

## The Role and Significance of Knowledge in Farabi's Ethical Theory

Azam Vafaei\* 

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### Abstract

Original Research



Knowledge is one of the most fundamental topics in ethics, and Farabi emphasizes its importance, arguing that the elevation of the soul to higher levels of knowledge, abstraction, and ultimately, moral happiness, is achieved through the rational and imaginative faculties. Happiness, in Farabi's view, is a process of becoming and connecting with the active intellect, transcending the material world. The active intellect serves both as the means and the object of knowledge. The imaginative faculty, when freed from the preoccupations of reason and the senses, can connect with the active intellect. Farabi considers happiness to be hierarchical, and the prophet, having traversed both dimensions of knowledge, attains the highest level of happiness, distinguishing them from the philosopher. Although Farabi's insights into intuitive knowledge, its connection to the active intellect, and its role in happiness are innovative, the evolving interpretations of the intellect and its classifications by later thinkers indicate the lack of comprehensiveness in his theory. Defining the intellect as a faculty for attracting good and repelling evil, which is shared by humans and animals, is also problematic. Finally, given Farabi's emphasis on collective happiness, if individuals in a society are unable or unwilling to attain rational knowledge, not only will collective happiness remain unachieved, but individual happiness will also be suspended.

### Keywords

Farabi, Ethics, Knowledge, Happiness, Soul, Active Intellect, Imaginative.

\* Associate Professor, University of Mofid, Qom, Iran. | [divani.mofiduni@gmail.com](mailto:divani.mofiduni@gmail.com)

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