



2528-9705



## EXTERNAL ACTIVE INTELLECT AND ITS EXISTENTIAL NECESSITY

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### ABSTRACT

*Aristotle believes that there is an internal active intellect in every human individual that is part of the soul and is eternal and grounds all intelligible entities. Avicenna argues for the existence of a unique external active intellect for all human individuals. He not only contends that the primordial intelligible entities as well as the intellectual and perceptual forms should be attributed to this intellect rather he suggest that the latter is the bestower of all existing forms in the material world. In this essay we assay the reasons and necessities that are required by the existence of the Active Intellect according to these two philosophers and proceed to demonstrate that attribution of these affairs to internal active intellect is preferred. Moreover, the existence of external active intellect with the mentioned functions is confronted with serious challenges.*

**Keywords:** Active Intellect, Avicenna, Aristotle, Bestower of the Forms, Soul.

### INTRODUCTION

The theory of Active Intellect that has been coined by Aristotle bespeaks of the existence of an incorporeal and eternal intellect that is counted as part of human soul and exists through all human individual souls in an independent fashion. However, some of the commentators and followers of Aristotle have declared it an external entity and come to believe in an incorporeal and separated active intellect. The external active intellect was welcomed by the next generation of philosophers insofar as some have equaled the Active Intellect with God. Furthermore, some philosophers have considered the same external active intellect the bestower of forms. In the current essay besides comparing the internal and external active intellects, the major functions that are attributed to the external active intellect and due to the existence of which the idea of active intellect seems necessary will be studied separately. Finally, we have addressed the question if the existence of active intellect with the aforementioned conditions and functions is necessary?

The other important issue is the advantage of the belief in an internal active intellect that has been rarely discussed and paying sufficient attention to it can pave the path for new developments in psycho-logy (i.e. science of soul).

**Active Intellect as conceived by Philosophers:****• Aristotle on Active Intellect:**

Aristotle believes in two types of intellect: active intellect and passive intellect. In his opinion, passive intellect is an intellect that is similar to matter and is associated with matter and gets affected by it and is exposed to degeneration. This is intellect in the current normal sense of the term.

But active intellect has different features. Before turning to Active Intellect par excellence, Aristotle provides a short account of matter and form. This account is for underlining the point that active intellect is like form because it is the source of the passive intellect:

“Since in all of nature there is something which is the matter for each kind of thing (and this is what is all those things in potentiality), while something else is their cause, i.e. the productive one, because of its producing them all as falls to a craft in relation to the matter, it is necessary that these differences be present in the soul. And there is one sort of intellect by coming to be all things, and another sort by producing them all, as a kind of positive state, like light. For in a certain way, light makes colors which are in potentiality colors in actuality. And this reason is separate and unaffected and unmixed, being in its essence actuality. For what acts is always superior to what is affected, as too the first principle is to the matter. Knowledge in actuality is the same as the thing, though in an individual knowledge in potentiality is prior in time, though generally it is not prior in time. But it is not the case that sometimes it reasons and sometimes it does not. And having been separated, this alone is just what it is, and this alone is deathless and everlasting, though we do not remember, because this is unaffected, whereas passive intellect is perishable. (However, since this intellect is passive nothing could be reminded to us, while the passive intellect is perishable). And without this, nothing reasons” (Aristotle, De Anima, Book Three, Chapter 5).

**A summary of the aforementioned words of Aristotle in this regard:**

The features of Active Intellect as conceived by Aristotle can be summarized as follows:

1. It grounds all intelligible entities.
2. It is similar to light in the sense that light brings the potential colors to full actuality and likewise this intellect turns the potential intelligibles to actual intelligibles.
3. It is essentially actual and this causes it to have three features:
  - a) It is incorporeal (separated from matter).
  - b) It is impassive.
  - c) It is not combined with passive intellect because it is nobler.
4. Since it is actual knowledge it is identical with its object.
5. Only when it turns incorporeal (becomes separated from matter) it reveals its own essence.
6. Since it never becomes affected by matter when it turns incorporeal it cannot recollect us.
7. It is not so that it might think for a while and stop thinking later (one can say that it is pure thinking).
8. When it departs soul it carries nothing of it with itself.
9. It is eternal.
10. It is immortal.
11. It is in the soul.



12. Moreover, this intellect resides in human soul and is an internal intellect.

*Reasons suggesting that active intellect resides in human soul, or to put it otherwise, it is internal based on Aristotle's words:*

- We need to believe that there is such distinguishing differentia in the soul. In fact, on the one hand, we distinguish an intellect... and on the other hand, there is also an intellect – similar to agent intellect – that grounds them all...
- It reveals its true nature only when it turns incorporeal. (If Aristotle's active intellect was truly incorporeal there would be no occasion to argue for this).

Also in the second book of De Anima Aristotle states:

“Therefore, that the soul is not separable from the body, or some parts of it if it naturally has parts, is not unclear. For the actuality of some parts belongs to the parts themselves. Even so, nothing hinders some parts from being separable, because of their not being the actualities of a body. It is still unclear, however, whether the soul is the actuality of the body in the way that a sailor is of a ship.” (De Anima, Book II, Chapter I).

Having noticed these words by Aristotle, one can add to previous notes the following two more remarks:

13. Soul is dividable.

14. Part of the soul is in the form that it is not the perfection of any physical body and this part can be separable.

15. The incorporeal Intellect (soul) is not the perfection for any physical body.

16. It seems that this separable soul is what we call Active Intellect.

Then, these points suggest that Aristotle believe in a type of intellect that:

- It is one of the parts of soul.
- It is separated and nobler from/than matter.
- It is eternal.
- Intellect is actual and grounds the intelligible.
- This intellect is what Aristotle deems to be the Active Intellect.

- ***Active Intellect after Aristotle:***

According to the aforementioned textual evidences, the place of two active and passive intellects is human soul and Aristotle has clearly endorsed this issue. However, after Aristotle his commentators have interpreted his words in other alternative forms.

Among his Greek commentators, Theophrastus (circa 285-370 BC.) and Themistius (circa 387 B.C.) believed that both Active and Passive Intellects are part of the faculties of the soul (Aquinas, 2010: 21). But some of other commentators contended that Active Intellect lies outside the human soul for a number of reasons.

- ✓ ***Alexander of Aphrodisias on Active Intellect:***

Active Intellect finds an external aspect in the view of Alexander of Aphrodisias and turns to an entity that is superior to man and is tantamount to the First Mover and God. He believes that this is what was suggested by Aristotle because the attributes that have been imputed by Aristotle to Active Intellect include incorporeality, impassivity, eternity, all of which are the features of the First Mover. On the other hand, Active Intellect is simple and for this reason what is the subject of its intellection should also be simple and there is no other absolute simple



but God. Then one can state that it is the eternal unique pure action that only thinks of itself and this is God (Davoodi, 1987: 199).

As to the words of Alexander one question can be raised to the effect that if those attributes that have been delineated by Aristotle as belonging to Active Intellect are only the attributes of the First Mover? To answer this question, we should first turn to the aforementioned attributes:

1. Incorporeality: incorporeality is an attribute that cannot be deemed to be an exclusive property of the First Mover rather according to philosophers, it includes the intellects and souls. Then, one cannot conclude the externality of active intellect based on its incorporeality.
2. Impassivity: active intellect can be an internal or external active intellect even with its impassivity. In other words, it can include intelligible entities even without having been affected by other things.
3. Purity: even if we believe that active intellect is the First Mover and we just believe in a passive intellect for humans this passive intellect should be pure (uncontaminated) due to its incorporeality.
4. Infinity: those who believe in the incorporeality and eternity of soul do also believe in the incorporeality and immortality of intellect and one of the reasons of immortality of soul is the eternity of intellect.

Then, none of the aforementioned points can be a reason for identification of intellect and First Mover.

✓ *Farabi on Active Intellect:*

Farabi also considers Active Intellect to be an entity that leads the rational faculty that is not an actual reason as such along with potential intelligibles from potentiality to actuality. Thus, “active intellect is a substance that is in itself an actual reason and separated from matter (incorporeal). It is neither a body nor is it inside a body and it has never been in a matter and will not be”.

After pondering on the intelligible entities and getting united with them human individuals can promote themselves to the level of active intellect. This promotion is the highest level of happiness for human souls that is achieved while they are separated from the physical bodies. However, even when they are associated with the bodies the representation of actual intelligibles in the rational faculty and the actualization of active and transcendent intellect cause human reason to be neared to the level of active intellect and this is due to the maximum similarity of the active and transcendent intellects. Thus, active intellect embraces all rational souls after reaching the highest level of actuality and incorporeality. Nevertheless, active intellect is not fully purified of every deficiency because its existence is driven from the other and is inspired by other entity. This deficiency will contain all incorporeal intellects as well as all beings save the First Origin.

Moreover, Farabi suggests that active intellect enjoys all forms of creatures and objects. Thus, he contends that all incorporeal forms abstracted from matters and their accidents exist in the active intellect. These forms have continuously existed in the realm of incorporeality and it is indeed from this realm that these forms are emanated onto the proto hyle and other matters. In this moment the forms lose their simplicity and due to the essential property of matters that do not accept but dividable forms turn dividable (Davoodi, 1987: 244).



Farabi believes that *prima materia* is promoted through the levels of perfection based on its possibility, capacity and nature and accepts consecutive forms in a continuous fashion until it reaches a level in which it can be separated from the matter and thus a totally incorporeal form is born. To put it otherwise, these forms, which have existed in matter and been potentially intelligible, reach a point via their ascension through levels of perfection under the auspices of active intellect that they can touch actual intelligibility through getting separated from the matter. In this evolutionary course human potential intellect meets external potential intelligible entity and thus they become united (Davoodi, 1987: 245).

Aristotle depicts the relationship between active intellect and passive intellect in terms of the relationship of light and human visual potency. But one can object that light is itself a potency that becomes actualized under the influence of another actuality while active intellect is of an essential and substantial actuality. This might be the reason why Farabi likens this relationship to that which is found between the sun and sight (Davoodi, 1987: 246).

Then Farabi is of the belief that the action of active intellect is a favor due to which animal rationale reaches the highest levels of perfection and in this way it can touch the ultimate happiness and this is not possible but through the intelligibles departing potentiality towards actuality. The forms that are emanated onto the lower world through active intellect are potentially intelligible because of their initial belonging to the matter. Then after passing through the stages of sensation, imagination and intellection they become an actualized intelligible and assist intellect to turn actual along with it. It is in this way that intellect turn transcendent in the ultimate stage. Thus, the reason of emanation of forms from the active intellect onto the matters in this world is conducting man towards his ultimate happiness and perfection (Davoodi, 1987: 247).

The meaning of revelation according to Farabi is that human reason receives the forms of the external objects directly from the active intellect without acquiring them from the particular matters. Thus conceived, active intellect plays the role of the Arch Angel of Revelation or Holy Spirit that is represented by the most perfect human individual who has the qualifications that are required for presidency of a city (Davoodi, 1987: 248).

#### ***Critical Assessment of Farabi's Views of Active Intellect as the Bestower of Forms:***

Farabi is of the belief that forms of beings are bestowed by the active intellect. To assess this view one needs first to turn to the meanings of form and then proceed through an evaluation of this theory:

Form is divided into two groups by philosophers: incorporeal forms and corporeal forms (Avicenna, 1960: 88). Incorporeal form can be attached to an object from outside provided that the object at issue has already had a material or corporeal form. In other words, corporeal form is the actuality of the object and this actuality cannot be attached to it from outside because the actuality of an object is the latter itself in respect of its actuality in the same way that the potentiality of an object is as such a notion of the object when it has not reached its full actuality. Avicenna has also highlighted the necessity of existence of a corporeal form for all objects (source from Avicenna). Then, the form that turns the matter actualized is indeed a rational entity that is abstracted from the object and its substantiality is not a token of its external existence rather it is the actual side of the object. As it was mentioned before, when we consider something from the point of view of its potentiality we approach it as a matter and if take its actuality into consideration we in fact think of its form. For example, a copper statue



in view of its previous state is a mass of copper while it is now a copper statue that has been built by a sculptor. If we believe that the bestower of the forms of beings is an incorporeal force we should conceive the incorporeal force and active intellect as identical with the sculptor. Having said these, there remains a further question: who gives form to this mass of copper? Sculptor or active intellect? We know all that the sculptor is the one who has bestowed this statue its form. Likewise, the one who bestows forms to other artifacts is their builders like carpenter, mason and so on and so forth. However, Farabi believes that the forms of all beings are endowed upon them by active intellect and the form that is received by matter is also emanated unto it by the active intellect. Therefore, Farabi's theory is faced with a serious challenge in this field. Perhaps it was this point, i.e. internality and incorporeality of attached forms, that have forced Mulla Sadra to attribute the succession of forms to the substantial material movement.

### ***Common Features of Mulla Sadra's Theory of Substantial Motion and Farabi's Theory of Active Intellect:***

We review part of Farabi's theory:

He believes that prima materia ascends through the stages of perfection based on its potentiality, disposition and nature and receives consecutive forms so that it reaches a station in which it can be separated from matter and there is no room for any intelligible incorporeal form to come to existence. In other words, the forms that have existed in the matter and been potentially intelligible reach full incorporeality via ascension through the stages of perfection and under the auspices of active intellect. In this evolutionary course of initiation human reason meets the external potential intelligible and thus they become united. Those forms that are emanated onto the lower world by active intellect are first potentially intelligible due to their association with matter and after it via passing through the stages of sensation, imagination and intellection they turn to actual intelligible and assist intellect to reach its actuality and turn transcendent. Then, the major cause of the endowment of forms by active intellect upon the matters in this world is leading man towards his primordial happiness and perfection.

As it is evident, Farabi's notion of the levels of the perfection of matter and form is of much similarity to the stages of the movement of creatures and likewise the same is the case with the soul's substantial movement although there is a difference in that the agent of movement in Farabi is active intellect while in Mulla Sadra it is a movement inside the substance. Then, it seems that Mulla Sadra has adopted part of his own theory of substantial movement from Farabi but since he has believed in the materiality of form in the sense of actuality he has not considered the external active intellect as the agent of movement in form.

- ***Avicenna on Active Intellect:***

Realization of self-evident intelligibles by active intellect:

Avicenna believes in an external active intellect which is both the bestower of forms and produces all intelligibles:

In the second chapter of his work "On Soul" under the title of "*demonstration of the existence of incorporeal rational substance for bodies and human souls as well as the demonstration of the fact that when souls depart the body become united*" he writes of active intellect as follows:

"We recognize that the rational substance of infants is void of every rational form and then we find some untaught intelligibles there. Then, realization of those forms in rational substance



has been either through sensory experience or via divine compassion. Anyway, the actualization of this initial rational form cannot be via experience because the latter cannot contain any necessary judgement” (Avicenna, 1952: 176).

Then he argues for such rational principles as the whole’s being larger than parts and non-contradiction law and equality of the objects that are equal with a third object and provides reasons for their actualization in the concrete experience.

Then, since there are only two justifications for their actualization and the first one is invalid then the second justification will be valid:

“These rational maxims are informed by the divine bless connected with the rational soul. Rational soul gets connected to it and through this connection the relevant rational form dawns onto it and this bless as long as it does not contain this universal rational form in its essence can never make it depicted on the rational soul. Then, these forms exist in the essence of this bless and every essence in which there are rational forms it is certainly an incorporeal substance and exists not in the body and cannot be constituted by the physical. Therefore, in this form this bless to which the rational soul is connected is like light for the eye save the benefit of light for eye is only perceptual” (Avicenna, 1952: 176).

**Summary:**

- 1- Rational substance of infants is void of all types of rational forms.
- 2- Then certain forms are found in it without any educational background.
- 3- These forms are acquired either through experience or via divine compassion.
- 4- These forms are not acquired via experience.
- 5- Then they are acquired via divine grace.
- 6- Rational soul is connected to divine grace and as long as this connection does not exist these intelligibles are not reflected in rational soul.
- 7- This grace is neither a physical body nor is it in any body and it is in itself by itself.

**Analytical Assessment:**

1. It should be taken for granted that there are certain intelligibles in human being that have not come into being via experience and the assessment of the cause of their existence is of a considerable significance. Avicenna is of the belief that these intelligibles are acquired via connecting oneself with divine grace and by the latter he means the external unique active intellect. But is there only two justifications for such intelligibles? Avicenna has argued for the possibility of only two justifications for the existence of these intelligibles while one can also think of other alternative aspects. For example, these intelligibles might exist in rational soul or part of it, i.e. reason, or internal active intellect as Aristotle suggests, and they would have not been acquired by means of the external active intellect. Then, this problem cannot be used as an argument in favor of the existence of an external active intellect.
2. It seems that one can better justify these intelligibles via an internal active intellect like what Aristotle suggest than any external active intellect. For in this case at least every human individual will enjoy a personalized active intellect and it is more intelligible to deem an internal active intellect to hold the intelligibles for every individual instead of thinking of one unique active intellect having all intelligibles on the behalf of human individuals.



Then the necessity of existence of an external active intellect has not been so far demonstrated by Avicenna.

✓ *Immateriality of Soul as a result of its Connection to Active Intellect:*

Avicenna continues in the following words:

“Then, now the grace to which the soul has connected itself is a rational substance that is neither a body nor is it in any body rather it is self-constituted and for soul it does the same service that is undertaken by light for sight. Of course, light is only paving the path for visual perception and is not a perceptual form by itself while this substance as such makes perceptual contribution to the rational faculty. Moreover, it is needless to say that it hosts the perceptual forms and though assuming a rational soul for the rational forms is itself a perfection for it and becomes realized when it is connected to this substance and bodily engagements including thoughts, griefs, joys and enthusiasms impede the connection which can be achieved only when one is delivered from all these bondages. Then, when it departs the body it will remain connected to its source of completion and the more it is connected to this source it will be immune to destruction. This is particularly the case if it does not perish when it gets disconnected with it. Thus, after death soul remains continuously immortal while it belongs to this noble substance that we call it universal substance of intellect and the religious scholars call it divine knowledge. But as to other faculties like animalhood and herbage, since none of them can do their special action but via the assistance of body they do not die by the death of body because every living being that does not do any action is idle and there is nothing called idle in the nature unless the rational soul turns nobler via connecting itself to the active intellect” (Avicenna, 1952: 177).

*Summary of the Text:*

1. This grace (active intellect) is like the light for sight but its difference with the light lies in the fact that the only benefit of light for sight is that it is just paving the path for perception not that it is a perceptual form while this substance as such is itself part of the rational faculty of perception. To put it otherwise, it is not only a vehicle for perception as a rational faculty rather it helps the perceptual forms to emerge in it.
2. Perception of rational forms by rational soul is a perfection that is acquired via connecting itself to the active intellect although bodily preoccupations can impede the soul's connection to active intellect.
3. The soul after its departure from body remains connected to active intellect as its complementary part and the more connected it is to the active intellect the more immortal it turns. Then, after its departure from body the soul does not perish. However, soul even when it is separated from active intellect does not perish.
4. Tools and means of soul and other faculties stop working due to their vital dependency on body. To put it otherwise, since there is nothing idle in the nature these tools cannot remain idle in nature and they will surely perish along with the body.

*Analytical Assessment:*

1. Whether Avicenna believes in the immateriality of rational soul or not? If the answer to this question is positive which seemingly is we no longer need the notion of active intellect? Avicenna's immaterial rational soul enjoys the attribute of immortality due to its immateriality and does not need to connect itself to active intellect for immortality.



2. Moreover, the connection of all souls to active intellect makes this question to be raised that how righteous and vicious souls can enjoy this perfection along with each other.
3. If we accept what Avicenna states of the impossibility of connection to active intellect when one is mentally preoccupied and for such connectivity one needs to deliver oneself from all faculties and imaginations like grief, joy and enthusiasm we should ask:

Whether our understanding of such self-evident issues as the whole's being larger than the parts or non-contradiction law requires to be preceded by a connection to active intellect or not?

If such an understanding requires one to be connected with the active intellect this will also require these self-evident facts not to be perceived while these facts are perceivable.

And if the understanding of these self-evident facts does not require this connect then there is no occasion for active intellect.

4. If the rational forms are only perceived by the assistance of active intellect in primary intelligibles or in all intelligibles. In other words, if every thought that occurs in human soul receives its intelligible forms via active intellect or man is independent in his perceptions?

To answer this question, we should further study the words of Avicenna via his other reason for the existence of active intellect:

✓ *Acquisition of Intelligible Forms by Active Intellect:*

In *Shifa: Book on Soul*, Avicenna states:

“Human soul is sometimes potentially rational and only then it turns actual and its actualization depends on an actual cause. Then, there is a cause that assists our souls to become actualized in the field of intelligibles because it is a cause involved in the bestowal of rational forms. Having said these, one should note that the bases of immaterial rational forms cannot be but an actual intellect and the relation of the latter to our souls is like the relation of sun with our eyes. In the same way that the sun can be seen by itself and it is via its light that invisible things turn visible the active intellect plays a similar role by our souls”. Then, when rational faculty becomes informed of particular events in our imagination and the light of active intellect in us shines onto it the latter becomes immaterialized and is reflected on the rational soul. This is not to say that these particular events are transferred from our imagination to our reason rather this is to say that soul's consciousness of these meanings prepares it to be exposed to the grace of active intellect. Then, thoughts and reflections are occasional movements for the soul that prepare it for reception of the divine grace in the same way that middle terms are extremely insisted for acceptance of the conclusion. Of course, the former (thoughts and reflections) and the latter (middle terms) differ in their ways. We will elaborate the latter point in near future. Then, rational soul owes its forms to its relation with the active intellect. In the same way that when light occurs onto the colorful objects an image will be reflected in eyes that is not wholly comparable with those colors. Then, imaginations that are potentially intelligible turn actualized not the imaginations themselves rather the things that are interpenetrated with them in the same way that the effect that by a light is received from the sensible forms is not the forms themselves rather is another thing that has a relation with it and it is born in the mind that is capable of receiving it; likewise when rational soul becomes informed of imaginary forms and becomes connected with the light of active



intellect it gets prepared to receive the forms enlightened by the light of active intellect and are delivered from all type of taints” (Avicenna, 1956: 208).

**Summary of Avicenna’s Words:**

1. There is an agent that causes human soul that is sometimes rational to reach its actuality and turn actually rational.
2. This agent is also involved in the bestowal of the rational forms.
3. Moreover, thoughts and reflections are occasional movements for the soul that prepare it for reception of the bless in the same way that middle terms play a significant role for the acceptance of the consequence.
4. Active intellect like the sun or light that make the sight possible sets the scene for the imaginary forms to be purified of the material stains and be able to get depicted in our soul.
5. Soul’s information of the particular meanings prepare the soul to be emanated by active intellect.
6. The rational soul that has been informed of particular meanings establishes a type of relationship with the active intellect.
7. From this relationship something is achieved that:
  - a) It is from the intellect.
  - b) It shares the same nature with the soul, on the one hand, and has certain essential differences as compared to soul, on the other.
  - c) It is purified of all material stains.

Therefore,

- Whatever turns actual while it is potential owes its actuality to an actual cause.
- Human soul is sometimes potentially thinking.
- The soul’s grip of the particulars in the imagination prepares the soul for emanation of the active intellect and receiving the incorporeal forms as a thinking faculty.
- Thoughts and reflections are merely occasional causes that prepare the path for the acceptance of the result.

**Analytical Assessment:**

If the intelligibles that are realized in our minds can be the result of connection to the (external) active intellect?

These intelligibles are of two types:

- Those intelligibles that take form as an effect of our thinking mind and lead to conclusion and inference.
- Such intelligibles as universal notions or secondary philosophical intelligibles.

As to the first case the following remarks should be taken into account:

a) If those intelligibles, which take form in our mind as an effect of thoughts in our mind in the form of certain inferences, are emanated from the active intellect (that is both external and sacred), every intellectual activity should lead to a correct conclusion while this is not necessarily the case.

**First Argument in Refutation of the Theory of Formation of Perceptual Forms by Active Intellect:**

1- If those intelligibles that take form as an effect of the thoughts in our mind are the result of one's connection with the active intellect, all intelligibles of all human individuals should lead to a correct result.

2- The consequent is invalid.

Conclusion: antecedent is invalid too.

***Explanation of First Premise:***

In the theory of active intellect one supposes that active intellect is part of the Decuple Intellects and these intellects are angels who are informed of the invisible and the affairs and keep the pure truth. Then if every intellectual activity is done under their auspices the conclusion should be necessarily correct because based on the hypothesis, intellects should not err. Human beings themselves are not involved in the acquisition of this result then they should not err too.

***Explanation of Second Premise:***

Human individuals make mistakes in their intellectual inferences. This issue is generally accepted both in empirical and intellectual sciences. These mistakes are corrected in the course of time and following the increase of information and experiences. If human knowledge was the result of connection to active intellect in all cases from the very outset the correct conclusions should have been acquired.

Then, one can rephrase the argument in other form.

***Second Argument:***

1- If intelligible forms in all human individuals are emanated from the "external unique" active intellect, all human individuals would have reached the same conclusion in one unique question.

2- The consequent is invalid.

Conclusion: then the premise is also invalid.

***Explanation of Second Premise:***

We take a particular issue into consideration that has continuously attracted human individuals. For example, we turn to the question what is man? If the answers that have been offered of this question are the same. Admittedly, this is not the case. If the answers are the result of a unique active intellect, we would have had the right to consider the answers one and the same despite the differences of the premises.

The answer will be as follows:

1- In many cases even with the similar premises difference inferences are made.

2- Even if we accept that all human individuals draw similar conclusions based on similar premises the connection to sacred active intellect should be the basis of validity of all inferences though it is not so.

**b) Proof:**

1- If our inferences are the result of our connection to active intellect the latter will be accomplice of the culprits and criminals through assisting them in their crimes because it is this active intellect that has forced them to commit crimes. Moreover, initial plans of these criminal actions has been inspired by active intellect.

2- But active intellect is an angel and a divine creature and naturally it is not exposed to any error.



Conclusion: then the result of our inferences is not the outcome of any connection to a divine active intellect.

The above discussions show that an external divine active intellect cannot be responsible for our inferences and as a result Avicenna's this argument in demonstration of the existence of an external active intellect fails.

b) Such intelligibles as universal notion or philosophical secondary intelligibles and so on and so forth.

Since these intelligibles are always available to human beings and all humans even the most evil ones have access to them, their attribution to an internal active intellect is more intelligible than attributing them to an external active intellect. Then these intelligibles first due to their general nature and secondly in view of their continuous association with humans are better to be attributed to an internal active intellect.

✓ *Avicenna's Other Proof on the Existence of Active Intellect:*

To put it in a nutshell, this proof suggests that intelligible forms should be from another source if the soul is supposed to be neglectful and since the existence of these intelligible forms in the soul serves as an evidence of their perception by the soul the latter cannot be neglectful of them and at the same time since these forms have this latter condition they cannot be in human body too. Therefore, these intelligible forms should be in the active intellect when the soul is neglectful (Davoodi, 1987: 312; Avicenna, 1956: 241).

This proof cannot either demonstrate the necessity of the existence of an external active intellect rather the attribution of the above cases to an internal active intellect is preferred.

✓ *Avicenna on Active Intellect as the Bestower of Forms and Its Criticism:*

Avicenna divides form into two types of incorporeal and corporeal and suggests that no matter is void of incorporeal form: "a form is either a form that is not separated from the matter or it is separated from matter and no matter is void of it" (Avicenna, 1960: 87).

As to the incorporeal form, he states: "a form that becomes separated from a matter for a certain goal is replaced by another form in the matter in order to sustain the matter. Then, form is an essential part of the very constitution of the matter and this constitution is firstly a self-constitution and then it can work as an intermediation in the sense that after constituting itself the form grounds the very constitution of the matter" (Avicenna, 1960: 87).

Then, Avicenna divides incorporeal form into two types: first the form that is emerging, e.g. it emerges through man and secondly, the form that is inherent. As to the cause of first type of forms, i.e. emerging form, he says that the cause is clear:

"And it becomes clarified accordingly that whatever form that emerges on a physical matter emerges due to a certain cause but as to the emerging form its cause is completely clear" (Avicenna, 1960: 87).

It seems that by emerging forms Avicenna refers to artificial forms in which the cause of form is their maker (not the active intellect). Thus conceived, there remains no room for the objection that is raised against Farabi's notion of artificial objects.

However, Avicenna says nothing of the inherent form that appears to be the form of natural objects and just notice the fact that physical hyle has been allocated to this form for certain reason:

"But as to the inherent form one needs to say that physical hyle has been allocated to it for a particular reason and we will soon elaborate it in more clear terms".



He continues in the following words:

“If the form is not incorporeal its cause will not be the hyle rather something that has set it beneficial for the hyle”.

It seems that by this cause he refers to active intellect itself:

“...Then it requires to be the incorporeal intellects, rather the closest one of them, and it is the same intellect that gives birth to something in association with the heavenly movements in which the forms of the lower world are embedded in passive manner in the same way that the intellect or intelligibles exist actively in it. Then, existing forms emanate from it in an allocative fashion ... From it a special incorporeal form is emanated and emerges through that matter” (Avicenna, 1985: 662; 1960: 410).

- *Analytical Study of Internal Active Intellect:*

Aristotle distinguishes between two types of intellect in human being. First intellect is the intellect that is the totality of all intelligibles. This is what we all call human reason or intellect. This is the same reason that is in charge of thought and perception and inference. Aristotle likens this reason to matter. The shared feature of this reason as compared to matter is its passivity. But this reason is contrasted to other type of intellect that is the agent of intelligibles. Here Aristotle has not considered any of these two reasons to be a form or a matter rather just he has regarded one of them to be akin to matter and the basis of this similarity is the passivity of first intellect (Aristotle, 1987: 244). Here there is no word of concrete matter or form rather only a mode of similarity is at stake. Aristotle’s reason for not equating efficient cause and form is that form represents the actuality of matter and although it is regarded as an efficient, formal and final cause its existential power, capability and potency is only in proportion to its matter and material design and cannot take any step further than what allows it its matter. However, many of human intelligibles do not follow any determinate demarcation. To put it otherwise, they are not passive rather they are themselves agents and change bringers. Thus, this intellect is active. Man acts creatively based on his own will and changes the world as he wills. Moreover, since he has also a passive reason this reason is part of his soul but it is not the form of body like the soul. Then, after human physical death it does not pass away rather it remains as incorporeal entity and continues its life.

- ✓ *How Aristotelian Intellect can be the Cause of Intelligibles?*

As Aristotle himself suggests, sight is the form for eye and hearing is the form for ears and likewise sense, imagination and thought might be a form for human intellectual faculty that includes brain and other neural system. Accordingly, there is no ban on application of intellect as a form for human intellectual faculty. But in this case one can deem brain and neural system as a matter and at the same time the sense, imagination and part of the process of thinking that is related to the body as the corporeal form. To this complex that is like the matter one can add another faculty that is called active intellect. This active intellect itself is the totality of all intelligibles, such as self-evident truths and psychological notions that are specifically from man. Moreover, these intellect and intelligibles can create themselves certain intelligibles as such. Intelligible creation can include perception of universals, helping the process of thinking and inference and so on and so forth.

**If internal active intellect should be necessarily immaculate and sacred?**



Internal active intellect should not be necessarily sacred. This active intellect despite its eternity can err due to its human nature. This error that is resulted from human interference can be made up.

✓ *How active intellect can contribute to the inference?*

We know that external sacred active intellect cannot be in charge of human inferences because in such a case all inferences should be correct. But this issue cannot be the case with an internal active intellect since this intellect despite its incorporeality and eternity is active and sacred while it is not one of the angels rather it can be declared an incorporeal force that has been emanated onto man and is able to assist man in perception of universal notions and making inferences.

✓ *Why internal active intellect is preferable over the external active intellect?*

As we mentioned before, external sacred active intellect cannot guarantee the conclusions of human inferences. Moreover, due to the incorporeality and distance of this active intellect from man and the existence of such conditions as being free from mental occupations one cannot attribute the existence of initial self-evident truths that always associate man to this incorporeal entity. This is also the case with understanding universals and secondary intelligibles and given the fast occurrence of these intelligibles on mind their attribution to an external active intellect seems impossible. More importantly, this active intellect is sacred and all his emanations should be immunized to all types of error while human reason is in some way involved in all oppressions and crimes. On the other hand, as we mentioned earlier, the inventor of the notion of active intellect has already declared this active intellect to be internal. Even if we turn a brown eye to Aristotle's idea we still have reasons to prefer the internal active intellect over the external active intellect.

## CONCLUSION:

- 1- Human soul or passive intellect's relationship with an internal active intellect is easier than its relationship with an active intellect that resides in the heavens.
- 2- In this state every human individual owns his own particular active intellect and this is more justifiable than thinking a universal active intellect is shared by the individuals.
- 3- Such an internal active intellect even if it is incorporeal and eternal is still human and does not have the immaculacy and sacredness of an angel. Then it can err and this error does not taint its immaculacy. Moreover, it will not be involved in human errors. However, ten intellects including external active intellect are all angels and should be normally immune to all types of errors.
- 4- Incorporeality of intelligibles and evident truths and their attribution to an internal active intellect is more intelligible because evident intelligibles are always available to humans.
- 5- Then as philosophers suggest the following activities make the existence of an external active intellect necessary:
  - Understanding of intelligibles
  - Acquisition of the results of inferences
  - Existence of self evident truths.

It is needless to say that attribution of these cases to internal active intellect are more intelligible and justifiable. Furthermore, Aristotle as the inventor of the theory of active



intellect endorses the internality of this intellect. Then there is no case for deeming an external active intellect.

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