



Ibn Rushd's *Faṣl al-Maqāl* and the Radical Turn of Western Philosophy

This paper examines the influence of Islam in world philosophy by re-reading Ibn Rushd's *Faṣl al-Maqāl*. It analyses the ideas and influence of Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) in inspiring the Age of Enlightenment in Europe. His philosophical works and doctrine written in early 12th century have manifested dramatic influence in the making of Western civilization as recognized in the late 18th century renaissance. The phenomenal impact of this highly Muslim contribution was seen in the cultural worldview that constitutes the cornerstone of Western Europe. The study is based on qualitative approaches in the form of a literature review and content analysis. The data were obtained from primary and secondary sources and analyzed by way of descriptive, analytical, thematic, hermeneutic, and historical techniques. The finding shows that the works and thoughts of Ibn Rushd as presented in *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, have inspired radical intellectual transformation in European society. This paper contributes to highlighting the historical influence of his scientific works that constitute the cornerstone of his worldview and discusses the monumental socio-religious reform initiated by Ibn Rushd in sociopolitical landscape of Al-Andalus.

Keywords: Ibn Rushd; *Faṣl al-Maqāl*; Renaissance; European Islam.

Makalah ini mengkaji pengaruh Islam dalam filsafat dunia dengan menelaah ulang *Faṣl al-Maqāl* karya Ibn Rushd. Makalah ini menganalisis gagasan dan pengaruh Ibn Rushd (wafat 1198) dalam menginspirasi Zaman Pencerahan di Eropa. Karya-karya filosofis dan doktrinnya yang ditulis pada abad ke-12 telah menunjukkan pengaruh dramatis dalam pembentukan peradaban Barat sebagaimana diakui pada masa Renaisans akhir abad ke-18. Dampak fenomenal dari kontribusi Muslim yang sangat besar ini terlihat dalam pandangan dunia budaya yang menjadi landasan Eropa Barat. Studi ini didasarkan pada pendekatan kualitatif dalam bentuk tinjauan pustaka dan analisis isi. Data diperoleh dari sumber primer dan sekunder dan dianalisis melalui teknik deskriptif, analitis, tematik, hermeneutik, dan historis. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pemikiran Ibn Rushd dalam *Faṣl al-Maqāl* telah menginspirasi transformasi intelektual radikal dalam masyarakat Eropa. Makalah ini berkontribusi untuk menyoroti pengaruh historis karya-karya ilmiahnya yang menjadi landasan pandangan dunianya dan membahas reformasi keagamaan monumental yang diprakarsai oleh Ibn Rushd dalam lanskap sosial-politik Al-Andalus.

Kata Kunci: Ibn Rusyd; *Faṣl al-Maqāl*; Renaisans; Islam Eropa.

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Introduction

This article examines the influence of Ibn Rushd (Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Rushd, 1126-1198) within the context of the intellectual transformation and revolution in thought that he helped stimulate in Europe. His influence extended across multiple fields of knowledge, including the Qurʾān, ḥadīth, law, jurisprudence, linguistics, ethics, theology, as well as the rational sciences such as mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. His intellectual contributions constituted a crucial milestone in the development of philosophical writing in the West, leading him to be remembered as the Muslim philosopher who exerted the most profound influence on Western intellectual history.¹ His ideas produced wide-ranging and significant effects on European currents of thought and various aspects of social life, while also contributing to the formation of intellectual traditions and the enlightened civilization of Europe.

The teachings of Aristotle in *Politics* were further developed by Ibn Rushd, who drew extensively on Plato's *Republic*, a work that expounds ideal principles on politics, literature, and rhetoric.² The synthesis of these ideas exerted a substantial influence on the formation of European social structures and the development of their liberal intellectual perspectives. The successful dissemination of Ibn Rushd's works in Europe subsequently gave rise to an intellectual movement known as Averroism, which was propagated by his students who had studied in al-Andalus and later revived and further developed his philosophical legacy. Among the most prominent representatives of this Averroist movement were Siger de Brabant (1235–1282) and his associates, including Boethius of Dacia, Berner van Nijvel, and Antonius van Parma.³

In his work *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, composed in the early twelfth century, Ibn Rushd articulated a systematic formulation of classical Aristotelian philosophy while offering a vigorous defense of the use of reason, dialectical inquiry, and the legitimacy of philosophical argumentation. One of the central theses advanced in this work is that Islam does not reject philosophy or philosophical investigation; on the contrary, it affirms that the study of philosophy constitutes an obligation for those who possess the intellectual capacity to pursue the sources of truth.

In addition to being renowned as a philosopher, Ibn Rushd made significant contributions to a wide range of disciplines, including medicine, mathematics, 'ilm al-kalām (Islamic theology), astronomy, geography, logic, and the sciences. He was also actively engaged in the development of the Mālikī school of jurisprudence and in legal studies shaped by his rational intellectual orientation. At a relatively young age, he studied under prominent Islamic lawmakers (fuqahāʾ) of Al-Andalus, including Abū al-Qāsim ibn Bashkuwāl al-Andalusī (d. 578/1183), Abū Marwān ibn Masarra, Abū Bakr ibn Samḥūn, Abū Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, ʿAbdullāh al-Māzarī, and Abū Muḥammad ibn Rizq, whose instruction provided him with a strong scholarly foundation.

¹ Naufal Mas'ud Yusnizar, "Pemikiran Ibn Rusyd Dan Pengaruhnya Di Eropa," Hidayatullah.Com, November 14, 2022, <https://hidayatullah.com/artikel/opini/2022/11/14/240038/pengaruh-pemikiran-ibnu-rusyd-dan-pengaruhnya-di-eropa.html>.

² Ahmed Alwishah and Josh Hayes, eds., *Aristotle and the Arabic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

³ Khaerul Umam Junaid, Sulfitriani Sulfitriani, and Sri Rahayu, "Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd: Mempertemukan Antara Agama Dan Filsafat," *El-Fata: Journal of Sharia Economics and Islamic Education* 2, no. 1 (April 2023): 39–51, <https://doi.org/10.61169/el-fata.v2i1.54>.





The philosophy of Ibn Rushd largely centers on questions of theology and metaphysics, offering significant intellectual renewal through philosophical analysis. His commentaries on the works of Aristotle, which had largely faded from the intellectual memory of medieval Europe, were translated into Latin in the early twelfth century and exerted a profound influence on the emergence of a new intellectual consciousness in Europe, while also contributing to the gradual transition away from the period often referred to as the “Dark Ages.”⁴ The translation movement, which continued for nearly three decades, greatly enhanced Ibn Rushd’s reputation in Europe and played a decisive role in reviving the intellectual legacy of Aristotle within the tradition of ancient Greek philosophy. In addition, he produced commentaries on several other classical works, including *De Anima Aristotelis*, his commentary on Aristotle’s *De Anima*.⁵

Ibn Rushd produced numerous abridgments of Greek philosophical works, amounting to roughly thirty volumes, commonly known as *al-Talkhīṣ* and *al-Mukhtaṣar*. These works were composed in the form of commentaries that combined exposition, critique, and the articulation of his own philosophical views. This approach is reflected in three principal types of commentary he employed: short commentaries consisting of concise summaries; intermediate commentaries (*talkhīṣ*) presented as paraphrastic expositions; and long commentaries (*tafsīr*) that provide detailed, line-by-line analyses of the original texts. His thought influenced major philosophers in modern-day Europe, such as Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and served as a central source of inspiration through their engagement with his works.

Scholarly studies of Ibn Rushd since the early nineteenth century have largely focused on his methodological contributions and intellectual influence as a pioneer of philosophy and as a “bridge of knowledge” between the East and the West. In the medieval Latin tradition he was known as Averroes and was regarded as one of the greatest philosophers in the history of Islamic intellectual thought, without equal among his contemporaries. The doctrines he developed functioned as an intellectual link between the Islamic and Christian worlds, thereby opening new avenues for the dynamic development of thought among European Christian scholars.⁶ This process unfolded during the height of Islamic civilization, when “his philosophy spread from Al-Andalus throughout of Europe and became a central element in the intellectual awakening of the Western nations.”⁷ The strength of his arguments and the authority of his scholarship were also employed in critiques of ecclesiastical dogmatism. The translation of Arabic works, particularly the philosophical writings of Ibn Rushd, into Hebrew and Latin gave birth to a tradition of rationalism that later provided an important intellectual foundation for the ideals and spirit that inspired the European Enlightenment.

In his study of rational Islamic jurisprudence and the method of law-making (*istinbāt*) employed by Ibn Rushd, Fathurrahman Azhari (2016) examines the legal framework and juristic orientation reflected in *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, a work intended to liberate the Muslim community

⁴ Hairul Faizi, “Ibn Rusyd Tanpa Beliau Barat Tak Mungkin Dari Zaman Gelap,” *The Patriot Malaysia*, September 2019.

⁵ Ahmad Nabil Amir and Tasnim Abdul Rahman, “Pengaruh Islam Dalam Sejarah Dunia Kajian Kitab Fasl Al-Maqal Oleh Ibn Rushd,” *ABDUSSALAM: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 1, no. 2 (August 2025): 93–103.

⁶ Ahmad Fuad Al-Ahwany, *Ibn Rusyd* (Wisbaden: Otto Harrossowits, 1963); Junaid, Sulfitriani, and Rahayu, “Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd.”

⁷ Muhammad Abduh, *Ilmu Dan Peradaban Menurut Islam Dan Kristen*, trans. Muhammad Syaf and Abu Bakar Usman (Bandung: Diponegoro, 1978), 169.





from the constraints of blind adherence to authority (taqlīd).⁸ Among the methods of *istinbāt* identified in the study is the approach of *ijtihād intiqāʿī*, which involves selecting the strongest opinion from among competing juristic views. In resolving conflicts between legal evidence, Ibn Rushd frequently employed the method of reconciliation and harmonization (*jamʿ wa tawfīq*) rather than *tarjīḥ* (preferential weighing of evidence). When he did apply *tarjīḥ*, however, he prioritized *ḥadīths* transmitted by a greater number of narrators (*rāwī*), reports transmitted by narrators with a stronger understanding of legal matters, traditions supported by additional evidentiary proofs, and sound *ḥadīth āḥād* over *dalīl al-khiṭāb* and *qiyās*. He also gave precedence to the explicit textual indication (*dalālat al-mantūq*) over implied meaning (*mafhum*), the specific over the general, and general Qurʾānic verses over analogical reasoning (*qiyās*).

The tension between philosophical tradition and religious orthodoxy is examined by Iyssa A. Bello (1989) in his study of the controversy between Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd concerning the issues of *ijmāʿ* (scholarly consensus) and *taʾwīl* (interpretive exegesis), as reflected in their complex works such as *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* and *Faṣl al-Maqāl*.⁹ The influence of Aristotle on Muslim-Arab philosophers is discussed by Ahmed Alwishah and Josh Hayes (2015), particularly in relation to the impact of Aristotelian doctrine on theologians and the intellectual traditions of the medieval period (from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries CE), including figures such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Ṭufayl, and Ibn Rushd. These thinkers translated, interpreted, and assimilated the teachings of Greek philosophy, thereby contributing significantly to the development of philosophy, science, and ʿilm al-kalām within the Islamic intellectual tradition.

According to Yusnizar Naufal Masʿud (2022), the greatest contribution of Ibn Rushd lies in his effort to reconcile religion (waḥy, revelation) with philosophy (ʿaql, reason), an intellectual legacy that exerted a significant influence on the European intellectual world.¹⁰ This view is reinforced by the studies of Rossi Delta Fitriana (2018), Mami Nofrianti (2021), and Syamsuddin Arif (2016), who emphasize that the Averroist school was for a time marginalized in historical development and overshadowed by dominant medieval European traditions such as Platonism, Augustinianism, Avicennism, and Alexandrism, before being revived in the nineteenth century by Ernest Renan through his work *Averroès et l'Averroïsme* (1852).¹¹ Meanwhile, Jamaluddin et al. (2024) highlight the moderate orientation of Ibn Rushd's thought, which upholds tolerance and rejects all forms of religious extremism.¹² Accordingly, this article seeks to examine the influence of Ibn Rushd's ideas and the development of his philosophical idealism in Europe through his *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, while also analyzing the intellectual strength of the scientific,

⁸ Fathurrahman Azhari Fathurrahman Azhari, "Metode Istinbath Hukum Ibn Rusyd Dalam Kitab Bidayah Al-Mujtahid," *TASHWIR* 4, no. 2 (February 2016), <https://doi.org/10.18592/jt.v3i8.603>.

⁹ Khalid Ishola Bello, "An Analytical Study of Al-Qādī's Poetry on Qālūn and Warsh Modes of Recitation of the Qurʾān," *An-Nur: Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (October 2020): 146–61.

¹⁰ Yusnizar, "Pemikiran Ibn Rusyd Dan Pengaruhnya Di Eropa."

¹¹ Rossi Delta Fitriana, "Ibnu Rusyd (Averroisme) Dan Pengaruhnya Di Barat," *El-Afkar: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman Dan Tafsir Hadis* 7, no. 1 (June 2018): 15–30, <https://doi.org/10.29300/jpkth.v7i1.1584>; Mami Nofrianti, "Jembatan Penyeberangan Peradaban Islam Ke Eropa," *Nazharat: Jurnal Kebudayaan* 27 (January 2022): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.30631/nazharat.v27i1.43>.

¹² Jamaluddin Jamaluddin et al., "Moderate Islam in Thought Ibnu Rusyd," *Proceeding of International Conference on Education, Society and Humanity* 2, no. 1 (January 2024): 487–95.





speculative, ethical, philosophical, and logical features that he bequeathed, and also its relevance within modern intellectual history.

This study employs a qualitative research approach based on library research and content analysis. In the process of data interpretation, the study adopts the hermeneutical approach of Hans-Georg Gadamer, alongside the contextualization frameworks developed by Abdullah Saeed and Fazlur Rahman, in order to examine the interconnections between ideas and critiques within the horizon of the text. The research data are derived from both primary and secondary sources relevant to the focus of the study. All collected materials and literature are analyzed using the analytical technique proposed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which involves the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

Biografi Intelektual Ibnu Rusyd

Abū al-Walīd Ibn Rushd, known in Europe as Averroes, was born in Córdoba, Spain, in 1126 CE. He pursued studies in Arabic *adab*, jurisprudence, theology, medicine, and philosophy under various teachers (*mashāyikh*), whose names are recorded in several historical sources. Among them was Ibn Zuhr, the renowned physician who had served as a court doctor in al-Andalus and later became his close associate. In 1169, he was introduced to the caliph Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf by Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 1185), the eminent philosopher of the time and a physician at the caliphal court. Abū Ya‘qūb was an avid reader of Aristotle, yet he complained of the difficulty of understanding “*its complex expressions and idioms.*” As a result of this meeting, Ibn Rushd was commissioned to produce explanations of Aristotle’s works for the caliph.¹³ As Ibn Rushd then recalled: “*From that moment on, with the advice and encouragement of Ibn Ṭufayl, I devoted myself to composing commentaries on the works of Aristotle.*”¹⁴

After the accession of a new caliph Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb al-Manṣūr, Ibn Rushd initially continued to enjoy royal patronage. However, in 1195, under mounting public pressure, the caliph ordered the burning of Ibn Rushd’s treatises on the grounds that they allegedly demeaned religion or reflected heretical (*mulḥid*) tendencies. At the same time, the study of philosophy and sciences was prohibited, except for astronomy, medicine, and arithmetic. Ibn Rushd was exiled to Lucena (Alaisano), south of Córdoba, in that same year, although he was later recalled and reinstated to his former position. Nevertheless, he did not long enjoy the restoration of the caliph’s favor, for on 11 December 1198 CE (595 AH) he died in Córdoba at the age of seventy-two.

The writings of Ibn Rushd that are recognized as authentic number nearly sixty-seven works across a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy, fiqh, theology, ‘ilm al-falak (astronomy), music, astrology, naḥw (Arabic grammar), linguistics, and medicine. Many of these works have survived in Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin translations, securing his place among the foremost intellectual figures in these fields from the medieval Islamic period onward. He became widely known in Europe from the thirteenth century through the translation of his commentaries on the philosophical corpus of Aristotle, earning him the title *The Commentator*, as famously described by Dante Alighieri, *che gran commento feo* (“who made the great commentary”).

These Latin translations, produced in the early centuries of their transmission, stimulated considerable intellectual activity among scholars and laid the foundations for the rise of Latin Scholasticism, one of the major achievements of intellectual life in Europe during the medieval

¹³ Ernest Renan and Andar Nubowo, *Ibn Rushd Dan Mazhabnya* (Institut Kajian Dasar: Kuala Lumpur, 2008), 17; Syamsuddin Arif, “Ibn Rusyd Dan Kemajuan Eropa,” Hidayatullah.Com, May 7, 2016, <https://hidayatullah.com/artikel/tsaqafah/2016/05/07/94395/ibn-rusyd-dan-kemajuan-eropa.html>.

¹⁴ Ibrahim Najjar, *Faith and Reason in Islam Averroes’ Exposition of Religious Arguments* (Oxford: Oneworld Publication, 2001), 1–16.





period and in the centuries that followed. Yet beyond his great contributions to the Aristotelian scholarly tradition, whose influence endured well into the modern era, Ibn Rushd also addressed theological questions more comprehensively than most other Muslim philosophers. Among these was the perennial issue of the relationship between faith and reason, the problem that became central to scholastic debates in Europe during the thirteenth century and thereafter.¹⁵

His contribution to this debate is recorded in three major theological treatises: *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, written in 1179; *al-Kashf ‘an Manāhij al-Adilla fī ‘Aqā’id al-Milla* (The Exposition of the Methods of Proof), composed in the same year; and a short tract entitled *al-Damīma*, which addresses the problem of the eternal and immutable knowledge of God in relation to contingent and particular entities. To this trilogy must also be added Ibn Rushd's systematic rebuttal of the critique advanced by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī against the Islamic Neoplatonist philosophers in *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers). Ibn Rushd's response, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (The Incoherence of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*), constitutes one of the most important philosophical defenses of Aristotelianism within the Islamic intellectual tradition.

Sumbangannya terhadap perdebatan itu dirakamkan dalam tiga tretis kalam: *Faṣl al-Maqāl* (*The Decisive Treatise*) yang ditulis pada 1179; *Al-Kashf ‘an Manāhij Al-’Adilla* (The Exposition of the Methods of Proof), tajuk asalnya ialah kitab *Al-Kashf ‘an Manāhij al-’Adillah fī ‘Aqa’id al-Millah aw Naqd ‘ilm al-Kalām diddan ‘ala al-Tarsim al-Idulujiy lil-’Aqida wa Ḍifā’an ‘an al-’ilm wa ḥurriya al-Ikhtiyar fī al-Fikr wa al-Fi’li*, ditulis pada tahun yang sama; dan trek pendek (*al-Damima*) yang membahaskan tentang pengetahuan Tuhan yang kekal dan tidak berubah berkait dengan entiti yang kontinjen dan khusus. Kepada trilogi ini harus ditambah bantahannya yang sistematik terhadap serangan al-Ghazali kepada Neoplatonis Islam dalam *Kerancuan Para Filsuf* (*Tahafut al-Falasifah*), yang ditulis pada 1195 yang bertajuk *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (*The Incoherence of the Incoherence*).

The prolific works produced by Ibn Rushd engage extensively with the ideas of al-Ghazālī, Aristotle, and Plato, as well as with the authoritative jurists of the Mālikī and Shāfi‘ī legal schools. He produced an abridgment of al-Ghazālī's *al-Mustasfā min ‘ilm al-Uṣūl* in his work *Ḍarūrī fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, in which he summarizes primary elements of Shāfi‘ī legal theory, while clarifying issues relating to the subsidiary rulings of legal schools. He also elaborated methodological foundations of Mālikī jurisprudence in his celebrated treatise, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid wa Nihāyat al-Muqtaṣid* (The Distinguished Jurist's Primer).

In the field of medicine, Ibn Rushd authored *al-Kulliyāt fī al-Ṭibb*, a systematic exposition of the general principles of medicine that draws upon the medical thought of Galen and is often considered comparable in stature to *al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb* by Ibn Sīnā. The work later became an important text in the medical curricula of universities in Europe. It was translated into Latin in 1255 by Bonacosa of Padua under the title *Colliget*, and subsequently into English as *General Rules of Medicine*. In addition, Ibn Rushd composed works such as *Kitāb fī Ḥarakat al-Falak* (Book on the Heavenly Movements), *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-Jadal* (Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Topics), and a commentary on Plato's *Republic*. Beyond these subjects, Ibn Rushd also produced works in law and philosophy, including *al-Ḍarūrī fī al-Fiqh*, *I’tiqād al-Mashāyikh wa al-Mutakallimīn*, *Sharḥ ‘alā al-Fārābī fī Masā’il al-Mantiq*, *Maqāla fī al-Radd ‘alā Abī ‘Alī Ibn Sīnā*, *Ittisāl al-‘Aql al-Mufāriq bi al-Insān*, *Masā’il fī Mukhtalif Aqsām al-Mantiq*, *al-Mabādi’*, *Tafsīr al-Urjūza*, and *Taḥṣīl*, among other treatises spanning metaphysics, logic, theology, and medicine.

Ibn Rushd maintained that truth is ultimately singular, even though the paths through which it is attained vary according to the different capacities of human intellect. This plurality of

¹⁵ Akh Muzakki, "THE ROOTS, STRATEGIES, AND POPULAR PERCEPTION OF ISLAMIC RADICALISM IN INDONESIA," *JOURNAL OF INDONESIAN ISLAM* 8, no. 1 (June 2014): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2014.8.1.1-22>; Fitriana, "Ibnu Rusyd (Averroisme) Dan Pengaruhnya Di Barat."





approaches is made possible through three epistemological modes: the rhetorical method (*khiṭābī*), commonly employed by the general public; the dialectical method (*jadālī*), utilized by the learned; and the demonstrative method (*burhānī*), practiced by philosophers and scientists. These distinctions are systematically articulated in *Faṣl al-Maqāl*.¹⁶ Ibn Rushd is widely regarded as a major proponent of a rational Islamic philosophy that absorbed and developed elements of classical Greek thought, particularly as expressed in the writings of Aristotle. In *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, he also examines several influential theological orientations within Islam, including the Ash‘arī, Mu‘tazilī, Bāṭinī (esoteric), and literalist traditions. At the same time, the work reflects on the philosophical nature of religion itself, emphasizing its inclusive and universal character. As Luthfi Assyaukanie observes in his introduction to the Indonesian edition of *Faṣl al-Maqāl*;

Ibn Rushd’s intellectual concern extends far beyond the boundaries of any religious communities. His thought possesses a universal character that may benefit humanity as a whole.¹⁷

Ibn Rushd undertook a systematic reconstruction of Aristotle’s philosophy to interpret and reconcile the truths of revelation and reason. In doing so, he defended some Muslim philosophers who had been declared heretical by al-Ghazālī, including al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Kindī, as well as intellectual groups associated with the Bāṭinī and Ismā‘īlī traditions. Responding al-Ghazālī’s criticism, Ibn Rushd argued:

*We maintain that Abū Ḥāmid erred in his judgment against the Aristotelian philosophers when he claimed that they held the view that God, the Most Holy and Exalted, does not know particular things. In reality, they affirm that God does know particulars, but through a form of knowledge that is not of the same kind as our knowledge of them.*¹⁸

The philosophical thought of Ibn Rushd exerted a profound influence in inspiring intellectual renewal and strengthening the role of philosophy, ideology, and reason, while firmly upholding the position of reason as parallel to revelation. In this regard, he critically engaged with the works and arguments of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, particularly in *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* and *Fayṣal al-Tafriqa bayna al-Islām wa al-Zandaqa*, which he regarded as restricting the development of logical philosophy and scholastic inquiry. As Assyaukanie observes, “For him, religious knowledge and rational knowledge were equally important.”¹⁹

Ibn Rushd emerged as a leading advocate of rationalism at a particular time when hostility toward classical philosophy (*‘ulūm al-awā’il*, sciences of the ancients) had reached its peak among segments of Muslim society. His endorsement of philosophy and *ijtihād* stemmed from his profound appreciation for philosophical inquiry and scientific knowledge.²⁰ Through his sustained engagement with philosophy, he revived the classical intellectual legacy of the Greek philosophers and produced critical commentaries on the philosophical and metaphysical doctrines of Aristotle. Ibn Rushd’s role in reintroducing Greek philosophy and his powerful influence on the flourishing of intellectual culture and the revitalization of *ijtihād* have been

¹⁶ Junaid, Sulfitriani, and Rahayu, “Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd.”

¹⁷ Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Ibn Rushd Sebagai Model Peradaban Islam*, February 2, 2006.

¹⁸ Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, trans. Al-Mustaqeem Mahmud Radhi (Kuala Lumpur: Middle-Eastern Graduates Centre, 2006), 22; Terkan Fehrullah, “Ibn Rushd, Faṣl al-Maqāl and the Theory of Double Truth,” *Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo*, 1999.

¹⁹ Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, xvii; Faizi, “Ibn Rusyd Tanpa Beliau Barat Tak Mungkin Dari Zaman Gelap.”

²⁰ Ibn Rushd, *On the Harmony of Religions and Philosophy*, trans. George Hourani (Leiden: Brill, 1959); Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*; Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl Al-Maqāl Fī Mā Bayn al-Ḥikma Wa al-Sharī‘a Min al-Ittiṣāl* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma‘arif, 1972).





described by Assyaukanie as a classical achievement of the medieval intellectual tradition. As he observes;

Ibn Rushd deserves to be regarded as a model of progress for Islamic civilization, not only because of his stature as a great philosopher, but also because he was a religious scholar who mastered the traditional sciences of Islam.²¹

Reconsidering *Faṣl al-Maqāl*

Faṣl al-Maqāl stands as one of the most significant works of Ibn Rushd. In this work, he examines the philosophical foundations of Islamic thought while engaging with the rational tradition inherited from Greek philosophy. The treatise highlights the authority of reason and the principle of intellectual freedom. Among its central arguments is the importance of analytical reasoning in the interpretation of the al-Qurʾān, a position that contrasts with more conservative approaches that rely primarily on ḥadīth-based exegesis.

The work further elaborates principles of logic, the methodology of interpretive reasoning, and the foundations of rational demonstration through rational, dialectical, and demonstrative reasoning. These forms were employed by post-classical Muslim philosophers and later contributed significantly to the intellectual transformation that influenced the development of Western philosophy. The treatise also addresses the nature of philosophical wisdom, the role of analogical reasoning, the objectives of the Shariʿa, and the use of logical, rhetorical, and demonstrative forms of proof. Its central theme is an appeal to the pursuit of knowledge through discursive and conceptual methods of reasoning. The arguments presented in the treatise rest upon three fundamental principles: *First*, philosophy does not lead to unbelief; *Second*, philosophy provides one of the most reliable paths to the attainment of truth; *Third*, the essential and unquestionable foundations of religious law consist of three beliefs: faith in God, belief in the prophets, and belief in the resurrection.

Starting from the premise that reason and revelation constitute two authentic sources of truth, Ibn Rushd argues that both are divine gifts granted by God. In his famous formulation, reason and revelation are “milk-siblings” (*ukht al-raḍīʿa*), inseparably linked. Reason requires revelation because many aspects of existence, especially those related to the metaphysical realm (*ghayb*), lie beyond the full reach of human intellect. Conversely, revelation also requires reason, for without the faculty of rational understanding, the meaning and guidance of revelation cannot be properly comprehended.

According to Ibn Rushd, whenever an apparent contradiction arises between the verses of the al-Qurʾān and rational understanding, the relevant passages must be interpreted through *taʾwīl* (allegorical interpretation). As he states in *Faṣl al-Maqāl*: “If no contradiction exists between revelation and reason, then nothing further needs to be said. However, if such a contradiction appears, revelation must be interpreted.”²² For this reason, the role of reason and sound philosophical inquiry becomes essential in understanding many Qurʾānic passages that, at first glance, appear to conflict with rational judgment or contemporary human values. It is precisely here that the strength of *taʾwīl* lies: as a hermeneutical method that enables the reconciliation and integration of meaning, preserving both the spirit of revelation and the ethical aspirations of humanity.

²¹ Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, xvii.

²² Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, 97; Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi et al., “Ibn Rushd’s Intellectual Strategies on Islamic Theology,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 20, no. 1 (February 2020): 19–34, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v20i1.5786>.





Parallelism between Philosophy and Sharī'a

His discussion of philosophy and the Greek intellectual tradition advances a fundamental understanding that there exists a clear harmony between revelation and reason, religion and knowledge, as well as between the Sharī'a and philosophy. The ideas originally formulated by the Greek philosopher Aristotle were elaborated in detail by Ibn Rushd in works such as *al-Kashf* and the short treatise *al-Ḍamīma*. These works articulate a clear doctrine of *ta'wīl* and advance a comparative as well as critical analytical approach to the scriptural texts of the Qur'ān and hadith.

In these writings, Ibn Rushd also provides a comprehensive exposition of philosophy and *ḥikma*, together with the logical principles found in the works of Aristotle. Remembered as the "Father of Rationalism," he sought to connect philosophy with religion, as clearly expressed in *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, where he argues that the pursuit of philosophy accords with the aims of religion in the search for truth about existence. He further emphasized the importance of drawing upon knowledge produced by non-Muslim scholars and earlier civilizations. As he famously stated: "*The study of the works of the ancients is a religious obligation, since their purpose in composing such works corresponds to the objective encouraged by the Sharī'a.*"²³

Major Arguments in *Al-Kashf 'an Manāhij al-'Adilla*

The treatise *al-Kashf 'an Manāhij al-'Adilla fī 'Aqā'id al-Milla* presents a rigorous and systematic argument within the field of *kalām*, while also offering a critical engagement with the positions of theologians and Sufi thinkers. Through this work, Ibn Rushd sought to integrate elements of classical Greek thought into the framework of Islamic philosophy.²⁴ The book was written around 575 AH/1179 CE during his residence in the Maghreb, and represents a continuation of his earlier writings, particularly *al-Ḍamīma fī 'Ilm al-Ilāhī* (a treatise on theological questions) and *Faṣl al-Maqāl*.

Jamal al-Din al-Alawi, in his work *Al-Matn al-Rushdī*, explains that Ibn Rushd's *al-Kashf* was composed during what he calls the *al-fāṣila al-Ghazālīyya*, the phase in which Ibn Rushd critically engaged the legacy of al-Ghazālī. This period occurred after Ibn Rushd had mastered Greek philosophy but before he produced his extensive commentaries (*al-sharḥ al-kabīr*) on the works of Aristotle, roughly between 574 and 576 AH.²⁵ In this work, Ibn Rushd advances analytical arguments concerning proofs for the existence of God, and presents detailed discussions on the concepts of existence, divine unity, and God's attributes within Sunni doctrinal framework. The treatise further addresses themes such as the unseen realm, divine action, the creation of the world, the mission of prophets, predestination, divine justice, and resurrection.

The discussions of theology and philosophy presented in *al-Kashf 'an Manāhij al-'Adilla fī 'Aqā'id al-Milla* articulate a significant intellectual approach to interpreting the normative texts of the Sharī'a, outlining a method for textual interpretation and theological inquiry that reflects Ibn Rushd's inclination toward moderation and balance within religious law. This assessment is echoed by Ibn Taymiyyah, who in *Minhāj al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya* (1:252) remarks: "Ibn Rushd

²³ Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, 11; Ibn Rushd, *The Philosophy and Theology of Averroes*, trans. Mohammad Jamil-Ub-Behman Barod (Baroda: Manibhai Mathurbhal Gupta, 1921).

²⁴ Abdul Rahim Sabri, "Ibn Rushd jawab al-Asya'irah, al-Ghazali," *Malaysiakini*, 16:42:17+08:00, <https://www.malaysiakini.com/columns/121024>.

²⁵ Sabri, "Ibn Rushd jawab al-Asya'irah, al-Ghazali"; Majid Fakhry, *Averroes: His Life, Works, and Influence*, Great Islamic Thinkers (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001); Moch Muwaffiqillah, Indana Zulfa, and Muhammad Ayman al-Akiti, "Revisiting Ibn Rushd's Demonstrative Philosophy: Bridging Classical Thought and Scientific Integration in Contemporary Islamic Higher Education," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 36, no. 1 (January 2025): 123–46, <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v36i1.6628>.





and those like him are closer to Islam than Ibn Sīnā and those of his kind, because they continued to observe the boundaries of religion, unlike those who neglected religious obligations and violated its norms.”²⁶

Refuting Ash‘arite Theologians

In *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, Ibn Rushd advocates the intellectual autonomy of philosophical inquiry and defends the legitimacy of rational investigation in matters concerning religion and the natural world. His position challenges theological tendencies commonly associated with Ash‘arism, which in his view, restricted the scope of philosophical reasoning within Islamic thought. Some later interpreters have even suggested that his defense of rational inquiry contributed indirectly to intellectual developments that encouraged the separation of philosophical reasoning from theology in Western Europe. In the introduction, Ibn Rushd explains that the essential purpose of philosophy lies in the contemplation of created beings and the reflective examination of their nature, since such intellectual inquiry enables human beings to attain knowledge of God. Through the systematic study of existence and the order of creation, philosophical reflection ultimately serves as a means of recognizing the divine reality underlying the structure of the universe.²⁷

At the same time, Ibn Rushd criticizes forms of *ta’wīl* that he considers methodologically unsound, particularly those associated with Mu‘tazilism, which he believed sometimes relied on excessive allegorical interpretation to defend their theological doctrines. According to Ibn Rushd, interpretive doctrines, especially complex philosophical interpretations of scriptural texts, should not be widely disseminated among the general public. He argues that the public circulation of such interpretations had historically contributed to the emergence of competing theological sects within Islam, often leading to mutual accusations of unbelief and heresy. In this context, he observes that the Mu‘tazila had interpreted Qur’ānic verses and prophetic traditions and openly communicated these interpretations to the masses, while the Ash‘arites had also engaged in interpretive practices of this kind, albeit to a lesser degree.²⁸

Ḥikma and Falsafa

Ḥikma, according to Ibn Rushd, should not be generalized as ordinary branches of knowledge such as physics, mathematics, or geography. Rather, it denotes a more fundamental and foundational form of knowledge corresponding to what classical Greek scholars described as philosophy.²⁹ In this sense, *ḥikma* represents a higher level of intellectual inquiry concerned with the underlying principles of existence. For Ibn Rushd, the concept of *ḥikma* carries significant implications because it is closely associated with the doctrinal teachings of the Shari‘a contained in the sacred texts. Consequently, he maintains that no genuine contradiction can exist between *ḥikma* and the Shari‘a, just as there can be no real opposition between religion and philosophy.

Ibn Rushd further argues that philosophy, referred to as *‘ilm al-naẓar*, or the science of rational inquiry, plays a crucial role in assisting believers to interpret the ambiguous verses (*mutashābihāt*) of the Qur’ān. *Mutashābihāt* verses, he maintains, can only be understood through sustained intellectual training and reflective contemplation (*‘amal naẓarī*). Philosophical reasoning, therefore, represents the most effective form of intellectual discipline for cultivating this interpretive capacity. The emergence of Ibn Rushd in the sixth century of the Hijra marked an important development in the study of philosophy within the Islamic

²⁶ Amir and Rahman, “Pengaruh Islam Dalam Sejarah Dunia Kajian Kitab *Faṣl Al-Maqāl* Oleh Ibn Rushd.”

²⁷ Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, 42–43.

²⁸ Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, 42–43.

²⁹ Arif, “Ibn Rusyd Dan Kemajuan Eropa,” xv.





intellectual tradition. By articulating the harmony between revelation and reason, and between philosophy and the Shari'a, Ibn Rushd helped strengthen the legitimacy of rational inquiry within religious scholarship.

Assyaukanie, in his introduction to *Makalah Penentu*, observes that few Muslim intellectuals have exercised as profound an influence on modern Western civilization as Ibn Rushd. During the early stages of the Renaissance, Ibn Rushd was widely regarded as a model of intellectual progress for European scholars. At the University of Paris, Ibn Rushd's teachings developed into a distinctive philosophical current known as Latin Averroism. Several scholars associated with this intellectual movement, including Siger of Brabant, Boethius of Dacia, and Goswin of La Chapelle, established specialized circles devoted to the study of Ibn Rushd's works, which later became known collectively as the tradition of Latin Averroism.³⁰

In his commentaries on the philosophy of Aristotle, Ibn Rushd consistently defended the principles of *ijtihad* and human freedom of choice, grounding his arguments in both revelation and a rational understanding of the natural sciences. At the same time, he sought to defend Muslim philosophers who had been criticized by al-Ghazali for their engagement with Greek philosophical thought. Ibn Rushd's defense of the authority of reason contributed significantly to the intellectual confidence that later shaped European philosophical developments, particularly those associated with the rationalist traditions that culminated in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.

According to Assyaukanie, the widespread recognition of Ibn Rushd as a model of intellectual progress is largely grounded in the rational and critical features of his philosophy. Assyaukanie adds that those who regard Ibn Rushd as an exemplar of intellectual advancement do so out of conviction that he represents a thinker *par excellence*, a towering intellectual figure whose contributions extend beyond the Muslim world to humanity as a whole.³¹ Ibn Rushd's comprehensive engagement with Greek philosophical works, together with his careful and systematic interpretation of the thought of Aristotle, elevated him to the status of one of the most influential philosophers in the Western intellectual tradition. Although Ibn Rushd did not always receive comparable recognition within the Islamic world itself, his reputation flourished in the West from the twelfth century onward.³²

Readers of Ibn Rushd: The Contribution of Ernest Renan

The intellectual revival associated with the thought of Ibn Rushd gained renewed attention in the nineteenth century through the writings of the French scholar Ernest Renan (1823–1892). Renan's rediscovery and interpretation of Ibn Rushd's philosophy helped stimulate renewed interest in the Islamic philosophical tradition within European intellectual circles and marked an important moment in the historiography of Western rationalism. Renan regarded Ibn Rushd as a figure who contributed significantly to the foundations of European rationalist thought.³³ He was considered influential in the development of European intellectual life because he articulated persuasive arguments for the autonomy of scholarly inquiry from the authority of ecclesiastical institutions.³⁴

Ibn Rushd's philosophical arguments, particularly his defense of reason and rational inquiry, have often been interpreted as challenging the dominance of church authority over intellectual life. His emphasis on intellectual freedom encouraged broader discussions about the

³⁰ Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, xii, xvii.

³¹ Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, xv.

³² Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, xvii.

³³ Ernest Renan, *Averroès et l'averroïsme: Essay Historique*, with Wellcome Library (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1861), <http://archive.org/details/b2486397x>; *Ibn Rushd Dan Mazhabnya*.

³⁴ Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, xvii.





separation between religious authority and political power. These ideas, which matured further in European thought by the eighteenth century, contributed to new interpretive and cultural orientations within the history of European philosophy. In the writings of Ernest Renan, Ibn Rushd's philosophy was expanded and presented as one of the intellectual sources that helped shape the revival of learning during the Renaissance, while also inspiring reformist intellectual currents in major European universities. From that period onward, Ibn Rushd's teachings became firmly established among his European followers, later known collectively as Latin Averroism.³⁵ Within this intellectual context, his *Faṣl al-Maqāl* played a significant role in shaping discussions on the relationship between religion and philosophy and in encouraging a reassessment of traditional theological perspectives.

Conclusion

This study has examined the philosophical foundations and intellectual significance of Ibn Rushd through a critical analysis of his seminal treatise *Faṣl al-Maqāl*. By applying a textual and historical approach to Ibn Rushd's writings and situating them within the broader scholarly tradition of Islamic philosophy, the study has sought to address the central research questions concerning the nature of the relationship between revelation and reason, the epistemological role of philosophy, and the wider intellectual impact of Ibn Rushd's ideas on both Islamic and European intellectual traditions.

The analysis demonstrates that Ibn Rushd developed a coherent philosophical framework that affirms the essential harmony between Shari'a and *ḥikma*. In his view, philosophical inquiry is not only compatible with religion but is in fact mandated by the scriptural call to reflection and rational investigation. Philosophy serves as a disciplined method through which human beings can interpret the deeper meanings of revelation, particularly those Qur'ānic verses categorized as ambiguous. The study also reveals that Ibn Rushd's defense of rational inquiry represented a significant intervention within the theological debates of the medieval Islamic world. By critically engaging with the positions of theologians and philosophers, including responses to the critiques of al-Ghazālī, Ibn Rushd sought to restore the legitimacy of philosophical reasoning within the intellectual life of Islam. The findings of this study confirm that Ibn Rushd's philosophical project represents one of the most sophisticated attempts within the Islamic intellectual tradition to reconcile faith and reason. His insistence on the compatibility of revelation and reason challenged theological literalism and philosophical skepticism, while offering a balanced epistemological model grounded in reasoning and faithful interpretation. The idealism he advanced gave rise to new intellectual perspectives and a distinct school of thought in Europe known as Averroism which went on to exert a significant influence on the development of modern intellectual and scholarly traditions.

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³⁵ Ibn Rushd, *Makalah Penentu Tentang Hubungan Antara Syariah Dengan Falsafah*, xix.





Author's Contributions

The authors declare that this study was conducted without any conflicts of interest, whether personal, commercial, or financial, in relation to the funding sources. The authors also confirm that they have no personal interests or affiliations that could have influenced the conduct or outcomes of this research. Ahmad Nabil Amir carried out the study and was responsible for writing and revising the article. Tasnim Abdul Rahman conceptualized the central ideas of the study and developed its theoretical framework. He also supervised the review process, contributed to improvements to the manuscript, and approved the final submission of the article.

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