

Avicenna
SELECTIONS ON COGITATION AND THE COGITATIVE FACULTY
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1. *Compendium on the Soul*, ed. Landauer, chap. 6, p. 167–9?:

Then in the animal there is a power which combines what has been collected together in the common sense in the way of forms, and distinguishes between them, and knows the differences amongst them, without the forms leaving the common sense. And without a doubt this power is different from the formative faculty, since the formative faculty has nothing in it but true forms bestowed by sensation. Whereas it is possible that the thing in this faculty be the opposite of this, for it can conceptualize vainly and falsely, so long as it does not accept is according to its form from sensation. And this power is called the imaginative.... And if the estimative faculty uses the imaginative faculty independently (*bi-infirādi-hā*), it is called by this name, that is, the imaginative faculty; whereas if the rational faculty uses it, it is called the cogitative faculty.

2. *Genesis and Return*, 3.3, p. 93–4:

And another faculty follows the imaginative faculty, which is called the cogitative faculty if it is in people (*al-nās*), and the intellect uses it; whereas if it is in animals or in people, and the estimation uses it, it is called the compositive imagination. And the difference between it and the imagination is that there is nothing in the imagination except what it has taken from sensation, whereas the compositive imagination may compose and divide and create (*tuhādithu*) forms which have not being sensed and are not sensed at all. For example, a flying human being, and an individual half human and half tree.

3. *On the States of the Soul*, ed. Ahwani, p. 62:

Then the power which is called imaginative in relation to the animal soul, and cogitative in relation to the human soul. And it is the power which is seated in the middle ventricle of the brain, in the vermiform [part], whose role is to compose some of the things in the imagination (*khayāl*) with others, and to separate some of them from others voluntarily (*bi-ḥasab al-ikhtiyār*).

4. *Sources of Wisdom*, chap. 14, pp. 38–9:

And there is a power which acts on the images by composing and dividing, which conjoins some of them with others and separates some of them from others. And likewise it conjoins them with the intentions which are in the memory, and separates them. And if the intellect uses this power, it is called the cogitative; whereas if the estimation uses it, it is called the imaginative. And its organ is the vermiform part, which is in the middle of the brain.

5. *Canon of Medicine*, pp. 96–7:

And the second is the power which the physicians call cogitative, and those who know the truth sometimes call it imaginative, and sometimes cogitative, for if the animal estimative faculty, which we will discuss later, uses it or arouses it, it is through itself and on account of its own action called imaginative. And if the rational faculty occupies itself with it and diverts it to what is useful for its ways, it is called cogitative. And the difference between this faculty and the first faculty, however it may be, is that the first is receptive or retentive of what has been conveyed to it of the sensible forms; whereas this faculty has free disposal over what has been stored in the imagination (*al-khayāl*), in such a way that it composes and divides. So it can re-present (*tastahḍiru*) a form in accordance with the way in which it has been conveyed from the sense, as well as a form different from it, like a man who flew and a mountain of emerald. And as for the imagination, nothing is present in it except on account of the reception from sensation. And the seat of this faculty is the middle ventricle of the brain. And this faculty is a tool for a faculty which is in reality the internal percipient in the animal, namely, estimation, which is the faculty which judges in the animal that the wolf is an enemy, and the child is to be loved, and the one offering food is a friend, and so he does not flee from him in an irrational way. And enmity and friendship are non-sensible, so the animal's sense does not perceive them. Therefore another power alone judges them and perceives them. And it is not by means of a rational perception, for it is without a doubt a perception which is non-rational. And human beings also use this power in many of their judgements, and in them they follow the course of the irrational animals. And this faculty is different from the imaginative (*al-khayāl*), because the imaginative takes the sensibles as established, whereas this faculty judges of the sensibles through non-sensible intentions. And it differs from the faculties which are called cogitative and imaginative in that some judgement does not follow their activities, whereas some judgement does follow the activities of this faculty, or rather, they are certain judgements. And the activities of those faculties are composed from sensibles, whereas the activity of this faculty is a judgement concerning the sensibles from an intention external to the sensible. And just as it is the case that sensation in the animal is a judge (*hākim*) of the forms of the sensibles, so too the estimation is a judge over them of the intentions of these forms which have been conveyed to the estimation, and which are not conveyed to sensation. And some people, speaking loosely, call this power imagination (*takhayyulan*), and they can have it this way, since there is no use fighting over names, but rather, it is necessary to understand the meanings and distinctions. And the physician does not contradict this through his study of this. This is because harm to the functions of this power follows upon harm to the actions of the other powers prior to it, such as imagination, compositive imagination, and memory, which we shall speak of afterwards. And the physician only speculates

about the powers which, when harm accrues to them in their actions, these are harmed. For harm accrues to the action of a power because of a harm which attaches to an action prior to it. And this harm follows upon either the temperament of this organ or its corruption, until someone cures it through a remedy or it is preserved from it. And it is not proper to him to know the state of the faculty which only attaches to it without mediation.

6. *Shifā'*: *De anima*

6.1.1: *De anima* 1.5, p. 40: (trans. Marmura): The third is the human soul, being a first entelechy of a natural body having organs by way of what is attributed to it, [namely] that it performs [those] acts that come about by cogitative choice (*al-ikhtiyār al-fikrīy*), deductive judgment, and by way of [its] apprehending universal matters.

6.1.2: 1.5, p. 45: Then [we have] the faculty called imaginative in relation to the animal soul, and cogitative in relation to the human soul. It is a faculty organized in the middle ventricle of the brain at the vermiform [tissue] whose function is to combine [things] in the imagination and to separate them from each other as it wills [it].

6.2: 3.8, p. 153 (trans. Marmura—parenthetical ref. in discussion of double vision): [The form] then connects with the spirit that carries the estimative faculty through the mediation of the spirit that carries the imagining faculty that in people is called the cogitative. The form which is in the imagination is then imprinted in the spirit of the estimative faculty. The imagining faculty serves the estimative, bringing to it what is in the imagination.

6.3: *De anima* 4.1, 165–66:

Next, we know certainly that in our nature we compose some sensibles with others, and separate some from others, not according to that form which we have found in them externally, and not accompanied by assent to the existence of any of them nor to their non-existence. So it is necessary for there to be a faculty in us by which we do this, and this is the faculty which is called cogitative (*mufakkirah*) when the intellect employs it, and imaginative (*mutakhayyilah*) when the animal faculty uses it.

6.4.1: *De anima* 4.2, pp. 169–170: “On the Activities of the Formative and Cogitative Faculties Among the Internal Senses.”

And the formative faculty also stores things which are not among the things that have been taken from sensation. For the cogitative power may freely dispose

of (*tataşarrafu*) the forms which are in the formative faculty, through synthesis and analysis, because they are its subjects.

For when [the cogitative faculty] composes or divides one of the forms among them, it is possible that it will preserve [that form] within it, because it is not a treasury for this form insofar as this form is related to a thing, and comes from inside or outside, but rather, it is only a treasure for it because it is this form through this species of abstraction (*al-tajrīd*). For if this form, to the extent that it is within it from an act of composition or division, had returned from outside, this power would take them as fixed, in the same way as it does when they appear to this faculty because of something else. But if it had happened because of some cause, either from the imagination (*al-takhayyul*) and cogitation (*al-fikr*), or because of some heavenly configurations, that a form is represented in the formative faculty, while the mind was inattentive,¹ or resting from considering it, it would be possible for this to be impressed upon the common sense itself, according to its shape. So one hears and sees colours and sounds which have no existence externally, nor are their causes external. And most often these things happen when the intellectual faculty is at rest, or the estimative faculty is negligent, and the rational soul is preoccupied from watching over the imagination (*al-khayāl*) and the estimation. For then the formative and imaginative faculties have control over their proper actions, so that what they furnish from among the forms is represented as something sensed.

6.4.2, pp.171–72:

In this case, the imaginative faculty (*al-mutakhayyilah*) is a power which the soul may divert from its proper action in two ways: (1) sometimes, as is the case when the soul is occupied by the external sensibles, the formative power is turned towards the external sensibles, and is moved by them through what appears to it from them, so that the cogitative faculty does not submit to the imaginative. So the imaginative faculty is preoccupied from its proper activity, and the formative faculty too is preoccupied from isolation by the imaginative, and that which these two require from the common sense is established and fixed in the occupation of the external sense. This is one of the two ways. (2) And sometimes, when the soul uses it in those of its action to which it is joined from the discriminative (*al-tamyīz*) faculty and cogitation (*al-fikrah*), something which also happens in two ways: (2.1) one of them is that it has mastery over the imaginative faculty, and makes it its servant, along with the common sense, in composing forms with their specifying characteristics, and in analyzing them, in a respect in which a correct end befalls the soul. And the imagination does not,

¹ Literally, “absent.”

for this reason, take mastery over the free exercise of what it possesses to exercise it through its own nature; rather, it is drawn forth in some way when the rational faculty controls it. (2.2) The second way is that it diverts it from the imaginings which do not correspond to external existents, and restrains it from these things by nullifying them. Thus, the imagination is not capable of representing and symbolizing them forcefully.

6.4.3, pp. 174–76:

And part of the nature of the imaginative faculty is to be continually preoccupied with the two storehouses, that of the formative faculty and that of the memorative faculty, and to be always mindful of the forms, beginning with the sensed or remembered forms, and moving from them to a contrary or an equivalent form, or to something which derives from that form as by way of causality. For this is its nature. And as for the specification of the motion from the thing to its contrary rather than to its equal, or to its equal rather than from its contrary, there are particular causes for this which cannot be enumerated. And in general, it is necessary that the root of the cause in this be that whenever the soul unites together the consideration of the intentions and the forms, it moves from the intentions to the forms which are most proximate to them, either absolutely, or because of the recent occurrence of their perception (*mushāhadati-hi*), because of the combination of the two in a sense power or in the estimation. And likewise it can be moved from the forms to the intentions. And the first cause which particularizes one form rather than another form, and one intention rather than another, is something which appears to it from the sense which is proper to it, or from the intellect, or from the estimation. For it is particularized through [the thing itself] or through something celestial. For when they are particularized by this thing [itself], its persistence and its transference are particularized by the particularization of the two principles, and by the dispositions which are combined in custom, and owing to the proximity in time of some forms and intentions. And these states may also be due to celestial states, and they may be due to things arising from intellect and sense, after the first particularization which is attached to them.

And know that rational cogitation (*al-fikr al-naṭiqī*) is afflicted by this power [i.e., the compositive imagination], and because of the nature of this power it is greatly preoccupied. For whenever it uses [this power] concerning some form, for some use directed to some end, it is quickly led to some other thing which is not related to [that end], and from it to a third thing, so that it makes the soul forget the first thing from which it began. Thus it is necessary for the soul to recollect, taking refuge in analysis by conversion (*al-tahḥīl bi-al-'aks*), until it returns to the starting point. And whenever it happens that the soul perceives

something in a state of waking, or that is it joined in some way to the heavens in a state of sleep, in the manner that we shall later describe, then, if [this power] enables the soul, through its rest or its subjugation, to establish [some form] firmly, and does not overcome it by curtailing the time during which what appears to it from the imaginings is established, then this form will be established in the memory very strongly, according to its own aspect and form (*'alā wajhi-hi wa-ṣūrahti-hi*).

7. *Ishārāt*, Forget 125:

A fourth faculty serves [estimation] in it, to which it belongs to compose and divide what is close to it of the forms taken from sense and the intentions perceived by the estimation; and it also composes forms with intentions and separates them from them. And when the intellect uses it, it is called cogitative, and when the estimation uses it, it is called imaginative.

8.1: *Discussions*, ed. Badawi, §359, p. 199:

Cogitation requires conjunction with the principles in the procurement of definitions and their conceptualization, and in the procurement of the middle [term]. As for [their] composition, this belongs to [cogitation], which it sometimes does well, and sometimes poorly.

8.2, §468:

And if by the cogitative faculty one means [the faculty] which is seeking, it belongs to the rational soul and it is of the species of the habitual intellect, especially when it adds a perfection by way of surpassing the habit. And if one means by it the moving faculty which presents the forms, it is the imaginative faculty insofar as it is moved with the desire of the rational faculty.²

9.1 *On the Human Faculties and their Perceptions*, pp. 43–44:³

And a faculty called estimation, which is that which perceives from the sensibles what is not sensed, like the faculty which is in the sheep which, when the form of the wolf is represented in the sense of the sheep, represents its enmity and wickedness, since the sense does not perceive this. And a faculty called the retentive, which is the storehouse of what the estimation has perceived, just as the formative faculty is the storehouse of what sensation has perceived. And a faculty called cogitative, which is that which has mastery over

² Alternatively: “And if one means by it the faculty which presents the moving forms, it is the imaginative faculty insofar as it is moved with the desire of the rational faculty” (It is ambiguous whether *al-mutaḥarrīk* modifies *ṣūrah* or *āriḍah*).

³ In *Tis' Rasā'il*, 42-48. According to Michot, this text is probably an excerpt from a longer text, possibly the ps.-Fārābī *Seals of Wisdom*.

what has been deposited in the formative and retentive storehouses, and mixes some of them with others and separates some of them from others. And it is called cogitative if the spirit and intellect of the human being (*rūḥ al-insān*) uses it, but if estimation uses it, it is called imagination.

9.2: **Holy spirit** (*al-rūḥ al-qudsī*) (44.23):

The side below does not distract it from the side above, and its internal sensation is not immersed in external sensation, and its influence exceeds its own body, without the heavenly bodies, and what is in them. And it receives intelligibles from the angelic spirit without instruction /45 from human beings.

Common weak spirits, if they incline to the internal, they are absent from the external, and if they incline towards the external, they are absent from the internal. And if they rely externally upon [one] abode, they are absent from the other. And if they incline internally to one power, they are absent from the other. And for this reason the act of seeing overwhelms the act of hearing, and fear preoccupies one from desire, and desire preoccupies one from anger, and cogitation diverts one from recollection, and recollection diverts one from cogitation. But one function does not distract the holy spirit from another function.⁴

/46 And sometimes the imaginative power is transferred through its likening motions (*bi-ḥarakāti-hā al-tashbīḥīyah*) from the thing seen in itself to things which are related to it. And this requires interpretation, and the interpretation is the intuition (*ḥads*) of the interpreter, who extracts the root in it from the branches.

And it is not the role of the sensible insofar as it is sensible to be understood, nor is it part of the role of the intelligible insofar as it is intelligible to sense. And the senses will only be perfected through bodily organs, concerning what the form of the sensible represents by a wonderful representation belonging to foreign concomitants; whereas intellectual perception will not be perfected by bodily organs. For what is conceived in them is particularized, whereas what is common and general is not conceptualized in it in something divisible, but rather, the human spirit, which receives intelligibles by means of intellects, is a bodily substance which is divided nor localized, but rather, does not enter into estimation, and is not perceived by sensation, because of the goodness of the thing.

⁴ Note emendation from the text; this sentence belongs with this section; the new *faṣl* concerns the common sense, e.g., *faṣl fī al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*.