

Evidentialism in Farabi's Epistemology

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Abstract

Farabi, as a philosopher who presented the Aristotelian tradition in the Islamic world in a distinctive way, combining it with Neoplatonism and Platonism, also retained a large part of Aristotelian epistemology in his own cognitive system. Just as Aristotle, according to modern epistemological interpretations, is largely considered an evidentialist, so is Farabi. Evidentialism means that the only acceptable criterion for adopting beliefs is valid rational or empirical reasons appropriate to that belief. However, in Iran, many, especially some admirers of the Illuminationist and Mulla Sadra's traditions, attempt to somehow discover a kind of intuitionism or at least evidence against evidentialism in Farabi. This judgment contradicts the view of some major specialists in Islamic philosophy, such as Dimitri Gutas. This issue is very important because the shift in Islamic epistemology from evidentialism to other directions played a very significant role in changing the nature of this

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philosophy. Accordingly, in this article, we will attempt to show based on which evidence Farabi is an evidentialist, and how he is largely indebted to Aristotle in this evidentialism, and we will also examine the evidence against Farabi's evidentialism. Given that the term "evidentialism" is an expression from contemporary Western epistemology, we will look at Farabi's philosophy from the perspective of this branch of philosophy. In this article, we will primarily view the matter from the perspective of Western specialists in Islamic philosophy, as their language is close to the language of contemporary epistemology. Our research method is descriptive and analytical, and comparative where appropriate. The findings of this research indicate that Farabi is largely an evidentialist, but a moderate one. This finding is very important in relation to determining the place and role of Farabi's epistemology in Islamic philosophy, as well as the later introduction of intuitionism into Islamic philosophy.

Keywords

Farabi, Evidentialism, Intuitionism, Epistemology, Islamic Philosophy.

Introduction

Epistemology, as a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature, sources, and limits of knowledge, has primarily revolved around the question of what can justify our beliefs; or in any other way, turn them into knowledge. One of the prominent theories in this domain is Evidentialism. This view holds that the justification of beliefs is a function of the evidence and grounds that a person possesses. A simple definition of evidentialism is as follows: In every situation, an individual ought to adopt or reject a belief in proportion to the evidence and grounds they possess. William Alston and Ernest Sosa, in their analyses, regard evidentialism as an internalist theory that bases the justification of belief on factors accessible to the agent's mind (Alston, 1989). The classic form of this theory appears in the works of Richard Feldman and Earl Conee. They believe that a belief is justified if and only if based on the agent's evidence at that time, it is reasonable for the agent to hold that belief on the basis of the evidence they possess (Feldman & Conee, 1985, p. 15). The definition of evidentialism in analytical language is as follows: Feldman and Conee define evidentialism thus: Doxastic attitude D toward P is justified for S at t if and only if having D toward P fits the evidence S has at t (Conee and Feldman, 2004, p. 310).

Accordingly, only evidence accessible to the cognitive agent is capable of providing justification. Therefore, evidentialism is an internalist approach (Alston, 1989). It should be noted that evidentialism stems from the concern for the rational defense of beliefs. This theory, in contrast to views such as Skepticism and Epistemic Optimism, emphasizes the necessity of reasonable evidence for accepting any belief (Conee & Feldman, 2004). As we can see, in many respects, evidentialism is not a new or novel approach; rather, a significant part

of ancient philosophy, both in the West and in the Islamic world, is evidentialist.

What we have stated in the description of Evidentialism is, in a way, an instance of explaining the obvious. But why did certain interpretations of evidentialism gain attention, and why did epistemologists strive to emphasize and affirm it? The answer must be sought in the expansion of approaches that, from various angles, questioned the necessity of the principle of the accessibility of rational reasons to the cognitive agent. Perhaps the most important of these are externalist approaches. Externalists such as Alvin Goldman are considered among the most important critics of evidentialism (Goldman, 1979).

In response to these criticisms, philosophers like Feldman have sought to present a modified evidentialism that pays attention to the practical limitations of human knowledge (Conee & Feldman, 2004). Others, including Timothy Williamson, in discussions about Knowledge-First Epistemology, have attempted to establish a kind of compatibility between internalism and externalism (Williamson, 2000).

Evidentialism, as one of the most significant theories in contemporary analytical epistemology, is an important starting point for understanding the nature of epistemic justification. Despite the criticisms leveled against it, this view still holds a prominent place in philosophical literature, and efforts to refine and re-read it continue. However, in contemporary Western epistemology, instances of denying or ignoring evidentialism by relying on intuitionism are rarely observed. Perhaps, with some allowances, one could place Alvin Plantinga's theory of Divine Sense in this category. Therefore, contemporary Western epistemologists do not face an opposing approach like the Illuminist or Mulla Sadra's intuitionism. Yet, a significant part of Islamic philosophy explicitly or implicitly negates

the evidentialist implications. In the Islamic world, after the decline of Peripatetic philosophy, criticism of evidentialism and the defense of alternative approaches gained considerable popularity.

Accordingly, this article attempts to demonstrate what Farabi's evidentialism is, what its place is in his philosophical system, and what importance this subject holds—especially in relation to rival currents such as Illuminationist philosophy. Through this, it can be shown in subsequent research how the negation of evidentialism by Suhrawardi paved the way for the decline of rationalist philosophy. In this article, we will primarily view the matter from the perspective of Western specialists in Islamic philosophy, as their language is close to the language of contemporary epistemology.

In the last two decades, research on the epistemological aspects of Islamic philosophers and their philosophical systems, based on the concepts of contemporary Western epistemology, has become very common. These studies are mainly, and primarily, focused on the epistemology of Mulla Sadra, and secondarily, on the epistemology of Avicenna (Ibn Sina). However, studies have also been conducted on the epistemology of Farabi based on contemporary Western epistemological concepts. Some of these studies, to the extent they are relevant to our research, have been utilized. One of the most important of these is the chapter "Farabi and Moderate Islamic Evidentialism " from the book *Analytical Islamic Philosophy*. The difference between the present research and the mentioned work is that here, a greater effort has been made to proceed based on the concepts of contemporary epistemology. Also, we have emphasized the importance of evidentialism in later periods of philosophy. The author, apart from the recent work, has not found another work that specifically examines Farabi's evidentialism—especially in relation to intuitionism.

1. An Overall Picture of Farabi's Epistemology

Although today there is an effort to highlight the epistemic aspects of Islamic philosophy in its study, it is primarily Western specialists who have attempted to frame its components within the concepts of contemporary epistemology. To put it simply, most Iranian specialists in Islamic philosophy, and specifically Farabi's philosophy, have rarely shown whether Farabi's epistemology is, for example, internalist or externalist, evidentialist or non-evidentialist, empiricist or rationalist.

Accordingly, the first step is to present an overall picture of Farabi's epistemology and then search within that epistemology for implications favoring evidentialism. Unlike Al-Kindi, who emphasized empirical evidence, Farabi offers a more balanced approach by integrating reason and revelation, where reason and imagination make the comprehension of universal meanings possible (SpringerLink, 2018). Farabi attributes a role to imagination that in Aristotle's philosophy was largely assigned to the faculty of intellect (reason). Accordingly, the role of imagination in Farabi's epistemology has attracted the attention of contemporary researchers. Farabi considers imagination an intermediary between sense and reason, playing a role in transmitting universal meanings into sensible forms. This view is especially important in explaining how the general public comprehends rational concepts through religious imagery and symbols (Maftouni, 2020).

Al-taev and his colleagues have examined the stages of intellect in Farabi's philosophy. They show that Farabi divides the intellect into different stages, each having a specific role in the process of acquiring knowledge. These stages include the Material Intellect, the Actual Intellect, the Acquired Intellect, and the Active Intellect, which sequentially range from potential capacity to the comprehension

of universal meanings and connection with the Active Intellect (Altaev et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Farabi distinguishes between conception and assent and relates certainty to the domain of assent. He believes that certainty is achieved when the assent corresponds to external reality (Özturan, 2013). This framework is seen in most works that introduce Farabi's philosophy. Therefore, reviewing it does not help us much with the specific issue of this research. In these works, we rarely find an answer to the question: Is Farabi an evidentialist? Fundamentally, in the review, reading, and interpretation of Islamic philosophy, the specific question of whether Farabi is an evidentialist or not has not been a dedicated focus.

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2. Searching for Evidentialism in Farabi's Epistemology

As we said, the concept of evidentialism is a term without a precedent in the history of philosophy; it belongs to contemporary epistemology. Therefore, searching Farabi's works for evidence favoring evidentialism must be done in a different way. It seems the most key term in the literature of Farabi—and also Avicenna (Ibn Sina)—that somehow guides us toward evidentialism, are the terms related to Reason, but not of the common type and in the manner briefly explained above. Some have said that in the history of Islamic philosophy, Farabi can be considered the pioneer of rationalism. It has even been said that in his philosophical analyses, Farabi considered reason to be superior to other tools of cognition and the criterion for judging truth and falsehood (Nasr, 2006). However, such descriptions are general and do not lead us to our specific goal.

However, in contemporary studies by Western Farabi scholars, some researchers have pointed to the presence of signs of evidentialism in Farabi's epistemology. For example, in Chapter Four of the book

Analytic Islamic Philosophy, the author introduces Farabi as a representative of "Moderate Islamic Evidentialism". In this view, Farabi, by emphasizing reason and argumentation, especially in theoretical domains, approaches a type of evidentialism, even though he also accepts the role of imagination and revelation in religious and revelatory domains. Furthermore, in the Stanford Encyclopedia entry for Farabi, it is stated that, according to Farabi, certain knowledge is the result of demonstrative arguments that are based on necessary and universal premises. This view is compatible with the principles of evidentialism, as it emphasizes that justified beliefs must be based on evidence and logical arguments.

Nevertheless, Farabi, in his works, such as *The Conditions of Certainty*, refers to various levels of certainty and accepts that some beliefs may be acquired through non-demonstrative methods, such as rhetoric or poetry. This indicates that he believed in a type of moderate evidentialism, in which, although emphasis is placed on evidence and argument, the role of other factors is also considered. Furthermore, Farabi, in his works, including *Enumeration of the Sciences* and *The Views of the People of the Virtuous City*, introduces reason as the necessary tool for achieving truth. He believes that certain knowledge is impossible without rational argumentation and demonstration (Fakhry, 2002). Some contemporary researchers also hold a similar view. For instance, Naqibzadeh believes that "Reason in Farabi's thought not only operates independently of revelation and religious law, but in case of conflict, it interprets the transmitted texts in favor of rational argumentation" (Naqibzadeh, 2014, p. 45). Farabi, in his treatise *Exhortation to the Path of Happiness* clearly states that whenever a rational judgment based on certain demonstration conflicts with the apparent meaning of religious texts,

the interpretation of the religious text is obligatory (Al-Farabi, 1985). As one of Farabi's commentators, 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī, writes in *Gawhar-i Murād*: "Reason, in acquiring divine and other forms of knowledge, does not depend on the establishment of religious law and possesses complete independence" (Lāhījī, 1996, p. 67). Based on Farabi's views, he introduces reason as the basis for argumentation in metaphysical matters (Lāhījī, 1996). In *Gawhar-i Murād*, he considers reason as the source of all knowledge and emphasizes its precedence over religious texts in the realm of theory.

Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī¹, in his commentary on *Ḥikmat al-Isḥrāq* (The Philosophy of Illumination) and his other works, considers philosophy to belong to humanity in general, and religion to be specific to its followers. He believes that philosophical rationality is independent of religious teachings (Shirazi, 2003). Of course, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī generally inclines more towards Illuminationist intuitionism than Farabi's evidentialist rationalism.

However, even such descriptions of Farabi's philosophy, or even quotes with this meaning from Farabi himself, cannot provide solid evidence in favor of Farabi being an evidentialist, because fundamentally, even the most anti-evidentialist philosophers in the tradition of Islamic philosophy (such as Suhrawardi) have spared no effort in praising reason. Therefore, it is necessary to search in Farabi's works for evidence that shows he approached something similar to the definition of evidentialism—as mentioned above—and the mere affirmation of the importance and validity of reason is not sufficient to

1. Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (1237–1311 CE) is mostly considered a commentator and interpreter of Avicenna and Suhrawardi, but he has also addressed Farabi's views in his commentaries. He cannot be considered a "direct commentator on Farabi," but he occasionally reports and critiques Farabi's viewpoints in his works.

prove our claim. Now let's see what we can find by delving into Farabi's works for this purpose.

Farabi, as one of the founders of the rationalist tradition in Islamic philosophy, believed that no philosophical proposition or claim is valid without argumentative support. He repeatedly states the necessity of grounding philosophical claims in rational demonstrations in his works, considering it a necessary condition in the domain of philosophy (Fakhry, 2002).

In his important work, *Ihṣāʾ al-ʿUlūm* (Enumeration of the Sciences), Farabi defines philosophy as a knowledge built upon rational argumentation and contrasts it with transmitted sciences. He emphasizes that every philosophical claim must be proven through certain demonstrations and rational inferences, and a claim without proof lacks epistemic value (Al-Farabi, 1985).

Furthermore, in his treatise *Al-Jamʿ bayna Raʾyay al-Ḥakīmayn* (The Harmonization of the Views of the Two Sages), Farabi shows that philosophical differences can only be resolved through argumentation and demonstration. By systematically analyzing the views of Plato and Aristotle, he insists that every philosophical theory must be based on solid demonstrations, or else it lacks philosophical validity (Al-Farabi, 1961).

In the treatise *Faḍīlat al-ʿUlūm* (The Virtue of the Sciences), Farabi explicitly declares that the virtue of the sciences, in addition to the nobility of the subject matter, depends on the "thoroughness of demonstrations" and precision in arguments:

The virtue of the sciences and arts is only achieved by one of three things: either by the nobility of the subject matter, or by the thoroughness of demonstrations, or by the greatness of the usefulness therein (Al-Farabi, n.d.-a, p. 22).

Farabi paid critical attention to the point that non-demonstrative methods, such as persuasion (rhetoric), have no place in philosophy. In *Al-Ḥurūf* (The Book of Letters), he considers the method of philosophy to be based on demonstration and says that persuasion (the method of religion) is subordinate to demonstration: "Philosophy relies on demonstration, and religion on the method of persuasion; and demonstration precedes persuasion" (Al-Farabi, n.d.-b, p. 45).

Also, in *Al-Fuṣūl* (Aphorisms), Farabi states that wisdom and philosophy seek the knowledge of ultimate causes, and this knowledge is only possible through demonstration: "Wisdom, in the subsequent stage, explains that this existence... gives reality to other existents" (Al-Farabi, n.d.-c, p. 33).

Farabi's explicit declarations of the primacy of demonstration are not limited to these instances. In *Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿUlūm* (Enumeration of the Sciences), he says: "Only by demonstration can the existence of anything be proven, unless its existence is identical to its essence" (Al-Farabi, 1985, p. 18).

In his critique of *Kalām* (Theology), Farabi states that the *mutakallimūn* (theologians), instead of relying on certain demonstration, use dialectic and sophistry, which can in no way reveal the truth. He clarifies that philosophy must be absolutely reliant on rational demonstrations, and dialectic has no place in it (Fakhry, 2002; Nasr, 2006).

As we know, one of the most prominent Western interpreters of Islamic philosophy is Dimitri Gutas. Now let's see what reading Gutas has of Farabi's epistemology. In Gutas's judgment, Farabi accepts the Aristotelian concept of demonstration as the sole legitimate method for attaining certain knowledge and scientific understanding. He relegates other forms of argumentation—dialectic,

rhetoric, and poetry—to the domain of persuasion and social function (Gutas, 2001 a, p. 43). This judgment by Gutas is evident from the quote we previously brought from Farabi himself. Furthermore, Gutas believes that "for Farabi, achieving certainty in knowledge is possible only through demonstration; a demonstration that alone provides a necessary, universal, and true account of the world" (Gutas, 2002, p. 85).

Another statement of this judgment is found in Gutas's quote: "Following Aristotle, Farabi considers demonstration to be the highest form of syllogism; the form that produces knowledge in its most precise sense, through the necessity of the premises and the validity of the form of the argument" (Gutas, 2001 b, p. 29). In the latter statement by Gutas, there are two subtle and important points, which, although not exclusively stated by Gutas, are of great significance.

First, he considers Farabi to be a follower of Aristotle in terms of his demonstrative approach (Burhan-ism). If this claim is correct—which, relying on the evidence we provided above, is difficult to doubt—then Farabi's evidentialism appears self-evident. The second point is that he considers demonstration the highest rank of knowledge—and not merely one of the highest ranks. In the next section, we will try to show what decisive importance these two points hold.

3. Does the Term "Demonstration" Imply Evidentialism?

With some considerations, this question can be answered affirmatively. What is termed "Demonstration" in the terminology of Farabi and later Islamic philosophers encompasses a significant part of the meaning of the term "Evidence". Therefore, it can be claimed that the degree of reliance an Islamic philosopher places on demonstration (proof) makes them evidentialist to that same degree. This point becomes clear by comparing the definition of demonstration

in Islamic philosophical literature with the definition of evidence in contemporary epistemology literature. The emergence of the approach that defends evidentialism in contemporary philosophical literature is essentially an attempt to re-emphasize the importance of evidence (proof) in reaching knowledge.

Of course, it must be noted that there are differences between evidence in contemporary epistemology and demonstration in Islamic philosophy. However, this difference does not compromise our goal. In contemporary epistemology, direct sensory perception is also considered among the evidence leading to knowledge, at a level equal to syllogism. However, in the Islamic philosophical tradition, syllogism (and thus demonstration) is placed at a higher level than direct sensory perception.

In any case, the comparison between demonstration and evidence leads us to a more subtle point. The opposition of the critics of evidentialism in the Islamic philosophical tradition primarily rests on the opposition to the absolute validity of demonstration. To put it simply, when they intend to attack evidentialism, they attack the exclusive validity of demonstration, asserting that there is another way to reach the truth—especially a more transcendent, purified, and important kind of truth—besides demonstration. For instance, Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī repeatedly directs criticisms against the sole reliance on demonstration and Greek philosophical reason. In contrast, he considers the rank of spiritual taste, Illumination, and intuition superior for comprehending the authentic truth. Suhrawardī says in *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* (The Philosophy of Illumination): "Not everything that is grasped by demonstration is grasped by the truth, for the Illumination and Lights have a spiritual taste that the people of speculation and demonstration do not attain" (Suhrawardī, 1992, p. 150).

He also states in *Mūnis al-ʿUshshāq* (The Lover's Companion):

"And that which pertains to the secrets and realities of the Lights is only achieved through spiritual taste and observation (vision) and the pure intellect has no path to it" (Suhrawardi, 1990, p. 325).

Not only are Suhrawardi's works filled with numerous instances of such quotes, but the philosophical literature tradition post-Suhrawardi, as well as our mystical tradition, is saturated with it.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Farabi, like Avicenna (Ibn Sina), has works and passages that not only seriously call into question his and Avicenna's evidentialism, but also present strong evidence in favor of their intuitionism.

In Farabi's case, specifically, his book *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) is a serious and undeniable piece of evidence. A response can be argued thus: It is precisely for these reasons that philosophers like Farabi have been rightly termed moderate evidentialists by some researchers, because they did not exclusively restrict justification to evidence (a point that was somewhat alluded to earlier).

Another potential response is that if we consider the dominant current in Farabi's philosophical literature—that is, what flows through the majority of his works—it points to Farabi's adoption of evidentialism. To be more explicit, if we consider the entirety of Farabi's works, the works pointing towards intuitionism are placed on the periphery in comparison to those pointing toward evidentialism.

However, this second argument is debatable, as in judging a philosopher, the centrality or marginality of an idea is not a decisive reason for judgment. In fact, in many cases, marginal ideas have been the source of greater controversies.

A third response that can be offered is that the Peripatetic Islamic philosophers were never able to escape the allure of intuitionism and were never entirely satisfied with evidentialism. As a

result, we witness a kind of oscillation (or back-and-forth movement) between evidentialism and intuitionism, although evidentialism still maintains prominence compared to intuitionism.

Therefore, if we can show that evidentialism prevails as an irreplaceable principle in the philosophical systems of Farabi, and consequently Avicenna (Ibn Sina), we can then argue—by examining the presence or absence of evidentialism in *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* (Illuminationist Philosophy) and even *al-Ḥikmat al-Mutaʿāliyah* (Transcendent Philosophy)—in favor of the claim that the elimination of evidentialism from Islamic philosophy (or at least its attenuation and reduced impact) caused the rationalist and philosophical aspect of what is known as Islamic philosophy to decline. In simpler terms, evidentialism acts as a prominent indicator showing to what extent what we call 'philosophy' is genuinely philosophy and to what extent it is mysticism.

This last sentence itself requires explanation. Critics of philosophy and rationalism primarily began their work by arguing that demonstration does not lead us to the ultimate truth, although it does advance us to the initial stages of truth. Even more importantly, it can divert us from the path of truth. The authentic and transcendent truth is attainable through intuition, spiritual taste, and similar matters.

This consensus is held not only by intra-philosophical critics of evidentialism like Suhrawardi, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, and Mulla Sadra, but also by critics outside of philosophy such as Abu'l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī and al-Ghazālī (though considering him entirely outside of philosophy may be debatable). Yaḥyā Yathribī has specifically articulated this claim regarding Suhrawardi's epistemology, stating that Suhrawardi's intuitionism is essentially a re-reading and repetition of the epistemological approach of Abu'l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī and al-Ghazālī.

To better understand the subject, we can look at the dispute between Al-Ghazali and Averroes (Ibn Rushd). The main opposition was over the validity of reason (specifically, in the sense of purely rational and demonstrative argumentation). In a very simple and superficial sense, Averroes believed that, alongside revelation and intuition, reason also guides us to the Source of existence and the ultimate truth, and that these two do not contradict each other. Reason is the guide for the intellectuals, and revelation is the guide for the masses. This was a point that the Latin Averroists, and at their head Thomas Aquinas, took from Averroes. Relying on it (and certainly with admirable innovations and subtleties), they were able to shake the deeply rooted and long-standing tradition of Augustinian fideism. Therefore, the difference of opinion over the seemingly simple belief of whether demonstration and rational argumentation have the final say, or faith, intuition, and spiritual taste, or whether both do, has had very astonishing results in the history of philosophy—both in the Islamic world and the West. The question might be raised that intuitionism and the subsequent Islamic philosophers' inclination towards it does not inherently constitute a flaw in Islamic philosophy, but is, in fact, a new capacity that Islamic philosophy attained.

This is a very important question to which different answers can be given. However, the author insists on a controversial answer: It seems that philosophy, as a purely rational endeavor, is truly called philosophy as long as it remains within the boundaries of reason and evidence (evidentialism). To the degree that it distances itself from evidentialism and approaches intuitionism, its philosophical nature is diminished.

The controversial nature of this answer lies in the fact that, from an epistemic perspective, it considers the primary criterion for the philosophical nature of an idea and theoretical product to be its

pure rationality. This is something that many defenders of Islamic philosophy, particularly the Sadrian tradition (Mulla Sadra), strongly disagree with, because accepting this criterion would implicitly suggest that the philosophical status of the Sadrian system is open to question. The opponents (of the Sadrian system's pure philosophical status) are also, so to speak, not empty-handed. In various expressions, sometimes sharp and sometimes mild, they question the philosophical nature of the Sadrian system.

It is for this reason that in many works introducing Sadrian philosophy, it is always emphasized that Transcendent Philosophy is an innovative and creative combination of mysticism and philosophy (or intuition and reason). The interesting aspect of the matter is that this repeated and frequent emphasis by the proponents of Transcendent Philosophy, and specifically Mulla Sadra's own philosophy, shows that this point (i.e., Sadrian intuitionism) is a controversial aspect of *al-Ḥikmat al-Mutaʿāliyah*.

Conclusion

This article is the first stage of an endeavor that will continue with an examination of evidentialism in *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* (Illuminationist Philosophy) and *al-Ḥikmat al-Mutaʿāliyah* (Transcendent Philosophy). This effort is intended to provide the necessary tools and material for the relatively controversial claim that the post-Peripatetic Illuminationist-Intuitive current primarily succeeded in setting Islamic philosophy on a new course—a course that made it resemble mysticism more than philosophy in the precise and common sense of the word—by questioning the exclusive validity of evidence in reaching the truth.

Therefore, the intuitionistic or evidentialist nature of a school of thought is neither an inherent merit nor a flaw. Rather, the key

point is that if an idea is to be considered philosophical, it must epistemologically follow the standard of evidentialism—even if it is the moderate version. In contrast, if an idea validates intuitionism (without any value judgment being made), it is outside the domain of philosophy. Of course, it is clear that this idea is unacceptable to many defenders of Transcendent Philosophy. However, if we take contemporary epistemology—that which is known as the Theory of Knowledge or Epistemology—as the standard, this claim appears very obvious, clear, and indisputable. As was stated at the beginning of the article, in this research, we have viewed Farabi's epistemology from the perspective of contemporary epistemology.

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