



Research Paper

# Comparative Analysis of the Afterlife Based on the Soul Theories of Avicenna and Descartes

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## Abstract

The topic of the "afterlife" is one of the fundamental issues in philosophy and theology that has deeply intrigued Islamic and Western philosophers alike. This paper provides a comparative analysis of Avicenna's (Ibn Sina) and Descartes' perspectives on the afterlife based on their theories of the soul. It aims to identify the similarities and differences between these two prominent thinkers in understanding the fate of the soul after death. The central question of this study is how the differing philosophical foundations of Avicenna and Descartes have influenced their views on the afterlife. The research method is descriptive-analytical and comparative, utilizing primary sources and related studies to describe and analyze the theories of these two philosophers. The findings indicate that Avicenna, relying on the Islamic philosophical system and Peripatetic metaphysics, views the soul as an independent substance that reaches perfection through the active intellect, with its fate depending on its connection to the intellect. In contrast, Descartes, employing the dualism of mind and body and emphasizing divine will, sees the immortality of the soul as guaranteed. The fundamental differences in the epistemological and metaphysical foundations of these philosophers lead to differences in defining the soul, its quality of survival, and its interaction with the afterlife. The results of this study highlight the strengths and weaknesses of both perspectives and suggest that a comparative examination of these issues can foster interdisciplinary research in philosophy and theology, offering a deeper understanding of the concept of immortality and the meaning of the afterlife.

**Keywords:**  
Avicenna, Descartes, Afterlife,  
Immortality of the Soul,  
Philosophy

Avicenna and Descartes, but limited research has been devoted to a comparative comparison of their views on the afterlife. This study attempts to present a comparative study between these two views by focusing on the primary texts of both thinkers, namely Descartes and Avicenna, with respect to the foundations of both philosophers.

Therefore, our goal in this article is to first provide an analysis of the views of Avicenna and Descartes on the survival of the soul and the quality of life after death, and on this basis to extract a comparative comparison of the similarities and differences between these two philosophers. Although we are aware that both are fundamentally different historically and religiously, the element of rational thinking and reasoning is the common denominator of both philosophers in analyzing the issue of the relationship between the soul and the body and the issue of the afterlife.

This study aimed to compare the views of Avicenna and Descartes on the "world after death". The studies showed that both philosophers, despite fundamental differences in philosophical foundations, believe in the

## Extended abstract

A comparative study of the views of Avicenna and Descartes on the afterlife is important in several ways, including a better understanding of the place of man in the system of existence, a more comprehensive understanding of metaphysical concepts such as the soul, immortality, and the afterlife, and the provision of a moral and educational model based on philosophical teachings for dealing with the issue of death and life. Given that previous studies have rarely addressed a detailed comparative comparison of these two philosophers on the issue of the afterlife, the present study can fill the gap in this field and open a new horizon for philosophical analysis. Several studies have examined the views of



immortality of the soul and the quality of life after death. Avicenna uses a metaphysical approach influenced by Islamic teachings and speaks in detail about the happiness and misery of the soul after death. He highlights the role of the active intellect and rational perfection in determining the soul's afterlife destiny. In contrast, Descartes, using an epistemological method and emphasizing the duality of the soul and the body, guarantees the immortality of the soul through the divine will and focuses on the direct connection of the soul with God. The fundamental differences between these two views are evident in the definition of the soul, the method of proving immortality, and its final results. The Islamic philosopher considers the soul to be an independent, cognizable entity whose connection with the body in the world is temporary, while Descartes introduces the soul as a thinking entity completely independent of the body. Also, while Avicenna goes into more detail about the afterlife of the soul, Descartes emphasizes the divine aspect and the direct connection of the soul with God.

This research shows that a comparative analysis of the views of these two philosophers on the afterlife allows for a deeper examination of the interaction between Islamic and modern Western philosophy. This analysis can help to better understand the foundations of the immortality of the soul and the quality of the afterlife, and pave the way for interdisciplinary research in the fields of philosophy and theology. By carefully examining the views of these two thinkers, we can gain a better understanding of how philosophical concepts are explained in two different intellectual traditions

and, in this way, develop new topics in different areas of philosophy. For future research, it is suggested that other aspects of the thoughts of Avicenna and Descartes, especially the cultural and historical influences of these views on different worldviews, be examined. These studies can reveal new dimensions of this philosophical comparison and help develop interdisciplinary philosophical discussions. Also, studies that examine the connections and mutual influences between Eastern and Western philosophies can help to provide a deeper understanding of the intellectual and cultural interactions between different societies. It is suggested that future studies examine more closely the role of theology in explaining the immortality of the soul and analyze the effects of this role on ethical and educational foundations. Also, a deeper study of the works of both philosophers and a more accurate comparative analysis of their views can lead to the discovery of new concepts and the development of new philosophical theories. These studies can help deepen philosophical knowledge and benefit from collective wisdom in order to solve the fundamental problems of contemporary man. Finally, empirical and practical examination of philosophical views on the immortality of the soul and their impact on everyday life and moral education can pave the way for positive changes in the way of looking at philosophical and moral issues in different societies. This interdisciplinary and practical view of philosophy can lead to the improvement of the level of public knowledge and awareness and the development of new concepts in various scientific and cultural fields.