

Mahmoud Abdel Hafez Khalaf Allah

Jouf University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Al-Jawf

A NEW READING OF THE EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS IN AL-FARABI'S PHILOSOPHY

This paper sheds light on the implications of comprehensive philosophical view of Al-Farabi on education, and the most important features and new progressive educational visions that have not been addressed before in any of the studies. Starting from his comprehensive view of the nature of the universe, existence, man, society, knowledge, mind, and values, Al-Farabi had drawn the features of his philosophical vision of education and the acquisition of science and knowledge, with the aim of community recovery, progress and advancement. Despite strength relationship to power and politicians at their highest levels at that time al-Farabi was not preoccupied with politics, and made his goal to advance man and instill virtue in society. His way to that is to raise the mind, knowledge and morals by which happiness is achieved. Al-Farabi was able to combine the vision of Plato and Aristotle in education and ethics and what the true religion brought, so his educational ideas were realistic and rational, and at the same time they did not violate the principles of Islamic law.

Key words: Al-Farabi, philosophical vision, education goals, ethics, methods.

Махмуд Абдель Хафез Халаф Аллах

Джуфа университеті, Сауд Арабия Корольдігі, Аль-Джавф қ.

Әл-Фараби философиясындағы білім беру аспектілерінің жаңа оқылуы

Бұл мақалада әл-Фарабидің білім беру туралы жан-жақты философиялық көзқарасының салдары, сондай-ақ бұрын бірде-бір зерттеуде қарастырылмаған ең маңызды белгілері мен жаңа прогрессивті білім беру тұжырымдамалары жарыққа шығады. Әлемнің табиғаты, болмыс, адам, қоғам, білім, ақыл мен құндылықтар туралы көзқарасынан бастап, әл-Фараби қоғамды қалпына келтіру, алға жылжу мен ілгерілеуді қалпына келтіру мақсатында білім беру мен білім және ғылымды игеру туралы өзінің философиялық көзқарасының ерекшеліктерін салған. Сол кездегі билік пен саясаткерлермен жоғары деңгейдегі қарым-қатынасқа қарамастан, әл-Фараби саясатпен айналыспады және адамдарды алға жылжытуды, қоғамға ізгілікті сіңіруді өзінің мақсатына айналдырды. Оның бұған жетелейтін жолы - бақытқа жететін ақыл-ойды, білімді және адамгершілікті көтеру. Әл-Фараби Платон мен Аристотельдің білім мен этика саласындағы көзқарасын және шынайы діннің не әкелгенін үйлестіре білді, сондықтан оның тәрбиелік идеялары шыншыл және парасатты болды, сонымен бірге олар ислам заңдарының қағидаларын бұзған жоқ.

Түйін сөздер: әл-Фараби, философиялық көзқарас, тәрбие мақсаттары, этика, әдістер.

Махмуд Абдель Хафез Халаф Аллах

Университет Джуфа, Королевство Саудовская Аравия, г. Аль-Джавф

Новое толкование образовательных измерений в философии аль-Фараби

Эта статья проливает свет на значение всеобъемлющего философского взгляда аль-Фараби на образование, а также на наиболее важные особенности и новые прогрессивные образовательные концепции, которые ранее не рассматривались ни в одном из исследований. Начиная со своего взгляда на природу вселенной, существование, человека, общество, знания, разум и ценности, аль-Фараби нарисовал черты своего философского видения образования и приобретения науки и знаний с целью восстановления сообщества, прогресса и продвижения. Несмотря на прочные отношения с властью и политиками на самом высоком уровне в то время, аль-Фараби не был озабочен политикой и поставил своей целью продвижение человека и привитие добродетели в обществе. Его путь к этому - поднять разум, знания и мораль, с помощью которых достигается счастье. Аль-Фараби смог объединить видение Платона и Аристотеля в образовании и этике и то, что принесла истинная религия, поэтому его образовательные идеи были реалистичными и рациональными, и в то же время они не нарушали принципов исламского права.

Ключевые слова: Аль-Фараби, философское видение, цели образования, этика, методы.

Introduction

Al-Farabi, Abu Nasr Muhammad bin Tarkhan bin Ishaq Al-Farabi, was a Muslim philosopher, born in (259 AH - 870 AD), and died (339 AH - 950 AD), and *Al-Farabi* is relative to Farab, where he was born in the countries of the Turk, Kazakhstan today, and this is the most famous and consistent novel.

When he was a boy, he had left with his father to Baghdad, had contacted scholars of his time, and had studied Arabic sciences, Islamic *Sharia* sciences, and had studied logic with the most famous scholars of the age, and the greatest of them at that time, namely (*Abi Bishr Matta bin Yunus*) and (*Yohanna Ibn Gilan*). Arab historians and scholars called him the "Second Teacher" after Aristotle, "the First Teacher" and the founder of the Science of Logic, as the title of the "Second Teacher" is an acknowledgment of *Al-Farabi's* thanks in introducing the science of Analytical Logic into Arab culture. (Amin, 2001)

Historians disagreed about *Al-Farabi's* knowledge of the Greek language, and it is more likely that he had studied the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and their writings from the remains of the ancient library of Alexandria that moved to Baghdad after the Islamic conquest. *Al-Farabi* was fluent in Turkish and Persian as well as Arabic languages. He had moved between many Arab and Islamic cities and countries such as Egypt, the Levant, and others, to draw on Science and knowledge. (Nassar, 1982)

He had a delicate sense, a fiery intelligence, and a fertile mind that tended to analyze and extrapolate, in addition to his asceticism and his austerity, so he did not marry and lived all his life for science and defend the poor and the vulnerable.

He had a prolific scholarly production that led the German orientalist "Steinchener" to allocate to him a huge volume, and most of his letters and writings were lost, only 40 of them were likely left, of which 32 are in Arabic, 6 in Hebrew, and two in Latin. The greatest part of *Al-Farabi* writings are explanations and commentaries on Aristotle's philosophy. (Hussein, 1985)

The most important philosophical features of *Al-Farabi* that influenced his educational views:

Starting from his comprehensive view of the nature of the universe, existence, man, society, knowledge, mind, and values, *Al-Farabi* had drawn the features of his philosophical vision of education and the acquisition of science and knowledge, with the aim of community recovery, progress and advancement. Basing on the aforementioned,

this paper sheds light on the implications of this comprehensive philosophical view on education for *Al-Farabi*, and the most important features and new progressive educational visions that have not been addressed before in any of the studies within the limits of the researcher's knowledge.

It is worth noting that the historical era that *Al-Farabi* witnessed during the second *Abbasid* era had an active role in shaping his scientific personality and his philosophical vision in general, as this period was tumultuous with intellectual turmoil at the same level of political turmoil.

This intense intellectual, social and political climate had a great impact on *Al-Farabi's* philosophy in general, and his educational vision in building human capabilities, upgrading society, and reforming the patron and nation in particular. (Shmout, 1985)

Al-Farabi had believed that a righteous society must be based on a combination of rational politics, comprehensive justice, correct ethics, and a strong economy, and the historical era that he had witnessed was in dire need of that, as political corruption dragged it into social corruption. Political corruption dragged it into social corruption, the manifestations of which varied, so cunning, deception, betrayal and lack of trust spread between the authorities and the people, and then many moral values collapsed. (Baraka and Labouz, 2015)

Despite *al-Farabi's* strength relationship to power and politicians at their highest levels at that time – as he always was one of the attendees of *Saif al-Dawla al-Hamdani*, the Emir of the *Hamdanid* state and its founder - *al-Farabi* was not preoccupied with politics, and made his goal to advance man and instill virtue in society. His way to that is to raise the mind, knowledge and morals by which happiness is achieved.

Some may ask how *Al-Farabi* did not work with politics, and some of his views were not devoid of it? The explanation for this is that he had believed that the education of societies can only take place through rational ruling and apropos politics, so that a society that is ruled by a foolish, ignorant or unjust, does not rise; and then his philosophical and educational views were featured with a political character.

Among these opinions, for example, Happiness rises for people when evil recedes; because the first for *Al-Farabi* means absolute good, and what hinders the achievement of happiness is evil. (Al-Otaibi, 2014)

In this regard, *Al-Farabi* had stressed the importance of good deeds in strengthening the

psychological aspect that is inherently entrusted with happiness. When this aspect is strengthened, it becomes in dissolution from matter, and does not need it, and then happiness will happen. For *Al-Farabi*, the relationship of happiness with the soul, not with the body, is what guarantees its survival and continuity among humanity, for the bodies are mortal, but the soul is more permanent. Therefore, he always calls for the liberation of souls, for free souls are the ones that create happiness and enjoy it at the same time.

Moreover, there is complementarity between *Al-Farabi* and both Plato and Aristotle in seeing the human soul, and its educational qualification for the virtues, for it - meaning the soul - it is three forces: (lust, anger, and mental-speaking power), all of them represent one soul. The reason for dividing it is to show that these are the forces that represent human behavior, the first and second relate to the body and the third to what is divine. (Al-Ahwani, 1962), then, the interest in self-education must be comprehensive so that the third force can control the first and the second ones.

Thus, *Al-Farabi* had linked evil with the control of desires and their demands, and did not link it to lust itself, because it is - he means desire - in itself neither evil nor good, as it is like the rest of the abilities that surround man.

Based on the aforesaid, he had seen desires and instincts in a neutral situation, and man chooses their direction, and thus he raises the value of the mind, and the necessity of its control over the rest of the soul's forces. The power that *Al-Farabi* called the (mental-speaking power) in the powers of the soul, when it weakens due to the control of the other two forces (lust and anger), the role of the mind recedes and evil deeds rise in society.

Al-Farabi had believed that the Visualization is the principle on which ratification is based in the sensual or mental science, and therefore Education lacks this Visualization, whether in the construction or transmission of ideas, disturbs the foundations of science and affects society. (Salman, 2006)

In the same context, *Al-Farabi* had affirmed that knowledge is a voluntary action, in which the mental-speaking power leads all the soul's forces, and the mind is controlled over the senses and instincts, and the mind needs prudence and deliberation, and the will depends on thinking and awareness, Because it is a conscious determination to perform a specific act for a goal, with awareness of choosing specific tools for it. (Al-Hawari, 2012)

***Al-Farabi* had based his educational philosophy on the following:**

- Existence Theory.
- His view of the human soul.
- His view of the mind, perception and thinking.
- Theory of knowledge.
- Sociological Theory.
- The theory of values and ethics.

New Features in the Educational Dimensions of *Al-Farabi's* Philosophy:

Through the extrapolation of the previous letters, books and writings of *Al-Farabi*, as well as the scientific studies and literature that dealt with *Al-Farabi's* philosophy, a number of new educational features and dimensions in his philosophy have been mentioned, which none of the previous studies have covered within the limits of the researcher's knowledge. It will be covered through the following axes: (educational objectives - curriculum and educational content - educational work ethics for the teacher and the learner - methods of education).

Educational Objectives

The aims of education for *Al-Farabi* are represented in the functions and goals of science, according to the contribution of each science to human education, and the "Science of Logic" comes at the forefront of all sciences in terms of function; due to its great role in evaluating the mind and developing its abilities. (Amin, 1968) *Al-Farabi* had considered logic as a method for scientific research and thinking, in which a person learns how to think, and measures the correctness of his behavior, so it is a tool for scrutiny, and a means of Evaluation and correction. (Amin, 1968)

As for the "Science of Linguistics", the aim of his learning is to correct the words and linguistic structures, because it is the language of oral and written expression for all nations. Furthermore, it is divided into a number of sub-sciences, such as: (Science of Compound Vocabulary - the Science of the Laws of Single Words and compound words - the Science of Writing Laws - the Science of the Laws of Reading Correction). (Amin, 1968)

As for the purpose of "Natural Science", it is to contemplate the causes of the existence of natural things and the purpose for which they were created (Atwi, 1978). As for the purpose of "Divine Science", it is to nullify corrupt suspicions of the Creator, may He be glorified and exalted, and thus it increases man's certainty and belief in God. (Al-Jazini, n.d.)

The aim of learning the "Science of Jurisprudence" is to enable a person to learn the rulings of *Sharia* (Al-Najjar, 1964), and the "Science of Theology" aims to enable the learner to support

legal opinions and actions and to weaken everything that contradicts them. As for the other sciences, such as Engineering, Mechanics, Numerology, Astronomy, etc., each of them has a goal of learning to advance the human being and the nation. (Amin, 1968)

Based on the above, a number of new progressive features can be drawn for *Al-Farabi's* education goals as follows:

The balance between mind and soul in education.
Education evermore.

The collection of information is not sufficient to raise the mind, so the learner must carry out research, investigation and experimentation.

Integration between mind and soul.

Linking science and education to reality, as science that is not related to reality does not achieve happiness.

2 – Curriculum and Educational Content

According to *Al-Farabi*, the curriculum meant the whole of the sciences that existed in his time, and *Al-Farabi* had classified them into eight categories:

- Science of Logic.
- Science of the tongue.
- Natural Science.
- Divine Science.
- Civil Science (ethics and politics).

The Science of Teachings (the four sciences): (Arithmetic, Geometry, Optics, and Music), and is concerned with the application of sciences in practical production, the manufacture of machines and their repair. (Mahdi, 2009)

Jurisprudence science.

Knowledge of Theology (pilgrims or polemics).

It is noted that these sciences are the same as those referred to in the objectives of education above, as *Al-Farabi* had divided these sciences, in terms of content and method, into (theoretical knowledge - practical knowledge). The theoretical knowledge of *Al-Farabi* - as previously mentioned - is of the highest order of practical knowledge. For example, "the Science of Teachings" branches out from the science of Numerology, and it is divided into the Science of Theoretical Number and the Science of Practical Number. . The first searches for the abstract numbers in the mind about objects and everything that is counted from them, and the second (practical): it searches what is happening to these numbers in terms of mathematical operations during the application. (Amin, 1968)

Thus, the Science of Geometry branches out from the Science of Teachings, and is divided into Theoretical Geometry and Practical Engineering. The first searches for solids, shapes and angles in an

abstract manner, and does not need physical bodies. The second: it searches in shapes and physical bodies, such as: (Triangle, square, circle, etc.).

Musicology is another category that belongs to the Science of Teachings, and it is divided into theoretical musicology that examines the composition of tunes and melody, and how to compose the weights and melodies. As for practical Musicology, it examines the types of melodies that are actually issued by musical instruments made, such as the lute, lyre, harp and other musical instruments.

Based on the aforementioned, a number of new progressive features of the curriculum and educational content of *Al-Farabi* can be deduced as follows:

The Pedagogical and educational content must be fully integrated with the objectives.

The comprehensiveness and diversity of the educational curriculum to help the overall growth of the learner.

Organizing the content and the educational curriculum in a logical manner helps learning.

A mixture of theoretical and practical content in the curriculum.

Theoretical content is more important than practical content; because the latter is based on the first, and the theoretical content is that which contains the philosophical background of science or specialization.

Taking into account the individual differences and the different preferences of the learners by diversifying the curricula so that each learner chooses what suits him best.

3 – The Ethics of Educational Work for the Teacher and the Learner

Islam made ethics an entrance to all sciences without exception, and emphasized that the reference for that is the Sharia, not the mind. As for *Al-Farabi*, he had believed that ethics are the goal in all sciences, and not an entrance to it; and therefore it is quite difference between the two aspects. Knowledge according to *Al-Farabi* does not necessarily lead to ethics; while ethics directs science to the advancement of Islamic values, so whoever does not refine his knowledge in this life, does not make himself happy in the Hereafter.

The ethics that *Al-Farabi* had portrayed from the relationship of the superior to the subordinate and members of society with each other are the morals of ignorant and lost cities as he called them, which were represented in oppression, injustice, humiliation, hypocrisy, adultery and hypocrisy, etc., and it is a symbol of what life was like in the second

Abbasid era. There was no effect of Islam in directing morals to the happiness of humanity. Therefore, *Al-Farabi's* attitude on the ethical problem in general was consistent with his philosophy, which was based on the rational approach rather than the religious approach.

The irony is that when *Al-Farabi* spoke about the ethics of the teacher and the learner, he deviated from his philosophical base, as if he was criticizing himself, saying: "Whoever wants to embark on the Science of Wisdom should be a young man who is polite with the etiquette of the good guys, possessing all the good qualities without leaving a legal corner, and he should be devoted to Science, not concerned with his living interests". (Mahmoud, 1975, 70)

As for the teacher or the wise scholar, as he called him, he should have all the qualities of the learner that I mentioned previously, in addition to the necessity not to make his knowledge for material gain; because he is not a craftsman, and knowledge is not a machine for making money, and whoever violates these teachings and regulations, *Al-Farabi* had considered him a falsified wise man. (Mahmoud, 1975)

Based on the above, a number of new progressive features of teacher-learner ethics in *Al-Farabi* can be drawn as follows:

The teacher is at the top of the social hierarchy in civilized societies and may be the president of a utopia.

The teacher carries the greatest message and comes in second place after the prophets, so he must be qualified for it and attain his place in the society that he deserves.

Humility, generosity, sincerity, patience and wisdom are among the most important qualities of the teacher.

The necessity for the learner to be devoted to knowledge, and to give him his time, effort and money.

Fools do not deserve knowledge, and the effort of wise teachers.

The teacher and the learner are responsible for the conscience and values of society.

4- Education Methods

According to *Al-Farabi*, education has different methods from the methods of education in its modern sense, and that is for several considerations, the most important of which are the nature of the era in which *Al-Farabi* lived, his rational philosophy, and the nature of the utopian city he was seeking. Education, according to *Al-Farabi*, goes beyond the traditional concept of the learning process within the walls of the school, and goes beyond the classroom

interaction between the teacher and the learner to being a social intertwined process that expands to educate society as a whole, including individuals, groups, boss, subordinates, etc. Then the education of *Al-Farabi* moved in two directions (the individual and society) and expanded under this umbrella to include all human relationships.

***Al-Farabi* approved a number of educational methods as follows:** (Hussein, 1979); (Al-Ali, 1979); (Jezzine, n.d.)

The necessity of reward for actions that are associated with good intentions, and issued from science and knowledge, without specifying the quality of these actions, their fields, or the controls of judging them. Here, *Al-Farabi* does not mean religious and doctrinal ritual actions, because morality for him differs from religious ethics. He is referring to the intellect-based ethics of knowledge, which considers virtue as a means, not a purpose.

A person should be kind in seeking benefits, move away from urgency, and seek help in means of obtaining the benefit, not the benefit itself.

Not competing with the president in his duties and competencies, as this disturbs and weakens the political and administrative systems, and confirms this because the president is the first reason for the existence of the utopia.

Al-Farabi denounces the adulation and hypocrisy of the presidents, because this corresponds to the desire of the same president who he believes is not wrong. And it reflects the reality of the second Abbasid era.

Appeasement to the enemies is a high betrayal and adulation for them is a humiliation and a motive for the oppression of the people that defame the ruler and expose him to his humiliation and subservience. (Comair, 1954)

Basing on that, a number of new progressive features of *Al-Farabi's* methods of education can be drawn as follows:

Reinforcement and reward is necessary in the educational process to reinforce good behavior.

Awareness of thinking is essential in the learning process and correcting mistakes.

The teacher and the learner must watch himself so that he modifies his behavior and does not repeat his mistakes.

Defining tasks and roles and adhering to them helps achieve goals.

Use methods of education that develop the capabilities of the mind.

Al-Farabi's methods of education are blamed for making them absolute, as if they are fixed facts,

and this contradicts his views that education must take into account the nature of place and time.

Summary

According to *Al-Farabi's* thoughts, Education has gained a distinct character which reflected his cognitive and intellectual richness, his rational philosophy, his nobility, sincerity, sincerity and objectivity, his modesty with the poor, his strength, steadfastness and his courage in facing the injustice and corruption that was widespread during his reign. *Al-Farabi* was able to combine the vision of Plato and Aristotle in education and ethics and what the true religion brought, so his educational ideas were realistic and rational, and at the same time they did not violate the principles of Islamic law.

Despite the numerous writings on *Al-Farabi's* philosophy, his educational views did not receive enough of the study, and the current study came to shed light on a number of new progressive educational features advocated by modern education in our current era. This has many connotations, the most important of which are the events that *Al-Farabi* lived in his era, similar in content to the reality of the Arab and Islamic nation in the current era. It also affirms that the tributaries of societal progress and the rise of nations are in education through the ages, and finally, the inimitable mentality that *Al-Farabi* had, which made him not only at the forefront of Muslim philosophers in his era, but also made him an important tributary of modern education in our current era.

References

- Al-Ahwani, Ahmad (1962). *Aristotle Thales: Book of the Soul*, revised from the Greek, Father George Shehata, Kanawati, Egypt, House of Revival of Arab Books.
- Alali, Abdel Salam (1979). *Al-Farabi political philosophy*. Dar Vanguard. Beirut.
- Al-Badour, Salman (2006). *Mind and Action in Islamic Philosophy*, Jordan, Dar Al Shorouk.
- Al-Hawari, Salah al-Din (2012) *Al-Farabi: Civil Politics*. Beirut. The modern library.
- Al-Najjar, Fawzi Mitri (1964). *Al-Farabi: Civil Politics*. Asset principles. The Catholic Press, Beirut 14.
- Al-Otaibi, Lazzah (2014). *Philosophical Basics of Education for Al-Farabi*, Journal of Education. Al Azhar university. no. 161. vol. 1.
- Amin, Othman (1968). *Science Statistics*, the Anglo-Egyptian Library, Cairo, 3rd Edition, p. 67.
- Atwi, Faouzi (1978). *Al-Farabi: Philosopher of the utopia*. Arab Book House, Beirut. P. 168.
- Baraka, Bedouin, Labouz, Abdullah (2015). *Philosophy of Education between Plato and Al-Farabi: A Comparative Study*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Qasidi Merbah University - Ouargla. College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Algeria. pp. 1-78.
- Hussein, Marwa (1979). *Materialism in Arab-Islamic philosophy*. Vol. 2. Dar Al-Farabi. Beirut.
- Hussein, Taha (1985). *Al-Farabi: The Thinker of the Great East*. Social Society of Sharjah. Vol 2. P. 5.
- Jezzini, Ibrahim (n.d.). *The views of the people of the utopian city*, the modern dictionary house. P. 69.
- Mahdi, Mohsen (2009). *Al-Farabi and the Establishment of Islamic Philosophy and Politics*, Dar Al-Farabi, Beirut, Edition 1, p. 114.
- Mahmoud, Hussein Ali (1975). *Al-Farabi in Arabic references*. Vol. 1. Freedom House, Baghdad.
- Nassar, Mujmed (1982) *In Islamic philosophy*. Vol.1, Cairo, El-Anaglu, Egypt.
- Qomair, John (1954). *Al-Farabi*, Vol.2, Dar Al-Mashriq, Beirut, p. 39.
- Shammout, Osama Amin (1985). Al-Farabi Educational Philosophy: Its Origins and General Features, *Journal of Social Sciences*, Kuwait University, Vol. 13, no.3.
- Wadih, Amin (2001). *Al-Farabi: The Second Teacher; the National Progressive Rally*. Vol. 17. no. 185. pp. 11-18.