

IBN ARABI'S UNDERSTANDING OF FREE WILL: SPIRITUAL FREEDOM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract: The article analyzes the concept of free will and its philosophical, religious, and ethical aspects. The views of various thinkers on human free will, its determination in achieving goals, and its role in social life are presented. In particular, the distinct interpretation of free will in the philosophies of Forobiy and Ibn Arabi, as well as its role in spiritual growth and social development, is discussed. The understanding of free will based on Ibn Arabi's theory of "wahdat al-wujud" (unity of existence) and its connection with the "Divine will" is emphasized. Sufis view free will as the inviolable freedom of humans, explaining that it is through uniting with the Divine that one achieves their purpose. Additionally, the article also addresses the ideas of tolerance and inclusivity, with particular attention paid to the scientific analysis of interfaith differences.

Keywords: sufism, religion, spirituality, freedom, society, philosophy, ideology, divine will, tolerance, generosity, enthusiasm, inspiration.

INTRODUCTION

In philosophical literature, the concept of will refers to desires, wishes, intentions, and goals. That is, it is the conscious direction of one's actions towards a specific goal, the determination to stay on that path, and the spiritual and moral ability to overcome existing obstacles. Will is an essential characteristic of human activity and a crucial factor that defines the meaning of life. A person with strong will shows consistency in their goals and actions. The

confidence in achieving a set goal is a powerful force of will and the main criterion. Indeed, firm belief creates a spiritual foundation to overcome difficulties along the way to the goal. Will is often interpreted as both related to Allah and the individual. In this sense, the concepts of Allah's will and the will of a servant arise. The will of Allah is considered much broader and superior to human will. The will of Allah is regarded as the force that defines the specific norms and balance of natural and social development laws.

Farabi introduced the term "ixtiyor" (free will) into scholarly literature, raising the issue that human free will can influence one's destiny. In doing so, he directly opposed the widely spread theory of determinism. By promoting this idea, he called for individuals to believe that, despite natural, hereditary, and class-based obstacles, a person has the capacity to reshape themselves according to their own knowledge and will. From a political perspective, Farabi argued that anyone could become a "mature" and "perfect" member of a cultural society.

Farabi considered the cultivation of human nature to be a long-term process of good deeds. According to him, any good moral behavior, if repeated in the mind, increases the strength and virtue of a person's consciousness. The quality of a cultural society fundamentally depends on will and choice, and the leader's duty is to guide this will toward goodness.

The development of any society and the realization of its progressive ideas depend on the will of its members. From this perspective, our ancestors always paid special attention to shaping the will of the people and nation and to the cultivation of willpower. They linked being willful to being faithful, as certain beliefs, teachings, and ideologies form the ideological foundation of a society. The strength or weakness of faith, as well as its alignment with

universal and national interests, plays a crucial role in the firm development of willpower.

METHODOLOGY

This article uses several methodological approaches to deeply analyze the concepts of will and desire in Ibn Arabi's philosophy. Through his Sufi views and philosophical inquiries, Ibn Arabi created a new perspective on the understanding of the freedom of will and desires. The article examines his views on will and the role of freedom of choice in human life. The following methodological approaches were employed to carry out this analysis.

The first methodological approach is philosophical analysis. In order to deeply analyze the concept of will in Ibn Arabi's philosophy from a philosophical standpoint, his views on will and freedom of choice were studied. Ibn Arabi's attitude toward will, its significance in human activity, and its moral principles were analyzed. Especially, the essence of his concept of will and its relationship between Allah and humans were thoroughly examined.

The second approach is the historical-analytical method. Ibn Arabi's views and his perspective on will were examined in a historical context. Through the historical-analytical approach, Ibn Arabi's approach to will was compared with the views of Al-Farabi and other sufis. This method allowed for the identification and analysis of similarities and differences between his philosophy's impact on society and human upbringing, and how it relates to modern perspectives.

The final methodological approach is critical analysis. Ibn Arabi's views on will were compared with contemporary ideas, particularly those concerning the freedom of will, external influences, and human freedom of choice. This

method allowed for the comparison of Ibn Arabi's ideas with modern philosophy and religious concepts, analyzing the social and religious significance of his views on will.

Through these methodological approaches, Ibn Arabi's views on will were thoroughly and comprehensively analyzed. The combination of philosophical, historical, textual, phenomenological, and critical methods ensured a deep analysis of the ideas and perspectives presented in the article. Moreover, the role of Ibn Arabi's Sufi philosophy in human education and its impact on society was clarified, and its significance in the social and religious environment was highlighted.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Ibn Arabi gave special attention to the philosophy of will in his views. He analyzed the ethical views of the sufis based on the theory of "Wahdat al-Wujud" (Unity of Being). The sufi stated that will is "neither az-Zat" (Substance الذات) nor its "Ayn" (one of its parts العين), but rather something related to substance and bound to possibility (الاممكن هأث بت ل لذات خاص ت علق). It can be seen that the will is in "ontological" relation with the essence, and it plays an important role in revealing the essence's nature [1].

Ibn Arabi linked will with movement. Movement is the way of life for all beings. To exist means, first and foremost, to move and change. Therefore, the concept of movement encompasses all the changes and processes taking place in the entire universe, including human society.

According to the sufi's thought, a person has two types of movement:

- 1) al-harakatu-l-ixtiyoriyya (Voluntary movement تيارية الحركة);
- 2) al-haraktu-l-iztiroriyya (Involuntary movement اضطرارية الحركة).

Voluntary movement is the act of choosing a course of action according to one's own will without any external pressure. In contrast, involuntary movement is the opposite of voluntary movement, where a person is influenced by pressure from situations like fear, hunger, and similar conditions to choose a course of action. Ibn Arabi also referred to this type of movement by another name, al-harakatu-l-xarijiyya (instinctive movement *الحركة الخارجية*).

Instinct (from Latin "instinctus" – awakening, arousal) refers to a complex set of inherited behaviors. Instinct arises as a response to external and internal stimuli. In humans, instinct is subordinated to conscious activity that forms during the process of upbringing and education.

Ibn Arabi divides will into three types:

1. Irodu-t-Tamanniy (Desire Will *إرادة تمنية*);
2. Irodu-t-Tab' (Nature Will *إرادة بطبع*);
3. Irodu-l-Haq (Divine Will *إرادة الحق*).

"Desire will" originates from within the individual. Desire refers to the intention to perform a specific action and the emotions associated with it. The realization of the action reflects the fulfillment of the desire. In the field of ethics, desire is viewed as the impulse to achieve a particular goal, ideal, or dream.

The concept of free will is central to Ibn Arabi's Sufi philosophy. In his work "Al-Futuh al-Makkiyya" ("The Meccan Revelations"), he expressed the following idea: "Divine supplications to Allah are not under His command but are within His will (*أمره في لا مشيئته في*)". Ibn Arabi asserted that free will is personally attributed to Allah (*الحق من شكلا يا إليه منصوب*). In the view of the loving Sufi, "will" is the will of the Beloved, and this represents the highest

degree of closeness to the Divine. When the Divine becomes manifest in the human senses of sight, hearing, and others, “will” ceases to exist.

Thus, the will of the lover embodies the union of the Divine and the actual reality. The merging with the “Divine will” occurs because the will of the lover and the Beloved align perfectly, transforming their relationship into a true, profound state of divine love.

According to the theorist of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, Maxdumi A’zam, for a seeker (salik), the truth is the pain of knowledge and the station of seeking it. He emphasized that according to the hadith “Man talaba wajada” (whoever desires something and strives for it, will surely find it), after the seeker desires the mysteries of the Divine and knowledge, they will have the opportunity to find them in their own heart [2].

Ibn Arabi emphasized the supremacy of divine mercy and compassion in the Qur’an, particularly highlighting the phrase “Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim” (In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful), which appears at the beginning of each surah. He wrote that in this single verse, there are three divine attributes that point to mercy: “Allah”, “Rahman” (The Most Gracious), and “Rahim” (The Most Merciful). He noted that there is no word signifying “anger” (qahr) in this phrase. He further explained that this indicates that the path to salvation lies within Allah’s mercy [3].

Ar-Rahman (The Most Gracious) is one of the names of Allah, commonly used in the phrase “Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim” (In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful). Both names are among Allah’s most fundamental attributes, signifying His mercy and compassion towards humans, especially on the Day of Judgment. The term “Ar-Rahman” was used during the pre-Islamic era in Arabia by Jews and Christians to refer to the one true Allah. It

also appears in monotheistic inscriptions from the 4th to 6th centuries in southern Arabia. Additionally, hanifs (monotheistic Arabs) and contemporaries of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), such as his opponents like the false prophets Abhala al-Aswad and Musaylima, used this term to refer to their gods. In the Qur'an, "Ar-Rahman" is one of the most frequently used terms to denote Allah, following Allah and Rabb (the Lord). During the Meccan period of revelation, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) primarily referred to Allah as "Ar-Rahman". "Ar-Rahim" means "The Most Merciful", further emphasizing Allah's compassion.

Ibn Arabi stated that the punishment and suffering in Hell are of a temporary nature. Once the allotted time has passed, the punishment and torment will cease. The sufi emphasized that even in Hell, Allah's mercy remains uninterrupted. He also drew a comparison between Hell and a house, noting that while the structure of Hell may resemble a house, the pain and suffering within it are not like those found in a regular home.

According to Ibn Arabi, "sin" (المعصية *ma'siyat*) is not inherent to human nature. Allah's mercy precedes any sin, anger, or punishment in Hell, just as human nature existed before sin. Therefore, a person is ultimately awaited by mercy and forgiveness [1].

The freedom of will is the conscious intention directed towards accomplishing a task. The issue of freedom of will has been a subject of debate for centuries among philosophy, psychology, secular, and religious teachings. For example, proponents of fatalism argue that all human actions are determined solely by external forces, while supporters of voluntarism assert that humans are completely free in their actions, and this freedom is not dependent on external forces. Religion, on the other hand, asserts that freedom, including the freedom of will, is determined by Allah, and a person's fate and destiny are

dependent on the Creator's will, which is predetermined. Some religious teachings also state that humans possess free will and are accountable for their sins.

According to Ibn Arabi, through the freedom of will, individuals choose their beliefs. The sufi's views resemble contemporary ideas of tolerance, as they emphasize the individual's ability to freely choose their path and beliefs without external compulsion, aligning with the principles of respect and understanding in a diverse society.

Tolerance is a concept that reflects spiritual virtues such as kindness, care, generosity, and compassion towards others. It involves respecting and honoring different worldviews, religious beliefs, national and ethnic characteristics, and traditions. Tolerance also means avoiding discrimination and insult in interactions, considering humanity as superior to everything else, and upholding these principles in communities, workplaces, and neighborhoods [4].

In Ibn Arabi's teachings, the issue of religious belief is also widely addressed. According to the sufi, differences between religions are natural, but this does not mean that they do not originate from a single divine source. The diversity of religions is similar to the way existence emanates from one divine source and manifests in various forms.

Understanding the Divine is the same as understanding oneself. When a person realizes that they reach Allah through divine virtue, spiritual purity, and wisdom, and that everything from the smallest particle to the vastness of the galaxies is under Allah's control, they come to the understanding that there is no other power besides Him, and that nothing is absolute except for Him. Upon

this realization, they become privy to the divine truths, recognizing that there is no doubt in Allah's sovereignty [5].

Truth is a philosophical and epistemological description of something or an event, determined by how thought and knowledge correspond to objective reality (existence). The issue of truth can be examined from two perspectives. First, through human rational and irrational knowledge. The only way to scientifically resolve the issue of truth is through the relationship between human knowledge and the real phenomena, qualities, and properties of the objective world. Second, it can be understood through esoteric knowledge, meaning the realization of the Truth and the attainment of Allah's "tajalli" (manifestation). In this path, the key principle is not knowledge, but rather enthusiasm, passion, inspiration, and love, which serve as the foundational principles for understanding Allah [6].

Ibn Arabiy considered the word to be the most powerful influence on the human soul. According to the sufi, the soul dislikes direct admonition, guidance, and education. When approached with these methods, the soul perceives it as an insult and expresses its displeasure. It refuses to accept the advice and reprimands given to it.

CONCLUSION

Will, as a conscious and goal-directed force, is one of the most crucial factors in human life. The development and formation of will not only drive a person toward self-awareness but also serve as a fundamental element for becoming a mature member of society. In philosophical literature, the strength of will refers to its determination in desires, intentions, and goal achievement, signifying an individual's ability to consciously manage their actions and

overcome external obstacles. The concepts of will and freedom of choice, particularly in the philosophical perspectives of sufis like Al-Farabi and Ibn Arabi, play a significant role.

Ibn Arabi connected will and action, describing both voluntary and necessary actions of humans. He explained that will is not only tied to human desires, but also integrates with Allah's will, guiding humans towards achieving the highest purpose in this world. According to Ibn Arabi, the true source of will, or the union of Allah's will with human will, represents the highest level of a person's approach to the Divine, marking the pinnacle of spiritual closeness to Allah.

The cultivation of will plays a crucial role in a person's spiritual and moral growth. Ibn Arabi and other sufis emphasized the importance of religious belief, ethics, and divine virtues in shaping will. They argued that through voluntary actions, a person can influence their destiny and contribute to the development of society. The development of will is also marked by determination, consistency, and unwavering faith in Allah, which are considered essential for spiritual advancement.

Ibn Arabi emphasized that the emergence of will is rooted in Allah's mercy and grace, and it aids in achieving one's true purpose. He also considered mercy and tolerance to be of significant importance in guiding people along the right path. Furthermore, when discussing the freedom of will, it becomes clear that the ability to resist external forces and destiny is closely linked to an individual's desires and beliefs. Will drives a person toward achieving higher spiritual virtues, realizing progressive ideas within society, and ultimately leads them toward true self-awareness.

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