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ABŪ NAṢR AL-FĀRĀBĪ ON THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SOUL

Nefsin Zâtî Bilinci Üzerine Ebû Nasr El-Fârâbî

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ABŪ NAṢR AL-FĀRĀBĪ ON THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SOUL *

Abstract

Questions concerning the nature of self-consciousness, personal identity, and what becomes of these when the soul departs from the body have always been fundamental issues for philosophers. This article investigates whether, according to Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, the soul attains self-consciousness directly or indirectly, a distinction among types of self-consciousness is possible, and the soul maintains its self-consciousness and individual identity after death. The scope of this article extends to the relevant passages from the philosopher's surviving works and fundamental texts in the secondary literature. The aim of the article is to reveal the philosopher's contributions to this discussion. Since no study focusing on al-Fārābī has yet been encountered among texts written on self-consciousness, it can be said that the study possesses original value and significance in this respect. The article's thesis advances that according to al-Fārābī, a reading of human souls as possessing self-consciousness that is direct, immediate, and continuous - beginning simultaneously with the soul's existence together with the body and continuing with the soul's continued existence- is possible. According to the conclusions reached, al-Fārābī considers that self-consciousness begins with the soul's existence together with the body, and that this consciousness and individual identity continue with the soul's persistence of existence after death. In contrast, he argues that the knowledge of self-consciousness occurs intermittently. The soul must separate itself from materiality, place itself at the centre of its apprehension, and intellectually perfect its secondary consciousness concerning the self to ultimate perfection. For souls that attain ultimate perfection, their self-consciousness and personal identity continue after their separation from the body; these souls are either rewarded with infinite happiness or punished with infinite torment. On the other hand, some souls perish together with the body due to their failure to attain this perfection. These souls lose their self-consciousness and identity.

Keywords: Philosophy of Mind, al-Fārābī, Self-Consciousness, Cognition, Identity.

Nefsin Zâtî Bilinci Üzerine Ebû Nasr el-Fârâbî

Öz

Zâtî bilincin doğası, zâtî kimlik ve nefsin bedeni terk etmesiyle bunların ne olacağı hakkındaki sorular, filozoflar için her zaman temel meseleler olmuştur. Bu makalenin konusunu Ebu Nasr el-Fârâbî'ye göre nefsin zâtî bilince doğrudan mı yoksa dolaylı mı ulaştığı, zâtî bilincin türleri arasında bir ayrımın mümkün olup olmadığı ile ölümden sonra nefsin zâtî bilinci ve bireysel kimliğini devam ettirip ettirmediğinin soruşturulması oluşturmaktadır. Makalenin kapsamını filozofun günümüze ulaşan kendi eserlerindeki

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ilgili pasajlar ve ikincil literatürdeki temel metinler oluşturmaktadır. Makalenin amacı filozofun bu tartışmaya olan katkılarının ortaya çıkartılmasıdır. Zira zâtî bilinç hakkında yazılan metinler arasında henüz Fârâbî'ye odaklanan bir çalışmaya rastlanılmamıştır bu yönüyle çalışmanın özgün bir değer ve öneme sahip olduğu söylenebilir. Makalenin iddiası Fârâbî'ye göre insanî nefslerin, doğrudan, dolayımsız ve sürekli olan, nefs ile bedenin bir arada var olmasıyla eş zamanlı başlayan ve nefsin var olmaya devam etmesiyle devam eden bir zâtî bilinç okumasının mümkün olduğunu ileri sürmektir. Ulaşılan sonuçlara göre Fârâbî zâtî bilincin nefsin bedenle birlikte var olmasıyla başladığını, ölümden sonra nefsin varlığını sürdürmesiyle de bu bilincin ve bireysel kimliğin devam ettiğini düşünmektedir. Buna karşılık o, zâtî bilincin marifetinin, yani bilincin bilincinin ise kesintili olarak gerçekleştiğini savunmaktadır. Nefs, maddîlikten ayrılıp kendisini idrâkinin odağına koyarak ve zâta dair ikincil bilincini son yetkinliğe kadar düşünsel olarak yetkinleştirmelidir. Son yetkinliğe ulaşan nefsler için onların bedenden ayrılmasından sonra zâtî bilinci ve zâtî kimliği devam etmektedir; bu nefsler ya sonsuz mutlulukla ödüllendirilmekte veya sonsuz azapla cezalandırılmaktadır. Öte yandan bazı nefsler ise bu yetkinliğe ulaşamamaları nedeniyle bedenle birlikte yok olmaktadır. Bu nefsler zâtî bilinç ve kimliklerini kaybetmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Zihin Felsefesi, el-Fârâbî, Zâtî Bilinç, Marifet, Kimlik.

INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental problems of philosophy is the nature of self-consciousness (*idrāk or shuʿūr al-dhāt*). This is the problem of whether a person achieves self-consciousness directly or indirectly. At the crux of this inquiry lies the fundamental question of whether human beings attain their essential consciousness independently of sensory experiences or through the medium of sensation or experience. While it is widely acknowledged that this question has assumed prominence in modern philosophy and continues to be a subject of discourse, there are also claims that this discussion can be found in the texts of Plato (429-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC).[1] Platonists argue that self-consciousness can be reached without intermediaries, whereas Aristotelians posit that self-consciousness is achieved after experience.[2] In modern philosophy,

[1] Aristotle, *De Sensu and De Memoria*, trans. G. R. T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); 7. 448a. Aristotle, *De Anima (On the Soul)*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin, 1986), 430.

[2] For detail see. Therese Scarpelli Cory, *Aquinas on Human Self-Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Descartes[3] (1596-1650), Locke[4] (1632-1704) and Berkeley[5] (1685-1753) are notable exponents of the direct, unmediated and pre-experiential nature of self-consciousness, while David Hume[6] (1711-1776) is a critic of this view, arguing that self-consciousness is achieved through experience of the surrounding world. Recent studies demonstrate that prior to the advent of modern philosophy, certain Muslim philosophers directly or indirectly addressed the issue and made significant contributions to the subject in a variety of ways. A notable example is the discussion of self-consciousness in the context of Avicenna's (980-1037) "Flying Man"[7] theory, which demonstrates that the subject was addressed by Islamic philosophers long before the advent of modern philosophy.[8]

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[3] Rene Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy", trans. John Cottingham, *Descartes Selected Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 160-212; Rene Descartes, "Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking the Truth in the Sciences (1637)", trans. John Cottingham, *Descartes Selected Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 20-56; Rene Descartes, "Principles of Philosophy. (1644)", trans. John Cottingham, *Descartes Selected Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[4] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. (1700)*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

[5] George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonus. (1713)*, ed. Honathan Dancy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 231-234.

[6] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature. (1739-40)*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

[7] Ibn Sīnā, *Ahvāl al-Nafs*, ed. Ahmad Fuad al-Ahvānī (Kāhira, 1952), 183-184; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, ed. Ali Riḍā Najafzāde (Tahran: Anjumān-i Āthār ve Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 2005), 2/205-208; 214; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Mubāhathāt*, ed. Bīdārfar (Qum: Intishārāt-ı Baydar, 1992), 435; Ibn Sīnā, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, ed. Seyyid Ḥuseyin Mūsawiyān (Irān: Muaʾssasa-i Pajūhash-i Ḥikmat wa Falsafa-i Irān, 2013), 325.

[8] Michael Marmura, "Avicenna's 'Flying Man' in Context", *The Monist* 69/3 (1986), 383-395; Theresa A. Druart, "The Soul and Body Problem: Avicenna and Descartes", *Arabic Philosophy and the West: Continuity and Interaction* (Washington D.C: Georgetown University, 1988), 27-49; Muhittin Macit, "Aristoteles ve İbn Sînâ'da Nefs-Beden İlişkisi Problemi ve Modern Zihin Felsefesindeki Bazı Yansımaları", *Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 26 (2004), 59-83; Deborah L. Black, "Avicenna on Self-Awareness and Knowing that One Knows", *The Unity of Science in the Arabic Tradition*, ed. Shahid Rahman (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 63-87; Ahmed Alwishah, "Avicenna on Self-Cognition and Self-Awareness", *Aristotle and the Arabic Tradition*, ed. Ahmed Alwishah - Josh Hayes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 143-163; Jari Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy: Avicenna and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 95-119; Mehtap Doğan, "İbn Sînâ Metafiziğinde Nefs-Beden Düalizmi Üzerine Bir Zihin Felsefesi Değerlendirmesi", *İlahiyat Tetkikleri Dergisi* 49 (2018), 161-184; Peter Adamson - Fedor Benevich, "The Thought Experimental Method: Avicenna's Flying Man Argument", *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 4/2 (2018), 147-164; Mehmet Ata Az, "İbn Sînâ'nın Uçan Adam Nazariyesi Bağlamında Nefsin Benlik Bilinci", *Eskiyeni* 51 (2023), 1045-1073; İsmail Hakkı Güler, "İbn Sina'da Zati Şuur Kavramının Çağdaş Zihin Felsefesindeki Yeri", *FLSF (Felsefe ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi)* 36 (2023), 433446; Mehmet Zahit Tiryaki, "Uçamayan Adam: Fahreddin Râzî'de Ben Şuuru", *Nazariyat* 6/1 (2020), 1-38; Ömer Ali Yıldırım, "Ebu'l Berekât el-Bağdâdî ve İbn Sînâ Bağlamında Nefislerin Bireyselleşmesi", *Bilimname* 39 (2019), 187-

However, as far as I can ascertain, the contributions of Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (870-950), the Second Teacher, to this discussion of self-consciousness have not yet been addressed in detail.[9]

For al-Fārābī, the human being is defined as a union consisting of soul and body, representing, two distinct substances.[10] The soul is posited as separate (*mufāraq*) entity from matter, whilst the body is defined as a substance made of matter.[11] The creation of the human being occurs simultaneously, and the soul can continue to exist after leaving the body.[12] Consequently, al-Fārābī holds a distinct substance dualism, characterized by a differentiation between the soul and body, which differs from the theories propounded by Plato and Aristotle. The fundamental questions that arise from this perspective are: According to al-Fārābī, how, is it possible for one to be conscious of oneself? What is the nature of self-consciousness? Does awareness of the self occur directly, without intermediaries and self-evidently, or is it acquired through intermediaries such as sensations, memories, etc., i.e. after experience?

1. SOUL AND ITS NATURE

To facilitate a comprehensive understanding of al-Fārābī's discourse on the subject of the soul (*nafs*), it is imperative to address briefly the various angles from which the topic is explored in his works in this title. This approach will enable the identification of potential disparities between his works and the articulation of a holistic reading. At times, he employs a tripartite division, distinguishing between the spirit (*rūḥ*), the soul (*nafs*) and the body (*badan/jasad*).[13] According to this division, the spirit controls the soul, and the soul controls the body. The spirit, rather than the soul, is considered to wield the most significant influence.[14] Taking this division into account, it is problematic whether the discussion of self-consciousness can be transformed into a comprehensive reading

219; Adem Evmeş, *Kâdî Mîr Meybûdî'nin Mantık Görüşleri* (Kayseri: Kimlik Yayınları, 2021), 27; Adem Evmeş, "Kutbuddin eş-Şirâzî'nin Akılcı Felsefeye ve Meşşâî Tanım Teorisine Eleştirileri: Şerhu Hikmetü'l-İşrâk'ı Bağlamında Bir Tahlil", *Dergiabant* 11/1 (2023), 170.

[9] See Enes Taş, *Fârâbî ve İbn Sînâ'da Bireyleşme İlkesi Bağlamında Nefis-Beden İlişkisi* (Bursa: Bursa Uludağ University, PhD Thesis, 2017).

[10] Al-Fārābī, *al-Ta'līqāt*, ed. Ja'far al-Yāsīn (Beirut: Dār al-Manāhil, 1988), 47-48.

[11] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt* (Haidarabad: Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmānīyyah, 1927), 2.

[12] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 8.

[13] See. Al-Fārābī, "Maqālāt al-rāfi'a fī uṣūl 'ilm al-ṭābi'ah", trans. Necati Lügal - Aydın Sayılı, *Belleten* 15 (1951), 103-122; Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur* (Leiden, 1943), 1/234; Al-Fārābī, "Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam", *al-Thamarat al-Marḍiyyah fi ba 'd Risālāt al-Fārābīyyah* (Leiden, 1890), 66-83; Al-Fārābī, *al-Da'āwā al-Qalbīyah* (Bombay, 1935).

[14] Al-Fārābī, "Maqālāt al-rāfi'a fī uṣūl 'ilm al-ṭābi'ah", 103-110.

in terms of al-Fārābī's general thought. For this tripartite division is not observed in his other works.

In his famous works like *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah,* on the other hand, al-Fārābī typically bases the theory of the soul on a dual division, based on the distinction between soul and body.[15] Therefore, this article will exclude those books in which he offers the tripartite division. Although he does not provide a definition himself in these second group of works, al-Fārābī occasionally quotes Aristotle's definition of the soul as "*the first perfection of the natural body that has potential life*"[16] or "*It* [i.e., the soul] *is the perfection of the natural body that has the organ from which apprehention and actions subject to apprehention occur.*"[17] On other occasions al-Fārābī describes the soul as *the form of the body.*[18] However, al-Fārābī's position does not simply consist of quoting the definitions of past philosophers. He accepts the soul itself as a substance and interprets it as the form of the body in relation to body. According to al-Fārābī, the soul absolutely needs a body to exist;[19] once it exists, it is possible for it to continue its existence after separation from the body.[20] This standpoint marks a fundamental divergence between al-Fārābī and Aristotle's conception of the soul (*psuchê*), wherein the latter's philosophy culminates in the demise of the corporeal body.[21] Contrary to Aristotle's view, al-Fārābī's approach posits a dualisms that evolves around and persists beyond the act of creation, suggesting that the soul and body are not merely successive entities but are inherently intertwined. The fundamental difference between al-Fārābī's dualism and the Platonic conception of the soul lies in the former's acceptance of the possibility of the prior existence of the spirit, which, according to the Platonists, is created before the body and will persist beyond its corporeal existence.

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[15] Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, ed. Fawzi Miṭrī Najjār (Beirut: Matba'at Katholikiyye, 1964), 31-32; Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, ed. Fawzi Miṭrī Najjār (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1971), 26-27; Al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl muntaza'ah*, ed. Fawzi Miṭrī Najjār (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1971), 97 ff. Fârâbî, *İdeal Devlet*, çev. Muhammet Caner Ilgaroğlu (İstanbul: Divan Yayınları, 2023), 28-29.

[16] Ilai Alon, *Al-Fārābī's Philosophical Lexicon, Qāmūs al-Fārābī al-falsafī, 2 Volumes Arabic and English* (England: Aris and Philllips Ltd. Teddington House, 2002), 479-483.

[17] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān*, trans. Ömer Türker - Ömer Mahir Alper (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2012), 26-27. I take both Arabic and Turkish translation into consideration while translating it into English here and the rest of the citations from this book.

[18] Al-Fārābī, *al-Ta'līqāt*, 48.

[19] See "Nafs", Ilai Alon, Al-Fārābī's Philosophical Lexicon, pp. 479-483

[20] Al-Fārābī, *al-Ta'līqāt*, 37-51; Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 40-41-214-217; Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, 82.

[21] Aristotle, "On the Soul", *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 414a ff.

In this sense, it does not seem right to read the discussion of the self-consciousness of the soul in al-Fārābī only in the light of the Platonic theory of spirit.

It is evident that a dualistic structure predicated on the soul-body dichotomy is prominent feature of his oeuvre, with some of his works being regarded as controversial. Notable examples include *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt, al-Taʿlīqāt* and *Kitāb al-Jamʿ bayn raʾyay al-ḥakīmayn Aflāṭūn al-ilāhī wa-Arisṭūṭālīs*, the contents of which overlap with his other works.[22] In *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, the soul is directly classified under the separate entities (*mufāraq*), without mentioning a stage of development of the soul, the theory of substantiation (*tajawhur*)[23] and temperament (*mizāj*).[24] Here al-Fārābī openly states that the cause for the existence of human souls should be a separate entity. For in the order of the existence the body comes after these separate beings namely the Uncaused Existence (*al-wujūd alladhī lā sabab lahū*), the intellects (*al-uʿqūl al-faʾālah*) and the celestial powers (*al-quwā al-samawīyyah*). The assertation is made that the form in the body is incapable of engendering a separate existence. In such a case, this form would have to be a higher being than it is now. Moreover, in such a hypothetical situation, the human soul would have come into existence without a cause. However, the form in corporeality, seen as it already exists, does not reveal anything more perfect than its essential existence.[25] Al-Fārābī attempts to demonstrate that the cause for the existence of the soul cannot be the body, as can be seen in his other works:

> Human bodies are the source of certain actions that do not emerge from other bodies. These actions do not come from their corporeality, as there is no absolute object. In this case, the source of these actions is the substance, which is the consistency (*qiwām*) [which creates it] of the absolute body. The coming into being of human bodies is different from the coming into being of composite bodies. Because there are existential characteristics of human bodies, such as growing, feeding, apprehending and moving on their own.[26]

Human beings can perform multitude of actions and, most importantly, think beyond time and space, thanks to this rational (*nāṭiq*)

[22] Macit, "Aristoteles ve İbn Sînâ'da Nefs-Beden İlişkisi Problemi ve Modern Zihin Felsefesindeki Bazı Yansımaları", 5-21; Aydın Sayılı, "Fârâbî ve Tefekkür Tarihindeki Yeri", *Belleten* 15/57 (1951), 23-24.
[23] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 2.
[24] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 7-8.
[25] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 7-8.
[26] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 7; Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 41.

part of the soul, which apprehends universal concepts[27] and uses them for the past, present and future. In these aspects, the soul is a being beyond the body. These are the main characteristics that distinguish humans from other beings. The question thus arises as to whether the soul is separate *ab initio* or is it reached after completing a process of perfection (*istikmāl*)? These questions are not addressed in this work. However, issues such as the dualistic structure of the soul-body unit and the state of the soul after death are briefly mentioned.[28]

A close consideration of other works, including *al-madīnat al-fāḍilah, Kitāb al-siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, *Fuṣūl muntazaʿah* and *Risāla fi'l-ʿaql and al-Taʿlīqāt,* reveals a consistent application of the emanation theory in addressing questions of existence, the soul, and the body.[29] In these works, the soul appears to pass through a preparatory phase and subsequently reaches the stage of the rational human soul, and then moving from potentiality to actuality.[30] In fact, this preparation phase is common to all beings in the sublunar world.[31] Al-Fārābī meticulously delineates these processes in the aforementioned works concomitantly expounding the theories of *substantiation*[32] *(tajawhur)* and *temperament* (*mizāj)*.[33] The existence of different temperaments in human beings and other creatures is an inevitable conclusion of the process of emanation itself and its form.[34] The process of the soul's perfection is an ongoing one, spanning the entire duration of an individual's life. It commences with the first perfection, initiated by the endowment of the first principles by the Active Intellect (*ʿaql al-faʿāl*). The final perfection, which a soul is expected to achieve by developing its theoretical and practical aspects to the level of acquired intellect, which is the closest intellection level to the Active Intellect,[35] is the perfection via which one can make the soul one of the separate entities.[36] From this points and in relation to these books, the

[27] Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 38-39.
[28] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 8; Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 51.
[29] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 70 ff; Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 37; Here he says that soul is not in the body see Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 51.
[30] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 132 ff; Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, 34.
[31] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 90 ff.
[32] Rıza Tevfik Kalyoncu, "Fârâbî Felsefesinde Nefsin Yetkinleşme Süreci", *Tasavvur/Tekirdağ İlahiyat Dergisi* 9/2 (2023), 1733-1768.
[33] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 214-215-242-243; Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 38 and 41; Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, 41-43; Sümeyye Parıldar, "Fârâbî Felsefesinde Mizaç Teorisi", *İslam Düşüncesinde Mizaç Teorileri*, ed. Mehmet Zahit Tiryaki - Kübra Bilgin Tiryaki (Ankara: Nobel, 2016), 79-95.
[34] Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, 62.
[35] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 26-27; Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, 35.
[36] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 164-165.

following questions come to the fore in the context of self-consciousness: Do human souls, having undergone a preparatory phase and attained the stage of rationality, have a self-consciousness when the Active Intellect gives the first principles to human beings? To elaborate further, can the imparting of the first principles to a soul devoid of self-consciousness be considered? According to these books, which a preparatory phase is considered as necessary, does the soul, which can be interpreted as separate from the beginning in the first group of books, possesses the quality of being separate from the beginning, or does it attain it with the final perfection of the soul? Moreover, some of his statements makes it clear that not every soul can exist in the hereafter. Does this mean that only those souls that have achieved this directly listed as separate? It is necessary to highlight these issues to comprehend the nature and possibility of self-consciousness, individual identity and the potential continuance of the soul and self-consciousness in the hereafter.

The explanations concerning the faculties of the soul and the processes of sensation (*iḥsās*) and apprehension (*idrāk*) undergo only minor alterations in *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah* and *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*.[37] In these primary works, al-Fārābī provides some information regarding the five senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting. He then asserts that data from the senses is unified by common sense (*ḥiss mushtarak*).[38] They are processed and unified by the imagination (*mukhayyilah*) faculty of the soul. The location of the soul is the heart. The mind, which does the work of the soul and carries out its orders like a steward, is in the head. The faculties of the soul are listed as nutrition, sensation, imagination, desire and reasoning. The soul is divided into three: vegetative, animal and human. The rational part of the soul is further divided into two: theoretical and practical intellects. The thinking part of the human soul has also been classified according to different levels of understanding as potential intellect (*ʿaql bil-quwwah*), intellect in action (*ʿaql bi al-fiʿl*) and acquired intellect (*ʿaql mustafād*).[39] At this point, al-Fārābī elucidates the relationship between the soul and intellect as follows:

> فالعقل الذي هو بالقوة هو نفس ما أو جزء نفس أو قوة من قوى النفس أو شيء ما ذاته معدة أو مستعدة لأن تنتزع ماهيات الموجودات كلها وصورها[40]

[37] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 133-139; Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, 32-34-72-74.
[38] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 180-181.
[39] Al-Fārābī, *Risāla fi'l-ʿAql*, ed. Maurice Bouyges (Beirut: Dār al-Machreq Sarl, 1983), 12.
[40] Al-Fārābī, *Risāla fi'l-ʿaql*, 12.

> The potential intellect is [either] [i] the soul itself, or [ii] a part of the soul, or [iii] a faculty among the faculties of the soul, or [iv] something whose essence is ready or has been prepared to abstract the essences and forms of all entities.

After indicating the definition of soul, it is necessary to bring into attention how al-Fārābī formulates the relation between self, substance and essence. In *Kitāb al-ḥurūf* the philosopher examines the relationship between essence (*dhāt*), substance (*jawhar*) and quiddity (*māhiyyah*) in detail. The essence is defined as the sum of all the parts that constitute a thing's being, and the essence that imbues a thing with its nature. Accordingly, every essence is a substance, yet not every substance can be considered an essence. He continues as follows:

> Self (*dhāt*) refers to the quiddity (*māhiyyah*) of a thing, the parts of its quiddity; in short, it is said to all the things that can be said in the answer to the question of "what is that thing?". It does not matter whether this thing is a sensible thing that does not exist in a subject or a kind of it or whether it is a sensible thing present in a subject or a kind of it.[41]

Furthermore, al-Fārābī states that the terms soul and essence are employed in a largely interchangeable manner, and when used interchangeably, it is in the meaning of "selfness" of a thing.[42] However, the subtle distinctions and similarities between the two usages are also highlighted. On the other hand, the second perfection of the soul corresponds to the point at which the acquired intellect will be closest to the Active Intellect. The immortality of the soul is intricately intertwined with the development of the theoretical and practical parts of it and the attainment of the final perfection, which is achieved by performing the necessary actions.[43] The state of the soul after death is an issue discussed in more detail in works such as *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah* and *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*. In the scope of this study, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, *al-Taʿlīqāt* and *al-Jamʿ*, in which al-Fārābī sustains the distinction between soul and body consistently with his famous works, will be included. Although there are some debates about their authenticity, the fact that these criticisms have not yet turned into an academic alliance should also be kept in mind.

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[41] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-ḥurūf*, trans. Ömer Türker (Istanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2008), 46; . I take both Arabic and Türker's Turkish translation into consideration while translating it into English here and the rest of the citations from this book. For an alternative edition see: Al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters (Kitāb al-ḥurūf)*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Berkeley: Zaytuna College, 2024).

[42] Mustafa Yeşil, *Fârâbî ve Quine'da Dil, Anlam ve Doğruluk İlişkisi* (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2019), 17-73.

[43] Al-Fārābī, *Risāla fi'l-ʿAql*, 20-24; Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, 82; Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 214-217.

2. SOUL AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

In this title, I will try to analyse some related passages to support the idea that there is a room to claim that the soul has self-consciousness which is direct, unmediated and permanent, beginning simultaneously with the coexistence of soul. Let me first begin with *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt.* Al-Fārābī's objective in *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt* is to demonstrate the existence of separate entities. He classifies these entities as the Uncaused Being, active intellects, celestial powers and human souls.[44] The properties that apply to all these entities are as follows: a) Separate entities are not material (*jism*) beings. Human souls, like others, are also *separate from material beings*. b) Separate entities do not die or disperse; that is, they do not disappear. Accordingly, the human soul will be able to continue its existence after death. c) The happiness of these entities is higher and superior to the happiness of beings related to matter. In this case, the human soul will live in eternal happiness (*al-saʿādah al-quswā*).[45] The feature relevant to our subject requires direct reference to the text itself:

> إنها مدركة لذواتها بعد أن يعلم أن إدراكها لذواتها مختلف بالأنواع فإن إدراكها لذواتها هو نفس وجوداتها، ووجوداتها مختلفة.[46]
>
> They [i.e. separate entities] apprehend their selves once it is known that the way of their self-apprehension differs by type; this is because their apprehension of their selves is, in fact, their existence themselves and their existences vary.

Two significant points can be identified in this passage: Firstly, he employs the term *idrāk/apprehension* to denote being conscious of the self and asserts that existing and having the apprehension of self (*mudrik li-dhawāt*) are equivalent phenomena. Secondly, the existence of the self and awareness of it commences simultaneously. Just as there are differences in the existence of Uncaused Being, intellects, celestial powers and human souls, there are also differences between their apprehension of their selves or having self-consciousness. In this work, the concept of God's awareness of his own self is articulated through the term *idrāk*.[47] The awareness of God's own self or existence is not a state that is acquired through an intermediary. God possesses self-consciousness through direct apprehension of his self, which is devoid of intermediaries and in

[44] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 2.
[45] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 2-3.
[46] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 3; Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 47-48.
[47] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 3.

the most perfect manner.[48] The apprehension of God's own self must be unmediated and direct. Does the same thing apply to the rest of separate entities, especially to human souls? The following response is given to the question:

> أنها تشعر بذاتها ولو كانت موجودة في آلة؛ لكانت لا تدرك ذاتها، من دون أن تدرك معها آلتها، فكانت بينها وبين آلتها آلة، ويتسلسل، بل ما يدرك ذاته فذاته له وكل موجود في آلة فذاته لغيره.[49]

> They [i.e. human souls] are aware of themselves. If [the soul] were to exist in a faculty, it would not apprehend itself, without [simultaneously] apprehending the faculty with it, in which case there would have to be another faculty between that faculty and itself, and there would be an infinite regress. Rather, the thing that apprehends itself, its self is from itself. [However,] the thing that exists in the faculty, its self is not from itself.

Al-Fārābī explicitly asserts that human souls are *also conscious of their own selves*. Despite the absence of detailed information regarding the temporal and ontological characteristics of this consciousness, it can be posited that human souls possess simultaneous consciousness from the moment of their existence. This assertion is supported by the statement that their own existence and the apprehension of their selves are synonymous. However, it is important to highlight the distinction between the apprehension of God's own self and that of the intellects and celestial powers. The concept of God's consciousness encompasses all the implications of the quiddities (*lawāzim*).[50] In contrast, the case for intellects, celestial powers and human souls does not align with this perfection. As can be understood, the terms *shuʿūr* and *idrāk* in the passage, are used to indicate that the self-consciousness of different beings occurs directly and without intermediaries. The self of the thing that apprehends its self is from itself. However, those whose existence is thanks to an intermediary being owe their existence to another being.

Other passages that support human souls have self-consciousness which is direct, unmediated and permanent, can be found in *al-Taʿlīqāt*. Here, al-Fārābī supports our reading that the thinking part of the human soul apprehends itself directly, without intermediary and evidently as follows:

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[48] Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, 46. He uses *idrāk* also for God's own apprehension of self.
[49] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 7.
[50] Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 46-47; Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 54-57.

الأشياء التي يكون وجودها لها، كالمفارق والنفس الناطقة، تدرك ذواتها، والتي وجودها بغيرها، كالقوة الباصرة لا تدرك ذاتها.[51]

> Things whose existence is by themselves, such as the separate entities and the rational soul, apprehend themselves (*tudrik dhawātahā*). [However,] things whose existence depends on something else, such as the faculty of sight, do not apprehend themselves.

As it is seen, al-Fārābī not only classifies openly the rational part of the soul among the separate entities and but also states that those whose existences are from themselves are conscious of their selves. Furthermore, he keeps using the term *apprehension* to denote this concept. He posits the impossibility of those whose existence is contingent on another being, such as the power of vision, apprehending themselves, that is, being conscious of their self. This is due to the fact that, even if an eye senses an object and conveys this sensation to the soul, it is not possible for the eye to comprehend its own identity or to be direct consciousness of itself. This phenomenon pertains to all five senses. In this context, the terms "consciousness" and "apprehension" are employed to denote the direct awareness of the soul's self, without the intervention of any intermediary. Just like learning and using universal concepts or moving independently, this is exactly the most important thing that distinguishes humans from other creatures: *Animals other than humans and plants cannot be constantly conscious of themselves*.

Lastly, it is important to note another passage, which is in *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah,* where the term *shuʿūr*/awareness is employed to denote direct consciousness of the pains caused by five senses and sensation. This necessitates self and self-consciousness of the soul. According to al-Fārābī;

> when the rational part [of the soul] is unaware (lā yashʿur) of the negative qualities [caused by senses] because it is preoccupied by what the senses bring it, and when [rational part] turns away from sensations and remains on its own, it becomes aware (shaʿara) of the negative qualities following these dispositions, which are independent of matter and isolated from the senses and from everything which brought to them from outside.[52]

As it is seen human soul cannot be aware of the distress, like a man in sorrow or an ill person, because it is too much preoccupied by the senses, but, if the soul returns to itself truly, it can be aware of them:

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[51] Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 48-49.
[52] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 222-223.

الجزء الناطق ما دام متشاغلا بما تورده الحواسّ عليه، لم يقترن به من الهيئات الردية، حتّى إذا انفرد انفراداً تامّاً دون الحواسّ شعر بالأذى[53]

> As long as the rational part [of the human soul] is occupied with what the senses present to it, it does not notice the negative qualities; however, when it becomes completely *separated from the senses*, *it becomes aware of* the torment [...][54]

The last passage indicates the necessity of self-consciousness and demonstrates its disruption by sensory experience and their associated materials, a topic that will be addressed in the subsequent section. The absence of both of the self and self-consciousness precludes the soul from experiencing the pains and illnesses that it is capable of directly apprehending.

Having visited these passages, now I want to highlight one terminological fact that the term "self" (*dhāt*) and "soul" (*nafs*) were not known publicly as technical equivalent philosophical terms and al-Fārābī brings this into attention. He not only warns the reader but also uses them interchangeably to indicate self or selfness of a thing in different usages:

> This word and the words derived and created from it, that is, the words "self" (*dhāt*), "in itself" (*wa mā bi-dhātihī*) and "selfness of the thing" (*dhāt al-shay)* are not famous among the public. These are words used only by philosophers and those dealing with theoretical sciences. People use "on its own" (*bi-nafsihī*) instead because they say, "Zayd fought on his own", and by this, they mean "without helper". They say, "Zayd is on his own", and by this, they mean "he is not with anyone else but with himself"; that is, he is independent of others in everything he does.[55]

In this passage, he shows that the terms soul (*nafs*) and self of a thing (*dhāt*) and their derivatives signify technically immediacy. Additionally, the term apprehension is a generic term that can be used for obtaining the universals, objects of desire, and sensation of particulars as well as the direct, unmediated self-consciousness of the soul. It is stated that even in the absence of the physical body, the soul can persist in apprehending universals, unassisted by the five senses, a topic which will be analysed in the last title.[56] However, this ability is contingent only upon the presence of self-consciousness. The senses are necessary for the intellection of universals and knowledge is generally acquired through them. But there

[53] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 222-223.
[54] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 222-223.
[55] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-ḥurūf*, 49.
[56] Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 39. See also "*min ghayr qaṣd wa min ḥaythu lā yashʿuru bihī*" at the same page.

exist phenomena that can be directly apprehended without the involvement of either.

Finally, I would like to discuss the relation between the self-consciousness of the human soul and obtaining the first principles by the help of Active Intellect to support that soul must have self-consciousness directly. He asserts that some first principles (*awā'il*), such as the principle of "*things that are equal to something are equal to each other*"[57] are either inherent in the human soul or bestowed upon it by the Active intellect. Therefore, the concepts/intelligibles that exist in such premises are given to man,[58] and no sensory data, intention or sensation is active in this process.[59] To illustrate this, he provides an example of a child's innate understanding of the first principles of the soul, demonstrating that the continuity of the non-physical apprehension of the soul does not depend on sensory experience. He advocates that people find the principles in themselves ready with an unmediated apprehension in our nature (*fiṭrah*), without knowing when and in what way the soul acquired these first principles. This explanation coincides with the discussion of first principles in many works, especially *Kitāb al-burhān*, and there it is stated that there is no need for senses to obtain some of the first principles as they have been instilled or imprinted in our nature:

> والحاصل بالطباع هو الذي حصل لنا اليقين به من غير أن نعلم من أين حصل ولا كيف حصل، ومن غير أن نكون شعرنا في وقت من الأوقات أن كنا جاهلين به، ولا نكون قد تشوقنا معرفته، ولا جعلناه مطلوبا اصلا في وقت من الأوقات، بل نجد أنفسنا كأنها فطرت عليه من أول كوننا، وكأنه غريزي لنا لم نخل منه[60]

> Naturally acquired are the premises that we know certainly without knowing where or how they were acquired, without being conscious of our ignorance of them at any point in time, without any desire to acquire knowledge of them, and without ever making them a subject of study at any point in time. On the contrary, we find our souls as if they were created together with them from the beginning as if they were innate to us and we cannot be deprived of them.

In this scenario, two hypotheses can be postulated: either (a) the soul possesses the self-consciousness even before the first principles are imprinted to it, and while experiencing this consciousness, it can be directly aware of these principles, without any awareness of the timing or

[57] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān*, 37-38.
[58] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 162-163.
[59] Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 38-39.
[60] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Burhān*, 4-5.

method of their impartation; or (b) at the moment when the soul possesses, that is, as soon as it comes into existence, these first principles are already present in its nature. This suggests that, upon attaining self-consciousness directly, the soul is initially conscious itself and subsequently encounters these principles as already present. In both cases, these principles must have been imparted to humans prior to sensation and experience; that is, human souls are inherently cognisant of these principles as a priori. However, it is well known that al-Fārābī does not endorse any kind of Platonic innate knowledge. Although there are differences, he follows Aristotelian tradition in epistemic theory. In conclusion, in the light of what has been said above, human souls have self-consciousness, which is direct and unmediated beginning simultaneously with the coexistence of soul and body.

3. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE COGNITION OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS: "A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT?"

Self-consciousness is posited as an inherent feature of the soul's existence, originating from the moment of its inception. This is unmediated, direct and obvious. This consciousness arises concomitantly with the existence of the soul and continues if the soul exists. The subsequent discussion will address the nature of conceptually cognising this self-consciousness. It appears that al-Fārābī's texts furnish us with the capacity to discern a secondary level of consciousness, differentiating the uninterrupted and immediate "self-consciousness" from the conceptual and intermittent "cognition (*maʿrifah*) of the self-consciousness" in the context of our experiential knowledge of this self-consciousness. This distinction enables the elucidation of the assertion that self-consciousness proceeds all cognitive processes. Then what is this cognition of the self-consciousness?

According to al-Fārābī, when the human soul is related to matter, materiality prevents it from examining its abstract (*mujarrad*) self and its own essence and states. We have previously touched upon the passage in *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah* in the previous part.[61] We will therefore proceed to examine additional texts in which he discusses this issue. While explaining this, he sometimes points this out with the verbs *ʿarafa* or *lā taʿrif* and sometimes with *adraka* or *lā tudrik*:

> والحواس هي الطرق التي تستفيدُ منها النفسُ الإنسانية المعارفَ. النفسُ مادامت ملابسة للهيولي لا تعرف مجرداتها ولا شيئًا من صفاتها التي تكون لها، وهي مجردة،

[61] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 222-223.

ولا شيئًا من أحوالها عند التجرد؛ لأنها لا يمكنها الرجوع إلى خاص ذاتها، والتجرد عمّا يُلابسها مانع لها عن التحقق بذاتها، وعن مطالعة شيء من أحوالها، فإذا تجردت؛ زال عنها هذا العوق، فحينئذ تعرف ذاتها وأحوالها وصفاتها الخاصة بها. وقال القوى البدنية تمنع النفسَ عن التفرد بذاتها، وخاص إدراكاتها، فهي تدرك الأشياء متخيلة لا معقولة لانجذابها إليها واستيلائها عليها، ولأنها لم تألف بالعقليات، ولم تعرفها، بل نشأت على الحسّيّات، فهي تطمئنُّ إليها وتثق بها فتتوهم أنه لا وجود للعقليات، وإنما هي أوهام مرسلة.[62]

> The senses are the means through which the human soul acquires knowledge (*maʿārif*). As long as the soul is connected to matter, it does not know its abstract nature nor any of its attributes as an abstract entity, nor any of its states when abstracted. This is because the soul cannot return to its pure self, while it is attached to matter, as such attachment prevents it from actualising its self or apprehending its states. However, once it becomes abstracted, these obstacles are removed, allowing it to know its self, its states, and its unique attributes. Corporeal faculties prevent the soul from being itself and its unique apprehension. Consequently, it apprehends things as imaginations rather than intelligibles, as it [i.e. soul] is drawn toward and dominated by these bodily faculties. Furthermore, because [the soul] has not been accustomed to intellectual notions nor knows them; rather, it has been nurtured on sensory sensations, and it finds comfort in and relies on them, imagining that intellectual notions do not exist and are merely unfounded illusions.

Do these explanations suggest that an exclusive focus on material concerns hinders the soul's ability to return to itself, thereby significantly impeding the capacity for self-consciousness within the soul-body unity? Alternatively, do these expressions imply that, while a person inherently possesses direct self-consciousness within the unity, the soul is unable to perpetually engage in its conceptual exploration of itself, attributes and states in its abstract states, that is, the cognition of the self-consciousness? Alternatively, this phenomenon may be intrinsically linked to the aforementioned perfection of the potential power in the soul. Does the process of being conscious of something necessitate the attainment of comprehensive knowledge regarding its nature?

As previously mentioned, al-Fārābī employs the verb *ʿarafa* or *lā taʿrif* when discussing the interaction between the soul and the matter. It does not know the self and the attributes of its own soul abstracted from matter, and states that materiality prevents the soul from focusing on its self which means, if I may, the recognising its self-consciousness (*al-quwā*

[62] Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 39-40.

al badaniyyah tamnaʿu al-nafsa ʿan al-tafarrud bi-dhawātihā). However, he states that when the human soul abstracts itself from matter, and it gets rid of those that prevent it from focusing on its self, the soul attains the knowledge of the abstract states and attributes of its own self. In this context, this last passage does not imply a loss of this direct *self-consciousness*, because this is direct and unmediated consciousness and always present. On the other hand, it is not always possible for the soul to be in the *cognition of self-consciousness*, which is, in a way, being conscious of the direct consciousness!

Al-Fārābī takes the subject even one step further with a passage he quoted from Aristotle at the end of *al-Jamʿ*:

> إنّي رُبّما خلوتُ بنفسي كثيرًا وخلعتُ بدني؛ فصرتُ كأنّي جوهر مجرد بلا جسم، فأكون داخلًا في ذاتي راجعًا إليها، وخارجًا من سائر الأشياء سواي، فأكون العِلْم والعالِم والمعلوم جميعًا، فأرى في ذاتي من الحسن والبهاء ما بقيتُ متعجبًا، فأعلم عند ذلك أني من العالم الشريف جزء صغير، فإني لَمُحَيًّا فاعل. فَلَمّا أيقنتُ بذلك ترقيتُ بذهني من ذلك العالم إلى العالم الإلهي؛ فصرتُ كأني هناك متعلق بها. فعند ذلك يلمع لي من النور والبهاء ما يكلّ الألسن عن وصفه، والآذان عن سمعه، فإذا استغشى في ذلك النور وبلغت طاقتي ولم أقو على احتماله؛ هبطتُ إلى عالم الفكرة. فإذا صرت إلى عالم الفكرة؛ حجبت عني الفكرة ذلك النور، وتذكرت عند ذلك أخي يرقليطوس، من حيث أمر بالطلب والبحث عن جوهر النفس الشريفة بالصعود إلى عالم العقل.[63]

> Often, when I am alone with my soul, and detached from my body, I feel as if I am an abstracted self, free from corporeality. [In such moments,] I immerse myself within my essence, separating from everything other than myself, becoming simultaneously knowledge, the knower, and the known. I observe beauty and pleasantness within myself. Then, I realised that I am a small part of the noble universe and that I am active in my life. In this certainty, my mind ascends to the divine cause from this universe, as if I am related to it. At that point, light and elegance illuminate me that are beyond words to describe or ears to comprehend. When this light overwhelms me, reaching the limits of my capacity, I descend back into the realm of thought. Once I enter the realm of thought, that light becomes obscured by thoughts. There I recall my brother Heraclitus, who urged seeking the essence of the noble soul through ascension into the realm of intellect.

[63] Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Jamʿ bayn raʾyay al-ḥakīmayn Aflāṭūn al-ilāhī wa-Arisṭūṭālīs, L'Harmonie Entre Les Opinions De Platon et D'Aristote, Texte Arabe et traduction*, ed. Fawzi Miṭrī Najjār (Dominique Mallet: Institut Français De Damas, 1999), 153-155; To see an alternative tr. Charles E. Butterworth, *Alfarabi The political Writings "Selected Aphorisms" and Other Texts* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 164-165.

Al-Fārābī does not refute the interpretation that the soul is capable of being alone intellectually with itself in this life. The act of quoting this passage appears to imply endorsement of a journey through thought, representing an experience between the divine and intellectual domains. This mental experience can occur multiple times prior to the separation of the soul from the body. Despite the continuous nature of direct *self-consciousness*, *the cognition of the self-consciousness*, i.e. the investigation of the abstract states and attributes of the self, is not necessarily continuous. For instance, humans have the capacity to recognise that they are beings capable of sensation, thought and apprehension, thereby transcending matter. However, since they do not consistently focus on this issue throughout their lives, they may, at times, become unaware of this aspect of their consciousness in their daily lives. Nevertheless, the aspect of their consciousness from which they are moving away is not permanent self-consciousness, which persists even when they focus on different topics. Self-consciousness is a feature that arises from being a separate entity. Since the separate soul is with a body living in a material world, it must abstract itself from materiality and place itself at the focus of its apprehension to consider its abstract states that transcend matter. This reflective thought is, if I may call it, *the cognition of self-consciousness*. Al-Fārābī states that being rational and being abstracted from matter are inextricably linked.

Let me visit another passage which supports my reading and conclusion of the quotation exist in *al-Jamʿ*. Al-Fārābī elucidates the distinction between sensation and direct apprehension through the medium of reasoning in his works. To suffice this purpose, I will bring only one example from *al-Taʿlīqāt:*

> النفس الإنسانية إنما تعقل ذاتها لأنها مجردة. والنفوس الحيوانية غير مجردة، فلا يعقل ذاتها، لأن عقلية الشيء هو تجريده عن المادة .والنفس إنما تُدْرك بواسطة آلات الأشياء المحسوسة والمتخيلة. وأما الكليات والعقليات فإنها تدركها بذاتها ونفسها[64]

> The human soul intellectually apprehends (*ʿaqala*) its own self because it is an abstract [being], whereas animal souls are not abstract [beings]; therefore, they cannot intellectually apprehend their selves, as the intelligibility of a thing is its abstraction from matter. The soul apprehends sensible and imaginative objects through [its] faculties, and it apprehends the universals and the intelligibles [directly] through their own souls and themselves.

[64] Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 50.

As an abstract being, the soul must apprehend the universals and intelligibles through its own self. Therefore, unlike self-consciousness, which is direct and continuous, the cognition of self-consciousness is indirect; it occurs through conceptual reasoning and inference depending on experience. Because the content and nature of a child's inferences about the cognition of his own self-consciousness are different from the cognition of an experienced person of advanced age, or the investigation of an educated and experienced person and an uneducated and inexperienced person is different. By reading this issue together with al-Fārābī's theory of the perfection of the soul, it is possible to interpret that as the soul gains progress in perfection, the cognition of self-consciousness develops from simple into more complex.

4. THE STATE OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND PERSONAL IDENTITY OF THE SOUL AFTER SEPARATING FROM THE BODY

In this final part, I would like to discuss the future of the soul, the self-consciousness and individual identity after soul leaves the body within the context of punishment and reward. The question arises as to whether self-consciousness and individual identity persist following the separation of the soul from the body. Al-Fārābī says in *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*: "…*you know that these* [i.e., human souls] *are simple beings and that when the perfection that exists in them as a potential occurs, they must accept it and separate from it* [i.e., the body]."[65] The terminology of being simple and the emergence of perfection here coincide with the other works of the philosopher. It is also stated that there is a potential power in the soul to reach happiness, and with this power, a person should strive for final perfection by completing the process of substantiation with the help and guidance of the Active Intellect.[66] The question arises as to whether there are individuals who might be incapable of attaining soul's perfection through the utilisation of this faculty. In such a scenario, would a being that was separate at the outset lose this separateness and consequently, its direct consciousness? What about the state of consciousness of the soul that have achieved perfection after bodily dissolution? The responses to these inquiries are not held in *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*. However, the issue of the soul continuing its apprehension without needing the body and sensations is stated as follows in *al-Taʿlīqāt*:

[65] Al-Fārābī, *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, 8.
[66] Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 62 ff.

وإذا فارقت البدن ولها الاستعداد لإدراك المعقولات؛ فلعلها تحصل لها من غير حاجة إلى القوى الحِسِّيّة التي فاتتها، بل تحصل لها من غير قصد.[67]

> When the soul separates from the body while having its preparedness for the apprehension of intelligibles, it is possible for [this apprehension] to occur for it without requiring the sensory faculties it has lost. Moreover, [this apprehension] may occur without deliberate intent.

In accordance with *Ithbāt al-mufāraqāt*, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, and even *Risāla fi'l-ʿaql,* the Active Intellect facilitates the attainment of the level of acquired intellect. The function of the Active Intellect in comprehension is mentioned in many works, especially *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah* and *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*. The attainment of unity with the Active Intellect is contingent upon the comprehension of these forms by the human soul, as elucidated in *Risāla fi'l-ʿaql*. In summary, the enhancement of the human soul's potential power encompasses the augmentation of its comprehension of universals. When a human being grasps most or all the intelligibles, they can only rise to the position closest to the Active Intellect. Al-Fārābī states that after the soul departs from the body, it can apprehend the intelligibles without requiring senses. Therefore, investigating the self-consciousness of the soul and the state of individual identity after separation from the body is directly related to whether the final perfection is achieved. Perfected souls no longer need a body to support themselves after this stage; they can exist without matter. The soul's ability to apprehend without the need for physical tools (sensation-imagination, etc.) is facilitated by its perfected power. The question therefore arises as to form and nature of existence of the soul in the absence of a physical body. Furthermore, the continuation of personal consciousness and identity in the hereafter is a subject of significant interest. The question arises as to whether this apprehension signifies the perpetuation of personal identity. This inquiry is a profound subject that merits further examination; therefore, it is advisable to consider this matter in the context of al-Fārābī's famous passage in *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*:

> When a group passes away, their bodies perish, their souls are purified, and attain happiness, others take their place in the city; they perform their deeds, and accordingly, their souls also become purified. Once their bodies perish, they join the ranks of the earlier group. They are close to each other just as non-corporeal entities are close to each other. So, they just become close to each other in one community. Similar souls connect

[67] Al-Fārābī, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, 39; . Here he also uses *shuʿūr* to indicate direct awareness of a child for the principles. For a similar reading see. Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 222-223.

> with one another, and as more souls join over time, the delight of each soul increases. As those who come later join them, the enjoyment of both communities increases as this latter encounter and come together with those who came before. Each soul apprehends itself and apprehends other similar souls multiple times. This apprehension grows with the addition of newcomers, resulting in an infinite increase in joy for every soul over time; such is the case of every community. This is the true supreme happiness, which is the aim of the Active Intellect. [68]

Al-Fārābī argues that the souls, which reach the highest happiness by perfecting their given competence, will continue their existence and necessarily their self-consciousness and individual identity after leaving the body.[69] Reflecting upon oneself and the essences of other souls necessitates the existence of self-awareness, as previously expressed. The absence of self-consciousness precludes the possibility of thoughts that are based on intelligibles. Moreover, the continuation of the soul necessarily means the continuation of self-consciousness and identity. For him, souls can exist in unity, maintain their own self-consciousness and identity and be aware of others at the same time.

On the other hand, it is stated that the situation of those who cannot reach the final perfection properly will be different; they will perish alongside the body.[70] Similarly, al-Fārābī in *al-Madīnat al-Fāḍilah* deals with human souls in a triple classification and states that the souls of ignorant people, who do not perfect their soul with powers given to them, will perish along with the body because they cannot apprehend intelligibles.

It can be deduced from these expressions that the second group will lose their self-consciousness and identity. If the soul disappears, self-consciousness and individual identity will also disappear. He posits that sinful souls, who perfect this given power but do not adequately perform the necessary moral behaviours, are immortal yet subject to eternal torment. The continuation of these souls' existence is predicated on the possession of their own consciousness and identity. Whereas the souls that perfect this given power, both theoretically and practically, will be in eternally happiness. It can be said that while those who have attained eternal happiness and those who are tormented continue to maintain their essential identities, those who disappear with the body cannot. For

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[68] Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, 82; to see for almost the same text Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 214-217.

[69] Muhammet Caner Ilgaroğlu - Luay Hatem Yaqoob "Fârâbî ve Hocazâde'nin Görüşleri Bağlamında Meâd Meselesi", *Manas Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 8/4 (Ekim 2019), 3085-3100.

[70] Al-Fārābī, *al-Siyāsat al-madaniyyah*, 83; Al-Fārābī, *al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah*, 220-224.

reward and punishment to be meaningful in the hereafter, the soul that will receive the reward and punishment must have essential consciousness, and personal identity must continue. Otherwise, the soul that does not have this consciousness and does not maintain his individual identity cannot understand why he is subject to reward or punishment.

CONCLUSION

It is understood that the texts regarding the discussion of self-consciousness in al-Fārābī's books can be found inherently in the discussions, such as the demonstrations of the existence of separate entities and the immateriality of the soul. Al-Fārābī claims that the self-consciousness of the soul begins simultaneously when the soul starts co-existing with the body. For him, existing means being conscious of the self and being conscious of the self is existing. The self-consciousness of the soul is direct, unmediated and continuous. It is the distinguishing feature of humans from others in the sublunar world that arises from being a separate entity from the beginning and provides necessarily an individual identity. However, *the cognition of self-consciousness* is indirect, mediated and interrupted. The latter depends on conceptual thinking. This is because the soul is unable to return to its own essence and focus on its abstract states and attributes, as the apprehension is invaded by material objects and issues. The cognition of self-consciousness, or if we may call it reflective consciousness, is possible when the soul positions itself into the focus of its apprehension by getting rid of materiality, abstracting itself from the outside world and thinking about the soul's features, states and nature. This requires a process of thinking based on experiential and conceptual content and reasoning. With the perfection process of the soul that continues throughout life, just like other concepts, the concept of "self", which is ready in our nature in a potential state and becomes active and mature in terms of content after self-consciousness, also becomes in action from time to time. Although the passages in *al-Jamʿ* can be traced back to Plato, he cites it from "Aristotle", and they can be interpreted as some sort of "thought experiment", which al-Fārābī seems to be endorsing in his own thinking. Human souls, then, mentally, can have a thought journey into the nature of self, which represents the relation between *direct self-consciousness* and *the cognition of the self-consciousness* and return to the material world.

Al-Fārābī discusses the states of self-consciousness and individual identity after the separation of the soul from the body in a threefold classification. The first group consists of those who develop theoretical

and practical intellects and reach the acquired intellect level, are in the nearest position to the Active Intellect, and achieve the second perfection. These liberated souls attain eternal happiness by maintaining their own consciousness and individual identity. The second group develop only one of the two aspects of the intellect but not the other. Souls in this group also preserve their self-consciousness and individual identities due to the continuation of their existence. But they will suffer in constant torment. The souls of the last group perish along with the body since they do not develop either their theoretical or practical parts of intellect. Hence, they lose their consciousness and individual identity. While the idea of continuation of self-consciousness and personal identity after death makes the reward and punishment concepts meaningful, the idea that some souls perish shows that the reason behind his approach may not only be religious concerns or a traditional understanding of it. As a result, it is possible to say that al-Fārābī's text have room to argue in favour of the reading, if I am not mistaken, that he contributed to the discussions of self-consciousness, individual identity and possible continuation of them in the hereafter directly or indirectly.

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