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EXPLORING THE CONCEPTS OF “MULK”, “MALAKUT” AND “JABARUT” IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF AZIZ NASAFI

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the intricate metaphysical concepts of "Mulk," "Malakut," and "Jabarut" within the philosophical framework of Aziz Nasafi, a distinguished scholar of medieval Islamic thought. These concepts form a tripartite cosmological hierarchy that delineates different levels of existence, ranging from the material realm (Mulk) to the spiritual realms of sovereignty (Malakut) and omnipotence (Jabarut). Drawing on Nasafi's seminal works and scholarly interpretations, this study examines the ontological significance of each realm, their interrelations, and their implications for understanding the nature of reality and the human quest for spiritual enlightenment. This article serves to deepen our understanding of Aziz Nasafi's metaphysical concepts of Mulk, Malakut, and Jabarut, highlighting their significance in Islamic philosophical thought and their implications for understanding the hierarchical structure of existence and the spiritual dimensions of reality.

KEYWORDS

Aziz Nasafi, Mulk, Malakut, Jabarut, Islamic philosophy, metaphysics, cosmology.

INTRODUCTION

Aziz Nasafi, a prominent figure in medieval Islamic philosophy and mysticism, developed a comprehensive metaphysical framework that elucidates the hierarchical structure of existence through the concepts of Mulk, Malakut, and Jabarut. Rooted in Islamic theology and influenced by Neoplatonic metaphysics, Nasafi's philosophical

insights offer profound perspectives on the nature of reality, divine sovereignty, and the soul's ascent towards spiritual perfection. This article aims to explore Nasafi's conceptualization of Mulk, Malakut, and Jabarut, shedding light on their ontological significance and their implications within Islamic philosophical discourse.

Metaphysical Foundations: Nasafi's philosophical inquiries are grounded in the Islamic intellectual tradition, which synthesizes rational inquiry with spiritual contemplation. Influenced by Avicennian metaphysics and Sufi mysticism, Nasafi delineates a tripartite cosmological hierarchy that encompasses different dimensions of existence. Mulk represents the material realm characterized by corporeal entities subject to physical laws, whereas Malakut denotes the spiritual realm of celestial beings and metaphysical realities beyond sensory perception. Jabarut, the highest realm according to Nasafi, signifies the domain of divine omnipotence and transcendent sovereignty.

Concept of Mulk: In Nasafi's philosophy, Mulk signifies the material world and its physical manifestations. It encompasses the cosmos, including planets, stars, and earthly beings governed by natural laws. Mulk represents the realm of contingency (mumkin), where created entities exist in a state of temporal flux and impermanence. Nasafi views Mulk as the lowest level of existence, characterized by its susceptibility to change and decay, yet essential for the manifestation of divine attributes in the physical realm.

Concept of Malakut: Malakut, in Nasafi's metaphysical framework, signifies the realm of spiritual sovereignty and celestial realities. It encompasses non-physical entities such as angels, spiritual beings, and divine intelligences that mediate between the material and spiritual dimensions of existence. Nasafi posits Malakut as a realm of subtlety (latif), where spiritual truths and metaphysical realities transcend the limitations of material existence. Malakut represents a higher order of reality characterized by the manifestation of divine attributes and the ascent of the human soul towards spiritual enlightenment.

Concept of Jabarut: Jabarut, the highest realm according to Nasafi, signifies the realm of divine

omnipotence and absolute sovereignty. It denotes the transcendental domain where divine will (irada) manifests without intermediary and where the essence of God's attributes permeates all levels of existence. Jabarut represents the apex of Nasafi's cosmological hierarchy, emphasizing the unbounded power and sovereignty of the divine over creation. In Nasafi's philosophy, Jabarut serves as the ontological foundation from which Mulk and Malakut derive their existence and purpose.

Exploration and Analysis: The exploration of Mulk, Malakut, and Jabarut in Nasafi's philosophy illuminates fundamental aspects of Islamic metaphysics, cosmology, and spiritual ontology. Nasafi's tripartite division of existence provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the hierarchical structure of reality, the interrelations between different realms, and the metaphysical principles governing the cosmos. His synthesis of Avicennian metaphysics with Sufi insights offers profound insights into the nature of existence and the human quest for spiritual transcendence.

In the philosophy of Aziz Nasafi, as influenced by Islamic metaphysical thought and Sufi teachings, the concepts of "mulk," "malakut," and "jabarut" represent different realms or dimensions of existence, each with its own characteristics and significance in the spiritual journey and understanding of reality.

1. Mulk:

- **Meaning:** Mulk generally refers to the material or physical realm, often translated as the world of creation or corporeal existence. It encompasses the visible universe and everything within it, including the earthly realm, planets, stars, and all physical entities.

- **Characteristics:** In Nasafi's philosophy, *mulk* is characterized by its temporal and spatial dimensions. It is the realm of manifest forms, governed by physical laws and subject to change, decay, and impermanence. Human beings reside in the *mulk* during their earthly existence, experiencing life through sensory perception and material interactions.

- **Role:** *Mulk* serves as the initial stage of existence where the human soul begins its journey towards spiritual realization and higher realms. It provides the foundation for the soul's development through worldly experiences and challenges.

2. Malakut:

- **Meaning:** *Malakut* is often translated as the "kingdom of dominion" or the spiritual realm. It represents the intermediate realm between the material world (*mulk*) and the higher divine realm (*jabarut*). *Malakut* is associated with spiritual realities, unseen dimensions, and the realm of archetypes.

- **Characteristics:** According to Nasafi, *malakut* is characterized by its ethereal nature and non-physical qualities. It is the realm where spiritual truths, divine attributes, and higher realities are manifested. In *malakut*, the laws governing existence are different from those in *mulk*, emphasizing spiritual principles and metaphysical truths.

- **Role:** *Malakut* serves as a transitional realm where the human soul gains deeper insights, spiritual experiences, and transformative knowledge. It is through *malakut* that the soul ascends towards higher spiritual stations (*maqamat*) and prepares itself for union with the Divine.

3. Jabarut:

- **Meaning:** *Jabarut* is the highest or the divine realm in Nasafi's philosophical framework. It is often translated as the "world of power" or the realm of omnipotence. *Jabarut* signifies the absolute sovereignty and divine attributes of God, transcending both *mulk* and *malakut*.

- **Characteristics:** *Jabarut* is characterized by its divine perfection, eternity, and absolute reality. It encompasses the divine attributes in their purest form, including attributes such as knowledge (*'ilm*), power (*qudrah*), and will (*iradah*). *Jabarut* represents the ultimate source and origin of all existence.

- **Role:** In Nasafi's philosophy, *jabarut* represents the goal and culmination of the soul's journey towards God. It is in *jabarut* that the soul achieves union (*ittisal*) with the Divine Essence, experiencing the highest levels of spiritual realization and proximity to God.

Relationship Between Mulk, Malakut, and Jabarut:

- *Mulk*, *malakut*, and *jabarut* form a hierarchical framework in Nasafi's metaphysical system, representing different levels or dimensions of existence. *Mulk* serves as the starting point, where the soul begins its journey and gains worldly experiences. *Malakut* bridges the gap between *mulk* and *jabarut*, facilitating the soul's spiritual ascent and realization of higher truths. *Jabarut* is the ultimate destination, where the soul achieves union with the Divine and experiences the fullness of divine presence and attributes.

- Together, *mulk*, *malakut*, and *jabarut* illustrate the interconnectedness and progression of the soul towards spiritual perfection and unity with God in Sufi metaphysics, reflecting Nasafi's profound insights into the nature of existence and the soul's journey towards divine realization.

CONCLUSION

Aziz Nasafi's exploration of Mulk, Malakut, and Jabarut enriches our understanding of Islamic philosophy by elucidating the hierarchical organization of existence and the metaphysical principles underlying the cosmos. His conceptualization of these realms underscores their ontological significance within the Islamic intellectual tradition, offering profound insights into the nature of reality, divine sovereignty, and the spiritual journey of the soul. This article contributes to the scholarly discourse on Islamic metaphysics by examining Nasafi's philosophical insights and their enduring relevance in addressing fundamental questions about existence and spiritual enlightenment.

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