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# THE ONTOLOGICAL AND INTELLECTUAL DIMENSIONS OF LOVE IN IBN SINA'S THOUGHT

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## **Abstract**

Love in general is a term often used to describe kindness and affection. Ibn Sina observed that love in human life except for spiritual love toward God is always connected to temporary and worldly objects. According to Ibn Sina, true love is intellectual love which is not bound to physical aspects but focused on seeking the Divine essence and the perfection of the rational soul. This idea aligns with earlier philosophers like Plato who believed that true love should be directed toward an eternal and limitless object. In his works Ibn Sina distinguishes between two main types of love: sensual love and intellectual love. Sensual love is driven by desires and physical attraction making it temporary and ever-changing. In contrast intellectual love arises from understanding the beloved object not based on outward appearance but on essence and reality. In this context love is seen as an emanative process that flows from the First Source God toward lower entities including the human soul. Intellectual love according to Ibn Sina is an everlasting form of love that brings the soul closer to perfection and a deeper understanding of God. Love for God as the manifestation

of the Divine essence serves as the main driving force in the spiritual and intellectual journey of humans toward perfection.

**Keywords:** *Ibn Sina, Intellectual Love, Spiritual Perfection, Ontology, Divine*

### Abstrak

Cinta secara umum merupakan istilah yang sering digunakan dalam menggambarkan kebaikan dan kasih sayang. Ibnu Sina mengamati bahwa cinta dalam kehidupan manusia, kecuali cinta spiritual kepada Tuhan, selalu terkait dengan objek yang bersifat fana dan duniawi. Menurut Ibnu Sina, cinta yang sejati adalah cinta intelektual yang tidak terikat pada aspek fisik, melainkan lebih kepada pencarian hakikat Ilahi dan kesempurnaan jiwa rasional. Pemikiran ini sejalan dengan gagasan para filsuf sebelumnya, seperti Plato yang memandang bahwa cinta sejati harus mengarah pada objek yang abadi dan tak terbatas. Dalam karyanya, Ibnu Sina membedakan antara dua jenis cinta utama: cinta sensual dan cinta intelektual. Cinta sensual dipengaruhi oleh dorongan nafsu dan ketertarikan terhadap penampilan fisik, bersifat sementara dan berubah-ubah. Sebaliknya, cinta intelektual muncul dari pemahaman terhadap objek yang dicintai yang tidak terikat pada bentuk luar, tetapi berfokus pada esensi dan hakikat. Cinta dalam konteks ini, dianggap sebagai sebuah proses emanatif yang mengalir dari sumber pertama, yaitu Tuhan menuju entitas-entitas yang lebih rendah, termasuk jiwa manusia. Cinta intelektual ini, menurut Ibnu Sina adalah bentuk cinta yang abadi dan membawa jiwa lebih dekat pada kesempurnaan dan pemahaman terhadap Tuhan. Cinta kepada Tuhan sebagai perwujudan dari hakikat Ilahi, menjadi pendorong utama dalam perjalanan spiritual dan intelektual manusia menuju kesempurnaan.

**Kata Kunci:** *Cinta Intelektual, Ibnu Sina, Kesempurnaan Spiritual, Ontologi, Keilabian*

### The Dynamics of Love and the Achievement of Happiness

Love if seen from an understanding of complete consciousness, will give birth to a true understanding of love. Love in its essence, is viewed as goodness, beauty, and affection. Ibn Arabi, in his book *Sufism* written by

Izutsu, says that love originates from something immaterial and of high value, and is a form of grace or divine power that actualizes an entity in the form of potential so that it can actualize because of God's love for it (Itsuzu 2015). Love is the need for the union of two specific entities without eliminating the freedom of one another. This love is referred to as the love possessed by a productive entity (always creating) that must actualize its creation (Bahjat 2002).

The Sufis also attribute the highest love to God as *Al-Muhib* (The Lover). The seekers must reach a certain *maqam* in order to recognize The Lover. A person who loves and has experienced this spiritual experience will indicate his love for himself and for others (Setiawan 2020). Ibn Sina (*Avicenna*) is a famous Muslim scientist who studied various scientific fields such as medicine, psychology, politics, interpretation of the Al-Qur'an, and other sciences (Hasyimsyah Nasution 2005). He is often referred to as a Peripatetic Muslim philosopher, and is considered an Aristotelian mouthpiece in his philosophy (Titin and Ginanjar 2017). However, at the end of his thoughts, Ibn Sina tended towards Sufism. (Nasr 1996). This can be seen in his work *Al-Isyārāt wa Al-Tanbihāt*. In the chapters entitled *Maqāmāt Al-‘Ārifīn* (The Stations of the 'Arifs/Sufis), Ibn Sina appears to focus heavily on the Sufi method. Not only that, in various of his treatises, especially *Risālah fī Al-'Ishq*, Ibn Sina's views are highly colored by Sufistic nuances

Ibn Sina divides the classification of love into seven parts, including: love that is part of lust, the existence of love in life, love for the vegetative soul, love for the animal soul, love for the side of goodness, love for the divine soul, and the peak of love. These parts are stages that humans go through, starting from the lowest love until reaching a noble position that leads to the perfection and happiness of the human self (Ibn Sina 2017). This is the foundation of Ibn Sina's Irfanic philosophy. According to him, God, through His emanation, bestows the quality of love upon entities both material and immaterial, such as the soul. In material entities, for instance, God grants the function of cutting to the sharpness of a sword. For him, love is *ishq* (a longing for perfection). Therefore, the form of perfection

and happiness is understood through love, where the vegetative soul loves its attributes of growth and development, the animal soul loves its forms of animalistic tendencies such as the instinct to prey for survival, and the rational soul desires the perfection of its intellectuality by loving all kinds of goodness and truth, until it reaches the pinnacle of union with God.

Ibn Sina implies that love originates from God's love for Himself and manifests in all entities within the scheme of emanation. This suggests that the attributes of *ishq* are of divine essence and possess an ontological existence (Ibn Sina 1945). Love is always oriented towards pure goodness and perfection because it is a manifestation of God. Another conclusion from Ibn Sina's account affirms that love in his thought is immaterial and spiritual. In Albertus Joni's research, titled *Love and the Capacity to Love: An Ontological Analysis of Love According to Ibn Sina and Thomas Aquinas* the ontological foundations of Ibn Sina's and Aquinas's thought are discussed. This research conveys that love, in Ibn Sina's view, is instinctive and can be attained by humans through critical thinking and self-reflection. Meanwhile, according to Aquinas, love is the power of Christ for His followers, thus it is affiliative and exclusive to Christians (E. Anwar 2020).

## Love as a Fundamental Principle in Ibn 'Arabi's Ontology

Ibn 'Arabi has a distinctive view of love rooted in the theory of *wahdat al-wujūd*, the unity of existence between God and His creation. In his thought, love is not merely an emotional or affective feeling, but rather a metaphysical principle that underlies all of existence. He asserts that love is the primary cause of creation, a path for creatures to recognize their true essence, and an intermediary for humans to know God (Bahjat 2002).

The ontological dimension of love in Ibn 'Arabi's thought is based on the concept of *tajallī* (divine manifestation). Every form of existence is a manifestation of the Divine Being, and love becomes the force that drives everything towards its origin, which is God (Sumbulah 2016). Love not only functions as an attraction (*jadhb*) that draws creatures to God, but also as a force that enables them to experience Divine reality within themselves.

In other words, love is a fundamental aspect of existence that connects everything to God as its source.

Ibn 'Arabi divides love into several levels, ranging from sensual love to spiritual love. Sensual love begins with attraction to the beauty of form, whether in humans, nature, or other beautiful objects. However, this love should not stop at the outward appearance alone, but should lead a person to true love, which is love for God. In his view, true love is love that is not limited to form or material aspects, but rather love that sees Divine beauty in everything.

This concept of love is also related to the idea of *insān kāmil* (perfect human) who, in Ibn 'Arabi's thought, is an individual who has achieved full awareness of the essence of love as a reflection of Divine love. The *insān kāmil* is not only someone who understands love intellectually, but also someone who truly experiences and embodies love within themselves. They not only love God, but also love all beings as manifestations of Him. Love for the *insān kāmil* is no longer particular or exclusive, but rather universal, encompassing everything without exception. Furthermore, Ibn 'Arabi asserts that love is not only a path to God, but also the ultimate goal of existence itself. When someone achieves true love, they no longer see a difference between themselves, other beings, and God. Because, in essence, love is the very being of God that permeates and encompasses everything.

## **The Hierarchy of Love in the Soul**

The vegetative soul has three primary faculties that reflect the principle of love's movement in its existence. First, the nutritive faculty allows organisms to replace lost physical parts with similar ones to maintain survival (Ibn Sina 2017). Second, the augmentative faculty is responsible for adding physical parts in various aspects, such as length and width, towards the perfection of growth. Third, the reproductive faculty enables living beings to produce something similar in actuality through the process of creation. Love in the vegetative soul is reflected in the drive or desire to fulfill these three main needs: obtaining nutrition, growing, and reproducing.

Ibn Sina associates these three drives with love as a fundamental principle in the plant soul. The nutritive faculty is related to the drive to maintain life by obtaining nutrition, the augmentative faculty is related to the plant soul's desire to develop optimally, and the reproductive faculty reflects the drive of love to continue the survival of the species through the process of reproduction.

In the animal soul, Ibn Sina describes two primary faculties that drive the existence of living beings with a higher level of consciousness compared to the vegetative soul. First, the motive faculty, which directs tendencies and desires, is divided into two main branches: *shahwah*, which draws creatures closer to what is desired, and anger, which rejects and moves away from what is considered dangerous. This faculty works by influencing the nerve muscles to contract and stretch, directing the body's organs according to its biological needs (Kusuma 2022). Second, the external perceptive faculty, which includes the five main senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch—plays a role in capturing stimuli from the surrounding environment.

Ibn Sina explains that love in the animal soul arises from the estimative faculty, which generates meaning from perceived objects. When creatures objectify something, they not only create a visual image of the object, but also generate a specific meaning, such as fear, sadness, suffering, or happiness. In this case, the formative faculty plays a role in generating the form of the perceived object, while the estimative faculty stores and gives connotative meaning to that object. Love in the animal soul has similarities with the vegetative soul in terms of the drive to maintain existence, but at a more complex level due to the existence of the estimative faculty that enables meaning-making of external objects. The main difference between love in the vegetative and animal souls lies in the existence of free will in the animal soul. Ibn Sina asserts that animals have a degree of freedom in determining their actions based on experience and perception, making love in the animal soul of a higher degree than in the vegetative soul. He also emphasizes that free will is not only possessed by humans with a rational soul, but also by non-rational animals in determining their actions.

The rational soul is a distinctive characteristic of humans that differentiates them from animals, due to the existence of reason, which enables humans to understand and consider moral values in life. Although humans and animals can both experience pleasure and suffering, the essential difference lies in the ability of reason to weigh and direct actions rationally. Ibn Sina emphasizes that the perfection of the rational soul lies in its intelligence, which is referred to as the intellect (Nasr 1996). The human intellect is divided into two parts: the theoretical intellect and the practical intellect. The theoretical intellect functions to understand and construct abstract concepts and universal principles, while the practical intellect is responsible for the physical movement of humans in performing actions based on rational and moral considerations.

The practical intellect is connected to the imaginative and estimative faculties, which are also potential aspects of the animal faculty, but in the rational soul, the intellect has a primary role in directing human tendencies towards actions that are morally and intellectually higher. The intellect becomes a guide for humans to do good, because without using the intellect, humans may be more inclined to do bad deeds. Ibn Sina asserts that the animal soul has love similar to that of the plant soul, but the existence of free will is the main differentiator (Ramdani 2021). This free will influences the actions taken by the animal soul, making love in the animal soul higher in degree than love in the plant soul.

The relationship between free will and love in the animal soul demonstrates that this will enables animals to choose specific actions or responses to the impulses of love that they feel. Reason enables humans to weigh the consequences of actions taken and to consider how ideally to respond to phenomena in life. Nevertheless, reason is not automatically active in determining the will, but rather depends on many factors, such as age, environment, and education, until humans reach a stage of understanding moral values in their lives.

Ibn Sina emphasizes that love, although sharing similarities with the animal and vegetative souls, reaches its peak in the rational soul, which

possesses intelligence or intellect (S. Anwar and Daryadi 2019). The desire for love rooted in human intelligence—whether through the theoretical or practical intellect—plays an important role in directing human actions and thoughts towards perfection. The existence of free will in the rational soul also plays a crucial role in driving love. The human ability to choose, weigh, and respond to their impulses of love is a result of the intelligence possessed by the intellect. Knowledge developed through the intellect, both in its theoretical and practical aspects, guides rational human love towards perfection, because the intellect helps humans understand concepts, values, and consequences of their actions, so that love can become a driver for moral actions.

### **The Acquisition of Knowledge About Love**

Ibn Sina believed that humans have the ability to acquire knowledge about entities in this world through perception involving various factors, such as imagination and memory. Knowledge acquired through sensory perception, although important, is particular because it only encompasses objects limited to daily experience and the material world. This knowledge depends on the senses and is temporary, because what is perceived by the senses is entities bound by time and space. However, according to Ibn Sina, there is a higher level of knowledge that is acquired not through physical perception, but through the intellect, which can access metaphysical objects and more universal realities (Laksono 2021). This kind of knowledge is not bound by the material and particular realm, but rather originates from a higher realm—a world that is not accessible to the physical senses but can only be reached through pure intellect and rational observation.

In Ibn Sina's system of thought, the intellect plays a very important role in acquiring knowledge and more universal truths. The intellect has the ability to access metaphysical objects, that is, higher realities that do not depend on the material world. At the most basic level of the intellect, humans can acquire knowledge that is axiomatic—knowledge that does not require a learning process but is known directly and clearly, such as

the basic principle that the whole is greater than its parts. This kind of knowledge, although simple, reflects the ability of the intellect to grasp basic truths that do not require external proof. Furthermore, there is an even higher level of intellect called the active intellect. This active intellect has the ability to acquire further knowledge, even without the involvement of sensory perception (Misbah Yazdi 2006). In this state, the intellect can acquire knowledge directly and without apparent effort, a form of knowledge known as acquired intellect. This knowledge is not produced through the senses or empirical experience, but is directly attained by the intellect through higher spiritual and intellectual achievement. It is this acquired intellect that allows humans to touch upon more sublime aspects of reality, such as an understanding of the essence of love itself.

Ibn Sina sharply distinguishes between the knowledge acquired by ordinary people through sensory perception and the high-level knowledge that can only be achieved by individuals with higher intellectual abilities, such as philosophers, saints, and prophets. Those at this higher level of knowledge can access and understand universal truths through constant mental exercise and purification of the soul. This process, which involves the formation of virtues and inner development, allows these individuals to acquire knowledge that is not only theoretical, but also leads to a deeper understanding of spiritual reality and the Divine essence.

### **The Essence of Love as the Reality of Existence in Ibn Sina's Ontology**

The discussion of love can be classified as an epistemological topic within Islamic Sufism. In Arabic terminology, love is often referred to as *maḥabbah*, which is the masdar form of the word حب (*ḥabba*) and has two meanings: first, to accustom and remain; second, to like something because of a feeling of love. In Indonesian, the word cinta (love) has several meanings: first, to like very much or to be very fond of; second, affection; third, to really want, to really hope, or to yearn in line with the pressure received; and fourth, a feeling of distress or indescribable anxiety (Novialdi and Nurohma Wati 2020).

In Arabic, the term *maḥabbah* comes from the word *aḥabba-yuḥibbu-maḥabbatan*, which literally means to love, loving, or love. *Maḥabbah* in *Sufism* is understood as a noble, sacred, and unconditional love for Allah. The essence of this love is that every atom within a lover (*muḥibb*) becomes a witness to the extent of their love for Allah. From *maḥabbah* develops the concept of *‘ishq*, which is a passionate and constant longing for Allah. The term *‘ishq* is often used by poets to describe love with a stronger meaning than other words. This word refers to a passionate desire and affection for something excessively, which makes its subject blind and unable to see anything other than their beloved (Armstrong 2001).

Ibn Sina uses the term *‘ishq* as a form of natural love and limiting the principle of its perfection. Love, according to him, is the driving force that God gives to His creatures as a manifestation of perfect goodness and the perfection of the All-Loving and Beloved (*Al-Wadud*). In the book *Risālah fī Maḥiyyah al-‘Ishq*, Ibn Sina explains that in every entity of life, there is always love that underlies it. Every entity has a desire to achieve perfection (*kamāl*), and that desire is expressed in the form of love. Ibn Sina calls this desire *‘ishq*, which has previously been defined as a passionate and constant longing for God as the pinnacle of perfection and goodness (Ibn Sina 2017). According to him, every living being is based on love as the foundation of its creation.

For Ibn Sina, love is not only limited to relationships between humans but is also a fundamental force in everything in the universe. He sees love as a force that drives nature and maintains balance. The concept of love in his thought includes several important aspects. First, love as a universal attraction that drives everything in the universe. Second, love as an impetus to achieve goodness, beauty, and perfection. For him, love encourages people to seek truth and wisdom and directs them to what is better. Third, love has a strong influence on individuals, both psychologically and spiritually. Love can provide motivation, increase self-awareness, and help someone grow into a better person. Fourth, love is a source of knowledge. For him, love opens the door to understanding higher essences and truths

that cannot be understood by reason alone (Suwinto 2013, 4). Fifth, love has a spiritual dimension and connects individuals with their origins and with the Almighty.

Dani Ramdhani, in his commentary, mentions that the idea of love in Ibn Sina's thought is closely related to mysticism. Some of his works, such as *Mantiq al-Mashriqiyyin* and *Risālah fī Ṭayr*, also contain mystical elements (Ramdani 2021). However, there is another opinion stating that *Risālah fī Mahiyyah al-‘Ishq* is a discussion of love within a philosophical framework that appears composed of mystical doctrines concerning the relationship between humans and God. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Ibn Sina entirely places love within the realm of mysticism, because he also speaks about love in the context of rational philosophy.

Ibn Sina also argues that love can be acquired through *riyādhah* or intellectual training. He asserts that the maturity of the human intellect enables someone to transcend the limitations of material values and understand universal concepts, such as love. In the Sufi tradition, love is often associated with spiritual experiences that lead a Sufi towards contemplation and union with God. However, Ibn Sina does not explicitly state whether love is *fitrah* (natural disposition) or grace. In *Risālah fī Mahiyyah al-‘Ishq*, he refers to love as a design (in English terminology), or *Al-Mudabbir-Mudabbar* in Arabic, which means the substance of the soul that encompasses all entities. He argues that every entity has one soul that bridges the relationship between humans and the divine soul. This divine soul is the ultimate reality that is the final goal of every search for love (Rafael Ramon 2008).

Within the framework of Neoplatonic philosophy, the concept of love is closely related to the theory of emanation. The fundamental principle of the One is an absolute entity that transcends everything. It is truth in itself, eternal, and indivisible. In Neoplatonism, God is the source of everything, emitting existence in a hierarchical manner (Hasyimsyah Nasution 2005). Ibn Sina adopts this idea into his philosophical system, adding that love is the emanative power of God that flows through the universal intellect,

soul, body, and all entities in the world. Love is the attraction that directs all entities toward their existential perfection. This aligns with the Neoplatonic idea of nous (divine reason), which is an emanation from the One and naturally yearns for reunification with its origin.

In the context of Ibn Sina's ontology, the first intellect through the tenth intellect are entities that emanate from the One (Nasr 1996, 80). These intellects play a role in the cosmological structure and are the cause of everything in the universe. Ibn Sina adds that love also plays a role in the universal order down to the lowest level, including in the human soul. Even in the plant soul (nabatiah), love is reflected in the drive to survive, grow, and reproduce (Hasyimsyah Nasution 2005). In the animal soul, love develops further due to the existence of free will that influences their actions. However, for Ibn Sina, the highest love is the love that leads to union with God.

Ibn Sina distinguishes levels of love in the human soul, starting from love in the vegetative soul, which is biological, love in the animal soul, which involves free will, to love in the rational soul, which leads to transcendental aspects. In Neoplatonism, the concept of spiritual love is more important than physical love. The highest goal of humans is to achieve a spiritual relationship with God, and to achieve this, humans must detach themselves from the material world. Ibn Sina calls this spiritual love divine love, which is the tendency of the human soul and angels to seek knowledge of the Absolute Good. Union with God through love is not only a mystical experience but also a rational process based on an understanding of the highest reality

## **The Influence of Platonism on Ibn Sina's Concept of Love**

Ibn Sina describes love hierarchically within a Platonic framework, starting from love that is sensual and reaching a form of love that has been stripped of worldly aspects (Nasr 1996). Love at the initial stage is still bound to material things and is worldly, such as attraction to physical

beauty and objects. However, along with the development of understanding and spiritual experience, this love transforms into a higher form, namely love that is oriented towards meaning, values, norms, and divine light.

Plato explains love in several levels. First, love at the lowest stage is manifested in attraction to physical beauty, which is still sensory. At this stage, a person realizes that the physical beauty found in one individual can also be found in other individuals. Second, after surpassing physical attraction, individuals begin to understand that the beauty of the soul has a higher and more lasting value compared to the beauty of the body, which is transient. The body can change over time, but the beauty of the soul remains preserved. Third, after realizing the value of the beauty of the soul, individuals develop the view that beauty can be found in many people. This understanding leads to the realization that every person has a value that deserves to be loved, so love becomes broader and is no longer selfish.

In Ibn Sina's thought, the concept of love that develops from simple entities to divine love has harmony with the concept of love according to Plato. Ibn Sina begins his understanding with love for material entities, which is in line with love for worldly beauty in Plato's thought. Furthermore, the understanding of the beauty of the soul in Ibn Sina's thought can be associated with the second stage of Plato's concept, where the soul is considered something more valuable than the physical body that changes over time. At a higher stage, both Plato and Ibn Sina emphasize that true love is universal and is not limited to one individual. Ibn Sina teaches that love ultimately leads to divine love, which is the highest form of love that guides humans to the perfection of themselves.

In Ibn Sina's understanding, sensual love is love that is still bound to passion and the senses, while higher love transcends material limitations and inspires humans to contemplate deeper meanings. He understands love as an impetus to approach goodness and achieve perfection. Love becomes a fundamental principle in the spiritual journey of humans towards true perfection. As has been explained in the previous discussion, love first appears in simple entities and develops in living beings (Misbah Yazdi 2006b).

## The Perfecting Movement in Love

Humans are substances composed of two main elements: *jasad* (body) and soul. The *jasad* is the material element or physical dimension of humans, while the soul is the spiritual element or spiritual dimension that animates the *jasad*. Ibn Sina argues that the human soul originates from the Active Intellect, a pure and unlimited intellect that is the source of knowledge and wisdom. This soul is understood as an eternal and indestructible substance, even after the death of the *jasad*. Humans have the potential to achieve high knowledge and understanding, especially through the development of reason and spiritual wisdom. In Ibn Sina's thought, the human soul has three levels: the vegetative soul, the animal soul, and the rational/human soul (Ibn Sina 2009). Each level of the soul plays a role in the dynamics of love and the process of human perfection.

Ibn Sina sees that love can be found in the vegetative soul, which is responsible for three main functions: obtaining nutrition, growth, and reproduction. The nutritive power enables physical replacement and is associated with the drive to sustain life by obtaining nutrition. The power of growth is responsible for physical addition and is related to the drive to develop and achieve optimal condition. The power of reproduction generates new generations and can be associated with the loving drive to continue the survival of the species through reproduction

At a higher level, the animal soul plays a role in moving living beings through instinctive impulses and emotions. Ibn Sina explains that love in the animal soul arises from the estimative faculty, which is the power that allows living beings to recognize a specific meaning from the perceived object (Ibn Sina 2004). When a subject objectifies something, besides creating a certain image or concept of that object (*al-ṣurah*), there also arises a certain meaning such as fear, sadness, suffering, or perfection. The highest stage in the human soul is the rational soul, which distinguishes humans from other creatures. This soul has two main aspects: practical intellect and theoretical intellect. The practical intellect enables humans to act with careful consideration, while the theoretical intellect assists in the

search for truth and understanding of the essence of reality (Harun Nasution 1983). The main characteristic of a person governed by the rational soul is the ability to choose between various conditions or relationships, such as distinguishing between good and bad, beautiful and ugly, pleasant and harmful, and various other relationships.

In its effort to establish the value of an action, the rational soul undertakes a process of purification of the objects of thought by eliminating the limitations of quantity (Misbah Yazdi 2006a). The intellect, as a person's potential, has the ability to perform various actions in detail, considering all aspects. An individual can purify an object from the material dimension and understand its essence. From there, a person can compose and establish the value of an object and provide an assessment of whether it is good or bad as a basis for determining moral behavior. Ibn Sina explains that the stability of an action of a soul, when combined with the stability of another soul that has a higher level and excellence, will increase grandeur, magnificence, and beauty. The higher stability tends to provide assistance to the lower stability. At the second level, this refers to human actions originating from the animal soul and benefiting from its connection with the rational soul.

## **The Manifestation of Love in the Soul's Movement Towards Perfection**

### **1. Love in the Faculty of Intellect (*Reason*)**

#### **a) Perception (*Idrak*) in the Power of Intellect**

Ibn Sina emphasizes the importance of love for beauty as an approach towards sublimity and the enhancement of goodness, which ultimately leads to the First Cause and Pure Beloved.

By referring to the Prophet's hadith stating that beauty of form exists in the harmony of nature, Ibn Sina unites the concept of beauty with moral values and good character. For him, beauty is not only a physical aspect but also the harmony of nature and good qualities that play a role in shaping human morality and ethics. This understanding is obtained in several stages, including the following (Ibn Sina 2009):

### b) Perception of Internal Senses

Ibn Sina explains that every perception only takes the form of the object being perceived. He states that material form arises because matter is a condition that does not inherently possess that form. In other words, perception requires taking the form from a particular material object.

For example, humans are able to perceive paradise because in the Qur'an there are descriptions of its beauty, complete with adornments and pleasures for its inhabitants. However, although humans can imagine paradise, the form of the adornments and food there is not the same as those in human perception.

### c) *Al-Hiss al-Musytarak*

Tidak ada satu pun dari indera eksternal yang dapat menggabungkan persepsi warna, aroma, dan kelembutan secara bersamaan. Makhluq hidup sering kali mengandalkan ingatan dari pengalaman sensorik sebelumnya. Misalnya, seekor rusa akan segera melarikan diri hanya dengan mendengar raungan singa, tanpa harus melihatnya secara langsung. Dari sini, Ibnu Sina menjelaskan bahwa persepsi dari *al-Hiss al-Musytarak* terjadi ketika informasi dari berbagai indera eksternal dikumpulkan dan digabungkan menjadi satu bentuk persepsi yang utuh.

### d) *Khayyal-Mushawwirah*

Ibn Sina states that in the *Khayyal-Mushawwirah* element, only the forms obtained from the senses are processed further. The formative element forms a concept about an object such as the sun, according to the size received from the senses. However, the imagination element does not always ensure that the state that is formed truly corresponds to the concept sensed.

Sometimes, this element can produce inaccurate perceptions when taking inaccurate information from the five senses. Therefore, he divides the analysis of this element into three parts to understand the process of forming perceptions.

e) *Al-Mufakkirah*

Ibn Sina explains that in animals there is a power capable of composing, separating, and creating differences in the forms collected by the common sense, without eliminating them. *Al-Mutakhayyalah* can work together with the common sense, which fleetingly makes it appear similar to *al-Khayyal*. However, when this element is used by the rational power, it is called *al-Mufakkirah*.

f) *Al-Quwwah al-Mutawahhimah*

This element allows living beings to make decisions about an object by assigning specific characteristics to it. This ability provides certainty regarding the differences between entities, and the resulting perception has the highest level of truth in the hierarchy of perception. With this power, animals are able to avoid danger and achieve desired goals. Humans also use it to make predictions or estimations of an event based on past experiences. Ibn Sina explains that the objects sensed by *al-Mutawahhimah* are not limited to physical objects, but can also include abstract concepts such as love and danger. (Al-Ahwani 1985).

g) *Al-Quwwah al-Hafizhah*

The *al-Quwwah al-Hafizhah* element, or the power of memory, plays a role in storing the images that have been perceived. Both humans and animals can store perceptions of material objects that they have sensed, but only if the object has a specific meaning given by *al-Mutawahhimah*. If not, the image will only be stored in the formative imagination power without having meaning.

The *al-Hafizhah* element functions as a storage place for perceptions that have been processed by *al-Mutakhayyalah* and *al-Mutawahhimah*. Without this element, the perceptions that have been formed cannot be stored or recalled. Therefore, the interaction between these three elements is important in the human cognitive process.

The intellect has the ability to abstract the meaning of love, and if this meaning is recognized and internalized in memory, then humans will have a correct understanding of love. This abstraction is also reinforced by the natural human tendency to seek goodness and beauty as a manifestation of God's emanation of love (Haidar 2012).

Ibn Sina affirms that pleasure is part of perception, and each individual experiences perfection and goodness based on their own understanding. He emphasizes that in the journey towards true love, humans must perfect their understanding of love, move away from the transience of sensual love, and direct the impulses of the highest soul towards Divine love as the highest form of perfection and pure goodness (Lala and Alwazzan 2023).

## 2. Divine Love

Ibn Sina concludes that every being inherently loves the Absolute Good, and the Absolute Good manifests itself to all who love it. The capacity to receive these manifestations varies in degree. The highest level of this attachment is when a being receives its manifestation in all its reality (Bahri 2011). This relates to how the manifestation of the Absolute Good is understood as a form of intellect by philosophers, where the agent intellect receives it not through the senses or imagination, but through knowledge of itself and the things that can be understood within itself.

The divine soul then acquires knowledge through the intellect as it moves from potentiality to actuality, which is interpreted as the human soul—the only intelligent being that experiences the transition from potentiality to action. (Hasyimsyah Nasution 2005). Its manifestation is then received by the animal, vegetative, and natural senses. In the final stage of his thought, Ibn Sina discusses the process of emanation from the One or Absolute Good, which is expressed through its manifestation. If the Absolute Good were not

made manifest, then nothing would be obtained from it, and without something being obtained, there would be no existence at all.

Ibn Sina affirms that God is not an intermediary, but rather the absolute goal. The highest transcendent perfection and happiness can only be found in union with God. He then defines this form of Perfection as 'the pleasure of majesty in Him'. He states that only by uniting with the divine can one achieve the highest perfection. Those who do not understand this concept have a less than perfect view (*mukhdaja*). People who are unaware that true Perfection lies in union with the divine have an incomplete or limited understanding.

Those who have not realized the divine existence will long for an imperfect conception of Perfection, but they also do not seek a broad understanding beyond their limited understanding. (Misbah Yazdi 2006a). Ibn Sina argues that after going through perfect spiritual exercise, a person with spiritual understanding can achieve divine 'attainment.' At this stage, their essence becomes like a clean mirror, in which the divine presence can be reflected.

In this context, there are two possible meanings of the word: first, referring to the overflow of spiritual pleasure that they receive, or second, more precisely, referring to the soul itself. The expression longing for a less than good conception of Perfection describes the dissatisfaction of a person who has not achieved awareness of the divine existence. This indicates an impetus to acquire a better understanding. Conversely, the statement not seeking what is beyond that reflects a lack of effort in pursuing spiritual understanding.

Ibn Sina states that through perfect spiritual exercise, one can achieve divine attainment, where their essence becomes like a clean mirror, reflecting the divine presence. Happiness arises because signs of the divine presence are present within them (Burhani 2001). This mirror analogy affirms that the soul that achieves spiritual understanding will perfectly reflect the divine existence.

In the final stage of its spiritual journey, the soul is no longer aware of itself as an entity separate from the divine; it is only aware of the divine existence itself. In fact, it is not aware that it has been adorned with divinity. This indicates absolute union with the divine, where the soul experiences the highest transcendent happiness. The perfection that is specific to the rational soul is when it becomes an intellectual domain, where all forms of reality, the order of all things that can be understood, and the goodness that flows into all things are etched within it. (E. Anwar 2020).

This process begins from the most basic substance, through high and pure spiritual substances, continuing to spiritual substances related to objects, then towards celestial bodies with their formations and structures, until finally the soul is able to encompass the entire formation of existence within itself.

At this stage, the soul witnesses the absolute excellence, absolute goodness, and absolute beauty of the Truth, and unites with it. If linked to the concept of love in Ibn Sina's thought, the soul's unity with the divine can be understood as the highest achievement of divine love.

Divine love, according to Ibn Sina, is the inevitability of love for God. The soul that achieves absolute union with the divine can be said to love the Absolute Good with an inherent love. (Maulana 2019). The Absolute Good manifests itself to those who love it, and the capacity of the soul to receive these manifestations varies in degree.

God, as the first cause, wills the existence of everything caused by Him (Kusuma 2022). His true love is that His manifestations may be received, and His desire is that all who receive His love imitate Him. The Perfect King wants to be a model for His creatures, while the mortal king is disturbed when made a model. What can be imitated from the Perfect King will never be exhausted and will not diminish His perfection in any way. All duties and covenants have been completed, and God is the Ruler of all the universe.

## Conclusion

The concept of love in Ibn Sina's philosophy is based on the principles of beauty, perfection, understanding, and happiness. He views love as a natural drive that leads humans towards perfection and understanding of themselves and the universe (Misbah Yazdi 2006b). If love is understood incorrectly, this can lead to imbalances in relationships, misunderstandings about oneself and others, and conflicts in social interactions. A mistaken view of love also risks producing emotionally and psychologically damaging experiences for the individuals involved. Conversely, love that is aligned with the principles of beauty, perfection, understanding, and happiness will lead people to balance, justice, and a correct understanding of love as a natural drive towards happiness and perfection. (Puspita Loka 2019).

Love is rooted in beauty, perfection, happiness, and understanding, and it is part of the structure of existence that connects humanity with higher metaphysical principles (Maryam 2024). Love in Ibn Sina's thought is also hierarchical, moving from sensory love towards intellectual and spiritual love, until finally reaching divine love. Meanwhile, in the philosophy of Ibn 'Arabi, love is not only a driving force in the process of achieving perfection, but also a fundamental essence of reality itself. He views love as the force that animates all existence, where all beings exist because of God's love. Love in Ibn 'Arabi's view is the principle that shapes existence and the manifestation of divinity in the universe. Love is not only a path to God, but also the most essential aspect of human existence and all reality.

Both in the philosophy of Ibn Sina and Ibn 'Arabi, love has a close relationship with the soul and perfection. Ibn Sina emphasizes that love is the natural tendency of the soul to achieve perfection, while Ibn 'Arabi sees love as a reflection of the divine essence that flows in all aspects of existence. Both agree that love is not merely a psychological phenomenon, but an ontological principle necessary for the movement and purpose of all entities. Love becomes a universal principle that connects humanity with God, guides the soul towards perfection, and becomes the foundation for reality itself.

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