

Research Journal of Islamic Philosophy and
Theology of Shahid Beheshti University
No.38 /Spring 2014

Refinement and Self-purification from Avicenna's Viewpoint and Ways to Achieve It

Shahnaz Shahriari Nayeri^{*}

Mohammad Najafi^{**}

Abstract

Drawing upon the views of some Muslim philosophers, social guidance activists and psychology and education authority figures who attribute the root of many societal problems, perversities and calamities to the self and its refinement and cultivation, the present paper aims at investigating refinement and self-purification from Avicenna's viewpoint adopting an analytical-deductive method. The paper gives priority to the awareness of one's flaws as a partial step toward the recognition of self-refinement and indicates that refinement and self-improvement from Avicenna's viewpoint is doubly necessary; first, because of the role that refinement and

^{*} Isfahan University

^{**} Isfahan University

shahriarin201467@gmail.com

mdnajafi@yahoo.com

cultivation plays in securing the hereafter bliss, and secondly because of its positive effect from an educational standpoint. From Avicenna's point of view, achieving hereafter bliss or acquired intelligence cannot rest only on theoretical reason; the pragmatic reason should also reach its highest position. It is the pragmatic aspect of the self which is more related to refinement and cultivation, and Avicenna's emphasis on improving the pragmatic component is due to its relation to the body and the role it has in relation to theoretical reason gaining sapience from active reason. Refinement and self-purification fall under two categories of methods: those adopted by oneself (primary and secondary methods), and those adopted by others; both methods lead to the reinforcement and empowerment of the self.

Key Terms: *self (soul), practical reason, speculative reason, refinement, purification.*