

## Philosophy from the Self to Action: A Reading in the History and Concept of the Philosophy of Action

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### Abstract:

This modest research paper addresses one of the important philosophical concepts that has not enjoyed significant and distinctive presence, nor received its fair share of genuine philosophical research and analysis—namely, the *Philosophy of Action*. This concept is indeed among those that reflect the true value of philosophy, as it connects ideas with practices and distances philosophy from its abstract nature detached from reality. In this paper, we seek to revisit the historicity and the concept of the Philosophy of Action, trace its philosophical evolution, and return to its earliest sources, beginning with Aristotle and extending to the contemporary era, while highlighting how intellectual and philosophical thought has engaged with the value of action and its presence in various philosophical traditions.

**Keywords:** Action, Value, Philosophy, Practice, Abstraction.

### Introduction:

The one who contemplates the philosophical history finds that it has been tied with many theoretical concepts that made

philosophy in a narrow frame, where most philosophical theories focused their research on the theoretical side, and this is what the philosophical history proves, starting from the Greek era which forms the real and actual beginning of philosophy, and arriving to modern philosophy which tried to send out the concept of philosophy within a frame imposed by society and reason, going beyond the mythical and theological thinking that dominated in the medieval age. Contemporary philosophy became aware of that epistemological gap which exists between what reason imposes as ideas, since it is the frame in which documentation is made to reach the total truth that the human seeks and that it is able to be the only way that leads to the total truths that man strives for, and between what reality imposes, that is, the embodiment of these ideas and making them a procedural action far from the total principles that philosophers have always celebrated. Contemporary philosophy became aware of that abyss existing between what reason imposes as formal abstract ideas and the transformation of these ideas into actual practices, and it is in reality a serious attempt towards what contemporary science has reached and the necessity that philosophy keeps pace with everything that is new and modern and

contemporary, as well as the questioning about the value of philosophy and its presence in the contemporary age within the discourse of endings that most Western and contemporary philosophical approaches have called for.

In this article we will try to follow the stages of philosophy, and how it tried to move from theoretical philosophy to procedural action through what is called the philosophy of action, so that philosophy moves from the frame of formality and abstraction to action and practice. We will also try to answer the following problematic: Does the founding of the concept of the philosophy of action cancel the abstract and formal character that accompanied philosophy through its history, or does it give it a special additional value within the great scientific development that the contemporary age is witnessing, or has it become obligatory for philosophy to keep pace with contemporary realities through what is called the philosophy of action.

### **First: Philosophy of Action, the Concept and the Meaning**

The concept of action occupied a large space in the history of philosophy because of its importance and the difference of points of view about it, where the word “action” in the Arabic dictionary is used for two distinct meanings, a linguistic meaning and an eventive meaning, so the verb in the grammarians’ terminology means what indicates a meaning in itself connected with one of the three times (past, present, future) (Al-Ayadi, 2007, p. 15). This indicates the temporal, historical and philosophical context of action, where we say “did”, “does”, and “doing” in the past, present and future, and the word “action” is used for what was connected and simultaneous with it in the past or the present or the future.

As for Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, he defines it by saying: “It is the word that indicates the meaning and its time” (Al-Farabi, 1991, pp. 41–42). This means the language in which action and its time and its place can be realized, so the action is an embodiment of the meaning and the idea which is the starting point and the action is as a result of it, and in this way the action becomes a reflection of the meaning and an embodiment of it.

As for the philosophy of action, it is a contemporary field that is concerned with the result of thinking and its aim, and this does not exclude the philosophical attempts that tried to push philosophical thinking into the frame of action and practice, but they were very few attempts if we compare them with contemporary philosophy. The philosophy of action is defined by Abdulaziz Al-Ayadi when he says: “The philosophy of action that we mean is the quality of thought that gathers the full mode of existence of the human beings in the world, by its ability to move in the distance of opposition between the two levels of theory and practice, or it is the procedural activity that embodies integration and undertakes becoming” (Al-Ayadi, 2007, p. 9). The gap in which philosophy has fallen, and we mean here the same abstract total frame that only the few understand, not to mention the idealism that made from philosophy that narrow frame that cannot be understood nor even comprehended, made many people become aware of it, by the necessity of pushing these totalities into a practiced and procedural frame, where philosophy in the end can live with all the conditions and all the questions that the human seeks to, and by this the philosophy of action becomes as a new frame of contemporary philosophy to answer these questions and to bring down abstract thinking into practice.

So the philosophy of action in the end is that integration which happens between thought

and reality and between theory and practice, in a procedural integrative frame, and according to a process built on harmony, where this one-sided view is not limited to a certain frame, but it forms the total of the concepts and the different fields of human thinking, and by this the philosophy of action is that comprehensive view for the total of ideas and theories, within an existential frame that is practiced and actual.

The philosophy of action seeks that the action in the end has a direct relation with the external world and with others, through a conscious thinking that starts from the self towards the external world, and this action in the end is a connection with the external world and with others in a certain way and it is an intentional movement, and it is a deliberate interaction between the self and things and others (Al-Qarni, 2001, p. 162). Thus, the action is not an action except if it is connected with others or with the external world through an effective and intentional practice at the same time, and from here the philosophy of action seeks that conscious procedural view which has a presence in reality where these theory and ideas are transformed into actual and serious actions and practices that have presence outside the self. In this way philosophy, especially the contemporary one, seeks to connect the idea with its results and with what it achieves from actions, to negate that abstract and metaphysical view that was connected with the philosophical history, especially the classical one.

Also, action has essential characteristics that must be available in it so that it becomes having a meaning and an actual existence, and through presenting the concept of action and also the philosophy of action, we must say that action is connected with a group of essential characteristics that distinguish it from others, and Ezzat Al-Qarni summarized and condensed them in three main points. The first is related to

bodily movement, so from the characteristics of action is that a bodily movement accompanies it and is connected with it from its inner nature. The second characteristic is related to will or the aim of the agent, where it concerns the action from the side of cause and aim and type of responsibility. As for the third characteristic, it is the connection of action with the external world (Lasfar, 2021, p. 31). In this way these characteristics form the real meaning of action and also the aim of the philosophy of action. The action must be conscious and have a relation with movement and intentionality and also with the external world, and it is in reality one of the pillars and features of modern philosophy, which sought to connect the idea with the action for a real aim or result, far from the excessive idealism that was connected with classical philosophy.

### **Second: The Course of the Concept of Action in Greek Philosophy**

The understanding of the philosophy of action takes us back to the previous philosophies, even if they were the first to that, they are considered few attempts if we compare them with contemporary philosophy, and that is because the human thought was focused on all what is abstract and formal, in order to restore consideration to the place of the human mind, and that it is able to solve all the problems of man and what he searches for from truths and causes.

The favor of the Greek civilization on the later human thinking, which drinks from it and considers it its basic starting point, cannot be denied, and here we mention specially the Greek philosopher Aristotle, who had the great merit in becoming aware of the contradiction in which the teacher of Plato fell, who separated between two worlds and made the world of Forms the world of absolute truth, and the world of facts and senses the world of falsity in which there are no truths.

From here was Aristotle's starting point concerning the founding of the concept of the philosophy of action starting from the contradiction of his teacher Plato, so Aristotle realized that this contradiction does not give human thought its real and actual existence, and he started from the idea of the immanent substance, not the transcendent one that his teacher Plato admitted.

Aristotle tried through his theory of action to go beyond the contradiction in which Plato fell, where he wanted to found a philosophy of immanent action that gathers between ideas and facts, to be more rational, and by that Aristotle gave great attention to the philosophy of action: "as we do not know anyone except Aristotle who cared about that before the twentieth century, the subject did not know prosperity except in two seasons: the phase of Aristotle and our phase". (Group of Authors, 2011, p. 364) For this, the great merit for the concept of action goes back to Aristotle, as he gave great importance to action and to the extent of the realization of ideas with their existents, and it is a new practical phase that characterized the Greek era, which was founding its concepts on mind and self and did not pay attention to facts and their importance in giving the complete truth of things and of their ideas and principles.

Aristotle distinguishes between actions and divides them into voluntary actions and involuntary actions. The voluntary actions have an internal and mental cause, because they are connected with mind and principle, while the involuntary actions have their cause in external powers, that is, outside the self (Group of Authors, 2011, p. 367). Here Aristotle establishes an integrative balance in which he tries to integrate the external actions and the extent of their effect on the self, because they give it real and clear knowledge, contrary to the internal and mental actions which alone do not

establish a real, clear and comprehensive balance.

Aristotle clarifies and "insists that thought alone does not make the action happen. Thought by itself is good always, and this does not mean that we think in a bad way or that we have false beliefs, but it means that thought cannot be evaluated morally". (Group of Authors, 2011, p. 365) There is no doubt that Aristotle gives value to mind and insists on it, as it is a supreme value that man possesses. The mind by itself is something good always, because it organizes human thinking and protects it from fallacies, but in Aristotle's view it is not enough, because thought in itself is not normative and cannot remain only as a value, but it must be connected with its results and its facts. The world of ideas that exist in the mind cannot lead man to the real action that he seeks, but thought must have its starting points from the world of facts that man lives. In this way, in Aristotle's view, thought alone cannot produce a real action, but thought must be directed from the self to the outside to imitate the world of things. Aristotle considers "that the rational power or what he calls mind or the power of knowledge is non-active and does not move and does not lead us to do anything at all". (Group of Authors, 2011, p. 367) Accordingly, Aristotle, as a clear criticism of Plato's opinions, tries to clarify for us the deficiency of mind alone in producing action, where he sees that mind is something important in action, but it is not sufficient alone to perform the action, away from the extent of its connection with its facts.

Accordingly, Aristotle is considered the first who discovered the paradox of the mental and the deficiency of the human mind regarding action, for the human mind is not something separate and transcendent, but it is a value that has its counterpart in reality.

Accordingly, “there is no mental action parallel to the action of extracting a conclusion from a theoretical logical syllogism in the case of scientific thinking, the extraction of the conclusion is that we do” (Group of Authors, 2011, p. 368). By this Aristotle clarifies the main principles of the philosophy of action, so the syllogism must have its result as action, and nothing but action, and far from that the syllogism becomes meaningless. The connection of the premises with the conclusions has as its result the action, and the action falls under the world of senses and direct and visible facts.

Aristotle speaks at length about the subject of the duality of soul and body in his book *On the Soul*, and he concludes by saying that the mental and the bodily are indeed two faces of one phenomenon. He says that it is self-evident that the passions of the soul, anger and courage and greed for example, are because of something external. The determination of these passions must determine the movements of the body or the movements of a part of the body or a power of the powers of the body. For example, the biologist determines anger as the boiling of blood (Group of Authors, 2011, p. 368).

This means in the end that every matter that arises or becomes an action is in the end a causal relation between thought and the natural and external world, and this is what Aristotle wanted to clarify, as he had priority in raising the subject of action and the extent of the possibility of connecting it and founding on it in understanding external subjects.

In this way the Aristotelian attempt for the concept of the philosophy of action was previous in the history of human thought, but it was not with that precision and that clear and evident foundation which modern and contemporary philosophy knew afterwards. However, it is considered the basic starting point to understand

this paradox and to push human thinking to the immanence between mind and action.

### **Third: The Presence of Action in Islamic Philosophy**

Islamic philosophy represents an important stage in human thought because of what it presented from valuable opinions and ideas in philosophical thought in its various fields, and it also contributed to explaining and simplifying Greek philosophy and presenting it in a clear and understandable form for the philosophies that came after it. A living example was taken from Islamic philosophy, where the light will be shed on the philosopher Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, in view of what he presented from valuable intellectual and philosophical opinions.

Abu Nasr Al-Farabi tried to reconcile between the opinions of the two Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle through his view on the idealism of Plato and the realism of Aristotle, concluding a middle position that gathers between the opinions of the two wise men. The philosophy of Al-Farabi appears through the human’s awareness of the world of existents and his intellection and understanding of them, where “the actual intellect is the intellect of abstract universals, and it is a breath from the Active Intellect, the intellect of God, and a successive emanation from the First Existent or from God, and man ascends to this intellect by being prepared for it and by persevering in ascending in the degrees of knowledge from natural sciences to mathematics to theology” (Nazariyat Luqa, 1982, p. 1984). Al-Farabi divides the intellect into three types: the potential intellect, the actual intellect, and the Active Intellect. The potential intellect is what God has put in us, and the actual intellect is the intellect’s perception of abstract things, while the Active Intellect, on which Al-Farabi focuses and praises, is the intellect of perceiving and

understanding the existents and reflecting on them, and its knowledge increases when it ascends from natural truths to mathematical and divine truths.

The Active Intellect for Al-Farabi is the intellect that perceives the actual existents and starts from them in building its final knowledge, which is connected with mind. Only in this way the Active Intellect becomes perceiving real knowledge that leads it to complete knowledge, while the other intellects have relative and incomplete knowledge.

The philosophy of action derives its place in the philosophy and opinions of Al-Farabi through his ethical and political opinions, but Al-Farabi's view in politics and ethics is almost not separated from the opinions of Greek philosophy. Ethics for Al-Farabi is that practical science, meaning that it advances to the practice of praiseworthy actions and following the virtuous capacity. Every human being possesses the capacity to do good, but he develops it through action and practice. Also, ethics for Al-Farabi is subject to the civil and political science, because individual behavior is acquired and branches from social behavior (Harbi, 2003, p. 102).

Accordingly, the philosophy of action appears in his ethical and political opinions, which end in those praiseworthy practices that start from the self and go towards others in the form of actions. Therefore, Al-Farabi connects the kinds of knowledge with each other and confirms the necessity of their coming together, and he says that in order to reach real happiness the work of the senses must be connected with the theoretical power, and accordingly: "sensation and imagination and seeing are not enough to act unless what is sensed or thought about is connected with knowledge, because the will is that the appetitive power inclines to what

it has perceived. If it works with the theoretical power and sets its aim and the appetitive power longs, and the deliberative power derives what ought to be done, then the imaginative and the senses help with that, and then the appetitive power performs those actions, then all the actions of man will be good and beautiful" (Harbi, 2003, p. 123). This is what Al-Farabi tries to reach through connecting the mental ideas with what corresponds to them from the perception of the senses. This is the aim of the philosophy of action, that man connects and brings down his ideas to that action in order to achieve happiness, where Al-Farabi focuses on the necessity of connecting ideas with actions, and their result will necessarily be the realization of happiness and beauty and good for man.

From here action gains a presence and a meaning in Islamic philosophy through the opinions of many Muslim philosophers, at their head Al-Farabi, who tried to involve all the intellectual and sensory faculties in the process of perception and action, so that it becomes a real theory whose task is practice and the presence of action, and not to remain captive to abstract thinking about its existents by contemplating them and involving them only in mental and logical processes and making them a passive side in the realization of knowledge.

#### **Fourth: Action in Modern Western Philosophy**

The presence of the philosophy of action in modern philosophy had a great good, especially in the stage of the Arab renaissance, which ends in the Western enlightenment that restored confidence to the human mind and to its selfhood and gave it absolute freedom in thinking and formulating truths.

In modern philosophy the focus will be on an important model which forms another concept for the philosophy of action that is

completely different from what was mentioned before in classical philosophies, and also different from contemporary philosophy, because the Hegelian system has another and different vision regarding the philosophy of action.

If the other philosophers in the philosophy of action separated between ideas and what corresponds to them from meanings in the reality of the sensible world, and founded the necessity of the cooperation of ideas and facts so that the end will be a practiced and procedural action, Hegel sees that this view perhaps did not yet understand that the world is in reality one world, which is the world of mind, because it is the one that gives things their value.

Hegel rejects the view that there is a world of sense that falls under the frame of action, but he affirms only the world of mind, since mind carries in its truth all things and worlds, and it is the one that gives them their real meaning through their representations in reality. He says: "if we think about that in the way that what is above sense is therefore the sensible world, or the world as it is for sense-certainty, then that would be an inverted understanding, because appearance is not mostly the world of sense-knowledge and sense-perception as they exist, but it is this world as it is put as cancelled or in truth as inner". (Hegel, 2006, p. 212) Hegel clarifies that consciousness is one and comprehensive and all things and representations fall under it, and that what appears from sense knowledge is nothing but representations of mind, or a world copied from the world of mind and spirit. Hegel continues demolishing the object that is separate from the self and founds an idealism of mind that inserts the object inside the self. There is in Hegel's philosophy no object outside the self, but there is a self under which all other worlds fall. He justifies that by saying in his book

Phenomenology of Spirit: "but the object which is negative for self-consciousness is from our side, or in itself, returned to itself, just as it is from its side. The object has become life through this reflection into itself". (Hegel, 2006, p. 259) Accordingly, Hegel confirms that the object does not become an object except when mind gives it that authority, so when the idea comes out and becomes embodied as an action, that is the work of mind and consciousness and not an object separate from the self.

Imam Abdel Fattah Imam clarifies the philosophy of action in Hegel through his explanation and commentary on the philosophy of spirit in Hegel, where he says: "the point of view we have reached is that the true soul is neither the inner by itself nor the outer, but it is the bringing into being of the inner and the outer together. The inner side does not disappear and does not hide behind the outer side, but on the contrary, it appears and manifests in it or is uncovered in this outer side, and the particular content of the soul is the very substance of its totality, so the two are one thing, and this is the actually realized existence of the soul" (Stein, 2005, p. 25). There is no doubt that the philosophical vision which Hegel aims at through his founding of the concept of spirit includes the existence of one world, which is the world of spirit, this world in which all worlds are included. The real action is mind, which is the self that grants and gives to things their real existence and their actual meaning. The Hegelian vision was an integrated, comprehensive system and a whole in one world, and by this Hegel closed all philosophical representations before him and even after him, to return to mind its meaning that was taken away by the empirical philosophies that were contemporary with him and which returned the value to reality and senses.

This approach which Hegel followed through his total philosophical system makes mind the first rank and the basic starting point for every reading and representation, and by this Hegel opened contemporary philosophy to the concept of method and difference, which is in reality a clear and explicit critique of Hegelian metaphysics that made from mind one world and denied all the other worlds in spite of their diversity and richness. Hegel realized that the rational system is able to contain all what man searches for, and it is the vessel for all what man seeks from knowledge that was absent from the philosophies before him. Mind in reality is the real action to which we must return and in which we must trust. The sensible world is just a world copied from the world of mind, as if Hegel here brings us back to the Platonic vision, except that Hegel does not admit the world of sense, while Plato admits it and makes it a deceptive world.

Therefore Hegel insists that everything that exists in the external world is in reality existing in the self and not an independent reality: “the philosophical reason knows that what appears here as a change in the object is in reality a change in the self, because philosophical reason knows that the external world is not in truth a reality independent by itself, but it is a product and projection of spirit itself, and that what happens, whatever it is, is nothing but a result of its spontaneous activity” (Stein, 2005, p. 27). Hegel wants through his philosophy of spirit to return all truths to the human self and the human mind, because mind is the one that gives to the external world its real existence, and this existence is already present in the human mind. The external world for Hegel is not independent, but it is the projection of spirit on things and the giving to them of that value and that knowledge and truth. This is what makes Hegel’s philosophy different from the other philosophies, as existence is one, comprehensive

and total, and we cannot divide it. The real existence is the existence of mind and spirit only.

From here it appears that what Hegel calls for in the philosophy of action is in reality going back to the action of the total mind, not the transcendent mind. Immanence and truths come from the authority of the total mind and the absolute spirit which gives to things their real value, and from here the human mind becomes that vessel in which all human truths exist, which later are represented in the world of things and facts. The development of mind and spirit in Hegel has reached a total stage capable of giving all things their truths and understanding them in their spiritual and total dimension.

Therefore the things that exist outside the self are the world of copies and representations of the ideas that exist in mind, and in the end this mind gives them their truths and grants them that knowledge and that value.

For this reason, we have put Hegel in front of a total and comprehensive system outside which we cannot think. The vision that Hegel aims at is a comprehensive and integrated vision, even if it is in the end connected with what is metaphysical more than what is real and visible. For this, the philosophy of action for Hegel is the action of mind and the action of the absolute spirit, from which the self starts and to which it returns, and the Hegelian philosophy is considered a model that is different in its approach from the other philosophies that separated between the world of spirit and the world of phenomenon.

### **Fifth: Action in Contemporary Western Philosophy**

Contemporary Western philosophy witnessed great intellectual and epistemological transformations, especially in methods, subjects of study, and the problems that it tries to treat, where thinking moved from the system of one

pattern to plurality and difference, and many critical currents appeared against what modern Western thinking had reached, whose result was enlightenment, as well as against Western metaphysics, and thought turned towards the study of facts, far from the metaphysics that the previous stages of philosophy had known (Sharoni, 2001, pp. 22-23). Contemporary philosophy has gone beyond the thinking that is founded on the self and on rationality because of the enormous, frightening and rapid scientific development that the contemporary age has witnessed, and this is what made philosophical thinking keep pace with this development and be affected by it.

In the midst of these transformations many philosophical methods and schools appeared calling for pushing philosophy into the space of the other and difference and objective scientific thinking, far from subjectivity that put man in a permanent conflict. The start was from the Frankfurt Critical School with its different generations, but it continued in criticizing the materialism that Western man had reached by the effect of liberalism, which marginalized man and took away his value and the sacredness of his life (Habermas, 1990, p. 122).

From here appeared many philosophers calling for restoring the value of the other by the effect of communicative rationality and the ethics of discussion, in an attempt to re-integrate the other in the existential equation by the effect of communicative philosophy or the theory of communicative action. This theory goes back to one of the great contemporary philosophers, namely the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who proposed the theory of communicative action as an alternative to instrumental rationality which destroyed man and treated him with the idea of conflict and violence.

Habermas's philosophical attempt was focused on diagnosing the problems of Western modernity and the extent of its contribution in the contemporary age, as well as benefiting from it in solving contemporary problems, where Habermas seeks to revive the concept of philosophy again after it was distorted by scientific tendencies and to benefit from it as social, political and ethical ideas and practices. He says: "subject-centered reason finds its rational criteria starting from the narratives of truth and success,... and in contrast, from the moment when we conceive knowledge as knowledge mediated by communication, then we measure knowledge itself by a faculty possessed by persons characterized by responsibility and participating in an interaction that guides them according to credibility claims based on mutual recognition between subjects" (Habermas, 1995, p. 482).

By this Habermas's intellectual project seeks to go beyond the traditional approach based on subjectivity, and he proposes a new approach whose pillar is communication and collective ethical action which serves society and changes its social, political and ethical reality for the better.

The philosophy of action appears for Habermas in the project of communicative rationality, which is founded on practiced and procedural action based on actual change between all subjects, and in this there is a clear and explicit critique of the philosophies of the self and the philosophies of consciousness which are based on theoretical rationality. He says: "I have tried within the framework of communicative action to establish a behavioral rationality whose meaning is that a certain person, whatever his social environment and language and form and cultural life, cannot avoid engaging in communicative practices" (Habermas, 2010, p. 30). The philosophy of

action for Habermas is based on procedural and communicative rationality so that everyone is in one agreement, one level, and based on argument and equality between all, but in the end it forms a real and practiced action within the public sphere. Communicative rationality that Habermas seeks does not exclude anyone, but everyone must be engaged in it.

By this Habermas founds his theory on the ethics of discourse, which in the end are procedural and practical. He says: “discourse ethics does not set objective orientations; instead, it sets a procedure based on presuppositions and aims at guaranteeing the neutrality of judgment. Practical discourse is a procedure for testing the validity of hypothetical norms, and not for producing justified norms. This procedural nature is what distinguishes discourse ethics from other cognitive, universal and formal ethical theories” (Habermas, 1990, p. 122). Habermas wants the procedurality of moral action, that is, he is not one of the philosophers of the single principle or the unilateral rationality, but these hypotheses must be crowned by procedural actions because of the truthfulness of their presuppositions. In this way many philosophers became aware of the gaps and flaws of unilateral philosophies that created a crisis between the self and the other, and Habermas’s theory of communicative action is considered a fascinating entry to go beyond this unilaterality, which exhausted philosophical thought and human societies.

In this way Habermas is considered the philosopher of real and procedural action, despite the difficulties and shortcomings that this theory faced.

### **Sixth: Action and Value in Contemporary Arab Thought**

Contemporary Arab thought is not separated from Western thought, each with its

specific problems and ways of dealing with them, and there is no doubt that Arab thought has known many intellectual projects with rich and diverse sources. Yet, if it is admitted in advance that these intellectual projects have not been activated and that their benefit has remained limited in treating the problems of the Arab world, the reason, as many researchers in this field see, goes back to the non-activation of the concept of action in Arab societies, while these ideas remained abstract and theoretical, far from the real action that seeks change and renaissance.

Arab thought turned towards theorizing more than application, as most of its problems were theoretical, far from their realistic character and from the presence of real action that leads to renewal and real change. Hassan Hanafi says about that: “some Arab thinkers have been accustomed to giving priority to contemplation over action and to going deep in theoretical researches under the pretext of epistemological grounding first, and the research becomes long and life passes while knowledge has not yet been completed, and since theories of knowledge in the West are renewed once by natural sciences and once by mathematical sciences and a third time by linguistic sciences, Arab thought remained panting behind the rapid rhythm so that it has neither grounded its knowledge nor grasped its reality” (Hanafi & Al-Jabiri, 1990, p. 10). Hanafi criticizes Arab intellectual projects for remaining only on the theoretical side, while Arab thinkers should have connected the scientific side with the theoretical side in order to treat problems and to catch up with the sciences and with the Western world. He gives as example the Western world which, when it started diagnosing its problems and finding solutions, connected ideas with facts, and the Western world achieved that leap whose result was development and the discovery of practical and theoretical sciences that connect and

combine between the theoretical and the applied, while Arab projects remained captive to theoretical thinking and do not realize a practical action. What is required now in Arab philosophy is to turn to practical life, because the ethical, political and economic life has remained obscure.

However, this does not in fact negate a wave of awareness and reflection in Arab and Islamic philosophy regarding the notion of action. Nassif Nassar clarifies this by saying: “in reality it is not impossible to conceive a philosophical thought in which realism, criticality and ontological vision come together, without it being an extension or a development of a previous philosophical doctrine. The nearest entrance to it I do not see it in the notion of the ego or substance or first philosophy or the absolute whole, but I see it in the notion of action or the notion of historical existence” (Nassar, 2009, p. 110). Nassar directs us to the real situation, as Hassan Hanafi mentioned earlier that the problem is not in grounding knowledge or founding a new intellectual system, but the real problem, as Nassar states, is the absence of real action inside Arab societies. The real problem is either in the extension and dependency of Arab projects on Western philosophical methods, and this creates another problem, since the problems of the Western world are not our problems, but there is no harm in benefiting from them in activating the concept of real action and effective practice in order to achieve renaissance in the Arab and Islamic world.

What the Arab world needs is diagnosing the real problems it suffers from, from its own womb and from within, and finding solutions that are compatible with the values of these societies, and activating the concept of action and the real value whose result is achieving a renaissance and entering the global culture and

integrating into contemporary sciences, according to Arab-Islamic methods that start from the spirit of Islamic values. Perhaps this is what the Moroccan thinker Taha Abderrahmane went to, as he said that it is possible to found an Islamic and Arab philosophy starting from Arab and Islamic methods and mechanisms that are compatible with Islamic values and treat the real problems that the Islamic world suffers from.

He points out in his book “The Arab Right to Philosophical Difference” that Arab philosophy can differ from Western philosophy in what it treats and in what it adopts, and that creativity comes from the inside and not from the outside, where he says: “the building of this different philosophy is a natural right, and even the slightest reflection on the truth of this philosophical difference discovers that it is the first witness to the practice of philosophizing, since this right does not exist except with the existence of freedom as a natural right, and if the matter is so, then the clearest manifestation of philosophical freedom must be precisely philosophical difference” (Taha Abderrahmane, 2006, p. 22).

Taha Abderrahmane directs us to the idea that we, as Arabs and Muslims, can weave a purely Arab-Islamic philosophy, far from the Western methods that most Arab thinkers have adopted, and that in the Islamic world we can practice philosophizing starting from internal facts and problems that emerge from the womb of the issues of Islamic societies. Only in this way we will have a special philosophy capable of taking the Islamic and Arab world out of the space of the other to free thinking and real and actual renewal.

As for Malik Bin Nabi, he points to “efficiency/agency” and considers it the driving movement in man, where the minds of efficiency extend to all means of thinking and include all

positions from the house and the family to the school and the rest of the facilities of life, and the individual remains the first field of efficiency, but he is the basic element and axis in the process of civilizational building. He says: “when we analyze the social energies in general, we find that they contain first and before everything the individual as tool and aim. Social energies result from the individual and return to him. The righteous individual will participate in building society, and his work returns to him in the form of social guarantees that ensure for him the directing of his individual energies” (Bin Nabi, 1986, p. 72). Bin Nabi focuses on the efficiency of the individual in society and the necessity of his engagement in it as an active and influential element, because he is the basic element in forming any society or civilization. He also returns the element of efficiency to the correct creed and positive values, so that his creed calls for work and scientific and cognitive acquisition and moral commitment in a general way, and in a more general way he works on changing himself, and this is what the Qur’anic text expresses in His saying, the Exalted: “Indeed, God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves” (Surat Al-Ra’d, verse 11). After reforming the creed of the individual comes the stage of building thought and the active human, and the social efficiency of ideas becomes connected with it.

In this way Arab thought needs to activate ideas and also needs the active human who makes from his ideas positive actions that in the end lead to a qualitative leap whose result is the civilizational take-off that pushes the Arab-Islamic nation to keep pace with the scientific and civilizational development that the world is witnessing today.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion it can be said that the philosophy of action had its real beginning from the Greek era, when Aristotle realized the paradox that his teacher Plato had produced in human thinking when he separated between two worlds, where Aristotle’s view was logical, scientific and more objective.

The idea of the philosophy of action was crystallized as a historical frame starting from Aristotle when he wanted to connect ideas with what corresponds to them in reality, that is, the immanence of the idea whose result is actual action, and in this way philosophy with Aristotle became more scientific, through practice and proceduralism.

The aim through the philosophy of action was to give philosophy more value and to push it into the frame of social, ethical and political practices, and to distance philosophy from purely abstract, metaphysical and formal thinking.

The philosophy of action witnessed a qualitative leap in the age of renaissance and Western modernity, especially with philosophical methods and the development of the experimental method, where many philosophers became aware of this paradox and tried to find a real solution for theoretical and metaphysical thinking.

As for contemporary philosophy, which in reality came as a reaction to Western metaphysics and transcendent thinking, it tried to establish a real philosophy of action that balances between pure thought and reality, especially with the great scientific and technological development that the present age has witnessed.

Contemporary philosophy has bet on the concept of action as a tool to valorize philosophical thinking, especially with the discourse of endings, and has defended that

philosophy is valid for every time and keeps pace with contemporary scientific developments.

Likewise, contemporary Arab thought has not been separated from the realities of the world, and through its philosophical projects it tried to urge the importance and value of action as a means for civilizational take-off, and it is in reality a clear call to activate the concept of action and value in Arab and Islamic societies.

The aim of this article was to present the historicity and concept of the philosophy of action and to highlight its real value in human societies. For this, thinking is the principle and action is the result, and we must balance and make immanent our ideas and our actions in order to achieve the desired value and realize the value of thought together as a concomitant and real frame that in the end leads to a positive and creative result.

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