

## AL-FARABI'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

*Abu Nasr Mohammad Al-Farabi was leading Muslim intellectual, philosopher, linguist, and educationist. He dealt with metaphysics keeping in view three basic concepts; God, the emanation and beings and the internal structure of beings. He always tried to understand the intellectual framework of the world and society. He wanted to restore unity in politics seeking guidance from Quran. According to Al-Farabi, education is a process to create ideal society by nurturing and preparing individual towards attaining perfection and freedom on a broader canvas. For him, education is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values for happier life. Al-Farabi prescribes persuasive and instructional strategies for common people while for elites, he recommends demonstration method. Sound character, intellectual competence and demonstration skill are the basic components of effective teaching. There should be sequence in learning starting with the language, then logic, seven forms of mathematics, natural sciences, human sciences, jurisprudence and academic theology. The concept of evaluation means the measurement of learning outcomes. Different instruments may be used to test knowledge and intelligence. The capacity for deductive and critical thinking understands the relationship between parts of information and to arrive at the understanding of whole.*

**Keywords:** *Al-Farabi, Philosophy of education, Instructional strategies*

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to present views and thoughts of Abu Nasr Mohammad Al-Farabi on education within the framework of his philosophical system. The researchers have been more interested in the subjects like logic, metaphysics and politics without considering the educational concepts of Al-Farabi. It is fact that Al-Farabi went through Plato's *Republic*, got its influence, which dealt mainly with education (Edward, 1980, p.140). It is not true that Al-Farabi was unaware of the dimension of Education from Plato's philosophy. He made a summary of Plato's *Laws*, which is the expression of his final thoughts and concepts on education.

Who was Al-Farabi and what were his concept and contributions to education? The following pages would provide answer to these questions:

### BIOGRAPHY

Abu Nasr Muhammad Al-Farabi was a highly educated and intelligent scholar and considered to be one the leading intellectuals of his time. He was bestowed with an enquiring mind that helped him to write on different branches of science and philosophy. He was also a well-known and outstanding linguist. He extensively read and translated the Greek commentaries on Aristotle. He added a lot in these commentaries. It was due to his work that Platonic thoughts were incorporated in Islam. He was known as the 'Second Teacher' whereas Aristotle was referred as the 'First Teacher'.

Al-Farabi, in his life, published more than 100 works of different size enriched of his experiences and observations. His philosophy is neither completely Greek nor completely Islamic but having unique religious and philosophical ideas.

Al-Farabi was born in a noble family of Farab in Turkestan, in 870 AD. His father had Persian origin was an army commander at the Turkish court. In search of knowledge and education, Al-Farabi moved to Baghdad, from where he studied grammar, logic, philosophy, music, mathematics and sciences. There he got an opportunity to learn from Abu Bishr Matta b. Yunus (d. 942 AD), who was the great translator and interpreter of Greek philosophy in Baghdad. Then he studied under Yuhanna b. Haylan, the Nestorian (d. 941 AD), in Harran. He was also affiliated to the Alexandrian school of philosophy located at Harran. He also remained in Antakya and Merv. Finally he settled in Baghdad.

In the year 943 he moved to Aleppo and joined the literary circle in the court of Sayf Al-Dawla Hamdani (d. 968 AD). Al-Farabi was allowed to wander in the countryside to think and write on his own. It was probably because of these experiences that he despaired at reforming his society and as reaction he inclined towards Sufism. His travels took him to Egypt. He was died in Damascus in 950 AD at the age of 80 (Tj. De boer, 1981, p.191).

### CONCEPT OF REALITY

Al-Farabi in his metaphysical thought tried to combine Platonic and Aristotelian thoughts and focussed on the topics like the First Being or God, the emanation and hierarchy of beings, and the internal structure of beings.

The First Being that gives existence to all other substances is the highest being. Al-Farabi describes Aristotle's concept about God as "self-thinking thought", who takes God primarily as Intellect whose primary operation is the contemplation of him. God knows both himself and all other things in the most perfect manners. As a result of God's intellectual activity He becomes by way of emanation the cause for the existence of other beings. The existences of the other things that are created by First being depend upon Him. These are not qualitatively different from God's existence. He exists in his substance. These are heavenly bodies, rational animals, non-rational animals, plants, minerals, and four elements. The emanated being is created directly by the First Being. The secondary intellect consists of nine others as well as the active intellect.

The structure of beings consists of characters taken from the First being. They have within themselves some fragmented of God. These may only be comprehended by God's knowledge of the world. Matter and form are the basic two elements of all the bodies present below heavenly bodies. Matter is the main component and gives foundation to form. It can exist in an imperfect manner without form and therefore is that whereby substance is in potency. Matter is itself the substratum for all changes and there is no opposite of it. Form means the active element of being as is marked and arranged by the heavenly bodies. It is the act of a substance but can endure only in matter. The hierarchy of forms depends upon how distant a body, which is a mixture of elements, is from the sphere of these materials. (Fakhry, 1983, pp. 107-128).

### EPISTEMOLOGY

Al-Farabi views on epistemology have the taste of Neo-platonic and Aristotelian concepts and dimensions. In his book, *Risala fi'l-'aql*, Farabi has provided the most useful key to his complex theories of Intellect. He divided 'aql (intellect or reason) into six main categories to elaborate and explain the various meanings of this Arabic word 'aql'. First, is termed as

judgment or prudence; the person who acts for the good is known by this faculty. The second category of al-Farabi's intellect is common sense. This intellect may be called 'obviousness' and 'immediate recognition' having close association with the Al-Farabi's third intellect that is Natural Perception. Its source is traced back to Aristotle's Posterior Analytics. It is about the fundamental truth that one can perceive. It is inborn quality or skill and cannot be derived from the study of logic or any other source. The fourth is named as conscious which is drawn by Farabi from Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics Book VI. It is a quality to distinguish goods from evil because of the life long experience and consideration.

The fifth intellect is from Farabi's six intellect the most important but difficult one. He renders most space to its explanation and description in his book *Risala fi'l-'aql*. According to Farabi it has four different types: potential intellect, actual intellect, acquired intellect and agent or active intellect. 'Aql bi'l-quwwa or potential intellect is the intellect. It is the capacity to abstract the forms of existing entities from which it is ultimately identified (Fakhry, 1983, p.121). It also changes into 'aql bi'l-fi'l (actual intellect). Aql mustafad (acquired intellect, the third sub-species of intellect) has relation with the actual intellect. Finally, there is the 'aql al-fa'al (agent or active intellect), which has already been elaborated above.

Divine Reason or God himself is the sixth and last of the intellects. It is the source of all intellectual energy and power. This brief presentation of Farabian intellects seems to be complex; however, given the complexity of the subject itself, as there is no other option (Fakhry, 1983, pp.107-128).

## CONCEPT OF UNIVERSE & SOCIETY

Al-Farabi had always tried to understand the humankind and this vast universe. He had a great desire to know the place of man in this universe. Through his meditation he wanted to reach a comprehensive intellectual picture of the society and the world. He very keenly studied the ancient philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. In his philosophical thoughts the components of Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy are crystal clear. He also integrated his own Islamic-Arabic civilization in it. The chief source of his philosophical thoughts was the Qur'an and the various knowledge distilled from it. He was a turning-point in the history of Islamic philosophical thought and teachings. He was considered as the founder of epistemology relying upon universal reason and the demonstrations. He lived in historical period of great turmoil so the intellectual and social circumstances prevailing of his day did not explain his approach. In those days the central Islamic caliphate was torn apart into independent states and principalities in both the east and west. The sects and schools of thought (*madhahib*) sprang up at the cost of the nation's intellectual and political unity (*oumma*). Thus al-Farabi's concern was to restore unity to Islamic thought by confirming the gnoseology based on demonstration.

He introduced logic within Islamic culture, and this is why he is known as the second teacher. He also worked hard to restore unity in politics and political science basing on the system of rules which governed nature and on the Qur'an which emphasized the relationship between gnoseology and values (axiology) (al-Jabiri, 1989, p. 241).

According to Al-Farabi's view, one of the goals of education is to create an ideal community. The citizens of the community work together in attaining happiness for all (Al-Farabi, 1959, p-97). Living in a society, theoretical and practical perfection can be obtained because it develops the individuals and prepares them to be free. If people were to live outside the society, they may turn out to be wild animals (Al-Farabi, 1964, p. 87).

## RELIGION VS PHILOSOPHY

Al-Farabi's Philosophy and Religion were two expressions of a single truth. Philosophy explains religion by providing proofs. It is neither in conflict nor in contradiction with religion. That's why he also brings together the philosophy of Plato and of Aristotle to describe the unity of intellect. In his opinion, there is a unity of thought in Plato and Aristotle concepts and the disparities are just in details.

## THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

In al-Farabi's philosophical system, education is one of the most important social phenomena. It deals with the human soul and ensures that the individual is being prepared from an early age to become a beneficial member of the society. It is to achieve his level of perfection to reach the goal for which he was sent in this world. It is fact that there is no writing specifically devoted to education in al-Farabi's books. However anyone who follows his writings with utmost interest and care will find various texts present here and there with clear educational elements. His overall philosophical views incline to combine separate concepts and thoughts into a unified world view. Indeed al-Farabi's view, the whole activity of education can be briefed up as the acquisition of values, knowledge and practical skills in a particular period and culture. The aim of education is to guide the individual towards perfection because the human being was created for this purpose. The existence of humanity in this world is to gain happiness which is the absolute good and also the highest perfection (Al-Farabi, 1983, p. 61).

According Farabi, the perfect human being (*al insan al kamil*) is he who has theoretical virtue, intellectual knowledge and practical moral values, becoming perfect in his moral behavior. Then, crowning these theoretical and moral virtues with effective power, they are anchored in the souls of individual members of the community when they assume the responsibility of political leadership. He becomes role models for rest of the people. Al-Farabi combines moral and aesthetic values like good are beautiful, and beauty is good. The beautiful is that which is valued by the scholars (Al-Farabi, 1982, p. 54). So the perfection he expects from education unites knowledge and virtuous behavior. It is also happiness and goodness at one and the same time.

Al-Farabi includes 'proficiency in the arts which is another aim assigned to education. In his view, perfection in theoretical and practical arts is one of the expressions of wisdom. The wise are those who are very proficient in the arts and acquire perfection in them (Al-Farabi, 1968a. p. 54).

In Al-Farabi's view, education is the combination of learning with practical action. The purpose of knowledge is to apply it. The highest stage lies in its being transformed into action, 'Whatever by its nature should be known and practiced, its perfection lies in it actually being practiced' (Al-Farabi, 1987, p. 73). The sciences are nothing until or unless they can be applied in practical otherwise void and useless. The practical sciences are those which are linked to readiness for action and absolute perfection is what the human being achieves through knowledge and action applied together. If the speculative sciences are learned without applying them, this wisdom is defective (Al-Farabi, 1983, p. 89).

## CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

Besides so many aims of education, one is to prepare the political leaders. Farabi says, ignorance is more dangerous in rulers than in the common people (Al-Farabi, 1982, p. 55). Al-Farabi says as the body needs food and captain is there to steer the ship, moral conduct

comes from the soul and the citizens have a real need for a leader who practice an acceptable policy. Their affairs and manners should be praiseworthy and up to the mark. The social life integrates the individual, the family and the city. 'What we say about all cities is also true of the single household and of each person' (Al-Farabi, 1982, p. 57). The people would not accept those laws nor would they respect them if rulers did not observe their own laws (Al-Farabi, 1982, p. 42). According to Al-Farabi, the political leader functions as a doctor who cares body health. The political leader treats soul and his political skill is for the well-being of citizens. The politicians should not restrict their work to the organization and management of cities. They should encourage people to help one another in dispensing good things and over rooting evils. They must use their political skills to protect the virtues and praiseworthy activities. They should encourage the citizens so that they cannot fail. One of the important characteristics of the political leaders is the consultative faculty. It is an intellectual capacity by which they can draw out what is most beneficial and most right in the search for the good among others (Al-Farabi, 1983, p. 50).

### CONCEPT OF VALUES

According to Al-Farabi the good balance of morals among the people ensure the soundness of the city life (Al-Farabi, 1968a, p. 24). This balance can only be achieved through education and it is also the most important aim of education. When moral values declines there appeared doubt in behavior and opinion of people. In the absence of these moral values in people's conduct the city life disturbs. So the morality is a basic objective and aim of education. Al-Farabi takes virtues as states of mind by which human being do good and kind deeds. They may be ethical or rational. The rational like wisdom, common sense and cleverness are present in human being. The ethical virtues are the temperance, courage, generosity and justice (Al-Farabi, 1968a, p. 30). These virtues must be in the soul of an individual so that he may practice them. He finds them attractive so that man can pursue those which are truly good and makes them their goal (Al-Farabi, 1968a, p. 34).

### METHODOLOGY OF INSTRUCTION

Al-Farabi has divided instructions into special and general. The special instructions are achieved exclusively through demonstration. The instructions are meant for the elite as they do not restrict themselves to theoretical knowledge (Al-Farabi, 1983, p. 78). The nation and citizens are divide into elite and general public. The general public are restricted to the theoretical knowledge and it is the generally accepted opinions (Al-Farabi, 1981, pp. 79,86). It is from the elite who exercise leadership role in a nation. (Al-Farabi, 1983, p. 87). This is the main reason behind different method of instruction. For common people, persuasive and descriptive methods are used to instruct them. The demonstration methods are adopted for instructing the elite class of the society (Al-Farabi, 1983, p. 88). Those people who have been examined or tested to find out if they have superior genius.

On the basis of above discussion, it can be said that Al-Farabi suggests a suitable method of instruction for elite and general class. Method may be appropriate to the level of learner keeping in view whether people belong to the common class or the elite. Farabi says that education is necessary for all in the nation. In the absence of education, nobody would be able to reach perfection and get happiness. Education should be available to all and sundry; however the method of teaching may be adapted according to the intended group. There are two basic method of instruction one for the common people, persuasion based and for the elite the method is demonstration based. Moreover, the method of instruction may also vary as per available instructional material. For example in order to teach theoretical virtues, the

demonstration method will be adopted and persuasion method will be used to teach arts and crafts.

The speech may be used for demonstration. According to Al-Farabi the aural instructions are in which teacher uses speech for subjects which may be taught in that way (Al-Farabi, 1968b, p. 86). It is also used for the teaching theoretical virtues. The speech and activity both are used for the persuasive method. The applied arts and moral values can be taught through this method (Erwin, 1971, p. 97).

Al-Farabi used the dialogue or debate method following the Plato's model. However he did not consider it the only method to go away from the world of sensory perception to reach the world of intelligentsia starting with contradictory ideas to arrive at unity. He stressed upon the importance of dialogue and discussion in instruction. He suggested two methods: the argument method and the discourse method but both of these can be used orally or in writing (Al-Farabi, 1982, p. 19). While speaking to the common people, their comprehension level should be kept in mind so that they can understand what is being said.

According to Al-Farabi the discourse of persuasion is persuading the listener with what will satisfy his mind, without reaching certainty, as opposed to the demonstrative discourse. It is tried to instruct the truth and to explain it in such a way as to bring about precise knowledge. Persuasion gets its purpose when the hearers do things that they are convinced are true. Similarly, the imaginative impression produces poetry and other arts, such as music. This leads the soul of the hearers to rise up and seek the imagined things or to flee from it (Al-Farabi, 1973, p. 151). In short, the objective of the discourse method is simply to persuade someone without reaching certainty. It would require precise proof. The debating method is used to prevail over an adversary making a particular idea triumph. It is to take an opinion to its furthest point in such a way that even the opponent believes it true. This method is used against stubborn people.

Scientific discourse is another kind of discourse used by al-Farabi. In this discourse the knowledge of something is obtained (Al-Farabi, 1970, p. 164) either through questions about the things and replies obtained finally by resolving a scientific problem.

Al-Farabi concludes all the foregoing in his book *Al-Alfaz*, saying that instruction has two aspects: the way of learning based on speech and the way of imitation based on observing other people's actions in order to imitate or apply them. Averroës agreed with him when he stated that 'there are two sorts of learning: by speech and by imitation. The latter is meant by adopting a model and applying it.

Al-Farabi says imagination has a clear educational function. It makes producing an imaginative impression. It is one way of instructing the common people in many of the concepts that are hard for them to grasp. So, the educator resorts to metaphors or appropriate illustrations. Indeed, it is natural for the common people to be restricted in their theoretical knowledge based on generally accepted opinion. The teacher uses the methods of persuasion and suggestion. The things represent through metaphors are useful in two fields: for instruction and guidance; and for confronting someone who stubbornly denies the way of truth. (Al-Farabi, 1961, p. 85).

In short, according to Al-Farabi the elements of instruction can be summarized as: firstly by making something understood by establishing its meaning in the mind and secondly by creating acceptance of what has been understood. Understanding something means the essence of the thing has been comprehended by the intellect. The things can be represented by something that resembles it. Acceptance can also be internalized in two ways:

demonstration leading to certainty, which is the philosophical approach; or persuasion, which is the religious method. (Al-Farabi, 1983, p. 90).

One of the techniques that al-Farabi was concerned with is called habituation. It is defined as a situation whereby the human being acquires a natural disposition. It means the frequent repetition of a particular action after short intervals and over a long period of time (Al-Farabi, 1987, p. 8). Ethical virtues are acquired by habituation and repetition, until they form a deep-rooted pattern in the mind. Ultimately, the issue excellently becomes moral behaviour. An admirable character can be attained by habituation. The character is admirable when its actions are marked by moderation, with neither excess nor neglect. This is also an Aristotelian view of the true nature of virtue and the way to acquire it. However al-Farabi demonstrates this theory by stating the fact that ethical morality is only attained by habit is shown by what we see in citizens. The political leaders make the citizens good by making them used to good actions. Habituation is not only a technique for teaching moral virtues, but can also be employed in teaching other things. It can be used for writing; which is acquired only when the person copies the action of a skilful scribe. (Al-Farabi, 1982, p. 63).

To sum up, the repetitive or drill method is appropriate for teaching ethics and practical arts. This habituation takes place by persuasion and affective speech. It establishes in their mind that the learners resolve to carry them out voluntarily. By way of coercion, it is used for disobedient citizens who are not inclined to do what is right of their own accord. They do not take any notice of what they are told. This method is used for any one who disobeys and continues until he grasps the theoretical sciences which are taught to him (Al-Farabi, 1983, p. 79).

## TEACHER'S CHARACTERISTICS/COMPETENCIES

According to Al-Farabi morality and learning are important conditions for the teacher. He has to bear a good character and seeks truth in all conditions (Al-Farabi, 1890, p.10). For educating the people, virtuous people shall be employed and trained in the logical arts (Al-Farabi, 1983, p. 81). The teaching profession should be adopted voluntarily without any obligation. Exception may be there but only in cases of absolute necessity. The other scientific and educational requirements a teacher should meet are: mastery over his art (his specialization) and its rules. He has the ability to demonstrate whatever is possible to demonstrate. He should have the ability to make others comprehend whatever he knows and the ability to guard against any shortcoming which might enter his art.

## CURRICULUM

It is considered that al-Farabi was the first Muslim philosopher who classified the sciences and learning. This he did for the sake of enumerating them, but also with an educational purpose. For al-Farabi, the learning must start with the language and its structure. The student may express himself like the people who speak that language. Without this ability, he will not be able to understand people nor they him. His personality will not develop properly. The foundation for all other kinds of knowledge is because of mastery of common language. Al-Farabi was well aware of the importance of language. He himself could speak several languages that enabled him to compare cultures and languages.

Next to languages comes logic, which is the the instrument of the sciences and their methodology. It gives sound reflection to science. It is also closely related to language. The Arabic word for 'logic' is *mantiq* which includes the verbal expression in intellectual process. This is why, in Farabi's opinion, language comes before rules to enrich the mind. (Ja'afar al-Yasin, 1980, p.80).

After language and logic comes mathematics. The Muslim philosophers call it the teachings (*ta'alim*). Al-Farabi describes that in the hierarchy of the theoretical sciences, arithmetic comes first. Whenever one desires to learn the theoretical art it begins with numbers, then comes magnitudes (measures) and after that come the other things in which numbers and magnitudes belong that is perspectives (optics). Mathematics and arithmetic is one of the basic tools to study the optics, astronomy and the natural sciences. Al-Farabi divides mathematics into seven parts: numbers (arithmetic), geometry, the science of perspectives, scientific astronomy (contrasted with astrology), music, dynamics and the science of machines (Al-Farabi, 1968c, p.53). Mathematics also includes algebra. According to Al-Farabi there should be no confusion in numbers and magnitude while starting mathematics instruction because there reins perfect order. There is precision and clarity to train the student's intellect in the path of mathematics. The student must progress to differentiate stages and levels of mathematics. It ranges from the immaterial and the immeasurable, then to what needs some matter, and so on. Next to arithmetic comes Geometry and it mostly depends on demonstrations giving us certain knowledge and banishing all uncertainty (Al-Farabi, 1968c, p.96). Geometry by methods has been divided into analysis and structure. Then there is perspectives, astronomy, music, dynamics and last of all mechanics (Al-Farabi, 1968c, p.97), then the natural sciences whose subject is matter (animal, vegetable, mineral, etc.).

Following sciences comes theology or metaphysics, then the human sciences (political science in particular), then jurisprudence (*fiqh*), law (*qanun*) and academic theology (*kalam*). In short, al-Farabi's curriculum is a group of sciences, graded as follows: science of language, logic, the 'teachings' (mathematics), natural science, theology, civics (political science), jurisprudence and academic theology. In his opinion, there is link between the natural sciences and theology. The human soul which he considers among the natural sciences has metaphysical aspect also. One can then move on to the study of the 'First Principle' of all existing beings; then return to human science, beginning with those governing society among other things, and the law which governs trade, and ending with the science which defends the beliefs on which society is founded. It is worth mentioning that Al-Farabi did not place medicine among the sciences. However he devoted an entire discipline and mention it many other of his works. Sometimes he calls it a science and sometimes an art. He did not mention in *Kitab al-ihsa'* (The Book of Lists) any physical exercise. However he does mention it in *Talkhis nawamis Aflatun* (Abridgement of the Laws). He says that it is beneficial to the body as well as the mind 'When the body is sound, so is the mind' (Al-Farabi, 1982, p.76). Al-Farabi designed a mathematical curriculum in education like that of Plato. As a reminder of the famous words written over the door of the Academy ('Let none enter who is not a geometer'), Al-Farabi said that 'the demonstrations used in geometry are the soundest of all demonstrations' (Al-Farabi, 1890, p.52).

Al-Farabi mentioned another theory that was taken by the followers of Theophrastus. According to this theory education begins with reforming the morals, 'for he who cannot reform his own morals cannot learn any science correctly' (Al-Farabi, 1890, p. 52). There is a third theory that of Boethius of Sidon, it begins with natural science. Its subject matter is closer to us and better known which can be grasped by the senses. Even though his pupil al-Saydawi disagreed with him and chose to begin with logic. Since it is a standard from where we can always distinguish between truth and falsehood. Al-Farabi comments that it is possible to combine these theories. In fact, the students should reform their own ethical values, before beginning the study of philosophy, so as to desire nothing but virtue. He must then strengthen the rational mind by training in scientific demonstration, which is geometry giving access to logic (Al-Farabi, 1890, p. 53).

## EVALUATION

Evaluating the outcomes of teaching was an important aspect of teaching and Al-Farabi was well aware of it. He emphasized that a learner's level in the field of study should be examined. After completing the course of a particular discipline, the learner should be tested to know the level of his learning. In this regard the question may be asked either an educational or an experimental type. In the first case, it is directed at the pupil who is supposed to know something so as to demonstrate that knowledge. A person can also test himself to know if he has made a quantitative or methodological mistake. For this purpose, instruments are made available to help us check the compass, the ruler, the scales, the abacus, astronomic summary tables, etc. (Al-Farabi, 1968c, p.58). Al-Farabi classified among the rules which are few in number but applicable to many things. If these are learnt and remembered we can also learn many matters incorporated in them (Al-Farabi, 1968c, p. 58). In the same way that knowledge is tested, so is intelligence: the ability to discriminate; the capacity for deductive and critical reasoning. Understanding the relationship between isolated pieces of information and grasping the links between them is Mathematical ability which is one of the important way of recognizing intelligence (Al-Farabi, 1987, pp. 4,6,53-54).

## CONCLUSION

Al-Farabi's metaphysical thoughts are based on Plato's and Aristotle views. He has integrated the three basic issues, God, the emanation and hierarchy of beings and the internal structure of beings. He tried to incorporate Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy into his own Islamic-Arabic Civilization, keeping in view teaching of Qur'an and the various derived sciences from Qur'an. According to Farabi, the concept of perfect human being is the one who has great intellectual knowledge and sound moral behaviour. This should be one of the main goals of education. The second major aim of education is to produce political leaders. These political leaders can exploit their skills for the welfare of the society. Al-Farabi considers a person intelligent if has wisdom, common sense, cleverness temperance, courage, generosity and justice. Al-Farabi clearly differentiates between masses and elites while he comments on methods of teaching. He suggests persuasive and descriptive for common people while for elites demonstration method.

It may be concluded that Al-Farabi's thoughts on education contains ethical morality along with acquisition of knowledge in the fields of language, mathematics, natural sciences, human sciences, jurisprudence, law and academic theology.

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