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ABU NASR AL-FARABI, THE FOUNDER OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

Автор мақалада ұлы мұсылман философы, «екінші ұстаз» ретінде танымал, Әбунасір әл-Фараби (259-339) еңбектері арқылы кейбір шығыстанушылардың ислам философиясы грек философиясының кешірмесі деген тұжырымдарының терістігін, жалғандығын ғылыми тұрғыдан дәлелдейді.

Makalede, El-Farabînin felsefesi hakkında çeşitli görüşler verilmektedir.

Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Tarkhan ibn Awzalagh (Uzlugh) (259-339), referred to as Alfarabius or Avennasar in Medieval Latin texts, is one of the most outstanding and renowned Muslim Philosophers. He became known as the "second teacher", the first being Aristotle. Al-Farabi, as Richard Walzer (1900-1975) has written, was of Turkish origin. He was born in Turkestan at Wsidj in the district of the city of Farab and is said to have died at the age of eighty or more in 339/950 in Damascus [1, 778]. From the lists of writings provided by the medieval biographers, al-Farabi's philosophical output appears to have been enormous with over one hundred works being credited to him. The largest part of al-Farabi's writings is dedicated to logic and the philosophy of language [2, 179].

Unfortunately the modernist writers of history of Islamic Philosophy, of which most are Orientalists or their followers, have desired to determine the Greek sources of Islamic Philosophy. They evaluate Islamic Philosophy as a merely copy, imitation, borrowing, eclecticism, commentary and extension of Greek one [3, 14]. From their perspectives, it is meaningless to speak about establishing of Islamic Philosophy, because if a philosophy is imitative, the speaking of its establishment or investigation will not make much sense.

In this article, I try to demonstrate that this idea is especially incorrect in regard to al-Farabi as the founder of Islamic Philosophy (Accordingly Orientalists' claim will be false with regard to the rest of Islamic Philosophers who are al-Farabi's students.). My effort will be based on determining al-Farabi's status in relation to Greece and on a deep comprehending of Islamic Philosophy. In present investigation, I am mainly indebted to the two great figures: Reza Davari Ardakani, Iranian Scholar and head of Iranian Academy of Sciences and Henry Corbin, French philosopher. As a result of their research, Farabiology has progressively entered into its new period in Iran.

Sometimes philosophy is regarded as a collection of metaphysical problems and the movement from them to principles is neglected. Deep inquiry of Islamic Philosophy presupposes this movement. The discussion about "if Islamic Philosophy has its own specific principles or it takes a share in them with Greek philosophy?" also necessitates the mentioned movement. If we stop in problems and say that Muslim thinkers merely entered some new problems into philosophy, or that they resolved problems better than their predecessors, then they can not be called philosophers, but they will be named commentators. If Islamic Philosophers would be only the translators of Greek ones and had not their independent research, as Orientalists and their followers have said, then

philosophy could not have any position in Islamic civilization and its teaching together with other Islamic sciences like jurisprudence, traditions, exegesis, etc would be impossible.

Those who are concerned with philosophy are briefly divided to four groups: learners, scientists, researchers, and philosophers. The first are only who quote philosophers' words, the second are legatee of philosophers and researchers, the third are able to transform problems in the light of their movement from problems to principles, and the fourth are those who question wonderingly of existence, they are awestruck of this problem. They becomes the teacher of others, because of the answer have found and the new plan have introduced. Among this group there would be a spectrum of different rankings and grades. For example, Islamic Philosophers' attitude to existence differs from Greek ones.

Al-Farabi established a philosophical system, considering all sciences of his age based on his philosophical principles. In philosophy, he was capable of independent judgment and personal reasoning. It is impossible to speak of his place in the history of philosophy without drawing any attention to this point. He is considered as the founder of Islamic Philosophy, because he has innovated in many special principles in philosophy, and his successors have extended his philosophical principles and problems. His work and the work of his followers were not only to learn and teach Greek philosophical opinions. They were not merely the imitators of Greek philosophers, however they are the students of Plato (429 BC-347 BC) and Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC) just like other well known philosophers [4, 15].

What I want to say in the present paper is that, particularly based on the ideas of al-Farabi as the founder of Islamic Philosophy, it is incorrect to claim that Islamic Philosophy is an eclecticism of Greek metaphysics, however the former is not entirely independent of the latter.

Al-Farabi has established some new principles, deducing some conclusions, and using the results on religious sciences. In al-Farabi's usage of philosophical judgments concerning religious rules, philosophy was essential and true religion was secondarily follower. al-Farabi's philosophical principles indicate the originality of his philosophical views compared with the Greek ones.

The main problem of philosophy is the question of existence, and existent qua existent. Different schools of philosophy and various periods of the history of metaphysics have been established based on the answers to this fundamental question. Aristotle has responded to the question, his response is not the same as Plato's one, however the two answers are similar. Al-Farabi's response to the problem is completely different from the two great masters of Greek philosophy, Aristotle and Plato. For him, existence is the same as God, and He is someone who gives existence to created beings.

This is al-Farabi that divides all existents to the two mental parts, existence and quiddity (and all essences to the categories of substance and nine accidents), for the first time in the history of philosophy whereas Aristotelian ten categories were the categories of existence, not of quiddity. It has been said that this thesis marked a turning-point in the history of metaphysics. This way of division is not an immaterial thing, not a small change in one part of wisdom, but has resulted in declaring several fundamental problems in Islamic Philosophy.

The emerging of other meanings of truth and causality is due to this idea. As a result of accepting the principle of Divine causality and the legitimacy of God, philosophical problems and the deductions of metaphysical research by Islamic Philosophy

scholars and philosophers, are distinguishable from the conclusions of Greek philosophy. Moreover al-Farabi is likely the first philosopher that divides existence to necessary and contingent (possible) in the history of metaphysics [5, 46].

For Greek metaphysicians, truth is factually *aletheia*, namely being unconcealed. Al-Farabi says that truth is the same as God and its other meanings relate and return to this idea. Because when he defines truth as the correspondence of knowledge with object, he holds that all existents stay in Divine Knowledge, and what have existed in Divine decree has descended to Divine destiny. This is also the case when he defines truth as an eternal being. Moreover the notion of causality has signified agent causality. We find none of these concepts in Greek philosophical works.

After fifth century, al-Farabi has been described as the second teacher in the history of Islamic Philosophy. The prior and recent historians and researchers have stated diverse justifications about this description all of them may be right. Al-Farabi has been the best Sages after Aristotle and really a highly proficient expert of logic, composing it in Arabic in a cleaned form. He also has corrected and commented many themes of Greek philosophy which had been meaningless and misunderstood because of the mistakes have occurred in translators' understandings. He is, therefore, the founder of a new remarkable field of philosophy.

Descriptions such as second teacher, demonstrate a type of wonderment and admiration, as when Plato called his student, Aristotle as "the intellect of scientific school" of academy, he did not mean anything but the admiration of his student. If it has been said that Aristotle has established and composed logic, classifying human sciences and determining their subjects and problems, it may be said also that al-Farabi has the same position in Islamic World. Aristotle is the teacher of intellectual knowledge, al-Farabi also classifies human knowledge, entering Islamic sciences in his classification. He gives a logical and rational form to human sciences.

On Islamic sciences, al-Farabi says that they should be placed under philosophy and secondarily follow it. All of Islamic Philosophers are the students of second teacher and has extended his metaphysical points of view. He has really resurrected rational science in Islamic World and established it. Consequently it is completely wrong to say that al-Farabi's speculative philosophy is an Aristotelian one or a merely eclecticism of the opinions of Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus (204/5-270 C.E.), Stoicists and Alexandrian philosophers. The eclecticism has been done more or less and its impacts can be seen in all works of Islamic Philosophers. However one topic has been neglected: the transformation occurred in Islamic and Christian world in the history of philosophy. Until al-Farabi's age, the conditions of this transformation were not provided. No one of his predecessors could dispute about principles.

Here it is necessary to make a distinction between a philosopher and a scholar of philosophy. Al-Farabi introduces a new scheme in philosophy, going over the interpretation of Greek philosophers. The ideas of God, cosmos, human being and truth in Greek philosophy completely differ from those of in Medieval Islamic or Christian philosophy. Greek philosophy discussions circle around the theme of cosmos while in whole medieval philosophy, God is a unique axis, this topic has never been declared by Plato and Aristotle.

In *Timaeus* Plato holds that it is Demiurge ("Creator" not in the sense of Abraham Religions) that produces all things in accordance with Archetypes. It does not manufacture things from non-existence [6, 238]. Aristotle also knows God (unmoved mover) as the final cause of cosmos, he does not attribute qualities such as knowledge, omnipotence, life,

audition, vision, etc to it whereas God is the agent cause of cosmos in Islamic Philosophy (Ibid Part 2,1983: 405). Hence we can say that Islamic Philosophy, whose founder is al-Farabi, is a new form of metaphysical thought.

In modern philosophy also the notions of substance and accident, matter and form, essential and accidental, etc are spoken of, but it can not be said that modern philosophy is merely a repeat of Greek one, although this philosophy is an extension of that one. In a similar way, the similarity of Islamic Philosophy to Greek one should not be attributed to the purely imitation of former from latter. Even natural science in Islamic Philosophy is fundamentally different from Aristotelian physics, for Muslim thinkers were viewing to natural things as God's creatures.

After learning Greek philosophy and Islamic sciences of his age, al-Farabi aimed at strengthening the status of philosophy and proving that the truth can be attainable only via metaphysics and intellectual knowledge. He made a special effort to demonstrate that philosophy is actually one, and the differences between philosophers are merely in exoteric aspect of their sayings, whereas they have had the same objective. His plan was the harmonization of all ways towards truth in philosophy.

Al-Farabi's seminal work is *Harmony between the views of Plato and Aristotle* [7, 110]. However it is less questioned that why did he attempt to harmonize between diverse metaphysical ideas? He was not the first one who tried to harmonize the view of philosophers. Before him, Plotinus's students particularly Prophyry of tyre (233-301) had composed such works, but that of al-Farabi is not comparable with its predecessors in depth. For he has found a criterion by which examines the views, unifying them. That yardstick is his own receiving of metaphysics. So the above mentioned book is not only a simple philosophical study aimed at designating Greek masters' thought, but also the beginning of establishing Islamic Philosophy. In the process of harmonizing the views of Plato and Aristotle, al-Farabi prepares the ground for declaring its own doctrine as an absolute metaphysics which religion, theology, jurisprudence, and other forms of knowledge should follow it.

Al-Farabi regarded speculative philosophy as real and original knowledge, situating the rest as the secondary and follower. He tried not only to make various philosophies coherent and harmonized, but also to unify religion and philosophy, and to remove essentially the difference between the two. Al-Farabi's try in this regard relates directly to the specific principles of Islamic Philosophy. None of Aristotle's commentators, if they were purely Aristotelian, could attribute philosophy to all forms of knowledge and thought, including religious thought. This aim would be attained only after some transformations in philosophical principles.

Al-Farabi's effort to harmonize metaphysics and religion is not a reason of the identification of the two, but his fundamentals require the try which has occurred by virtue of historical position of thought. In other words, his effort to harmonize religion, theology and Sufism with philosophy is, in fact, the result of a new answer to the principal question of philosophy and derives from establishing Islamic Philosophy.

Another distinctive al-Farabi's doctrine, is the theory of the Intelligence and of the procession of Intelligences, enjoined in al-Farabi by the principle *ex uno non fit nisi unum* (The unit does not emanate from it but the unit). The emanation of the First Intelligence from the first Being, its three acts of contemplation which are repeated in turn by each of the hierarchical Intelligences, and which engender each time a triad composed of a new Intelligence, a new Soul and a new Heaven, down to the Tenth Intelligence. The first divine

Essences, Aristotle's star-gods, become 'separate Intelligences' in al-Farabi. In his whole theory of the Intelligence, as well as in his theory of the Sage-Prophet, al-Farabi is someone more than a 'Hellenizing philosopher'.

Al-Farabi's theory of prophetism is the crowning glory of his work. His theory of the 'Virtuous City' bears a Greek stamp in virtue of its Platonic inspiration, but it fulfils the philosophical and mystical aspirations of a philosopher of Islam. It is often spoken of as al-Farabi's 'politics'. His 'politics' depends on his whole cosmology and psychology, and is inseparable from them. Thus his concept of the 'perfect City' encompasses all the earth inhabited by man, the *oikoumen*. It is not a 'functional' political program. His so-called political philosophy could be better designated as a prophetic philosophy.

However many of the themes of al-Farabi's Politics can be found in Plato and Aristotle works, his politics can not be identified with what the two philosophers have said. Several differences are visible, including the difference qua subject, qua objective, qua the ways provided to attain that goal, and also qua the system and hierarchy considered in the scheme of Utopia. Farabi's political view is inclined to establish utopia according to revelation and intellect and to express the essence of ideal city. He held that the head of such a city should be a philosopher who receives his knowledge from the origin of revelation. Factually the philosopher chief of al-Farabi's utopia is the same prophet, and real religion, according to him, is very metaphysics.

The explanation of al-Farabi's politics and the comprehension of the concept of city and civilization he means, depend on conceiving his fundamentals of theoretical philosophy and the relation of this philosophy to religion. For him, political debates are permanently the conclusions of speculative knowledge.

For al-Farabi, union with the active Intelligence can be effected by the intellect. This is what happens in the case of the philosopher, because this union is the source of all philosophical knowledge. The union can also be effected by the imagination, in which case it is the source of revelation, inspiration and prophetic dreams. It can be shown how prophetic philosophy give rise to an entire theory of the Imagination, which vindicated imaginative knowledge and the world perceived by such knowledge. It is significant that in al-Farabi the theory of the imagination likewise plays a crucial role.

The gnosiology which derives from this prophetic philosophy is established essentially as a function of the degrees of vision or audition of the Angel, whether in dream, in a state of waking, or in the intermediary state. For al-Farabi, the Sage is united with the active Intelligence through speculative meditation; the prophet is united with it through the Imagination, and it is the source of prophetism and of prophetic revelation. This conception is only possible because the Muhammadan archangel-Gabriel, the Holy Spirit-is identified with the active Intelligence. This is in no way rationalization of the Holy Spirit-rather, the contrary is the case. The identification of the Angel of Knowledge with the Angel of Revelation is actually demanded by a prophetic philosophy: this is the orientation of all al-Farabi's doctrine.

The ideal City, perfect as it is, does not constitute an end in itself for al-Farabi. It is a way of bringing men closer to supraterrrestrial happiness.

In fact, al-Farabi's true spiritual posterity is found in Hossein ibn Abd Allah ibn Sina (Avicenna) (980-1037), who acknowledged him as his master. He was influential in Andalusia (especially for Ibn Bajjah) and for Shabb al-din Yahya Suhrawardi (1155-1191). This influence can also be perceived in Sadr al-din Mohammad (Mulla Sadra) Shirazi (1571-1640) [8, 165].

What al-Farabi was seeking in his time, is significant for us in present period. So attention to his ideas is not a mere formality. We need to our ancient thinkers and should talk them with empathy, read their works charitably and be familiar with the thinking. Then we will be the lovers of science and thought. Since no nation has a future without any dependence on science, our civilization also depends on the past and its thought. Perhaps it is not necessary for us to resurrect philosophy, but at least we are seriously needed to metaphysics in the future.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

М. ШАХДЖУЕЙ (Тегеран)

АБУ НАСР АЛЬ-ФАРАБИ – ОСНОВАТЕЛЬ ИСЛАМСКОЙ ФИЛОСОФИИ

Автор в статье с помощью трудов великого мусульманского философа Абунасра ал-Фараби (259-339) доказывает заблуждения некоторых востоковедов концепции о том, что исламская философия это копия греческой философии.

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