



## **A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IDEA OF THE "JAPANESE MODEL" IN MUSTAFA KAMIL'S "THE RISING SUN"**

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<b>Received:</b> 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2026 <b>Accepted:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	This article analyzes the socio-philosophical work of the Egyptian enlightener Mustafa Kamil, "Ash-shamsu mashriqat" (The Rising Sun). In addition, the idea of the "Japanese model" as a model for the peoples of the East is revealed in its essence.

**Keywords:** "Ash-shamsu mashriqat", Japan, Meiji reforms, modernization, national unity, national identity, national consciousness, freedom, science.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The socio-political crisis, colonial pressure, and spiritual decline that occurred in the Muslim East at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries prompted many thinkers to seek ways of national revival. Mustafa Kamil, who worked in such historical conditions, called on the peoples of the East to awaken through his work "Ash-shamsu mashriqat".

Mustafa Kamil's work "Ash-shamsu mashriqat" interprets the development experience of Japan as an important example for the peoples of the East. In particular, the author pays great attention to the period of the Meiji reforms carried out in Japan in the second half of the 19th century. This period is of great importance in the history of Japan as a stage of transition from a feudal system to a modern industrial state.

### **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

The abolition of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1868 and the restoration of the Meiji Emperor's rule brought about fundamental political changes in the country. The Meiji government began to centralize state administration, abolishing the old feudal principalities and introducing a unified administrative system. As a result of the abolition of the "han" system in 1871, all regions were transformed into prefectures. This unified the country politically and laid the foundation for modern state administration.

One of the most important directions of the Meiji modernization was the reform of the education system. In 1872, the "Education Law" was passed, establishing elementary and secondary schools throughout the country. Western natural and technical sciences were introduced into the educational system. As a result, by

the beginning of the 20th century, Japan had become one of the most literate countries in Asia.

Mustafa Kamil assessed this aspect as the main factor in the development of the East, considering science and enlightenment to be the basis for the advancement of society. Industrialization policy was also one of the important features of the Meiji era. The state built railways, established modern factories and plants, and developed shipbuilding and heavy industry. The opening of the first railway between Tokyo and Yokohama in 1872 went down in history as the beginning of the country's industrial development. Japan managed to transform from an agrarian country into an industrial state in a short period of time.

Mustafa Kamil believes that progress should not be achieved by blindly imitating the West, but by adopting modern achievements on a national and cultural basis. Therefore, the idea of the "Japanese model" put forward in the work "Ash-shamsu mashriqat" appears as a practical expression of the philosophy of the Eastern Renaissance. Through this concept, the author justifies the need to modernize Eastern societies on the basis of science, enlightenment and national unity.

This work is essentially of a publicistic and philosophical nature, in which the author analyzes the main factors of social development. Through the symbol of the "sun", he expresses the need for enlightenment, awakening of consciousness, and historical movement. According to Mustafa Kamil, the decline of the East is due to internal weakness, as well as external pressure, ignorance, social indifference, and lack of knowledge.

In this regard, the main idea put forward in the work is the achievement of socio-political freedom through the awakening of national consciousness. Mustafa Kamil interprets freedom not only as political



independence, but also as the liberation of human thought. One of the most important aspects of the work is the promotion of the concept of the "Japanese model". Japan industrialized in a short period of time in the 19th century, introduced a modern education system, reformed public administration, but at the same time preserved its national values. The author emphasizes this aspect: "Development should be carried out not at the expense of losing identity, but on the basis of strengthening it."

According to Mustafa Kamil, Japan achieved this thanks to a rational policy, the unity and enthusiasm of the Japanese people, who put the interests of the nation above their own interests, and cared about the future of their homeland. The "Japanese model" is based on the following philosophical principles:

- the harmony of tradition and modernity;
- selective modernization;
- preservation of national identity;
- creative assimilation of external experience.

This concept offers an alternative path of development for Eastern societies and opposes blind imitation of the West.

Colonialism is not just political domination, but also the conquest of the human mind. Mustafa Kamil believes that in order for a nation to be free, it must first have spiritual freedom. After all, freedom begins not with the body, but with the mind. He says this about it:

الاستعباد لا يكون في الأرض فقط، بل في العقول"<sup>1</sup>  
"أيضاً، والحرية تبدأ من الفكر  
(Slavery occupies not only lands, but also hearts, and freedom begins first with the mind.)

Indeed, only when a society can think independently of external pressures and ideological shells can it understand what it needs for itself and its future and choose the right path. If necessary, it can swim against the current. Society only moves when every person, who is part of the whole, a part of society, has in their mind the thought, "I have to swim to survive." After all, only a society whose citizens understand their duty to society can preserve its freedom. We can see Japan as a shining example of this.

The Japanese people have made all the sacrifices necessary for the rise of their nation. In return, they

have maintained both their spiritual and physical freedom. Now they have become one of the most developed countries in the world, having a place of their own. They have gained a powerful influence both economically, politically and militarily. They have achieved enviable achievements in science and modern technology.

Mustafa Kamil, who visited Japan several times and lived there for a period of time, admires its development policy and calls on the peoples of the East to follow its example. He says in his work:

إن أخذت بأسباب التقدّم مع حفظ تقاليدها، فصارت"<sup>2</sup>  
"مثالاً يُحتذى"

(It (Japan) used the means of development while preserving its traditions, becoming a model to follow.)

The Japanese experience shows that a nation can embark on the path of modern development while preserving its values. They did not assimilate into a foreign culture, but rather assimilated it and combined it with the national spirit.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, while many Western countries were undergoing modernization, in the East, particularly in Egypt, religious fanatics and imitators still resisted modernity and scientific advances. At a time when the ideological struggle was taking place between conservatives who considered scientific achievements to be contrary to religion and tradition, and liberals who were inspired by Western achievements, the enlighteners led by Mustafa Kamil put forward the idea of "Harmony of Tradition and Modernity". They were in favor of selectively accepting Western achievements without abandoning national traditions. Mustafa Kamil says this in his work "Ash-shamsu mashriqat":

التقدم في تقليد الغير، بل في الاخذ بما ينفع مع التمسك  
"بالاصول"<sup>3</sup>

(Progress does not lie in blindly imitating others, but in adopting useful things while adhering to basic traditions.)

Indeed, the true path to progress is renewal without losing identity. A society that is cut off from its roots can never develop sustainably.

## **CONCLUSION**

<sup>1</sup> Mustafa / مصطفى كامل. الشمس المشرقة. - القاهرة، ١٩٠٤. ٢٤٢ ص 19. Kamil. Ash-shamsu mashriqot. – Cairo, 1904. – B.19.

<sup>2</sup> Mustafa / مصطفى كامل. الشمس المشرقة. - القاهرة، ١٩٠٤. ٢٤٢ ص 21. Kamil. Ash-shamsu mashriqot. – Cairo, 1904. – B. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Mustafa / مصطفى كامل. الشمس المشرقة. - القاهرة، ١٩٠٤. ٢٤٢ ص 24. Kamil. Ash-shamsu mashriqot. – Cairo, 1904. – B. 24.



In conclusion, Mustafa Kamil's "Ash-shamsu mashriqat" is an important socio-political work that philosophically substantiates the issues of Eastern awakening and national development. In the work, the author analyzes the reasons for the Eastern peoples' fall under colonial oppression and shows that their backwardness is associated not only with political pressure, but also with educational and social stagnation. In this context, it promotes science, national consciousness, and social solidarity as important factors of progress.

In particular, the idea of the "Japanese model" put forward in the work deserves special attention, in which the author presents Japan's experience of modernization as an example for the East. Japan is distinguished by the fact that it has become a powerful state by mastering modern science and technology in a short time, while preserving its national values. Mustafa Kamil, analyzing this experience, emphasizes the need for the peoples of the East to renew themselves, not blindly imitating the West, but preserving their cultural and religious foundations. Thus, the idea of the "Japanese model" in the work "Ash-shamsu Mashriqat" is manifested as a practical program of the philosophy of Eastern revival, which justifies the need for integration into global development while preserving national identity. These views of the author are manifested as an alternative model of civilizational development and serve as a philosophical and practical program for Eastern societies.

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