



GENIUSES OF THE EASTERN RENAISSANCE

Fozilov Golibjon

Faculty of Social Sciences of the National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek

94-944 44 40 golibjonf1@gmail.com

Early Islamic philosophy and Islamic metaphysics, imbued as it is with Islamic theology, distinguishes between essence and existence more clearly than Aristotelianism. Whereas existence is the domain of the contingent and the accidental, essence endures within a being beyond the accidental. The philosophy to al-Farabi, Avicenna, al-Beruni. The search for a definitive Islamic philosophy separate from Occasionalism can be seen in what is left of his work.

Abu Nasr al-Farabi (870 – 950 CE) is known as the *Second Teacher* in Islamic philosophy, as he brought Aristotelian logic into Islamic thought and made it central, which connected Boethius (d. 525 CE) to Abelard (d. 1141) in France, passing Greek logic from Roman to medieval European hands along with others. While al-Kindi (d. 866 CE) and al-Razi (d. 925) brought Greek philosophy into Islamic thought, it is al-Farabi, and following him Avicenna and Averroes, who focused on Aristotelian Peripatetic logic and what it can and can't say.

Farabi was born in Farab, conveniently, what is today Kazakstan, northern lands of what was Persia, and his family was Turkish, from the lands Greeks and Persians fought over in Aristotle's time. After working as a gardener in Damascus, Syria, he moved to Baghdad and devoted himself to studying Arabic, which he didn't know, as he spoke Turkish, as well as all the logic and philosophy he could in Syriac and Arabic with the famous logician Abu Bishr Matta (d. 911) and Ibn Haylan. Farabi was a great musician who wrote primary studies on music theory, and it is said that he once played for al-Dawlah, ruler of Aleppo, so well that he moved everyone to tears, then made them all laugh until they fell asleep, while Farabi quietly left. He wrote many books on cosmology, politics and logic, traveled, taught, and died in Damascus in 950 CE, almost 650 years before Descartes, the first major modern European philosopher, was born in France in 1594.

Farabi says logic is a tool that produces certainty when used properly in all arts, and in all the practical and theoretical sciences. "Farabi argues, using and extending an example found in the Nyaya Sutra, that if we know that a cloud always has a rippling wind, and this wind causes the sound of thunder when clouds bump into each other, we can say, syllogistically, that the cloud causes the sound, and we can also, he adds, define thunder thus, as the sound made by rippling wind in clouds colliding, which is how it is caused, created and so speciated." [1] A definition has two parts, *genus* and *differendum* for Aristotle, the larger group that the thing shares with other things, and what can be said of it that it is different from the other things of the same set. As such, thunder is a type of sound, and, to differentiate it from other sounds, it is specifically the sound made by rippling wind in clouds colliding.



Al-Farabi argued that thought, identified Platonically with sight and the imagination, is in the heart, which can imitate what we sense to understand and represent, and create to reason and speculate. "Farabi uses the example of imagining evil as symbolized by darkness, which is seeing darkness and feeling evil in the imagination. Farabi calls genius *overflow* of imagination." [2] Farabi argues that poetry is good for improving the imagination, which is useful in all thinking and studied subjects, but poetry can nobly direct the rational faculty to higher forms and moderate our emotions, or it can stimulate the baser emotions and pleasures, which leads to weakness of constitution and character.

Following al-Farabi's lead, Avicenna initiated a full-fledged inquiry into the question of being, in which he distinguished between essence (*Mahiat*) and existence (*Wujud*). He argued that the fact of existence cannot be inferred from or accounted for by the essence of existing things, and that form and matter by themselves cannot interact and originate the movement of the universe or the progressive actualization of existing things. Existence must, therefore, be due to an agent-cause that necessitates, imparts, gives, or adds existence to an essence. To do so, the cause must be an existing thing and coexist with its effect.

Ibn Sina (980–1037), commonly known in the West as Avicenna was a Persian polymath who is regarded as one of the most significant physicians, astronomers, philosophers, and writers of the Islamic Golden Age, and the father of early modern medicine. Sajjad H. Rizvi has called Avicenna "arguably the most influential philosopher of the pre-modern era". He was a Muslim Peripatetic philosopher influenced by Greek Aristotelian philosophy. Of the 450 works he is believed to have written, around 240 have survived, including 150 on philosophy and 40 on medicine.

Avicenna's consideration of the essence-attributes question may be elucidated in terms of his ontological analysis of the modalities of being; namely impossibility, contingency and necessity. "Avicenna argued that the impossible being is that which cannot exist, while the contingent in itself (*mumkin bi-dhatihi*) has the potentiality to be or not to be without entailing a contradiction." [3] When actualized, the contingent becomes a 'necessary existent due to what is other than itself' (*wajib al-wujud bi-ghayrihi*). Thus, contingency-in-itself is potential beingness that could eventually be actualized by an external cause other than itself. The metaphysical structures of necessity and contingency are different. Necessary being due to itself (*wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi*) is true in itself, while the contingent being is 'false in itself' and 'true due to something else other than itself'. The necessary is the source of its own being without borrowed existence. It is what always exists.

The Necessary exists 'due-to-Its-Self', and has no quiddity/essence (*mahiyya*) other than existence (*wujud*). Furthermore, It is 'One' (*wahid ahad*) since there cannot be more than one 'Necessary-Existent-due-to-Itself' without differentia (*fasl*) to distinguish them from each other. [4] Yet, to require differentia entails that they exist 'due-to-themselves' as well as 'due to what is other than themselves'; and this is contradictory. However, if no differentia distinguishes them from each other, then there is no sense in which these 'Existents' are not one and the same. Avicenna adds that the 'Necessary-Existent-due-to-Itself' has no genus (*jins*), nor a definition (*hadd*), nor a counterpart (*nadd*), nor an opposite



(*did*), and is detached (*bari*) from matter (*madda*), quality (*kayf*), quantity (*kam*), place (*ayn*), situation (*wad*) and time (*waqt*).

Avicenna's theology on metaphysical issues (*ilāhiyyāt*) has been criticized by some Islamic scholars, among them al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim. While discussing the views of the theists among the Greek philosophers, namely Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in *Al-Munqidh min ad-Dalal* ("Deliverance from Error"), al-Ghazali noted that the Greek philosophers "must be taxed with unbelief, as must their partisans among the Muslim philosophers, such as Avicenna and al-Farabi and their likes.[5] "He added that "None, however, of the Muslim philosophers engaged so much in transmitting Aristotle's lore as did the two men just mentioned. The sum of what we regard as the authentic philosophy of Aristotle, as transmitted by al-Farabi and Avicenna, can be reduced to three parts: a part which must be branded as unbelief; a part which must be stigmatized as innovation; and a part which need not be repudiated at all."

Abu Rayhan al-Biruni was an Iranian scholar and polymath during the Islamic Golden Age. He has been variously called as the "founder of Indology", "Father of Comparative Religion", "Father of modern geodesy", and the first anthropologist.

Al-Biruni was well versed in physics, mathematics, astronomy, and natural sciences, and also distinguished himself as a historian, chronologist and linguist. He studied almost all fields of science and was compensated for his research and strenuous work. Royalty and powerful members of society sought out Al-Biruni to conduct research and study to uncover certain findings. In addition to this type of influence, Al-Biruni was also influenced by other nations, such as the Greeks, who he took inspiration from when he turned to studies of philosophy. He was conversant in Khwarezmian, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, and also knew Greek, Hebrew and Syriac. He spent much of his life in Ghazni, then capital of the Ghaznavid dynasty, in modern-day central-eastern Afghanistan. In 1017 he travelled to the Indian subcontinent and authored a study of Indian culture *Tarikh al-Hind* (History of India) after exploring the Hindu faith practiced in India. He was an impartial writer on customs and creeds of various nations, and was given the title al-Ustadh ("The Master") for his remarkable description of early 11th-century India. In Iran, Abu Rayhan Biruni's birthday is celebrated as the day of the surveying engineer.

Al-Biruni spent the first twenty-five years of his life in Khwarezm where he studied Islamic jurisprudence, theology, grammar, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy and also dabbled in the field of physics and most other sciences as well. The Iranian Khwarezmian language, which was the language of Biruni, survived for several centuries after Islam until the Turkification of the region, and so must some at least of the culture and lore of ancient Khwarezm, for it is hard to see the commanding figure of Biruni, a repository of so much knowledge, appearing in a cultural vacuum.[6] He was sympathetic to the Afrighids, who were overthrown by the rival dynasty of Ma'munids in 995. He left his homeland for Bukhara, then under the Samanid ruler Mansur II the son of Nuh. There he corresponded with Avicenna and there are extant exchanges of views between these two scholars.



In 998, he went to the court of the Ziyarid amir of Tabaristan, Shams al-Mo'ali Abolhasan Ghaboos ibn Wushmgir. There he wrote his first important work, *al-Athar al-Baqqiya 'an al-Qorun al-Khaliyya* (literally: "The remaining traces of past centuries" and translated as "Chronology of ancient nations" or "Vestiges of the Past") on historical and scientific chronology, probably around 1000 A.D., though he later made some amendments to the book. He also visited the court of the Bavandid ruler Al-Marzuban. Accepting the definite demise of the Afrighids at the hands of the Ma'munids, he made peace with the latter who then ruled Khwarezm. Their court at Gorganj (also in Khwarezm) was gaining fame for its gathering of brilliant scientists.

In 1017, Mahmud of Ghazni took Rey. Most scholars, including al-Biruni, were taken to Ghazni, the capital of the Ghaznavid dynasty. Biruni was made court astrologer and accompanied Mahmud on his invasions into India, living there for a few years. He was forty-four years old when he went on the journeys with Mahmud of Ghazni. Biruni became acquainted with all things related to India. During this time he wrote his study of India, finishing it around 1030. Along with his writing, Al-Biruni also made sure to extend his study to science while on the expeditions. He sought to find a method to measure the height of the sun, and created a makeshift quadrant for that purpose.[7] Al-Biruni was able to make much progress in his study over the frequent travels that he went on throughout the lands of India.

Belonging to the Sunni Ash'ari school, al-Biruni nevertheless also associated with Maturidi theologians. He was however, very critical of the Mu'tazila, particularly criticising al-Jahiz and Zurqan. He also repudiated Avicenna for his views on the eternity of the universe.

The dispassionate account of Hinduism given by Al-Biruni was remarkable for its time. He stated that he was fully objective in his writings, remaining unbiased like a proper historian should. Biruni documented everything about India just as it happened. But, he did note how some of the accounts of information that he was given by natives of the land may not have been reliable in terms of complete accuracy, however, he did try to be as honest as possible in his writing. Dr. Edward C. Sachau compares it to "a magic island of quiet, impartial research in the midst of a world of clashing swords, burning towns, and plundered temples." Biruni's writing was very poetic, which may diminish some of the historical value of the work for modern times. The lack of description of battle and politics makes those parts of the picture completely lost. However, Many have used Al-Biruni's work to check facts of history in other works that may have been ambiguous or had their validity questioned.

Most of the works of Al-Biruni are in Arabic although he seemingly wrote the *Kitab al-Tafhim* in both Persian and Arabic, showing his mastery over both languages. Bīrūnī's catalogue of his own literary production up to his 65th lunar/63rd solar year (the end of 427/1036) lists 103 titles divided into 12 categories: astronomy, mathematical geography, mathematics, astrological aspects and transits, astronomical instruments, chronology, comets, an untitled category, astrology, anecdotes, religion, and books he no longer possesses.



REFERENCES:

1. Rescher's Al-Fārābī: An Annotated Bibliography (Pitt. Univ. Press, 1962) at Persée.fr. *al-Fārābī—brief introduction by Peter J. King
2. Netton, Ian Richard (2008). "Breaking with Athens: Al-Farabi as Founder, Applications of Political Theory By Christopher A. Colmo". Journal of Islamic Studies. Oxford University Press. 19 (3): 397–8.
3. Essa, Ahmed; Ali, Othman (2010). Studies in Islamic Civilization: The Muslim Contribution to the Renaissance. International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). p. 70. ISBN 978-1-56564-350-5.
4. Indian Studies on Ibn Sina's Works by Hakim Syed Zillur Rahman, Avicenna (Scientific and Practical International Journal of Ibn Sino International Foundation, Tashkent/Uzbekistan. 1–2; 2003: 40–42
5. Avicenna: Notes on Rescher's Studies on Arabic Modal Logic", *Journal of Islamic Studies*, II (2): 209–228,
6. al-Biruni; Sachau, Eduard (1910). Sachau, Eduard (ed.). Alberuni's India: An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Customs, Laws and Astrology of India about A.D. 1030
7. Khan, M.S. (1976). "Al-Biruni and the Political History of India". *Oriens*. 25/26: 86–115. doi:10.1163/18778372-02502601007. ISSN 0078-6527