

## Original Paper

# Development of the Ideas of the Universe and Man in the Philosophical Views of Al Farabi

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### Abstract

*Farabi's social utopia is a search for harmony between an intelligent universe, divine intelligence in the universe and a civil structure—a perfect human community. In other words, the thinker sought to project the harmony and harmony inherent in the cosmos onto earthly life, to deduce the laws of the functioning of human society from the eternal laws of being. This requires knowledge of the order and harmony of things in the universe as the laws of all things. The concept of the ideal Farabi society is based on this conviction. On the basis of his research, al-Farabi created a new way of understanding the world and perceiving all that exists, which became the basis of the philosophy of the East during the Middle Ages. The article analyzes the philosophical outlook of Farabi about the essence of the Primordial One, matter, man, society etc.*

### Keywords

*Farabi, social utopia, creation of the world, man, Islamic philosophy, substance, matter, idea, pantheism, concept*

### 1. Introduction

According to Farabi, a perfect society, parts of which are interconnected and mutually consistent, “is likened to natural things; apart from existing things” (Farabi, 1975).

The thinker substantiates the need for the correspondence of the world order and society to the cosmic thinker with the following reasoning: “Just as there is some first principle in the world, followed by other principles in order...and so on up to the last ones in the order of existence of existing things, just as in the totality of that that contains a people or a city, there is some kind of first principle, followed by

other principles and other inhabitants...and so on up to the last in civil and human (being) inhabitants. As a result, what makes up the city is similar “to what makes up the totality of the world, ‘that is, theoretical perfection’.”

## 2. The Principle of Anthropologization

In accordance with the principle of anthropologization in an ideal society, the social ladder of earthly life (the hierarchy of estates) is derived from the cosmic world order where “that which is free of matter is closest to the First Cause. Then celestial bodies follow, celestial material bodies follow. All these things follow the First Cause, strive for it, and everyone imitates it to the best of their ability, according to their degrees (Farabi, 1960)”.

Likewise, in an ideal society, the social differentiation of citizens depends on their proximity to the First Chapter, which acts on the model of the First Cause in the universe. According to Farabi, the ruler of an ideal city “is similar to the First Cause, to which other existing things owe their existence and (from which) the degrees of existence gradually descend so that each of them turns out to be leading and headed, until (the matter) ends, possibly, by existence, having nothing to do with management, but only serving and existing for the sake of another” (Farabi, 1975).

Thus, an ideal society functions like a cosmos: as the First Cause serves only as a goal for all other things in the world, so the head of a virtuous city is a goal for all citizens, serves as an example for them to follow. In this philosophical deduction, the socio-political content is clearly expressed emotionally-pantheistic system, defining the Farabi cosmogony, built on the principle of anthropologizing the universe, allowing for an analogy between human and natural. That is why a detailed analysis of the social utopia of the thinker is preceded by a consideration of his philosophical concept of the universe, based on pantheistic ideas.

The principle of anthropologization is based on the teachings of the ancients about the macro- and microcosm, in which the cosmic order affects human relations, human cognition is considered the cognition of the surrounding world. In other words, the ancient thinkers gave the concept of space (universe) a human, social meaning. In their cosmogony, order is projected onto human relations, human cognition is considered “on the model of a legal society. The natural cosmic order, which was of primary importance for the ancient Greeks, was a kind of projection of human life” (Grigoryan. 1969). Thus, the Pythagoreans endowed the universal life with a soul, Empedocles—with elements of love and hate, Anaxagoras and his followers filled the universe with an organizing spirit, which in the philosophy of the Stoics was expressed in the idea of a world *logo*.

The principle of anthropologizing the universe, undoubtedly, was an expression of searches in the field of human cognitive activity and evidence of the enormous, persistent work of the human mind to comprehend everything that relates to man himself, to society, and nature. At the same time, it was also

a consequence of the weakness and dependence of man on the surrounding forces of nature, the limitations of his cognitive capabilities. As a result of this, the causes of natural phenomena were considered by a person from the point of view of the ideas, motives and relationships that were familiar to him, which led to the animation of nature. On the basis of the principle of anthropologisms, a teleological view of the world around is formed in accordance with the purposeful activity of the person himself.

The anthropological period of Greek philosophy was transitional: it replaced the mythological worldview, and since the time of Socrates, ancient Greek natural philosophy is giving way to moral philosophy, which laid the foundation for Platonic-Aristotelian metaphysics. In the new philosophy (which can be talked about conditionally, in relation to the 5th-4th centuries BC), there is a decisive turn from the study of space to the study of human affairs, the foundations of human society. The problem of a person is now viewed in the light of new ideas, belief in the power of the human mind, in its ability to solve its own problems, is being rethought, many positions are being rethought, the process of liberating human thought about naive ideas and superstitions is intensified. In the philosophy of Socrates, attention from the study of space is switched to the study of a person's own being, special importance is attached to the knowledge of the essence of virtues (History of Philosophy, 1940).

The principle "Know himself, formulated by Socrates, expresses the unity of knowledge, intellectual development and law! Military improvement of man and man is considered as a being! social and reasonable. In this awareness of himself by a person, his definition, given by "biologists," as Homo Sapiens (a rational being and the Aristotelian characteristic of Zonn Politicon (political being) subsequently finds expression.

Farabi calls man an intelligent animal, a civilian animal, and the sciences studying human behavior, the conditions of his life—a civil science.

Farabi interprets the state as a political form expressing the most perfect communication of people with each other. The "city" in its social ontology is not just a territorial-administrative unit, it is an expression of precisely that form of uniting people that most corresponds to the state as a political organization of society. "City" is a higher stage in the development of society, which replaces the "bestial" way of life in the era of ignorance, when people were united by natural rather than social ties (Farabi, 1973).

### **3. Pantheistic Worldview**

Thus, you gradually switch the subject of philosophy to the study of real phenomena associated with the knowledge of man; the conditions of his life, the paths leading to the achievement of happiness. Questions occupy a central place in Farabi's social utopia, which logically follows from the sociopolitical holding of his emanation-pantheistic concept of the universe.

In the conditions of the Middle Ages, philosophical thought was largely dependent on theology, served as a substantiation of the doctrine of theologians about the existence of God, which was contrasted with the rest of nature as absolute, infinite-to finite, created being. This opposition of the natural and the divine are to a certain extent overcome by pantheistic ideas, within the framework of which the view of nature as an external expression of the deity is formed. The pantheistic view of the world in antiquity is characteristic of the philosophy of the Stoics and Neoplatonists, and later in the philosophy of Benedict Spinoza in the XVII century. He gets a pronounced materialistic coloring.

In the early medieval philosophy of the Near and Middle East, the pantheistic trend was reflected in the philosophical systems of the Eastern peripatetics Abu Nasr al Farabi, Ibn Sina, Biruni, Ibn Rushd and other thinkers. According to V.E. Evgrafov, a special philosophical system has developed in creativity—the left form of pantheism, in which natural-philosophical ideas, deistic tendencies and the emmatic theory of Neoplatonism, uniting God and matter through emanation, were uniquely combined (Contemporary problems of historical and philosophical science, 1970).

In the shell of pantheistic ideas, scientific materialistic tendencies are gradually making their way, which often coexist with pantheistic views, although they completely diverged in the treatment of individual issues of life. In particular, on the issue of the universe, the materialists denied the existence of spirit, believed that there is no Allah, standing outside the world and standing outside the world and possessing reason and will. They called matter as the substantive basis of the world, affirming the identity of the material world and Allah. Pantheists saw at the basis of the plurality of the world a single substance—the spiritual principle, admitting in the phenomena of the world the presence of a certain contiguity, harmony, and purpose.

Materialists saw a real connection between the elements of the world, and as the relationship of the whole to the particular, the end to the means, the rule of change was recognized in these relationships, thereby excluding the presence of a reasonable connection and a reasonable beginning.

According to the pantheists, the absolute beginning has reason, since Allah being an internal principle of the functioning and development of the world is included in it itself.

The internal principle that unites all the elements of the world, according to materialism, is matter (Hilmi, 1975).

From a pantheistic position, Farabi examines the problem of the universe, the relationship and relationship of the divine and the natural. Unlike the usually anthropological interpretation of God in religious teachings, designed for the masses of believers, the thinker gives a philosophical and moral definition of God, considering him as the First Cause, the First Being, representing an active and creative principle. Deity is interpreted by him as the World Mind, Absolute Wisdom, Absolute Perfection and Absolute Beauty. In Farabi, the deity does not appear over a natural being, infinitely dominating the forces of nature, but acts as an active principle that is intelligible and intelligible in its

essence. It, according to the thinker, “in its essence is reason, for it is matter that prevents things from becoming reason and to comprehend actually”.

In this sense, the deity acts as Absolute wisdom, but “not thanks to the wisdom acquired through the knowledge of something outside His essence”.

The aesthetic properties of the Primordial One are Splendor, Beauty, Decoration, Superiority, by means of which he realizes his being in the best way and achieves perfection, i.e., actually manifests itself in the objects of the surrounding world. Since Jehovah is the most perfect, His beauty is the highest beauty and His perfection is free from vices and imperfections. “The perfection of His essence”, writes Farabi, “is not that (perfection) that, having given money or something else, receives in return pleasure, appreciation, superiority or other benefits and perfection”. Through the self-manifestation of the deity, its connection with other things in the sublunary world is carried out, which substantively receives its being from the being of the absolute. As the thinker writes, “it is connected with His substance, it follows from it that other things receive being from Him in their substances”.

From these considerations it follows that being is one in its substantive basis, although it is multiple in accidents. Nothing precedes the Primordial Being, “for the outflow of another being from Him, nothing is needed except its essence and substance, as we and many existing things need it”. The Being of the Primordial One is one, it is not divided into two parts, through one of which it could be substantialized, and the other could be the beginning of the existence of another being. Therefore, the Primordial Being for the outflow (emanation) from Him of another being does not need anything except its essence and substance. Many existing things need another substance. The Primordial One through his names (Beauty, Splendor, Knowledge, Wisdom, Justice etc.) is manifested in the surrounding things. According to the thinker, “the names that should be called (the First Being) are names that denote the perfection and superiority of things existing around us”.

However, numerous types of perfection of surrounding phenomena do not represent independent substances, they should be understood as “a single substance and a single being, absolutely indivisible”. Using names that denote certain qualities inherent in the First. Farabi refers to them knowledge, reason, wisdom. “In such types of perfection, there must be something that is most worthy and correct to call the name (designating) the given species”.

The essential qualities of a deity (absoluteness, infinity, unity) and its external properties (names), through which it is revealed in the surrounding phenomena, are correlated as a whole and a part. “With regard to the things existing around us”, Farabi writes, whether the names denote virtue, and the perfection of that part of an existing thing, by which it relates to another thing so that the relationship will be a part of what is designated by this name”. Similar names are applied to the First Being to denote his relationship to other things, “which originate from him through the outflow of their being”. Consequently, the names of the First Being served to denote his perfection in the absolute sense, and

then in the process of emanation along the descending line, they denote the perfection of other things in relation to the absolute”.

Thus, Farabi’s philosophical concept of the universe is objectively idealistic. It is based on pantheistic “views of the deity as the primary source from which the existence of all existing things stems. The process seems to be natural. Within the framework of pantheistic views, the world can be divided into varieties: a real being (Vakhtadul vujud) or a hidden world (G’aib olami) and possibly existing being or present being (Zohiri olam).

Unlike the religious picture of the world, Farabi admits an organic relationship between these types of being as between the primary (substance) and the secondary (accident). Necessary being has no part (Fasl), no body (Djins), no definition (Ta’rif), and no opposite (Ziddi). In essence, it represents unity (Axad), which is not comprehended by the mind in concepts, and manifests itself only through its properties (names) in the surrounding phenomena, i.e., in oneself through the visible multitude. From the point of view of unity, the necessary being is hidden (Botiny), but it is constantly in a state of emerging from secrecy (G’aib) and openness (Zaxir). Cognition of it is possible through cognition of the plurality of the world descending from it in steps, i.e., deity through his names (properties, qualities) is also manifested in surrounding things, the knowledge of which leads to the knowledge of the divine essence of the world. Allah differs from all other things in unity, which constitutes his essence and designates being inherent only to the One. Farabi means God by a necessary being, a single being. According to him, “regarding the First (Jehovah) one should be convinced that it is Allah Almighty”.

According to the Russian researcher V.V. Sokolov, in Farabi’s doctrine of the outflow of the multi-stage material world from the divine substance, “creation is considered, in essence, as a timeless process and appears as a kind of objective-idealistic evolutionism” (Sokolov, 1978).

In the process of emanation, form and matter appear in the necessary sequence. The top of the universe is formed by deity, and the lowest level of it is matter. The Second Causes (spirits, angels, and archangels), active mind, form and matter consistently flow from absolute being. The first three of these steps of emanation are not bodies and are not enclosed by bodies, while the other three (active mind, form, and matter) are in bodies, although they are not bodies. Only matter has physicality. In turn, the bodies are subdivided into six kinds of celestial bodies, intelligent animals, non-intelligent animals, plants, minerals and four elements (earth, water, air, fire).

Their combination, according to Farabi, forms the visible material world. Material bodies do not have an intelligent soul, while the souls of celestial bodies have some kinship with an intelligent soul. However, they are not endowed with sensory perception or imagination, although they have the ability to comprehend the mind. The souls of heavenly bodies are free from all imperfection (Farabi, 1975).

The immediate environment of the First Being is formed by the Second causes (spirits, angels, archangels), each of which has its own attribute, and through this attribute “the essence peculiar only to

it is substantialized". In the process of emanation, the existence of each thing receives its perfection depending on the proximity or remoteness from the deity. The second causes, closest to the deity, active mind, celestial bodies have a higher level of perfection up to the First Matter. The First Being possesses absolute perfection. All other things that follow him are perfect according to their degrees along the descending line. Hence, the aesthetic qualities of the deity, the names of Allah, through which he manifests himself in the world around him, do not possess absolute perfection: they represent only a semblance of absolute perfection in the mirror, that is, in nature and in the universe.

In Farabi's opinion, the numerous names of perfection "designated by his names do not express the idea of the plurality of perfections into which the First Being is divided. On the contrary, these numerous names should be understood as a single substance and a single being, absolutely indivisible. "The multiplicity of material phenomena is based on a single spiritual substance. Beauty in the phenomena and objects of the surrounding world is a reflection of the perfection and virtue of the divine substance.

The cosmic order of the arrangement of various things in relation to the First Essence is projected by the thinker onto an ideal society in which the first chapter is endowed with the greatest perfection, and the social status and functions of citizens are determined by their location in relation to the ruler: the most accountable functions are performed by those who are closer to the ruler, and so descending line. The criterion that determines such social differentiation is the degree of perfection of the mind.

The most perfect form of mind—the active mind is possessed by the First Head, who would be located below all others to the First Being and draws on his idea of the First Mind.

Farabi endows the most imperfect being, perhaps, with things that are, which are composed of being and non-being. These two extremes (being and non-being) arise from matter. Due to the presence of a material shell, all other things by themselves do not have the ability to perfection, they only hold the potential for perfection. In other words, possibly existing things need a cause from outside for their perfection. For, according to the ideas of the thinker, things located below the celestial bodies are extremely imperfect, because they receive their essences that are distant from the First Being, and they themselves do not yet have an actual essence, since they are endowed only with matter. They can get rid of matter only through gaining form. In order to be substantial, it is possible that things that exist must acquire form. Farabi considered matter as the potency of all substances in the world.

The existence of all things under heaven is also improved thanks to the heavenly body and active mind, which the world gives them actual existence. It is possible that beings are not capable of self-movement, self-actualization "because of the lag and immutability of their being" without the mediation of an external engine, which are the heavenly body with its parts and the active mind. "Both of them," wrote Farabi, "together improve the existence of all things under heaven".

The principle of emanation leads the thinker to the idea of the divine essence of nature and man, to the affirmation of the connection of the human mind with the cosmic, divine. In his opinion, the human mind as a thinking ability exists only potentially. To actualize it, a cause from the outside is required—the influence of the cosmic mind. A person can rise above all living beings through the continuous improvement of his mind, bringing it to the level of active mind, thanks to which “he strives or can strive independently for all other perfections.”

These perfections include beginnings—the first sciences, the first intelligible entities formed in the rational part of the soul. But, a person’s comprehension of this knowledge is possible “only after the sensing part of the soul develops and forms in him first, (then the striving part of the soul”.

Reasonable power capable of conscious activity is divided into theoretical and practical reason. The first promotes a person’s position of the surrounding world and the acquisition and knowledge of intelligible things. Practical reasoning contributes to the acquisition of skills and habits by a person in mastering art (crafts), the knowledge of good and evil, and indicate the ways to achieve happiness. This is the reasoning power of practical reason (Khairullaev, 1966).

#### **4. Discussion**

In his reasoning about the universe, the medieval thinker echoes with Aristotle, who asserted forms as a way of actualizing matter, and connected the improvement of the human mind with the process of education. In the concept of the universe of Farabi, Aristotle’s doctrine of being, his logic is organically combined with the ontological system of Neoplatonism. In the shell of the pantheistic worldview of great thinkers, he develops the ideas of free thought, delimiting the spheres of reason of faith, science and religion, while giving preference to philosophy, which leads to the achievement of happiness in this world.

Al-Farabi improved many of Aristotle’s theories and unraveled the tangle of previously unresolved problems. In addition, he developed scholasticism, creating such terms as necessary being, conditioned being, speculative and practical intelligence, and many others (Hammond, 1947).

True bliss, in his opinion, consists in reaching the highest levels of knowledge. A person can achieve this goal only by improving his mind and bringing it to the level of active mind. It is the active mind, helping a person to acquire theoretical knowledge and practical virtues, that gives him the opportunity to achieve the highest bliss on earth—happiness. “The action of an active mind, writes Farabi, consists in caring for an intelligent animal (man) and in the desire to give him the opportunity to achieve the highest, accessibility for him, the level of perfection, namely the highest happiness”.

Hence, the achievement of happiness is possible in this worldly life, and the myths about the immortality of the individual soul, about afterlife rewards and resurrection are empty fables: there is no other reward but that which a person can receive in the process of cognition. And this highest reward is



happiness, which lies in one's own perfection. Trust and atheism and accused them of seeing the truth in faith (religion), but in philosophy and in this conviction they do not blow the teaching of the prophet, but bow before the authority of Aristotle, and this leads to a deviation from the faith (Grigoryan, 1969). Proceeding from pantheistic ideas, Farabi will give a philosophical interpretation of the deity, considering him as a final substance that acts by virtue of its immanent causality and serves as the cause of itself. Therefore, the outflow of the world from the deity is regarded by him as an act of natural law (Grigoryan, 1969).

## 5. Summary and Conclusions

The pantheistic perception of the world enables Farabi to overcome the opposition of the divine and the human, putting forward the idea of their organic connection. This connection was revealed not in mystical ecstasy or in prayers, but in the process of cognition through the continuous spiritual improvement of a person. In this regard, he puts forward the idea of an active mind or active intellect, which contributes to the inner illumination of a person—like the sun. Giving impetus to vision to see objects. “The active mind in relation to man occupies the same place”, writes Farabi, “which the sun occupies in relation to vision. Thanks to the light that comes from the sun, vision becomes actually a seer, whereas before it was potentially a seer”.

Likewise, the active mind communicates something to a person that is imprinted in his rational power, like wearing light to sight. “This is how the rational force comprehends the active mind, thanks to which the intelligible is potentially, and the potential mind is actual and approaches the cosmic, divine, frees itself from materiality” (Sagdiev, 1973).

All this, of course, is achieved in the process of cognition and vigorous activity. On the principle of the ascent of the human mind to the divine through continuous improvement in the process of cognition, Farabi's doctrine of a single intellect, of the unity of mankind from the point of view of the unity of its substantial basis—universal being—is based.

Farabi believed that a person has two principles: spiritual and material. The material is limited by the body, lends itself to empirical research with the help of five senses: the spiritual is the rational power of the soul, which is and intelligible images of entities. This force is divided into two parts, one of which deals with action (amal-aksion) (Amali-harakat), the other with perception (idrak-perception) (Amali-idrok) (Hilmi, 1975).

The presence of two principles is due to the twofold predetermined human life, which involves two types of bliss. True happiness in life is seen in the contemplation of truths in the pursuit of wisdom, in the achievement of perfection of reason. However, the degree of perfection of the mind among people is different. Hence, the degree of bliss has a value corresponding to the perfection of reason, for each person “can acquire the perfection to which he is intended by nature” (Farabi, 1975).

The highest good, the achievement of which is possible in this worldly life, is happiness. Undoubtedly, Farabi is not talking about individual happiness and the ways to achieve it, but about happiness to a social ideal, for the realization of which a perfect organization of the social order is required. Hence, the human striving for happiness presupposes the aggregate activity of people based on mutual assistance. The highest goal of human life is to achieve happiness. This requires an ideal society built on the theoretical principles of philosophy.

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