

The Philosophy of Criticism in Ibn Rushd and the Possibility of Civilizational Revival: A Comparative Analytical Study

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Abstract

This research has dealt with an important issue in the history of Islam mainly from two angles. The first one is to reveal the importance of the intellectual projects of this nation. The second is mainly concerned with the way in getting benefits from them at present. This is what I am trying to investigate by following Ibn Rushd's critical project. His project is mainly represented in the localization of rational approach within religious thought by justifying the legitimacy of philosophical rational proofs to explore the value of religious knowledge. Also, this philosopher has confronted theological principles through the great critical work as an attempt to restore the presence of philosophy in the intellectual field after Al Ghazali directed as a strong stab at it that shook its theoretical foundations. This study is divided into three major parts. In fact, after giving a brief definition of Ibn Rushd, I will deal not only with the dominance of the Asha'ari trend and the emergence of critical school of Ibn Rushd but also I will concentrate on the establishment of the Islamic mind. In this work, I have dealt with objectivity and subjectivity in Ibn Rushd's critical philosophy and the man's ability to localize the rational approach with Islamic thought. Then, I wondered about the possibilities of drawing inspiration from the rational approach to restore the potential for civilizational revival.

Keywords: *Mind curriculum – Critical project – Islamic thought – Mental proofs – Verbal origins.*

Introduction

The world of a scholar like Ibn Rushd al-Farabi does not represent just one of the pillars of Islamic thought, but a pivotal case in the history of this nation, firstly because he is one of its last great philosophers, and secondly because he is the last of its intellectual embodiments. Moreover, he is the last manifestation of rational *ijtihad*, which is a fundamental condition in the development of both transmitted and rational knowledge alike.

The setback of the Rashidian thought marked a fracture in Islamic culture and its civilizational leadership, yet the methodological approach of the man remains the unique model, especially through the critical project he undertook in facing a critical trend established by one of Islam's geniuses, Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, surpassing any other based on his foundational references. He authored what resembles the essential unity among the three pillars of Islamic thought: jurisprudence, theology, and mysticism. However, Ibn Rushd courageously and skillfully confronted al-Ghazali's Salafi project, attempting through critical excavation of the dialectical method to localize the rational methodology with an Aristotelian reference within religious thought. Despite the obstacles, and although the Rashidian project was transmitted to the Christian West and laid the foundations for a revival movement manifested in the strong confrontation between supporters of Rashidism and its opponents, the critical effects of his project remain alive in the memory of Muslims.

The ongoing conflict between Salafi thought and the rational methodology, especially since the emergence of the pioneers of the Arab-Islamic renaissance in the 19th century, is merely an extension stemming from an intellectual movement that began with the Mu'tazila, and did not end with Ibn Rushd. Despite containing severe errors that threaten the constants of transmitted references, the prevailing belief that a revival movement is possible in Islamic thought cannot risk reviving it without returning to the Rashidian critical project and its foundational principles upon which to build. Because thought does not form from nothing, and the intellectual history of this nation, whether through its religious burden or its rational projects, despite being beset by the traps of ideological conflict, is nothing but an acquired and original legitimacy that justifies Muslims to re-stake and enter into a new intellectual critical movement, reviewing its foundational principles and extracting the methodologies of incoming thought through globalization and its pressing flows. Here we find the foundational principles of the intellectual movement and the causes of

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confrontation between their contradictions hardly differing from the conditions of previous conflict referents, even though the nature of scientific streams and the mechanisms of confrontation between them have differed.

Therefore, we question the nature of the Rashidian foundation for one of the most important critical schools in the history of Islamic thought, as well as Ibn Rushd's methodology in localizing the rational method within the process of reconciling with transmitted thought? Then, through this, we pose a problem represented by the possibility of civilizational revival based on Abu al-Walid's critical experience?

Who is Ibn Rushd?

He is described by "Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'" as an intellectual encyclopedia who combined transmission and reason. In describing him, it is a statement and a hint: a statement that reveals his vast knowledge and attests to his abundant knowledge, and a hint that shows his rejection and denunciation of some of his scientific burdens. he said about him: "He is Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Abi al-Qasim Ahmad ibn Sheikh al-Malikiya Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd al-Qurtubi, born a month before his death in the year 520 AH. He was raised by his father, took medical training from Abu Marwan ibn Jariwal, then turned to the sciences of the ancients and their pupils until he became an exemplary figure in that regard."² However, the author of the biography did not deny Ibn Rushd's merit in ethics as well as in knowledge, describing him as humble and diligent.³ Ibn Rushd was born in Cordoba (Andalusia) in the year 520 AH and died in Marrakech (Morocco) in 595 AH. He was raised in a house of knowledge and judiciary until he became the judge of Seville in 565 AH and then the judge of Cordoba in 537 AH.⁴

What we recognize during the early period of Ibn Rushd's upbringing is his adherence to family norms and their religious behavior, despite his passion for seeking rational sciences, which qualified him to form a friendship and affection with Ibn Tufayl, whom he introduced to the Muhtadi Caliph Abu Yaqub Yusuf. The latter asked him to explain Aristotle's books⁵, which he mastered, becoming a close friend of the Caliph Yaqub bin al-Mansur bin Yusuf. He thus gained scientific status and political protection. However, under the pressure of the Salafi wing opposing rational sciences, he faced oppression and book burnings, which perhaps was the turning point that broke the rational trend and became a sign of the setback that caused the stagnation of the ijtihad movement for a long time. The problem is not partial, relating to deviations in religious interpretations, but rather the prevention of scientific critique, which only relies on the sharp confrontation between different ideas and perceptions to discern the truth or at least for people to differentiate between knowledge and choose the most effective in organizing their lives and in compliance with their religious purposes. This forms in them the incentive to develop, and Ibn Rushd achieved from religious sciences the most distinguished and from rational knowledge the broadest, with noble character. It was said about him that he was "famous for virtue, dedicated to acquiring knowledge, unified in jurisprudence and its differences (...), and also distinguished in medical science, good in classification⁶, and proficient in meanings." His philosophy influenced both the East and the West, and what the researcher regrets about the man's thought is that the West's interest in him was greater, and his influence in directing European renaissance thought was deeper. Besides his mastery of religious sciences and especially medicine, he delved into philosophy as the greatest interpreter of Aristotle.

Aristotle profoundly influenced Ibn Rushd's philosophical direction, to the point where it nearly overshadowed Ibn Rushd's claim to the title of philosopher, because Ibn Rushd himself acknowledged that he was not the founder of a philosophical doctrine. Nonetheless, a fair student cannot fail to recognize his intellectual worth and philosophical merit, where most of his thought represented a critical school through

² Shams al-Din al-Dhahabi, "Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'." Edited by Shu'aib al-Arna'oot. (Vol.1. Beirut: Dar al-Risala, 1984): 21:307-308.

³ See al-Dhahabi, "Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'", 21:308.

⁴ See George Tarabishi, "Mu'jam al-Falasifa." (Vol.3. Beirut: Dar al-Tali'a, 2006): 23.

⁵ See Tarabishi, "Mu'jam al-Falasifa", 23.

⁶ Muwafaq al-Din Ibn Abi Asibaa, "Uyoon al-Anba' fi Tabaaqat al-Ata'ib." Edited by Nizar Rida. (Vol. D.A. Beirut: Dar Maktabat al-Hayat, D.T): 530.

which he established a conciliatory methodology between transmission and reason. He even became a pioneer of the rational methodology, which led to his criticism of the dialectical methodology among the theologians, especially in his intellectual confrontation with Imam Abu al-Ghazali. Moreover, Ibn Rushd's opinions were not spared from scrutiny, revision, and correction, especially in matters where Ibn Sina agreed with the theologians. This will form the basis for reading Ibn Rushd's critical project and taking it as a foundation for a possible intellectual revival in light of the significant relaxation that the Arab and Islamic knowledge fields have experienced, acknowledging that in this research, I will not delve into Ibn Rushd's critique of the Sufi methodology, which he encapsulates in its sensory nature founded on experience and not subject to rational proof.

Chapter One

The Dominance of the Ash'ari Trend and the Emergence of Ibn Rushd's Critical School

Before Ibn Rushd and the Dominance of Al-Ghazali's Thought on Sunni Doctrines

Al-Ghazali's influence in the direction of knowledge, backed by political assurance during the Seljuk rule over the Abbasids' authority, and with his genius was able to dissolve the conflict between jurisprudence, theology, and mysticism, thereby fundamentally uniting these three pillars in a way that was embraced by the social trend and accepted as an alternative to the previous divisions that had perplexed the Islamic society before al-Ghazali. However, the pioneers of the Ghazalian school and the social trend overlooked the conception of this philosophical system that requires a rational foundation, as al-Ghazali created a methodology in his vision of a society based on knowledge at all its levels, but most scholars did not notice this and dealt with al-Ghazali's thought partially.

Ultimately, al-Ghazali settled on the Sufi path, establishing the society on the educated and the common people with traditional burdens, followed by the class of rationalists consisting of jurists and theologians. Thus, al-Ghazali first united jurisprudence, theology, and mysticism after a bitter conflict between these three directions. With the theological methodology, al-Ghazali confronted the thought based on the rational fundamental reference represented mainly by the Sīnā'iyya school, which was originally for esoteric doctrines. He took a decisive stance on their opinions in divinity, refuting them on three issues: their assertion of the eternity of the world, their claim of no bodily resurrection, and their assertion that God knows universals without particulars. He also denounced them on other matters, stating that they in some respects approached the Mu'tazila's doctrine⁷. Al-Ghazali's thought was warmly received in the East and its effects extended to the Islamic West, but he also faced a violent reaction in the form of sharp Rashidi criticism, especially in theology and mysticism.

Al-Ghazali wrote his famous book "Tahafut al-Falasifa" in which he declared his opposition to this intellectual segment, and as is known, al-Ghazali wanted to undermine the theoretical foundations of Sīnā'iyya philosophy on which the esoteric thought was based. His criticism of al-Ghazali mainly targeted Aristotle, who holds a prominent position in Ibn Sina's philosophy. He stated: "Let us confine ourselves to demonstrating the contradiction in the opinion of their foremost philosopher, the absolute philosopher and the first teacher, for he arranged their sciences and polished them under their claim, removed the padding from their opinions, and selected what is closest to the origins of their desires, namely (Rystalus)."⁸ Then, he confronts al-Farabi without elaboration, but selects the strongest representative of the Pythagorean rationalism up to his time, Ibn Sina, who was aware of his inclination towards esoteric trends and the influence of esoteric doctrines on his philosophy. This is because, in Ibn Sina, God is a pure intellect that has no activity except contemplating His own essence, from which other intellects derive, and He is devoid of all attributes. This is the same as the esoteric Isma'ili belief, "they say that they deny the attributes

⁷ See Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, "Al-Munqidh min al-Zilal." (Vol.1. Damascus: Dar al-Nafa'is, 2009): 61-66.

⁸ Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, "Tahafut al-Falasifa." Edited by Suleiman Dunya. (Vol.4. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, D.T): 76.

in reality, disabling the essence from all attributes (...), they innovated in the matter of the first intellect, which is perfect in action, then through his mediation the following intellect."⁹

In other books, al-Ghazali approaches these ideas as he did in his book "Ma'arij al-Quds," especially regarding the matter of receiving revelation from inferred intellect, which he developed into prophecy, saying about the Light Verse in Surah An-Nur:¹⁰ "Then, when the inferred intellects obtained it, it is a light upon light, the light of inferred intellect upon the light of innate intellect, and these lights are inferred from the cause of these lights to Him, like the lamp in a niche fitted with a great fire that spread on the earth. That fire is the active intellect overflowing the inferred intellects upon human souls."¹¹ However, al-Ghazali, as we know, was a Sunni Ash'ari theologian who believes in prophecy and establishes divine speech represented in verbal discourse, as well as other attributes and meanings like ability, knowledge, life, will, hearing, and sight, in addition to affirming the afterlife and interpreting resemblance as theophoric, thus similar to Ash'ari methodology, opposing Mu'tazila by affirming the attributes exceeding the essence without contradiction, and agreeing with them in interpreting subjective attributes, and so on. Therefore, Ibn Rushd's criticism of the dialectical methodology of theologians in general, and al-Ghazali in particular, will be established through his book "Tahafut al-Tahafut" which he authored in response to al-Ghazali's "Tahafut al-Falasifa," and his book "Manahij al-Adilla," and his methodological book "Fasl al-Maqal." This is in addition to adopting the philosophical rational methodology and legitimizing it religiously, benefiting from a philosophical rational project founded through the school of Ibn Rushd al-Farabi.

The Emergence of Ibn Rushd's Rational Method

Ibn Rushd as a Critic of the Kalam School

Al-Ghazali authored "Tahafut al-Falasifa" in which he refuted the philosophers on three matters and innovated in others, with the title of the book implying the undermining of philosophy from within, meaning that the philosophers' arguments used to establish their opinions would themselves be used to undermine philosophy internally. The word "Tahafut" translates to French equivalents like "collapse," "fall," and "destruction," and recently is translated as "lack of coherence."¹² Al-Ghazali is criticized for favoring doctrine over rational arguments, i.e., he works to "undermine the philosophers' certainty through rational debate itself."¹³ Through this conception, Ibn Rushd begins his critical work, not following the criticisms that al-Ghazali levied on the philosophers, but what concerns him is the disturbance of al-Ghazali's methodology that he adopted to critique the philosophers' opinions. "Ibn Rushd was aware of the self-undermining flaw in this issue, because if we accept the complete inability of the intellect, then this intellect extends to performing negation of itself, that is, the negation by which the intellect negates itself."¹⁴ Thus, we find Ibn Rushd's first criticisms of al-Ghazali are to assert that al-Ghazali's reliance on dialectical methodology lacks proof in critiquing the philosophers. He presents this assertion logically and demonstratively, aiming to destabilize the theoretical origin that al-Ghazali used to confront the philosophers, meaning he directly challenges al-Ghazali's intellect. He comments on the accusation by philosophers that they claimed the eternity of the world by saying, "This is a debate at the highest level, and he is not an absolute, continuous proof-holder, because his premises are general, and the general are close to the common, and the premises of the proofs are from the essential matters that are compatible."¹⁵ Here, Ibn Rushd confirms the methodological flaw despite the modern and sophistication in the theologians' thoughts. Ibn Rushd recognizes that the philosopher's role is primarily methodological correction, meaning

⁹ Suleiman Abdullah al-Sulami, "Usul al-Isma'iliya." (Vol.1. Riyadh: Dar al-Fadhila, Riyadh, 2001). 1:536-537.

¹⁰ Ayah: (Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth like His light within a niche...), Surah An-Nur, Ayah 35.

¹¹ Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, "Ma'arij al-Quds fi Madraj Ma'rifat al-Nafs." (Vol.2. Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, 1975): 55-56.

¹² Henry Korban, "Tareekh al-Falsafa al-Islamiyya." Translated by Naseer Marwa and Hassan Qubaisi. (Vol.2. Beirut: Awidat lil-Nashr wa al-Tiba'a, 1998): 277.

¹³ Korban, "Tareekh al-Falsafa al-Islamiyya", 278.

¹⁴ Korban, "Tareekh al-Falsafa al-Islamiyya", 287.

¹⁵ Abu al-Walid Ibn Rushd, "Tahafut al-Tahafut." Edited by Salah al-Din al-Huwari. (Vol. D.T., Beirut: Al-Maktaba al-Asriyya, 2002): 45-46.

the rational perspective should be corrected according to accurate demonstrative proofs. If the reasoning is not built on correct, self-evident premises in the intellect accepted by the intellect as certain axioms, then the results are not guaranteed. This is what Ibn Rushd criticizes about the theologians in general and al-Ghazali in particular.

Ibn Rushd confronted the theologians through two paths: he presented evidence suitable for the public, maintaining the traditional social trend in defining doctrines, as found abundantly in his book "Manahij al-Adilla," and he also presented evidence he saw as demonstrative and based on logical syllogisms and rational interpretations. He tried hard to separate between types of discourse, considering the hierarchy of knowledge among people, saying: "That is because the natures of people differ in belief. Some believe by proof, and some believe by dialectical statements, believing the proof-holder's argument through proofs, as their nature does not allow more than that, and others believe by rhetorical arguments, such as believing the proof-holder's rhetorical arguments through demonstrative arguments."¹⁶

The issue of will appears as a perplexing dilemma between theologians and philosophers, as the Kalam scholars approach it in their transmitted nature, trying to prove it by affirming its eternity, whereas the philosophers and the active intellectuals who run towards the abstraction of the pure nature of absolute transcendence methods, assuming that will cannot precede existence or anything but it relates to fundamental knowledge about the nature of this existence.¹⁷

Interpretation in Ibn Rushd's Approach vs. Interpretation in the Theologians' Approach

If we take interpretation in al-Ghazali's name instead of interpretation among the theologians, they fundamentally start from doctrinal texts, as it is their belief ceiling and reference. This is contrary to philosophy, which starts from the intellect seeking belief. Al-Ghazali in this path wrote several books dealing with the issue of interpretation, perhaps the most important of which are "Faisal al-Tafrīqa bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqa," "Iljam al-Awwam 'an 'Ilm al-Kalam," "Al-Madhnun bih 'ala Ghair Ahlih," and "Qanun al-Tafrīq." The latter book, as he declared in the introduction, is due to a question about the hadith: "Indeed, the devil runs in the blood of one of you"¹⁸. The related difficult questions encompass the unseen. Al-Ghazali, wanting to establish a general law of interpretation instead of merely answering some ambiguous questions as he said in his declaration: "Questions that I dread delving into and answering for several reasons, but if I repeat the review, I mention a general law that can be used in this pattern,"¹⁹ hence he does not approach rational interpretation that would enable him to interpret some issues rationally to align with people's realistic concerns. Instead, he declares that he will not leave the realm of the unseen, and in the extreme degrees of interpretation, he deflects the apparent meaning to another by rational interpretation within the transmission framework only. The rational interpretation as seen by al-Ghazali has divided existence into five levels: the subjective existential which is the true existence outside sensation and intellect, sensory existence which is particular to the senses, imaginary existence which is the image of these sensed things, rational existence which is the meanings of things, and hypothetical existence which is not existing in sensation nor intellect but has something resembling it²⁰. Thus, Abu Hamid tried to interpret many esoteric issues in a way that fits these levels, such as sacrificing a sheep between paradise and hell representing death, and seeing the Prophet (PBUH) in the form of a wall²¹, and other metaphysical images

¹⁶ Abu al-Walid Ibn Rushd, "Fasl al-Maqal fi Ma bayna al-Hikma wa al-Shari'a min al-Ittisal." Edited by Muhammad Ammara. (Vol.3. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, D.T): 31.

¹⁷ Ibn Rushd, "Tahafut al-Tahafut":51.

¹⁸ Narrated by Bukhari No. 2035 and 2038 in I'tikaf, and Muslim No. 20185 in Islam. Imam al-Ghazali mentioned it in the introduction of his book ("Qanun al-Tafrīq") as a reason for composing the book.

¹⁹ Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, "Majmu'at Risalat al-Imam al-Ghazali Qanun al-Tafrīq." Edited by Ibrahim Amin Muhammad. (Vol. D.A. Cairo: Dar al-Tawfiqiyya, Cairo, D.T): 624.

²⁰ See Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, "Faisal al-Tafrīqa bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqa." Edited by As'ad Jumaa. (Vol.2. Tunis: Dar Kiranis, 2014): 48-49.

²¹ Al-Maqsood bi al-Ha'i al-Bustan.

mentioned in traditions²², as well as in matters of divinity, the theologians' interpretations are known according to different sects.

Thus, we see that the theologians' interpretations in general, although they admit basing them on reason to grasp the meanings of ambiguous phrases from the wording, do not deviate from the texts' boundaries. Rather, they are mostly rational justifications leading to the public's acceptance of what has been formulated in the transmission.

Ibn Rushd was aware of the theologians' methodology and the goals they imposed on themselves, which is to affirm and defend these doctrines with rational arguments, following the interpretations of the theologians, especially the Ash'aris, according to Ibn Rushd. He recognizes that they wanted to convince people of what the texts state, through the criteria set by the founders of the schools, and that this requirement obliges them to subject the intellect to what they saw as a response to the transmission conditions. However, Ibn Rushd turns interpretation in two directions, and he sees that one belongs to the demonstrative scholars and cannot be interpreted by others, while the other is maintaining general doctrines according to their rational requirements. In this context, he says: "Sharia is divided into two: apparent and interpreted. The apparent part is the obligation of the public, and the interpreted is the obligation of the scholars. As for the public, their obligation is to stick to its apparent meaning and leave its interpretation, and scholars are not allowed to disclose its interpretation to the public."²³ But Ibn Rushd also knows that interpretation mainly deals with esoteric issues, most of which the intellect cannot handle, so he declares that interpreting these dilemmas does not rely on rational arguments, saying: "Although you consider the evidence that interpreters used for these matters to all be unproven, but the legal phenomena are more convincing than them."²⁴

Chapter Two

Ibn Rushd and the Establishment of the Islamic Mind

Ibn Rushd represents a phenomenon of rational thinking similar to that initiated by the Mu'tazila in the first half of the second century and the following century. The Mu'tazila school recorded significant success by its leaders in propagating and developing the doctrine, and perhaps if not for the Mu'tazila's pragmatic involvement with authority, their thought would not have declined at that early stage in favor of the scholastic thought represented by the models of the various schools, whether jurisprudential or theological, which often rely on the products of the great imams. Unlike Mu'tazili thought, which continued to intellectually contribute for over a century, the Rashidi phenomenon did not extend beyond Ibn Rushd's lifetime, as it faced a strong Salafi backlash that broke its stem and burdened the Islamic mind with a significant loss. The intellectual trial of Ibn Rushd was a real sign of the closure of ijtihad and the petrification of Islamic thought in favor of traditional schools with their doctrinal differences. This does not mean that Ibn Rushd's views were more correct than his opponents', or that his philosophical rationalism was a substitute for the methodological approaches of the fundamentalists and theologians. However, the rejection of this scholar and the burning of his books recorded the greatest rejection of the intellectual opposition that was the only way to confront jurisprudential and theological orthodoxy, as established by Imam al-Shafi'i's principles of jurisprudence and the doctrinal determination of the Ash'ari school primarily. This is all closely related to the (مدرسة الأثر), whose characteristics were aligned with the first comprehensive interpretation of the Quran by Imam al-Tabari²⁵. But with this new setback of the Islamic mind, does the trial of the Rashidian rational mind represent a continuous petrification in favor of the traditional school? Or does what Ibn Rushd planted in terms of methodological seeds have the potential

²² See al-Ghazali, "Faisal al-Tafriqa bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqa":53-56.

²³ Ibn Rushd, "Manahij al-Adilla":132-133.

²⁴ Ibn Rushd, "Manahij al-Adilla":193.

²⁵ Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (224 AH/310 AH), one of the foremost scholars from Tabaristan, was highly intelligent, and among his works are "Jami' al-Bayan fi Tafsir Ayat al-Qur'an" and "Tareekh al-Tabari". (See al-Dhahabi, "Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'":14/267).

to revive this rational mind whenever the residues of stereotypical patterns crowd around it and the need to awaken it intensifies?

Intellectual Orthodoxy and Ibn Rushd's Defiant Rationalism

The Rashidian rational mind appeared at a time when the characteristics of stereotypical thinking were dominating the Islamic world under the influence of the strong doctrinal schools of jurisprudence, Ash'ari theology, and Sufi paths. Additionally, the Shiite school and its various branches were taking shape, but the most invulnerable was the scholastic foundation in which Imam al-Ghazali authored the Sunni schools in jurisprudence, theology, and mysticism, alongside the traditional Salafi school, which aggressively opposed any interpretative direction, even partially. Salafis also conducted harsh intellectual and ethical trials against the philosophers' principles, posing a strong threat to the rational methodology, and even to the study of *ijtihad*. The triumph of Imam al-Shafi'i's principles and the determinations of the theologians and the routinization of Sufi thought acted as a strong blow to the rational references and their social presence, primarily aligning with the Salafi stereotypes. Even with the emergence of forms of philosophical thinking mixed with Kalam after Ibn Rushd, these attempts did not exceed being a hidden philosophical term and rational standard models under the guise of theologians.

"They paved the previous stage for the emergence of philosopher-theologians who blended Ash'ari Kalam and Islamic philosophy methodologically and substantively, and among the most prominent were Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (606 AH), author of many theological-philosophical texts, followed by Imam al-Amidi (631 AH), al-Armi (680 AH), al-Iji (756 AH), and al-Taftazani (792 AH).²⁶" However, we did not find any of them adopting philosophical thought clearly, which led to primarily Sunni routinization, and to a lesser extent, Shiite routinization, in line with the foundational methodological line of intellectual orthodoxy. By orthodoxy here, I mean methodological discipline of doctrinal patterns rigidly fixed, making any attempt to deviate or think outside of them a threat to strict religious and social trials. Here, we revisit the Rashidian problem within traditional thought, hoping to obtain critical mechanisms that enabled Ibn Rushd to navigate the intricacies of this thought and his bold attempts to localize the rational method alongside the transmitted approach capable of understanding the nature of Eastern thinking and its religious societies. This raises the question again about the potential for reviving the Islamic rational mind and creating a methodological revolution that breaks the strict constraints still imposed by the traditional school to this day.

Ibn Rushd and the Intellectual Revolution within Jurisprudential Schools

We know that the jurisprudential school was formed with Imam al-Shafi'i as the founder of **Usul al-Fiqh** (Principles of Jurisprudence), and it is not surprising to find that even today, after more than fourteen centuries, all students of jurisprudence and its thinkers adhere to the **Usul** methodologies established by this great Imam. In one modern book, someone said about al-Shafi'i's principles: "His two great books: the 'Risala' (**Usuli**) and the 'Al-Um' (**Fiqh**), were and still are sources from which scholars and eloquent people draw rulings and judgments, and a source in which researchers find the aims and purposes."²⁷ If this is the opinion of one of the contemporary writers, how can we imagine the situation during Ibn Rushd's time? Faced with this stereotypical promotion of thought patterns that influenced even rational topics through the **Usuli** methodology that imposed itself on all Islamic knowledge, Ibn Rushd finds himself facing a firm orthodox position that is difficult to overcome. He realized that a split occurred in the Muslim community that has long persisted, "This split is fundamentally due to chaos that happened in minds, which should be put to an end, i.e., returning to a stable intellectual structure. This foundational idea appeared twice in

²⁶ Muhammad al-Ansari, "Alaqa' 'Ilm al-Kalam al-Ash'ari bil-Falsafa min al-Muwajaha ila al-Istia'ab," Majallat Zakhayer lil-'Ulum al-Insania, No. 7. (2020):317

²⁷ Abdul Wahab Ibrahim Abu Sulaiman, "Minhajjiyyat al-Imam Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i fi al-Fiqh wa Usulih." (Vol.1. Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 1999):39.

history, and each time it emerged complete, the first time shaped by Aristotle (...), and the second time inspired by the Quran."²⁸

If Ibn Rushd adopted the Aristotelian method in his discussion of the Islamic rational school represented by Kalam, he attempted another rational method to confront the authority of jurisprudential stereotypes, as he found every school was closed in on itself, and every intellectual system became orthodoxy, especially not accepting deviations outside its limits, and the **Usuli** methodologies in the jurisprudential society kept surveillance on every deviant. All this, and reason being a prisoner of strict modeling fixed by schools with rigid rules and named leaders, making interpretative margins a competitor to the divine texts, and even an obstacle to the intellectual vitality that motivated the early great imams to research and *ijtihad*. The standardization of **Usuli** rules becomes dangerous to the text itself, making it a sanctified and rigid duplicate of the text. Therefore, Ibn Rushd initiated through his book **"Bidayat al-Mujtahid wa Nihayat al-Muqtasid"** to expand the circle of inference through diverse schools and different scholars across time and place and methodologies, "for he does not want to confine himself within the scope of one school, but he wants to explore all jurisprudential schools with rational and transmitted directions alike. Moreover, he always tries to be an objective reader of conflicting heritage, honestly confronting its problems without inserting himself into the conflicts, and without being a party in the issue. It is not impossible that Ibn Rushd's conduct would lead to a critical reading of the jurisprudential heritage, giving him a critical and meticulous reading attempt, and trying to rationalize the effort that Muslim jurists did before him."²⁹

Ibn Rushd, while authoring his book **"Bidayat al-Mujtahid wa Nihayat al-Muqtasid"**, was not only compiling jurisprudential inferences attributed to the companions, followers, and great imams, but was fully aware that he was opposing the transmitted methodology in a very intelligent way, as if saying to them: "O deniers of the philosophers, your rational principles and your accusations against them with numerous differences, even though their principles are rationally based on assumption, how come you differ in jurisprudential inferences despite their alignment with fixed references from the Quran and Sunnah." Therefore, Ibn Rushd's foundation of this jurisprudential inference pattern was a philosophical rational work, even if not declared, and if we did a simple applied model, we would find Ibn Rushd in his first book **"Bidayat al-Mujtahid"**, in its first chapter he mentions the consensus on the obligation of purity, and in the second chapter, dealing with the knowledge of the act of wudu (**ablution**), he mentions that considering it requires twelve issues, and each issue has many divergent trends, reaching the matter of wiping over the socks, and he sees that considering it also requires seven more issues, and so on.³⁰ Thus, we find that all the book's chapters were set up in this manner, which is an embedded criticism of the fundamentalist stance on disagreements over rational syllogisms.

Ibn Rushd and the Localization of the Rational Methodology within Religious Thought

Ibn Rushd established a revolutionary critical project, where his most important intellectual writings were either explanations of the Aristotelian philosophical text, in which he saw the ideal methodology of intellectual rationality, or primarily directed towards critiquing Islamic Salafi thought with its three directions (jurisprudence, theology, and mysticism). If I have mentioned how he tried to destabilize Usuli jurisprudence through authoring the book **"Bidayat al-Mujtahid wa Nihayat al-Muqtasid"**, although on the surface it does not differ from the typical approaches to classical jurisprudential studies, Ibn Rushd's criticism of the theologians and Sufis was harsher, presenting a straightforward superiority of reason over transmission in all these fields that the philosopher of Cordoba dealt with through a sharp archaeological approach. This makes it impossible to understand his philosophical critical project outside of this trio: **"The book 'Kashf 'an Manahij al-Adilla' deals with major doctrinal or jurisprudential topics, the book 'Bidayat al-Mujtahid' deals with branch jurisprudence, and the book 'Fasl al-Maqal,' which is considered a methodological book, proposes a method that relies on reason to consider religion in**

²⁸ Turad Hamadeh, "Ibn Rushd fi Kitabihī Fasl al-Maqal wa Taqir ma bayna al-Sharī'a wa al-Hikma min al-Ittisal." (Vol.1. Beirut: Dar al-Hadi, 2002):137.

²⁹ Hassan al-Qurawashi, "Al-Mantooq Bihi wa al-Maskut 'anhu fi Fiqh Ibn Rushd al-Farabi." (Vol. D.A. Tunis: Dar al-Tunisia lil-Nashr, 1993):52.

³⁰ See Abu al-Walid Ibn Rushd, "Bidayat al-Mujtahid wa Nihayat al-Muqtasid." (Vol.8. Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifa, 1986):7-18.

general."³¹ In addition to his book "**Tahafut al-Tahafut**" in response to al-Ghazali, and his explanations of Aristotle that benefited Arab intellect with precise expression and condensation of cognitive content, he also **"presented summaries of traditional logic books from propositions to rhetoric and poetry and appended summaries of Eisagogy of Forfurius."**³² It is known that logic books include propositions, expression, syllogism, demonstration, debate, sophistry, and appended by rhetoric and poetry³³. We know that Aristotle's logic has received attention since the philosopher Kindi, its impact is found even among grammarians and jurists, then the project's legitimacy was established with al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd came after to be one of the most important ones to be localized within Islamic rational topics, making the conservative reactions towards him unable to prevent the leakage of philosophical syllogisms into the tissues of religious thought, even among his most vehement historical opponents, the later Ash'aris after al-Ghazali.

Ibn Rushd was aware of the dangers of introducing the philosophical methodology alongside religious topics, and it was a great risk for him as he tried to legitimize this project, considering that the act of philosophy is to consider existence and its indications on the Creator, and that Sharia called for this act which is hesitant between the delegated and the obligatory.³⁴ Ibn Rushd deduced this from religious texts such as Allah says:

(أَو لَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ) ^{37,36} and (فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ) ³⁵ and other verses that came in this context. Moreover, Ibn Rushd, in legitimizing him religiously, placed the rational syllogism alongside the Usuli syllogism deduced after the initial revelation,³⁸ especially since people differ in their methods of inference, **"And that is because people's natures differ in belief. Some believe by proof, some believe by dialectical statements believing the proof-holder's argument through proofs, as their nature does not allow more than that, and some believe by rhetorical arguments such as believing the proof-holder's rhetorical arguments through demonstrative arguments."**³⁹

The followers of Ibn Rushd's philosophical project realize that he did a great work, even if not all of it was correct, especially in matters of divinity. He acknowledged that transmitted evidence is more precise than reason in this field, but Ibn Rushd broke many Usuli stereotypical boundaries in jurisprudential, theological, and Sufi topics by criticizing their evidences and showing their weaknesses. However, he did not attempt to exclude religion from the intellectual forefront but is considered to have carried the flag of criticism to reconcile wisdom and Sharia. He declared in **"Fasl al-Maqal": "Wisdom is the companion of Sharia and its infant sister,"**⁴⁰ so we find that this great thinker directs his criticism not only to religious scholars but also to major Islamic philosophers like al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, especially in matters of divinity. He objected to Ibn Sina's division of the necessary and the possible, saying: **"Therefore, the division of existence into necessary existence and possible existence is an unknown division if it does not account for the possibility of the real possible."**⁴¹ Ibn Rushd, as we know, followed Aristotle's method in proving the existence of something not a body through movement and time. Therefore, **"Ibn Rushd**

³¹ Hamadi al-Ubaidi, "Ibn Rushd al-Farabi: Hayatuhu, 'Ilmuhi, Fiqhuhu." (Vol. D.A. Tunis: Dar al-Arabiya lil-Kitab, 1984):101.

³² Forfurius al-Suri (233-301 or 305 CE), Syrian-origin philosopher who wrote in Greek and was a student of Plotinus in Athens, and was an author of Plotinus, and was influenced by his teacher to author "The Stobaeon Nine." (See Tarabishi, "Mu'jam al-Falasifa":466).

³³ Ma'an Ziyada, et al., "Al-Mawsoo'a al-Falsafiyya al-'Arabiyya." (Vol.1. Beirut: Institute of Arab Development, 1988). 595:2.

³⁴ See, Ibn Rushd, "Fasl al-Maqal":22.

³⁵ Surah al-Hashr, Ayah 2.

³⁶ Surah al-A'raf, Ayah 185..

³⁷ See, Ibn Rushd, "Fasl al-Maqal":22

³⁸ See, Ibn Rushd, "Fasl al-Maqal":25

³⁹ Ibn Rushd, "Fasl al-Maqal":31.

⁴⁰ Ibn Rushd, "Fasl al-Maqal":67.

⁴¹ Ibn Rushd, "Tahafut al-Tahafut":153.

determines that the division of existence into necessary and possible is unknown in itself, and is neither correct nor limited to what exists."⁴² Additionally, Ibn Rushd rejected Ibn Sina's theory of emanation and the connection between the One and the One, and the generation of minds from minds. He strongly criticized Ibn Sina's view that celestial bodies are composite of images and motions, contrary to the ancients who saw them as purely simple⁴³. He also completely rejected al-Ghazali's accusation against philosophers about the weakness of their stance on the existence of celestial bodies apart from possible causes, saying: "As for these sayings, all of them are Ibn Sina's sayings, and whoever said similarly, those are untrue statements, not in line with philosophers' principles."⁴⁴

Chapter Three

Ibn Rushd's Critical Project and the Possibilities of Civilizational Revival

There is no doubt that the stakes of civilizational revival are important for all those interested in Islamic thought, as multiple attempts have emerged since Ibn Rushd until the era of the pioneers of the renaissance in the 19th century and our current time. We cannot conclude that all these projects have failed, as what we imagine in this revival is that it flows and draws vitality from the bold attempts of the predecessors. Undoubtedly, reviving rational methodologies is the highest priority for those who wanted to secure their place in this endeavor. Ibn Rushd worked hard to build the structure of reason and localize it within Islamic thought, but what can this scholar contribute to our current era, especially since his critical project, and indeed his entire philosophy based on Aristotle, have become past. Moreover, most of his critical objections to theologians were not disastrous in their entirety, especially in matters of divinity, but we do not deny any revival effort for Islamic thought, or for the Islamic civilization, which cannot think about restoring its vitality without drawing inspiration from past experiences and their general principles aimed at our scientific directions among inherited residues after centuries of rigidity and imitation. Despite the provocations of the neighboring civilization with its technical momentum and the astonishing development witnessed by the new knowledge society with all its fluid cultural facets, Ibn Rushd, as the major phenomenon and the pioneering experience in confronting conservative thought and Usuli orthodoxy, was able, with wisdom, to secure a pioneering status for reason within the dominant stereotypical trend, especially by adopting the scientific experimental logic represented by the law of causality. This law still represents the methodological strength on which the scientific revolution was founded, especially since he adopted Aristotelian philosophy that starts from material movement to prove the existence of what exists. Furthermore, Ibn Rushd's strength in confronting the traditional stereotypical challenges to Usuli rationality that the Salaf imposed, and the later inability to create innovative methodologies to liberate foundational references from their margins coated under the guise of sanctity by adhering to the reference texts based on the religious text's legitimacy and social dominance.

The Law of Causality in Ibn Rushd and the Signs of Building the Scientific Methodology

Another principle through which Ibn Rushd established his critical and scientific project simultaneously was his adoption of the law of causality and defending it while responding to theologians in this regard. To understand his position, we must first know the theologians' stance, especially al-Ghazali's, on this relationship. Perhaps the predicament regarding the divine attribute of ability and its connection to the Mu'tazila's conditions is what made Kalam scholars, especially Salafis, reject causal relationships, especially material causality. Al-Ghazali said: "Association, while it is generally believed that two things are a cause, and while it is generally believed that one is a cause, it is not necessary for us, but each of the two is neither this nor that, nor this nor that, nor is the confirmation of one implying the confirmation of the other, nor the denial of one implying the denial of the other. (...) like watering and drinking, satiation and eating, burning and meeting fire (...). Their association based on the

⁴² Faïsal Ghazi (unknown), "Nad Ibn Rushd li Ilahiyat Ibn Sina." (Vol.2. Beirut: Dar al-Hadi, 2008):2008:104.

⁴³ See, Ibn Rushd, "Tahafut al-Tahafut":174.

⁴⁴ Ibn Rushd, "Tahafut al-Tahafut":180.

previous estimation of Allah's creation through succession, not due to its necessity in itself."⁴⁵

Although the principle of denying causality was mentioned by modern thinkers like David Hume and some who criticized the inductive methodology like Karl Popper, this law has become a general principle for the development of sciences, as it is considered one of the strongest motivations for observation and tracking the nature of relationships in the origin of things. It is considered one of the strongest methods for explaining phenomena, predicting outcomes, and generalizing laws. In this context, Ibn Rushd says in response to al-Ghazali: **"And whoever denies that, he cannot admit that every act must have a doer, and that these causes are either sufficient in themselves for the acts that arise from them, or that their acts are caused by something external: either a separate or a non-separate cause, which is an undefined matter needing much research and examination."**⁴⁶ Ibn Rushd also shows that abolishing the law of causality negates thought and negates knowledge because it underpins scientific evidence, **"For whoever removes the causes has removed reason, and the practice of logic sets up that there are causes and effects, and that knowledge of those causes is only complete by knowing their causes, so removing these things is nullifying knowledge and abolishing it."**⁴⁷

Ibn Rushd's awareness of the importance and efficacy of the idea of causality in scientific construction indicates a significant consciousness that the development of science does not proceed without establishing reason based on reality, not outside of it. It is not surprising that Ibn Rushd was one of the founders of material philosophy, as he was a natural scientist through his mastery of medicine, as well as a jurist and expert in Kalam, thus the most capable of understanding the objective conditions for developing knowledge and ensuring the continuity of scientific production. Although the principles of the causality law he adopted had an Aristotelian reference outside the religious reference circle, it is a clear call for knowledge coexistence with others, not for abolishing them or rising above their knowledge and principles. He says in the context of reconciling the rational syllogism: **"It has been made clear that if no one before us advanced by investigating the syllogistic reasoning and its types, we must start by examining it, and the later can seek help from the advanced."**⁴⁸ Thus, Ibn Rushd's project is based on reviewing the prevailing methodologies and adopting scientific methodologies, benefiting from what is correct and proved effective, provided all of it serves reason and Sharia together.

Ibn Rushd and the Possibilities of Civilizational Revival

Ibn Rushd's rationality and critical project do not gain their importance from the results he achieved as a philosopher of Cordoba, as the nature of philosophical proofs in divinity does not differ much from the efforts of the theologians, as dealing with doctrinal matters at the level of relationship with the self is a matter that will not reveal its ambiguity due to the limitation of the human mind in fulfilling their imitative faith conditions through the revelation texts, which Ibn Rushd himself confirmed. Instead, the importance of this Rashidian project lies in revealing the depth of the stuck intellectual crisis bound by the methodological structure that the Usulists could not overcome, or by the authority of the Salaf who rigidly adhered to it as if they imposed it on those who came after them. According to Ibn Rushd, by integrating rational references within religious thought, he prepared the Islamic mind for the possibility of delving into religious heritage and discussing it internally, imposing an adjacent cognitive authority alongside the divine knowledge maintained by religious scholars and their dominance over the hearts of the masses. Perhaps Ibn Rushd's strength was primarily in presenting himself as a sacrifice to the scientific spirit called for by the foundational religious text and igniting its springs through the great imams, and then issuing from after them in doctrinal and sectarian models. But with this great sacrifice he recorded in his major trial, they kept the issue of reason alive, obsessed, and stimulated against repeated defeats, especially in later ages after his trial that marked the hope of revival since long ago.

⁴⁵ Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, "Tahafut al-Falasifa":239.

⁴⁶ Ibn Rushd, "Tahafut al-Tahafut":333.

⁴⁷ Ibn Rushd, "Tahafut al-Tahafut":335.

⁴⁸ Ibn Rushd, "Fasl al-Maqal":25.

Islamic thought's first renaissance occurred with the era of codification, which launched ambitiously to establish methodologies and define knowledge directions, but the **Usuli** determinations that followed solidified it into fixed molds that became ossified, except for some minor differences. We establish the Islamic intellectual reference in the codification era, which captured revelation texts to unleash their giving springs. **"The codification era witnessed the reference framework for the Arab intellect, other vibrant and broad intellectual activities formed their distinct circles sometimes overlapping, sharing heritage and trying to solidify or nurture aspects of it."**⁴⁹

Ibn Rushd lived in a time of two main ideological tendencies, the first represented by religious Salafism in all its manifest and esoteric forms and the Mu'tazilites, and the second represented by philosophy with its diversity and civilizational and religious associations. Ibn Rushd was a conciliatory figure between these two references, attempting to establish an intellectual reality that enjoys the continuity of knowledge contributions in both religious and temporal knowledge. This is the same as we see today, with the split among revival advocates of Arab-Islamic thought between modernist positions advocating adopting the contemporary Western model as a model for the entire era, and Salafist positions advocating focusing on religious principles, and selective positions advocating mediation and taking the best of both models.⁵⁰

Thus, we find that Ibn Rushd represents a present support for reformers, connectors, and civilizational conciliators, and we cannot confirm the correctness of all he provided, especially since I see that Islamic thought needs innovative methodologies that break the conservative intellectual constraints of the Islamic **Usuli** school, and developing these methodologies from within the foundational references of religious texts and rational discussions alike, liberating the principles and texts from the dominated margins under the guise of sanctity by adhering to the reference texts based on the religious text's legitimacy and social dominance.

Conclusion

Intellectual reform projects in the history of this nation are numerous, but the most influential are those that marked a strong turning point imposing their effect on the later generations. Perhaps the inspiring models include the great imams: al-Shafi'i, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd. Although the latter imposed a rational presence in religious thought either by acceptance or rejection, this is due to the importance of his experience and the depth of his critical project that planted its roots in the core of the **Usuli** cultural movement. Although Ibn Rushd was rejected in the last phase of his life, they could not negate his persistent rational mind against every revival movement in the history of Islamic thought and the depth of the Rashidian experience in philosophy and in his critical confrontation with theologians. I concluded in this research the following important results and recommendations:

Results

Ibn Rushd is one of the geniuses of Islamic thought, not only for the intellectual results he achieved but for his methodology that tried to localize reason within religious topics.

Ibn Rushd, through his critical project, imposed a strong presence within Islamic culture in his era and afterward, either through adoption or rejection.

Ibn Rushd was an example of intellectual coexistence between the East and the West.

⁴⁹ Muhammad Abed al-Jabri, "Takween al-Aql al-Arabi." (Vol.10. Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihda al-Arabiya, 2009):175.

⁵⁰ See Muhammad Abed al-Jabri, "Ishkaliyyat al-Fikr al-Arabi al-Mu'asir." (Vol.2. Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihda al-Arabiya, 1990):15-16.

Recommendations

Necessity to re-read the major projects of the great Islamic thinkers like al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd for what they represent in methodological seriousness as real turning points in cognitive topics.

Re-examining Islamic philosophy and its methodological additions alongside the critical heritage.

Working on religious thought critique with patience, and the necessity to rationalize dealing with the stiff margins of the reference texts.

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