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**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON SOUL AND LIFE
IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ARISTOTLE AND IBN SINA
(WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE BOOK *DE ANIMA*
AND *KITĀB AL-NAFS* FROM *AL-ŠIFA'*)**

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Numerous works have been written in different languages about the nature of the soul and soul-body relations in the viewpoint of Aristotle. In the meantime, due to the high influence that Ibn Sina has received from Aristotle in his philosophy, a considerable number of these works have also been done as comparative studies on the psychology of Aristotle and Ibn Sina. These works have explained the commonalities of the two philosophers as well as the differences that exist in Ibn Sina's psychology in definition of the soul, its essence, soul-body relations and so on. But no study has independently examined the difference between the soul and life in the viewpoint of Ibn Sina and nor compared these differences with what Aristotle expresses in his works. Our aim in this article is to compare the opinion of Aristotle and Ibn Sina about the nature of the soul and life, and to show how they think differently.

Keywords: philosophy of soul, Aristotle, Ibn Sina, Avicenna, soul, life

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Introduction

The problem of the soul is one of the issues that, has occupied the minds of philosophers from ancient, and created completely different perceptions of the nature of the soul in their works; from the idea of the soul as an stranger belonging

to another world and having a divine origin which has been settled in the body as a guest, to the more rational thinking about the question of the soul, which the Greeks later referred to, as the word “*Psyche*”. But no philosopher in the ancient, not even Plato, has dealt with the question of the soul independently. Aristotle is the one who, for the first time in the history of philosophy, addressed the issue of the soul in his book *De Anima* where he raised his main opinions about the soul; this is one of the most important books that has always been considered as one of the greatest references in psychology. Islamic philosophers, like others, have paid special attention to this book and have written numerous works under its influence. Ibn Sina, as a peripatetic Muslim philosopher, is one of these scholars who wrote the sixth section in *Tabi’iyyat* part of the book *al-Sifa’*, based on *De Anima*. It is because of this impact of Aristotle on Ibn Sina that many scholars from different aspects have compared his works and opinions with the philosophical system of Aristotle.

Ibn Sina, as professor Nasr mentions, was able to lay the foundation of medieval scholastic philosophy, to synthesize the Hippocratic and Galenic traditions of medicine, and to influence the Islamic arts and sciences in a way which no other figure has ever been able to do before or after him¹. On the other point, he paid so much attention to psychology that if we call him a philosopher of the soul, we are not mistaken. It is said that he left over thirty works regarding the soul. These works place him in a high position in comparison with Aristotle².

Despite all the works that have comparatively dealt with the psychology of Aristotle and Ibn Sina, there are still issues that have no place in the comparative studies of these two great philosophers. One of these issues is the relationship between the soul and life. In this research, based on Aristotle’s final opinions, we show that how he explains soul and life as synonymous and does not differentiate between them; in another word, Aristotle considers the soul to be exactly the actual life. While Ibn Sina makes a significant difference between the soul and life and does not consider them as a single concept, in any way.

Aristotelian and Avicennian psychology

Indeed Ibn Sina has made extensive use of Aristotle’s works in his psychology, especially from *De Anima*. Although, Ibn Sina had a version of the book *De Anima*, which was translated by Ishaq ibn Hunayn³ into Arabic, but it is undeniable that the Sinitic psychology differs significantly from the Aristotelian psychology in details. The differences can be considered in these two following categories:

- (1) **Obvious differences:** These are the differences in which Ibn Sina has clearly mentioned his own idea and criticized or corrected the viewpoints of Aristotle; as an example, we can refer to the definition of the soul, the essence of the rational soul, permanence of the soul and so on.
- (2) **Hidden differences:** Although these differences are not obvious at the first glance, but after a deep research in the ontological and metaphysical

¹ Nasr, S.H. *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardi, Ibn ‘Arabi*. Cambridge, Mass., 1964, p. 22.

² Dibaji, M.A. “Noavari-ha-ye Ebn Sina dar elm-e nafs” [Ibn Sina’s innovations in psychology], *Philosophical-Theological Research*, 1385_{AH} (2006), Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 54.

³ d. 910.

foundations of the two philosophers, they might be revealed; for example their different opinions in soul-body relations in accordance to plant and animal soul⁴.

Granger has mentioned in his book: "It should not be forgotten that Aristotle started out under the tutelage of Plato, unabashedly as a substantialist in his psychology, and very much in the spirit of Descartes, which is attested to by the fragments from and the ancient testimonies about his dialogues, the Eudemus and Protrepticus, which generally are believed to have been written early in Aristotle's career. These dialogues present a view of the soul very much in keeping with the opinions Plato expresses in the Phaedo. The soul is a 'substance', immortal and independent of the body. It exists prior to its embodiment, which is a state of bondage and an unhealthy condition for the soul, and after death it may transmigrate into another body. In the Protrepticus Aristotle credits the soul with sovereignty over the body, which takes the form of an agency, in which the soul uses the body in instrumental fashion, and he is reported to hold in the Eudemus that the soul manifests its actions through the body. Aristotle from the very beginning of his conception of the soul conceives of it as something in possession of agency and as something that brings about changes. He could very well have carried over this idea of the agency of the soul from his early days under the influence of Plato into his later thinking, even in his turn towards a dispositionalist view of the soul"⁵. Therefore, our emphasis in this article is on Aristotle's final opinions; hence, the main focus will be on the book of *De Anima* and some of its interpretations. And we will also use some other works of Aristotle accordingly.

Ibn Sina's *Kitab al-Šifa'* (Book of the Healing) encompasses four main areas: logic (al-mantiq), natural philosophy (al-tabī'iyyat), mathematics (al-riyādiyyat) and metaphysics (al-ilāhiyyat). The section on natural philosophy is divided, in turn, into eight subsections corresponding to the works which make up the Aristotelian physical corpus (with the addition of Nicholas of Damascus' *De plantis*). The eight books of the section on natural philosophy deal with different topics. The sixth section is about psychology (al-nafs). His psychological theme is directed from Aristotle's fundamental thesis of *De Anima* towards neo-Platonic currents of thought, especially those in the *Enneads* of Plotinus. He found Plato's esoteric teachings of 'creation', 'soul', and so forth closer to revealed doctrines than the views of Aristotle; in particular, he regarded Plotinus's views of the soul as useful in harmonising Aristotle's views with revealed doctrines⁶. Ibn Sina made extensive studies of Greek philosophy and presented the thought of ancient predecessors in a modern and understandable way. He is known as the most prominent and influential philosopher and scientist in Islamic countries, and had a great influence on Eastern and European ideas and played an important role to improve Aristotelian philosophy in the West.

The prologue to the Nafs [soul] can be fruitfully compared with the prologue to Aristotle's *Meteorology* [*De Anima*], with which it shares the same threefold structure and programmatic tone. In particular, both the Aristotelian and the Avicennian text seem to serve the same purpose, namely framing a science whose

⁴ Zamaniha, H. "The relationship between the soul and the body from the point of view of Aristotle and Ibn Sina, with emphasis on vegetable and animal souls", *Journal of Zehn*, 1397_{AH} (2018), No. 73, p. 118.

⁵ Granger, H. *Aristotle's Idea of the Soul*. New York, 1996, p. 153.

⁶ Dastagir, Md.G. *A Study of Avicenna's Concept of the Soul in Relation to those of Aristotle and Plotinus*, Diss. Hull, 1997, pp. 9–10.

epistemological status (subject-matter, position, boundaries) is not entirely clear: in the case of Aristotle, it is the science that all his predecessors have called meteorology, whereas in the case of Avicenna, it is psychology. Therefore, it seems safe to infer that in the age of Avicenna, as already happened in the Late Ancient tradition and in the first Arabic reception of Peripatetic philosophy, there was still disagreement about the epistemological status of psychology; for this reason, at the outset of his investigation of the soul Avicenna provides a sort of 'global' interpretation of it⁷. The prologue to Avicenna's *Nafs* can be ideally divided into three parts according to the issues dealt with in them: First part – the place of psychology within the wider context of investigation of nature; Second part – the necessity of a general and unitary account of the soul; Third part – the summary of the conclusive sections of natural philosophy, i.e. botany and zoology, and of the third and fourth parts, i.e. the mathematics and the metaphysics, of the *Šifā'*⁸.

Before entering to the problem of soul and life, first of all, and for a better understanding, it is necessary to review the viewpoints of Aristotle and Ibn Sina in the definition of soul, its essence and soul-body relations; since the different opinions of these two philosophers in the definition and the essence of soul and body, leads to two different approaches to psychology, And these approaches make them explain the concept of soul and life in two different ways.

Definition of Soul

In *De Anima*, Book I, Aristotle reviews the opinions of his predecessors on the subject, in an *Aporia* method, which is considered highly anthropocentric⁹. In this method, Aristotle tries to show the weakness of the predecessors' opinions and finally to present his own opinion. After all these opinions, Aristotle, defines soul as follows: "The soul is the first actuality (*entelekheia*) of a natural body which has life potentially" (412a27). In *De Anima*, II, by contrast, Aristotle defines the soul – describes it, to be precise – as the "first *entelekheia* of a natural instrumental body possessing life potentially". One of the challenges facing the Greek commentators on the *De Anima* was figuring out exactly what Aristotle meant by *entelekheia*, a term which he invented and which he also used to define change (*kinesis*) in *Physics*, III. The consensus amongst scholars nowadays is that we ought to translate *entelekheia* as "actuality", thereby making it more or less synonymous with the Greek *termenergeia*; and that we ought to worry less about what Aristotle thinks an *entelekheia* is than what he thinks the soul and change are *entelekheia*¹⁰. In Arabic, *entelekheia* is translated to "*kamāl*" (كمال).

Unlike most of his predecessors who concentrated exclusively on animal or even merely human soul, Aristotle aims for an account that applies as widely as

⁷ Alpina, T. "Knowing the soul from knowing oneself. A reading of the prologue to Avicenna's 'Kitab al-Nafs (Book of the soul)'", *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia toscana di scienze e lettere 'La Columbaria'*, 2017, Vol. LXXXII (n.s. – LXVIII), p. 447.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Mollayousefi, G. "Ravesh-e falsafe pardazi-ye arastou dar majmou'e-ye maba'dotabi'a" [Aristotle's method of philosophizing in the metaphysical collection; with a look at Zeta], *Journal of Ayeneh Ma'refat*, 1397_{AH} (2018), No. 18/3, p. 97.

¹⁰ Wisnovsky, R. "Avicenna and Avicennian Tradition", *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*. Cambridge, 2005, p. 99.

possible, that covers every instance of ensouled being¹¹. In four different parts of *De Amina*, Aristotle has defined the soul. For a precise clarification, in continuation, we explain each word of the definition. The first word is “actuality”. In explaining what sort of actuality is the soul, Aristotle says: “first actuality” meaning actuality like unutilized knowledge that is prior in genesis, for “substance as form” to arrive at a second definition of soul. As first actuality, that is, actuality of the prior or first sort comparable to knowledge, the soul bestows life on the body, this life consisting in further actualizations or operations of the living being. Since he has sufficiently emphasized that soul is substance and substance is form, Aristotle can leave it at saying that soul is actuality of the first kind of such a sort of body¹².

The special turn of phrase here, “natural body, having life in potentiality”, has been prepared for where matter is called potentiality. Matter as such could only have life in potentiality. Not just any body, but only that which is in potentiality a living thing can be ensouled and living. In speaking of the body having life in potentiality, Aristotle refers just to the body as matter in relation to form rather than as composite. This potentiality is the potentiality of the body presently actualized by the soul¹³. Regarding the body, Aristotle talks of such as an organic body which probably means “instrumental” or having the power of an instrument. The body is organic through being composed of parts that provide instruments for the soul¹⁴. And by ‘life’ here, he means that which has through itself nourishment, growth, and decay (412a14).

On the other side, from the very beginning of *Nafs al-Šifa’*, Ibn Sina has two clear differences with the Aristotelian method; the first: he postpones the examination of the opinions of the predecessors to the next sections of the book. And the second: Ibn Sina separates himself from Aristotle in the way how to define the soul; he believes that the proof of the existence of the soul needs to be mentioned before its definition. This is why; he first tries to prove the existence of the soul and then enters to the discussion of soul defining and its nature: “The first thing we need to talk about is proving the existence of something that is called soul”¹⁵. This difference in the beginning of the discussion is undoubtedly rooted in the different approaches of these two philosophers on what soul is; since in Ibn Sina’s philosophy, soul as a separated substance from body needs to be proved independently, while Aristotle believes that the existence of the soul as a part of a living being is obvious and does not need to be proved.

In the general context of the definition of the soul, Ibn Sina examines almost the same thing that Aristotle mentioned in *De Anima*, but there is a great difference between them in the semantics of the words used in the definition. Ibn Sina emphasizes on using the word “perfection” (كمال) for the word “entelekheia” instead of using form. He establishes a clear distinction between perfection and form, and believes that the soul, as a separate substance, is the actuality of the natural body, not a form for it. In his book, Ibn Sina points out that every form is perfection, while not all perfection can be a form. And then as an example, he refers to the king and the sailors, each of whom is perfection for the city or the

¹¹ Polansky, R. *Aristotle’s De Anima: A Critical Commentary*. New York, 2007, p. 145.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 159–160.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

¹⁵ Ibn Sina, *al-Šifa’, Tabi’iyyat section*. Qom, 1388_{AH} (2009), p. 5.

ship that they are guiding, but in no way, they can be considered as a form¹⁶. This is while for Aristotle, it is still unclear, however, whether the soul is the actuality of the body in the way that a sailor is of a ship (413a9).

Wisnovsky considers Ibn Sina's intention of *entelekheia* to be different from what Aristotle intended. Somewhat surprisingly, Avicenna does not use *istikmal* (استكمال), the term cited in the *lemmata* of his Marginal Notes on Aristotle's *De Anima*. Avicenna uses *kamāl* to define the soul in two ways, the first as part of the standard Aristotelian definition, the second as part of his own modified definition, in which the various types of soul or faculties of soul are defined in a series. The standard Aristotelian definition appears in *On the Soul* (*Fi n-nafs*) sixth section of the *Natural Philosophy* (*Tabi'iyat*) part of his great *summa*, the *Book of Healing* (*Kitab al-Šifa'*): "So the soul which we are defining is a first perfection of a natural instrumental body [which the soul uses] to perform the activities of living"¹⁷. The precise definition of Aristotelian *entelekheia*, and on the other hand, the concept of *kamāl* in Ibn Sina's definition of the soul, leads us to the conceptual differences between the two philosophers. This is where Ibn Sina separates from the Aristotelian tradition.

Aristotle believes in "hylomorphic" conception of the relation of soul and body, which puts soul and body, in unity without losing the distinction by viewing one as actuality and the other as potentiality¹⁸. Although, Aristotle's hylomorphic pattern is at work in Avicenna's reworking of the *De anima*, but its applicability is limited to the case of the soul of inferior living beings. That is, Aristotle's general definition of the soul as form and first actuality of a natural body potentially having life corresponds to Avicenna's notion of inseparable perfection which he applies only to the soul of plants and animals. Avicenna's original contribution to the science of the soul is, by contrast, the notion of separable perfection referred to the human, rational soul¹⁹.

Soul-Body relations

In Aristotle viewpoint, soul and body are considered exactly as form and matter; since form and matter are one, we can find out the unity of soul and body in the philosophy of Aristotle; a hylomorphic relation; *hyle* means matter and *morphe* means form. They are one like wax and the figure it takes, and generally like matter of each thing and that of which it is the matter. If form and matter are one even in a waxen artifact, this should be much more the case for a natural living being. Soul and body unity accords with his wider thought on unity of actuality and potentiality. The unity of form and matter explicable in terms of actuality and potentiality is hardly a unity of completely separate things on the same level, but the soul is actuality and it is the cause of whatever unity and being there is of body and the composite living being²⁰. As Aristotle believes, the soul is not independent of the body, and no problem arises of how soul and body can be united

¹⁶ Ibn Sina, *al-Šifa'*, *Tabi'iyat section*. Qom, 1388_{AH} (2009), p. 4.

¹⁷ Wisnovsky, R. *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*. Ithaca, NY, 2003, p. 114.

¹⁸ See Polansky, R. *Op. cit.*, p. 160.

¹⁹ Alpina, T. "Intellectual Knowledge, Active Intellect, and Intellectual Memory in Avicenna's 'Kitab al-Nafs' and Its Aristotelian Background", *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 2014, Vol. 25, p. 134.

²⁰ Polansky, R. *Op. cit.*, p. 162.

into a substantial whole²¹. But in Ibn Sina's philosophy, however, soul and body are combined as two metaphysical elements, so called "concrete composition". According to Ibn Sina, form is a separate metaphysical element from matter and is something that is imparted to matter from the outside. He goes so far as to consider the form as a cause partner (*Sharik al-Illah*) for matter²². He believes that matter can only exist by the form imparted to it by the Intellect; without form it would be pure receptivity deprived of reality. That is why prime matter cannot be found by itself. Moreover, matter is [created] for form and its purpose is to have form imposed upon it, but form is not [created] for matter²³. Hence, in Ibn Sina's philosophy, we can find a kind of duality between form and matter and, consequently, between soul and body.

Since the actions of the soul appear in or through the body, we can say that in Ibn Sina's psychology soul as a master controls the actions of the body. That is why he mentions "body" in the definition of the soul. One of the signs of this kind of relationship is that with the appearance of some moods such as hatred, love, sorrow, joy, or fear which, belong to the soul; in these moods, a change occurs in the body as well. For example, nourishment is disturbed by grief, and it is strengthened by joy²⁴. Of course, it should be noted that according to Ibn Sina, these dispositions are firstly and inherently related to the soul and secondly are associated with the body²⁵. It is obvious that the soul which Ibn Sina describes is a kind of substance that dominates the body and its potentiality.

Ibn Sina, therefore, acknowledges that the bodies of living natural objects, including plants and animals, are merely the instruments of their souls; the body is passive and the soul is active. The soul, as a formal cause, is the reason for the unity of the body, and thus the soul is exactly the goal of living being; the expectation from the living being is fulfilled in the function of the soul. In the example of eye and vision, the purpose of eye is to see. And when eye shows this function, it has reached to its goal and end²⁶.

From what has been said, it is concluded that Ibn Sina did not accept Aristotelian form-matter composition for the relation of soul and body. According to Ibn Sina, the definition of soul as form, and body as matter, cannot include all types of soul, and at least, the human soul cannot be considered as a form united with matter. However, he somehow considers the plant and animal soul to be a type of form united with matter, and in the following explanation, he refers to this meaning: "It is correct to call the soul as form when it is applied in a kind of substance in which a plant or animal being is created"²⁷. This phrase confirms the meaning that he considers the soul for plant and animal as a form united with matter; whereas the human soul – in his view – is not a printed form in matter. Ibn Sina, instead of interpreting that the soul is the principle of life or movement,

²¹ Menn, S. "Aristotle's Definition of Soul and the Programme of the De Anima", *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 2002, No. 22, p. 83.

²² Ibn Sina. *al-Sifa', Tabi'iyat section*, pp. 85–88.

²³ Nasr, S.H. *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: Conceptions of Nature and Methods used for its study by the al-Safa, al-Biruni, and Ibn Sina*. London, 1978, pp. 218–219.

²⁴ Ibn Sina. *al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat, with Nasir al-Din Tousi comentation*. Matbou'at Dini publ., 1392_{AH} (2013), p. 307.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

²⁶ Ghavam Safari, M. *Nazari-ye-ye sourat dar falsafe-ye arastou* [The theory of form in Aristotle's philosophy]. Tehran, 1382_{AH} (2003), p. 304.

²⁷ Ibn Sina. *al-Sifa', Tabi'iyat section*, p. 6.

considered the soul as the controller of body. Although he explains the definition of soul, like what Aristotle did, and accepts the essence, and actuality for the soul, but he discusses differently in the meaning of form as well as the meaning of perfection. Moreover, instead of being “in the body” he emphasizes on being “with the body”. Therefore, he does not accept the physicality and impression of the soul in the body. He believes in a spirituality belonging of the soul to the body²⁸.

In the book of *Nafs al-Šifa'*, when Ibn Sina wants to prove the substance of the soul, at first he points out that, of course, the substance is clear for the soul which can exist individually according to its nature; But in the case of plant and animal soul, this needs to be proven²⁹. Then, after proving the substance of the soul for these types of soul, he says: “So the existence of soul in body is not like the existence of non-essential qualities in the subject. Therefore soul is substance; because it is a kind of form which is not in the subject”³⁰. So it is clear that whenever Ibn Sina calls the soul as form, he means plant and animal soul, and when he says that soul is a form that is not in the subject, it means that the animal and plant soul are in a kind of body that is not unnecessarily present in its own consistency. Therefore, it can be concluded that Ibn Sina's conception of living beings is very different from Aristotle's conception; Ibn Sina considers the living being as a being composed of two essences, namely the soul and the body, that its life is through the soul; therefore, it is something separated from the body. Meanwhile, in Aristotle's philosophy, soul and body are two aspects of a single essence.

Substance of the soul

There is no difference between these two philosophers, in considering the soul to be a substance. Aristotle, while defining the soul, emphasizes that: “the soul is a substance as the form of a natural body which has life in potentiality” (412a20). In one sense, substance is matter, which is, something that is not an object in itself. But in another sense, substance is form which actualizes the matter and turns it into a certain object. In other words, it is this certain object that arises from the combination of matter and form. Aristotle called this composition as the first substance; it means this [soul-body combination] is more eligible than anything else to be called as substance. The essence of the body is the same. Among bodies, the natural body is the source of the construction of artificial bodies and the source of abstraction of mathematical bodies³¹.

In comparison of the opinions of these two philosophers regarding the substance of the soul, the main question is about the independency; is this substance an independent essence? What we receive from Aristotle's definition of soul-body relations is that the soul cannot be considered as a separate substance alongside the body; in his opinion, the soul and the body are two aspects of a single substance. Everson insists that, in the definition of Aristotle, soul can itself have

²⁸ Dibaji, M.A. *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

²⁹ Ibn Sina. *al-Šifa'*, *Tabi'iyat section*, p. 22.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³¹ Davoodi, A. *Aghl dar hekmat-e masha' az arastou ta ebn-e sina* [Intellect in Peripatetic Philosophy from Aristotle to Ibn Sina]. Mard-e Mobarez publications, 1349_{AH} (1970), pp. 30-31.

no essence. He says: Since the *psuchē* is the form of a living body, it is an essence – it does not itself have an essence. It is not the *psuchē*, then, which can be defined, but rather whatever it is that has a *psuchē*. Aristotle does, of course, provide some characterizations of the *psuchē* in *DA II*³². Since Aristotle has referred to matter that is not in virtue of itself “a this”, that is, a substantial being, he speaks of matter that becomes a substantial being in virtue of its substantial form³³. Aristotle defines soul not as the form of the composite but rather as the form of the matter to highlight this relationship³⁴. This is what is called the “*hylomorphic*” conception, with its emphasis upon the unity of soul and body.

In accordance to Avicenna, when we predicate the term “*perfection*” of something (soul), we are not making any claim about whether that thing is a substance or not³⁵, so first of all, we need to prove that the soul is a substance. It is important to know that the soul in the psychology of Ibn Sina, as Wisnovsky believes, is more like a form as shape – the arrangement of matter structured with a view to performing some function – than it is like a form as substance. With this in mind, the form can be seen as the springboard from which there arise activities associated with possessing that form³⁶.

Ibn Sina emphasizes that the soul is an independent essence. As mentioned before, in his psychology, matter and form are really two separate essences that have made a united composition. For this reason, in Ibn Sina’s philosophy, there is a kind of duality between soul and body. This is a point that becomes clearer with the metaphysical foundations of these two philosophers and what they have said about the relationship between form and matter. For better understanding, we can refer to the theory of the *Flying Man* of Ibn Sina, where he separates the soul from the body in order to discover an independent substance for the existence of the soul³⁷. This is why, he considers the soul as the manager of the body not the principle of the living being.

Soul and life

Life plays a significant role in the conception of the soul. Life is taken to mean that the body is such that the actions attributed to life are issued from it. But in order for the body to be so, it needs something other than itself, just as a ship needs an existence other than the ship itself called a sailor in order to be a source of commercial interests. Hence life is the potential in the body that comes to actuality by the soul. But do bodies contain life in themselves, or whether it is the soul or something else that brings life from outside to the body, or whether life is a blending of both the body and the soul. By ‘life’ we mean that which has through itself nourishment, growth, and decay (412a14).

In Aristotle’s philosophical system, there is absolutely a very close connection between the concepts of the *psyche* and the living being. He calls the organic natural body a potential living being, and the soul is *entelekheia* or the actuality of that potential living or organic being. He emphasizes on it when he presents

³² Everson, S. *Aristotle on Perception*. Oxford, 1997, p. 3.

³³ Polansky, R. *Op. cit.*, p. 148.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

³⁵ Wisnovsky, R. *Avicenna’s Metaphysics in Context*, p. 117.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

³⁷ Ibn Sina. *al-Sifa’*, *Tabi’iyyat* section, p. 18.

a general definition of a potentially living body: “having within itself a source of movement and rest” (412b16). Thus, Aristotle's interpretation of the living being means the body with the soul. Because as he explains, the distinguishing point in a living being from other beings will be ‘having a soul’: “it is not that which has lost its soul which is potentially such as to live but that which possesses it” (412b25). Or in another sentence he introduces the soul in the primary way as the one by which we live and perceive and think (414a13). Here and in the following parts of the *De Anima*, it seems that Aristotle considers the possession of the soul to be synonymous with the meaning of life. He, therefore, seeks to state that the body carries its life potentially, which is going to be actually the soul. On the other hand, the body is not separate from the soul, which has the potential to live: so it is actually the body that has the soul.

Such a body is like a machine for which it has the ability to run, and this ability is what Aristotle calls the first actuality of the natural body. In the actuality of life, there is no difference between plants, animal or human soul. The only difference is in the level of life³⁸. In 412b11–12, Aristotle explains how loss of functional capacity is loss of essence as the kind of thing able so to function. A body having life potentially cannot be alive without its actuality and form, the soul. This may be clarified through comparison of an artificial instrument, such as a double-sided axe to a natural living body. This is the main point of the comparison to soul, that the axe's functionality cannot be separated from it while it is an axe³⁹. Therefore, natural body with potential life is a substance that actual life, the first actuality, is its form. Thus, there is no difference between actual life and the soul.

This is while, in the text that presents in temporal imagery the eternal relation of the world to God, Avicenna speaks of a necessary emanation from the Necessary Being. He begins by describing the Necessary Being at the summit of the universe as one, incorporeal, and the source of all other things. From this Being's act of self-reflection, first effect, a pure intelligence, necessarily proceeds⁴⁰. Ibn Sina believes that soul is emanated from this Necessary Being, which is God. Therefore, from the very beginning, he considers two different aspects for the soul, which are the sources of many of his differences with Aristotle. He says: “This word [soul] is the name of this living being [in terms of the connection between soul and body], does not refer to the essence of such a thing. So its name is *soul* as it relates to the body”⁴¹. Therefore, the soul here is playing the role of management for the body. And since Ibn Sina says that we need another kind of knowledge to know the nature of the soul, we may refer to the second side of the soul which is related to its essence; when it is concerned without the body. These two aspects that Ibn Sina proposes for soul refer to two sides of the soul; its essence and actions.

Therefore, whenever Ibn Sina considers the soul as the first perfection of the body with potential life, he refers to the actions of the soul; in this function, life is considered as one of the works of the soul and the soul as the source of this work. It is clear that such a principle is other than life; like a captain, who is the manager of the ship's movement⁴². This is why in the book of *Nafs al-Sifa'*, as to

³⁸ Davoodi, A. *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

³⁹ Polansky, R. *Op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁴⁰ Zedler, B.H. “The Prince of Physicians on the Nature of Man”, *The Modern Schoolman*, 1978, No. 55, p. 165.

⁴¹ Ibn Sina. *al-Sifa'*, *Tabi'iyat* section, p. 9.

⁴² Davoodi, A. *Op. cit.*, p. 283.

the question whether the soul is analogous to 'life', Ibn Sina argues that in living bodies there occur some known activities or behaviours which are the crucial factors on which we can claim that living bodies are actually alive, and Ibn Sina does not oppose this. But what he objects to is that 'what is commonly understood by "life" as predicated of living things is either a state of being such that the subject exhibits this behaviour, or else the fitness of the body to carry out the life functions'. Neither the former nor the latter is known as the 'soul', for the soul and the aptitude to show the activities of life are not the same⁴³. Ibn Sina is thus content to say that if by 'life' we mean what is commonly meant then the concept of life and that of soul are not the same, but "if by 'life' we mean something such that the term is synonymous with 'soul' in the sense of primary *entelecheia*, then there is no argument"⁴⁴. So Ibn Sina believes that bodies do not have life by themselves; In fact, they have the potential to be a vehicle for life.

Conclusion

Although Ibn Sina's psychological accounts begin with the Aristotelian definition and framework of the soul, but then he slips away from the fundamental themes of Aristotelianism. Considering what was mentioned in this research, it can be concluded that in spite of the many uses that Ibn Sina has made of Aristotle's *De Anima* in his discussions of psychology; but there are some differences in Ibn Sina's philosophical approach that separate him from the Aristotelian tradition. What Ibn Sina does, is to distinguish his accounts of the non-rational souls from those of the rational soul. Unlike Aristotle, he introduces a kind of soul, which is to be the perfection of the body rather than its form; this is the beginning of a separation between Ibn Sina and Aristotle.

In the distinction between perfection (*kamāl*) and form (*Surat*) in the definition of the soul, and in considering the word *perfection* to be a better translation for *entelekheia*, Ibn Sina, in fact, emphasizes that the soul is an independent substance, and not a principle printed in the body. By perfection, Ibn Sina means something other than *entelecheia*, at least, in Human soul. Since in Ibn Sina's psychology, soul and body are combined as two metaphysical elements, soul, as a master, controls the actions of the body; this is why the soul has its own independent activities, which refer to the immortality theory of the soul. Although in the book of *Nafs al-Šifa'*, Ibn Sina – like Aristotle – accepts the substance, form and actuality for the soul, but in the sense of both form and actuality, he explains differently from what Aristotle says. In Ibn Sina's explanation of the soul, "to be with the body" takes the place of "to be in the body". This is while, there is a hylomorphic relation between soul and body in the philosophy of Aristotle; they are indeed considered being one like wax and the figure it takes. In this case, we can hardly find independent actions in the soul.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Ibn Sina's conception of living being is very different from Aristotle's conception; Ibn Sina considers the living being as a being composed of two essences, namely the soul and the body, that its life is through the soul; this is something separated from the body. Meanwhile, in Aristotle's philosophy, soul and body are two aspects of a single essence. In Aristotle's

⁴³ Ibn Sina. *al-Šifa'*, *Tabi'iyat section*, p. 17.

⁴⁴ Dastagir, Md.G. *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

philosophical system, there is absolutely a very close connection between the concepts of the *psyche* and the living being. He calls the organic natural body a potential living being, and the soul is *entelekheia* or the actuality of that potential living or organic being. Thus, Aristotle's interpretation of the living being means the body with the soul. Because as he explains, the distinguishing point in a living being from other beings will be 'having a soul'. Aristotle considers the possession of the soul to be synonymous with the meaning of life. He, therefore, seeks to state that the body carries its life potentially, which is going to be actually the soul. On the other hand, the body is not separate from the soul, which has the potential to live: so it is actually the body that has the soul. Therefore, natural body with potential life is a substance that actual life, the first actuality, is its form. Thus, there is no difference between actual life and the soul. According to Aristotle, when the potential life of a natural body becomes active, the soul of that body is realized. Thus, there is no difference between actual life and the soul.

Meanwhile, Ibn Sina believes that what we mean by the concept of life and that of soul are not the same. Since life is considered as, one of the works of the soul, and the soul as the source of this work, such a source is other than life itself. Indeed, the soul, as Ibn Sina describes, cannot be synonymous with actual life. In Ibn Sina's philosophy, life is the same potential that exists potentially in the organic body, and what the soul does, is to transform it into actuality. Therefore, he believes that bodies do not have life by themselves; In fact, they have just the potential to be a vehicle for life. The main point that separates Aristotle and Ibn Sina is that in Aristotelian psychology, the soul is to complete the organic natural body which has a life, while Ibn Sina believes that the soul contains the life given by God; a view that is in accordance with the religious beliefs of Ibn Sina.

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Компаративное исследование понятий души и жизни в философии Аристотеля и Ибн Сины (на материале работ «О душе» и «Книга исцеления»)

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На разных языках написано множество работ о воззрениях Аристотеля на природу души и отношений между душой и телом. При этом многие такие работы представляют собой сравнительные исследования психологии Аристотеля и Ибн Сины в силу того влияния, которое Аристотель оказал на последнего. В таких работах объясняются общие черты в учениях двух философов, а также отличия Ибн Сины в том, что касается определения души, ее сущности, отношений души и тела и т.д. При этом ни одно исследование не рассматривало отдельно различия между душой и жизнью с точки зрения Ибн Сины и не сравнивало их с позицией Аристотеля. Наша цель в этой статье – сравнить мнения Аристотеля и Ибн Сины о природе души и жизни и показать различие в их подходах.

Ключевые слова: учение о душе, Аристотель, Ибн Сина, Авиценна, душа, жизнь

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