

Ibn Rushd on truth between Religion and Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The research problem centers on the epistemological debate that emerged within Islamic thought concerning the nature of Truth and the methodologies for its attainment. A profound contention arose between theologians, who adhered to the primacy of the religious text, and philosophers, who championed reason and its demonstrative tools as the ultimate path to truth. This study aims to analyze Ibn Rushd's methodology in resolving this intellectual deadlock, demonstrating the inherent harmony between Revelation and Reason to dissolve the conflict between Sharia and Philosophy. By employing comparative, contextual, and critical analytical methodology, the study explores how Ibn Rushd reformulated the relationship between the sacred text and philosophical inference, asserting that Truth does not contradict Truth. The findings indicate that the perceived tension between revelation and reason is not an ontological contradiction but rather a methodological divergence. This is resolvable through a dual strategy: the allegorical interpretation (ta'wil) of the religious text to unveil its inner meaning, and the application of logical demonstration (burhan). Ultimately, the research affirms the Unity of Truth and the complementarity of philosophical proof and scriptural interpretation, establishing a foundation for societal and existential harmony by bridging the gap between faith-based certainty and demonstrative scientific knowledge.

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Intruduction

The question of truth has been central to epistemological problems and the core of philosophy since its inception. Throughout its long history, philosophy has been unable to formulate a definitive, unified conception of truth, due to the connection between knowledge and the ever-changing nature, means, and aims of human existence. Early philosophical positions varied between the Platonic conception, linked to the world of immutable Forms, and the Aristotelian conception, which considered logic and rational proof the surest path to attaining certain knowledge (Ibn Rushd, 2004). This legacy was transmitted to the Islamic world via the translation movement, encountering a new religious context that posed problems concerning the relationship between reason and revelation. With the expansion of the Islamic state, rational methods developed in theological debates contributed to the formation of Islamic theology (*kalām*) and simultaneously opened the door for philosophy as an epistemological system exploring existence, knowledge, and divinity.

However, this interaction was not without tension. The treatment of metaphysical issues—such as the eternity of the world and God’s omniscience—led to direct clashes with the *Ash’ari* school, which viewed these propositions as a threat to the faith. This clash reached its peak with Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī in the twelfth century, who launched a fierce attack on the philosophers in his book *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, declaring them infidels on three well-known issues (Al-Ghazali, 1982). This stance led to the establishment of a sharp dichotomy between reason and revelation, reproduced in Islamic consciousness as an inherent contradiction. While earlier thinkers like (Al-Kindī, 1950, 25-36) attempted to defend the possibility of harmony, asserting that both strive for the same goal, the intellectual context remained fraught with the rejection of philosophy.

In this context, Ibn Rushd emerges as the thinker who grasped the depth of the epistemological crisis, seeking a harmony that would eventually influence both the Islamic East and the Latin West (Fakhry, 2001). He saw that the essence of the problem does not lie in the conflict between Sharia and wisdom, but rather in the adoption of uncertain approaches that led to the loss of truth. Accordingly, Ibn Rushd turned his attention to investigating the nature of truth, striving to establish an epistemological methodology that would resolve the perceived conflict. This study investigates the foundational philosophical inquiry: Does a difference in methodology necessarily lead to a difference in truth, or is plurality merely methodological without affecting the unity of truth itself? This research utilizes a critical textual and comparative analysis of Ibn Rushd’s primary works, examining his attempt to reconstruct the relationship between reason and revelation. As Ibn Rushd asserted in *Fasl al-Maqal*, “truth does not contradict truth, but rather agrees with it and bears witness to it” (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 96).

1. Methodology

This study adopts a critical, textual, and comparative analytical approach aimed at revealing Ibn Rushd's conception of truth and demonstrating the methodological foundations he employed in addressing the complex relationship between Islamic law and philosophy.

1-1 Type of Research and Scope

The research is a foundational philosophical inquiry that primarily involves analyzing Ibn Rushd's original texts-both philosophical and theological-while connecting them to the historical and intellectual context in which they arose. This allows for a deeper understanding of the epistemological motivations that guided his project and the problems he sought to address.

1-2 Sources and Material

The analysis is based on a meticulous reading of Ibn Rushd's primary works, notably *Faṣl al-Maḡāl* (1997), *Al-Kashf 'an Manāḥij al-Adillah* (2007), and *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (2008). To provide a comparative dimension, these are examined alongside the positions of theologians, particularly the seminal work of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* (1982), representing the *Ash'arite* school at its most influential.

1-3 Analytical Tools and Framework

To deconstruct Ibn Rushd's position, the study employs three specific analytical dimensions:

- **Textual Analysis:** Deconstructing the underlying argumentative structure to reveal the logical relationships connecting premises and conclusions. This is essential for understanding the construction of rational demonstration and scriptural interpretation (*ta'wīl*).
- **Comparative Methodology:** A systematic comparison between the "demonstrative syllogism" (*burhān*) advocated by Ibn Rushd and the "dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms" prevailing in Islamic theology (*kalām*).
- **Contextual Reading:** A reading that considers the political and social circumstances of Al-Andalus, including the tension between traditional *Mālikī* jurisprudence and philosophical inquiry (Al-Jābirī, 2007).

1-4 Evaluation of Interpretation (*Ta'wīl*)

Integral to this method is an evaluation of the conditions, criteria, and epistemological functions of interpretation. The study examines Ibn Rushd's classification of people according to their modes of belief and his distinction between discourse for the public and the elite as fundamental tools for understanding the limits of disseminating rational interpretations.

2. The Epistemological Conception of the Unity of Truth

2-1 Diagnosis of the Intellectual Crisis

Ibn Rushd's treatment of the concept of truth begins with a precise diagnosis of the epistemological crisis that Islamic thought had reached in his era. The multiplicity of methodologies, the confusion of methods of reasoning, and the proliferation of sects and schools of thought led to conflicting conclusions and a loss of certainty. He observed that the abundance of contradictory claims on doctrinal and philosophical issues was not evidence of intellectual richness, but rather an indication of methodological flaws, because contradictory conclusions necessarily implied that the path leading to them was not reliable. For Ibn Rushd, the problem did not lie in truth itself, but in how it was sought and the means employed to reach it.

2-2 Ontological Unity: Non-Contradiction and Methodological Plurality

The central pillar of Ibn Rushd's reconciliation project is the principle that "truth does not contradict truth but rather agrees with it and testifies to it" (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 96). This is not a mere slogan but a methodological law of non-contradiction: if demonstrative proof—which is certain—appears to conflict with the apparent meaning of scripture, the fault lies in the human understanding of the text, not in the truth of the revelation itself. Truth, he asserts, is essentially one and indivisible; differences of opinion regarding it do not stem from differences in truth itself, but rather from differences in methodologies, intellectual capacities, and functional objectives (Taylor, 1998). As correspondence to reality as it is, truth cannot be multiple in a single matter, because multiplicity leads to relativism and conjecture, the very antithesis of the certainty that constitutes the goal of true knowledge (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 95).

By grounding the unity of truth in the rationality of existence, Ibn Rushd establishes that because both reason and revelation originate from a single divine source, they must eventually converge on a singular objective reality, regardless of the differing linguistic or logical paths taken to reach it. Consequently, interpretation (*ta'wīl*) becomes a mandatory cognitive tool for resolving apparent discord. In Ibn Rushd's system, truth remains ontologically singular; methodological diversity is treated as a cognitive necessity for a pluralistic society rather than a fragmentation of reality. All certain knowledge, whether based on reason or revelation, must ultimately lead to the same truth. Based on this understanding, Ibn Rushd rejects the prevailing view that establishes a fundamental opposition between Sharia and philosophy, as truth does not oppose truth but rather accords with it and testifies to it.

2-3 Historical Distortions and Sectarian Conflict

The misunderstanding that befell philosophy, he argues, was a major reason for the distortion of the concept of truth within Islamic culture. Some Muslim philosophers, such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, received Aristotelian philosophy in partial or interpreted forms, introducing metaphysical elements foreign to its original framework. This led to conclusions that appeared

to contradict the apparent meaning of Islamic law. Consequently, philosophy was held responsible for these results, not as a demonstrative method, but as a system of particular opinions, paving the way for its rejection by jurists and theologians (Al-Jabiri, 1981, 210).

Conversely, the religious understanding of truth was not immune to this flaw. Theological schools, Ibn Rushd believes, contributed to complicating the issue by adopting undisciplined interpretations and expanding the scope of conjecture in matters that should be addressed with demonstrative rigor. This approach led to the freezing of legal doctrines, the dominance of imitation, the exclusion of reason, and the transformation of epistemological disagreement into sectarian conflict that reached the point of mutual excommunication, as clearly manifested in al-Ghazali's position on the philosophers (Al-Ghazali, 1982, 45).

2-4 The Complementarity of Reason and Revelation

The pursuit of truth, he emphasizes, necessitates distinguishing between the sources and methods of knowledge without conflating them. Revelation is a divine source that addresses all people, employing diverse approaches suited to their varying capacities, while reason is a human instrument aimed at understanding existence in terms of its causes and principles. The difference in source, however, does not imply a difference in truth; rather, it requires understanding each source within its specific domain and recognizing its limits and function (Ibn Rushd, 2007, 118).

Reason thus occupies a special place in the apprehension of truth, serving as the basis of moral responsibility and the instrument for transforming knowledge from potentiality to actuality. Through demonstration, it can attain a level of assurance beyond the reach of doubt. This role does not negate revelation but complements it, for revelation guides and directs reason toward its ultimate end, providing the ethical and moral framework that governs the course of knowledge (Ibn Rushd, 1994a, 32).

Truth, in this sense, becomes an objective rather than subjective concept—a universal principle not subject to whims or sectarian interests. It is not the property of one group over another, nor is it monopolized in the name of religion or philosophy. Rather, it is sought for its own sake, through a method that guarantees epistemic reliability. Ibn Rushd's concept of truth thus forms the theoretical foundation of his critical, conciliatory project, which seeks to rebuild the relationship between reason and revelation on a basis of integration rather than conflict. Truth is the point of convergence between religious law and wisdom, the criterion by which the validity, objectivity, and usefulness of methodologies are measured.

3. Methods of Attaining Truth

3-1. The Primacy of the Demonstrative Method (*Burhān*)

The demonstrative method is the cornerstone of Ibn Rushd's epistemological framework and the most reliable path to certain truth. In his view, divine law does not merely call upon humanity to accept faith based on unquestioning submission, but rather explicitly urges them

to contemplate and reflect upon existence, linking this to the use of reason as a tool for perception and discernment. For this contemplation to be sound and fruitful, it must be based on valid logical reasoning (Ibn Rushd, 1992a), of which demonstration is the most complete and capable form for yielding certain knowledge (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 89; Leaman, 1988).

Demonstration, he argues, is a syllogism composed of true, primary, necessary, and self-evident premises that serve as the cause of the conclusion in terms of both existence and knowledge. It does not merely produce conviction but reveals the thing by understanding its primary causes and universal principles. In this sense, demonstration differs fundamentally from dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms, which rely on conjecture and popular opinion and do not attain the level of certainty, despite their persuasive power and dialectical function in presenting and promoting an idea (Ibn Rushd, 1992b, 44).

3-2 Methodological Misuse and Intellectual Turmoil

The confusion between these types of syllogisms, he asserts, was a primary cause of intellectual turmoil within Islamic thought. Theologians and jurists resorted to dialectical and rhetorical syllogisms in matters that could only be resolved through demonstration, then disseminated their conclusions among the public, who were unfamiliar with the boundaries and methods of rigorous knowledge. This blurred the lines between conjecture and certainty and multiplied disagreements among different schools. Such an approach distorted the image of philosophy due to the public's lack of understanding of it and its methodologies, leading to accusations that philosophy produced conclusions contrary to religion-ultimately causing public rejection. The problem, however, lay not in demonstration itself but in its misuse, its replacement with inferior methods, or its presentation within a framework inconsistent with its true structure, a structure known only to those versed in it (Ibn Rushd, 2007, 132).

3-3 The Inseparability of Logic and Revelation

The demonstrative method is inextricably linked to the unity of truth. As long as demonstration yields reliable results, its conclusions cannot contradict the sound understanding of Islamic law. As established in the ontological analysis of Section 3.2, the convergence of these two paths is a logical necessity. Therefore, logic serves not as an external rival to revelation, but as an internal instrument for clarifying the linguistic boundaries of the text. Because two verified truths cannot be mutually exclusive, the role of the scholar is to utilize logical syllogisms to ensure that human interpretation remains in harmony with the certain results of reason (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 96).

3-4 Prerequisites for Demonstrative Knowledge

Particular importance attaches to the prerequisites for acquiring demonstrative knowledge. Such knowledge is not accessible to everyone; it requires a specific innate aptitude, a gradual learning process, and extensive practice in applying logical syllogisms according to their conditions. Ibn Rushd's distinction between classes of people is not merely a social hierarchy

but an epistemological necessity rooted in the varying innate predispositions and mental capacities of humankind. While the "Demonstrative" elite achieve assent through certain premises, the "Masses" are addressed through rhetorical parables, and the "Dialectical" theologians occupy a middle ground of probability. By linking this hierarchy to the educational processes of conception (*taṣawwur*) and assent (*taṣdīq*), Ibn Rushd argues that Islamic law acts as a universal discourse; it provides the majority with accessible, sensory-based truths while simultaneously directing the intellectual elite to higher causal learning. This structure ensures communal stability by preventing the generalization of complex syllogisms to those who lack the rigorous training to endure them, thus protecting the "stability of faith" while maintaining the "integrity of reason" (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 123; Ibn Rushd, 2008, 435; Ibn Rushd, 1992b, 50).

The acquisition of demonstrative knowledge, moreover, is not a complete individual achievement; no single person, regardless of intellectual capacity, can generate such knowledge alone. Rather, it is the cumulative product of human effort throughout the ages. Ibn Rushd therefore strongly defends the legitimacy of drawing upon the sciences of previous civilizations, asserting the necessity of engaging with their knowledge. Studying the books of the ancients is a religious obligation due to its essential benefits for human interaction and development, as long as the goal is to reach truth. The crucial factor is not the speaker's background, culture, appearance, or religion, but the validity of the statement. Reason is a shared faculty among all humankind, and what is proven true through demonstration must be accepted, while what is proven false must be identified and avoided (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 91).

3-5 The Juridical Dimension of Rational Inquiry

In underscoring the importance of the demonstrative method, Ibn Rushd did not neglect to legitimize it or highlight its juridical dimension, given its paramount importance in human life, particularly in Islam, and to clarify its relationship to religion itself. Rational inquiry into existence is an integral part of a Muslim's religious obligation, and knowledge of God is incomplete without knowledge of His creation—that is, knowledge of the world in terms of its causes, components, and functions. The completer and more precise this knowledge, the more firmly established, comprehensive, and beneficial becomes knowledge of God. Philosophy, as a demonstrative enterprise, is thus not a rival to Islamic law but a servant to it, complementing its epistemological and faith-based objectives in essence rather than negating them (Ibn Rushd, 2007, 145).

The demonstrative method, in this conception, is not merely a logical technique but a comprehensive epistemological vision of the world, grounded in the rationality of existence itself and its order according to a causal system that can be perceived and formulated into universal laws. Through this method, Ibn Rushd sought to liberate knowledge from the authority of conjecture and imitation, grounding it instead in epistemic reliability in a way that

ensures the unity of truth and establishes a firm link between reason and revelation, without one overpowering or negating the other.

4. The Regulatory Framework of Interpretation (*Ta'wīl*)

4-1 Addressing "Epistemological Chaos"

Until Ibn Rushd's time, Islamic intellectual life suffered from what he termed "epistemological chaos," stemming primarily from flawed methodology in dealing with and interpreting Islamic law. This methodology lacked rigorous criteria for understanding religious texts, leading to uncertain conclusions that often prioritized the ideological and self-serving perspectives of various groups over truth itself. The turmoil transformed Muslim societies from a state of certain knowledge to one dominated by misguided understandings of Sharia. Sects proliferated, clashed, and even declared each other infidels, despite their shared faith and destiny (Ibn Rushd, 2007, 150).

The root cause lay in the approach to religion and its objectives, not in the essence of religion itself. This flaw manifested in three general categories of interpretation: undisciplined rational interpretation, obscure and subjective esoteric interpretation, and dialectical interpretation aimed at imposing a particular idea or declared principle. The result was multiple meanings for a single word, the loss of truth, and widespread confusion among the Muslim public (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 110).

4-2 Paths to Reliability

To rectify this cognitive corruption, Ibn Rushd called for subjecting religious texts to a rigorous framework governing understanding for the sake of truth alone, not narrow ideological purposes. This reliability, he argued, is achieved through three paths: first, reason, which brings the potential certainty within the soul into actuality; second, demonstrative reasoning through empirical premises related to established knowledge; and third, authoritative transmission, a mechanism with its own specific conditions and contexts (Ibn Rushd, 1994b, 102).

4-3 Linguistic Methodology and the Nature of the Quranic Text

The Holy Quran, as the source of Islamic law, has naturally been the focus of attention for Islamic sects. However, the diverse nature of Quranic vocabulary, ranging from literal to figurative, clear to ambiguous, and general to specific (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 115; 1994b, 104), has made the text susceptible to varying interpretations, leading to distortions and deviations from its true meaning. Ibn Rushd therefore bases his linguistic methodology on the premise that a Quranic word may be a definitive text conveying a single meaning in its context. Words can be categorized, in terms of their meaning, into those that indicate a ruling by their explicit form and those that indicate a ruling by their conceptual and rational meaning (Ibn Rushd, 1994b, 106).

The Arabic language, as the language of the Holy Quran, serves as the repository of words and the framework for meanings, possessing its own structure, context, and concepts embodied

in specific words. The original meaning of words is the “apparent meaning” (*zāhir*) for which the word was initially established. A word may be borrowed for something else due to a resemblance or indication pointing to the new borrowed meaning. If the word is devoid of such indications, it must be interpreted according to its original meaning (Ibn Rushd, 1994b, 107).

4-4 Substitution and the Apparent Meaning

Two aspects of the apparent meaning, representing the common denominator in understanding, were identified. The first is form: a word originally used for something and then borrowed for something else due to a relationship between them, such as the metaphorical use of “nest” for a bed among the Arabs. The second is substitution: the replacement of the general with the specific, or vice versa. The methodological principle dictates that these categories must be interpreted according to their apparent meaning, which is the default, and it is not permissible to resort to the borrowed meaning-interpretation-unless conclusive evidence indicates otherwise (Ibn Rushd, 1994b, 109).

4-5 Defining Interpretation (*Ta'wīl*)

Ibn Rushd defines interpretation as the process of targeting the true meaning intended by the author of the text by shifting the word from its literal to its figurative meaning, provided that Arab conventions of naming, substitution, and metaphor are not violated (Ibn Rushd, 1994b, 112). The need for interpretation arises with ambiguous words-those whose apparent meaning can bear more than one sense or that seem contradictory, especially expressions of the unseen through examples from the observable world (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 118). Building upon the principle of non-contradiction established in Section 3.2, this linguistic shift is not an arbitrary choice but a necessary cognitive transition when literalism would conflict with certain rational proof. Within Ibn Rushd’s framework, this interpretive duty falls exclusively to the demonstrative class, who possess the linguistic and logical rigor required to move from the “apparent” (*zāhir*) to the “inner” (*bāṭin*) meaning while maintaining fidelity to the core tenets of the Sharia.

4-6 Intellectual Capacities and the Danger of Misinterpretation

Islamic law considers the varying intellectual capacities of people; it addresses the general public with literal meanings and sensory perceptions that lead to action and happiness, while leaving the tools of demonstrative reasoning to those firmly grounded in knowledge (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 123). The major transgression of certain groups-the *Ash'arites*, *Mu'tazilites*, *Sufis*, and *Hashawiyya*-lies in their interpretation of literal meanings directed at the masses to serve their own purposes. This nullified the wisdom of Islamic law, undermined scholarly certainty, and spread confusion among the masses (Ibn Rushd, 2007, 165). The disorder caused societal fragmentation and the disintegration of epistemological foundations, profoundly affecting social relations among adherents of various interpretive groups and leading to mutual

accusations of heresy, demonstrating that the problem lies in the mechanism of understanding, not in religion itself (Ibn Rushd, 1994b, 115).

5. Levels of Islamic Discourse and the Criteria for Consensus

5-1 The Hierarchical Classification of Legal Issues

Ibn Rushd divides Islamic legal issues into three levels: matters on which Muslims unanimously agree to take literally, matters on which they unanimously agree to interpret, and matters on which disagreement exists. Fundamental issues-such as belief in God, prophethood, and the happiness and misery of the afterlife-are common principles for all people and should be understood in their plain sense (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 98).

Regarding consensus (*ijmā'*), he sets a condition that makes definitive override nearly impossible: the universality of all those holding the consensus at a single time. This is difficult to verify in theoretical matters, unlike practical ones. Therefore, "one cannot definitively declare as an infidel someone who violates the consensus in interpretation" (Ibn Rushd, 1997, p. 99). From this perspective, the excommunication of philosophers on theoretical issues-such as the eternity of the world or the nature of divine knowledge-is seen as an epistemological error, a point further elaborated in the critique of theological inconsistency in Section 6.3.

5-2 Addressing Human Diversity through Sharia

The Sharia was originally revealed to accommodate differences in human nature. Those who lack access to demonstration due to their innate understanding are addressed through parables and analogies. Such content employs rhetorical and dialectical tools that must be taken in their plain sense. Anyone who interprets them and presents the results to ordinary believers, especially regarding fundamental religious principles, is considered an unbeliever or a denier (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 105).

As for words containing hidden meanings, scholars are obligated to interpret them to enhance our understanding of the Creator through His creations. Ibn Rushd classifies a third type of text, a middle ground between the obligation of plain reading and interpretation, because it is complex and ambiguous. In this category, a scholar who errs is considered excused and even rewarded for his effort, provided he adheres to the principles of interpretation and does not disclose the results to the uninitiated (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 110).

5-3 The Critique of Al-Ghazālī's Methodological Inconsistency

The "great transgression" of the theological schools-specifically the *Ash'arites* and *Al-Ghazālīs*-lies in a fundamental methodological inconsistency that Ibn Rushd deems "sophistic." By employing poetic and rhetorical methods in demonstrative matters and, more critically, declaring these speculative interpretations openly to the uninitiated, they violated the early Muslims' practice of linguistic restraint. This practice corrupted both Islamic law and wisdom; instead of increasing the number of scholars, it increased those who spread corruption (Ibn

[Rushd, 1997, 112](#)). Ibn Rushd's critique of Al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut* is thus twofold: first, it attacks the excommunication of philosophers like Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina on theoretical issues (such as the eternity of the world) where consensus is impossible; second, it condemns Al-Ghazālī for failing to strive for certainty, famously noting that he was "an *Ash'arite* with the *Ash'arites*, a Sufi with the Sufīs, and a philosopher with the philosophers" ([Ibn Rushd, 1997, 113](#)). This inconsistency did not merely spread corruption; it dismantled the objective conditions for understanding, replacing certain knowledge with the "epistemological chaos" of sectarian debate.

5-4 Education, Conception, and Assent

Ibn Rushd establishes the essential purpose of Islamic law as an educational process aimed at genuine knowledge. Education divides into two categories: conception (*taṣawwur*) and assent (*taṣdīq*) ([Ibn Rushd, 1997, 118](#)). Since Sharia aims to guide everyone to truth, it predominantly employs common methods suited to ordinary believers, while directing the elite to higher levels of learning. As established in the earlier analysis of the hierarchy of assent, this educational stratification ensures that the pursuit of truth remains accessible to all while preserving the rigor required for demonstrative science.

6. Levels of Qur'anic Discourse and Mechanisms of Interpretation

6-1 Categorization of Apparent and Intended Meanings

Ibn Rushd analyses the relationship between Qur'anic words and their apparent and intended meanings, considering them two fundamental categories ([Ibn Rushd, 2007, 155](#)):

- **Explicit Alignment:** The explicit meaning coincides with the intended meaning. This includes the three fundamental principles: God, prophethood, and the Day of Judgment. No interpretive departure is permissible.
- **Explicit Divergence:** The explicit meaning differs from the intended meaning. Here, interpretation branches into four categories based on the difficulty of understanding the analogy ([Ibn Rushd, 1997, 120](#)).

6-2 The Scope of Acceptable Interpretation

Ibn Rushd presents a methodological summary linking premises and conclusions to define acceptable interpretation ([Fakhry, 1982, 102](#); [Al-Jabiri, 1981, 215](#)):

1. **Absolute Certainty:** Certain premises and direct conclusions; requires no interpretation.
2. **Interpretation of Conclusions:** Certain premises and exemplary conclusions; interpretation applies only to the conclusions.
3. **Interpretation of Premises:** Probable premises and self-evident conclusions; interpretation applies to the premises.
4. **Interpretation of the Limits:** Uncertain premises and exemplary conclusions; interpreted only by scholars.

6-3. The Critique of Ash'arite Atomism and the Denial of Causality

Beyond the social error of disseminating interpretations to the masses, Ibn Rushd directs a vehement philosophical critique against the internal logic of *Ash'arite* principles. He describes their framework as "sophistic" because it fundamentally denies the necessary truths of reason—most notably the principle of causality. By asserting that there is no inherent connection between a cause and its effect, the theologians undermined the very possibility of demonstrative science. For Ibn Rushd, Al-Ghazālī and the *Ash'arites* did not merely contradict the practice of the early Muslims; they dismantled the ontological stability of the world, leading to the misguidance of believers through a methodology that lacks both traditional authority and rational necessity (Ibn Rushd, 2007, 170). This denial of natural necessity effectively isolates the divine will from the rational order of creation, a conflict that necessitates a re-evaluation of the ontological relationship between God and the world (Dababseh, 2023).

7. The Crisis of Theological Interpretation and the Corruption of Methodology

7-1 Incompatibility with Sharia Objectives

The fundamental problem with theological schools—such as the *Ash'arites* and *Mu'tazilites*—lies in their direct conflict with the teleological objectives (*Maqāṣid*) of Islamic law. While Section 4.4 established the psychological necessity of the three methods of assent, here the focus shifts to their juridical function. Ibn Rushd argues that these methods are not merely educational tools but are “the most convincing and effective (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 124). mechanisms specifically instituted by the Lawgiver to preserve the faith of the community. By injecting non-demonstrative, speculative interpretations into the public sphere, the theologians do not merely err in logic; they effectively nullify the divine wisdom behind the Sharia's structure. This results in the "fragmentation of the word" and the multiplication of sects, as the intended "middle path" of the Law is replaced by polemical disputes that offer neither the certainty of philosophy nor the simple peace of literal faith.

7-2 The Hostility Toward Wisdom: Historical Context

Ibn Rushd strongly defended the legitimacy of philosophy as the instrument of certainty. The hostility towards philosophy was exemplified by his meeting with Caliph Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf al-Muwaḥḥidi. Ibn Rushd was overcome with fear when questioned about the eternity of the heavens, fearing the ignorant animosity towards wisdom—an animosity he later fell victim to (Al-Marrākeshī, 1998, 220).

7-3 The Harmony of Sharia and Wisdom

Ibn Rushd affirms that the essence of the relationship between Sharia and wisdom is one of complete harmony. Wisdom is “the companion of Sharia and its foster sister” (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 125). The apparent conflict does not arise from nature but from “corrupt passions and distorted beliefs.” Philosophy, with its demonstrative methods, is in complete agreement with Islamic law, reinforcing it with conclusive evidence for those seeking certainty.

8. Intellectual Summary

It becomes clear that Ibn Rushd's epistemological project stemmed from a profound awareness of the intellectual crisis that plagued the Islamic world in his time and before, manifested in the fierce conflict between proponents of reason and proponents of revelation. This conflict resulted in the fragmentation and disintegration of truth, the dominance of conjecture, and the multiplication and contradiction of various sects and schools of thought. He believed this conflict was fundamentally unjustified, as the disagreement concerned not truth itself but rather the methodologies employed in its pursuit, the means used to attain it, and the objectives behind this divergence. Ibn Rushd's position on truth—which establishes objective reality, enabling humanity to fulfil its potential without contradicting divine revelation as clarified by Islamic law—can be summarized as follows:

First, truth is singular and indivisible, as multiplicity contradicts certainty and leads to relativism and confusion. Religious law is true, and philosophy is true; one truth cannot oppose another, for “truth does not contradict truth, but rather agrees with it and bears witness to it” (Ibn Rushd, 2007, 116). Any apparent contradiction between religious law and philosophy is merely the result of misunderstanding or methodological flaws, not a genuine conflict in the essence of truth.

Second, the unity of truth is linked to the unity of reason as the shared instrument for its perception. Reason, despite its varying degrees and diverse capacities among people, remains the faculty that enables the transition of knowledge from potentiality to actuality. Since Sharia is a universal discourse directed to all people, its methods vary between demonstrative, dialectical, and rhetorical, while those capable of demonstration are assigned the task of deepening rational understanding of texts without generalizing this understanding to ordinary believers, in order to preserve the stability of faith and the unity of the community.

Third, since reason is religiously mandated to engage in contemplation and reflection, it justifies the use of all methodologies and cognitive tools produced by human thought, regardless of their cultural or religious origin. The determining factor is not a person's religious or intellectual affiliation but rather the validity of the conclusions established through proof. Hence, Ibn Rushd defended the legitimacy of drawing upon the heritage of previous nations, especially the Greeks, and considered Aristotle a trustworthy thinker. He deemed studying the books of the ancients a religious duty and a civilizational necessity, provided the goal is to reach certain truth.

Fourth, the Qur'anic text does not possess uniform clarity with specific meanings readily understandable to everyone. Rather, it contains explicit meanings as well as allegorical or symbolic ones requiring interpretation. However, this interpretation is not absolute but bound by strict linguistic and demonstrative principles. It must not infringe upon the fundamental tenets of faith, which must be taken in their plain sense, such as belief in God, prophethood,

and the Day of Judgment. Thus, interpretation becomes a necessary cognitive tool for understanding the text, not a means to demolish it, subject it to whims, or employ its results for purposes other than truth.

Fifth, emphasis is placed on demonstration as the surest path to truth, grounded in a rational worldview that considers existence ordered according to a causal system that can be perceived and understood. This worldview establishes objective knowledge and opens the way for the development of sciences and human knowledge practically beneficial to humanity. It prevents thought from slipping into sterile debate or persuasive rhetoric that distances one from attaining true and beneficial knowledge (Al-Miṣbāḥī, 2007, 88).

Sixth, truth is not limited to its cognitive dimension but encompasses an inherent ethical and human dimension. Truth necessarily leads to virtue and goodness and establishes a rational consciousness that liberates humanity from fanaticism and dogmatism, opening the way for pluralism, coexistence, cooperation, and stability. The pursuit of truth is not an abstract intellectual goal but a prerequisite for achieving human freedom, civilizational progress, and the advancement of human consciousness.

Seventh, the relationship between reason and revelation, as Ibn Rushd sees it, is one of integration rather than contradiction. Reason deepens understanding of revelation, and revelation guides reason and regulates its value system. Both contribute to revealing a single truth whose source is all-encompassing divine knowledge. Excluding either leads to an impoverishment of knowledge, while their integration ensures the balance of thought, the continuity of development, and the diversity of knowledge (Ibn Rushd, 1997, 122; al-Jābirī, 2007, 145).

Eighth, truth is an objective reality that exists independently, bearing no affiliation of any form. One should not refrain from seeking it simply because of differences in its source. Truth itself, its essence, its path, and its purpose, fosters a kind of awareness that cultivates rationality in all who encounter it. The pursuit of truth is thus a human duty and an ontological necessity.

Ninth, truth represents a state of liberation for those who grasp it, and its positive impact can be felt through experiencing and advocating for it. Whoever understands truth is freed from closed-mindedness and rigid attachment to a particular idea. Truth thus becomes an end, emancipating one from dogmatic closure. This is necessary for openness and understanding, and constitutes one of the essential conditions for survival, progress, and development, especially in an era open to all possibilities.

Tenth, the authentic key to truth is reason, characterized by consistency and objectivity. Attention must therefore be paid to its nature, types, and role. Reason is the essence of the demonstrative method and equally the essence of interpretation related to sacred texts. It is the shared faculty among all humanity, despite differences in capacity, accessible to every person

according to their intellectual abilities. Indeed, reason has become one of the hallmarks of the immortality of humankind itself.

Eleventh, the methodology, nature, and purpose of truth necessarily lead to a pluralism that was lacking in the society in which Ibn Rushd lived. Although pluralism is a fundamental characteristic of Islamic thought, especially in jurisprudence, truth has often fallen victim to individual interests and narrow understanding. Truth is intrinsically connected to itself and not confined to one field or group over another. It is wisdom that should be embraced wherever found, in a manner appropriate to its nature and role.

Twelfth, truth is a single, unified entity, whether approached through Sharia in its practical aspect or through wisdom in its theoretical aspect. The interaction and integration between these two aspects strengthens truth, which serves as a necessary entry point for actual existence—a growing and developing existence capable of assimilating all the achievements of the mind at every stage of human activity.

Thirteenth, Ibn Rushd did not stand as an admirer impressed by what the philosophers, theologians, or jurists who preceded him had presented. Rather, the methodology he created, applied, and strongly advocated established a clear position on the necessity of critiquing existing thought to demonstrate its soundness or incoherence. He criticized Ibn Sīnā more than Al-Ghazālī, for the former subjectivized philosophy and did not understand it as its authors intended, while Al-Ghazālī did not follow the certain method in his interpretations, disseminating them to those who could not comprehend them. This demonstrates the necessity of proceeding within a specific context to create the objective conditions for understanding and, consequently, development and awareness.

9. Summary of the Study

This study has analysed the problem of truth in Islamic thought through an examination of Ibn Rushd's position, as one of the most prominent thinkers who sought to transcend the opposition between reason and revelation and rebuild the relationship between Islamic law and philosophy on a solid epistemological foundation. The study begins with the observation that the historical disagreement between philosophers and theologians was not, in essence, a disagreement about the nature of truth, but rather about the methodologies and means leading to it—resulting in conflicting conclusions, the multiplication of sects, and a decline in epistemological certainty.

The research problem revolves around the following question: Did Ibn Rushd succeed in presenting a coherent conception of truth that resolves the perceived contradiction between reason and revelation and establishes an epistemological methodology capable of combining rational demonstration and scriptural interpretation without negating either? Based on this question, the study posits that Ibn Rushd succeeded in formulating a conception of truth grounded in its unity and non-contradiction, through a rigorous methodological framework for attaining it, whether through demonstrative reasoning or through interpretation.

The study adopts a critical analytical approach based on an internal reading of Ibn Rushd's texts, linking them to their intellectual and historical context, and comparing them with the positions of theologians, particularly the *Ash'arites*, and with the stance of Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī, which represented a pivotal moment in the conflict between Islamic law and philosophy. The study demonstrates that Ibn Rushd's critique was not directed at religion or philosophy per se, but rather at the misuse of methodologies, the confusion of levels of discourse, and the dissemination of rational interpretations to an audience ill-equipped to understand them.

The study reveals that Ibn Rushd's concept of truth rests on clear epistemological foundations, most notably that truth is singular and does not manifest in multiple forms within a single issue, and that what is established by conclusive rational demonstration cannot contradict what is presented in correctly understood religious law, because truth accords with truth and testifies to it. From this standpoint, Ibn Rushd defended the demonstrative method as the most reliable path to certain knowledge, considering reason, as the basis of moral obligation, an essential instrument for understanding existents in terms of its causes—an understanding that deepens faith rather than contradicting it.

The study also highlighted the pivotal role of interpretation in Ibn Rushd's project as a mechanism for regulating the relationship between religious texts and rational demonstration. For Ibn Rushd, interpretation is not a practice open to everyone, nor a means of subjecting texts to whims, but a cognitive process bound by strict linguistic and demonstrative controls, undertaken only by those qualified through knowledge. He emphasized the necessity of distinguishing between discourse directed at ordinary believers and discourse directed at specialists, warning against the generalization of rational interpretations due to the resulting doctrinal confusion and communal fragmentation.

10. Critical Dimension and Contemporary Relevance

The importance of this study lies not merely in addressing the problems of his era but in offering an intellectual horizon applicable to contemporary challenges. Ibn Rushd's epistemological framework provides a vital model for resolving the modern dichotomy between scientific inquiry and traditional belief. In an era characterized by both religious dogmatism and secular scientism, Ibn Rushd's project suggests a path toward an integrated pluralism. By viewing reason and revelation as “foster-sisters,” modern Islamic societies can engage with global scientific advancements—from genetics to physics—without perceiving them as a threat to scriptural truth, provided that the rigorous interpretive tools of *ta'wīl* are applied. This study thus affirms that Ibn Rushd's understanding of truth is not merely a theoretical philosophical stance but a foundation for reconstructing epistemological and ethical consciousness based on certainty and openness.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Ibn Rushd's project represents a pioneering attempt to restore reason to its rightful place within the religious framework, without falling into exclusionary rationalism or rigid textualism. He established an integrated vision that sees Sharia and wisdom as two complementary paths toward a single truth, each with its own domain, function, and boundaries. Ibn Rushd embodied this project in his thought and practice, as both a rationalist philosopher and a *Mālikī* jurist, affirming that truth is not monopolized or confined to any school of thought or orientation but is sought for its own sake, through a methodology that guarantees its objectivity and unity.

In essence, Ibn Rushd's philosophy on truth holds that we need philosophical truth just as we need religious truth.

Philosophical truth is inseparable from value, and value is only established in the soul through freedom. If we believe in truth, value, and freedom, then we are on the path to realizing human potential (Al-Kasm, n.d.).

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