

Ibn Al-Haytham's View On Human Soul

Usep Mohamad Ishaq

Universitas Komputer Indonesia

Corresponding Email : usep.mohamad.ishaq@email.unikom.ac.id

Abstract

Ibn al-Haytham (965-1039) is hitherto known merely as a prominent scientist and mathematician who contributed to the development of science and mathematics. His contribution in philosophy and religious sciences are not exposed yet, therefore some scholars e.g. Muhammad Saud (1990), Saleh Beshara Omar (1977), Roshdi Rashed (2007), and many others, consider him neglecting philosophical and religious issues and regarded him to be a secular-positivist scholar. consider him to be uninterested in philosophical and religious issues. However, study has been done from the his primary works, especially his work namely Kitab Thamarah al-Hikmah that still rarely studied by researchers of Ibn al-Haytham thought. The method used in this study is the historical and philosophical methods. The results obtained clearly show that Ibn al-Haytham was not merely scientist and mathematician, he was also a philosopher who had contributed in explaining human psychology which accepted other philosophers. He elucidates the faculties of human soul and explains the relation between soul and the concept of happiness.

Keywords: Ibn Al-Haytham, Kitāb Thamarah Al-Hikmah, Islamic Psychology, Concept Of Happiness

Submission	Review Process	Revised	Accepted	Published
February 12, 2020	April 18, 2020 – December 10, 2021	December 11, 2021	December 12, 2021	December 29, 2021

Introduction

The name of Ibn al-Haytham (965-1039), whose full name is Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Haytham, is more widely known as a mathematician and scientist. Studies related to other fields such as philosophy, psychology, ethics, theology, and others are still lacking. Among the causes is that almost most of Ibn al-Haytham's works that can still be obtained today are in the fields of mathematics and science.

Because of this, it is assumed that Ibn al-Haytham was only a mathematician and scientist and not a philosopher. Previous studies of Ibn al-Haytham's biography and bibliography show that Ibn al-Haytham was actually a philosopher like al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Miskawayh, and others. It's just that his thoughts have not been explored and researched much. (Ishaq & Wan Daud, 2017). Among the thoughts of Ibn al-Haytham that

have not received attention and study are his views on the science of the soul and its relationship to the concept of happiness. The science of soul and happiness is an important aspect in the construction of Islamic philosophy in particular, because it is closely related to other elements of philosophy such as epistemology and axiology. Therefore, research on Ibn al-Haytham's thoughts, especially on psychology, is important to do.

Research Methods

The method used is the historical research method (historical method), which consists of the stages of research: topic selection, collection of relevant sources, verification of source authenticity or also called historical criticism, interpretation which includes analysis and synthesis, which is continued with historical writing. or historiography (Kuntowijoyo, 2005). The

choice of topic in question is why this topic was chosen. This topic is considered important because there is a gap in the research of Ibn al-Haytham's thought, especially in psychology; the heuristic stage, namely the search and collection of relevant historical sources to obtain data on Ibn al-Haytham's thoughts that are relevant to psychology.

The main sources of Ibn al-Haytham's thought in psychology are the earliest sources and short autobiographical quotations from Ibn al-Haytham, as well as primary sources from Ibn al-Haytham's own work; stage of criticism or verification, internally by checking the reliability of its contents and externally by checking its authenticity.

Philosophical methodology is also used here, especially comparative research by comparing the psychological concepts of Ibn al-Haytham with other philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Miskawayh, al-Fārābī, al-Ghāzālī (Bakker & Zubair, 1990). In addition to linguistic analysis, it is also carried out to check the authenticity of the work by comparing one work with other works of Ibn al-Haytham. The reliability of the work was investigated by analyzing some of Ibn al-Haytham's primary sources.

Results and Discussion

In the *Kitāb Thamarah al-Ḥikmah*, Ibn al-Haytham states that humans are privileged creatures with the specialties they have. Humans have something that distinguishes themselves from other creatures through the faculty (strength) related to reason called *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*. Humans like plants and animals, which are called irrational animals, have several faculties in common, namely the plant faculty (*al-quwwah al-nabāṭiyyah*) and the animal faculty (*al-quwwah al-ḥayawāniyyah*). Ibn al-Haytham did not elaborate further on the plant faculty, but then Ibn al-Haytham detailed the animal faculty into two parts, namely the faculty related to the

desire (*shahwah*) to get something he wanted, which was called *al-quwwah al-shahawāniyyah*; and the two faculties relating to the desire to win something (*ẓafar*) and to defeat something (*ghalabah*). The power associated with this is called the power of anger (*al-quwwah al-ghaḍbiyyah*) (Ibn al-Haytham 1998). Although there are similarities in potential in humans with other creatures, especially plants and animals, humans are given a differentiating faculty, namely the rational faculty (*al-quwwah al-nāṭiqah*) (Ibn al-Haytham 1998). Distinguishing (*faṣl* or *differentia*) in the language of mantic science means a *lafadz* that answers the question '*ayyu shay'in huwa?*' ('Which one is it?') (Al-Abhariyy, 2016): that is a special characteristic that is inherent and always present which is not possessed by other substances, the permanent nature of the individual that distinguishes himself from the others in a genus, in this case the genus of animals. In other words, the rational faculty is the faculty that distinguishes humans from animals in the animal genus. The term *nāṭiq* comes from the Arabic root, namely *n-ṭ-q* which means lexically to speak (to pronounce, to articulate) (*n-ṭ-q*, 1968). Because of this, humans are characterized by their ability to think and be able to articulate them through speech as well as their ability to think systematically (*manṭiq*). Al-Attas (1995/2001, 2015) has shown that through this *nāṭiq* power, in the view of Islam, humans since in the spiritual realm have been able to recognize God because he already has the ability to speak when answering God's questions (Al-Attas, 1995/2001). ; Al-Attas, 2015).

Futhermore, Ibn al-Haytham details the rational faculty of man. He divided it into three parts, namely the power of imagination (*takhayyul*), memory (*dhikr*), and the power of thought (*fikr*). The power of imagination is the power that is able to store memories of objects even though the object is no longer in front of

its external senses (al-ḥiss). Ibn al-Haytham likens this ability to that of a person who has seen a city, then he goes away from that city. With the power of superstition he can still imagine or fantasize about other cities that are similar. It can also be referred to as the drawing power (al-quwwah al-muṣawwirah) which the rational soul uses when working when the human body is sleeping. The ability of this imagination power is influenced by something called mizāj al-badan which can be translated as temperament or body character. When mizāj al-badan is in a balanced state, then a human being will be able to describe all events that have passed and events that will occur in the future. If the mizāj al-badan achieves a perfect balance, then a human being will be able to obtain the inspiration which is called by the general public as inspiration (al-waḥy) (Ibn al-Haytham, 1998). Al-waḥy here is interpreted linguistically and not in religious terms which are defined as the words of Allah revealed to one of the prophets (kalām Allāh ta'ālā al-munazzal alā nabiyy min anbiyā'ihī) (al-Tahānawī, 1997). Indeed, several other philosophers such as Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) have attributed this phenomenon as a naturalistic explanation of the revelations received by the prophets, but Ibn al-Haytham is not clearly link the two concepts.

The term al-waḥy in language is news or information that comes quickly and secretly (al-Tahānawī, 1997), either in the form of signs, inspiration, or writing (al-Tahānawī, 1997). According to al-Fārābī if the power reaches perfection in a person then he can reach the perfect stage as given by God (minḥah) to the prophets (Anwar, 2015). Nevertheless, both al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā still state that prophethood is a privilege given by God to prophets (Anwar, 2015). This naturalistic explanation is given to explain rationally that the revelation event is not something that is impossible to explain.

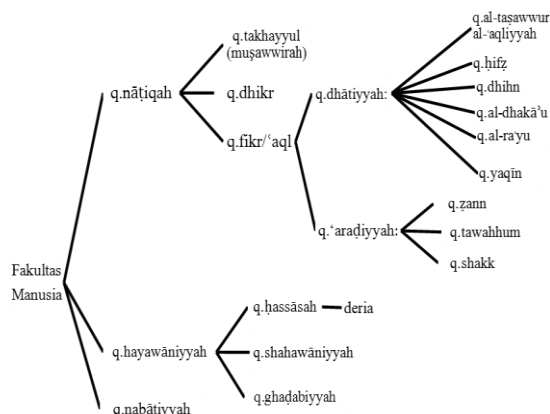
However, Ab amīd al-Ghazālī refuted the explanation of the revelations received by the prophets naturally from these philosophers, although he did not deny the explanation that the human imagination might be able to see the unseen in his dreams (Anwar, 2015). Even a study conducted by Frank Griffel shows that al-Ghazālī actually did not reject Ibn Sīnā's explanation of the possibility of prophecy, because he understood that this explanation was only an explanation and was not intended to enable every human being to receive revelation like the prophets:

“Al-Ghazālī clearly understands that Ibn Sīnā in his *De anima* does not claim to demonstrate that prophets receive revelation on the two ways outlined, i.e. on the way of imaginative and intellectual revelation. These are arguments for the possibility of prophecy and not proofs for its existence. The statements on prophecy in the psychological part of al-Shifā' were understood as explanations of how prophecy must occur, if it occurs. Al-Ghazālī points out that even the falāsifa's teachings that revelation is received as a result of a connection between celestial beings and the prophets' souls are purely explanatory and not demonstrative.”(Griffel, 2014).

Fazlur Rahman stated that indeed in this case al-Ghazālī has acknowledged that human abilities to a certain degree will have the power to receive potential revelations, which with God's gift through the angels this potential becomes something actual (Rahman, 2008).

Furthermore, Ibn al-Haytham explained that the faculty of al-dhikr (memory) is the ability to present something that already exists in the soul, and the faculty of al-fikr (thought) is the ability of the rational soul to know (al-idrāk) the nature of things (mawjūd-mawjūd), that is what is called the intellect (al-'aql); while what is meant by al-idrāk is the depiction of the soul that captures (al-mudrik) the object of knowledge (al-mudrak). To better

show Ibn al-Haytham's explanation of the human soul and its potential, this description can be described schematically through Picture 1 below:



Picture 1. The Division of Various Faculties in the Human Soul According to Ibn al-Haytham

The faculty of fikr or reason (ʿaql) has six essential powers and three accidental powers, the essential consisting of the power to visualize intellectually (al-taṣawwur al-ʿaqliyyah), memorizing/retentive senses (al-hifz), mind (al-dhihn), intelligence (al-dhakāʾ), views/opinions (al-raʾyu), and belief (al-yaqīn). The purpose of al-taṣawwur al-ʿaqliyyah is the occurrence of a brief description of things (al-mawjūdāt) in the soul in a succinct manner and their laws as they really are.

While al-dhihn is the ability of the soul to distinguish between something and something else, al-dhakāʾ is an ability related to the speed of the human soul in recognizing (maʿrifah) and knowing (ʿilm). In the Islamic scientific tradition there are two types of knowledge, namely introductory knowledge (maʿrifah) and scientific knowledge (ʿilm). According to Ibn al-Haytham, knowledge of knowledge (maʿrifah) is a sensory picture, while knowledge of knowledge (ʿilm) is a clever or conceptual picture. Recognition (maʿrifah) is understanding (idrāk) the description of something by distinguishing it

from something else, while knowledge (ʿilm) is understanding the nature of something (idrāk aqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ).

Furthermore, what is meant by al-raʾyu is the result of thinking (al-fikr), and what is meant by al-yaqīn is the conformity of what is in the mind (al-ʿaql) with what it captures (maʿqūlāt). Ibn al-Haytham explained that reason is a power in the human soul that is able to change from a particular matter (juzʾ) to something universal (kull), namely the human ability to understand everything that can be perceived by reason (maʿqūlāt) so that it is free from accidental barriers.

When humans see a particular object in the form of a circle, the circle is perceived in the mind as a geometric concept in the form of a circle that does not only apply to the particular object in front of it but also applies to other circles. The concept of a circle that exists in this mind does not have accidental properties such as color, texture, size, thickness, and so on.

While the power of reason that is accidental is: al-ẓann, which is when the mind sees two opposing views (taḥāḍiy al-raʾyayn), then tawahhum is the conformity of al-ẓann without a fixed decision, meaning that the mind has the ability to predict something that it does not know by way of compare it with something he already knows. Like when a human being who has just seen a fruit that he has just seen, but because it looks very similar to an orange, he assumes that the fruit is an orange. While the last one is al-shakk, which is when the human mind cannot determine between establishing something (ithbāt) or rejecting something (al-nafyu). Such is the view of Ibn al-Haytham regarding the human soul. In summary, the internal senses of humans can be tabulated as table 1 below:

Table 1.
Human Inner Senses According to Ibn al-Haytham

The Absorbed	Absorber	Saver	Organizer of Form and Meaning
Shape	al-ḥassāsah atau ākhir al-iḥsās	takhayyul atau al-quwwah al-muṣawwi rah	quwwah al-mumayyiza h (tamyīz)
Meaning	‘aql: tawahhum	al-ḥifẓ dan al-dhikr	

From table 1 above, it can be summarized that the internal senses of humans according to Ibn al-Haytham are that objects are perceived through the senses called al-ḥassāsah or ākhir al-iḥsās, while their meaning is perceived and given properties or attributes by tawahhum by recalling stored memories that may be already exists in al-dhikr and al-ḥifẓ.

Then Ibn al-Haytham explains why humans are given a distinction in the form of rational faculties is because it will be a means to achieve the happiness of the soul, Ibn al-Haytham stated:

“Man with his intellect shows that he is prepared to seek happiness (al-sa‘ādah), that is, the acquisition of true goodness (al-khayr). True goodness is something that is desired for its own sake. Intellect figuratively speaking is he who chooses something he wants because of himself (want something that is in that object, not because of other objects, -pent.).” (Ibn al-Haytham, 1998).

If humans use this potential of reason seriously, they will get true happiness. Ibn al-Haytham divides two types of happiness, namely happiness that is caused because humans avoid something that hurts themselves (rāḥah min alam), and the second type of happiness that is caused because he is looking

for something that makes him happy because of the things that are in that thing, not because of something that hurts him (rāḥah min ghayr alam), this is true happiness. An example of the first kind of happiness is the disappearance of hunger which gives rise to happiness and pleasure. This happiness arises because of the hunger that hurts his soul which can be removed by eating the food he likes. Once a person reaches that stage, then he will not like the food anymore. Thus, happiness is not in food, and happiness like this is not true happiness. The second type of happiness is that which is sought for oneself, namely a knowledge termed by Ibn al-Haytham as al-ḥikmah, which is defined as all knowledge of the truth and every wholesome action. This al-ḥikmah can only be achieved with the rational faculty of humans.

الحكمة علم كل حق وعمل كل نافع

"Al-ḥikmah is knowledge of what is right and what is beneficial." (Ibn al-Haytham, 1998).

Ibn al-Haytham also explains another meaning of al-ḥikmah, namely resembling the actions of Allah in terms of human capabilities:

الحكمة هي التشبّه بالله تعالى ذكره في أفعاله بمبلغ طاقة الإنسان

"Al-ḥikmah is resembling the names of Allāh Ta‘alā in His actions to the level of human ability." (Ibn al-Haytham, 1998).

Thus the rational faculty is a gift from God to humans so that they can achieve happiness, namely when humans can know the truth and do something that benefits others, both of which are a form of imitation of the attributes of God who is All-Knowing the Truth and All-Giving to others. his creatures. In addition, Ibn al-Haytham states that this rational faculty is also useful for perceiving sensory facts and processing them, it is also

useful for contemplating God's wisdom and strengthening faith in Him:

"...and after going through the science of logic (manṭiq) will come to the science of nature (ṭabi'ī) namely al-ḥikmah its basics, the reasons, the causes come to the science of metaphysics (ilāhiyah) with which he then understanding al-ḥikmah Allāh Ta'ālā, remembrance of Him in the regularity of the heavens and the earth and what is in between then he should with that confirm (belief, -pent.) The Creator (al-Bāriy), the God who is worshiped (al-Ilāh), the Most High (Ta'ālā), All-Wise (al-Ḥakīm), All-Powerful (al-Qādir), and All-Knowing (al-Khabīr)." (Ibn al-Haytham, 1998).

All faculties given to man, especially through his rational faculty, prove and show that man has been distinguished from other creatures. According to Ibn al-Haytham, humans who do not use this special potential will have the same dignity and status as animals, even lower than them because animals are not given this rational faculty.

"Therefore, humans who do not have al-ḥikmah are humans who are lacking, because they are not distinguished from irrational animals (animals), which are devoted to reason. Humans who have al-ḥikmah (al-insān al-ḥakīm) are real humans, I mean by that they are perfect humans (al-insān al-tāmm), because they are different from irrational animals because they are devoted to reason." (Ibn al-Haytham, 1998).

Because according to Ibn al-Haytham man must try to perfect himself by using his rational faculties to become a perfect human being (al-insān al-tāmm), by which perfection he will achieve happiness.

Happiness for Ibn al-Haytham is the highest goal of seeking knowledge, even in its pragmatic dimensions such as benefiting society in the end is the implementation of duties as caliph on earth, gaining the pleasure of God. In his view, true and lasting happiness ultimately exists in the afterlife without forgetting the kind of happiness in this world which is temporary and limited. Because for Ibn al-Haytham happiness has three dimensions, namely: happiness related to the body which is termed freedom from pain (rāḥah min alam), happiness related to noble character which is called freedom from other than pain and the most peak and can be achieved. achieved with the previous two happiness is true and lasting happiness in the land of the hereafter (Mohamad Ishaq, 2020). According to Ibn Sīnā, the human soul has faculties which are divided into three parts, namely: the plant soul (al-naḥs al-nabāṭiyah), the animal soul (al-naḥs al-ḥayawāniyah), and the human soul (al-naḥs al-insāniyah) (Ibn Sīnā, 2007; Al-Attas, 1995/2001). Where Ibn Sīnā further details that the plant soul consists of three faculties: namely the power to eat (al-quwwah al-ghādhīyah), the power to grow (al-quwwah al-munammīyah), and the power to reproduce (al-quwwah al-muwallidah) (Ibn Sīnā, 2007). While the animal faculty consists of two major parts, namely: the power to move (al-quwwah al-muḥarrikah) and the power to perceive or perceive (al-quwwah al-mudrikah) (Ibn Sīnā, 2007). The faculties of locomotion are further divided into two types, namely: the first as a power to do something, either wanting something (al-quwwah al-shahawāniyah) or rejecting something unwanted (al-quwwah al-ghaḍabīyah); The second is as an actor (fā'ilah), which is useful for moving the muscles when wanting or avoiding something (Ibn Sīnā, 2007). Meanwhile, the perceptive faculty (al-quwwah al-mudrikah) consists of the external senses (khārijī), known as the five external senses (al-ḥawās al-khamsah),

namely: sight (al-baṣar), hearing (al-sam'), smell (al-shamm), taste or taste (al-dhawq), touch (al-lams) (Ibn Sīnā, 2007). Meanwhile, the internal senses (bāṭin) also consist of five parts, namely: first, fanṭāsiyā or al-ḥiss al-mushtarak or common sense; second, al-khayyal and al-muṣawwirah; the third is al-mutakhayyilah which relates to the animal soul and al-mufakkirah which relates to the human soul; fourth, al-wahmiyah or the same faculty as explained in the previous concept of Ibn al-Haytham; fifth: al-ḥāfiẓah and al-dhākirah as previously mentioned (Ibn Sīnā, 2007). With the same format as before, the uses of these faculties can be seen in table 2 below:

Table 2.

Process (Internal Senses) According to Ibn

Sīnā

The Absorber	Absorber	Saver	Organizer of Form and Meaning
Shape	fanṭāsiyā or al-ḥiss al-mushtarak	al-khayyal and al-muṣawwirah	al-mutakhayyilah
Meaning	al-wahmiyah	al-ḥāfiẓah and al-dhākirah	

From Tables 1 and 2 it is clear that Ibn al-Haytham's view is similar to that of Ibn Sīnā, except for a few different terms. Besides Ibn al-Haytham and Ibn Sīnā, the concept of dividing the soul into three parts was actually also accepted by Ibn Miskawayh (Ibn Miskawayh, 1994), and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (al-Rāzī, 1992/1978). Although Ibn Miskawayh in Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq only mentions two, while Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī mentions the three types of souls.

Conclusion

From the description and analysis above, it is clear that Ibn al-Haytham had a view of the human soul. This means that he has contributed not only in the fields of science and mathematics, but also in other fields such as

psychology. Therefore, it is not correct to assume that some scholars who consider Ibn al-Haytham to be indifferent to the fields of philosophy and religion, with which he is considered a secular scientist in the sense of isolating metaphysics from science. The concept of the soul according to Ibn al-Haytham is in line with other philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā, al-Rāzī, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Miskawayh, and others who continued the views of Aristotle. The relationship between the soul and happiness (sa'ādah) is emphasized as the ultimate goal and the true goodness (khayr) of al-ḥikmah which aims to perfect humans (al-insān al-tāmm), i.e. those who make good use of their rational powers (nafs al-nāṭiqah).

References

- Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. (2001). *Prolegomena to The Metaphysics of Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC. (First published in 1995)
- Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. (2015). *On Justice and The Nature of Man: A Commentary on Sūrah al-Nisā' (4):58 and Sūrah al-Mu'minūn (23):12-14*. Kuala Lumpur: IBFIM.
- Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn. (1992). *Kitāb al-Nafs wa al-Rūḥ wa Sharḥ Quwwāhumā*, terj. M. Ṣaghīr Ḥasan Ma'ṣūmī, Imām al-Rāzī's 'Ilm al-Akhlāq. New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan (First published in 1978).
- Al-Tahānawī, Muḥammad 'Alī. (1997). *Mawsū'ah Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn wa al-'Ulūm vol.2*. Beirut: Maktabah Lubnān Nāshirūn.
- Anwar, Haerul. (2015). "Kenabian dalam Pandangan Fazlur Rahman: Satu Kajian Analitik-Kritikal" (Master thesis tidak terpublikasi). CASIS Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

- Bakker, A., & Zubair, A.C. (1990). Metodologi Penelitian Filsafat. Yogyakarta: Penerbit PT Kanisius
- Griffel, Frank. (2004). "Al-Ghazālī's Concept of Prophecy: The Introduction of Avicennan Psychology Into Aš'arite Theology," Arabic Sciences and Philosophy vol. 14 (2004), 101-144.
- Ibn al-Haytham, Abū 'Alī al-Ḥassan. "Kitāb Thamarah al-Ḥikmah," ed. 'Ammār Jam'ī al-Ṭālibī, dalam Majallah Majma' al-Lughah al-'Arabiyah bi Dimashq 73 no. 2, (1998), 288.
- Ibn Miskawayh, Abū 'Alī Aḥmad. (1994). Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq, terj. Helmi Hidayat ed. Ilyas Hasan, Menuju Kesempurnaan Akhlak: Buku Daras Pertama tentang Filsafat Etika. Bandung: Publisher Mizan.
- Ibn Sīnā, Abū 'Alī al-Husayn bin 'Abdullāh. (2007). Aḥwāl al-Nafs Risālah fī al-Nafs wa Baqā'ihā wa Ma'ādiḥā, ed. Aḥmad Fu'ād al-Ahwānī. Paris: Dar Byblion.
- Kuntowijoyo. 2005. Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah. Yogyakarta: Bentang Pustaka.
- Mohamad Ishaq, U. (2020) "Konsep Kebahagiaan Menurut Ibn al-Haytham", Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman, 14(2), 269-290.
- n-ṭ-q. (1968). Dalam Edward Willian Lane Arabic-English Lexicon, vol.8 (8 vol.). Beirut: Librairie du Liban.
- Rahman, Fazlur. (2008). Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.