter of faith and not of reasoning, have a peremptory character: if modern European differentiates the natural and the supernatural, the «savage» in their collective representations perceives the world is one. <sup>vi</sup>

The symbolic theory of myth, fully developed by the German philosopher Cassirer, made it possible to deepen the understanding of the intellectual originality of mythological thinking. Mythology is considered by the Cashier along with language and art as an Autonomous symbolic form of culture, marked by a special way of symbolic objectification of sensory data and emotions. Mythology appears as a closed symbolic system, United both by the nature of functioning and by the way of modeling the surrounding world. The cashier considered spiritual activity of the person and first of all myth-making (as the most ancient type of this activity) as «symbolical».

*Representatives of the psychoanalytic school (V.Wundt, Z.Freud) as the genesis of myths emphasized the role of affective states and dreams, as well as associative chains as fantasy products related to myths.*

*The English anthropologist A. Malinowski marked the beginning of a functional school in ethnology and mythology. In the book «Myth in primitive psychology» (1926), he wrote: «As we will see, if the myth is studied alive, it is not symbolic, but a direct expression of its content; not an explanation that satisfies the scientific interest, and verbal resurrection of primitive reality. It is retold to meet deep religious needs, it is a set of moral and even practical prescriptions, as well as a means of maintaining social subordination. In primitive culture, myth has an indispensable function: it expresses, strengthens and codifies faith; it justifies and sustains moral principles; it affirms the efficacy of ritual and contains practical rules that guide man. Thus, myth is an essential part of human civilization; it is not an idle tale, but an active force, not an intellectual explanation or an artistic fantasy, but a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom».* <sup>vii</sup>

According to the definition of A. F. Losev: «The Myth is a religious symbol, because the religion is a belief in the world and life according to this belief, including a certain kind of morality, life, magic, rituals and sacraments, and a cult. The myth is nothing transcendental in itself does not contain, does not require any faith... From the point of view of primitive man, who has not yet reached the division of faith and knowledge... it should not be about faith, but about the full identification of man with his environment, that is, nature and society. Not as magical operation, the myth even more includes no rites. Magic operation is a literal or substantial realization of a myth... Magic, ritual, religion and myth represent fundamentally different phenomena, which are not only often develop quite

Thus, mythology emerged as an early form of human self-consciousness and expression of a holistic human attitude to the world, the existing world order. In the era of primitive society, the world was represented mainly through mythological images. Since ancient times, man has perceived the world

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that surrounds him, as a rule, through two polar categories: friendly and hostile forces, good and evil, white and black. Such performances have found their vivid expression – in myths, legends, fairy tales, epic. In them the phenomena of nature and society, as well as the supernatural phenomena were interpretivist in unity with legendary heroes, gigantic creatures, in particular dragons, birds etc. In them along with the special weaknesses of primitive people was reflected great courage and heroism, especially the deep sense of confidence in the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, faith in the implementation of the noble goals and aspirations.

In the image of the world expressed the forces of nature in unity with human activity. But this manifested itself as a complex of knowledge accumulated over the centuries about nature and human society. Unlike philosophy, based on logical thinking, mythology was associated with emotional impressions. In this regard, the logic in the presentation of events has become a priority, although the names of the characters are preserved depending on the period of their creation. Accordingly, with the development of society, its plot is also gradually changing in accordance with the requirements of life. The essence of this process is the early period of spiritual perfection of mankind – the primitive community and the ancient world rely mainly on mythological thinking. With the development of society, it strengthens the logical component.

Scientist-orientalist Muhammad Imomnazarov said: «Literally fiction began to appear in our region (Central Asia - P.D.) only shortly before the revelation of the Koran. ...The essence of the great discovery of Islamic enlightenment is that our great encyclopedists, who lived in the X–XI centuries, conducted a comparative study of all the knowledge that humanity has formed before Islam and made sure that all the existing knowledge that humanity has realized correspond to the essence of the Tawhid faith... As a result of these revolutionary changes in the spiritual perfection of man, mythological thinking, corresponding to the primitive community, which was the main style of thinking of the ancient world and partly medieval man began to develop to the level of logical thinking (that is, thinking on the basis of cause-effect relationships), creative thinking (which is the expression of his vision in symbols), historical thinking (to draw conclusions based on the facts given in historical sources, etc.)»<sup>viii</sup>. And this was the beginning of the formation of modern scientific thinking.

## 2. MORAL VALUES AND IDEALS IN AN EPIC TRADITION ANCIENT INDIA

The foundations of Indian philosophy, which originated mainly in antiquity and the early middle ages, were formed during the four millennia in the interaction and synthesis of epic and classical literary traditions. Veda – philosophical and religious book, which arose in India in 1500-600 BC. Mythological thinking of the ancient Indians had preoritetnoy importance in the development of the Vedas. The great scientist Abu Rayhan Beruni wrote in his work «India»: «Veda means knowledge that was not previously known... His Indians believed the words of the Supreme Creator uttered by Brahma». <sup>ix</sup> «Veda» – is a Sanskrit word meaning «knowledge». The Vedas cover issues relating to the social, political, economic, spiritual life of the ancient Indian peoples.

The Upanishads – is a philosophical comments written to the Vedas, which help to understand their essence. Upanishads began to be created in 1000-800 BC. The word «Upanishad» is sanskrit and has the meaning of «disciple sitting next to teacher» and «useful advice and parting words». His own the essence of expresses – «puzzling knowledge». <sup>x</sup> Total Upanishad more than 200, including large and small poems, stories that belong to different artistic directions.

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The structure of the Upanishads consists of a question-answer, that is, a conversation between the teacher and the student. In this case, the teacher can be not only a specially appointed mentor, but also the parents of the student, grandfather and grandmother, as well as recognized, respected people.

The main terms in the Upanishads are Sanskrit, and the term Brahman means – development, spirituality, existence and eternity; the term Hiranyagarbha means – cosmic intelligence; the term Para means – higher knowledge; the term Apra means – lower knowledge.

The term Om or AUM is also a Sanskrit word for the character of Brahman and his three main qualities:

«A» is Whichmap – Creator,

«U» is Vishnu – the protector

«M» is Shiva – the destroyer.<sup>xi</sup>

In the Upanishads, the class system is legitimized, and the unity of the universal and individual spirit is considered.

The idea of reincarnation is a specific Indian phenomenon.

It is based on «Karma» – the basic concept, which is often the center of all Indian philosophy. Karma means the behavior, action. The term karma means both moral and metaphysical criteria of philosophy.

However, in modern philosophical systems they usually distance themselves from each other. Belief in karma, reincarnation, i.e. rebirth, is associated with ethical behavior. Ethical motivation is understood as a manifestation of the justice of the Universe. That is, for a generous person, there are prospects for the good, and for a sinner – for evil. Thus, the Upanishads legitimize the layered system. This means that people «earn» the right to belong to a certain class in their previous lives.

In the Upanishads, written in the later period, there is a transition to finding the way Moksha relieving man from samsara. Karma itself means behavior, action. All human suffering is a consequence of certain actions and behavior.

«Five thousand years ago, due to the increasingly shorter life expectancy and the weakening of his memory, for the people of the end of the world Vyasadeva kaliyug first prepared a Veda written on paper. He then created sources such as the «Mahabharata», is dedicated to the history of the Upanishads, Purans and Great Buharats that, given the scope of the intelligentsia, coming from a literate family, help to understand the deep content of the Vedas. He also wrote «Vedanta-Sutra from his mouth at the request of his teacher Narada, which means «the last word of the Vedas»<sup>xii</sup>.

As in ancient spasenoviceva, the main theme of «Mahabharata» is associated with moral values and ideals of man.

In particular, the preamble «Mahabharata» starts with these lines:

Who will overcome life-in battle?

What they call real courage...

Who will be right in an unequal dispute ?

Who deserves more praise in the songs?

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One who will not feel sorry for himself for the sake of others

Who struggles for the sake of pure and bright truth

He will win the battle for life.

Against dark, evil forces.

Who fights honestly, inevitably

Will be called brave.

Without envy, self-interest-impartially

Who protects human happiness -

Remains right in unequal combat.

If the person is honest, brave and noble

Whoever he is, wherever he is.,

Myths, songs will be composed by him.<sup>xiii</sup>

From this we can understand that the main leitmotif of the work is the ancient heroes, their courage and generosity, nobility, honesty, justice, high morality and moral values.

Indian monument of Sanskrit narrative prose «Pancha-Tantra» (literally «five principles or texts») – formed by the III–IV centuries a.d., has a long-standing folklore origins. «Pancha Tantra» from ancient times was known and popular in Central Asia under the name «Kalila and Dimna» . Tradition calls the author of a Brahman Vishnusharman, as if he lived in the V –VI centuries, who at the request of one Raja to teach him the wise management of the state and made this collection of allegorical instructive stories.

Heroes in «Panchatantra» – animals, society and mores which are a copy of human. Participants narratives have «telling» names, characterize their character. As noted orientalist of Suima Ganieva: the Greatest value «Kalila and Dimna» is that ever since its inception, it has not lost its value and influence as a piece written just yesterday. Incredible stories, parables, proverbs, which are set out in it, passed down from generation to generation and gained wider popularity.<sup>xiv</sup>

### 3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EPIC TRADITION OF ANCIENT CHINA

In the development of Eastern epic tradition, the Confucian doctrine occupies a special place. Speaking about knowledge (chji) and its origin, Confusiy associated it with the study of ancient books and the experience of ancient ancestors. In addition, he considered ancient legends and chronicles to be the main source of knowledge. Therefore, any new phenomenon was evaluated from the point of view of the old experience and prohibitions of the past. This approach led to the idealization of the Chinese past. As a result, despite the fact that in China there are also ideas of Taoism and Buddhism, Confucianism during the II century BC and the beginning of the XX century retained the status of the official ideology.

For almost three millennia of the development of Chinese philosophy, its conceptual design of views on nature and society proceeded within the framework of such important categories as «Tao» (way, pattern), «Li» (rules of behavior; spirit; truth; clarity; loyalty; applicability and usefulness), «Li» (mind; law), «tai Ji» (great limit), «Yin Yang» (struggle of light and dark beginning), «qi» (life

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ether). The cosmic law of «human growth» is that its interaction with the life ether should be constant, but not exceed the measure.

Otherwise, disease, chaos, spiritual and physical crisis are inevitable. The perfect person, having a sense of measure, lives in harmony with the heavenly principle: compliance with the measure as a voluntary self-restraint is organic for the sage, does not suppress nature. In this sense, the ritual for the ideal personality – «the cosmic principle, which he does not change».<sup>xv</sup>

Characteristic of Eastern cultures, in particular ancient Chinese philosophical teachings, is also the idea of the world as a huge living organism. Not divided into natural and human, it was perceived as an organic whole, all parts of which are interconnected and affect each other. This cosmology excluded the opposition of the subject to the object and was based on the recognition of the dual nature of things in accordance with the «Yin-Yang» model.

The bipolarity of existence was expressed through two primary forces: «Yin» acted as a negative pole, personifying the passive (female) origin, and «Yang» as a positive, active, creative (male) origin. Interconnected «Yin» and «Yang» constantly alternate and interact. The concept of «Yin» and «Yang» was the basis for understanding the universal interconnectedness of phenomena and their mutual resonance. According to the teachings of Taoism, «Everything permeates a single path – Tao, everything is connected with each other»

The doctrine of the two types of energy that determine the course of all world processes, played for Chinese natural philosophy the role of a universal paradigm that organizes all the traditional knowledge (science), which has its subject unity «macrocosm – microcosm» (in the language of the European tradition of the late antiquity – pliom, in the language of Chinese natural philosophers – «the great One», Tai), qualitatively superior to the sum of its components «things». This approach is sometimes called holistic (holistic), and the corresponding methodology – holism (from Greek. holos, «all, whole»)<sup>xvi</sup>.

#### **4. MORAL VALUES AND IDEALS IN AN EPIC TRADITION PEOPLES OF THE MIDDLE EAST**

The favorable geographical location, nature, climate of Central Asia, which since ancient times had a unique cultural space, provided it with an early start of socio-economic development and served as an important link connecting the culture of the peoples of the West with the East; Mesopathamia, Iran, Egypt, later Greece and Rome with China and India. «It is this factor, according to orientalist Fozilakhon Suleymanova, - finding similarities between Gopathoh and Minotavr, myths and folklore Greek mythology and mythology of the peoples of Central Asia confirms the existence of the relationship, the enrichment of one culture and literature of the other began with the distant past and was carried out up to Islam».<sup>xvii</sup>

It is known from the history of mankind that ancient peoples and nationalities expressed their noble dreams, ideals through their epic heroes. In them, the attitude of man to nature, to man, to the world as a whole, he succeeded in moral values. And it was an important tool in regulating the interaction of people in society.

In particular, in «Avesto», which was the first written source of the peoples of Central Asia and Iran, ancient Indians, Chinese, as in written sources of Hellenism, mankind has always glorified the idea of a happy life, moral values such as honesty, truthfulness, diligence, friendliness. The basis of «Avesto» is the idea of fighting good and evil, light and darkness; the unity of good ideas, kind words, good deeds.

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In ancient legends happiness, good was associated with light, sunlight, and Vice versa – death, misfortune, evil with darkness and terrible cold. These ideas subsequently had a significant impact on the formation of ideas about the city of happiness and the city of misfortune, not only in literature, but also on the development of philosophical thought. For example, their influence was strong in the formation of Plato's teachings about the ideal state of creation Forobi works about the ideal city.

«The ideas of the Zoroastrians, – wrote Najmiddin Kamilov – deeply penetrated into the consciousness of the peoples of Turon, Iran, Greece, on the basis of which began to form a social morality based on the principles of purity and truthfulness. Thus «there was a philosophy of a new understanding of the world, the spiritual power inspiring people to creativity, faith in a bright and happy life».<sup>xviii</sup>

Among the ancient epic compositions that influenced the development of the world epic tradition, which are characterized by high ideological and artistic perfection and a deep humanistic direction, remains an important moral value, it can be noted for example, «Gilgamesh» the Sumerian, «The Iliad» and «Odyssey» of Homer, the ancient Greek; «Mahabharata», «Ramayana», «Kalila and Dimna» («Pancha-Tantra») the Indians; «Go'ro'g'li», «Alpomish», «Manas», «Forty girls», «Gershasp», «Qayumars», «Jamshid», «Erxubbi», «To'maris», «Shiroq», «Siyovush», «Rustam» of the peoples of Central Asia.

In them, along with the reflection of ancient historical events in a highly artistic form, you can see the perception of the world through mythological representations, moral and value attitude of man to nature, life in general, expressed by various aesthetic methods.

One of the famous works related to the epic genre, where moral values have found their vivid expression is «Shahname» Firdausiy (940-1020). It contains ancient legends, a heroic epic, and the history of Iran, from the time of Alexander the great to the death of Yadigard III (651), king of the Sassanids. The main characters of the work are Rustam, Sukhrob, Cova, Isfandiar, Giv, Siyavush, Bejan, Lumbak Mazdak, and others; of the kings Alexander and Bahrom.

The basis of «Shahname» are moral values such as honesty, courage, justice, love and devotion to the Motherland, etc., as well as the ideas of centuries-old and eternal struggle between good and evil. Experts note that these ideas began with ancient religious dogmas, myths and legends that were included in the «Avesto».

Firdausi glorifies man as a possessor of mind, priziyaet him not to hurt anyone, not to razbrasivat seeds of evil. In his opinion, if someone harms someone, he will be exposed to disaster:

If you are just and your faith is pure,

There will be no stitch in your soul.

If you are immoral, the poison is incurable,

Wait from Heaven – a thousand troubles.<sup>xix</sup>

Firdausi characterize good behavior and noble deed as an important value, which warns human from of evil.

The great representative of the Eastern classical literature Alisher Navoi also widely used legends in the creation of the work «Hamsa». The poet wrote that in his works he used ancient legends to glorify the moral qualities of man.<sup>xx</sup>

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Alisher Navoi creates an artistic image of the «perfect personality» (*insani kamil*) through such qualities as honesty, courage, devotion, modesty, enlightenment, diligence, love of neighbor, the ability to sacrifice personal interests for the benefit of society.<sup>xxi</sup>

Thus, the glorification of moral values is an important feature of the Eastern epic tradition, which for centuries had a strong influence not only on literature, but also on the development of philosophical thought, has become a dominant factor in the formation of the Eastern mentality. At the same time, it had a strong influence on the culture, literature and philosophy of not only the East, but also Western Nations.

## 5. SUMMARY: THE PRIORITY OF MORAL VALUES AS THE MAIN IDEA OF THE EASTERN EPIC TRADITION

In the history of the development of social thought, the moral perception of the surrounding world was most clearly manifested in the representatives of Eastern philosophy. The purpose of moral life was seen in the priority of spiritual values over material, continuous struggle between virtue and vice, good and evil.

In particular, in the culture of nations and peoples living in the territory of Central Asia, a special place was occupied by the moral law of Zoroastrianism – the unity of good intentions, kind words and good deeds. That is, the spiritual perfection of a person here was evaluated not only by good thoughts and words, but also by good deeds. This is what drew the attention of representatives of various schools and areas of Eastern philosophy. And therefore, such concept as «humanity» is determined primarily on the basis of moral criteria.

So in the teachings of *tasavvuf*, which arose in Central Asia in the XI– XII centuries and had a great influence on the work of many outstanding poets and thinkers, such as Saadi Sherazi, Alisher Navoi, etc., under the concept of «spirituality» means the way of comprehension of the Almighty through moral self-improvement and humane actions. From the point of view of secular philosophy, spirituality is man's awareness of the root essence of his life and bringing it in line with the principles of humanism. Therefore, the moral activity of man is the main criterion of his spirituality. The role of translation in the influence of Eastern culture on Europe was great. By the 12th century, scientific, philosophical and artistic works created in Arabic had earlier developed into Latin and later into other Western languages. In particular, the works «A Thousand and one nights», «Kalila and Dimna», «Sindbandnoma» were received with great interest by Western readers. The founder of the scientific understanding of history and culture, I. G. Herder, wrote: «Fairies, passed from Indian and Iranian legends to the novels of the Arabs and from them further – to the Christian peoples; stories «A Thousand and one nights» ... they taught subtle meanings, the truth to express delicately, embellishing them in imaginative outfits, to present the wisdom of life in a pre-jeweled form, not to waste the best times of his life in vain».<sup>xxii</sup>

I. G. Herder declared the uniqueness of different national cultures. However, he believed that the ancient culture of the East had a certain influence on the development of European culture.

1. Thus, in the Eastern epic tradition, the readers' attention was drawn not only to the artistic plot, historical and legendary events, but also to the deep life wisdom, moral values that have been formed over the centuries. The main one is that the highest purpose of man is the harmonious development of

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the body, mind and spirit. The goal of human aspirations should be spiritual perfection. And also each mythological worldview as a manifestation of spirituality already has its own central and highest moral values, which are carried out through the prism of the idea of the struggle between good and evil, axiological judgments «permissible» and «unacceptable».

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