

Q2: Virtuous City of Al-Farabi

Al-Farabi's virtuous city is a utopian vision of just, prosperous and harmonious society in which citizens cooperate with one another for achieving a common goal of "true happiness" which is defined by Al-Farabi as "moral, spiritual and intellectual perfection." This virtuous city is ruled by a philosopher-Prophet who acts as a model of moral, spiritual and intellectual excellence and guides citizens toward ultimate happiness.

Salient Features of Virtuous City

Following are the salient features of Virtuous city of Al-Farabi.

i- Pursuit of True Happiness of Citizens

Virtuous city is characterized by the pursuit of true happiness of citizens which Al-Farabi defined as moral, spiritual and intellectual perfection.

ii- Efficient functioning of society

In a virtuous city, all citizens perform their role on the basis of their innate

talent for ensuring efficient functioning of society, similar to organs working in a healthy body.

iii. Societal Harmony

One of the greatest attributes of Virtuous City is societal harmony. Every citizen cooperates with ^{one} another and prioritizes collective interests over selfish interests. Every citizen cooperates with the other, thereby contributing to achieving common goal of true happiness.

iv. Imitation of Cosmic Order

The Virtuous City is structured ^{by} following the ~~order~~ of cosmic order, which reflects divine wisdom, justice and balance. This focus of Al-Farabi on imitating cosmic order for creating an ideal and just Virtuous city makes his concept of Virtuous city a utopian vision.

v. Justice in Society

Another feature of Al-Farabi's Virtuous City is justice in society. The Philosopher-Prophet ensures justice and equity in society through his incredible leadership.

Al-Farabi derives this principle from Islamic theology which advocates for justice in society. For instance, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) says:

“By Allah, if Fatima (R.A.) daughter of Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) stole, I would have cut off her hand.”

vi. Provision of moral and spiritual leadership by Philosopher-Prophet

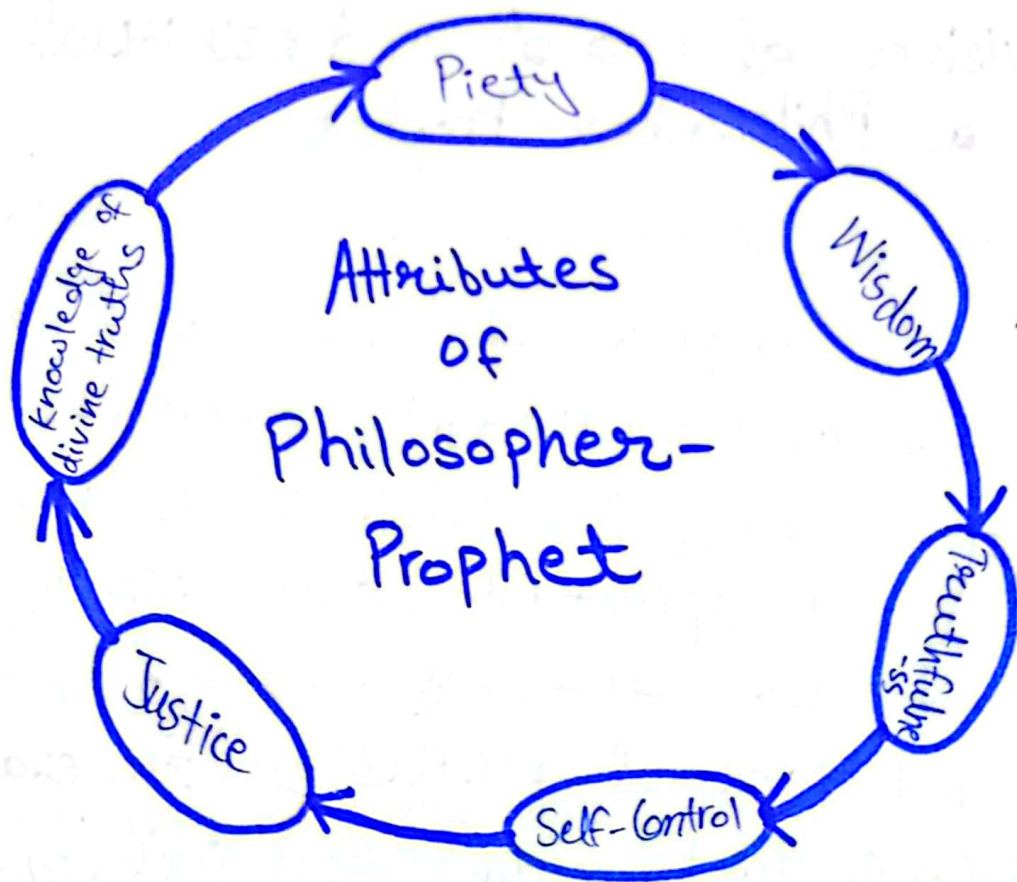
Al-Farabi's virtuous city is ruled by Philosopher-Prophet who acts as model of moral, spiritual and intellectual excellence. For instance, in Islamic history the ideal, just, prosperous and harmonious state was established in Madinah due to moral and spiritual leadership of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.).

According to Jules Masserman, a psychoanalyst from the U.S. ;

“The greatest moral and spiritual leader of all times was Muhammad (P.B.U.H.)”

(Times Magazine, July 1974)

Fig: Attributes of Philosopher-Prophet defined by Al-Farabi



vii- Harmony between religious principles and philosophical reasoning

Another salient feature of Virtuous City is harmony between religious principles and

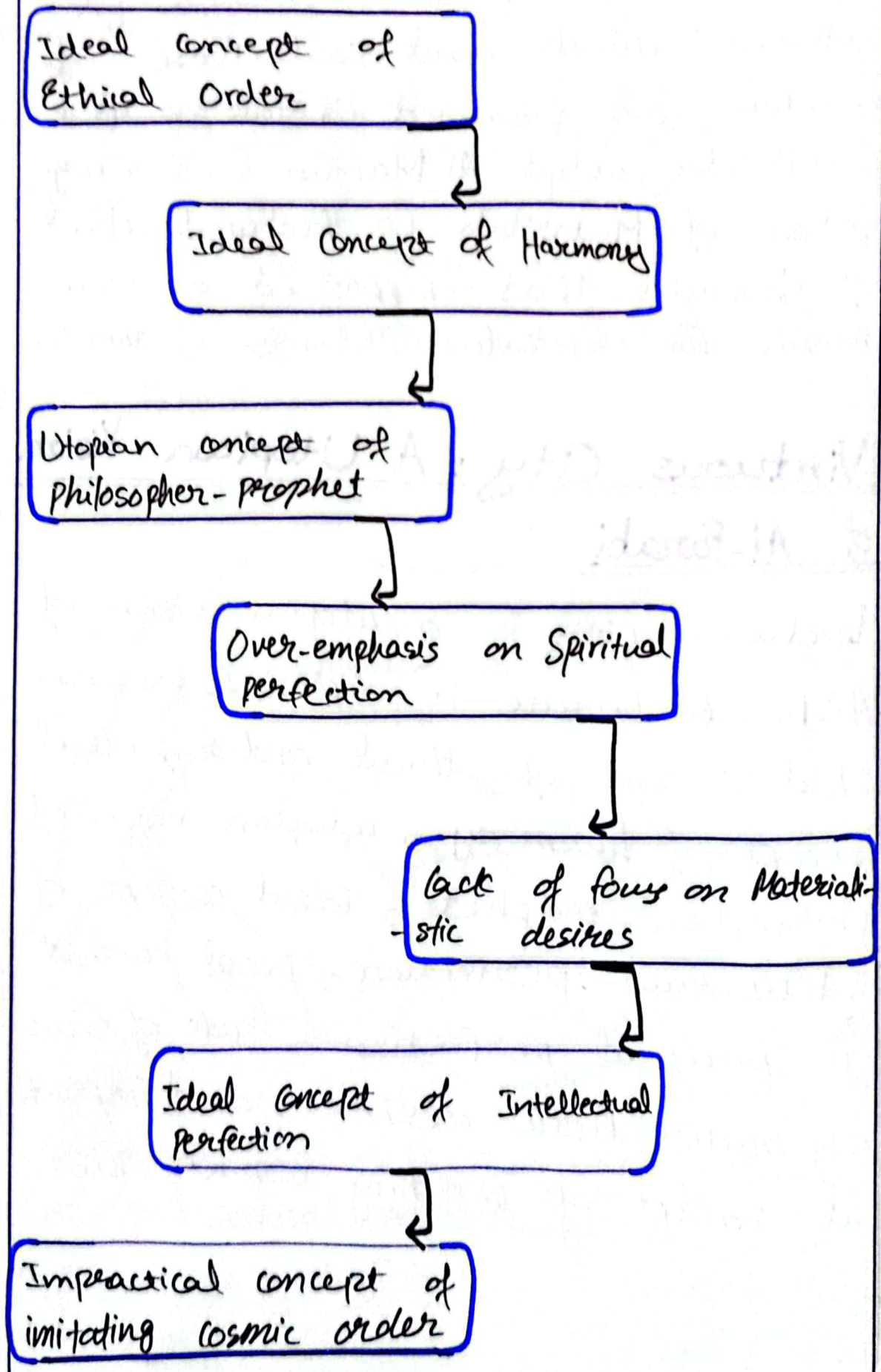
philosophical reasoning. For instance, during the reign of Abbasid Caliphs religious principles were harmonized with philosophical reasoning for cultivation of citizens' minds and souls. House of wisdom was promoted for this purpose. Similarly, Caliph Al-Mamun was a major patron of Mutazilahi (a theological school of thought that emphasized on using reason for explicating Islamic doctrine).

Virtuous City: A Utopian Vision

of Al-Farabi

Virtuous City is a utopian vision of Al-Farabi because it emphasizes on an ideal concept of ethical order, ideal concept of harmony, utopian vision of philosopher-prophet, ideal concept of intellectual perfection, ideal concept of spiritual perfection, lack of focus on materialistic desires and impractical concept of imitating cosmic order.

Fig: Features of Virtuous City that make it a Utopian Vision of Al-Farabi



- Ideal Concept of Ethical Order

One of the reasons due to which Al-Farabi's Virtuous City is a utopian concept is that it advocates for an ideal ethical order.

In a Virtuous City, every citizen is responsible for the well-being of others.

There is a socially unified environment where ethical behavior is reinforced.

This nurtures moral development in all individuals. Practically, this ideal concept of ethical perfection can not be attained.

- Ideal Concept of Harmony

Another feature of virtuous city that makes it utopian is ideal concept of harmony. According to Al-Farabi, in virtuous city every citizen works in harmony with the other. This fosters compassion, altruism, generosity and empathy which strengthen moral fabric of community. All citizens prefer collective good over their personal will. However, in this contemporary materialistic and self-seeking world such ^{ideal concept of} harmony is utopian.

iii. Utopian Concept of Philosopher-Prophet

Al-Farabi's virtuous city is ruled by philosopher-prophet, who acts as a role model of moral, spiritual and intellectual perfection. The attributes of philosopher-prophet include piety, wisdom, self-control and knowledge of divine truths and metaphysics. For instance, Caliph Ali (R.A.) was pious, wise, self-disciplined and well-aware of metaphysics. Caliph Ali (R.A.) famously stated

ce

I see Allah with the eye
of my heart. ”

This reflects that he was a model of moral, spiritual and intellectual perfection.

In modern world, such leaders do not ~~rarely~~ exist. that is why

iv. Over-emphasis on Spiritual Perfection

Al-Farabi's concept of virtuous city greatly, in fact overly emphasized on spiritual perfection. In Virtuous City, there is cooperation, harmony and solidarity. Living in harmony with one another compels individuals to ^{raise} ~~prioritize~~ above their materialistic desires. It leads to

a shared pursuit of divine truths and closeness to the first cause. Solidarity of virtuous city reduces egotism in citizens and promotes moral virtues in them. By ~~emb~~imitating morally upright companions, citizens of virtuous city embark on a journey of self-purification. This purification helps in attaining true happiness and divine proximity. However, in this materialistic world this concept of self-purification makes virtuous city a utopian vision.

V- Lack of Focus on Materialistic Desires

Another reason due to which Al-Farabi's Virtuous City is a utopian vision is that his concept lacks focus on materialistic desires. Virtuous city is characterized by the pursuit of true happiness i.e. moral perfection, spiritual and intellectual perfection. In this ideal state, citizens focus on correcting their actions and becoming morally upright for promoting ethical order in society. They focus on seeking intellectual mentorship from

Philosopher-prophet and highly intellectual scholars. Moreover, their goal is spiritual ascent. This concept of Al-Farabi which detaches citizens from materialistic desires in Virtuous City makes it a utopian concept.

vi. Ideal Concept of Intellectual Perfection

Virtuous City focuses on intellectual perfection of citizens. Citizens cooperate with one another for nurturing reason in themselves. Philosopher-Prophet guides citizens about metaphysical truths and through cooperation this knowledge is transmitted across society. For instance, ^{under} during Seljuk empire Nizamiyah Madrasahs sought to educate citizens for their intellectual development. The concept of Virtuous city which emphasises that cooperation nurtures reason in a just society is an ideal, impractical and utopian vision in this fast pace life of modern world.

Conclusion

Virtuous city is a utopian vision of just and harmonious society in which citizens cooperate for achieving moral, spiritual and intellectual perfection. Philosopher-prophet is ~~also~~ an embodiment of wisdom, pioussness and justice. In modern era, this concept of Al-Farabi's Virtuous city is utopian.