

# **LANGUAGE, SOCIETY, AND SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE: THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN AND EASTERN PERIPATETIC THOUGHT**

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## **Abstract:**

This article examines the problem of the formation and construction of social meaning through a comparative philosophical analysis within the framework of the philosophy of language of the modern Western thinker Ludwig Wittgenstein and the tradition of Eastern Peripatetic philosophy. The study analyzes Wittgenstein's concepts of "language games," "forms of life," and the emergence of meaning within a social context, and compares them with the views of prominent representatives of Eastern Peripatetic thought Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd particularly their reflections on spiritual knowledge, intellect, and ethical perfection.

The article interprets social meaning not merely as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a form of spiritual and intellectual experience. The results of the analysis indicate that there exists a conceptual convergence between Western and Eastern philosophical traditions regarding the problem of social meaning and the nature of spiritual knowledge. The findings of the research possess methodological significance for philosophy, cultural studies, and the broader field of social and humanitarian sciences.

**Keywords:** Social meaning, spiritual knowledge, philosophy of language, Ludwig Wittgenstein, language games, Eastern Peripatetic philosophy, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, intellect and ethics, philosophical thinking.

## **Introduction**

In contemporary philosophical thought, the problem of social meaning and spiritual knowledge occupies a central place in the study of the interrelationship between human activity, language, culture, and ethical consciousness. In the context of intensifying global social processes, the expansion of communicative space, and the growing dynamics of intercultural dialogue, the question of how meaning is formed and what its social and spiritual foundations are has gained particular relevance. Knowledge and social experience expressed through language are closely connected with the spiritual development of the individual, which requires a comprehensive philosophical approach to their analysis.

In twentieth-century Western philosophy, the philosophy of language developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein demonstrated that meaning is not a product of individual consciousness alone but emerges within social practice and within the framework of “forms of life.” His concept of “language games” reveals the normative, contextual, and practical character of social meaning. This approach shows that meaning should not be understood solely as a logical or semantic category but rather as a phenomenon determined by social experience and patterns of human interaction.

Within the Eastern philosophical tradition, particularly in the framework of Peripatetic thought, the problem of spiritual knowledge has been interpreted in the context of the unity of intellect, ethics, and society. Thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd explained knowledge in relation to the inner perfection of the individual and the moral order of society. In their philosophical teachings, spiritual knowledge is viewed not merely as theoretical understanding but as a process that becomes manifest through ethical and practical activity. This perspective allows for identifying the spiritual foundations of social meaning within Eastern Peripatetic philosophy.

From this standpoint, a comparative examination of Wittgenstein’s philosophy and Eastern Peripatetic thought contributes to a deeper understanding of the construction of social meaning. In both traditions, meaning and knowledge are understood as phenomena that arise beyond individual consciousness and develop in close connection with the social environment and ethical norms. However, this issue has not been sufficiently explored in philosophical literature in a systematic and comparative manner, particularly regarding the conceptual relationship between Western philosophy of language and the spiritual epistemology of Eastern Peripatetic thought.

The problem of the construction of social meaning and spiritual knowledge has been interpreted within various theoretical approaches throughout the history of philosophical thought. This issue has primarily developed within Western philosophical traditions that examine the complex relationship between language, consciousness, and society, as well as within Eastern philosophical perspectives that emphasize the role of intellect, ethics, and spiritual perfection. In Western philosophy, the problem of social meaning is closely connected with the twentieth-century “linguistic turn.” In particular, the ideas presented by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his work *Philosophical Investigations* provide an important theoretical basis for understanding the social nature of meaning. Wittgenstein interprets meaning not as a strict correspondence between signs and objects but as a phenomenon that emerges through the social use of language within the framework of “language games.” His concept of “forms of life” reflects the inseparable connection between language, culture, and social experience. These ideas were further developed by philosophers such as J. L. Austin, John Searle, and Peter Winch, who emphasized the role of social practice and communicative context in the formation of meaning.

Within Eastern philosophical thought, the problem of spiritual knowledge was systematically elaborated within the Peripatetic tradition. Al-Farabi interpreted knowledge in relation to intellectual maturity and the ethical order of society. In his concept of the virtuous city, knowledge and meaning are understood as spiritual foundations that serve social harmony. In

the philosophy of Ibn Sina, spiritual knowledge is viewed as a process directed toward the inner perfection of the human being through both theoretical and practical forms of intellect. Ibn Rushd, in turn, substantiated the social and ethical significance of knowledge through the harmony of reason and revelation. In these philosophical sources, meaning is not limited to logical cognition but also includes moral and spiritual dimensions of the process of knowledge. An analysis of the existing scholarly literature indicates that although Wittgenstein's philosophy has been widely studied, the comparative examination of his concept of social meaning with the notion of spiritual knowledge developed in Eastern Peripatetic philosophy has received insufficient attention. In many studies these traditions are considered separately, while their methodological and conceptual convergence remains largely unexplored. This circumstance determines the scientific novelty and relevance of the present research.

The present study is conducted on the basis of an integrative approach to philosophical knowledge. A comparative philosophical method was employed as the principal analytical tool, allowing the philosophy of language developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein to be examined alongside the spiritual-epistemological perspectives of Eastern Peripatetic philosophy. This method made it possible to identify both the linguistic and spiritual foundations of social meaning.

In addition, the study employs the historical-philosophical method, through which the ideas of Wittgenstein and Eastern Peripatetic thinkers are examined within the context of their historical formation, socio-cultural environment, and intellectual traditions. Through analytical examination, key concepts such as "social meaning," "language games," "forms of life," "spiritual knowledge," "intellect," and "ethics" are systematically analyzed.

Furthermore, a hermeneutic approach is used to interpret the internal content, semantic layers, and structures of meaning in philosophical texts. A systemic approach makes it possible to consider social meaning and spiritual knowledge as components of a unified conceptual framework. The research methodology is developed in accordance with general philosophical principles and is guided by the requirements of logical consistency, objectivity, and scholarly rigor.

Within the framework of this study, the problem of the construction of social meaning was analyzed through the philosophy of language developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein and the concept of spiritual knowledge formed within Eastern Peripatetic philosophy. The results of the comparative philosophical analysis indicate that both traditions share a common conceptual approach in which meaning and knowledge are understood as phenomena that emerge beyond individual consciousness and are formed within social and ethical contexts.

First, Wittgenstein's concept of "language games" reveals the normative and practical character of social meaning. The meaning of linguistic signs depends on their use within particular social situations, and in this process language reflects mutual understanding and shared experience among interacting subjects. The notion of "forms of life" further substantiates the close connection between meaning and cultural as well as ethical norms. As a result, social meaning appears not as an independent semantic entity but as a dynamic phenomenon that is continuously reproduced and transformed through social practice.

Within Eastern Peripatetic philosophy, the problem of spiritual knowledge is interpreted on the basis of the unity of intellect and ethics. In the philosophical teachings of Al-Farabi, knowledge is regarded as a factor that ensures social order and moral perfection. In his theory, social meaning is formed through the system of virtues and the spiritual harmony of society. In the thought of Ibn Sina, spiritual knowledge is connected with the inner perfection of the human being and the active function of intellect, while the true value of knowledge is determined by its ethical consequences. Ibn Rushd, in turn, interprets spiritual knowledge in relation to the social responsibility of reason and its connection with the common good.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that although methodological differences exist between Wittgenstein and the Eastern Peripatetic thinkers, their fundamental ideas converge in recognizing the primacy of social meaning over individual subjectivity. In Wittgenstein's philosophy, this is expressed through the social use of language, whereas in Eastern Peripatetic philosophy it is articulated through ethical-practical activity and the perfection of intellect. In both approaches, meaning and knowledge are formed within the framework of society and are reinforced by social responsibility and ethical norms.

The findings of the study indicate that the construction of social meaning cannot be reduced solely to linguistic mechanisms. Rather, it is a complex process closely connected with spiritual experience, ethical values, and cultural traditions. This perspective makes it possible to integrate Wittgenstein's philosophy of language with the spiritual epistemology of Eastern Peripatetic thought. Consequently, new theoretical possibilities emerge for interpreting social meaning and spiritual knowledge within a unified philosophical framework.

## **Conclusions**

This article provides a comparative philosophical analysis of the problem of the construction of social meaning on the basis of the philosophy of language developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein and the concept of spiritual knowledge formulated within Eastern Peripatetic philosophy. The findings of the study demonstrate that the formation of social meaning and knowledge cannot be reduced to individual consciousness alone but is closely connected with the social environment, ethical norms, and cultural experience.

Within Wittgenstein's philosophical framework, meaning is interpreted as a dynamic phenomenon that emerges through the social use of language, particularly within the context of "language games" and "forms of life." This perspective reveals the inherently social nature of meaning and highlights its close relationship with normative and practical human activity. In contrast, Eastern Peripatetic philosophy interprets spiritual knowledge through the unity of intellect, ethics, and society, where the true value of knowledge is determined by its contribution to the moral and intellectual development of both the individual and the community.

The comparative analysis indicates that, despite methodological differences between Western and Eastern philosophical traditions, there exists a conceptual convergence in recognizing the social and practical nature of meaning and knowledge. In Wittgenstein's philosophy this process appears primarily within linguistic and communicative contexts, whereas in Eastern

Peripatetic thought it is expressed through moral maturity and spiritual perfection. Both approaches affirm that social meaning is formed within the framework of society and functions as a factor that shapes human responsibility.

The results of the study substantiate the necessity of interpreting the construction of social meaning not only within the limits of linguistics or epistemology but also as a spiritual and philosophical phenomenon. Such an approach provides an important theoretical and methodological foundation for a deeper understanding of intercultural integration, social consciousness, and spiritual knowledge in contemporary philosophical research. These conclusions possess scholarly significance for further studies in philosophy, cultural studies, and the broader field of social and humanitarian sciences.

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