Clarification of Moral Moderateness from the Perspective of Islamic Thinkers (Farabi, Moskaviyeh, Qazali and Naraqi)

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Abstract: The present study has been carried out with the objective of elaborating the moral moderateness from the perspective of the Islamic thinkers (Farabi, Ibn Moskaviyeh, Imam Muhammad Qazali and Muhammad Naraqi). The study takes advantage of a library research method. Library research is the method used in all of the scientific studies and the study subject is based on the library research findings in some of them since the beginning. In this group of the studies, the researcher should explore the background and history of the study subject. In the present study, in order to elucidate the moral moderateness based on a library research method, the researcher offers the most important basics and indicators related to moral moderateness, including benefaction, felicity, power of ego, moderateness, virtues and meanness, from the perspective of great Islamic philosophers such as Farabi, Qazali, Naraqi and Moskaviyeh who are mostly the followers of Aristotle and Plato’s schools. In regard of the general results of the clarification of the moral moderateness, it can be stated that the perspectives of Farabi, Imam Muhammad Qazali and Muhammad Naraqi are very much similar to those of Aristotle and they have not had a special innovation in elucidation of the moral moderateness but the perspectives and notions of Ibn Moskaviyeh, especially in regard of moderateness, feature innovations disregarding his pure following of the lead of Aristotle and Plato. The abovementioned cases have been investigated thoroughly by the researcher within the format of the current research paper in the forthcoming parts constituting five chapters.

Keywords: ........

INTRODUCTION

Mankind has always taken steps in line with brief recognition of the subjective sciences so that he might gain an insight over the meaning of the universe and figure out the secret of the creation and he needs to be morally good because he is a social creature. Based thereon, the moral issues have always kept the minds of the philosophers busy and have made them perform explorations and searches to understand and discover the thing that is termed ethical behavior. Ethics are amongst the original manifestations of the human society and no domain of the human life can be found that has been left unimpressed by the moral principles and beliefs (philosophical contemplations in ethics, Zahra Ehsani, 11).

In fact, ethics and moral nature of the human being is an area incorporated by the larger internal life fields thereof. The questions as to what actions or feelings are moral and which of them are immoral or, in other words, what is correct and what is incorrect in different periods of time and under certain statuses might be the most essential questions with which everyone is faced (Qoreishi, 2014). Since the advent of meta-ethics (ethical philosophy), each morality has had a content and credibility, including the most important Aristotelian moral indices and their subsequent philosophical ethics, middle-way or golden
mean theory. In Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle points to an inscription in Delos to express the history of inclinations towards the moderation and sobriety in the ancient Greek as follows: “The thing that is more moderate and more just is finer ...” (Aristotle, 2002, 71).

The middle way axiom, as the most important approach in Aristotelian ethics, is a research having its public and traditional roots in the ethics philosophy. Aristotle has proposed the theory in contract to Plato’s exemplary ethics. The theory reveals to the reader the idea that virtuousness is nothing apart from the nature of the human beings and other things. Therefore, to achieve such virtues, one should act based on his or her nature. Middle way helps us behave like human beings and be good human beings. Based on the theory, virtuousness is a middle state but not in terms of quantity rather it is the middle point of two extremes. In Aristotelian ethics, the middle way is the moderation state of the person who chooses temperance; thus, the middle way, as a virtue, is derived of the norms and habits and is rendered persistent by them. In Aristotle's mind, the human laws and traditions order morality that is defined as acting in accordance to the virtues exercised in a society. The particular function of the middle way axiom is the recognition of the correct conditions of performance. The recognition of the correct conditions of performing actions is the duty of every human being. Generally, it seems that the middle way axiom is an integral part of Aristotelian philosophy system. It is a philosophical approach to ethics that has been drawn on a tradition inherited by Aristotle (Saifollahi, 2010).

This is why McIntire, an explicator of Aristotelian ethics, confesses that imagining a middle way might possibly be the difficult concept in ethics (McIntire, 2000, 65). According to the idea that, from Aristotle's perspective, it is difficult to arrive at a middle way and for determining the middle ways, one should either be a practical sage or imitate the practical sages (practical phronimos or manicus's sage), in every society, the actual sages should be trained who can precisely evaluate and investigate all the factors of a situation to specify partial middle ways for varying conditions (Sayyed Qoreishi et al, 2010).

Certain concepts, including the more important felicity and excellence, play key roles in defining a middle way as intended by Aristotle. Aristotle introduces felicity as the utmost goodness and general and natural optimum for the human beings, “the activity of ego in consistency with virtue”. It means that felicity paves the way for reaching a sort of virtue that is accompanied by activity and arriving at a virtue in such a way that it does not lead to a benevolent action or activity is not benevolent in his idea and the activity in accordance to virtue is a component thereof (Ibid, 1098). In this definition, Aristotle underlines the importance of performing activities in reaching felicity and believes that the felicitous mankind, besides having to have the rote paragon of virtue, should be practically taking it into account because from, his perspective, a person might have a virtue in a potential form inside him or her but it never reaches the actualization stage like a person who is asleep or prevented from performing an activity for any reason. On the contrary, the actual virtue and goodness will surely reach actualization because the person whose activities are consistent with virtue necessarily performs certain activities that are in compliance with benefaction and goodness.

To elaborate the special concept of virtue in regard of the mankind, Aristotle divides the phenomena appearing in the ego into three parts: 1) reactions that are accompanied by pleasure and pain like lust, anger, fear, courage, jealousy, hatred, zeal and sympathy; 2) faculties that are talents setting the ground for the perception of the reactions such as the talent for perceiving anger and lust; and, 3) habits that are talents by way of which a person does good or bad things: for example excess and prodigality in anger is an improper and unpleasant behavior that if kept to a mean it can be proper and favorable (Ibid, 1105).

Moreover, the virtues and the mean behaviors are not at all faculties because nobody becomes a virtuous or mean person based on the talent for receiving the feelings and reactions so as to deserve being admired or reproached. The human beings’ faculties and talents are natural and intrinsic while, as Aristotle puts it, virtue is neither natural nor intrinsic and nobody is good or bad intrinsically rather virtue is actually acquired by the aid of the nature (Shoja’ei, 2017).

In defining ethical virtues, Aristotle states that "it more or less exist in any divisible amount and there is a medium limit between the two extremes that is an objective or mathematical middle way with the same
distance to the both ends; but, there is also a middle way “in respect to us” that is not the same in all mankind rather it is different from a person to another; for example when ten is high and two is low, six is the mean. This mean is a value but the correct middle limit for us cannot be counted like this because if ten units of food for a person are high and two units are low, the sport trainer does not simply specify six units of food for a person because this amount can be large or small for that person ... due to the same reason, the master of every technique tries sticking to a mean limit and avoids going on extremes; and, that should be an accurate mean not a surficial (numerical) mean” (Aristotle, 1999, 63-64).

Therefore the virtues and inferiorities are to be enumerated amongst the habits that constitute the stable and solid states of human ego and they are acquired via performing correct and moderate actions. Aristotle emphasizes that nobody can become the owner of a virtue by performing virtuous deeds rather the possessor of a virtue is the person who always acts corresponding thereto (Sayyed Qoreishi et al, 2010).

One problem of the today’s society is the individuals’ unawareness of their duties and lack of law-orientation. The elders of ethics have always been of the belief that the mankind is aware of the duties at all times because the communities lose their rank of synergy as a result of weakness and absence of knowledge and awareness in such a way that the behavioral interactions are not laid on the foundation of real styles as a subsequence to which the social treatment premises become shaky. Philosophers and theosophists have offered useful solutions in anthropological discussions that can guide a vast majority of the human beings; furthermore, in religious and canonical perspectives, the ethical middle way is recounted as a virtue. According to the aforementioned cases, the present study author intends correct elaboration of the real middle way from the viewpoints of such Muslim scholars as Farabi, Moskaviyeh, Qazali and Naraqi as an ethical virtue so as to investigate the strong points and practical solutions in line with proper human behavior to finally come up with the common and different points following which a defendable and efficient theory can be reached as a practical axiom to be used in the correction of ethical behaviors, in both social and individual regards. In addition, this subject, i.e. the middle way, can be one of the most important and essential ethical basics providing for answers to the criticisms. In the end, the present study deals with the investigation and elucidation of ethical middle way as held by four Muslim thinkers, namely Farabi, Moskaviyeh, Qazali and Naraqi, and tries finding answers to the following questions:

How is the ethical middle way from Farabi’s perspective?

How is the ethical middle way from the viewpoint of Imam Muhammad Qazali?

Study Method:

The present study is an applied research in terms of its objectives and it is a library-documentary research based on the data collection method. In applied studies, the objective is the development of applied knowledge in a certain field of study. The study is an applied research because it makes use of the obtained results to elucidate the ethical middle way from the perspective of Islamic thinkers (Farabi, Moskaviyeh, Qazali and Naraqi); the study also uses moderation and middle way topics in philosophical and ethical affairs and areas as well as in cases and studies related to ethics and it is descriptive in this regard that the ethical middle way is described, identified and investigated from the perspective of various basics and areas.

Study Findings:

Everything that falls in the middle way provides for virtue, goodness and best of the things. According to the scale and essence that the human beings seek for perfection to reach felicity as the very benefaction and the best for the achievement of which one should behave ethically moderate and based on the axiom of ethical middle way. In the current research paper, in order to elaborate the ethical middle way according to the library research, chapter four that incorporates the study findings presents the most important basics and indicators related to ethical middle way, including benefaction, felicity, power of ego,
moderation, virtues and inferiorities all of which have been drawn on the perspectives of great Islamic philosophers such as Farabi, Qazali, Naraqi and Moskaviyeh who have to a large extent followed Aristotle’s school of thought.

**Benefaction from Farabi’s Perspective:**

Like Aristotle, Farabi divides benefaction into two categories: the ones inherently deemed optimum and they are desired by the mankind for their own sake and the ones not inherently optimum but they are desired for being means of reaching other optimums hence featuring another-optimum nature. In recognizing the beneficence of the felicity states that “because we see that felicity is something that, when obtained, there is no ultimate beyond it to be requested so felicity is selected for its own sake not for reaching another thing. Resultantly, felicity is the most deserving and most superior and most perfect of the benefactions (Atrak and Khoshdel Rawhani, 2014).

In Fosul-e-Montaze’eh and after expressing and criticizing the perspectives of some philosophers who know felicity as the enjoyment of pleasures or comforts, he puts forth the viewpoints of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle indicating that felicity is determined based on life on earth and in the otherworld. In his opinion, human beings possess two lives and two kinds of perfection: the corporeal life during which the mankind reaches first rank perfection via performing virtuous deeds and acquiring all the virtues following which a last rank of perfection is obtained that is the very ultimate and utmost felicity in the other world. The latter is the final goal of the mankind that is acquired in life in the other world. This utmost felicity is the absolute good and inherently optimum and it never comes about as a means for attaining another optimum rather the other affairs take place for the sake of this optimum (Farabi, 2009, 46).

In regard of the goodness of the middle way deeds, Farabi points out that “the good deeds or the middle-way virtue is the middle point of the two extremes both of which are evil, one is excess and the other is deficiency (negligence). This same idea also holds for virtue as the middle way of two aspects both of which are inferior: one in the excessiveness direction and the other in the deficiency direction” (Ibid, 115).

**Farabi’s Felicity:**

Farabi believes that felicity is the absolute good and it is considered as an inherent optimum” (Farabi, 2000, 96). From Farabi’s perspective, felicity is the most eclectic and most perfect utmost goal towards which the mankind is inclined and for the achievement of which they make efforts. Some utmost goals are selected as means and tools of attaining another optimum: such as when someone uses drugs. Some others are inherently optimal and it is evident that such an optimum is more perfect and more eclectic than the optimum that is chosen as a means and instrument. Of course, the inherent optimums might be applied for the achievement of another optimum like knowledge that becomes the means of collecting wealth. However, inherent optimums that are always selected inherently and never become the means of reaching another optimum are called the most perfect and the grandest benefactions because there would be no need for reaching another utmost goal upon the attainment of felicity. So, it becomes clear that felicity is never willed as a means for reaching another utmost goal hence it is to be realized as the most perfect and the most major of the benefactions. The claim can be substantiated on the performance of the ones who reckon they have come to an understanding of the felicity. Such individuals only think of the thing they know to be felicity and spend all their efforts to attain it and never select it as an introduction but they regard it as the final goal of their whole life efforts like the individual who enumerates knowledge or wealth as the examples of felicity (Ibid, 1992, 180). The idea is indicative of the fact that the human beings do not have a common perception of felicity. However, felicity differs in various cities. Farabi knows the subjective speaking capability as the medium of human’s attainment of felicity and believes that the intermediation takes two forms: “firstly, in terms of the perfections that exist for the subjective speaking faculty and the other in regard of the idea that the move towards felicity and perfection are secondary to the awareness of felicity and that the awareness of the subjective speaking faculty is obtained because felicity has been recognized hence targeted as the utmost goal and motivated by the power of argumentation” (Farabi, 2000, 107).

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as means and tools of attaining another optimum; such as when someone uses drugs. Some others are inherently optimal and it is evident that such an optimum is more perfect and more eclectic than the optimum that is chosen as a means and instrument. Of course, the inherent optimums might be applied for the achievement of another optimum like knowledge that becomes the means of collecting wealth. However, inherent optimums that are always elected inherently and never become the means of reaching another optimum are called the most perfect and the grandest benefactions because there would be no need for reaching another utmost goal upon the attainment of felicity. So, it becomes clear that felicity is never willed as a means for reaching another utmost goal hence it is to be realized as the most perfect and the most major of the benefactions. The claim can be substantiated on the performance of the ones who reckon they have come to an understanding of the felicity. Such individuals only think of the thing they know to be felicity and spend all their efforts to attain it and never select it as an introduction but they regard it as the final goal of their whole life efforts like the individual who enumerates knowledge or wealth as the examples of felicity (Ibid, 1992, 180).

**Human Perfection from Farabi's Perspective:**

Farabi states that “the human being in possession of the tools of achieving perfection is always inclined towards perfection so as to reach a rank at which s/he becomes needless and separate from material and exit the realm of being a creature in such a way that one can consequently reach the actual intellect rank, to wit the nearest rank to the active intellect in which case the human being is not destroyed with the degradation of the body and becomes needless of the material existence, i.e. one becomes needless of any material even when still in the material body (Farabi, 2000, 105). In fact, it has to be stated that a human being becomes needless of physical and material things to remain existent and stable and this is per se of several ranks. From Farabi's perspective, intellect is the sole way of reaching felicity. The ranks that a human being takes till arriving at an ultimate perfection begin from the speaking ability as the source of the humans’ ability for receiving the verbal intelligible issuances and the individual exits the pure passivity and reception mode when this faculty of the verbal intelligible issuances reception is engaged and it is by the unification with the verbally intelligible issuances that one can reach the actual intellect rank. The highest rank of unification with the intelligible issuances in human being is the one called the apprehensive intellect that is the nearest rank to the active reasoning stage (Ibid, 105).

**Farabi's Virtue:**

Generally, virtue causes the human beings' perfection. In this regard, Farabi believes that “human virtues are sensual stuff by way of which the humans perform benefactions and good deeds and, in the opposite, there are stuffs by means of which heinous actions and wrongdoings are perpetrated. These are called vices”. He is of the belief that “the good of everything is what causes benefaction and essence and deeds’ perfection”. He also states that “the relationship between virtue and felicity is established by fine deeds because the thing that gets a human being to felicity is the fine deeds and these fine deeds originate from the virtues” (Farabi, 2000, 105). Farabi classifies virtue to two sets: temperament virtues and utterance virtues. The latter is related to the speaking component of the ego such as wisdom, astuteness, smartness and good perception and the dispositional virtues pertain to the argumentative component of the ego such as chastity, courage, generosity and justice.

In regard of virtue, Farabi believes that virtue is whatever that causes benefaction and essence and actual perfection thereof. In Farabi's mind, felicity is directly and closely associated with virtue and he states that the relationship between virtue and felicity is established by the fine deeds because the thing that aid one reach felicity is the performing of b fine actions that stem from virtues. In classifying the virtue, Farabi believes that the thing that causes felicity of this and the other world is fourfold: subjective, intellectual, dispositional and scientific virtues and fabrications. The subjective virtues constitute the science the final intention of which is rationalization of the creatures before the mankind and believing in their existence. The human beings acquire parts of this knowledge since their very birth and some others are attained by contemplation and search hence required to be taught and instructed (Ibid, 106). Farabi believes in a natural virtue in the human beings. By the term “natural”, the involuntary nature of the virtue is intended. Such a virtue is innately existent in the human nature. The virtue enjoys the same
existence as the habits existing in the non-speaking animals such as the courage of a lion and the cunningness of a fox for their being characterized by such innate characteristic in such a way that moving towards these actions is a lot more easier for them than moving in a direction opposite to them unless they are forced by an external cause to perform things against their natural virtues (Farabi, 1993, 109).

**Sensual Faculties from the Perspective of Farabi:**
In expressing the sensual faculties, Farabi divides the speaking power into two parts: theoretical and practical. He knows the latter as the servant of the former that is considered by him as a means for arriving at felicity. Farabi, as well, is amongst the philosophers who realize the real felicity of the human beings as something of a theoretical and intellectual nature. He believes that the ego possesses a nonmaterial honor and reality as well as certain powers each of which is a rank of human perfection: and, the human beings indeed have five faculties: digestion, senses, imagination, argumentation and speaking (Farabi, 1992, v.1, p.27).

Farabi knows nutrition as the first faculty of the body that is specific to nourishment and it is envisioned as a faculty shared by humans and animals and plants. He believes that even plants have a faculty for attracting power and it is the first faculty that is created in the human beings and it is per se comprised of components. Farabi divides the nutrition power into primary and secondary and believes that there is a longitudinal relationship holding in this classification in such a way that some parts are both primary and secondary functions meaning that they issue orders and obey orders simultaneously. In another categorization, he only finds the nutrition faculty and only the mouth as the principal component and yet in another classification he divides the nutrition faculty into digestive, developmental, generative, absorptive, distinctive and excremental (Farabi, 2000, 87).

Speaking faculty is specific to the human beings who use it to think. This faculty is per se divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. The practical speaking faculty has been created to serve the theoretical speaking faculty and the latter has been created to assist the human beings in reaching felicity. “The primary nutrition faculty and the primary sensual faculty as well as the imagination faculty all serve the speaking faculty”. “An animal’s tendency and inclination or hatred and reluctance towards different things and affairs come about as a result of intimidation”. In fact, the idea that the ego and the body is composed of certain constituents does not mean that they possess numerous components rather each of these constituents is a rank and position of their realities in the discussions of which Farabi follows Aristotle (Farabi, 2000, 106). It is as if the ego and the body’s faculties are in a longitudinal link and serve a higher rank faculty the same way that the ego faculties obey the subjective speaking faculty meaning that the human beings are superior creatures and the other species have been created to provide service to the human beings who have been exempted from serving the other creatures (Farabi, 1992, v.1, p.68).

**Moderation Theory from Farabi’s Perspective:**
The ultimate goal of moderation is the being characterized by fine dispositions. What is fine temperament from Farabi’s perspective? In responding to the aforesaid question, it can be stated that “he proposes the middle way theory following the lead of Aristotle and recounts the fine action as the very moderate deed”; such as moderate food that is different for children and adults. The middle way that is stated in ethics and deeds is related to the second meaning. In this sense, the deeds and the moralities should be assessed in proportion to the doer’s intention and the place wherein the actions are done so that the moderate deeds a therefore, the fine deed is the one situated somewhere between the two extremes and it is not so that it can be identified by an absolute sign and within an fixed extent rather the moderate deed differs in respect to every individual under certain circumstances. Of course, the ethics and deeds of the moderate nature are like medium in nourishment that is moderate for the majority of the people and the mediums are only occasionally found moderate for some people and immoderate for others: it means that there is no such a thing as identical medium and moderate for the majority of the people (Farabi, 1992, 192).

In fact, this is reflective of the idea that the fine and moderate deeds and ethics are relative and the statement does not at all express a certain type of fine deed. In regard of offering a practical way for achieving moderate deeds, Farabi apparently delegates it to the conscience of an individual and society.
He has stated somewhere that “the actions performed by the possessors of the good temperaments are fine”. Therefore, it is necessary that the middle way be depending on the society’s judgment in respect to that certain temperament and deed”. He expresses somewhere else that “the action the doer of which is admired by the majority of the people and the temperament the owner of which is extolled is fine deed stemmed from nice temperament” (Atrak, 2011).

**Moderation Axiom from Farabi’s Perspective:**
“Verily, it is in moral behaviors that the deeds’ quantity, in numerical and extent terms, and quality, in terms of intensity and weakness, are measured in respect to the doer and the person towards whom the deed is direct as well as the thing for which purpose it is issued based on time and space”. In regard of virtuousness limit of each moral deed, Farabi simultaneously gives value to the quantity moderation, in which the deed should be somewhere in the middle point of two extremes, excess and deficiency, as well as quality moderation because the latter, as he considers, features intensity and weakness and needs five conditions, including the personality of the doer, the person towards whom the action is directed, the thing for which the action is done, the place and time” (Atrak, 2011, 203). Farabi supports the moderation axiom proposed by Aristotle and has the following statement in its clarification:

Benefactions are good deeds half way to both excess and deficiency. Moreover, he states that virtues are sensual stuff and habits in the middle way of two extremes, i.e. the excessive deficiency and excessive extravagance like misfortune that is (a virtue) between overindulgence and mortification one of which is excessive and the other is deficiency (Farabi, 2009, 36).

**Ethical Virtues and Vices:**
Farabi presents a list of ethical virtues and vices and deals with finding the commonalities of the axiom in regard of the famous ethical virtues. One primary virtue is courage that is obtained in adherence to the middle way by taking dangerous measures. Another primary virtue is chastity as moderation in taking pleasure the extremes of which are revelry and anhedonia (Farabi, 2011, 100). In Fosul-e-Montaze’eh, Farabi speaks of justice and states that “justice is firstly related to the benefactions common between all the society members following which it is related to the preservation of what has been apportioned. These common benefactions are healthiness, properties, veneration, positions and the other benefactions that they may share” (Javadi, 2003). In defining justice, Farabi knows it related to the society members and remarks that the society members enjoy the justice, mentioned by him as a sort of benefaction, corresponding to their abilities. Justice served more than one deserves is an instance of tyranny and oppression and it becomes an example of individual mistreatment if it is served less than one deserves and accordingly it becomes an example of social injustice if it is served more than they deserve. Like Aristotle, Farabi is amongst the individuals who seek justice in the apportionment of the properties and giving every individual what s/he deserves but, unlike Aristotle, he does not consider justice as a middle point between oppression and freeness rather he considers both of them as oppression (Farabi, 2009, 80).

Next, Farabi offers another definition of justice that also incorporates the first definition: performing virtuous deeds of any type by a person in respect to oneself and others as well as fairness in distributing the properties and preservation of each individual’s share are all specific kinds of a more general term called justice (Atrak, 2011, 205).

**Middle Way from Farabi’s Perspective:**
Farabi is amongst the most prominent figures interpreting the works by Plato and Aristotle. His ideas of the middle way can be found in his books such as “Tahsil Al-Sa’adat”, “Al-Tanbih Ala Sabil Al-Sa’adat” and “Fosul-e-Montaze’eh”. Farabi follows the moderation axiom of Aristotle and proposes it more within the format of good deeds and fine virtues and states that “benefactions are moderate deeds and middle ways between two extremes, deficiency and excessiveness. Furthermore, virtues and sensual stuffs and habits are the middle points of two vices, excessiveness and deficiency” (A’arafi, 2012, 194).

In positing the moderation theory, Farabi has been more influenced by Aristotle than Plato. The examples he applies in elaboration of moderation axiom, like food for children and adults and moderate anger the extent of which ranges for various affairs, are exactly the instances used by Aristotle in Nicomachean Ethics. In elucidating moderation theory, Farabi does not have an important innovation and invented
idea. Of course, he has put forth a lot of innovations in other areas and they cannot be at all regarded as repetitions of the Greeks’ teachings. In responding to the question as to what are the fine deeds giving rise to the fine temperaments, Farabi posits the virtuous middle way following the lead of Aristotle and states that “the fine deed is verily the very middle point deed” (Farabi, 1992, 194).

**Perspectives regarding the Middle Actions of the Two Extremes of Excessiveness and Deficiency:**
Farabi knows the good behavioral interactions as the middle way and describes excessiveness and deficiency respectively as frugality and prodigality in doing something hence recounting virtue as the thing that goes in between. He realizes chastity as the middle state of voraciousness and greediness and anhedonia and he knows whatever beyond and falling short of chastity, the middle point, as, respectively voraciousness and avarice and also considers anhedonia and lack of taking pleasure in things as inferiority; like generosity as the middle point of meagerness and wastefulness. He also introduces courage as a middle point of heedlessness and rudeness and fearlessness and cowardliness and fearfulness and faint-heartedness. Moderation and middle way are the intermediate points of two extremes, excessiveness and deficiency. The middle way and moderation have two meanings: one is additional and the other is spontaneous. Middle way has two meanings: one is spontaneous and the other is proportional like six as the middle point between two and ten (Atrak, 2011).

Farabi considers it as meaning additional and believes that figure six is spontaneously between two boundaries. The seasons and all the things that are in the middle point like six will be never increased or decreased because the extent from ten to six equals that of six to two hence six is the additional middle way between ten and two. The relative middle point differs in various times for various extents because the things that are added to it are increased or decreased like the food given to children and the middle way food for a fully mature industrious laborer (Farabi, 2009, 24).

In this regard, he believes that the laborers and adults differ from children. So, the food differs according to the ratios and differences in age and the amount of the drug prescribed for a person also follows the same rule and this relative middle way is a medium state applied in actions, dispositions and habits. That is because the actions are determined in terms of the quantity and quality as well as the weakness and strength of the doer in respect to the person towards whom they are directed. So he states that “the medium state of each action is specified in respect to its peripheral affairs as well as in comparison to the things with which they are assessed” (Ibid, 25).

In regard of the truth of moderation, Farabi states that “in showcasing the truth that the moderation and middle state differ in actions and deeds by different bodies and groups during various times like the medium states of the drugs and foods, it has to be mentioned that these intermediate states differ from people to people and from time to time: as for the behaviors and actions, the medium state is occasionally something for the entire groups of people and something else at another time and there are actions and deeds that are the middle points for some people while envisioned as extremes by some others”. Farabi states that “the same way that a physician determines the medium state of drugs and foods, the kings and politicians, as well, specify the intermediate points of the actions and temperaments. At all times, the physician is the person who determines the middle state of the foods and drugs for being educated in the medicine. Kings and city heads determine the medium state of the temperaments and actions of the society members for their being knowledgeable in politics and governance” (Sharifi, 2015).

**Excessiveness and Deficiency from Farabi’s Perspective:**
Farabi knows the fine deeds and niceties as two extreme boundaries of excessiveness and deficiency that are both recounted as heinous by him: he also states that “the same holds for the virtues because the superiorities or the very middle-point states and habits are the mediums of two extremes that are both inferiority hence heinous and one is excessive and the other is deficient very much like piousness and chastity that are the middle points of voraciousness and avarice and anhedonia. So, there is a trait beyond chastity and virtuousness and that is avarice and there is another trait falling short of piety and that is anhedonia”. Farabi gives excessiveness and deficiency examples of such moral virtues as generosity and courage, knowledgeability and humbleness, forbearance and amicability and recounts them as
unfavorable and explains that their middle ways and moderate states are favorable and admired (Atrak, 2011).

**Felicity from Qazali's Perspective:**
Qazali realizes the human felicity in perfection that is described by him as doing something for which a person has been created. The ultimate felicity, as explained by Qazali, lies in meeting the God in the other world. In Kimiyay-e-Sa'adat, he presents introductions a little different from what was mentioned to express that felicity is the recognition of the eminent God. Qazali states that everything’s felicity is in what it takes pleasure in and the taking of pleasure in a thing is the thing deemed expedient from the view angle of the nature of that thing for the purpose of which it has been created. He also points out that the heart takes pleasure in knowledge and gaining insight over the truth of things. By heart, Qazali means the ego of the human beings as the divine and spiritual and gentle part of their existence and the humans’ truth perceives and is addressed by the world and deserves reward and punishment. This truth is sometimes interpreted as soul and reason (Qazali, 2014, v.1, p.56). Qazali’s discussions on felicity in his book, “Mizan Al-Amal”, is very close to the perspectives of Aristotle and such Islamic thinkers as Farabi, Avicenna and, especially, Raqeb-e-Esfahani. The otherworldly felicity cannot become perfect unless by the third type of benefactions and felicities that is described as the sensual virtues summed up in four primary virtues: knowledge, chastity, courage and justice. Sensual virtues are not completed unless by the third type of the felicities and benefactions that is described as physical virtues summed up in four things: 1) healthiness; 2) death; 3) beauty; and, 4) life length. The third type of the benefactions and felicities are not completed unless by the fourth type of the benefactions and felicities that is described as external virtues and summed up in four things: 1) possessions; 2) wife; 3) children; and 4) esteem and largeness (Atrak and Khoshdel Rawhani, 2011).

**Virtue from Qazali’s Perspective:**
In his moral discussions as a type of virtue-oriented ethics, Qazali pursues morality in three traditions, namely philosophical, mystic and religious. Underlining his own discourse approach, he finds religious ethics necessary for reaching the ultimate goal of the humans, to wit felicity. Due to the same reason, he finds everything that is happening in the world as willed and wanted by the God. So, any human being seeking for the achievement of the utmost felicity should request it from the God. It means that in order to reach this final goal, one should be assisted by the God for which reason such an individual should resort to verdicts and lifestyles and the canonical orders and religious ethics are the apparent form of them. So, the thing that gives a person the sureness in the heart that s/he will reach the felicity is the achievement of the religious virtues. Qazali realizes that the mystic virtues are the internalities of the religious moralities by way of which he links the religious ethics and mystic moralities and, since the religious virtues are laid on the foundation of ego like the philosophical virtues, he takes advantage of them in providing an exact exposition of the religious virtues via analyzing the ego based on philosophical practices. This way, the philosophical virtues help an individual reach felicity as the religious virtues do (Qazali, 2014, v.1, p.121).

**Narrative Reasoning on Moderation Axiom:**
In a narrative reasoning, Qazali points to AYA 6 of SURAH HUJURAT in which it is ordered by the God that “لا من آتی الله يقبل سلم” (Qazali, 2009, p.156), meaning that “verily, the Muslims are those who have come to believe in the God and his apostle and have not doubt it and fight by their properties and bodies on the path of God and they were honest”.
He finds the faith in the God and the great apostle of Islam (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny the best of His regards) as a certain issue stemming from the intellect in the utmost position of wisdom and interprets struggling by wealth as the generosity that is the perfection state of the carnal desires and describes fighting by body as the courage that is the utmost goal of anger. He expresses and approves these three primary virtues (chastity, courage and wisdom) as the constituents of the four virtues of the believers. Moreover, in regard of the HADITH that “the midway is the best of everything”, he believes that the HADITH has a secret and actualization and that is that the AYA “إلا من آتی الله يقبل سلم” meaning “unless the one who has been bestowed a sound heart by the God” speaks of the soundness of the heart and its

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cleanliness from the worldly matters. Jealousy and its opposite virtue, munificence, are the side effects of the corporeal life and the healthiness condition necessitates that the heart be empty of both of them meaning that a person should not be so greedy that crazes for collecting wealth and not so greedy that be zealous to endow all wealth s/he has collected because both of these blur the heart rather the soundness of the heart is that one should be clean of both of them and since heart usually becomes inclined towards a direction, the best state is that the heart takes a position somewhere in the middle. In fact, the middle way is between prodigality and frugality. And, courage is the middle point between cowardice and heedlessness and chastity is the middle point between promiscuity and torpidity and inclinations towards both of them is denounced (Qazali, 2004, v.3, p.68). By the felicity of the heart as mentioned by Qazali in the above statement, he means its being not blemished by malignity and depravity such as greediness over the wealth and he does not mean that each state should be in the middle point in its absolute sense hence be empty of virtue and craftiness like tendency towards donations and it can be daringly stated that the interpretations intended by Qazali are not accepted by the Islamic theosophists and, in fact, the middle way, as considered in respect to moderation, is the very limit of virtuosity and the person holding this rank is said to be morally virtuous.

**Moral Purification in Moderation Theory:**

Like Islamic theosophists, Qazali uses the comparison of ethics with medicine and expresses that:

1. The same way that moderateness in the temperaments causes healthiness and violation of it causes diseases, moderation in the ego's faculties means healthiness of the body and violation of the equilibrium state causes disease and the same way that curing of the body depends on the removal of the causes of the diseases and obtaining healthiness for it, the curing of the ego depends, as well, on the elimination of the vices and inferior moralities and obtaining of the fine ethics and virtues.

2. The same way that the principle in the physical dispositions is moderation and violation of moderation comes about due to such ancillary affairs as food and weather, the human beings that have been created moderate and with a healthy nature are made Jews, Christians and Magi by their parents; it means that the human beings acquire inferior ethics by education and rearing.

3. The same way that the body is not created perfect from the beginning and grows and develops by being nourished, the human ego has also been created imperfect and it has to become complete via being fed on knowledge and being purified and edified.

4. If the body is healthy, the physician tries keeping on the healthiness and if it is sick, the physician tries making it healthy again and removing its ailments. The same way, the clean, edified and purified ego is kept on going on and effort is made to strengthen it and if the ego is sick and with depravity, efforts should be made in line with repelling of the vices and attraction of perfection and moral virtues.

5. The same way that the routine in curing a disease in medicine is prescription of things counteracting the disease and the same way that fever is brought down by cold and vice versa, the ethics law orders the performing of opposites in curing of the depravities. So, ignorance is cured by education and the avarice is cured by teaching generosity and haughtiness is cured by teaching humbleness and the promiscuity is cured by obligation (Qazali, 2004, 85).

In treating the patients, the physician should pay attention to their physical states and time and the other issues and drugs are usually prescribed in proportion to the intensity and weakness of the disease and its type. It is not also possible to cure all the patients using one method and one drug for a single amount. The ethics scholar, as well, should attend to the states of his pupils, their ages, temperaments, moods and their other issues and it is not possible to purify all of them based on a single method (Ibid, 76).

To reach the virtues, Qazali recommends forcing the ego to the issues featuring fine virtues and believes that deeds should be repeated to become habits because habit is a secondary nature of the mankind and the favorable moralities are acquired via habits. This happens in case that the habits are found pleasurable by a person; for instance a generous person should enjoy making donations and the humble person should feel good upon acting humble before the others and an individual is not said to have such
characteristics as generosity and humbleness if s/he performs them reluctantly. He believes in mortification for reaching the virtues and acquiring the fine deeds. So, the person who practices stinginess should also try exercising generosity to the extent it has become his or her habit and it has to be kept in a middle point so that the person might not go on extreme and become excessive in doing so. In recognizing the medium limit, Qazali points to a statement by Aristotle and states that in order to figure out the middle limit and become inclined towards it, first of all, one should know to which one s/he is inclined (towards excessiveness or deficiency) then opposite measures should be taken to reach the medium limit (Ibid, 79).

**Qazali’s Axiom of Moderation:**
Qazali knows moderation and temperance as good characteristics of the performance of the dispositions. Following his antecedents, Qazali uses the moderation axiom for each of the ego’s threefold faculty and considers virtue as the middle point between excessiveness and deficiency for each of them (Atrak and Khoshdel Rawhani, 2011, 291).
He states that if such a faculty as anger becomes inclined from a middle point towards the excessiveness extreme, such a vice as heedlessness comes about and if it becomes inclined from the middle point towards the deficiency extreme, carelessness happens. If the lust tends towards the extreme end, the individual becomes mischievous and if it becomes inclined towards the deficiency extreme, lustfulness comes about (Qazali, 2004, 67).
In fact, Qazali attributes excessiveness and deficiency to such faculties as lust and anger not to the chastity and courage; this does not hold in theosophy wherein the theosophists use excessiveness and deficiency for virtues and consider them as inferior in the theosophy. Following the lead of Aristotle, he has the following statement in regard of theosophy: there is no excessiveness or deficiency in the virtues falling in the middle point. Qazali knows the moderation and temperance in using the ego’s faculties as the cause of well-temperedness and, following his precedents, applied moderation axiom to each of the threefold faculty of the ego and recounts virtue as the middle point between two vices, excessiveness and deficiency. He expresses that “if the anger violates the moderateness and becomes inclined towards excessiveness extreme, heedlessness comes about and if it becomes inclined towards the deficiency extreme, aggressiveness follows. If the lust becomes inclined towards the excessiveness extreme, the individual becomes mischievous and if it becomes inclined towards the deficiency extreme, such a depravity as self-lustfulness comes about (Atrak, 2011).

**Faculties of Ego: Justice, Chastity, Courage and Wisdom**

**Qazali’s Justice:**
Qazali’s definition of justice is in fact the same definition posited by Plato of the justice in the society: it reads: the entire components of the society should take their own right positions like the parts of a unit body that each has to perform its duties. In regard of the idea that whether justice has two ends or not, Qazali has not stated anything and he believes that since there is no middle point between discipline and its absence so justice is not a middle point between two things. Qazali has two different definitions of such a virtue as justice. Once, he presents a Platonic definition based on Plato’s classification of the three faculties of ego meaning that he describes it as the comprehensive virtue of the ego that is obtained following the acquisition of the three ego’s faculties, to wit wisdom, courage and chastity, and elimination of the two vices, lust and anger, from the intellect. He knows justice with such a meaning not as a virtue in the same rank as the other three virtues but as superior to all the other virtues (Qazali, 2004, 105).
In Ehya’a Al-Olum” and after classification of ego to four faculties of intellect, anger, lust and justice (by the latter, actual reasoning is intended), he expresses that justice is the virtue of the actual reasoning and the fourth virtue in the same rank as the other three virtues the responsibility of which is controlling and reigning the anger and lust. This is a rather new definition of justice. In fact, Qazali does not realize justice as being exclusive to the threefold faculty rather he uses it in ethics and considers it as prerequisites to politics and transactions. Of course, justice, as used in ethics, is comprehensive and incorporates the other two faculties. The definition of justice in trading is the very idea of not causing loss and not suffering loss and this is an Aristotelian definition of justice. In fact, it can be stated that an
individual should take what s/he deserves and gives what the others deserve. So, when in a transaction, neither Qobn (leaving a right unclaimed) nor Taqabun (giving one a right s/he does not deserve) are allowed (Ibid, 106).

**Qazali’s Chastity and Courage:**
Unlike Aristotle and the other Islamic scholars, Qazali speaks of the control of intellect over lust and anger because such virtues as chastity (abstinence of improper lust) and courage (being fearless and performing or avoiding risky actions) are obtained via obeying the intellect’s instructions (Atrak and Khoshdel Rawhani, 2011, 294).

**Wisdom from Qazali’s Perspective:**
Qazali divides wisdom (a constituent of the fourfold philosophical virtue) into two types of knowledge: contemplation and transaction. And, he finds both types of transaction knowledge as being specific to the instruction by prophets and states that transaction knowledge is of two kinds: apparent knowledge that is the awareness of the physical deeds (worships and habits) and knowledge of the internal nature that is related to the heartfelt issues (things that save or perish an individual). Furthermore, it is stated by him that the intellect needs canonical rules to reach the fundamental virtues (chastity, courage and justice) and it is not alone capable of recognizing the virtues and acquiring the virtues. In Ehya’a Al-Olum, Qazali, besides examining the ethics purification, has also investigated worshipping and habits or transactions for the reason that he finds the philosophy of the verdicts on worships and transactions lying in clean-cutting of the virtues from the perspective of the sacred canonical rules that intend expelling of the vices from the human beings. In the section on the worships, he recounts Namaz, fasting, Zakat, Hajj, reading of the Holy Quran, remembrance and saying prayers as revitalizers for the impression they leave on the humans’ ethics. That is because the worships revive the remembering of the God and cause divine familiarity, love and proximity that are per se ethical virtues. Habits and transactions are not directly related to the God for their being based on human interactions but they can be means of arriving at an otherworldly felicity. Qazali states that moderation axiom does not hold for justice for which he only considers one word, i.e. oppression. Therefore, he enumerates four primary virtues or, as he puts it, generative virtues (Qazali, 1983, 99).

He believes that although there are many moral virtues, they can all be summed up in these four virtues. Qazali elaborates moderation axiom by taking the canonical rules as another scale of moderation along with such other scale as intellect into account. This is well reflective of the combinatorial nature of his ethics theory. In regard of the subjective fourfold virtue, Qazali has notions different from what has been expressed by Muslim theosophists. He also differs from the other theosophists in regard of such a virtue as theoretical and practical theosophy. Qazali distinguishes theoretical theosophy from practical theosophy and knows former as the knowledge of such general and necessary truths and meanings as theosophical, philosophical and logical sciences hence finds moderation axiom as not holding in theoretical theosophy. By using theosophy in ethics, he means one of the four principles of practical or temperamental theosophies. Of course, practical theosophy, herein, encompasses both theory and practice and he has been influenced in this idea of his by Avicenna (Qazali, 2004, 67).

The Relationship between Qazali’s Faculties of Ego:
Using various examples, Qazali tries clarifying the relationship between the ego and the body. Once, he describes ego in the body as king in a territory and recounts body as the kingdom of the ego and interprets the body organs and faculties as the servants and subordinates of the ego, such as intellectual faculty that has been described by him as a wise minister and an advising counselor. Lust, as well, is recounted as a wrongdoing servant that steals the food of the city and accumulates it somewhere. Anger has also been described as the head of the police and it is also said by him to be cunning and a liar and continuously hides itself in the guise of a benevolent advisor but there is a lethal poison beneath its guise. This wrongdoing servant is in a constant dispute with the minister’s intellect and acts rebelliously. To punish it, the wise minister seeks assistance from the head of the police and sits it in its place. This way, the territory of the body becomes inclined towards justice and order. Qazali expresses that body is like a country and a city and the human intellect is the manager and strategist of the country and, in fact, the
perceptions, like the apparent and the internal senses, are the soldiers and functionaries of this king and he states that the king also has enemies like concupiscence that causes the issuance of lust and anger both of which are the foes of the intellect. In another example, he resembles the intellect to a horse-rider and the lust to the horse and describes anger as a dog and he believes that if the horse-rider is skillful enough, s/he can tame and rear the horse and the dog and resultanty s/he can save himself or herself and reach the destination. But, if the horse happens to be wild and the dog untamed, the horse-rider cannot reach the destination and s/he is feared to be perished. Like Plato, Qazali believes in three faculties of intellect, anger and lust for the human beings (Qazali, 2004, 290).

Conclusion:

What are the differences between the perspectives of Farabi and Qazali in terms of the ethical middle-way?

Considering the idea that the Islamic scientists have predominantly laid the foundation of their perspectives and philosophies regarding moderation on the notions and viewpoints of Aristotle and Plato, as the primary theoreticians of this axiom, it is necessary to investigate the differences and similarities of Aristotle's ethical middle way to the Islamic theory of ethics before dealing with the differences and similarities of the Islamic philosophers' perspectives in terms of the ethical middle way and moderation. In regard of this important topic it can be stated that Aristotelian ethics and the theory attributed to him, while being somewhat effective in ethical grounds, are considered as just one primary axiom and it seems that this axiom does not fundamentally apply in Islamic ethics, as the objective of the appointment of the great apostle of Islam (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny the best of His regards) and also directed at human perfection. The positive point existent in Aristotle's theory and accepted nearly by all the Muslim thinkers is the moderation axiom; but, it seems that this scale does not have the required efficiency alone and it cannot be the basis of the ethical virtues and depravities. Based on the interpretation offered of the moderation theory, all the sensual faculties should be seminally recognized and the ultimate goal should be figured out and it has to be also discerned where do these faculties interfere with one another's affairs so as to be able to come up with a solution indicating where the interference is required and here moderation should be exercised.

Therefore, the divine proximity theory, that is based on the intellect and narratives' confirmation, becomes the most credible solution and the most comprehensive criterion for reaching the peak of the human virtues and conquering of the apex of the perfection because in Islamic ethics, that are laid on the original foundations of Holy Quran and Ahl-e-Bayt teachings, the closeness or distantness of the human deeds to the God and reaching His proximity matters the most. In this case, there are many deeds that are considered as depravity hence outlying the middle point based on the Greek paragon of Aristotle, but they are to be envisioned as pure virtue based on Islamic basics and vice versa.

It can be stated regarding the similarities and differences of the perspectives of such Islamic philosophers as Farabi and Imam Muhammad Qazali that:

In proposing the moderation theory, Farabi has been greatly influenced by Aristotle than by Plato. Unlike the majority of the Islamic theosophists, he has not mentioned the threefold classification of the ego's faculty by Plato. His fivefold classification of the ego's faculties is the very categorization posited by Aristotle in a treatise on ego with the difference being that Aristotle has mentioned an incentive faculty in lieu of the imagination faculty. Unlike Plato, Farabi, following Aristotle, has not spoken of the primary fourfold faculty. The examples he uses in elaboration of moderation like the food for the children and adults and moderate anger that differs based on various issues are exactly the examples used by Aristotle in Nicomachean Ethics. In elucidating the moderation theory and ethical middle way, Farabi does not seem to have an important innovation and an invented idea; however, distributive justice and the general definition of justice are exclusively coined by him and they are different from the definitions provided by Aristotle and Plato. Of course, he presents many innovations in the other areas and they cannot be at all realized as repetitions of Greeks' teachings. Farabi's philosophical thoughts are so original and novel that he is known by some as the initiator of a new era in philosophy called Farabi Era's Philosophy. In Farabi's
mind, moderate and medium are applied in two meanings: one is the middle limit as understood from the surface of the phrase and the other is additional and relative middle point. In expressing the middle way theory, Farabi pays special attentions to the quality plus quantity of the moderation. Qazali realizes that the human felicity lies in his perfection that is the doing of the thing for which the mankind has been created. Qazali knows moderation and temperance in the faculties' performance as the cause of well-temperedness and recounts virtue as the middle point of two extremes, excessiveness and deficiency. The most important similarity of Qazali’s theory to that of the other philosophers, especially Farabi and Ibn Moskaviyeh, in terms of moderation, is the discussion on the comparison of ethics and medicine in treating the diseases in such a way that it can be stated that moderation in temperaments brings about healthiness and digression thereof causes disease and, in general, observance of the ethical middle way causes the prevention of ego’s infliction with the sickness. But, the followings are the most important differences in Qazali’s perspectives regarding moderation with the others:

1) Offering a fourfold classification of the ego’s faculties for the elaboration of the primary fourfold philosophical virtue and addition of a faculty named justice to the Plato’s faculties;
2) Adding the canonical and mystic virtues to the list of virtues: this one is specific to Qazali’s ethics;
3) Adding the pillars of worship and religious rites to the premises of felicity achievement in addition to the two ethical pillars of ego purification of the depravities and acquisition of these virtues;
4) Offering a new definition of practical intellect as well as offering a new definition of such a virtue as justice;
Offering the narrative-based reasoning and expressing numerous narrations and AYAT in confirming the moderation theory and so on.

References