

Averroes and His Using Plato's Republic in History

Mohammadreza Shahidipak*

Faculty of Arts and humanity and literature, Department of History Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Azad University Central Tehran Branch, Tehran, Iran

Abstract

Classical Greek Social-political philosophy belongs to Plato and Aristotle and is based on the paradigm of liberty of human wisdom in presenting values in order to manage its life. Averroes (1126) re-examined the Greece philosophy and collected and explained the works and traces of Aristotle and this resulted in the development of philosophy and emergence a new global philosophy in Spain. In Averroes's view, philosophy does not belong to Greece, and its universal truth has no limitation of nation, time or place. Representing the mentioned paradigm destroyed the cultural unity of the medieval world. Paper investigated the basic element of political philosophy as freedom, justice, ruler's attributions, good life, philosophical description of cities and role of education and public law, right ,emotion, reason in facing of cities ;based on a commentary of Plato's Republic by Averroes .He used terminology of political philosophy of Plato with Aristotelian view. Interpretation of social and political philosophy of Plato by Averroes in west of Islamic world is the most important cultural phenomenon in history of philosophy have conserved still his vast influence. Averroes is famous and remarkable philosopher and jurist believed in priority of reason and philosophy .He was excommunicated in eastern and western of Islamic world and in Europe but he still has any successors of Jew, Christians and Islamic philosophers and free scholar in the world. His philosophy is real spirit of medieval philosophy. He introduced philosophy as best epitome of thinking and contemplation in Islamic civilization and culture. He establish special language and hermeneutics for research in philosophy and humanity sciences and his method for political analyse of Islamic history of medieval is upon using philosophical theory in history. His discussions and criticises on Republic is third steps for establishing the classic political philosophy in Islamic world .he determined method and structure of understanding and interpretation of texts in medieval. He established fundamental principle of natural law theory. Some political thought of Averroes is different of Plato's Republic and some is paradoxical and some social thought of Averroes is just opposite to thoughts of Plato as programing for education in cities. The problem is if Averroes has formulated an independent political philosophy, if violation of Plato's view in ruler's attributes is a paradox in Averroes's political philosophy.

Keywords

Greece, Plato, Aristotle, Wisdom, Freedom, Justice, Averroes, Ruler, Cities, Education, Law

Received: March25, 2015 / Accepted: April 20, 2015 / Published online: June 12, 2015

@ 2015 The Authors. Published by American Institute of Science. This Open Access article is under the CC BY-NC license.

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

1. Historical Introduction

Political philosophy and sociology of Plato and Aristotle, From Greek the origin of social political philosophy have re-examined and discussed by any scholars and philosophers but historical turning point accomplished by Averroes in Spain in medieval epoch. in historical view, we find by exerting philosophy in political thought, Aristotle and Plato founded

the social political philosophy in ancient Greek which has led to widespread and deep effects on the world's culture. Plato in top of western philosophy and he has very basic role in facing of Islamic philosophy but between Islamic philosophers, Averroes is devoted follower of Plato because philosophy is nothing but footnotes on the Plato's Republic which is a suitable start for social political philosophy (Palmer, 2011). The first exposition of his political thought

* Corresponding author

E-mail address: Msnoor100@yahoo.com

was by Aristotle. Aristotle brought politics from government into public life. And his political philosophy has been dominant on political ideology for 2500 years. In Aristotle sphere of influence, including the transmission *and* preservation of his works, was the Islamic civilization. There were high volumes of Plato and Aristotle's works and different commentaries available for Muslims in Spain cities. The Shiite government Al-Mohades raised the flag of philosophy in his capital, Seville, for a short time, meanwhile specific academic measures on Aristotle works were done by the order of caliph Al-Mohades. Averroes categorized these works in three different levels (Marrakeshi, 1998). However he discussed and Commentated Plato's Republic with the title "the necessity in politics", because Aristotle's book of Politics was not yet available in Spain. he tried to state Plato's political views through Aristotle's psychology (Averroes, 1998) that explained in his book Nicomachean Ethic. Averroes selected and collected universal issue from Republic of Plato and eliminated and omitted something not necessity for world philosophy special myths and stories theses belonged to special culture or religion. He showed real definition of politic as science of civil upon ethic and struggled to establish a new system of political philosophy. For accomplishment of his program he used as free philosopher and scholar, terminology of political thought of Plato and he produced frame work and special paradigm that he can able to criticized and analysed history of Islamic states and nations .paper researched some discussions of Averroes in Republic of Plato upon what he collected in his book, "The Necessity in Politics". Upon Averroes opinion, discussion in freedom, justice, world philosophy, sharia, education, ruler, truth, right, citizen and good life, are necessity in politics.

2. Paradigm of Good Life

The common point in political philosophy of Islam and Greek is the natural unity between individual goodness and political, social goodness. The rules which contribute to build a good city and a good country are only achieved through individual virtue which means each individual interest in its duty (Plato, 1968). The good life from Aristotle's viewpoint is also compatibility of life with virtue in a city, where the government is ruled by the middle class (Heywood, 2002). Goodness is shared with the good human, the good citizen, and the good ruler which can be totalized in one soul under the special condition of the reign of the good government over the society and he believed absolute and eternal idea of good life must govern to private and public aspect of life. by this opinion he rejected relativity and accepted absolutely as necessity for good life and he rejected sophist politician that they believed, ability and power is equal, right. Averroes as Plato believed in absolute real therefore he criticized and

rejected some Islamic political man for his remoteness from absolutely of Islamic ethic. Averroes who is more in favour of Aristotle said: citizens themselves do not have any virtue and the ruler's obsessive behaviour is necessary for the existence and continue of good behaviour, because Aristotle believed that the quality and definition of the goodness is under influence of each nation's interest and goal of the political society is just good life (Plato, 1968) and possibility of good life just accomplish by state (Copleston, 1983).

3. Natural Law Theory and God's Right

Theory of natural law is ancient theory discussed by any scholar of world. It is theological, political ,sociological and The common background between Plato (Plato, 1968) and Aristotle (Aristotle, 2009) and any Jew ,Christian and Islamic philosophers in medieval is natural law theory and belief in natural identity of Human and society , in their opinion, man and societies as a natural phenomenon have special rights. in opinion of Plato ,Will of God belong to socialized of man and right of God is complementary of human's rights .he rejected this theory that God don't have any intervention in citizen's rights . Averroes as Plato discusses of God's rights beside by citizen's natural law in his book in Islamic laws. He formed relation between God's rights and natural law in framework of cosmic system of being and introduced principle of natural law theory .His paradigm in natural law is upon empire of divine law and his opinion imitated and adopted by Christian and Jew scholars as a Aquinas and Musa IBN MEYMUN who wrote his book Delalet-u-Haairinupon opinion of Averroes in complementary of natural law with sharia and GOD's rights. He introduced works of GOD as natural works (IBN MEYMUN, 1969) .Archbishop of Paris Aquinas (1274), having a modified interpretation of Averroes and Avicenna on political philosophy of Aristotle, says: city is a natural foundation and the God's right which is of his grace doesn't violate human's right which is of human reason alone (Brehier, 1931).

4. Virtuous cities, Rulers' Characters and Averroes Paradoxes

Averroes political thought is in response to Plato – Aristotelian question which asks:" who should be the ruler?" Scientific knowledge of quality and character of rulers and virtual cities and philosophical recognize of cities begun by AL- Farabi in his book about perfect cities (Al-Farabi,1986) in political Islamic philosophy of medieval and continued by Nasir-Al –Din tusi (1273) he explained in his book Ethic,

Kinds of societies and conditions of cities and ruler's characters, and finally by Averroes, he as a supreme judge of Al-Mohads government, called the king-philosopher theory illogical. His contemporary caliph, Man sour, ordered to interpret Aristotle's works and Averroes took the burden of this order. Man sour thought that the ruler's characters are acquired through studying of philosophy. This paper investigates why Averroes reduced the characters from philosophy to jurisprudence and announced jurispudent who is aware of jurisprudence and has authority of Jihad (holy war) is competent for the authority of ruling (Averroes, 1998).

The underlying cause of this paradox in political thought of Averroes who believed in the absolute validity of wisdom, are listed as follow. The first one was development of crusades in Spain. The second one was the fact that Plato's theory was very idealistic. Next was the influence of the five-hundred-year historical experience of Muslim reign in the system of caliphs on his mind, and the last one was the great jurispudent dominance in Al-Mohads's government (1130-1269) but there is no paradox by rejecting Plato's paradigm of states's changing. He rejected the necessity of Plato's pattern of changing of cities and citizens and states in five forms: aristocracy, democracy, oligarchy, Timocracy, tyranny (Averroes, 1998). he used new terminology for any of these political idioms.

In spite of falling the attempts of Plato in forming the ruler of Sicily to philosopher –king and same failed Averroes to changed Man sour to philosopher. Plato disappointed of existence of king-philosopher and loosed his hope for building virtual cities, because necessity of collection philosophy and politics in ruler for establishment of ideal states and virtual cities is core of political thought of Plato. He in late of his life wrote Laws after he returned to real life and delivered possibility of perfect states. His state was state of Sparta not perfect state. Therefore Plato reduced the right of government from philosophers to who suitable for protect Laws. But Averroes adopt new approach and new paradigm for resolve this paradox and puzzle and historical trouble in selection of suitable ruler. He contrary to Plato believed in possibility of establishing of good cities. He claimed virtual cities had been built in ancient history of Iran and in the beginning of emergence of Islam. (Averroes, 1998) and he believed in possibility of building of virtual cities and perfect and ideal state by real using of Islamic law. His state same not ideal state but it was Al-Mo had dynasty that he failed to philosophized his ruler, Al- Mansur and he criticized any aspect of administrations of his state. He denied distribution of political and economic power in Al- Mo had empire. He claimed his state changed from ideal state to state of domination and dignity and upon his opinion this is condition of cities and states in Andalusia in medieval period.

5. The Agreement Between Sharia and Philosophy

In historical aspect from beginning of emergence of Islam occurred any contract between Hellenic thought from Greece and Islamic thought and any Islamic scholar as Kandy (866) translated many of Greece philosophical manuscripts to Arabic and Farabi (950) introduced first combination of Islamic religion and Greece philosophy and Avicenna (1037) by combining Persian philosophy and Islamic philosophy and Greece philosophy, established and formed in first time systematic face of Islamic philosophy.

there is in Islamic world six century of struggles and arguments about agreement or disagreement between religion and sharia, these waves of religious quarrels terminated to ideological war between Fatimid dynasty of Egypt (909-1171) that believed in agreement between philosophy and religion and Abbasid state of Bagdad (750-1258) that his theologian al- Ghazali denied philosophy as truth and excommunicated philosophers. in the west of Islamic world theologians of Al-Moravids dynasty (1056-1146) that were followers of al-Ghazali (1111) supreme clergy of Abbasid Caliph of Baghad, believed there is nothing agreement between sharia and philosophy. finally after fall of al-Moravids dynasty by Al-Mohads dynasty this state believed in agreement between philosophy and sharia, Averroes as supreme philosophers and physician of Al-mohad's state criticized and analysed and rejected dogmatist opinions of al- Ghazali and he formed new pattern and paradigm for agreement between philosophy and sharia. The most important factor in Averroes political thought is to identify the relationship between Sharia and philosophy. Believing in double truth, he put wisdom before Sharia and considered anagogical interpretation as a philosopher's right (Averroes, 1991). He accomplished this important work by analyse of Republic of Plato with Islamic thoughts. Plato introduced political philosophy in dialectic method but Averroes established political philosophy in analytic method and demonstrative reasoning and proof upon agreement between sharia and philosophy as double truth.

We find same beliefs and same ideological war in Europe. Aquinas (1274) and Lull raised against Averroes and him using on his own paradigm, but his Jewish apprentice used it in order to totalize the philosophy and the religion of Muses (IBN MEYMUN, 1969). The philosophical impression of MUSE IBN MEYMUN (1205) in recompiling of the sharia of Jewish caused dispute among the Jewish. And conservative Jewish of south of France that were opposite to the compiling of the law of the sharia forced the competent authorities of the Christians to burn his works (Sarton, 1975). This rationalism between the Jewish followers of MUSE IBN MEYMUN, who like his master believed in the importance

of the relationship between the religion and the philosophy caused the spread of philosophy in religious societies, and also caused the pursue and the torture of the Jewish in south of France and Spain and Their thoughts were also taken into accounts as revolutionary thoughts.

6. Justice in City and Soul

Plato similar cities to body of man for explain justice. it is core concepts of philosophy of Aristotle and Plato (Aristotle, 2009, plato1968) .Considering the equal effect of justice on both soul cultivation and socializing him is the first and the most essential element of Plato's political philosophy (Foster, 1994). In his interpretation of reality of the unity of justice both in the city and the individual, Averroes as philosopher and as supreme physician of Al-Mohad dynasty tried to justify social justice in his contemporary society from Plato's view. He used medical examples for explain principle of justice in societies. He accepted ethical structure of justice as Plato and argued about ways of obtaining of wisdom and bravery as basic element of justice and he discus as Plato about material must be learned to human and citizens for earning of justice. He explains opinion of Plato in justice and cities in framework of Islamic ethic. His commentary on city and justice is upon most sentence of Plato, that he says: justice is nothing but accomplishment of natural duty to the perfection by everyone in the city (Plato, 1968, book, IV, p, 194) and upon his opinion the dignity of justice in the city is the dignity of justice in human's soul. So different parts of human soul must work as it is in accordance with the determined measures for him and this situation will necessarily be possible when the ruler of wisdom guide (Averroes, 1998).

7. Freedom and Contemporary Society of Averroes

Among Averroes political philosophy features is the usage of the philosophy in criticism of culture, politics, thoughts, rulers, and the patrons of his contemporary era. Identifying freedom according to the current condition is the heart of his political philosophy. In his political philosophy, Islamic societies are criticized. He believed human is a social animal who seeks freedom of action and opinion, and freedom is the social and political element of his philosophy. As a supreme judge, he writes: freedom is the base of any judicial task. Consequently, political society cannot be realized, because freedom is the essence of any republic political work, and the society interest is in avoiding despotism. Prohibition of the philosophical studies is the evidence on the lack of freedom of opinion in Andalusia. Philosophical studies were

prohibited in the reign of Omayyad and Al-Moravids (Averroes, 1998, p, 64). Actually the short summer of philosophy started with the rise of Al-Mohads by Averroes and consequently ended by his death. He hated despotism and considered Omayyad dynasty, the freedom denier, as the root of tyranny which is still dominant in Spain in medieval. He called for the intellects of his era to get away from dialecticism, and argument, superstitions, imitations, and heresy.

8. Paradigm of Wisdom Independence for Human Life

Averroes, who lived in a three religious society where people were always involved in theological argument, was always busy working on a suitable style for human coexistence through general principles of the global philosophy (shahidipak, 2011). In his words, philosophy is a humanitarian reality having no special nationality, time, or location and things under the name of Indian, Iranian, Islamic, Christian, or Jewish philosophy would have no philosophical validity .it can appear anytime, anywhere (Averroes, 1998). Based on this viewing, Averroes emerged the world classic philosophy in Spain. The effect of philosophy in classic Greek in political thought was the fact that based on wisdom, human can shape a collection of values and thoughts to run his life (Aristotle, 2009).Averroes like Aristotle believed in the collectively of the wisdom and the independent identity of the human's will in ruling affair. Rejecting Plato's theory of idea, he also considered the politics and ruling as humanitarian facts and introduced the rational discipline as the human perfection. He also started to identify the realities independent of location, time, individual, and religion in different countries with different people having different opinions. His model was to identify wisdom's positions in life for the preservation of the unity of cultures in these religious cities, but theological opposition disturbed the cultural unity of ruling in Cairo, Oxford, Sorbonne, church meetings in London and Paris, and religious centre of Morocco which resulted in testified crusades and finally his ideas were excommunicated. The thought of Aquinas who tried to show that the reality is just the thought of church was located in front of Bryant's opinions, the founder of Latin Averroist-movement who believed in double truth. Aquinas was the symbol of the western awareness against Averroist philosophical action of wisdom independence in running human life. His works are political reactions which greatly had been rejecting political philosophy of Averroes (Brehier, 1931).

9. Education, Learning to Human and Development of Cities

Some of big part of Greece knowledge is about learning to human and education and its methods that have conserved its influence on theories of education (Gutek, 1997). Plato and Aristotle began philosophical works by funding education institution; lyceum and Academus. Upon their opinions cities and citizens appear by several form of education. Plato's pattern of education explained in seventh book of Republic. his ideal education is upon remembrance and his program and curriculum is several collection of ideal knowledge. he believed in priority of geometry and mathematic in program of education. Plato believed, education is best instrument for accomplishment of perfect cities. Plato's system of education is suitable for development of cities in aristocracy and monarchy states. Averroes in his commentary of Republic, rejected opinion of Plato in education (Averroes, 1998). he believed in priority of logic because human is free will subject and agent and he need for beginning of his education, knowledge as logic and philosophy that are basic causes of nourishment and training of wisdom. He kept aloof from idealism and realism of ancient Greece in education and he offered the Shiite system of education that built upon logic and philosophy and this system of education have experimented in any cities of Iran, Egypt, Spain, morocco, Tunisia, Syria in medieval. Therefore Averroes is leader of belief in rejecting of absolute certainty in curriculum and believed in giving birth of logic in education that is mentioned by contemporary scholars and scientists of education and learning (Gutek, 1997).

10. Law, Emotion, Reason and Cities

Law is basic element of political thought of Plato; he wrote most important of his books, Laws. He wrote laws as result of his trips to any country in Europe, Asia and Egypt in Africa. He observed administrations of any governments and met and counselled to any kings and rulers. After these he believed in absolute roots of law and he believed in influence of metaphysic in law. He programed in laws for credible cities and states (Copleston, 1983). Plato in spite of his disappointment of existence of ideal in the earth, believe in perfect city in heavens and said; "in heaven, there is laid up a pattern of it, methinks, which he who desires my behold, and beholding, may set his own house in order. But whether such an one exist, or over will exist in fact, is no matter; for he will live after the manner of that city, having nothing to do with any other." (Plato, 1968, p430), Plato

believe root of human's behaviour are reason, emotion and, excitements, but citizens must follow laws with transcendental basic for firmness and strength of cities. He introduced laws for conservation of cities by who is guard and keep laws.

Averroes same as Plato wrote in west of Islamic world in Spain very most scientific of his works; book of Islamic laws upon new method and upon priority of reason to law and religious jurisprudence and in this book he answer this question; What the law presents? He struggled in his book in Islamic laws to reasoned justification of religion jurisprudence in framework of Shiite rationality. He explains in his book relation between law, emotion and reason (Averroes, 1969). He as Plato introduced laws as cities' preservation and as spirit of cities. Therefore we can find practical philosophy of Plato and same Averroes in their books about laws.

11. Conclusion and Finding

As a conclusion, his commentary on Republic is constructive interpretation and in glance his commentary on Republic is successful using of pure philosophy for interpretation of history, Pure Philosophy and philosopher which are the necessity of politics, in his contemporary society were effected less, just because of the presence of the theologians and the politicians. The theologians of the three religions released three combinations of religion and philosophy in Islamic east and west and in Christian west based on the social and political expediency. Averroes and his Islamic, Christian, and Jewish followers criticized the rulers and society; on the other hand it is just Aquinas who suited international actions of ruler with ethic, a good example for this can be 'war'. As a finding; Philosophy introduced by Plato and his devoted follower, language of prophets and natural duties of prophets as philosopher belong to fixed nature of human that it is nothing but rescue of human therefore platonic's learning must be re-examine and mediate and contemplate for active peaceful relation between people of world that maybe it deliver human from contemporary critical condition of world and people near shortly to idea of perfect city that didn't build by Man where it is in heavens.

References

- [1] Aristotle, Politics, Oxford university press, 2009, p, 8, 52, 85, 97, 103, 112, 114, 118,
- [2] Averroes, Muhammad, Alzaroria-fi-Isiasia, Al Wahda Derasat Center publisher, Beirute, 1998, p, 72, 76, 82, 88, 102, 105, 119, 120, 139, 172, 177, 198,
- [3] Averroes, Muhammad, FasAlmaqal, darAlmashreq, 1991, p, 15, 17, 18, 24, 27, 28.

- [4] Averroes, Muhammad, *bedayat-Al-Mojtahed*, Razi publisher, Qom, 1969, p,4,5,12,13,
- [5] Brehier, Emile, *his toiredelaphilosophie la Antique et la Moyen Age*, 1931, translated by Mahdavi, kharazmipublisher, Tehran, P,153,160,162,164,200,249,264.
- [6] Caplestone, Fredrick, *A history of philosophy*, V1, translated by Mudjtavavi, scientific publisher, 1983, p,189,201,321,324.
- [7] AL-Farabi, Abu-Nasr, *Kitabara Ahl al-Madinat al- Fadilat* (ideas of habitants of virtual cities), libraireoriental, By rut, 1986, p,115,127,131,143.
- [8] Foster, Michael, Translated by Shaykh Aleslami, Tehran, Scientific and Cultural Publishers, 1994, p 85
- [9] Gutek, Gerald, *Philosophical and ideological perspectives on education* 2ed, Boston, Allyn and bacon, 1997, translated by Pakseresht, Samtpublisher, Tehran, p,39,415,394,151.
- [10] Heywood, Andrew, *politics*, 2nd, ed, translated by Alem, nay publisher, Tehran, 2002, p.44,
- [11] IBN MEYMUN, MUSA, *,Delalet u l-Haairin*, by Dr, Atay, published by maktabatol –Al sghafah al diniyah, 1969, p,590,593,707,734.
- [12] Marrakeshi, Abdulvaahad, *Al-Mojab*, dar-Al-ketab-bayrut, 1998, p,219.
- [13] Plato, *Republic*, copyright by permission of the American corporation, new York, 1968, p, 121,185,188,191,199,215,223,240.243,265,277.
- [14] Palmer, Donal, *Looking at philosophy*, translate by Mokhbar, Markaz publisher, Tehran, 2011, p,90,92.
- [15] ShahidiPak, Muhammad Reza, *Analytical History of Andalusia*, Al-Mustafa University Publishing International, Qom, 2011, p,295,298.
- [16] Sarton, George, *introduction to the history of science*, translated by Sadri, scientific publisher, 1975, P, 1216,1217,1589,1734.