



## PERCEPTION AND CONCEPTS RELATED TO PERCEPTION

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**Abstract:** Perception is defined as the process of fully grasping an object, making sense of it, and forming a mental representation. Islamic philosophers viewed perception as a process and sought to explain the functioning of the elements involved in it. Reason, as the primary instrument of cognition, is regarded as the key faculty that distinguishes human beings from other creatures. The relationship established with the active intellect forms a bond that enhances perceptive ability, while the mind, encompassing the faculties of understanding, comprehension, and abstraction, functions as an integral part of the perceptive process. The soul, considered a sacred element breathed into human beings by God, is viewed as the existential source of cognition and the principle that enables the body to become active. Imagination, representing the abstract and flexible dimension of perception, allows sensory data to be reconstructed in the mind and is particularly associated with phenomena such as dreams and revelation. The faculty of *wahm* (estimative faculty), enabling intuitive judgment, serves as a bridge between reason and imagination. The senses constitute the initial and concrete stage of perception, making the experience of reality possible and marking the beginning of the perceptual process.

The convergence of these concepts reveals that the process of cognition possesses a multidimensional and holistic structure. The notion of cognition can provide a contemporary perspective by bridging the rich intellectual heritage of Islamic philosophy with the ongoing developments in artificial intelligence. In particular, the parallels between efforts to understand human cognition and the design of artificial intelligence systems are increasingly being explored and discussed.

Cognition and its related concepts play a fundamental role in grasping human nature and the ability to think, and reconciling this heritage with current technological developments is of great importance.

**Keywords:** Perception, Reason, Sense, Mind, Imagination.

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## Introduction

In the dictionary, it is a concept that has many meanings, such as reaching, realizing, and envisioning. The word “perception” is used in different meanings in the Qur'an and covers a wide range of areas.

As a term, it is defined as “comprehending an object in its entirety, the formation of its image in the intellect, the representation of the images and ideas reflecting the truth of a thing in the intellect of the perceived.” (Hökelekli, 2000)

It is also necessary to consider the concept of perception as a verb. Two questions will appear before us here. First, who is the subject to whom perception is attributed? Second, no matter who the subject in question is, how does perception arise from it? (Yunus, 2012). These are questions that have been debated since the early periods. It has always been a matter of dispute whether the perception that occurs on a subject is the subject itself or God, the transcendent power. Although the majority state that the subject cannot be itself and that the subject cannot be anyone other than God, a considerable number of philosophers believe that the

subject which be comprehend at the point of perception is again the subject itself as the subject. In particular, philosophers who say that God is the subject argue that the entire act of perception belongs to God. In this regard, Qadi Abduljabbar said that if the subject is visual perception, the eye must be intact, if it is intact, the lights must come at the right angle, the rays must be sufficient, these rays must travel at a linear angle, and there is no human intervention anywhere in the process of touching an object, and he argued that this act of perception is completely provided by God and that we humans are incapable. As for the other question, the manner of its occurrence, there are two different views on whether it is direct or indirect. In general, those who argue that it is direct are those who argue that the subject is God. Those who argue that the subject of cognition is human beings, that is, the subject itself, have stated that cognition will occur due to an event, that is, it is an indirect act. These two groups were formed by the commonality of the philosophers' answers to these questions. (Erel, 2022)

## 1. Concepts Related To Cognition

### 1.1. Intellect ('Aql)

The word originates from the Arabic root letters "a-q-l." Lexically, it means "to restrain" or "to prevent." (Kavsut, 2018) As a term, it is defined as "a simple substance that perceives the truth of existence, that is not material but affects matter; a power that abstracts forms from matter, transforms them into concepts, and constructs propositions and syllogisms by establishing relationships between these concepts." (Bolay, 1989)

Even if the word "intellect" is not mentioned in the Qur'an, there are some words that correspond to that meaning. These are: lubb, hilm, hicr, nühâ and fuâd. (Quran)

Reason has always been one of the central topics of philosophy, and this is equally true in Islamic philosophy. It can be said that nearly all philosophers have addressed the concept of reason in some way.

Reason is the essential faculty that makes human beings truly human and distinguishes them from all other creatures. From the act of worshiping God to performing practical tasks such as hunting, reason plays a role in every aspect of human life. The Qur'an frequently refers to the act of reasoning (ta'aqqul), often addressing believers through questions or admonitions. This is because, without the use of reason, a human being becomes no different from other living beings. (Bolay, 1989)

Here, rather than focusing on the definition of intellect, we will examine its relationship with cognition. Philosophers and other scholars regard intellect as the most essential faculty that human beings employ in the process of cognition. As noted in the definition given above, "intellect" is what enables us to perceive and comprehend. (Bolay, 1989)

In discussing the concept of perception, philosophers often also address the notion of the active intellect (al-'aql al-fa'âl). The connection between the active intellect and the human soul is referred to as ittisâl (union or contact). Establishing a relationship with this intellect is said to greatly facilitate one's capacity to perceive reality. As mentioned above, the prophets were considered the most accomplished individuals in achieving ittisâl, and for this reason, they possessed an elevated level of cognition. (Kutluer, 2013)

*Some theologians, considering the types of matters grasped by the intellect, have classified it as follows:*

**Theoretical Intellect (al-'aql al-nazarî):** *The faculty that perceives knowledge unrelated to practical behavior; the capacity for abstract cognition.*

**Practical Intellect (al-'aql al-'amali):** *The faculty that determines whether something should or should not be done; the power that motivates a person toward action.*

(Mustafa Sabri Efendi, vol. I, p. 440)

In short, we can say that reason and cognition are inextricably intertwined. Since they complement and complete each other, it is unthinkable to separate them. This seems to be a common view shared by almost all philosophers. When philosophers try to explain the intellect, they inevitably resort to the concept of perception. In this way, we complete the explanation of the intellect, which stands as the most basic element of the perceptual process.

### 1.2 Mind

In terms of its lexical meaning, the concept of "mind" is almost synonymous with "cognition." It refers to processes such as understanding, comprehension, and retention. When these meanings are applied to the concept of cognition, they largely correspond to the same idea. In fact, in ancient sources, the term is often associated with meanings like "faculty of perception" or "ability to perceive." Islamic philosophers also sought to define the concept of mind by drawing on these meanings found in earlier sources. (Kutluer, 2013)

Islamic philosophers have focused extensively on the concept of the mind. In particular, philosophers such as al-Farabi conducted substantial research on this topic. According to al-Farabi, human happiness can only be attained by distinguishing between good and evil, right and wrong. What enables this discernment—this selective ability—is cognition, and more specifically, the mind. Al-Farabi deepened his investigations into the mind and proposed that conception (tasawwur) is divided into two categories. One of these, the "First Intelligibles," consists of things that can be grasped through the senses and exist within the mind. He emphasized that conceptions formed through sense perception—i.e., grasped by the mind—are more solid and reliable. (Kutluer, 2013)

Ibn Sina, as in all other areas, approached this topic systematically. Through his methodical treatment, he contributed to the compilation of these subjects into written works, ensuring their preservation to the present day. Ibn Sina especially sought to examine whether truth exists within the mind or not.

As in all other subjects, Ibn Sina approached this topic systematically. Thanks to this methodical approach, these issues were compiled into written works and have been transmitted to the present day. Ibn Sina especially focused on the question of whether truth resides in the mind.

Eventually, even an entire branch of philosophy dedicated to the mind emerged: the philosophy of mind. This area of philosophy, which remains underexplored in Turkey, was developed with the aim of shedding light on the nature of the mind. Today, it also encompasses the study of consciousness. It is a philosophical model that investigates the relationship between mind and body and conducts research in this area. The philosophy

of mind is generally categorised into two major positions: dualism and materialism. I believe that this field will receive greater attention and become more prominent in our intellectual life in the coming years. (Kutlusoy, 2018)

In short, it can be said that cognition is a concept that encompasses the mind. However, the mind is also the source from which cognition draws its strength. There is no need to speak of a communicative relationship between them—because they are embedded within one another, they do not require external interaction.

### 1.3 Soul (Rūḥ)

Lexically, rūḥ refers to the essence, soul, or spiritual entity that religions and religious philosophies regard as separate from the physical body. In the philosophical sense, it is defined as the animating principle that enables the body to function—the vital force of the body. In the Qur'an, rūḥ is used in various senses, including mercy, angel, revelation, life, Gabriel, Jesus Christ, and the divine principle that sustains the vitality of all living beings. (Quran)

Throughout the history of philosophy, the concept of the soul has consistently been a subject of debate and inquiry. There have been various approaches—ranging from attempts to calculate its physical weight to assertions equating it with divinity. Within Islam, numerous disciplines have examined the nature of the soul, including Sufism, Kalam (Islamic theology), and the History of Religions. In this section, we will focus specifically on how Islamic philosophy has approached and interpreted the concept of the soul.

In ancient times, numerous definitions were proposed concerning the concept of the soul. With the emergence of Judaism and Christianity, more developed and relatively modern definitions began to appear. Philosophical authorities such as Aristotle made significant contributions to this subject. Aristotle delved deeply into the nature of the soul, to the extent of writing a dedicated treatise titled *De Anima* (On the Soul). Following this influential work, the conceptualisations of the soul underwent further transformation. (Kutluer, 2018)

Within the Islamic tradition, the discipline most profoundly engaged with the concept of the soul is Sufism. Believing in a direct, experiential relationship with the soul, Sufi thinkers have explored it extensively. However, the philosophers within the Sufi tradition did not approach the subject solely through a mystical lens; rather, they also sought to contribute philosophical interpretations to the discourse on the soul. (Simsek, 2019)

In Islamic philosophy, the soul is often referred to as the *nafs*. Thinkers such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, however, associate it with the active intellect. Ibn Sina, in particular, discusses this concept extensively in his theory of emanation (*ṣudūr*). Within the metaphysical hierarchies he describes, the soul holds a position that is regarded as sacred. (Tasci, 2022)

Unlike other philosophical topics, this matter has not given rise to significant controversy. The reason lies in the belief that the soul was breathed into us by God and thus possesses a sacred nature. As a result, it is not generally viewed as a subject open to critical debate. Philosophers tend to refrain from making assertions that might contradict the principles of Sharia.

Its connection to perception is, in fact, quite clear. Human beings possess both a body and a soul. If the body ceases to exist, the soul remains unaffected. However, without the soul, the body is incapable of any action. Since the soul is the source of life, it naturally serves as the source of cognition as well. Indeed, the word *cogniser*—one who perceives—captures the essence of this relationship.

### 1.4 Imagination

In its original Arabic form, the word denotes meanings such as “to suppose” or “to liken”. Lexically, it refers to an image that appears real to a person in a state of sleep or wakefulness. What is being referred to here is not reality itself, but rather the shadow of reality, its reflection in a mirror, or its symbolic representation in a dream. In the dictionary, imagination is defined as “the image of something that is assumed to be real, or that resembles or imitates the real. (Durusoy, 1998)

The first Islamic philosopher, al-Kindi, discusses this concept in detail. It is worth noting that al-Kindi was unable to establish a systematic philosophical framework. Since there were no established sources of Islamic philosophy at the time, he drew upon the works of Western philosophers. In his studies on imagination, he was notably influenced by Aristotle. According to some sources, Aristotle's contributions to the concept of imagination were the most significant until the time of Kant. (Asma, 2017)

Al-Kindi expanded his studies on imagination and even authored a work titled *On the Nature of Sleep and Dream*. In this treatise, he explores his in-depth views on the power of imagination. He asserts that the imagination operates at a higher capacity during sleep, attributing this to the temporary inactivity of the sensory faculties.

After Kindi, philosophers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) further developed his ideas and presented them in a more systematic framework. Al-Farabi took Kindi's concept of *al-mutakhayyila* (the imaginative faculty) and elevated it to a more advanced level. According to Farabi, the imagination is capable of forming images suited to the five external senses, as well as the nutritive and appetitive faculties, by means of analogy. He also emphasizes the role of imagination in sacred and spiritual experiences. Farabi states that phenomena such as communicating with divine beings or receiving messages from the future occur through the operation of the imaginative faculty.

Ibn Sina, on the other hand, attempts to offer a new interpretation by distinguishing between the faculties of *al-musawwira* and *al-mutakhayyila*. In this context, he places greater emphasis on the concept of dreams. Ibn Sina also attributes prophetic revelation to the faculty of imagination (*al-mutakhayyila*). However, he does not dismiss the role of reason. On the contrary, he argues that during revelation, the intellect (*'aql*) and the imaginative faculty work together, enabling the reception of divine commands. (Uysal, 2013)

As for Ibn Rushd, a philosopher deeply engaged with the concept of imagination, he develops his own views by drawing upon earlier thinkers. According to him, imagination cannot exist independently of the senses. This is because we tend to imagine certain things that we have previously perceived through our senses. This process corresponds exactly to what we earlier described under the topic of perception as “imaginary perception”

(al-idrāk al-khayālī)—the kind of perception that follows sensory experience. An example would be imagining a person years after having once seen them.

In order to highlight the distinct nature of imagination, Ibn Rushd compares it with other cognitive faculties. Through this method, he arrives at more robust conclusions. He asserts that imagination is neither a discipline nor a science. In support of this conclusion, he refers to the fallibility of imagination and its inability to perform verification.

According to Ibn Rushd, it is not only the imagined forms of things we perceive through our senses that enter the mind. The spiritual impressions that these perceptions leave on us can also influence our imagination. In this way, Ibn Rushd attempts to demonstrate that imagination has a more spiritual dimension than mere sensory experience.

Averroes introduced new interpretations of the concept of imagination. He reinterpreted the ideas he inherited from earlier philosophers such as Aristotle, al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina. While he adheres to the views of his predecessors in some instances, in others he departs from them to develop his own philosophical position. In short, Averroes emphasized that although imagination is connected to the other faculties of perception, it remains indispensable to their operation. (Sahin, 2016)

Those who have interpreted the concept of imagination in Islamic philosophy can generally be classified into three groups:

- Those who regard imagination as a functional continuation of the five external senses (e.g., al-Kindi, the Ikhwan al-Safa, Ibn Bajja, and Ibn Rushd);
- Those who, within a philosophical framework, assign to the imaginative faculty (*al-mutakhayyila*) not only the mediating function between sensation and reason but also additional cognitive roles (e.g., al-Farabi, Ibn Sina);
- Those who treat imagination not merely as a psychological or epistemological concept, but as a cosmological principle with metaphysical significance (e.g., Suhrawardi, Ibn al-ʿArabi, and Mulla Sadra). (Durusoy, 2005)

Imagination is one of the faculties of perception. In brief, it is a concept embedded within cognition. It represents the most abstract form of perceptual experience and functions to complete what is lacking in sensory input. Imaginative perception occupies a middle ground between sensation and intellection. In short, imagination is an essential and indispensable component of cognition.

### 1.5 Estimation (*Wahm*)

Lexically, the Arabic term *wahm*, often translated as “estimation,” carries meanings such as delusion, conjecture, assumption, or an impression that arises inwardly. In terms of epistemological value, it refers to “the weaker of two propositions or opinions,” and to judgements or imaginations about the future that lack certainty. (Durusoy, 2012)

In Islamic philosophy, the concept of *wahm* was first introduced by the earliest Islamic philosopher, al-Kindi. He defined it as the internal faculty used to accept or reject propositions. Influenced by Aristotle, al-Kindi offered early interpretations of this faculty.

As in many other subjects, Ibn Sina (Avicenna) was the one who systematised the concept. He defined *wahm* in a way that allowed it to be applicable across multiple disciplines. In general, estimation is considered an internal sense faculty that operates on data obtained through the five external senses.

Ibn Sina sought to distinguish *wahm* from reason (ʿaql), arguing that the human soul possesses two faculties of judgement: reason and estimation. Among these, the judgements formed by reason are considered more accurate and reliable. Philosophers following Ibn Sina, such as Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, regarded him as the authority on this subject and attempted to further develop his views. (Durusoy, 2005)

Ibn Rushd (Averroes), however, approached the topic from a different perspective. He questioned the need to posit a separate faculty like *wahm* when the imagination (*al-mutakhayyila*) already fulfils similar functions. For instance, he argued that when a lamb perceives danger in a wolf it sees for the first time, this perception arises from imagination. He maintained that in animals, imagination is the highest cognitive faculty, whereas in human beings, it is surpassed by reason. (Ibn Rusd, tr. Özey, 2020)

Another related topic is the concept of *wahmiyyāt*. Lexically, it refers to notions that are assumed to exist despite having no actual existence—knowledge formed on the basis of delusion or mistaken assumptions. Initially, this term was generally used to denote the conclusion reached through an act of judgement. However, in the post-Avicennian period, it gradually evolved into a term used to denote erroneous judgements. More broadly, it began to be applied to things that lie beyond the realm of the senses, i.e., supra-sensory matters.

Ibn Sina states that in metaphysical matters—such as God, the intellect, and other abstract concepts—the faculty of estimation (*wahm*) cannot arrive at a valid judgement on its own and must be validated by reason. Even a critic of Ibn Sina, such as al-Ghazali, endorsed this position. This endorsement from a prominent opponent suggests the relative strength of this interpretation. Al-Ghazali himself emphasised the importance of logic (*mantiq*) and advocated its use within the domain of religion.

Beyond being a perceptual faculty within the philosophical system, *wahm* also found a place in the science of logic. This dual inclusion helped solidify the legitimacy of Ibn Sina’s theory and enabled subsequent philosophers to further develop and refine the concept. (Durusoy, 2012)

To conclude, estimation (*wahm*) is one of the faculties—or, more precisely, one of the levels—of perception. It holds a significant place within the hierarchy of perceptual faculties defined by Ibn Sina. As mentioned above, estimation is the faculty that allows a person to form judgements about things that are not directly known. To revisit the lamb-wolf example: a person who has never seen a wolf cannot have direct knowledge of it. However, if a familiar animal such as a lamb instinctively flees upon seeing a wolf, we infer that the wolf poses a threat to the lamb. From this, we further infer that the wolf might also harm us, leading us to keep our distance. This process exemplifies how estimation works—deriving conclusions not from direct sensory data, but from associations and inferences based on indirect observation.

This may be one of the most practically useful forms of cognition for human beings, as it integrates both sensory and

imaginative perception. A judgement formed through the combined operation of these faculties is less likely to mislead; on the contrary, it often guides one toward making the most appropriate decision. In summary, estimation is a concept embedded within the broader framework of perception. According to Ibn Sina, it occupies the third rank among the stages of perception. (Durusoy, 2012)

## 1.6 Sense

Lexically, sense refers to the ability of humans and animals to perceive external stimuli through the organs of sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste—in other words, sensation. In Islamic philosophy, it is generally explained through the term *ḥiss* (feeling/sensation). We can infer the meaning of sense from the concept of *ḥissī idrāk* (sensory perception).

When examining the usage of the word *ḥiss* in the Qur'an, we find it mentioned in seven verses. The meanings conveyed in these verses vary and include:

- “to destroy or inflict a horrible death”,
- “a hidden or subtle sound”,
- “observation of perceptible (sensible) states”,
- “acquiring knowledge through righteous deeds”,
- “a sensation appealing to the ear”,
- “the absence of sensory awareness regarding peoples who perished in the past”,
- and “witnessing torment through the sense organs”. (Quran)

The concept of sense, which was explored by ancient philosophers, held a significant place in Islamic philosophy and was discussed by numerous thinkers. The varying perspectives of these philosophers demonstrate that the concept of sense is one that can evolve and be interpreted in different ways. (Hökelekli, 1994)

Al-Kindi, the first Islamic philosopher, was among the earliest thinkers to engage with the concept of sense. According to Kindi, sense refers to the faculty by which a person perceives external objects through the sense organs. He argued that sensory perception may vary depending on external conditions.

The Ikhwan al-Safa (Brethren of Purity), on the other hand, dedicated a separate chapter to this subject in their encyclopaedic work *Rasā'il*. In the treatise titled *fī al-Ḥāss wa'l-Maḥsūs* (“On the Perceiver and the Perceived”), they provided detailed explanations regarding sensation. According to the Ikhwan, sensation is the alteration of the disposition of the sense organs due to the direct stimulus of a perceptible object. Referring to perceptible objects as ‘bodies’, they describe the act of sensory perception as a spiritual phenomenon. (Hökelekli, 1994)

Al-Farabi likens the mind to a blank slate and asserts that everything written upon it occurs through the senses. He identifies five primary senses and attributes this classification to Aristotle. However, when it comes to the formation of concepts, Farabi argues that abstraction is performed not by the senses themselves, but by the faculty of perception (*quwwat al-idrāk*), which operates beyond mere sensory input. (Hammond, 1947)

The philosopher who most systematically and thoroughly studied the concept of sense is Ibn Sina (Avicenna). Through his interpretations and theoretical insights, he laid out a comprehensive framework concerning sensory perception. His classifications, in particular, greatly facilitated the work of later philosophers. (Göz, 2018)

For example, he presents the developmental order of the five external sense organs as follows:

### 1.6.1 The Sense of Touch (*ḥāssat al-lams*)

Ibn Sina places the sense of touch first in the hierarchy of sensory faculties, emphasising its indispensability for both animals and humans. All Islamic philosophers seem to agree on this point. While the sense of touch can itself be divided into categories, Ibn Sina notes that its loss is irreparable.

### 1.6.2 The Sense of Taste (*ḥāssat al-dhawq*)

Taste has been a long-standing topic of philosophical and physiological debate. How the tongue perceives flavour has often been questioned. The idea—endorsed by both Al-Ghazali and Ibn Sina—that taste is enabled through the breakdown of substances by saliva has now become widely accepted. Ibn Sina observes a resemblance between touch and taste, but also identifies distinct differences, which justify treating taste as a separate sensory faculty that enables perception in its own right. (Hökelekli, 1994)

### 1.6.3 The Sense of Smell (*ḥāssat al-shamm*)

There is also disagreement concerning the nature of olfaction. The debate mainly concerns how we perceive odours. Ibn Sina argues that we perceive smells carried by the air we inhale. Al-Ghazali, on the other hand, maintains that when air and odours come into contact, a transformation occurs between them.

### 1.6.4 The Sense of Hearing (*ḥāssat al-sam'*)

Unlike some other senses, the sense of hearing has been the subject of general consensus. According to Ibn Sina, sound is perceived when vibrations in the air strike specific parts of the ear. Al-Ghazali concurs with this view.

### 1.6.5 The Sense of Sight (*ḥāssat al-baṣar*)

The perceptual capacity of vision has been one of the most debated topics in both Islamic and Western philosophy. One camp, including certain theologians (*mutakallimūn*), argues that everything can be perceived through sight. In contrast, some philosophers assert that only colours can be perceived visually and that no deeper or abstract perception can be achieved by sight alone. Theories about how vision occurs vary widely, but the general view is that vision results from the interaction of light between the eye and the object.

The most debated issue among the five external senses concerns the relative superiority of sight versus hearing. This question has sparked long-standing disagreements between philosophers and theologians. According to the philosophers, hearing is the superior faculty, as it allows us to perceive sounds from all directions and in various environments, enabling responsive action. In contrast, sight is limited to perceiving colours and light reflections directly in front of us. Theologians, however, argue that sight is superior since, through it, everything in the visible world can be perceived. Hearing, on the other hand, is restricted to the perception of sound only. (Hökelekli, 1994)

Alongside the five external senses, Ibn Sina also introduces the concept of the “common internal sense” (al-ḥiss al-mushtarak). He describes this faculty as the internal repository where the data received by the five senses is collected and synthesised. It is also the faculty that integrates the impressions from all external senses and constitutes the foundation of what is referred to as ‘external perception’. According to Ibn Sina, this common sense is associated with an organ located in the anterior part of the brain. When this faculty interacts with other internal powers, it can give rise to experiences such as dreams and hallucinations. (Göz, 2018)

As demonstrated, the concept of sense functions as a subcategory of the broader concept of perception. It is considered a faculty that enables a person to perceive an object or an event. The first stage of perception—what we call sensory perception—encompasses this dimension. In this sense, it can be said that perception begins with the senses. The richness of the classifications within the concept of sense contributes significantly to our understanding of the topic. In particular, Ibn Sina’s systematic treatment of the subject stands out as especially noteworthy. Thinkers such as al-Ghazali, al-Farabi, and our earliest philosopher, al-Kindi also offered valuable insights and perspectives on this matter.

Although the related concepts discussed above might initially seem tangential to the main topic, such a conclusion would be misguided. These concepts either complete the process of cognition or are themselves completed through it. Each of them has been examined as an independent field of inquiry within Islamic philosophy. Their shared and defining feature is that they all pertain to the domain of cognition.

## Conclusion

In this study, the concept of perception (idrāk) and related notions such as intellect (‘aql), mind (dhihn), soul (rūḥ), imagination (khayāl), estimation (wahm), and sense (ḥiss) are examined in detail from the perspective of Islamic philosophy. Perception is defined as the process by which a human being fully comprehends an object, makes sense of it, and forms a mental representation. This concept holds a significant place in the history of philosophy and Islamic thought. Both ancient philosophers and Islamic thinkers have placed cognition at the center of enquiries into human nature and the capacity for knowledge, continuously questioning the nature and operation of this phenomenon.

Islamic philosophers have viewed cognition as a dynamic and multi-layered process and have sought to explain how various faculties—such as reason, mind, the senses, the soul, estimation, and imagination—function within it. The intellect (‘aql) was defined as the primary instrument of cognition and regarded as the most essential faculty that distinguishes human beings from other beings. The relationship established with the Active Intellect (al-‘aql al-fa‘āl)—a process referred to as ittisāl—was believed to enhance perceptual capacity, and within this context, it was asserted that prophets attained the highest level of perception. The mind (dhihn), as the faculty responsible for understanding, comprehension, and abstraction, is considered an integral part of the cognitive process. Thinkers such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina (Avicenna) emphasised the role of the mind by articulating its dual capacity for conception (taṣawwur) and assent (taṣdīq), thereby demonstrating its philosophical and epistemological significance.

The soul is considered the existential source of cognition, and it is emphasised that it is a sacred quality breathed into human beings by God. It is stated that in the absence of the soul, the body would not be able to carry out any activity, and therefore cognition would not be possible. The fact that the soul is considered the life force in Islamic philosophy shows that perception also comes into existence through the soul. On the other hand, imagination represents the most abstract and flexible dimension of perception. The imagination, which enables the reconstruction of the perceptions obtained through the senses in the mind, is especially associated with dreams, revelation, and images. Farabi and Ibn Sina stated that imagination plays an intermediary role even in divine revelations.

Estimation is the power of perception that enables humans to form an intuitive judgement. According to Ibn Sina, estimation is a level that comes after the intellect and helps people to make judgements in the face of an unknown situation. It has the potential to direct people to the truth, especially by working together with imaginary perception and sensory perception. The senses constitute the first and concrete stage of the perception process. The reality perceived through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch is abstracted and perceived in the mind. Ibn Sina’s systematic studies made a great contribution to later philosophical studies by explaining how the senses work and their role in the cognition process.

The concepts discussed in this study are intertwined as complementary elements of the perception process and form an inseparable whole. Each concept explains a different dimension of cognition and explores the human capacity for meaning-making in depth.

Today, these ancient concepts have regained importance, especially with the advancement of artificial intelligence technologies. There is ongoing debate about the extent to which artificial intelligence systems—designed to imitate human cognition—can embody faculties such as reason, mind, imagination, and the senses. An artificial intelligence’s ability to perceive an object, form a judgement about it, or imagine it is directly related to how closely it replicates the mechanisms that constitute human cognition. However, whether abstract faculties such as the soul and estimation can be replicated by artificial intelligence remains a significant question.

On the other hand, disciplines such as ‘Artificial Intelligence Ethics’ and ‘Artificial Intelligence and Religion’, which have emerged within the scope of artificial intelligence studies, demonstrate how vital and indispensable these concepts are for humanity. Particularly in countries such as those in Europe and the United States, extensive research is being conducted in these fields. Addressing these issues from philosophical, ethical, and religious perspectives has become an urgent necessity. It is evident that the deep intellectual heritage of Islamic philosophical tradition can make significant contributions to these contemporary discussions.

In conclusion, cognition and its related concepts form the foundation of what it means to be human and to think. The rich legacy of Islamic philosophy has offered a profound understanding of these concepts and has served as a valuable point of reference for today’s technological debates. Considering that the boundaries between artificial intelligence and human cognition will be further explored in the future, the relevance and significance of these concepts will inevitably become more apparent. In this context, it

is both a cultural and scientific responsibility to carry the Islamic philosophical understanding of cognition into the modern world and to integrate it into studies on artificial intelligence.

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