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### Essence of intellect and logic in the farabian tradition

The article gives an analysis of that during the Islamic Middle Ages the Al-Farabi's doctrine on intellect and logic took pride of place. The main point in this part of his philosophy is a belief in the power of human mind, as well as the human ability to discover the diversity of the world around owing to logic. Al-Farabi places no boundaries to human mind and his ability to penetrate into the essence of things. Value relevance of the Al-Farabi's philosophical views is that it considers human reason, as coming from the Single Essence, as making human in form of consubstantial entities in God. Therefore, Al-Farabi fundamentally studied intellect. Intellect is a strict universality; following it means to be reasonable. Intellect acts as a universal principle of the formation of human personality and the cognitive process as a whole.

**Key words:** intellect, logic, being, perfection, prudence, four intellects, apodeictics, dialectics.

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Осы мақалада орта ғасырдағы араб – мұсылман кезеңіндегі әл-Фарабидің ойшылдық пен логика ілімінің оқытылуы, басты орындарының бірін алатыны туралы жазылған. Оның оқытуындағы басты кезеңді, адам ақылдығының күшіне сену және логика ғылымының күшімен қоршаған ортаны түсіну алады. Әл-Фараби ақыл мен адамның барша затқа көңілін салуын шектемеген. Философияның қажеттілігін, әл-Фараби оның адам ақылының бір біріктірушіден келе жатқанын және адамды шынайы түрдегі болмысты жаратушыға келтіргені арқылы көрсетеді. Сол үшін Әл-Фараби ақылды зерттеуді басты түрде алған. Ақылдың өзі үздік қасиет болғанымен, оның жолында болу ойшылдықты көрсетеді. Ақыл үздік қасиеттей адам келбетін құрасырады және жалпы түрдегі баршылыққа керемет зерттеушілік болып келеді.

**Түйін сөздер:** ақыл, логика, болмыс, жетілгендік, парасаттылық, төрт ақыл-парасат, аподейктика, диалектика.

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В данной статье дается анализ того, что на протяжении всего Арабо-мусульманского средневековья учение Аль-Фараби об интеллекте и логике занимает одно из почетных мест. Основным моментом этого блока в его учении составляет вера в силу человеческого разума, способность понимать все многообразие окружающего мира благодаря логической науке. Аль-Фараби не ограничивает никоим образом разум и способность человека проникать в суть вещей. Ценностная актуальность философии Аль-Фараби представляется в том, что она рассматривает человеческий разум как идущий от Единого Сущего, как превращающий человека в форму подлинной субстанции, находящейся во Всевышнем. Поэтому Аль-Фараби подошел к изучению интеллекта фундаментально. Интеллект – это универсальность, обладание сознательностью. Интеллект действует как универсальный принцип формирования человеческой личности и как, в целом, познавательный процесс.

**Ключевые слова:** интеллект, логика, бытие, совершенство, рассудительность, четыре интеллекта, аподейктика, диалектика.

## ESSENCE OF INTELLECT AND LOGIC IN THE FARABIAN TRADITION

### Introduction

Human beings are unique in al-Farabi's vision, because humans stand between two worlds – the '*higher*', (immaterial world of the celestial intellects), and the '*lower*', (material world of generation and decay).

Human beings inhabit a physical body, and so belong to the 'lower' world, but they also have a rational capacity, which connects them to the 'higher' realm. Each level of existence in al-Farabi's cosmology (and then epistemology) is characterized by its movement towards **perfection**, which is to become like *the First Cause*; a perfect intellect. Human perfection (or happiness), then, is equated with constant intellection and contemplation. The highest type of theoretical knowledge, for Al-Farabi, is **wisdom** (*hikmah*). As he emphasizes in *On the Attainment of Happiness*, "the favorites are those people who are not limited in any of their theoretical knowledge" [1, p.61]. Wisdom is knowledge of the ultimate causes of all existing entities, as well as the proximate causes of everything, by which he meant 'first philosophy' or metaphysics and 'second philosophy' or physics, respectively. His time was a time when links between knowledge and wisdom required concrete explanation. In this case, the Syrian philosophers understood "knowledge as the exact understanding of things through cognitive discernment," while "wisdom was the good administration of knowledge." [2, p.36]. At the same time, "Christian theology gave further impetus to putting 'wisdom' on a pedestal high above 'knowledge' where it has remained to our days, celebrated in innumerable disquisitions poetry and prose." [3, p.36].

### Main body

According to Al-Farabi, double type of knowledge consists in knowing that entities exist, what they are, how they are and, if many, how they culminate in an orderly fashion, in a Single Being, who is the cause of those ultimate entities, as well as the lower proximate entities. Such a Being is the True One, whose subsistence (*qiwam*) does not depend on anything else, being self-sufficient. He is, in addition, incorporeal and His being is entirely different from the being

of other entities, which do not resemble Him except in name. In contradiction to theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge is described by Al-Farabi as the area of practical reason or the faculty whereby man acquires, after numerous experiences and prolonged observations of sensible things, certain premises which enable him to determine what ought to be preferred or avoided in those (voluntary) matters. Al-Farabi believes that reason, especially its practical form, is a kind of virtue and blessing. In this regard, “he investigated the nature in virtue of which all that comes into being exists in act” [4, p.68]. An issue on the essence of virtue shows that virtue is considered as a relativistic concept. “In one work, for instance, Augustine defines virtue as the perfect love of God and presents each of the cardinal virtues as a form of love. In a second work, he distinguishes virtues, which cannot be ‘badly used,’ from powers of the soul, which can be. In a third work he says that virtue is the good use of free will, which comes from God.” [5, p.495].

Many thinkers mentioned the practical reason as bringing real blessing and happiness, i.e. bringing social co-existence on the basis of conscience. “In the Middle Ages, conscience was not seen as a faculty; on the contrary, it was viewed as an aspect of practical reason.” [6, p.8]. In the Al-Farabi’s doctrine, the practical reason is identified with prudence, *ta’aqul* or *phronesis*, as Aristotle called it. The aim of prudence is the choice of the best means for happiness, as the ultimate goal. Its subdivisions are: 1) skill (*kays*), consisting in choosing the best means of attaining any particular good; 2) cunning (*daha*’), which consists in choosing the best means of attaining a great good, such as wealth, pleasure or dignity; and 3) malice (*khubth*), which consists in choosing the best means of attaining a base goal, such as a base gain or pleasure. Prudence can take other more general forms. Thus, we may have prudence in the management of the household or the city-state, called by Al-Farabi, respectively, economic (from Greek *oikia*, or household) and political prudence. Thus, prudence can take the form of giving advice to others (*mashuri*), stirring animosity (*khusumi*) or creating strategy for opposing the enemy.

A more systematic account of certain knowledge (*ilm yaqini*) is given in Al-Farabi’s *Paraphrase of Aristotle’s Analytica Posteriora*, known in Arabic as the *Book of Demonstration (Kitab al-Burhan)*.

Here, he states that certain knowledge is three-fold:

1) Knowledge that the thing is, called the knowledge of existence or the ‘knowledge that’ (*ilm anna*);

2) Certain knowledge of the cause of the thing, called the ‘knowledge why’;

3) Certain knowledge of both together.

The problem of the intellect or reason, expressed in Arabic in one word – ‘*aql*’ – was at the center of philosophical speculation from the earliest times. Aristotle raised the many questions that arise in connection with this highest faculty of the soul, but left many aspects of these questions unanswered.

In his own treatise, *On the Meanings of the Intellect (Fi Ma’ani al-‘Aql)*, Al-Farabi begins by giving a list of the meanings of the intellect or reason. With respect to the meaning of ‘reason’ as used by the public, when they describe a person as reasonable (‘*aql*’), it clearly refers to prudence (*ta’aqul*) or sound judgment in the determination of what is right, as against the determination of what is wrong, generally referred to as cunning or perfidy.

Al-Farabi divides intellect into four types:

Potential intellect,

Actual intellect,

Acquired intellect,

Agent/Active intellect.

The potential intellect represents the capacity to think, which is shared by all human beings.

The actual intellect is an intellect engaged in the act of thinking. By thinking, al-Farabi means abstracting universal intelligibles from the sensory forms of objects which have been apprehended and retained in the individual’s imagination.

This requires the Agent/Actual Intellect to act upon the retained sensory forms; just as the Sun illuminates the physical world to allow us to see, the Agent Intellect illuminates the world of intelligibles to allow us to think. Agent/Active Intellect is the agency that causes the potential intellect, as well as the potential intelligible, to become actual one. Its relation to the potential intellect being is similar to that of the sun to the eye. Even if “Al-Farabi does not identify the divine mind called the Active Intellect with God” [7, p.701], it’s possible to do such identification, if we are based on logic of the Agent/Actual Intellect given by Al-Farabi. Because the Agent Intellect knows all of the intelligible, this means that when the human intellect knows all of them, it becomes associated with the Agent Intellect’s perfection and is known as the acquired Intellect. In other words, acquired intellect is the Agent Intellect in a human. Or, acquired Intellect is a gift from the heaven in form the First Principle or Unmoved Mover.

Logic and epistemology of Al-Farabi is based on the ancient heritage, especially on connection with the logical works of Aristotle. Aristotelian logic

primarily, and then the Stoic logic influenced on the formation of the Al-Farabi's logic.

First of all, Aristotelian logic is associated with his *Organon* (a Greek: *ὄργανον*, meaning 'instrument, tool, organ') is the standard collection of Aristotle's six works on logic. The name *Organon* was given by Aristotle's followers, the Peripatetics.

They are:

The *Categories* introduces the 10-fold classification of what exists: substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, situation, condition, action, and passion. Using all these categories leads a researcher to productive knowledge, or blessing. But here, Aristotle allocates that blessing is "indispensably opposite to evil" [8].

*On Interpretation* introduces the conception of proposition and judgment, and the various relations between affirmative, negative, universal, and particular propositions.

The *Prior Analytics* introduces his syllogistic method, argues for its correctness, and discusses inductive inference.

The *Posterior Analytics* deals with demonstration, definition, and scientific knowledge.

The *Topics* treats issues in constructing valid arguments, and inference that is probable, rather than certain.

The *Sophistical Refutation* gives a treatment of logical fallacies, and provides a key link to Aristotle's work on rhetoric.

Al-Farabi supports the idea of Aristotle that logical status and structure of any thought must be based on the reality of the thoughts. Everything must be studied in accordance with its nature. This is an object of metaphysics. We know that there are many interpretations of metaphysics. For example, Al-Kindi explains that "it is the knowledge of the causes of things" [9, p.71]. We also know that Al-Farabi, as well as Al-Kindi, follows such definition of metaphysics, as it is done by Aristotle.

In classifying parts of the logic Al-Farabi follows Aristotle. In logic, he allocates *apodeictics*, dialectic, sophistry, rhetoric and poetics. Therefore, he does not limit the scope of logic by formal logic. According to Al-Farabi, only Aristotle could organize logic and establish the rules of all methods of cognition. Aristotle proved that *apodeictic* methods are used in speculative sciences. Dialectical methods are mostly used in mathematics, and also in speculative sciences. Sophistical methods bring misfortune (несчастья) and give total false. Rhetorical methods are common for all the arts and civil affairs. Anyone, who wants to prove anything beautifully, uses rhetoric.

*Apodeictic judgments* give absolutely true judgments;

*Dialectic judgments* give generally true judgments;

*Rhetoric judgments* give equally true and false judgments;

*Sophistical judgments* give generally false judgments;

*Poetic judgments* give absolutely false judgments.

Thus, according to Al-Farabi, dialectic is 1) an introduction to philosophy, 2) exercise of the mind, 3) the basics and principles of science, and 4) antidote against the sophistry.

For deeper understanding of dialectic in the Al-Farabi's view, we should mark the comparison between dialectic and rhetoric. Rhetoric (according to both Aristotle and Al-Farabi) is a practical strategy of thinking, which involves the real-life cases and the interests of a man. It is sphere that captures the life conflicts and dramas. This rhetoric kind of thinking seems to be infinitely far from human thinking, which deals with achievement of logic truth, that is, dialectic.

Rhetoric deals with logical justice, while dialectic deals with logical truth. But, both rhetoric and dialectic are considered as the public domain. Both they are equally study the opposites that need to be analyze, to be proved by concrete methods. Rhetoric is more practical, while dialectic is more theoretical. Essence of the dialectic method is to reveal, develop, and solve contradictions that exist in the logical thesis.

Al-Farabi developed a doctrine about 'generally accepted ideas' as primary knowledge, prior to logical conclusions. 'Generally accepted ideas' may contain false and, therefore, they require verification. So, dialectics is an art, which allows go move from 'generally accepted ideas' to true original knowledge. In addition, dialectic allows saving philosophy from the Sophists.

Al-Farabi compares dialectics with a doctor, who must to use best efforts and knowledge to treat the patient, even if there is no guarantee to achieve good results. Unlike Aristotle, Al-Farabi considers the rhetoric as separated from dialectics, because in the process of public speaking rhetoric is based on, emotions, moral categories, 'sympathy', 'patriotism', dogmas of the Koran, etc. According to Al-Farabi, the most important condition for logical evidence is the correspondence of human knowledge to objective reality, as Aristotle said. Al-Farabi systematically develops teachings of Aristotle on the primary judgments.

The original basis of the logical judgments is: the views of the common people, or concrete wise men;

generally accepted judgments like “respect to parents is duty”;

data of sensitive perception;

some general principles intelligible entities, axioms (like a part is less than a whole).

All this leads to systematically arranged outlook, which helps a human both to understand his role in the world and to find his happiness. Thus, by Al-Farabi, Happiness is “the attainment of perfect knowledge and high moral standards” [10, p.582].

### Conclusions

In summary, like Aristotle, Al-Farabi recognized that the Active Intellect is clearly distinguishable from the First Principle or

Unmoved Mover, on which it actually depends. But unlike Aristotle, he describes it as an emanation, ten times removed, from the First Principle, or the One of Plotinus. That’s why the first three intellects are the different states of the human intellect and the Agent/Active Intellect is the Tenth Intellect (the moon) in his emanational cosmology. Even here, Al-Farabi goes well beyond Plotinus, for whom the ultimate principle of motion is the second emanation from the One or the Universal Soul (*Psyche*), which may be described as the mediator between the intelligible and the material worlds. Without this mediator, the First Intellect (or *Nous*) cannot possibly act on that lower world. It was, perhaps, out of his desire to bridge the tremendous gap between the intelligible and the material worlds that, Al-Farabi felt compelled to introduce that series of ‘ten intellects’, of which the Active Intellect is the last.

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