

Islamic Education in Ibn Rushd's Epistemological Perspective: Sources of Knowledge, Methods of Attainment, and the Integration of Religion and Philosophy

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Abstract: This study discusses Islamic educational thought from the perspective of Ibn Rushd's epistemology, a prominent Muslim philosopher known as a bridge between Eastern and Western thought. This study focuses on the sources of knowledge, methods of acquiring knowledge, and the integration of religion and philosophy in Ibn Rushd's view. This study uses a library research method with a qualitative descriptive approach, analyzing Ibn Rushd's works and other supporting literature. The results of the study show that Ibn Rushd's educational epistemology is based on three main things, namely the senses (empirical), reason (rational), and revelation (revelation). All three are important pillars in the process of achieving knowledge. Ibn Rushd also offers a method of acquiring knowledge through observation, experimentation, logic, and philosophical reflection based on religious values. In addition, Ibn Rushd's thoughts emphasize the importance of integrating religion and philosophy in education to build a complete human being who has theoretical, scientific, practical, and moral virtues. This study recommends the importance of strengthening the integration of religious knowledge and philosophy in the contemporary Islamic education system to produce a generation that is knowledgeable, moral, and able to respond to the challenges of the times critically and constructively.

Absrtak: Penelitian ini membahas pemikiran pendidikan Islam dalam perspektif epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd, seorang filsuf Muslim terkemuka yang dikenal sebagai jembatan antara pemikiran Timur dan Barat. Fokus kajian ini terletak pada sumber-sumber pengetahuan, metode perolehan ilmu, dan integrasi antara agama dan filsafat dalam pandangan Ibnu Rusyd. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi kepustakaan (library research) dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, menganalisis karya-karya Ibnu Rusyd serta literatur pendukung lainnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa epistemologi pendidikan Ibnu Rusyd bersumber pada tiga hal utama, yaitu indra (empiris), akal (rasional), dan wahyu (revelasi). Ketiganya menjadi pilar penting dalam proses pencapaian ilmu pengetahuan. Ibnu Rusyd juga menawarkan metode memperoleh ilmu melalui observasi, eksperimen, logika, dan refleksi filosofis yang tetap berlandaskan pada nilai-nilai keagamaan. Selain itu, pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd menegaskan pentingnya integrasi antara agama dan filsafat dalam pendidikan, sebagai upaya membangun manusia paripurna yang memiliki keutamaan teoritis, ilmiah, praktis, dan moral. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pentingnya penguatan integrasi ilmu agama dan filsafat dalam sistem pendidikan Islam kontemporer, guna melahirkan generasi yang berilmu, berakhlak, dan mampu merespons tantangan zaman secara kritis dan konstruktif.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Islamic education is very rich in the thoughts of important figures. These thoughts then contributed to the development of Islamic education from the classical to the modern era. Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd (1126–1198 AD), also known by the short name Ibn Rushd and

Averroes in Latin literature, is one of the important figures in the history of Islamic education.¹ Ibn Rushd is better known as a philosopher-scholar in the world of intellectuals. In contrast, in Islamic boarding schools (pesantrens), Ibn Rushd is famous as an expert in Islamic jurisprudence through his monumental book, *Biadayatul Mujtahid*. The West knows him as a bridge connecting the East and the West, Islam and Christianity.²

Ibn Rushd's figure in the world of philosophy, which is thicker than his figure in the world of education, does not mean at all that Ibn Rushd cannot be called an educational figure; it's just that historical records that discuss Ibn Rushd and education are not as many as historical records about Imam Syafi'i, Al-Ghazali, and others. But talking about philosophy means we will talk a lot about science, which is the main part of the education process. That means talking about Ibn Rushd's philosophical thoughts will also indirectly talk about education.

The education that Ibn Rushd is engaged in is to lead humans to their perfection as humans. According to him, humans, through the education process, must be able to colour themselves with the virtues that are standardized in Aristotle's thoughts, which he wrote in his book *al-Akhlaq Ila Niqumakhus* (Nicomachean Ethics), namely theoretical virtues (virtues of philosophical reason), scientific virtues (knowledge and its applications), practical virtues (ethics and politics), and moral virtues (ethical actions).³

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted through library research, namely library studies or library-based research. Library-based research is part of a research proposal whose data is collected through information sources such as books, articles, journals, online media, and other documents.⁴ The literature reviewed and researched were books, articles and journals sourced from the library, especially those concerning the concept of happiness from Hamka's perspective. This research also used a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze a deep understanding of happiness. The search for data sources was through two primary sources and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained through the writings of Modern Sufism, while secondary data was obtained through books, articles and journals.

¹ Dhaoul Ngazizah and Kholid Mawardi, "Integrasi Filsafat Dan Agama Dalam Perspektif Ibnu Rusyd," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mandala Education* 8, no. 1 (2022).

² M Afrizal, Kurnial Ilahi, and M Syafwan HB, "Metode Kalam Ibn Rusyd (Kritik Atas Metode Mutakallimin)," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 26, no. 1 (2018): 95–112.

³ Abu Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibnu Rusyd, *Republik Plato Ala Ibn Rusyd*, ed. Zainuddin (Sadra Press, 2016).

⁴ Agus Susilo Saefullah, "Ragam Penelitian Kualitatif Berbasis Kepustakaan Pada Studi Agama Dan Keberagamaan Dalam Islam," *Al-Tarbiyah: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 4 (2024): 195–211.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biography of Ibn Rushd

Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd was born and raised in Cordoba ⁵. He was the son of Ahmad or Abu Al-Qasim (d. 1168 AD)⁶. He was born and raised in a family of fiqh (Islamic law) experts. His father and grandfather were judges. Growing up, he went to Seville to study fiqh, science and medicine, then stopped and returned to Cordova to write, conduct research studies and read books. Three books of tafsir, namely *Al-Asghar*, *Al-Ausath* and *Al-Akbar* (the small, the medium and the large), introduce Ibn Rushd as the Explainer or (*Asy-Syariah*) or interpreter of Aristotle's tafsir.⁷

Some of Ibn Rushd's important works that can still be traced to this day show the breadth and depth of his thinking in various fields of science. In the field of philosophy and wisdom, Ibn Rushd's most famous work is *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (Confusion in Confusion), which is a critical response to Al-Ghazali's work entitled *Tahafut al-Falasifah* (Confusion of the Philosophers). In addition, Ibn Rushd also wrote the works *Jauhar al-Ajram as-Samawiyah* (The Structure of Heavenly Bodies), *Ittishal al-'Aql al-Mufarriq bi al-Insan* (Communication of Active Reason with Humans), and *Masa'il fi Mukhtalif Aqsam al-Manthiq* (Some Problems on Various Parts of the Science of Logic).⁸ He is also known for his commentary on Aristotle's thoughts, written in *Syuruh Katsirah 'ala al-Farabi fi Masa'il al-Manthiqi Aristha*. In addition, there is also his work *Maqalah fi ar-Radd 'ala Abi Ali bin Sina* (Paper on the Answer to Ibn Sina's Thoughts) and other philosophical works⁹

In the field of kalam science, Ibn Rushd wrote the monumental work *Fashl al-Maqal fima Baina al-Hikmah wa asy-Syari'ah min al-Ittishal* (Explanation of the Relationship between Philosophy and Shari'a). He also wrote *I'tiqad Masyasyin wa al-Mutakallimin* (Convictions of Liberalists and Experts in Kalam Science), as well as *Manahij al-Adillah fi 'Aqaid al-Millah* (Various Argumentative Methods in Religious Creeds). In the field of *fiqh* and *ushul fiqh*, Ibn Rushd's important works include *Bidayah al-Mujtahid wa Nihayah al-Muqtashid* (Beginnings for Mujtahids and Ends for Simple People). Ibnu Jafar Zahabi even recognized this work as the best book in the Maliki school of jurisprudence. Moreover, has been translated into various languages and has become an important reference in jurisprudence. Other

⁵ Ahmad Fuad Al-Ahwani, *Filsafat Islam* (Pustaka Firdaus, 2008).

⁶ Abu Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibnu Rusyd, *Bidayatul Mujtahid: Analisis Fiqih Para Mujtahid*, 1st ed. (Pustaka Amani, 2007).

⁷ Gasim Yamani, "Tiga Persoalan Metafisika Menurut Ibn Rusyd Dan Al-Gazali Serta Implikasinya Terhadap Keimanan," *Prosiding Kajian Islam Dan Integrasi Ilmu Di Era Society (KIIIES)* 5.0 2, no. 1 (2023): 16–21.

⁸ Jamaluddin Jamaluddin et al., "Moderate Islam In Thought Ibnu Rusyd," in *PROCEEDING OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION, SOCIETY AND HUMANITY*, vol. 2, 2024, 487–95.

⁹ Rossi Delta Fitriana, "Ibnu Rusyd (Averroisme) Dan Pengaruhnya Dibarat," *El-Afkar: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman Dan Tafsir Hadis* 7, no. 1 (2018): 15–30.

works are *ad-Dar al-Kamil fi al-Fiqh* (The Perfect Study of Jurisprudence) and *Risalah adl-Dhahaya* (Treatise on the Laws of Sacrifice).¹⁰

Meanwhile, in the field of astronomy, Ibn Rushd wrote *Maqalah fi Harkah al-Jirm as-Samawi* (Paper on the Movement of Celestial Bodies) and *Kalam 'ala Ru'yah Jirm ats-Tsabitah* (Explanation of Observations of Celestial Bodies that Seem Still). In the science of *nahwu* (Arabic grammar), Ibn Rushd produced the works *Buku adl-Dharuri fi an-Nahw* (Basic Matters in the Science of Nahwu), as well as *Kalam 'ala al-Kalimah wa al-Isim al-Musytaq* (Explanation of Musytaq Words and Isim). As for medicine, Ibn Rushd's most famous work is *al-Kulliyat fi ath-Thibb* (Complete Study of Medicine), which consists of seven volumes and is the main reference in various universities in Europe. This book has been translated into Latin, English, and Hebrew.¹¹ In addition, he also wrote *Syarh Arjuwizah Ibn Sina fi ath-Thibb*, which was very popular and became a study material at Oxford University, Leiden University, and Sorbonne University Paris. Ibn Rushd also wrote *Maqalah fi at-Tiryaq* (Paper on Antidotes to Poison), *Nasha'ih fi Amr al-Ishal* (Advice on Handling Diarrheal Diseases), and *Mas'alah fi Nawaib al-Humma* (Study on Various Types of Fever Diseases), all of which have been translated into several European languages and Hebrew.¹²

Source of Science and Knowledge

In his book *Manahij al-Adillah*, Ibn Ruyd views science as "the recognition of an object with the causes that surround it." This view is based on the understanding that the existence of objects around us is not autonomous. These objects are formed because of cause and effect.¹³ Ibn Rushd recognizes the following causes, which refer to Aristotle's teachings: material causes (*al-asbab Madiyah*) relate to the object, formal causes (*al-asbab al-shuriyah*) relate to the form, efficient causes (*al-asbab al-failah*) relate to efficiency or process, and final causes (*al-asbab al-ghaiyah*) relate to the goal.¹⁴

According to Ibn Rushd, knowledge comes from two things, namely the reality of existence and revelation. Soleh conveyed in his book *Epistemologi Ibn Rushd* expressed the following:

Sources of knowledge in Ibn Rushd's perspective consist of reality and revelation. These two forms of sources each gave rise to different scientific disciplines: existential reality gave rise to science and philosophy, while revelation gave rise to religious sciences (*ulum Syariah*). However, according to Ibnu Rushd, these two types of sources of knowledge are not contradictory but are

¹⁰ Fitrianah.

¹¹ Jamaluddin et al., "Moderate Islam In Thought Ibnu Rusyd."

¹² Fitrianah, "Ibnu Rusyd (Averroisme) Dan Pengaruhnya Dibarat."

¹³ Aksin Wijaya, *Teori Interpretasi Al-Qur'an Ibn Rusyd; Kritik Ideologis-Hermeneutis* (Yogyakarta: LKIS PELANGI AKSARA, 2009).

¹⁴ Khudori Soleh, *Epistemologi Ibn Rusyd: Upaya Mempertemukan Agama & Filsafat* (Malang: UIN MALIKI PRESS, 2012).

harmonious and related because both are true and lead to the truth. One truth cannot possibly contradict another truth.¹⁵

The reality of existence consists of empirical material and rational things. Meanwhile, Ibnu Rushd took revelation as a source of knowledge in addition to the reality of existence because not all sources of knowledge can be captured by empiricism and the ability to reason.¹⁶

In Manahij Ibn Rushd said,

Knowledge of happiness and salvation leads to knowledge of the soul and its essence. However, will the soul truly experience happiness and salvation in the afterlife? If so, what are the criteria? Besides, what is used to prove that goodness (good actions) will lead to happiness? How and when are these criteria applied? Likewise, about good and bad. Fortunately, we can find the provisions for all of that in the Shari'a, and all of that cannot be explained except by revelation. At the very least, the information of revelation is superior..... all of this, more broadly, cannot be known through science (*ilm*), technology (*shinah*), or philosophy (*hikmah*).¹⁷

How to Get Knowledge

Ibn Rushd argued that knowledge is obtained through two main stages: logistic reasoning and the formation of theory or conception (*tashawwur*). According to Ibn Rushd, conception (*tashawwur*) is an initial preparation towards knowledge (pre-existing knowledge), namely forming a theory or concept of an object based on its material form (*al-syai nafsu*) or something similar (*mitsaluh*). On the other hand, logistic reasoning can be classified into three approaches: coercion (*burhani*), dialectic (*jadali*), and rhetoric (*khuthabi*).¹⁸

The method of exposition (*burhani*) is "an intellectual activity to prove the truth of a proposition through a deductive approach by showing a proposition that has been proven axiomatically".¹⁹

The dialectical method, also known as "jadali", is reasoning built on premises that are only close to the truth, rather than burhani reasoning or promising demonstrations. Here, Ibn Rushd states that,

This premise is equal in position and rank to generally accepted opinions (*al-masyhurat*). Generally accepted opinions are statements that are recognized by the majority of society or by all scholars (*ulama*) and rational people (*uqola*), or the majority of them. The difference between

¹⁵ Soleh.

¹⁶ Soleh.

¹⁷ Soleh.

¹⁸ Khaerul Umam Junaid, Sulfitriani Sulfitriani, and Sri Rahayu, "Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd: Mempertemukan Agama Dan Fislafat," *El-Fata: Journal of Sharia Economics and Islamic Education* 2, no. 1 (2023): 39–51.

¹⁹ Syamsuddin Arif, *Islam Dan Diabolisme Intelektual* (Jakarta: INSISTS, 2017).

convincing premises and generally accepted opinions is that the former is produced from intellectual understanding and rational testing. In contrast, the latter is usually recognized only based on faith or the testimony of others, without rational testing. What is generally accepted is not necessarily true.

Rhetorical reasoning (*khuthabi*) is lower than dialectical reasoning. It is based on premises that are purely based on belief (*sukun al-nafs*) and which are not found in the majority of society; in other words, they are only believed by a group of individuals without any testing of their truth..²⁰

Harmonization of Religion and Philosophy

The dualism between religion and philosophy, or revelation and reason, has become a deep-rooted, complex problem in the history of Islamic thought. The verdict of infidelity from anti-philosophy scholars to scholars engaged in philosophy has colored the struggle of thought in this region. Therefore, scholars, including Ibn Rushd, have tried to mediate and harmonize religion and philosophy.

Before discussing the harmonization of religion and philosophy, it is a good idea first to consider the results of Yusuf Musa's research on the relationship between experts between these two opposing poles as follows,

1. Accepting revelation absolutely and eliminating race. This is usually done by uneducated scholars, such as Imam Syafi'i (767–820 AD), who, in his *ar-Risalah*, stated that revelation is the only source of truth
2. Taking racism and abandoning revelation, Pure rationalists usually do this. One is Ibn Zakaria Ar-Razi, who lived from 865 to 925. He believed that reason is the best gift from God, and therefore humans are only limited by reason itself to behave.
3. Striving for a balance between religion, philosophy, revelation, and reason. Important people who worked in this field include al-Kindi (806-875), al-Farabi, al-Sijistani (d. 1000 AD), Miskawaih (d. 1030 AD), Ibn Sina (980-1037 AD), Ibn Tufail (d. 1185 AD), and Ibn Rushd.²¹

Ibn Rushd is one of many figures who tried to reconcile religion and philosophy. However, the form and views of the harmonization between religion and philosophy in these figures are different; each has a different perspective and steps. Ibn Rushd's efforts to harmonize religion and philosophy are based on his thoughts which he conveyed in the book *Fashl al-Maqal*;

²⁰ M. Asrorun Ni'am Sholeh, *Reorientasi Pendidikan Islam: Mengurai Relevansi Konsep Al-Ghazali Dalam Konteks Kekinian* (Jakarta: Elsas, 2006).

²¹ Soleh, *Epistemologi Ibn Rusyd: Upaya Mempertemukan Agama & Filsafat*.

If this sharia is true (*haq*) and invites reasoning that conveys true knowledge (*mariah al-Haq*), then we know for sure that burhani (philosophical) reasoning cannot possibly contradict what is conveyed by sharia. One truth will not contradict another truth, but rather support and testify to each other (*yusyhidullah*).²²

Ibn Rushd considered revelation as “the highest knowledge of spiritual existences”. This wisdom informs a Prophet about true happiness in the world hereafter. Therefore, the shariah, or practical wisdom, emerged to bring happiness to humans.²³

On the contrary, revelation teaches reason. How many verses in the Qur'an ask people to think, reason, and consider creation as a sign of the greatness of Allah. In the epistemology of al-Jabiri's perspective, the Islamic scientific method is divided into three levels: bayani, burhani and irfani. If bayani is based on sacred texts, irfani on intuition, then burhani is based on reason.²⁴

It seems that Ibn Rushd also thought so, that rationalism, in this case, the Burhani method, is not always desired to be monopolized by philosophy. Religious science must also be approached with the Burhani method, namely the possibility of religion being understood with rhetorical, dialectical, and Burhani methods. Therefore, Ibn Rushd stated that there is a harmonious relationship between revelation and reason, saying that reason plays a significant role in understanding revelation and reality. Reason uses interpretation and takes to accommodate religious teachings.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research on Islamic education from the perspective of Ibn Rushd's epistemology, Ibn Rushd's thought contributed significantly to developing Islamic educational concepts despite his greater recognition as a philosopher and jurist. Ibn Rushd's educational thought originates from his philosophical view of knowledge as an integral part of the educational process. According to Ibn Rushd, the ultimate goal of education is to guide individuals toward achieving personal perfection by cultivating various virtues, including theoretical, scientific, practical, and moral virtues.

Furthermore, Ibn Rushd positions the integration between religion and philosophy not as contradictory but as complementary dimensions in pursuing truth and advancing knowledge. Accordingly, Ibn Rushd's epistemology reflects the importance of the sources of knowledge, the methods of acquiring knowledge, and the integration of reason and revelation within Islamic education.

²² Soleh.

²³ Soleh.

²⁴ Soleh.

In light of the foregoing, this study suggests the necessity of strengthening scholarly studies on Islamic education based on the epistemological frameworks of classical Muslim scholars, such as Ibn Rushd, to enrich the intellectual tradition and provide new perspectives in the development of contemporary Islamic education. Educators, academics, and practitioners of Islamic education are encouraged to further explore and integrate Ibn Rushd's ideas into educational practices, particularly in strengthening character development, fostering intellectual growth, and integrating religious and secular sciences.

Moreover, it is essential for Islamic educational institutions not to focus solely on doctrinal aspects but also to create space for rationality, dialogue, and the cultivation of critical thinking skills among students per the educational values Ibn Rushd promoted. Islamic education will be better positioned to produce knowledgeable, virtuous generations and balanced intellectual and spiritual sensitivity through such an approach.

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