

Examining the Theoretical Foundations of Sufi Perspectives: An In-Depth Analysis of Ibn Sina's Views

Nigina Karimovna Shamsutdinova*

Associate Professor, Navoi State Pedagogical Institute, Navoi, Uzbekistan.
Corresponding Author Email: nigina11@mail.ru*



DOI: <http://doi.org/10.38177/AJBSR.2024.6308>

Copyright © 2024 Nigina Karimovna Shamsutdinova. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Article Received: 07 July 2024

Article Accepted: 09 September 2024

Article Published: 13 September 2024

ABSTRACT

The historical details in the article and the writings of Ibn Sina attest to his interest in Sufi doctrines, his personal acquaintanceship with many of them, and his friendship with some of them. The author claims that Ibn Sina's mystical worldview was greatly influenced by Aristotle's ideas. However, Sufi passion was not something unusual or accidental for the scientist. Due to its universality and scope, it became a model for later scientists and philosophers. During this period, the scientific heritage left by the great sages was a huge scientific treasure for their followers and an important fundamental basis for the development of their views, schools and heritage. The heritage of Al-Kindi, Ibn Majah, Farabi, Ibn Rushd and other thinkers became the property of human culture. One of the most prominent representatives of this school is Abu Ali ibn Sina. In addition to mastering, restoring, and spreading Aristotle's teachings, he was also able to critically perceive and develop them alongside his esteemed predecessors.

Keywords: Metaphysics; Mysticism; Ideological foundations; Moral qualities; Creator; Ethical system; Spirit; Sufism; Sufi; Truth; Supreme mind.

1. Introduction

Researchers interpret Ibn Sina's transition to Sufi themes in the last period of his life in different ways. The ideological trend created by the teachings of Aristotle and his supporters led to the formation of a philosophical school - the school of peripatetism. This school was just as great, influential, and illustrious as Plato's "academy". The Islamic intellectual milieu of the Middle Ages was one of Aristotle's spheres of impact. "Eastern peripatetism" is another socio-cultural milieu in which the thinker's ideas were given new life. The essence of the theory of knowledge can be understood based on Ibn Sina's treatise "Spirit". The scientist thoroughly investigates the different levels of knowledge, giving particular emphasis to rational knowledge and sense perceptions from the outside world. The Latin phrase "dator formarum," which means "forming" or "former," is used to refer to seen forms, which are the subject of rational knowledge but not just the outcome of abstracting sensory data and this is known as a separate active awareness. It is from this higher principle that substantial forms participate in the creation of the subconscious world, and from it, visible forms arise. Verbeck asks about the place of the individual in this cognitive process.

1.1. Study Objectives

Everyone has the ability to perceive tangible forms through active consciousness, but to varying degrees. Most importantly, according to Ibn Sina, this ability was possessed by prophets and gnostics who possessed holy power or heavenly (divine) consciousness. They differ from others in their talents, which are associated with the original cause. Others manifest this ability in an imperfect form. To some extent they achieve this by studying the material world. "Active consciousness illuminates tangible forms through the mental powers that serve to understand tangible forms. Perception or the process of thinking is one of the activities of the individual, but tangible form is one of the activities perceived by the transcendental consciousness" [3]. Emotional knowledge plays only the role

of propaedeutics for the realization of the ability to know. It prepares the soul for the perception and mastery of material forms associated with material things. According to Ibn Sina's teachings, knowledge of material objects—which isn't the outcome of a thorough examination of the subject—cannot be isolated from the universal. Its importance is ensured by the highly sensitive source from which it originates. On the basis of this teaching, Ibn Sina's question of empiricism and nominalism is removed. Thanks to active consciousness, human knowledge is not limited to the influence of the senses. Since the universal arises from the fundamental source from which substantial forms in the subconscious world's existence develop, it is not constrained by generic notions [4]. Therefore, conceptualism has no basis.

The thinker not only studied Aristotle's legacy but also assimilated all the scientific and cultural accomplishments of antiquity, including the works of renowned Greek philosophers, numerous academic institutions, and fields of study including physics, mathematics, and medicine, in order to build his philosophical worldview. Ibn Sina makes many references to them in his writings, and with good reason. Ibn Sina's metaphysics is analyzed by his theory of knowing. Ibn Sina demonstrates the greatest degree of knowledge that humanity has ever attained in his metaphysics. Since the ontology of the thinker analyzes the human mind, it also looks at cognition.

2. Research Methodology

The famous scientist V.F. Asmus wrote in the preface to Aristotle's book "Metaphysics" that "On the basis of this book, the peoples of the East and Europe have studied philosophy for centuries. Whoever studied this book, studied philosophy itself, descended into its depths, struggled with its difficulties and contradictions, rose to its heights and avoided its limitations, will suffer. Aristotle is the true teacher of humanity" [1].

Verbeek claims that Ibn Sina is not a nominalist either, arguing that universal terminology encompasses more than merely names that let us categorize and group different objects. Ibn Sina was also not a conceptualist, states Verbeek. Ibn Sina is an intellectual who sees the ideal of human perfection in correct, impartial knowledge, and this thinking is present in Farabi, too.", says J. Verbeek [2]. J. Verbeek, analyzing the ideas of Ibn Sina, writes that he (Ibn Sina) is not, first of all, an empiricist: he does not connect human perception with emotional actions, and for him the role of emotion is seen only in the activity of preparing the soul for the perception of material forms arising from active consciousness.

3. Results and Discussion

Ibn Sina's metaphysics makes final conclusions compared to other sciences and represents an active mind and thinking and is in constant contact with the world. Metaphysics not only studies the material existence that we perceive through our senses, but also seeks the causes of the existence of the universe, thanks to which everything ends with the existence of the first cause. Ibn Sina divides metaphysics into two fields of study: first, existence and the first cause; second, knowledge as it seeks to identify the ultimate meaning of all human understanding. Regarding the mystical beliefs that pique our interest in Ibn Sina's writings, their immediate theoretical foundation was found in Aristotle's teachings on the spirit, politics, ethics, and poetics. Regarding each of these topics, separate foundational works have been written. As was said above, Ibn Sina's system of classification of sciences is the same as Aristotle's. Naturally, in the works of Ibn Sina this did not affect the expression of his philosophical views,

including thoughts about man. To identify the ideological sources of Ibn Sina's anthropological teaching, a classification approach is necessary when analyzing these sources, which are the works of Aristotle. The reason for this situation is that some of his works - for example, "Ethics", "On the Soul", "Politics", "Poetics" - were devoted to the philosophy of man by the Eastern thinker and served as a direct source for the development of his teaching. His works such as "Logic", "Metaphysics", "Physics", and "Rhetoric" are connected with the problem of man, and such issues as the organic connection and interdependence with nature, space, and living beings are widely analyzed.

Aristotle's moral teaching had a significant impact on the representatives of the Eastern school of Peripateticism, where he demonstrated his status as an "innovator," brought the concept of "ethics" into scientific discourse, and established it as a separate scientific discipline. Unlike Ibn Sina's teaching on the soul, which dealt with the internal spiritual world, emotional experiences, and states of man, ethics attempted to reveal aspects related to the external actions of man - his activity and character. Its main goal was to educate people as possessors of high moral qualities. According to Aristotle, the content or basis of this teaching is divided into two types: moral qualities (generosity, courage, honesty, truthfulness, etc.) and dianoetic (qualities formed by mental (thinking) training) abilities (wisdom or prudence, prudence, etc.).

In some of Ibn Sina's short moralistic works, the influence of the moral teaching of the first teacher is visible. In some places in these works, he uses the structure of the division of virtues typical of Aristotle's teaching. Despite the time gap separating modern times from Aristotle and Ibn Sina, moral thought increasingly turns to these priceless moral monads (the First, the Creator), which are virtues. In these views of the thinker, it is noticeable that an opinion is expressed about the attributes of God. Among the ethical works of Aristotle mentioned by Ibn Sina, the "Nicomachean Ethics" should be named first. The transformation of ethics into an independent science made it possible in the future to purposefully study the problem of man and direct scientists to search for other unknown areas of human nature. Just as the doctrine of the soul turned psychology into an independent area of scientific knowledge, ethics in the course of its evolution contributed to the identification of that set of philosophical knowledge that constitutes the subject of "anthropology" - the science of man.

A person's moral education results in theological norms that are derived from Sufi moral values, traditions, and rituals. The main goal of a person is to achieve otherworldly bliss and happiness, it is recognized as the ultimate "divine truth". Ibn Sina in his Sufi reasoning proceeds from the tolerant principle of "doubling the truth", which consists in an attempt to "unite" or "reconcile" the two basic principles of human nature: reason and faith, philosophy and religion. Comparative research has demonstrated that Zoroastrianism and the earliest Iranian teachings are the sources of Ibn Sina's Sufi beliefs. According to this teaching, the world is based on the struggle of the forces of Good and evil, light and darkness. By transferring the idea of the struggle between good and evil to the social level and explaining the social life of man, Ibn Sina expresses the idea of the unity and necessity of these forces in society as the source and driving force towards goodness and self-awareness.

The philosophical teaching of Ibn Sina was nourished by such ideas as the teaching of the Stagirite about the four causes, four types of action and his theological teaching. In addition, in this book, Aristotle gives a classification of objects that he creatively used and developed in his teaching. This book of Aristotle had a great influence on the

further development of religious-philosophical and Sufi thought, especially Eastern Peripateticism. In order to evaluate the philosophical teaching of Ibn Sina, it is necessary to mention another science of Aristotle - logic, because it is the first element of the philosophical system of Ibn Sina. It manifests itself as a method and methodology of cognition, and "anyone who has chosen the difficult path of science must first of all know the ways and means of achieving true knowledge, the methods and means of distinguishing truth from lies, the methods and means of avoiding errors and deception" [6].

Some scholars view Ibn Sina's approach toward Aristotle's teachings as biased, and they see him as an interpretation and mimic of the ancient philosopher. The answer to the question of whether Ibn Sina was in fact an interpreter or an opponent, an epigone or a reflexive follower of Aristotle's philosophy is given in his works. Their analysis allows us to say with confidence that Ibn Sina was both an interpreter and an opponent, a defender and a rival of the ideas of the Stagirite and his school. However, in order to put an end to all kinds of talk on this matter, it is appropriate to refer to his work "Philosophy of the Orientalists".

Ibn Sina highlights spiritual elements among the moral attributes that Aristotle demonstrated. This type of virtue is directly related to people's daily lives, forcing a person not to rely on fate, but to be the master of his own destiny, to realize his potential. F. X. Cassidy writes: "Aristotle explores moral problems, helping people and improving society. Unlike Socrates, who considered virtue and knowledge to be the same, Aristotle (for the first time in the history of moral thought) connects moral virtue mainly with desire, wish, will..."[5]. Ibn Sina's ethical theory in practical philosophy was based on Aristotelian ethics. When defining the subject of ethics, it is assumed that human moral activity or the meaning of life, the goal of man are aimed at improving his spiritual and moral powers and achieving the highest good. Ibn Sina's morality teaches a person endowed with free will to be responsible for his actions, to rely on himself, to cultivate virtues in himself that correspond to the moral ideal and the highest principles of reason.

Therefore, it is precisely because of Ibn Sina's position that we do not see in his work a radical conflict between philosophy and religion, in other words, a conflict between philosophical and theological worldviews. Considering the Sufi roots of Ibn Sina's teachings, it is necessary to emphasize the special significance of Sufism in his work. Researchers interpret Ibn Sina's appeal to Sufi themes in the last period of his life in different ways. At the same time, Sufi passion was not something unusual or accidental for the scientist. Historical facts and Ibn Sina's writings indicate that he was interested in Sufi teachings, was personally acquainted with many of them, and even became friends with some. For instance, he frequently met and held lengthy discussions with Sheikh Abusaid Abulkhair, the leader of the Nishapur Sufi school and a well-known intellectual at the time. Even one of his treatises, "The Movement and Counter-Movement and Its Parts" or "Faizi Ilahi", also known by another name, is dedicated to Sufism [7].

According to Ibn Sina, during this period the attitude of the Peripatetic philosophers towards the legacy of Aristotle became more acute. In any case, for Ibn Sina himself, this was a matter of fundamental importance and in some ways painful, even tragic. Aristotle was unquestionably well-liked by theologians, scientists, philosophers, and the general mediaeval populace of his age. Aristotle's influence did not prevent Ibn Sina from defending the truth. In

this regard, he freely expressed his opinion. In his work, Ibn Sina "al-Hikma al-mashriqiya" he mentioned his views and attitude towards the philosophy of Aristotle. This was essentially a message to philosophers who support and adhere to the Peripatetic school of philosophy [8].

4. Conclusion

Even if they had such an opportunity, they did not consider it necessary to correct and comprehend what their predecessors said. "However...", Ibn Sina emphasizes, "we are not far from the truth, given that we have learned science outside of Greek sources" [10]. According to Ibn Sina, "predecessors" (that is, Greek philosophers) played an important role in the formation of his Sufi worldview, especially in the early period of his activity. At the same time, Ibn Sina evaluates the position of Aristotle as a scientist who managed to systematize all the private sciences of his time. He learned the truth about many things and discovered perfect methods and secrets of science. "Man is the first person who dares to discover the unknown and correct errors, possesses the highest degree of human strength," writes Ibn Sina [9].

Thus, they did not have the opportunity to think with their own minds, focusing their lives on studying the legacy of their predecessors.

Consequently, the influence of Aristotle's scientific work "Metaphysics" on the formation of Ibn Sina's views on personality cannot be overestimated. Moreover, it is the ideological source of all of Ibn Sina's philosophical teachings. Andronicus of Rhodes, the librarian for Aristotle, is credited with introducing the term "metaphysics" into science and it has several meanings. In its original content, it defined the highest ("first") theme of philosophy, and in the work of Stagirite, its most basic theoretical concepts and rules are set forth. Aristotle's philosophical system was formed on the basis of these concepts.

Declarations

Source of Funding

This study did not receive any grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing Interests Statement

The author declares no competing financial, professional, or personal interests.

Consent for publication

The author declares that he/she consented to the publication of this study.

Authors' contributions

Author's independent contribution.

References

- [1] Asmus, V. (n.d.). *Metaphysics of Aristotle*. Aristotle, Works in 4 volumes, Page 50.
- [2] Verbeke, G. (1977). *Le statut de la métaphysique*. Simon Van Riet. Avicenna Latinus, liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina 1-IV. Louvain: E.Peeters; Leiden: E.J.Brill, Page 25.

- [3] Verbeke, G. (1977). *Le statut de la métaphysique*. Simon Van Riet. *Avicenna Latinus, liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina 1-IV*. Louvain: E.Peeters; Leiden: E.J.Brill, Page 27.
- [4] *Le statut de la métaphysique*. Simon Van Riet. *Avicenna Latinus, liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina 1-IV*. Louvain: E.Peeters; Leiden: E.J.Brill, Page 9.
- [5] Dinorshoev, M. (n.d.). *Natural Philosophy of Ibn Sina*, Pages 29–30.
- [6] Cassidy, F.H. (n.d.). *Ethical Works of Aristotle*. Aristotle, Works in 4 volumes, Page 22.
- [7] Ibn Sina (1992). *The wisdom of polytheism*. Selected works, 4.4., Dushanbe: Irfan, Page 21.
- [8] Safarova, N.O. (2021). *Philosophy of the algorithm of Abu Raikhan Beruniy*. *Theoretical & Applied Science*, 104(12): 419–421.
- [9] Ibn Sina (1992). *The wisdom of polytheism*. Selected works, 4.4., Dushanbe: Irfan, Page 30.
- [10] Nigina Karimovna Shamsutdinova (2024). *Methodological nature of sufi categories in the views of avicena*. *Theoretical & Applied Science*, 134(6): 186–188.
- [11] Nigora Olimovna Safarova (2024). *Intangible values and cultural heritage*. *Theoretical & Applied Science*, 134(6): 183–185.
- [12] Ibn Sina (1992). *The wisdom of polytheism*. Selected works, 4.4., Dushanbe: Irfan, Pages 25, 30.