



## **SOME ASPECTS OF MEDIEVAL EASTERN RATIONALISM: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS**

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<b>Received:</b> April 6 <sup>th</sup> 2023 <b>Accepted:</b> May 6 <sup>th</sup> 2023 <b>Published:</b> June 11 <sup>th</sup> 2023	The article analyzes the unique views of Farabi and Ibn Sina, the great thinkers of the East, about the mind, its status and possibilities as the highest criterion of the cognitive process.
<b>Keywords:</b> cognition, cognitive process, live observation, emotional cognition, mental cognition, theoretical intelligence, practical intelligence, active intelligence, possible intelligence, logic, thinking, understanding, judgment, conclusion, intelligence, intellectual capacity.	

In all periods of human history, the problem of mind has been the focus of attention of philosophers. Because knowledge and practical activity of a person is mainly based on the mind. Doing business on the basis of intelligence and thinking is only a human quality. Exalting this virtue is one of the basic features of our spiritual culture.

Due to the rise of rationalism in the spiritual life of Central Asia in the Middle Ages, the problem of mind gained importance in Eastern philosophy and was thoroughly studied. In particular, the problem of mind is one of the most complex parts of the philosophical system of the great encyclopedist Abu Nasr Farabi (873-950). This problem was developed by the thinker in his treatises on "Civil Policy", "The Essence of Issues", "Views of the Residents of the Virtuous City", as well as "The Essence of the Word of Mind".

Describing the power of intelligence as a natural and inseparable part of a person, Farabi divides it into theoretical and practical. With the help of the power of the theoretical mind, a person acquires knowledge. It refers to the power that a person can exercise in his administration through the power of practical reason. This power, in turn, is divided into professional and intellectual. With the help of professional power, a person learns arts and crafts, and with the help of intellectual power, he thinks and observes what to do and what not to do. However, Farabi specifically refers to the disembodied and immaterial mind in order to evaluate the improvement of mental cognition and the deepening of the essence.

Farabi in his treatise "The essence of the word intelligence" recognizes six meanings of the concept of "intelligence": The first is a simple word that is used when talking about a person, that he is intelligent. The second is what the Mutakallim are arguing about, in the sense that everyone understands it in their own way. It refers to what the mind denies. The third meaning of the word mind is reflected in Aristotle's

treatise "Proof", the fourth in the book "Nicomachean Ethics", the fifth in his treatise "On the Soul" and the sixth in "Metaphysics"<sup>1</sup>.

In Farabi's imagination, knowing the essence is related to knowing the form of the object. The possibility of separating the form from the matter of the subject, that is, from knowing the essence, is gradually becoming a reality. Mind performs this process, that is, form is separated from matter, and things that are thought turn from possibility to reality. And the mind, knowing their essence, moves to the second higher stage, that is, from potential mind to real mind. Intelligence or rationality continues in the essence of knowing and deepening. The mind deepens into knowledge of the next basis of the "substrate" of knowledge of essence, in which it arms itself with knowledge of essence and elevates their material basis to the realm of knowledge. This stage is called the acquired mind.

According to Alloma, when the mind passes into its physical, material forms, it rises to the form of elements, which are the lowest forms of existence. As a result, the mind passes from the knowledge of earthly and material things to the knowledge of the forms of spatial bodies, the essence of immaterial things far away. In this last higher stage he becomes the active mind, i.e. merges into the single objective worldly mind<sup>2</sup>. In this, the whole process of the transition of the mind from the potential state to the actual state is carried out through the influence of the heavenly active mind. So, the soul and mind of a person go to eternity, that is, in the words of Farabi, the mind is eternal, just as the seal of eternity is

<sup>1</sup>Аль-Фараби. О разуме и науке. – Алма-Ата: Наука, 1975, 3-бет.

<sup>2</sup>Хайруллаев М.М. Абу Наср ал-Фараби. – М.: Наука, 1982, 217-бет.



stamped on the noble thoughts and masterpieces of the sages.

Abu Nasr Farabi considers the worldly active mind as the basis of world creation among the six principles of the universe. The task of the active mind, he shows, is to care for the intelligent animal and to strive to bring it to the level of maturity which man is capable of attaining, that is, of attaining perfect happiness. The worldly active mind is involved in the knowledge of objective reality by man. This process is characterized by the fact that the worldly active mind raises the data of the senses and makes them suitable for contemplation, and contemplation leads to deep and comprehensive knowledge, and ultimately leads to eternity, enriching the various levels of development with various knowledge of the universe.

The great thinker of the East continues his opinion that the active mind serves as an intermediary between the first cause and man. The first reason goes to the active mind and is related to the human soul. In turn, the soul is located in the body, the property of "divine life" is transferred to matter, to man, and the essence of man, his knowledge in the form of intelligence remains eternal. Here one can see the full manifestation of Eastern pantheism. "And the eternity of the mind means the eternity of the human race"<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, "the eternity of the active mind is nothing but the eternal renewal of humanity and the continuity of civilization"<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the allama's doctrine of reason played an important role for the medieval period and opened a wide way for the liberation of science from the influence of religion and the celebration of advanced humanitarian ideas.

Ibn Sina (980-1037), one of the great representatives of medieval Eastern Peripateticism, said that humans differ from animals in that God has given them intelligence. Thanks to it, a person can distinguish good from evil, intellectual maturity from error, friend from enemy. The light of reason makes a person free from the influence of random forces. In the process of cognition, the sense organs and the observation based on them act as the closest assistants of the mind.

According to Ibn Sina, the highest stage of the cognitive process is mental cognition. Mental cognition reprocesses the information received through the senses, summarizes it based on understanding, judgment and conclusions. The results achieved at the level of live observation are reformed in a certain way. The role of logic is extremely important in this.

Although the great thinker does not reject live observation, he points out that it is somewhat limited. After all, it is difficult to imagine the process of cognition without live observation. But despite this, in some cases, it interferes with having knowledge embodied in complete, full-fledged concepts. Thanks to it, knowledge with a simple imagination or a simple empirical basis begins to claim the status of scientific concepts, complicates the process of knowing<sup>5</sup>.

Ibn Sina, like his predecessor Al-Farabi, pays special attention to reason in his doctrine of rationalism. Mind is a great gift, without it the process of knowing would never have come to an end. Intelligence separates the human race from the animal kingdom. According to him, "the power of the mind is infinite, and what it thinks is meaningless. The mind can reflect anything it wants"<sup>6</sup>. If the power of live observation does not deviate from the unimportant properties of accidents-things-objects, the power of reason has the sole purpose of capturing their most important aspect - the essence, the kingdom of substance. At the level of ordinary observation, the human mind can have simple ideas about the world, but without the gift of reason, it is impossible to have science.

According to Allama, "the mind is the internal power that controls the behavior of a person, it calls to know the science of intuition - logic in order to understand people's character and nature more deeply. The benefit of this knowledge for a person is tangible, it increases a person's insight, expands the scope of thought, puts the ones who know or don't know in their place and perfects a person"<sup>7</sup>.

According to Ibn Sina, the mind is the supreme power of the human soul that serves universal knowledge. In most cases, Ibn Sina and the representatives of his school understand the mind as the ability of the human soul to abstract thinking and general knowledge, and the intellect as the ability of the human soul to be achieved through any means of knowledge.

Cognition is a relatively mature form of perception through the mind. With the help of the mind, we know the general things, human soul, existence. Therefore, he defines the difference

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<sup>5</sup>Ибн Сина (Авиценна). Избранные философские произведения. – М.: Наука, 1980. – Б. 222-223.

<sup>6</sup>Ўша жойда, 272-бет.

<sup>7</sup>Абу Али ибн Сино. Саломон ва Ибсол. – Т., 1980, 13-бет.

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<sup>3</sup>Ўша жойда, 218-бет.

<sup>4</sup>Ўша жойда, 218-бет.



between concepts and things, analyzes and abstracts general and specific, substantial and accidental concepts. At the same time, he classifies the concept of intelligence. He says that there is a possible and active mind. The main power of the single soul is the possible mind. And the active mind is a mind that is a self-existent principle, separate from the individual soul. Active intelligence is common and unique to all human beings<sup>8</sup>.

Ibn Sina explains the process of human cognition as the process of origin of things in the material world. According to him, in reality, matter exists as a possibility, and mind as an active basis. Sensual knowledge is the foundation of real knowledge. Mental knowledge is realized thanks to the knowledge received through the sense organs. The senses help the mind in different ways. One of them is sensory perception, which gives images to the mind and gives rise to four mental actions:

*First*, the mind separates simple concepts from individual things by means of matter, material connections and attributes, and they distinguish the essence, the accident, depending on the common and different aspects of the mind. Due to this, the main concepts arise in the mind, which are mastered using imagination and findings. Therefore, the mind first of all carries out logical operations on the data of the senses, compares them in order to determine their similarities and differences, separates generality from individual things, their connections and properties, existence from abstraction, accidentality. Concepts are formed as a result of logical actions based on such sensory data.

*Second*, the mind establishes relations of negation and affirmation between individual concepts. The comparison of general concepts by way of negation and affirmation is primary and the mind accepts it, but if it is not, the mind retains it until it is in the position of the middle term of the syllogism. On the other hand, after the formation of the concepts, the next action of the mind is to compare and combine the concepts by means of confirmation and denial in judgment. At the same time, the comparison of concepts and the connections between them are taken as a self-evident fact in the judgment or established by means of a syllogism.

*Thirdly*, the mind acquires the necessary parts of affirmative or negative judgments by means of

sensory perception based on the experience of grounds. Here, while considering the relationship between the emotional and mental levels of cognition, it is appropriate to emphasize the interesting idea that the relationship of concepts in different forms of judgments has the character of legal communication. In other words, these connections of concepts in judgments are not accidental, but necessary. In doing so, we make sure that the relationships of the concepts in the judgments are of a necessary, legitimate nature, based on experience, observation, or logical paths. "The mentioned relations between the concepts," writes Ibn Sina, "are not sometimes, but always, and therefore the certainty that the given part has some relation to the given possessor according to its nature, or that the given effect is not incidental to the given basis according to its nature or to it in its essence." creates<sup>9</sup>.

*Fourth*, the activity of the mind consists in perceiving such rules as are based on undisputed, generally accepted opinion.

In the rationalist doctrine of the thinker, reason is interpreted as the criterion of any knowledge. According to him, "any knowledge that is not weighed on the scales of reason cannot be true, so it is not real knowledge."<sup>10</sup>

Along with being a rationalist, Ibn Sina, as a great natural scientist, recognizes that intuition, observation, and observation play a major role in the process of knowing. He writes that the senses provide material for the mind, and the mind processes this material and creates concepts using various logical operations. Therefore, the importance of the idea put forward by Ibn Sina is that observation and experience do not only help the mind to master the logical connections of concepts, but also determine the connection of concepts in judgments and other logical forms of thinking as having a real, legitimate character.

In short, the advanced thinkers of the East tried to prove the power of the mind, its objective content, and its importance in the development of the world based on the doctrine of aql al-fa'ol. The ideas put forward by them today serve as a basis for the continuous enrichment of the spiritual culture of society, the achievement of immortality with the contribution of human intelligence to science and enlightenment, and the creation of skills for leaving a

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<sup>8</sup>Болтаев М.Н. Абу Али ибн Сина – великий мыслитель, ученый-энциклопедист средневекового Востока. – Казань: Мастер-Лайн, 1999. – Б. 196.

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<sup>9</sup>Ибн Сина. Избранные произведения. Том 1. – Душанбе, 1980. – Б. 89.

<sup>10</sup>Ўша жойда, 89-бет.



legacy in the field of science and culture to future generations.

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