

## CATEGORIES OF HARMONY IN THE CONCEPTIONS OF CLASSICAL SCHOLARS

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### ABSTRACT

*This article analyzes the issues of the category of harmony and its nature, the improvement of the process of ethical and aesthetic education of the individual, the influence on this process of ideas and views of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. The ideas of classical scholars are consonant with the achievements of modern moral philosophy and the philosophy of music. In the process of forming the faith system of the person, musical art plays a significant role, as it is the emotional basis of personal principles and norms. Requests for the spiritual life of society require a constant appeal to the national philosophical heritage, in this case, Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. These scientists vividly demonstrated the moral and pedagogical potential of music in the life of society and each individual. Music in their view is one of the effective means of "correcting the morals" of citizens.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Harmony, Ethical, Aesthetic, Music, Education, Enjoyment, Natural*

### INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes the issues of the category of harmony and its nature, the improvement of the process of ethical and aesthetic education of the individual, the influence of the ideas and views of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina on this process. Ideas thinkers of the classics are consonant with the achievements of modern moral philosophy and the philosophy of music. In the process of formation of the belief system of the person, musical art plays a significant role, as it is the emotional basis of personal principles and norms. Requests for the spiritual life of society require a constant appeal to the domestic philosophical heritage, in this case, Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. These scientists clearly demonstrated the moral and pedagogical potential of music in the life of society and each individual. Music in their view is one of the effective means of "correcting the morals" of citizens.

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The works of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina are not only rigorous scientific tractate, but also are written in the style of 'adab', that is, there is always: a) appealing to the reader, b) elements of moral teaching and c) instruction on what a human should be. Therefore, the studies of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina always contain an educational aspect or a "shift"<sup>1</sup> to the moral plane.

The philosophical concepts of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina are "ethical". They were seeing the destination of art in helping to improve a personality. According to the Oriental peripatetics, "natural" harmonious music can improve people's moral behavior. Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina wrote about the therapeutic potential of music in the treatment of primarily mental ailments, the main of which is an angry temper. Al-Farabi unambiguously diagnosed: "Bad temper is a soul ailment"<sup>2</sup>, and one should use musical means in the process of deliverance from that.

Al-Farabi wrote: "Actions that impede [achieving] happiness are bad or ugly actions"<sup>3</sup>. Here, the word "ugly" is synonymous with the aesthetic category of "abominable". The ethical evaluation of a person's action is supported by his aesthetic image. Ibn Sina in the "Canon of Medicine" gives a "medical" description of the ugly human body: "If the structure of a person is disproportionate, then he is bad even in mind, in sense... If a person has a round head and forehead, and a very long face, a neck is thick, stupidity is seen in his eyes – he is one from the people far from kindness"<sup>4</sup>. Ibn Sina describes the human physiology and gives an ethical diagnosis. Ethical and aesthetic categories flow into each other. The plasticity of ethical and aesthetic categories can be explained by the triune (logical, ethical and aesthetic) nature of harmony, the presence of its three incarnations: truth, goodness, and beauty. The category of enjoyment, for example, Al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina used when the context suggests that this is aesthetic pleasure delivered by music. Then reasoning flows into the ethical plane when it comes to assigning pleasure to a person's life or to the field of psychology when it comes to the mechanism of sensations.

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<sup>1</sup> Sokolov V. V. *Medieval Philosophy*. – Moscow: Higher School, 1979. - p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Farabi. *Socio-Ethical Tractates*. – Alma-Ata: Science, 1973. - p. 21

<sup>3</sup> Al-Farabi. *Philosophical Tractates*. – Alma-Ata: Science, 1970. - p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Sina. *Canon of Medical Science*. Book 1. – Tashkent, 1954. - p. 231.

“Natural” is a category that is not used in modern ethics, but this category was actively used by the Oriental peripatetics. Later, the French enlighteners of the XVIII century also adopted the category of "naturalness" when they prove the natural rights of a human to equality and social justice, etc. Al-Farabi divided not only melodies into natural and unnatural ones. He wrote: “The fullness of sensation promotes pleasure, and imperfection causes suffering. Naturalness is the best state of being.”<sup>1</sup> The natural state is a state of harmony and happiness in which all the inhabitants of a righteous town should be. According to the ancient Greek doctrine of eudemonism (from the Greek word *eudemonia* – happiness), happiness is a necessary condition for the life of an individual, while Al-Farabi is constantly talking about overall happiness. Subsequently, I. Kant expressed clearly: "God wants not only that we be happy, but also that we make ourselves happy, that's what constitutes the morality"<sup>2</sup>.

A person is required and encouraged first to follow a common interest, duty, and then personal one. Collectivism is not just a moral norm, but a way of life, unlike the European tradition of philosophizing which cultivated individualism. Real practice, the history has shown that it is impossible to create ideal living conditions for any particular group of people when the majority lives in misery; such an imbalance leads to the collapse of the state. Hypertrophied individualism, in other words, egoism has its limitations – it is impossible to violate the interests of another person or community.

Similarly, many shades of meaning can be distinguished in the use by Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina of such categories as perfection, harmony, beauty, etc.; they all carried an ethical meaning. For example, “Strong sense of beauty is one of the characteristic features developed by the Muslim culture. In the literary monuments of that era, “mahabbat al-jamal” (love to beauty) is considered as an essential element of education... the refined and sophisticated secular life demanded a corresponding “theoretical” substantiation of this sophistication – both in purely everyday life and in terms of philosophical and artistic reflection”<sup>3</sup>, this is an integral, worldview outlook of harmony. Ibn Sina wrote: “Everything that exists in the world by its nature strives for perfection. It is this aspiration to perfection that is the goodness that is invested in its essence”<sup>4</sup>. In relation to human, it is more correct to use the concept of “improvement” in comparison with the concept of “perfection”. According to Ibn Sina, the pursuit of perfection is an essential property of the world and human. Being engaged in self-improvement, a person rises above the lower, animal state, finding spirituality, he acquires a "higher nature", the true essence.

The central idea of the ethical views of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina was their idea of freedom of will – *ihtiyar*. Al-Farabi in his socio-ethical tractates describes three kinds of will: the first is desire – sensation, then imaginary desire, and on their basis “the third kind of will is formed in a person, namely, a desire originating from mental ability. This latter is called free choice, it is inherent only to the human, but in no way to other animals. And thanks to it, a human can make commendable and censurable, good and bad [actions] and receive reward and

<sup>1</sup> Al Farabi. Socio-Ethical Tractates. – Alma-Ata: Science, 1973. - 87.

<sup>2</sup> I.Kant. Lectures in Ethics (1780-1782). / Ethical Thought: Scientific and Journalistic Readings. – Moscow, 1990. p 321.

<sup>3</sup> Serebryakov S. B. Ibn Sina's (Avicenna) Tractate about Love. – Tbilisi: Metsnierereba, 1976. - p.19-20.

<sup>4</sup> Citations of S. R. Rakhimov. Psychological-Pedagogical Views of Abu Ali Ibn Sina. Tashkent, 1979. P. 109.

punishment for it"<sup>1</sup>. It turned out that the free will of man, and not the dictates of the Scripture, is the main factor of morality. Moreover, the Quran contains the principle of moral responsibility of a human in the creation of evil, because moral evil is created by human, by people: "What good happens to you, it is from God; and that evil happens with you, it is from you"<sup>2</sup>.

Al-Farabi teaches to distinguish between "love of freedom" and "free-thinking" as two stages of the ikhtyar of man. He wrote: "Striving for what is comprehended is, in general, a manifestation of free will. If it comes from sensation or imagination, then it has a name common with the manifestation of free will; but, if it comes from thinking or reasoning, it is called with the general [term] of free choice inherent exactly to a human."<sup>3</sup> If "freedom of will" has a sensual nature, then "free choice" is a conscious moral decision of a person.

Similar thoughts are present in the heritage of Ibn Sina<sup>4</sup>, who logically argued that if we do not recognize the free will of a human who commits all sorts of actions, including unkind things, then the will of God, rather than the will of a human, becomes the source of evil on Earth. The doctrine of free will raised the problem of personal responsibility before their own destiny, the society and God for the actions performed.

The idea of freedom of will, freedom of choice was later transformed into the doctrine of the autonomy of person, which originated in the bosom of German classical philosophy. Personality autonomy is the norms that a person recognizes as a person; this is the right to choose to act as he wants, and not how he should. It is from this difference *how should* a person act and how he *is entitled*, where the evil derives from. And it is precisely that morality consists of: to choose between the proper and the desirable (one's own will).

Such free-thinking, recognition of freedom of choice for a human could not avoid objections. The talented thinker Al Ghazali proceeded to a scrupulous examination of such views. According to his narration, there are two ways of learning God: mystical apprehension and contemplative cognition. The first way of learning God is an irrational merging with God, which is the goal of the theory and practice of the Sufis. Al Ghazali implemented contraposition of the views of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, the Oriental peripatetics with the irrationality of Sufism, which brought many achievements to the treasury of world culture (the main of them, in our opinion, is the idea and practice of spiritual and moral perfection that Sufis professed). Thus, Al Ghazali made obvious the differences in their philosophies and helped to understand what kind of personalities were Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. They were rationalists of mentality and used scientific methods of perception, "philosophers who claimed to be protagonists of logic and evidence" (Al Ghazali).

This opinion refutes one of the stereotypes circulating in the public consciousness of the world community, which consists in the fact that the Oriental philosophical culture [mentality] is associated with spirituality, and Western philosophy with rationality. Moreover, "spirituality" is interpreted in this case as something mystical, irrational, but attractive. Sometimes there is a touch of romantic idealization in the irrational sense of the philosophical heritage of the Orient. An example of how reverently the German thinkers Schopenhauer, Schilling, Goethe, Nietzsche regarded the Orient philosophy. On the other hand, the rejection of the rationality of the Oriental philosophy is a convenient implicit

<sup>1</sup> Al Farabi. Socio-Ethical Tractates. – Alma-Ata: Science, 1973. - 400 p.

<sup>2</sup> Quran. Translated by Sablukova - p. 129-130.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Farabi. Philosophical Tractates. – Alma-Ata: Science, 1972. - p. 288.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Sina. Selected philosophical works. – Moscow: Science, 1980. - p. 382.

explanation of the current socio-economic problems of the Eastern world. Meanwhile, thinkers of the Muslim world from the Middle Ages made a considerable contribution to the development of the theory of mind (noology) and developed a rationalistic methodology of cognition, in particular, the theory of rational study of the phenomenon of music. In the Orient, a different type of philosophical culture, a different type of philosophical discourse has developed. The Oriental peripatetics, in our opinion, successfully combined in themselves both the skills of European theoretical analysis and the proper Muslim-philosophical ideological principles.

In the twentieth century, new attempts to oppose the theory of personal moral responsibility have emerged. These are the so-called objectivist ethical teachings. They argue that morality is outside an individual human (given by God, laid in nature, developed by the collective mind, the options are various), and an individual agrees or refuses to comply with it. Indeed, morality is an aggregation of social norms that regulate the relations of people. But they are respected when they are personified, become personal. Moral by its content is a set of general laws, its form of expression is always individual. Moralists talk about this when they say that a human himself is the author of his actions, he is free, he has the freedom of choice.

Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina were bearers of not only progressive knowledge, but of advanced one: the doctrine of the free will of a person, of ways of building an ideal state, of "practical philosophy" as a corrector of morals, so they did not consider this task an exclusive prerogative of the faith. Ethics in their understanding is a "practical" philosophy, which in practice helps to make the right moral choice, and not just a set of contemplative arguments far from real life.

Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina believed that music is a property of the space, it can be measured. Everything in this sublunary world is measurable. Quantity, a number is a measure of the substrate of a substance, it determines the quality of a phenomenon. Number, measure, a form is what distinguishes one object from another, one melody from another. This line of reasoning is called Pythagorean. It was popular among the Oriental peripatetics.

A number is an abstraction, it does not depend on the situation of usage. With the help of 10 numeric characters, any harmony can be described: "beauty exists only where numerical harmony was realized, the art itself is also nothing but the number and structure" (Losev A.F.). A number is the limit of existence of the limitless, the dialectical unity of the ultimate and the infinite. The commensurability of numbers is otherwise named as harmony. The infinite is something unthought, reasonless; the ultimate is shaped, understandable, reasonable, i.e. harmonious. Harmony is the balance of components. These views prepared the ground for the understanding of what is called a measure, a sense of measure. In ethics, this is one of the fundamental principles: "the middle of extremes" (Aristotle), which is a virtue. No one offers to ignore their own desires, but they should be commensurate with the desires of others (rational egoism); the ability to sacrifice oneself (altruism) to the detriment of their own interests, gives rise to parasitism of others; the constant desire to receive pleasure (hedonism) produces pessimism, because life is not only pleasure; acting solely on the basis of considerations of benefit does not always mean acting prudently, etc. Morals, morality is proportionality in everything.

The Pythagoreans considered a decade (number of ten) as identification of the perfection of existence. Indeed, it consists of emptiness (zero), of nothing and a unique unit, of something; together they are enough to describe the world. It is on this dialectic of zero and unit that not only musical theory is built, but also modern information technologies, a programming language. These numbers are enough to understand the essence of things.

There is a stereotype that it was Pythagoras and his school who first drawn the attention to the fact that a number is a sole form of all things. However, the Uzbek researcher V. Iskhakov notes that the number, in particular, the triad played a huge role in the Aryans anthropocosmism, and notes that the triad was a fundamental number in the eastern branch of the Aryans – not to mention the Hindu Trimurti (the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) and related representations – the triplicity of the primeval beings of Orphics. Triad is not only a number, but it is also the essence of being: the number three is the beginning, the middle and the end of everyone and everything. In addition to the triad, the eastern peripatetics distinguished the number four: four tastes, types of fluid in the human body, ‘mijaz’ (temperaments), which, for example, Ibn Sina described in his "Canon of Medicine". Al Kindi in his "Risala" gave meaning to each of the four strings of oud, associating them with four heavens (arba al-falak), constellations (buruj), four elements (irkan al-anasir), seasons, months, days (al-yum), bodies (badan), human ages, soul forces (Kavva an-nafs), etc.

The prototype of the concept of goodness is, apparently, the concept of useful, expedient. Ibn Sina’s statements: “Everything where there is an exchange, in reality there is an interest as well”<sup>1</sup>. He differed the two kinds of goodness. The first kind of goodness is: good as an exchange, interest, benefit, and the second kind of goodness is goodness "by disinterested will", "absolute charity" or "that good that is done simply as good, not by coercion, not by necessity or for goal, there is a perfect good"<sup>2</sup>. For Ibn Sina, the concepts of useful, expedient are truly the prototype of the concept of good, advantage. What is useful is not in a roughly utilitarian sense, but in the sense that a useful thing is a property of a harmonious perfect object – as stated in the modern philosophy: “Genetically beautiful and valuable came from one source – the useful”<sup>3</sup>.

Although, as the poet I. Brodsky said, “aesthetics is the mother of ethics,” but there is no direct connection between the artistic and aesthetic taste of a person and his moral principles. (High-ranking officials in Nazi Germany, as a rule, had a fine aesthetic taste, connoisseurs of painting and classical music, and at the same time organized mass tortures and murders). Education, intelligence, talent is not always a guarantee of morality. The main thing that characterizes a person as a human is not only how he treats nature, beauty, power, but how he treats another person.

Does talent, in this case artistic, serve exclusively to the goodness or can an artist be an evildoer and a conductor of evil? Are genius and villainy incompatible? Or compatible? Life does not give definitive – yes or no – answers. A.S. Pushkin wrote a whole poem, trying to give his own vision of the problem. In the world of musicians a legend exists that Mozart, a brilliant composer and an outstanding musician, was poisoned by his colleague in art Salieri. Mozart died suddenly when he was 37 years old. He composed music so easily and gracefully that his contemporaries recognized it as masterpieces while the composer was alive, and such successes could not but envy. The philosophy of morality says: “the supreme art is a perfect life” (Socrates); a goal and the means of achieving a goal must be consistent with each other. The Art ennobles human, how the Oriental peripatetics believed, therefore those who love and are engaged in the arts cannot be whatever else but good.

Goodness, the main category of ethics of Aristotle, is a developed moral quality of a person. It is formed, and not given as a gift, and it forces a human to do so and not otherwise. "Goodness", “virtue” is doing good. It’s opposite – the

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sina. Danish-name - Stalinabad: Taj. State Publishing House, 1957. - p.194.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Ali Ibn Sina. Selected Works. Vol.1. Dushanbe, 1980. - P.158.

<sup>3</sup> Shukina T. Aesthetic Evaluation in Professional Judgments about Art // Soviet Art Studies, 1976, release 1. - p.309.

word "evil-doing" is doing evil. It seems that Aristotle, as an educator of Alexander the Great, set himself the goal of cultivating a highly moral personality. Alexander really became a great, but (!) a great conqueror.

Thus, the importance of ideas of classic thinkers is great for improving the process of ethical and aesthetic education. They are consonant with the achievements of the modern philosophy of morality and the philosophy of music and serve to further improvement of the theory and practice of the spiritual-moral and aesthetic education of the rising generation.

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