

Looking at the life of al farabi religion essay



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Al-Farabi was described as the founder of Arab Neo-Platonism and the first major figure in the history of that philosophical movement since Proclus. The Latin Middle Ages called him as Abunaser and the Arabs selected him as the 'Second Master' after the great philosopher, Aristotle. Al-Farabi's best work contains the integration between Aristotle and Plato on concerns of the world existence, the soul, and reward system for afterlife. According to Al-Farabi, God's core and reality is fused together with no distinction in them. But there has been neoplatonic touch in his writing too. It is uttered in Al-Farabi's orientation to God in a negative mode; presenting the divinity by what he is not i. e. He has unique, undividable and inexpressible.

The Neo-platonic element is most visible in his doctrine of emanation which gives hierarchy of being. The top position is the Divine Being whom Al-Farabi designates as 'the First' which gives birth to the First Intellect. A total of ten intellects emanate from the First Being, all being an immaterial substance. The First Intellect comprehends God and produces a third being, the Second Intellect. It also comprehends its own essence and results in the production of the body and soul of "al-sama' al-ula", the First Heaven. All the other following intellects emanate stars and planets. The tenth intellect is given a greater importance. It builds the true bridge between the divine and terrestrial worlds. This Tenth Intellect (active intellect) was responsible for actualizing man's intellectual potentiality and emanating form to man and the sublunary world.

It was quite clear that Al-Farabi's philosophical drink were relating the Quranic touches. He mentioned that God does not act directly on the sublunary world but is responsible for all actions done by his emanations.

Much is assigned to the Active Intellect. He does points to God as ' Lord of the Worlds' and ' God of the East and the West's'.

He was Aristotelian and neo-Platonist as well. He tried to demonstrate a basic agreement between Aristotle and Plato on such matter as creation of world, survival of soul, rewards and punishment.

He described six types of intellect that exist and these are:

Prudence or discernment

Common sense

Natural perception

Conscience

Potential intellect

Division reason

He asserts that good society should pursuit goodness and happiness and where virtue will clearly abound, which he discussed in his book ' the virtuous city' And there are four types of cities which are corrupt and we should avoid it and these are

The ignorant city

The dissolute city

The turncoat city

The straying city

Al-Farabi was surely aware of Plato's own fourfold division of imperfect societies in the Republic into diarchy, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny. The resemblance, however, is more one of structure (four divisions) rather than

of content. Ibn Sina owes a considerable intellectual debt to his predecessor for what he got from Aristotle with the help of Al-Farabi. Islamic (particularly Sunnite) educational thought followed the course mapped out by al-Ghazali and this influence has remained valid even after the influx of Western civilization and the emergence of a modern, contemporary Arab civilization.

Al-Ghazali

Al-Ghazali is one of the greatest Islamic theologians, mystical thinkers and jurist, was born in 1058 A. D. in the city Tus of Khurasan to a Persian family. His father was reputed as great Sufi and died when he was young. His father's friend takes care of Al-Ghazali and his brother after the death of his father. Both of them went to Madrasa, where they study Arabic, Persian, the Koran and the principles of religion. He also studied fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), tafsir (Koranic exegesis) and hadith (prophetic tradition).

He then moved to Nishapur, where he studied fiqh, kalam, logic and some philosophy under the guidance of Imam al-Juwaini, the most eminent Shafi'ite faqih of the day. He continued to study for five years under Imam al-Juwaini and to assist him with teaching. He also began to write and to study Sufism under another shaikh, al-Farmadhi.

After the death of his master Imam Al-Juwaini, he travelled to meet Nizam ul Mulk, the Seljuq minister, and remained with him for six years, during which time he lived the life of a ' court jurist'. After few years, he was appointed as chief professor at Al-Nizammiyah of Baghdad, where he lectured more than 300 students.

He was a lawyer, a scholaristic, a philosopher, a skeptic, a traditionalist and a moralist. His famous work was the revitalization of Muslim theology and reoriented the values of theology once again in the people of that time. It is said that he brought the orthodox Islam of his time in close contact with Sufism. His combination of spiritualization and fundamentalism in Islam had such a mark stamp on his powerful personality.

His book “ the coherence of the philosopher” mark a major turn in Islamic epistemology. His encounter with skepticism led him to believe that all the casual events and interactions are not the product of material conjunction but rather than the immediate and present ‘ will’ of God. And this major turn led him to convert into Sufi.

He tried differentiating between theology and mystics. We found the discussion between Al-Ghazali and mutazilities which is consider as one of the major work of Al-Ghazali. He said that God’s attributes are something different from, yet added to God’s essence. Whereas, mutazilites denied the existence of attributes and reduce them to God’s essence and act. They says that

“ Both are not identical, but not different.”

He rejected all the previous philosophies. He become the real challenger to the philosophies of Aristotle, platonious, Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. He bitterly criticized Aristotle, Socrates and considers Greek as non-believers and labeled them as corrupters of Islamic faith. His philosophies were also closer to the modern minds.

He is famous for proposing and defending the Asharite theory of occasionalism and he gave very good example of fire and cotton to explain it. He supports scientific methodology. He believed that whosoever thinks that refuting such a theory is religious duty, harm religion and weaken it. These matters rest on demonstrations, arithmetical and geometrical that has no room for doubt.

His theory of atomism claims that atoms are the only perpetual thing in existence and all the other things in the world is "accidental" which means something that last for just an instant. He stated two types of diseases, the first is the physical and the other is spiritual. He believes that closeness to good is the sign of normality whereas, distance from God leads to abnormality.

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