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The Being of Science in Al-Farabi's Philosophy

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Abstract: *The purpose of the article is to identify the forms of being of science in the philosophy of the Muslim thinker Abū Naṣr Muhammad al-Fārābī, who lived in the 9th–10th centuries. In this regard, the article first addresses the problem of the origin of science. The enumeration of sciences is manifested in al-Farabi's research as "divine science," that is, metaphysics and individual sciences, with a Muslim specificity. Science as a process of cognition is an ascent from the imperfect to the perfect. The First Cause (the First Being) of everything is the absolute perfection. It is also a deity and the "cause" of the origin of sciences. The comprehensive encyclopedism of al-Farabi's predetermined science is a kind of worldview. In this context, he distinguished between the science of language, logic, mathematics, physics, metaphysics, and civil science, which explains the essence of real happiness. Only members of the ideal community ("the inhabitants of a virtuous city") are able to achieve happiness. Therefore, the study of sciences in totality creates the respective "virtuous" worldview. Science*

as a cognitive activity forms an intellectual and moral category of "elites" whose mission is enlightenment. Morality is the foundation of intelligence. Thus, the problem of being of science in al-Farabi's philosophy is undeniably relevant in the framework of Enlightenment 2.0.

Keywords: *education, enlightenment, morality, rationality, science, worldview*

Introduction

The Muslim thinker Abū Naṣr Muhammad al-Fārābī left behind a multifaceted intellectual heritage. For him, the problems of ontology, axiology, epistemology, and even politics are all interconnected. The concepts of knowledge and science are inseparable. A person acquires knowledge. Science proves its authenticity rationally. Genuine knowledge is "virtuous knowledge." Philosophy systematizes rationally substantiated knowledge and gives directions to a "virtuous" life with freedom of choice. Knowledge, perceived through faith, about the structure of the world refers to religion. Faith is the initially "virtuous" foundation of the universe. Al-Farabi explains faith rationally. Thus, the interrelation religion–science–philosophy was considered in the spiritual structure of society. Al-Farabi put forth the thesis "virtuous religion is like philosophy."

In this article, the central issue is science as a rational proof of everything. Al-Farabi explained the foundations of Muslim faith using the rationalism of ancient Greek philosophers. Consequently, his treatises offer a holistic scientific description and explanation of the cause-and-effect interdependence of nature and the human community from the First Cause of the world—that is, the deity. According to al-Farabi, the function of science is to demonstrate proof by logical identification of cause-and-effect knowledge.

The purpose of this article is to examine the being of science in al-Farabi's philosophy. To achieve the goal, three aspects are considered: first, the origin and enumeration of sciences; second, science as a worldview; and third, the potential application of al-Farabi's ideas of improving science and higher education in the context of modern global problems.

The origin and enumeration of sciences

As a medieval encyclopedist, al-Farabi presented a classification of sciences in accordance with the regularities of the formation and structure of the universe. The totality of sciences is the unity of knowledge that explains the universal spheres in sequence from the more spatial to the less spatial, in accordance with the causal order of things, its appearance of one from the other, from the deeper and more fundamental to less, also in accordance with the descent from the more perfect to the less perfect, and vice versa with the ascension. The classification of sciences presented by al-Farabi structurally encompasses all areas of knowledge of his time.

The origin of sciences, as well as appearance of things, is determined by the categories of cause and effect, possibility and reality, which clarify the transition from non-being to being. Substances and accidents create the sciences. Substance (essence) is comprehended by reason through accidents. Accidents as manifestations and signs of a substance are perceived by the senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and tactile perception.

The reason for the emergence of science is to explain the nature of substance in development and transformation. For example, the science of number was caused by the division of substance into parts, the science of measurement was revealed by the number of parts of substance, and astronomy was formed by the movement of substance.

The movement of substance is accompanied by sound—consequently, the science of music emerged. Al-Farabi called these sciences pedagogical or educational. These sciences prepare students for the study of subsequent sciences (Al-Farabi, 1987, pp. 91–96).

More fundamental is the science of nature, which explains the processes of nature. Al-Farabi (1987, p. 98) explains: "this science completes the knowledge of all accidents of the absolute substance, which are located in the sublunar world." He defined the science of deity, or metaphysics, as the most significant and universal science. According to the thinker, beyond the knowledge of metaphysics, there is no theme, notion, or problem to study. Metaphysics studies the causes of the emergence of substances and, consequently, of accidents. Al-Farabi speaks about authentic knowledge. This knowledge reveals the essence of a thing and reasons for its existence (Al-Farabi, 1987, p. 109). To reveal the foundations of

metaphysics, one needs to consider the issue of the First Cause—that is, the First Existing (the First Being), the First Mover. Al-Farabi also mentioned Allah, the Almighty in his treatises, using the Muslim interpretation.

In his treatise *The Essence of Questions*, the thinker considers the categories of "possibly-existing" and "necessarily-existing." The transition from "possibly-existing" to "necessarily-existing" is characterized by cause-and-effect relationships. The absence, the non-existence of "possibly-existent" does not look absurd. The "possibly-existent" can become "necessarily-existent" only due to a certain reason, some determinant. There is the following of a cause-and-effect series, according to the ascent from the imperfect to the perfect, from non-existence to being, and at the top and at the base is the First Being, who is also the Almighty. The absence of the First Cause is absurd, impossible. The First Being has no matter, no form, no action, no purpose. The First Being is beyond all criteria and properties. The First Being creates all observable things. The First Being is the cause and proof of everything, "pure reason," "the highest degree of beauty, perfection, greatness," "the first loving and the first beloved." The First Cause is the deity forming a series of things, the degree of perfection of which is determined by the approach to Him. The First Being is the creator. The first act of creation is the first reason, from which the second reason flows, and so on. All subsequent reasons as "possibly-existent" form spheres with matter and soul as a form inherent in this matter (Al-Farabi, 1987, pp. 231–237).

The First Being is eternal. He is the main truth. Metaphysics explains how this truth comes to all truth created by him (Al-Farabi, 1970, p. 174). Al-Farabi used the idea of the spheres between the First Cause (God) and the world (Sparavigna, 2014, p. 36). Comprehension of metaphysics serves as the limit to the study of sciences. Therefore, the identification of causes and consideration of reality in accordance with the universal ideal should be considered as the universals of science. To reveal the true causal relationship through the "educational" and individual sciences in all processes and phenomena, to consider their compliance with the main ideas of the universe, must be taken as the main goal of theoretical science.

In general, al-Farabi divides the sciences into individual and universal. The individual sciences (physics, geometry, arithmetic, medicine, etc.) study single entities (Al-Farabi, 1985, pp. 334–335). Metaphysics as a universal science studies the absolute being, the synonym of which should be considered the First Beginning of all beginnings, the First Cause of all causes, the First Engine that sets everything in motion and, at the same time, is not itself in motion.

Human knowledge represents a hierarchical structure and the subject of a certain science. The hierarchy of human knowledge has an ontological justification, as it reflects the structure of the universe. One level of being is the cause of another level, everything is hierarchized, but at the same time merged together.

Sciences also merge in terms of their object of study, but their various branches emerge from one another in a causal sequence (Malinova, 2020, p. 194).

Thus, metaphysics in al-Farabi's interpretation aims at identifying the causes of all things. Scientific problems are considered in the cause-and-effect relation with a focus on the ethical component, which can be one of the theoretical foundations for the social science and humanities. Moreover, it must be said that technical, natural sciences (especially genetics, genetic engineering, biotechnology, virology) and even information technologies need to have ethical grounding. Scientific discoveries and inventions should not contribute to social chaos and deform the initially virtuous nature of man.

In addition, we should know about the universal-planetary unity, in the root and essence of which there is a single beginning and cause of being, supporting both the planetary axis and preserving the essential human core. Thus, the cause-and-effect connection, unity, interdependence, and interconnectedness of all things, phenomena and processes derive from a common single absolute being. It should be considered both in fundamental and applied scientific research in order to establish and maintain planetary balance.

Due to the "unity" of sciences in al-Farabi's treatises, the concept of moral rationality and rational morality is defined. "Rational" means virtuous. Virtuous maintains balance, unity, nobility, justice, philanthropy, and mercy. At the same time, morality preserves and glorifies human virtue with rational comprehension. The thinker defined the unity of intellectual and ethical virtues to achieve happiness and perfection. Thus, moral rationality—the unity of heart and mind—should become the postulate of the "new enlightenment" in the context of globalization, commercialization, networking, and technocracy.

Enlightenment 2.0 is created to rethink and overcome the accumulated problems of modern civilization. Enlightenment 2.0 brings forth the philosophy of balance. This philosophy involves finding a balance between humankind and nature, between the short-term and the long-term, between transience and stability, between the personal and the public, state, and religion (Weizsäcker & Wijkman, 2018, pp. 95–96). The category of balance also implies a fair

distribution of goods both within the community and in the whole world. The Oriental spiritual traditions (Taoism, Buddhism, etc.) are taken as the theoretical basis for the philosophy of balance.

The balance between East and West, between the rational and the irrational, must be maintained. Al-Farabi used the rationalism of ancient Greeks to explain the Islamic doctrine, and, consequently, his treatises are a symbol of spiritual unity and balance between East and West. Al-Farabi suggested a balance between heart and the mind, between upbringing and education, ethics and intelligence. Thus, the thinker's conceptualization can be perceived as a theoretical basis for the philosophy of balance and Enlightenment 2.0.

There are all the informational sources for the dissemination of principles, concepts, and categories of the new enlightenment at the present stage of development of human civilization. It is necessary to make the new enlightenment a worldview for the conservation of natural resources, strengthening peace throughout the world, the use of scientific discoveries and technologies only with virtuous intentions. The new enlightenment can be used for establishing a new format of interaction between people on the basis of mutual understanding and mutually beneficial cooperation. In this regard, science as a process of cognition in al-Farabi's philosophy can be used in the theoretical substantiation of the challenges of the humanities and the ethical foundations of natural and technical research.

Al-Farabi in his treatise *The Book of the Enumeration of the Sciences* identified the following sciences: the science of language, logic, mathematics (arithmetic, geometry, optics, the science of stars, the science of music, the science of gravity, the science of skillful techniques), physics, and metaphysics. Civil science, jurisprudence, and dogmatic theology constitute a separate block. Al-Farabi integrated political thought into Islamic society (Zeraoui & Gonzalez Uresti, 2021, p. 80).

Metaphysics is defined as the end and completion of all knowledge and studies, but al-Farabi emphasizes the position of civil science after divine science in the classification structure. Probably, the thinker imagined that the study of "educational," individual sciences and metaphysics should prepare the individual for practical activities and everyday life. Civil science addresses the behavior and morals of people, issues of power and control. One of the main questions of civil science is the problem of happiness. Al-Farabi characterizes the concept of happiness as the leitmotif of existence of both community and individual. The achievement of happiness requires acquisition of virtue because only an

educated and highly moral person can know real happiness. Hence, there is the next question of true happiness and the illusory one. It seems incredibly important to define happiness in the true sense in accordance with virtue—that is, moral and intellectual understanding. Therefore, real happiness lies in dignity, justice, mercy, love, goodness, togetherness with the whole community and the whole world, creating beautiful and good things. The study of sciences in totality helps to know these necessities for achieving happiness. By contrast, lack of education and the absence of impulses for intellectual development leads to ignorance. In this regard, al-Farabi divides human existence into two states: virtue and ignorance. Virtue is the study of sciences and moral improvement throughout life in order to constantly maintain harmony in society and order in accordance with approaching to the First Cause of the world.

Ignorance creates imaginary, false happiness. Ignorance leads to moral decay. The process of "decay" can become habitual, consequently, there are "ignorant cities," which should be understood as the negative qualities of the human soul (meanness, dishonor, deceit, etc.), as well as entire communities subject to deceit, injustice, totalitarianism, corruption, or violence. In this regard, al-Farabi presents the entire universe as a hierarchy of spheres from the First Cause, and the same hierarchy is projected onto the human community (state, city, team, and family). The head or leader of each of the communities for a virtuous organization must be an analogue of the First Cause.

The First Cause is a moral and intellectual ideal, and thus both high morality and knowledge of the sciences should be inherent to the leader of each community. In view of this, civil science also implies the problem of power. The leader of the community is guided by virtue. If his rule does not appropriate moral and intellectual ideals, and he is not comparable with the First Cause, his power is ignorant. Thus, a government that allows deceit, violence, corruption, pressure, repressing honor and dignity, is called ignorant.

The integrity of knowledge in the classification of sciences, presented by al-Farabi, creates the scientific worldview. It allows us to consider all the phenomena and processes in the structure of the universe.

All sciences are interconnected, it is impossible to isolate any from the enumeration. The classification of sciences as an increasing structure from simple to more complex fits the hierarchy of the universe. The classification represents a comprehensive and unified complex perception of reality from the knowledge of elementary arithmetic to the rational understanding of the deity and the values of the human community.

Science as a "virtuous" worldview

The scientific worldview should be understood as a rational worldview. Among the "balances" of Enlightenment 2.0 is the "faith–mind" balance, which was suggested by al-Farabi. Rationality is a relative concept, and it is advisable to focus on Islamic rationality here.

Various forms of rationality are manifested in philosophical thought. The forms of rationality depend on the historical era, the personality of the thinker, and the value system. (Kurmangaliyeva, 2014, p. 28). Undoubtedly, the Islamic rationality of al-Farabi differs from Western rationality. The Kazakh Farabiologist Galiya K. Kurmangaliyeva (2014, p. 34) concludes that the type of rationality "means a certain framework of philosophical and ideological foundations, cognitive norms and value systems determining the integrity of human life, on which it is built and in line with which it flows."

Al-Farabi laid the foundations for Islamic rationality, containing the "organic unity of knowledge and faith" (Solov'yeva, 2014, p. 17). Rationality has epistemological and ontological significance, as "the way in which a person fits into the world, originally created by the Almighty" (Solov'yeva, 2014, p. 18).

The Canadian philosopher Joseph Heath considered the question of a "heart–brain" ("feelings–reason") balance. The contrasting of the two components is characterized as "head versus heart." Describing political technologies, Heath shares the concepts of truth and truthfulness. Lies can be used in politics. Lies can be pronounced repeatedly in media resources. Therefore, they can acquire a "degree of truthfulness."

The masses perceive more information. They do not define the information by its authenticity. The masses can neglect the analysis of the information. A lie uttered affirmatively and confidently, repeated several times, looks "truthful." Then the masses, even if there were doubters among them, reflect: "maybe this is true, or maybe not…" As a result, the lie becomes generally accepted truth, since the arguments are accepted by the majority. Such a technique of political manipulation is described in (Heath 2014, pp. 3–8). "Heart" is about feelings and intuition, it is opposite to rational analysis—hence, "head versus heart." Good sense (sanity) is often overshadowed by emotions and addictions.

Al-Farabi offers an explanation and solution to the problem presented by Heath. The "heart–head," "morality–reason," and "feelings–sanity" balance is found in

the human body. The thinker speaks about the significance of both the heart and the brain. Heart is a source of innate warmth (Al-Farabi, 1970, p. 271). The warmth of the heart has no measure, while the brain was created "naturally cold and damp." The brain gives measure to the warmth (Al-Farabi, 1970, p. 274). The warmth of heart can manifest itself in the feeling of love, compassion, trust, responsiveness, and mercy. The brain is a symbolic designation of the "cold" mind (reason), guiding the warmth of the heart in the right direction and giving it the necessary framework. Al-Farabi argues about the "heart" as the main organ which symbolizes morality, that is, the ethical component of human and social life. The meaning of "to be human" is a matter of faith. A "human" in the genuine meaning is one who is virtuous and capable of real happiness.

Virtue is "the light emitted by the First Cause of the world"—more precisely, the moral foundations. Virtue is spiritual purity. "Being moral" is an imperative perceived by faith. The First Cause, the First Principle, the First Existing as the "first" and absolute virtue is perceived by faith, but the "First …" is recognized rationally. Since the "first" bestows reason on humanity, "heart" is also understood as an innate belief in human virtue, as an essence, the impulse of which is regulated by reason. Thus, there is the "faith–reason" balance. The scientific worldview contributes to the balance being seen in everything and used in practice, in everyday life. The basis of the scientific worldview is moral rationality.

The category of integrity is revealed in al-Farabi's thought, and it characterizes the relationship of religion, science, and philosophy in understanding spirituality. The worldview of the majority in the Muslim caliphate in the 9th–10th centuries was undoubtedly based on religion. Revelation (Holy Scripture) as an established truth is accepted by faith, which is the basis of religion. Religion embraces the truths of virtue; what it cannot explain, is accepted by faith. Philosophy operates with rationality and explains revelation. Thus, al-Farabi (1987, p. 324) concludes: "A virtuous religion is like philosophy."

On the other hand, the purpose of science is to prove. Science explains the reason for the being of things. Science is based on proofs, as "the part of philosophy that provides evidence to the predetermined actions of a virtuous religion" (Al-Farabi, 1987, p. 325). Thus, the thinker presented the interdependence of religion, science, and philosophy.

Science, explaining the causal interaction of things, clarifies in the minds of people the structure and gradation of the universe, social structure, and spiritual

evolution of the individual. A planet is similar to a human body, all organs of which are interconnected and interdependent, and a community of citizens constitutes the state. According to the body, the sciences explain appropriate patterns of functioning of these "organisms." The sciences are united like all organs in the body.

The category of integrity is also manifested in the characterization of the "organism" of sciences. "Educational" and individual sciences and logic are the grounds for comprehending metaphysics. The essence of metaphysics is projected onto the human community studied by civil science. Studying the sciences in totality is aimed at understanding the universe, the structure of the state, social harmony and appropriate existence, the goal of which is achievement of happiness. Consequently, it is possible to create an ideal (virtuous) community and a state only on the basis of scientific worldview.

A virtuous worldview (as al-Farabi called it in *Principles of the Opinions of the Citizens of the Virtuous City*) is knowledge of the following:

> "The First Cause and all its attributes," non-material things, the top of which is active mind, celestial substances, natural bodies, the origin of man, "arising of abilities of soul" and the process of enlightenment by active mind to soul, forming in it the first concepts," the political leader ("the First Head"), his deputies (if it is necessary), will and freedom of choice, happiness. (Al-Farabi, 1970, pp. 338–339)

In addition, a virtuous worldview includes demarcation between "virtuous" and "negative" societies and factors ("ignorant cities"). Thus, knowledge constituting the "virtuous worldview" is covered by previously listed sciences.

Al-Farabi identifies two approaches to the comprehension of faith. The first is for "enlightened, wise men or philosophers." Their comprehension of faith is based on reason, proof, and logic. The second approach is for the masses, containing "imagination, symbols, images" (Solov'yeva, 2014, p. 18).

The indicated components of the worldview "are learned by the wise with evidence and their own intuition" (Al-Farabi, 1970, p. 340). "Proof" as the main category of science is a method of searching for true knowledge. Wise men pass the acquired knowledge on to those who follow them and trust them. The followers of the wise receive the most authentic knowledge. The rest are left only with "imitative representations," and they are far from understanding the essence. "Imitative representations" can be far from reality in one way or another.

Their perception without proof is the basis of religion. The "virtuous" people may have different religions, since they are based on "imitative representation […] although they believe in the same happiness and strive for the same goals" (Al-Farabi, 1970, p. 341). The foundations of "virtuous" religions, calling for justice, harmony, mutual assistance, mercy, real happiness can be explained scientifically.

Al-Farabi divided people into "elite" ("chosen ones") and "the general public." The "chosen ones" comprehend "theoretical knowledge," which is based on the understanding of the "most remote beginnings," "incorporeal beginnings" (Al-Farabi, 1973, p. 322). In al-Farabi's lifetime, the "chosen ones" could be related to people with "political leadership," since they determined what needed to be known in a "virtuous" state. The "chosen ones" by persuasion inspire "the general public" with figurative forms of "theoretical knowledge" (Al-Farabi, 1973, p. 322).

Thus, science as a worldview aims at a rational explanation of the world and society. A community is being formed by scientific knowledge. The community is capable of building a trajectory for the development of a "healthy" social organism where justice, harmony, and honesty prevail. The focus on the study of sciences in totality allows us to form a holistic worldview.

Al-Farabi's concept of science and the modern university

Al-Farabi did not define science as a separate social institution. The "chosen ones" are the transmitters of scientific knowledge to "the general public." According to al-Farabi's treatises, rulers should possess the most valuable knowledge. "The First Head" (political leader) is the human and intellectual ideal. Therefore, he has the right and opportunity to rule the "virtuous city."

No doubt, in the period of Muslim Renaissance, "the general public" perceived information in the form of maxims from the lips of rulers, wise men, and clergymen. Nowadays the "chosen ones" can signify professionals of intellectual sphere (humanitarians), explaining the phenomena and processes of modernity by moral rationality. The moral and intellectual understanding of everything is necessary for solving the topical problems of our time (ecology, war and peace, the problem of corruption, tolerance, social harmony, etc.)

It is advisable to apply the discoveries of science, modern technology, and innovation in a "virtuous" way. This can contribute to the solution of many

problems. For instance, preservation of the environment, the establishment of a "healthy" social organism (with prevalence of justice), resolution of international conflicts only by peaceful means, etc.

Al-Farabi also promoted "interdisciplinarity." Sciences should be united to achieve results. Al-Farabi's "interdisciplinarity" can be integrated into the post-non-classical science. The "virtuous city" model is a way of social self-organization on a moral and intellectual basis, where the spiritual core could be called an attractor, which can become an axis.

In this regard, the ethos of science is particularly significant. Robert K. Merton (1973) understood the ethos of science as a set of values and norms that is considered mandatory for the scientist. The scientific community developed the imperatives that constitute the researcher's conscience (Merton, 1973, pp. 268–269). Conscience is the highest moral category. It defines the principles of life that establish fair relations and norms in all spheres. Conscience is an indicator showing the violation of the "morality–intellect," "faith–rationality," and "heart–mind" balance. The concept of conscience is not excluded in the scientific field. The scientist's conscience contributes to the natural and social balance.

There are three historical models of universities. University 1.0 has the goal to transmit knowledge. University 2.0 outlines the goals of teaching and research. University 3.0 functions according to the scheme "education–science–innovation–commercialization."

Al-Farabi presents in his treatises an appropriate model of the university. The model fits into the scheme "education–science–worldview." It should be noted that this model presents the worldview rather than mere upbringing. The university does not cultivate but demonstrates virtuous views and behavior.

Education is one of the most significant social phenomena in al-Farabi's philosophical system. Education engages the human soul and guides the individual to prepare for becoming a useful member of society (Rauf, Ahmad & Iqbal, 2013, p. 88). The model of civil society and education in al-Farabi's philosophy is approached as a solution to the challenges in the development of Islamic education in the technological era (the fourth industrial revolutions) (Sya'bani & Rajiani, 2019).

Al-Farabi's philosophy has been included in the educational practices of Islamic universities in Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country. The program mainly incorporates al-Farabi's consideration of the concept of reason (intelligence).

For the students, the purpose of the program is to acquire not only knowledge but also practical skills to achieve perfection in life and moral values (Asmuni, 2021, p. 497). Al-Farabi's philosophy in higher education curricula is aimed at orienting a critical, systemic, logical, comprehensive, existentially integrative model of thinking. Philosophical thinking is the capital in self-development of young intellectuals (Asmuni, 2021, p. 495).

The university, on the one hand, is a "temple of science," but on the other hand, it can serve as an "oasis," where a student finds a balance between "intelligence and morality" through engagement with professors and managers. The professionalism, intellectual rigor, and scientific integrity of professors predetermine the effectiveness of the work, due to cohesive harmonious activity. A graduate of such a university, when developing innovations and implementing them and creating his own business, will be guided by conscience and honor, which will contribute to the improvement of business culture and fair, free competition.

Conclusion

Al-Farabi's concept of science and its purpose can be used for the further development of the humanitarian direction Enlightenment 2.0. It provides a rational explanation for everything. Al-Farabi gives rationality a moral content and quality, revealing moral rationality, which largely explains the effectiveness of the sciences in totality and in specific enumeration.

Scientific understanding of the essence of the universe, man, and society forms an appropriate worldview. The unity and balance of morality and intelligence in understanding the main goal of science attests to the integrity and interconnectedness of all processes and phenomena, and the need to maintain balance.

Since science can be perceived as the basis of a moral-intellectual worldview, it cannot in any way be isolated from society. On the contrary, permanent dialogue between scientists and the general public seems essential. In order to bring knowledge to society, a scientist must have a conscience himself. Conscience forms the personal core of a scientist. Then the scientist can widely and actively bring true knowledge to society. The ethos of science must be formed by the entire scientific community. The ethos should constitute steady morality in a research environment and the higher education system.

Al-Farabi's philosophical legacy draws from the origins of Western philosophy. A clear influence of Aristotle is evident in his texts, especially in his views on metaphysics. On the other hand, al-Farabi's approach resonates with the most contemporary developments in making sense of science, its role for society and its purpose, be it knowledge or wisdom (Müürsepp, 2013). It may be that we need to take a deeper look into Aristotle's thinking in order to make a holistic sense of the contemporary understanding of science (Müürsepp, 2003). Studying al-Farabi's legacy may help us in this task. There are clear parallels between the caring position of al-Farabi and those of some contemporary thinkers like Nicholas Maxwell whose ideas were recently discussed in the *Balkan Journal of Philosophy* (Müürsepp & Jakubik, 2022). Given the turbulent world we are living in, these points of contact need to be studied further. Needless to say, establishing common ground between Christianity-based and Muslim civilizations is a task of the utmost importance.

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