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JUSTICE AND RATIONAL DELIBERATION IN AL-FARABI'S PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

Al-Farabi's philosophy presents a comprehensive view of human nature and the role of the state in facilitating the pursuit of happiness and perfection. He views human beings as inherently social creatures who cannot live in isolation and are dependent on the state for support, security, and adherence to laws. In his view, the state exists not only to provide for the needs of its citizens but also to ensure that individuals can pursue virtuous qualities and attain happiness.
The concept of justice, as articulated by Al-Farabi, is central to the state's function. Justice is intertwined with other essential values, such as right, freedom, and equality. This leads to a deeper exploration of justice's moral dimensions—its importance in society, its connection to human rights, and its relationship to ethics.

Al-Farabi's philosophy raises several important questions:
What is the moral dimension of justice as a value?
Is justice an absolute or relative value?
Does prudence direct justice towards the common good and avoid evil?

Thus, Al-Farabi's thought positions justice as a fundamental moral value that should be upheld by individuals and the state alike. Through the application of prudence and guided by the principles of virtue, justice helps form a society that supports the flourishing of its members and contributes to the greater good.

KEYWORDS

Justice, Civilisation, Prudence, Ethics, Morality

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Introduction.

Al-Farabi believed that humans are inherently social beings who cannot survive alone, as they require support from others for their needs and the fulfillment of their tasks. As civil creatures, humans naturally integrate with others within a society, which is organized and governed by the state. The state exists to provide individuals with the necessary support for their work, welfare, and projects, while also ensuring that they adhere to the laws and regulations that maintain order. However, living in a society with many others brings about various challenges, which require the state to establish legislation to regulate relationships between individuals. According to Al-Farabi, it is through work and the pursuit of virtuous qualities that human beings strive for perfection and, ultimately, happiness. The state's goal, therefore, is to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to lead a fulfilling life by providing security, work, and the conditions necessary for reaching happiness and perfection.

The concept of justice in Al-Farabi's philosophy is closely linked to other fundamental values such as rights, freedom, and equality. This leads us to examine the importance of justice in society and its connection to human rights and ethics. In light of this, the following questions arise: What is the moral dimension of justice as a value? Is justice an absolute or relative value? If prudence is the highest human faculty and the foundation for building just societies, how does it guide society towards the common good while avoiding evil?

1. The Principle of Justice and Equality in Al-Farabi's Thought

In his vision of an ideal society, Al-Farabi introduces a hierarchical system, not from the world of utopia, but grounded in practical realities. The principle of hierarchy, upon which this ideal society is structured, is based on the idea that individuals should be organized according to their nature and capabilities. Al-Farabi describes this hierarchy as not arbitrary but as a necessary structure that aligns with the natural differences in individuals' faculties, both inherited and acquired. He emphasizes that individuals should occupy positions that align with their abilities and receive what they deserve based on their capacities, a concept Al-Farabi refers to as "sublimation" (Al-Farabi, 1996). This principle of sublimation is essential for achieving justice, as it ensures that every individual is placed in a position that reflects their worth and receives the good they are entitled to.

Al-Farabi's focus on this principle of initiation stands in contrast to the realities of his time, where conflict and division were prevalent in relations between individuals and states. In the non-utopian societies of his era, injustice and inequality often dominated, leaving many citizens without access to the happiness and well-being that the state was meant to provide. Al-Farabi's ideal city, in contrast, is one where justice and equality enable individuals to live harmoniously and pursue happiness. This society is structured not only on equality but on efficiency—the idea that everyone should contribute to the common good in a way that reflects their abilities and role within the state.

Al-Farabi's ultimate goal is for individuals to achieve happiness through the realization of reason and the pursuit of virtue. Happiness, for Al-Farabi, is not merely personal but is tied to the well-being of the community. In his view, the philosopher-king or ruler plays a critical role in guiding citizens towards this goal. The ruler, as the highest authority in the ideal state, must ensure that the conditions are in place for individuals to attain happiness. Al-Farabi's emphasis on the moral and ethical role of the ruler highlights his belief that the state should not only provide for material needs but also guide individuals towards moral and intellectual perfection (Al-Farabi, 1996).

Through the application of justice and the cultivation of reason, Al-Farabi envisions a society where individuals are empowered to reach their full potential, contributing to a collective pursuit of happiness. This vision of justice, grounded in reason and fairness, provides a model for understanding the moral dimension of justice in society.

Al-Farabi’s principles of justice and equality are integral to his vision of a harmonious society, where every individual has the opportunity to fulfill their potential and achieve happiness. His philosophy stresses that justice is not just about maintaining order but also about creating conditions for the flourishing of all individuals, guided by wisdom and prudence. The role of the ruler, in this context, is crucial in ensuring that justice is not only a theoretical value but a practical one that leads to the common good (Al-Farabi, 1996).

Al-Farabi presents various factors contributing to the formation and cohesion of cities and states without always explicitly analyzing them. Among these are elements such as shared natural dispositions, common linguistic traits, and even shared olfactory characteristics. These factors, though subtle, play a role in natural affinity and cohesion among people. He traces this gradual association from sharing the same household, then the same dwellings, to cohabiting the same city, and eventually inhabiting the same region or valley (*al-Fārābī, Ārāʾ Ahl al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah*, p. 132).

While he presents the views of the inhabitants of the misguided cities (*Ahl al-Mudun al-Ḍāllah*), it is clear from the context that he does not endorse their perspectives. Instead, Al-Farabi places the highest value on the association rooted in love and justice. He asserts that “the parts of the city and the ranks of its parts are allied with each other and linked to love and cohesion, and remain preserved with justice and the acts of justice” (*al-Fārābī, al-Fuṣūl al-Muntazāʿah*, ed. Fawzī Mitrī, Catholic Press, Beirut, 1971, pp. 71–72).

Politics, according to Al-Farabi, is not necessarily associated with arbitrariness or violence. In the ideal (virtuous) city, complete reason and optimal values prevail. Politics, in this context, is marked by wisdom and clarity, as it aims fundamentally at securing the happiness of the citizens. One of the defining qualities of the ruler of such a city is, as Al-Farabi states, "to be naturally a lover of justice and of those who practice it, and to hate injustice and those who commit it. He should be generous to his family and others, encouraging them towards justice. He should influence those around him to reject injustice, showing preference to those who are

good and virtuous. Moreover, he must be just, not difficult to guide, nor aggressive or resistant when called upon for justice—but firm and unwavering when summoned to commit injustice or that which is vile" (*al-Fārābī, al-Fuṣūl al-Muntazāʿah*,, pp. 155–156).

Accordingly, Al-Farabi's political theory is fundamentally centered around a concept of universal necessity, which entails integrating all functions of the state into a unified, harmonious body governed by a single president. He draws an analogy between the state and the human body, in which all members (organs) interact in harmony to preserve its stability and vitality. The president of the state functions like the heart, guiding and coordinating the roles of the other members, who support the preservation of the whole. In this vision, the roles and responsibilities within the state are hierarchically distributed according to individuals' knowledge and intellectual capacity. Philosophers occupy the highest rank, followed by those engaged in religious practices, and then the general public. This hierarchical structure forms the foundation of what Al-Farabi terms the virtuous city (*madīnat al-fāḍilah*)—his utopian ideal (*al-Fārābī, Madīnat al-Fāḍilah*, p. 84).

However, while Al-Farabi provides a nuanced and realistic account of the principles that govern the lives of the inhabitants of ignorant and straying cities, he deliberately excludes the possibility of internal conflict and political violence in his ideal model. He removes the element of coercive authority from his societal and political imagination, considering that the pursuit of material well-being is analogous to bodily health. Yet, the pursuit of wealth and sensual pleasure represents a false form of happiness. Consequently, societies focused on such pursuits are marked by corruption, strife, and a desire to dominate.

In comparison, Plato—though a foundational figure in utopian political philosophy—divides the world between Greeks and barbarians and does not support a democratic conception of justice. In fact, he explicitly asserts that slaves are deluded if they believe in equality, because justice, in his view, cannot be universal since people are inherently unequal by nature. This idea is elaborated in his "myth of the metals", wherein individuals are born with different substances (gold, silver, bronze), determining their place in society. Therefore, for Plato, justice is achieved when each person fulfills the role to which they are naturally suited.

It is the value of justice that governs the faculties of the soul and ensures their hierarchical order, as it stands as the virtue of virtues. Just as the soul must be ordered and ruled by reason, so too must the ideal city, according to Plato, be organized into three main classes (besides the slave class): the producers, the guardians (soldiers), and the rulers, who are philosophers. These classes must operate in harmony to achieve justice as the highest value, one that is intimately linked with the realm of forms or ʿālam al-maṯal (Plato, Phaedrus, trans. Dr. Amira Helmy Matar, 1st ed., Dār al-Maʿārif, Egypt, p. 24).

Plato emphasized that man must perform according to his nature, fulfilling his role in society according to his abilities. This principle is rooted in the state of justice that Plato constructs, where justice is the core value, and it operates as an extension of the individual's morality. The individual is, in this sense, a microcosm of the state, and the state, a macrocosmic reflection of the individual. As such, the individual's rational power (al-quwwa al-ʻaqlīyya) is considered the highest and most important faculty. Therefore, philosophy—as the discipline that governs reason—must serve as the guiding force of the state, and the ruler must be a philosopher-king. Justice, both in the individual and the state, can only be achieved when reason dominates, guiding all actions and decisions. The philosopher-king is not driven by personal ambition, power, or wealth, but by a commitment to the public good (al-maṣlaḥa al-ʿāmma), ensuring that justice is realized and tyranny avoided.

Al-Farabi, following a similar line of thought, called for equality within an Islamic framework. In his view, justice does not stem from absolute equality, but rather from relative equality, which integrates both distributive and legal justice. For Al-Farabi, the ruler or judge acts as the arbiter to safeguard the rights of individuals, including their property, both movable and immovable. Prior to the establishment of the state, natural justice favored the strong; thus, justice in the utopian city, in Al-Farabi's view, is a process of equitable distribution, with the ruler-philosopher distributing the state's resources in a way that benefits all citizens, especially the needy and destitute.

In contrast, Al-Farabi's vision diverges radically from Plato's. Plato divides states that oppose the state of justice into four types: religious, feudal, people's state, and authoritarian state. However, Al-Farabi envisions a society where the people constitute a single, unified, and harmonious body, with no divisions or stratifications separating them. He depicts this society as a graded system that begins with the first president, followed by other roles that serve and support the central authority, without any person being set apart from the others. The structure of society, according to Al-Farabi, is based on natural capacities—each individual's role and function are defined by their strengths and abilities, starting from the highest office and descending to those who serve, with no hierarchy of power separating them in a rigid sense.

The ruler, or president, in Al-Farabi's utopian city, cannot be an ordinary person. His leadership is defined by two essential qualities: first, he must be naturally prepared for leadership, possessing the right qualities of vision and character, and second, he must be chosen voluntarily for his role as a philosopher-king. In essence, the president does not merely occupy a political position in the utopian city; he serves as a moral teacher, an ideal philosopher, and even a prophet, embodying the highest ethical and intellectual ideals. Thus, this first president, who is both a philosopher and a prophet, represents the ideal integration of knowledge, virtue, and leadership within society.

In contrast to Plato, who envisioned his just state as a cohesive entity where the relationship between the individual and the state is grounded in unity and justice, Aristotle introduces a more nuanced perspective, considering the influence of time and space on the individual. While Plato's model is abstract and theoretical, Aristotle takes a different approach, especially regarding the concept of justice. Unlike Plato, who emphasizes the idealistic vision of a just society, Aristotle argues that justice is embodied in the golden mean—a state of balance that avoids both excess and deficiency. In this sense, justice is not a fixed, abstract principle but a dynamic, practical one, where virtue is attained through moderation.

For Aristotle, practical justice is realized in the distribution of wealth, ensuring that resources are allocated in a proportional and mathematically fair manner. In this model, justice demands that both good and bad be shared among individuals equitably. Furthermore, Aristotle emphasizes the importance of laws to guarantee security, tranquility, and fairness for all members of society. Relations among individuals, according to Aristotle, should be based on both real and ideal forms of friendship, which serve to strengthen social bonds and ensure a just community.

(Aristotle, Politics. Quoted from the Greek original by Father Augustine Barbara Polly. G2 Lebanese Committee for the Translation of Masterpieces, Beirut, 1980, p. 90-91.)

From the establishment of the value of justice, we observe a significant shift away from its metaphysical framework with the advent of political philosophy, particularly as introduced by the Enlightenment thinkers. One such thinker, the English philosopher David Hume, linked justice to the well-being of the individual, particularly as a consumer. In his work, Hume suggests that justice is not just a moral concept but a pragmatic tool to achieve individual well-being, which in turn leads to a greater respect for and adherence to laws. This connection between justice and well-being emerged in response to the consequences of the Industrial Revolution and the spirit of the French Revolution, which sought to align society with the principles of individual freedom and economic progress (David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature: An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning).

Hume argues that this well-being can only be realized by securing individual freedom, which he believes is best achieved through private ownership of the means of production, alongside advancements in industrialization and technology. This position reflects the liberal spirit of the era, which holds that the state exists to serve the individual, rather than the other way around.

On the other hand, Montesquieu takes a different approach to individual justice. He asserts that justice for individuals can only be guaranteed through the separation of powers within the state—namely, the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Montesquieu's vision aligns with his broader philosophy on the balance of power, which he argues is crucial for the preservation of liberty and the fair application of justice (Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, trans. Arab Cultural Center, 2005, Introduction, p. 7 et seq.).

We also turn to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who sought to frame justice within a normative ethical framework. For Kant, justice is deeply intertwined with three fundamental moral standards: freedom, dignity, and duty (Immanuel Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morality, translated by Moses and Hiba, Arab Organization for Translation, 2005, p. 31). According to Kant, human beings are free and possess inherent dignity, which transcends any price. Furthermore, individuals are bound by a moral duty that requires them to act in such a way that they treat themselves and others as ends in themselves, not merely as means to an end. This duty dictates that one must behave in a way that reflects mutual respect, treating others and oneself with the dignity they deserve (Immanuel Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morality, translated by Moses and Hiba, Arab Organization for Translation, 2005, p. 31).

For Kant, justice is therefore realized through the exercise of practical moral reasoning, by which individuals transcend their natural inclinations and align their actions with these universal moral principles. This approach embodies justice not as a mere legal construct but as a moral imperative tied to the autonomy and dignity of individuals.

In contrast, existential philosophy and Marxism offer distinct interpretations of justice. Existentialism, particularly as proposed by Søren Kierkegaard, emphasizes the individual's inner experience and the ego as

central to the concept of justice. It focuses on personal choice, responsibility, and the subjective experience of justice. Existentialist justice is often framed in the context of an individual's struggle for meaning in an otherwise indifferent world.

On the other hand, Marxism presents a different conception, linking justice in the state or society directly to the justice of the individual. In Marxist theory, justice is achieved when society has overcome class divisions, and the individual's freedom and dignity are realized through collective action and the establishment of a just social system that benefits the working class. For Marx, the realization of justice in society is the necessary condition for the individual to experience true justice.

In his conceptualization of justice, Al-Farabi was deeply influenced by Plato, aligning with many of his political ideas, even though he sought to interpret them through an Islamic lens. While Al-Farabi's ideas occasionally exaggerated the abstraction of certain concepts, making his envisioned city or state appear more as a utopia or ideal dream than a practical reality, there is no utopia without a foundation in reality. Dreams, after all, are often woven from elements of the real world, and the line between fiction and truth is not always as rigid as it seems. Jamil Saliba points out this dynamic in his work From Plato to Avicenna, noting that "fiction is often preferred to truth, and facts are woven from the threads of dreams" (Jamil Saliba, From Plato to Avicenna, AlandalousI4, 1951, p. 80).

Given the similarities in civilizational conditions, factual circumstances, and epistemological frameworks, the Muslim philosophers who followed Al-Farabi—such as Ibn Sina, Ibn Bajja, thinkers from Shiite and Ash'ari traditions, Al-Mawardi, and Ibn Rushd in Cordoba—were all influenced by the same intellectual heritage. Despite their differing perspectives, these philosophers, along with the jurists and thinkers of the time, shared a common vision. Ibn Khaldun, in his critique, distanced himself from this abstract and utopian approach, declaring that such visions were "rare or far-fetched," and he questioned the viability of their ideal societies (Ibn Khaldun, *Introduction*, p. 303). While he acknowledged the unrealistic nature of these ideas, he also sought to ground his own philosophy in a more empirical understanding of human society and construction.

Nevertheless, even with his critique, Ibn Khaldun did not entirely deviate from the fundamental premise shared by his predecessors. He, too, dreamed of a society that could blend the ideals of the city of God with the reality of earthly existence. This vision, while acknowledging the constraints of the real world, aimed to infuse it with the virtues of the divine city—a city governed by justice, virtue, and morality. The philosophers from Al-Farabi onward were united in their desire to bring the city of mankind closer to the city of God, even if their methods and philosophical outlooks varied. They sought to alleviate the burdens of the earthly city by incorporating the attributes of the city of heaven, hoping to soften the harshness of the worldly state through religious principles, as Al-Farabi had outlined, even if their angles of view and concepts differed.

The second philosopher transcended the concept of a city-state and envisioned a united human race, much as the ancient Greeks, including Plato and others, did not limit themselves to organizing cities like Athens and Sparta. Instead, he contemplated the direction of all nations converging under one ruler (Saliba, 1951, p. 78). He proposed a hierarchical organization of the city, one that began at the top and gradually descended, with differentiation in knowledge and industries. The orders from the highest authority, the first president, must be communicated down the pyramid until they reach their intended recipients. The city, in this framework, serves moral and metaphysical purposes. These purposes necessitate the formation of social classes, which are, in essence, cognitive layers. The philosopher classifies the city's layers based on his understanding of the faculties of the soul and the way these faculties govern the self. The rational individual is the ruling figure, while the other parts of the city consist of those dominated by physical desires and sense perception. The city, thus, becomes a property of goodness, and happiness is equated with the practice of virtue, which are moral qualities that prevail within the paradox of reality's qualities.

The mind, in this context, becomes the system of the city. However, this system is not produced by education but rather by nature, aligning with the notion that man is a civil animal by nature. This statement reflects the paradox of man, where society is nurtured by nature to be a civil entity. The city, then, is a structure of logic that departs from realism and justice, grounded in the ruler's understanding of the nature of souls and the limits of their faculties. Goodness, happiness, self, and virtue are all paradoxical premises in the political reality established by the citizens. Hence, the city stands as a paradoxical field where reality and the choices of individuals meet.

Al-Farabi's vision of the city is arguably even more idealistic than Plato's *Republic*. Unlike Plato, Al-Farabi avoids using the concept of the state in his political and social theories, choosing terms like the city, nation, religion, sect, and pluralism. This suggests that Al-Farabi was primarily focused on a goal that

transcends the state, with the state serving only as a means to an end. The ultimate goal is to achieve the highest good and final perfection (Harb, 1995, pp. 166-167). Thus, Al-Farabi set the goals of meeting and governance as higher aspirations that transcend the practicalities of statecraft. He envisioned the individual as being free of contradictions, devoid of conflicts between competing desires. He conceived of the community as a place free of the struggle for material gain, and the presidency as an ascetic duty, rather than a quest for power.

In this sense, Al-Farabi constructed a kingdom of righteousness within an illusion (Harb, 1995, p. 166). While it is an idealistic vision, it remains a kingdom that expresses hope for the best, one that refuses to surrender to the bitterness of reality. Utopia, in Al-Farabi's view, arises from a sense of transcendence—without which no meaningful policy can be established. The utopian vision persists as an undeniable reality until humanity ceases to imagine and dream.

Hence , in our view, the city of Al-Farabi is based on the duty of the modern democratic state by providing three basic things to the citizen: guaranteeing the right to life, the right to property, and the right to happiness and freedom. Al-Farabi had concluded that the basic duty of the state is to guarantee two things: the first is to guarantee the right to life, and the second is the right to happiness, and thus he had prepared the way for pre-French revolution philosophers such as Voltaire, Rousseau and others to the three duties.

2. Al-Farabi's Concept of Sanity

The concept of *prudence* is introduced at the beginning of Al-Farabi's *Treatise on the Mind*, wherein he explains its role in guiding one to distinguish between what is good and what should be avoided as evil. As noted by the China Investment Fund (RCIF), when the public describes a person as "sane," they typically refer to their reasoning abilities. This is because the term "sane" is often used to describe someone who is virtuous, well-informed, and capable of discerning the best course of action in moral situations. In contrast, a person who is adept at recognizing evil, but does not take the appropriate action to avoid it, would not be considered "sane"; such a person might instead be labeled as "deceptive" or "shrewd" (Puig, 1938, pp. 4–5).

In his work *Extracted Chapters*, Al-Farabi links reasoning to the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* (practical wisdom), which he reinterprets within his own philosophical framework. Al-Farabi used this concept to establish a connection between ethics and politics, suggesting that the "happy" human being—one who is virtuous and wise—can also be an ideal citizen (Fawzi, 1971, pp. 34-71). This contrasts with the Machiavellian view of the ruler, in which reasoning holds little moral significance, as well as with the perspectives of Hobbes and Kant. For Al-Farabi, the integration of ethics with political governance was central to achieving a harmonious society.

Al-Farabi's vision of rationality is more than just an abstract philosophical pursuit; it represents a practical philosophy aimed at creating a relationship between truth and efficacy. Unlike Kant, who focused on the formal ethical implications of politics, Al-Farabi and his contemporaries like Ibn Bajja viewed rationality as an active and promising tool for building a society where the ethical life and political life could coexist harmoniously (Tarki, 1998, p. 47). In this context, rationality is not simply theoretical but is intended to guide practical action, achieving an actual coupling of reason with real-world effectiveness.

However, the intellectual system that studies the human being as the first tributary of political philosophy remains underdeveloped, despite the progress made by figures like Ibn Bajja. The illusion of anticipation, which seeks to perfect human nature, has not yet become part of our essential understanding. According to Fathi al-Maskini (1998), this "painstaking quest to complete what is possible in us" reflects an ideal that has not yet been fully integrated into our intellectual traditions (p. 82). Therefore, Al-Farabi's concept of prevention is not merely a call for philosophical or religious governance; it is a fundamental demand that arises from the human condition itself—an imperative that calls upon humans to exercise their faculties, actions, and existence in the pursuit of goodness and virtue.

Al-Farabi presents the mind as a tool for theoretical thinking, specifically concerning abstract knowledge, while reason is the tool for practical thinking related to the affairs of human life. In this view, a rational person relies on reason to ensure that their actions align with moral principles, thus harmonizing their mental reasoning with their ethical conduct. The division of reason's meanings serves to elevate its importance in public life, as it is something universally shared. As discussed in earlier texts, this concept of reason becomes inherently connected to religious, moral, and social dimensions.

Rationality, in this sense, is what makes the mind truly rational—by implementing a set of theoretical and practical measures that, when adopted in human practices, render an individual rational. This approach determines the content of the "problematic mind" from a historical perspective, inviting us to reconsider the original meaning of reason, which may have been forgotten or sidelined. Al-Farabi's reference to the

Aristotelian notion of reason in his *Treatise on Reason* underscores this point, positioning the mind as central to both moral and anticipatory action.

For Al-Farabi, as for Spinoza, living according to the demands of reason is essential to human flourishing. While science and wisdom are virtues of the theoretical mind, reason serves as the virtue of the practical mind. In this regard, reason is "the ability to see clearly and deduce the finest and most fitting actions that lead to the greatest good and a noble, virtuous goal"—which, in Al-Farabi's framework, is happiness or any pursuit that promotes true and meaningful joy (Fathi al-Maskini, 1998, p. 83). Prudence, as a form of practical reason, involves managing life's affairs by discerning the best course of action to achieve happiness.

It is important to distinguish prudence from mere cunning or malicious behavior. Prudence, according to Al-Farabi, is the alignment of the theoretical and practical mind, achieved by matching "certain knowledge with necessary macro premises" across different life spheres to ensure happiness and balance in all human expressions. Reason, in this context, connects truth to efficacy. Practical efficacy is not contrary to truth; Al-Farabi argues that a disconnect between truth and efficacy would lead to manipulation and malice. Truth divorced from efficacy would become empty and ineffective.

Moreover, Al-Farabi identifies multiple types of prudence. "Domestic prudence" governs the affairs of the household, "civil prudence" manages the affairs of the city, and "medial prudence" aims at the greater good of humanity. Reason, in this framework, becomes an awareness of "human things" and the pursuit of happiness. Al-Farabi's philosophy draws from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and the concept of *Iteqqa*, distinguishing between the theoretical arts and wisdom. While the *veronese* arts require discretion and the use of opinion, the things characterized by necessity must be handled with caution and rational foresight.

Al-Farabi distinguishes three types of prudence—domestic, civil, and medial—each subject to a differential ladder based on the applied purpose and degrees of rationality, depending on the human being's multiple practices across various levels: familial, civil, and societal. These forms of prudence do not all require the same degree of attention or application. When the matter at hand is of great significance, it demands stronger and more comprehensive prudence, whereas smaller or less complex matters only require a more moderate degree of prudence. As Al-Farabi notes, prudence varies with the context and scale of human action (Al-Farabi, *Extracted Seasons*, p. 42).

Further, Al-Farabi divides medial reasoning into two distinct forms:

1. The consultative aspect: Here, reason is directed toward others in a consultative manner to guide them in managing affairs, whether domestic or civil.
2. The confrontational aspect: This involves strategic prudence used in repelling aggression, organizing defense or war, and "eliciting a virtuous opinion" in resistance. This form ensures the safety of the home, the city, and the human being.

According to Al-Farabi, prudence cannot be considered "wisdom" in the strictest sense, as it is subject to change and is not a creative art. Al-Farabi aligns with Aristotle's idea that prudence, while closely related to wisdom, is distinct and "wise only by metaphor and analogy" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 39). Prudence is seen as a virtue, while malice or cunning do not belong to the realm of virtue.

However, prudence necessitates the application of thought, reasoning, and narration. In this respect, Al-Farabi echoes Aristotle's assertion that practical reason is intimately linked to action and the moral consequences of good and evil for humanity. Aristotle's view on prudence as "the queen of reason, oriented toward action and related to good and evil" (Aristotle, *Ethics*, Volquin, 1965, Book II, Chapter 1, p. 45) is upheld by Al-Farabi, who sees it as essential for guiding human conduct in the world.

The concept of "sanity" serves as a crucial link that can facilitate a positive form of mediation between prevention—understood as the effort towards achieving happiness—and politics as a governing device. This mediation is realized through what Al-Farabi calls the "quality of narration" (Al-Farabi, *A Treatise on Reason and Chapters*, p. 39, p. 55, p. 42, p. 57). It represents the ability to devise practical solutions that guide human efforts toward virtuous actions, perfecting what is good for the soul without the need for rewards or punishments. Sanity, in this regard, becomes the actual tributary for creating a positive and flexible relationship between happiness and the city (Fathi Al-Maskini, p. 81).

Al-Farabi emphasizes that the ruler's decision-making is shaped by the reasoning capacity of the governed. Reason, as Al-Farabi suggests, is not about reflecting on what is permanent and necessary but about understanding the possible and the future—what he calls the pursuit of happiness through "incoming things," whether natural or voluntary, at a specific time and place. Therefore, reason is not confined to efficiency alone (Aristotle, *Ethique de Nicomache*, p. 155; p. 169). Unlike wisdom, which is concerned with understanding universal truths, prudence is the virtue that drives practical action aimed at achieving human happiness.

In this context, the city becomes humanly impossible without the proper application of reason and prudence. Al-Farabi, following Aristotle's teachings, asserts that "you cannot be a ruler without being reasonable, and you cannot be reasonable without being virtuous" (Al-Farabi, *Extracted Chapters*, p. 65-70). The demand for happiness thus transforms into the realization of reason, which must be accessible to all individuals. This enables them to derive meaning from their existence, based on what they possess, even before fully realizing it—an ability intrinsic to their humanity.

Finally, Al-Farabi's transformation of reason from the theoretical to the practical realm reflects his desire to open the mind to existence and life. This openness is not about the dominance of knowledge over life, but about creating harmony and happiness that make life possible. He synthesizes abstract theory with practical applications—craftsmanship, technology, labor, and social utility—bridging the gap between intellectual and practical dimensions of human life.

Conclusions

Al-Farabi's texts offer an analytical contemplation on the relationship between the theoretical mind (in its Greek identification) and the practical, transactional mind, articulating how both are interlinked in a rational framework. Prudence, in Al-Farabi's view, serves as an internal guide that aligns the mind with reality, aiming to bridge the isolation of the individual by establishing relationships based on "goodness." This is particularly evident in his message of "caution for happiness." Through this approach, Al-Farabi creates a philosophy where rationality becomes the foundation for managing human affairs, both individually and socially.

By examining his works, we can conclude that Al-Farabi's philosophy is quintessentially rational, with a focus on the management of all aspects of life, as outlined in many of his later texts. His philosophy integrates elements of Aristotelian thought, Platonic ideals, and Neoplatonism, offering a unified vision of knowledge that encompasses both the theoretical and the practical. As noted by J. Saliba, Al-Farabi's doctrine cannot be strictly categorized as merely Stoic, Platonic, or modern; rather, it is an amalgamation of all these traditions, forming a comprehensive system that emphasizes the unity of truth and knowledge (J. Saliba, *History of Modern Arab-Islamic Philosophy*, p. 183).

At the heart of Al-Farabi's philosophy is the belief in the unity of philosophy and the unity of truth. For him, a person cannot be just unless they are rational, for it is through reason that one is guided toward truth and justice. Justice, in Al-Farabi's framework, is a practical application of rational principles in everyday life. Prudence, therefore, is not just a virtue but the very foundation upon which justice is built. Al-Farabi tightly connects the concepts of prudence and justice, asserting that a virtuous state must be governed by a just philosopher, one who applies reason to the management of state affairs. This ideal model of governance is an embodiment of a society ruled by both reason and justice, reflecting Al-Farabi's vision of the perfect society.

Thus, Al-Farabi's philosophical system stands as a profound synthesis of ancient Greek thought and Islamic intellectual traditions, offering a rational foundation for both individual and collective human flourishing. His integration of theory with practice provides a roadmap for achieving not only personal virtue but also the establishment of a just and harmonious society.

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