

Q. Explain Al-Farabi theory of state.

1. Introduction :

Abu-Nasr Al Farabi was a prominent Muslim philosopher and one of the preeminent thinkers of medieval Islam. He was the follower of Greek philosophers and his theories are seemed to be influenced by the ancient philosophers. He gave theory of state however, his concept of state is different from the state of Plato and Aristotle. He gave practical concept of state, concept of true happiness, peaceful state and liberity of citizens, qualities of Rasool-ul-Amar and varieties of states. His concept of state has unique ideas and characteristics.

2. Context of Al-Farabi's Theory :

Al-Farabi was follower of Aristotle and Plato. He was also a scientist, philosopher, logician and musician. He make many enormous writings.

- Name : Abu-Nasr Al Farabi
- Other Name : Alfarabius or Avennasar
- Important elements of philosophy : Metaphysics, Cosmology, Astronomy
- Important title : The Second Teacher
- Famous publication : Al-Madina Al-Fadila, Summary of Plato Laws, Siyasat-ul-Madinah

He was influenced by the concept of ideal state of Plato however, he gave his theory of ideal state in a modified form.

3- Main Points of Farabi's Theory of State:

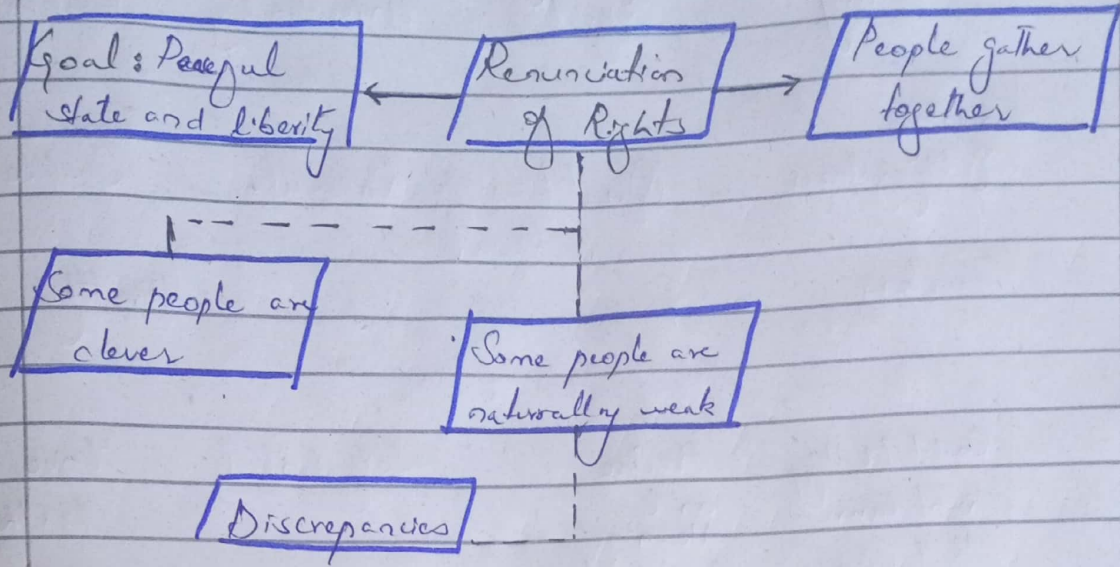
The main points of Al-Farabi's theory of state are given below:

a. Concept of Farabi's Ideal State:

Farabi says that Plato has given his concept of ideal state in his famous work "Republic". However, Plato's concept of state was just a utopic concept, he did not give a practical form to his concept of state. For Al-Farabi, "State of Madinah" was the ideal state that Plato was talking about, where justice is the 'mean' end to mean.

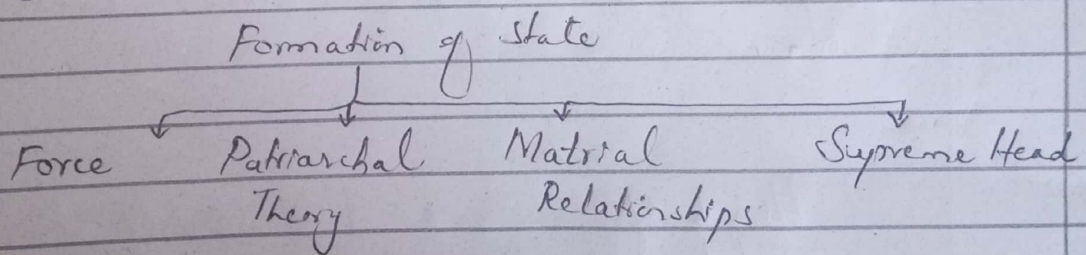
b. Concept of True Happiness and Renunciation of Rights:

Al-Farabi says that responsibility of state is realization of true happiness. This could be achieved when the people gather together to consider state affairs and give up their rights in favour of each other. This would result into peaceful state as well as it will ensure the liberty of its citizens. As the society contains different types of people, which could result in discrepancies.



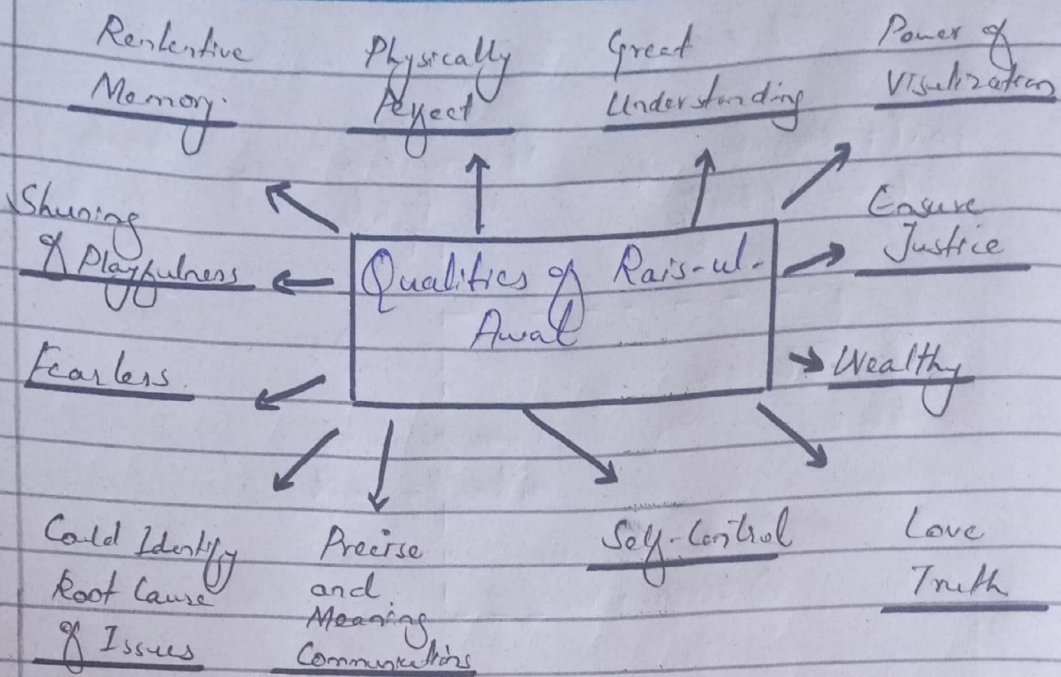
c- Methods of Formation of State:

One of the important feature of Al-Farabi's theory of state is his methods of formation of state. He gave four important methods for formation of state.



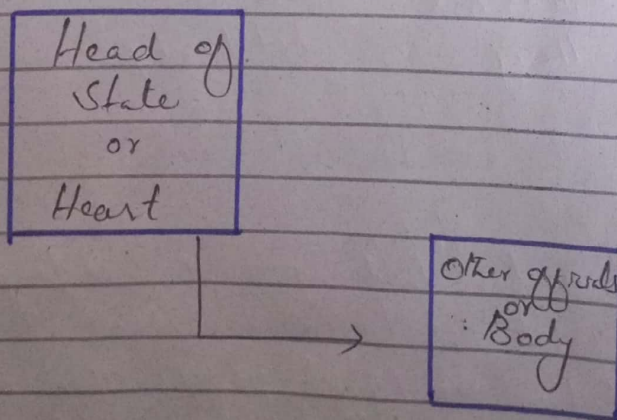
d- Foremost Leader of State:

Al-Farabi writes that job of philosopher is to tell the state between good and bad. So, he identified some qualities of foremost leader or "Rais-ul-Awal", which would run the state, are as follows:



e- Internal Organization of State :

Just like Aristotle, Al-Farabi used the organic concept of state. He says that state is like a body with two important features i.e. Head of state which constitutes heart whereas, body which includes other parts of state.



He says that for proper functioning of state,

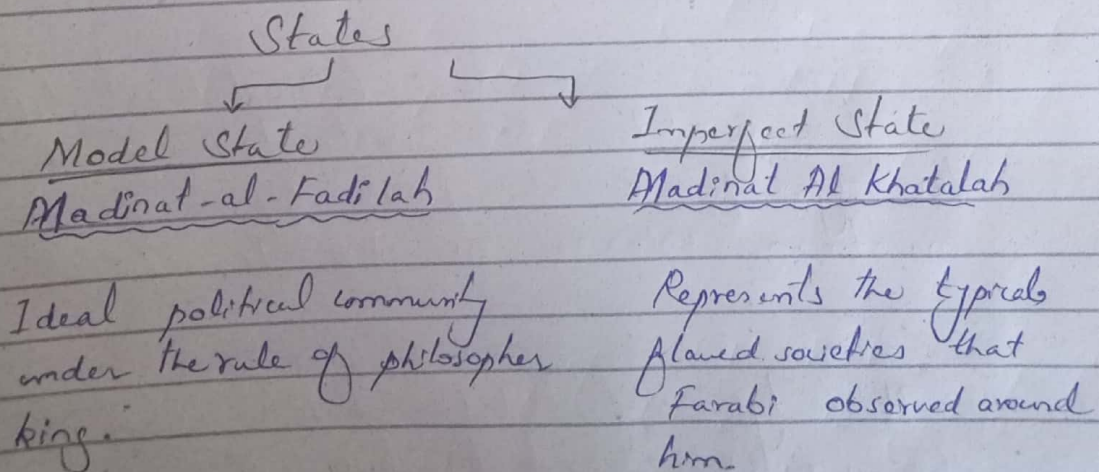
the head of the state must be vigilant. He further explains that the important officials will stay close to the head just as important body organs lie close to hearts.

f- Right of Individualism:

"Man is the natural hater of his own kind." Farabi was of the view that individuals in a state do not like if all possess same rights and objects. Hence, he gave the concept of individualism which gives people the right of having common property.

g- Varieties of State:

Al-Farabi distinguished two types of state: the "ideal or model state" and "the imperfect state."



Types of Imperfect State:

The imperfect state represent the flawed

glamed societies and where the ruler may not possess wisdom and virtue of a philosopher king. The citizens may be driven by material desires and the state's primary focus may be on mundane matters like security, wealth and power. The types of imperfect state are as follows:

i. State of Necessity: (Dawlah - al - Darurah)

It refers to a state where normal rules and laws are suspended for a short period of time. It addresses a state of emergency where legal and political framework is not sufficient to handle a situation.

ii. State of Ease: (Dawlah - al - Yusr)

It is state of harmony where social and political aspects are in order. In this status, community enjoys security, stability and general well-being.

iii. Imperialistic State: (Dawlah - al - Tughaliba)

It is a state which wants to expand its territory, influence and power by acquiring and maintaining colonies or dependencies.

iv. Ignorant or Tyrannical State:

It is type of state which is characterized by a ruler who lacks knowledge and wisdom. The ruler is driven by personal desires, leading to oppressive and tyrannical rules.

v- Despotism State:

In despotism state, the ruler is an absolute monarch who rules without any restraint or regard for justice. The citizens have limited or no rights, and the state is often characterized by arbitrary rule and absence of law.

vi- Timocratic State:

This state is governed by ruling class and it prioritizes material wealth, honor and power. The ruler in timocratic state are driven by ambition and self-interest rather than wisdom.

4- Analysis of Farabi's Theory of State:

Al-Farabi developed political theory that integrated elements of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy with Islamic thought. His idea of state is centered around the idea of achieving human perfection through a well developed political community. His theory is also rooted in pursuit of human development through establishment of pious and virtuous state under the supervision of philosopher king.

5- Conclusion:

Al-Farabi idea of state had a significant influence on subsequent Islamic thought and continue to be studied and discussed in contemporary political philosophy.
