

IBN RUSHD'S INQUIRY INTO TRUTH

İbn Rüşd'ün Hakikat Araştırması

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Abstract

Abu'l-Walid Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Rüşd (Averroes) (ca. 1126-98 CE) has been held as one of the greatest Islamic thinkers, jurists and scientists of the twelfth century. He was an accomplished commentator on Plato and Aristotle, a physician, a practicing judge, a jurist, a princely advisor, and spokesman for theoretical and practical problems of his time.

Averroes, the philosopher, was devoted to expounding and defending Aristotle's natural philosophy, psychology and metaphysics. He worked diligently on their reconciliation with the doctrines of Islam. According to Averroes, philosophers are the guardians of reason, which is founded on proofs or certainty. They must be distinguished from those who use reason only as a dialectical tool or from the general public who use reason in a rhetorical way.

This paper examines Averroes's account of the harmonious relationship between philosophy and religion. It focuses on two interpretations of Averroes's understanding of the relationship between philosophical and scriptural discourse, as it relates to his genuine treatment of the concept of 'truth', i.e.,

Richard C. Taylor's interpretation in terms of the unity of truth, on the one hand, and Oliver Leaman's interpretation, which accentuates the perspectival aspect in Averroes's understanding of the relationship between philosophical and scriptural discourse in the Decisive Treatise, on the other.

It is argued that İbn Rüşd was able to embrace two apparently opposing positions. He believed in one truth that people can reach in two different ways: religious and philosophical. Hence, the harmony between religion and philosophy is achieved.

Keywords: İbn Rüşd, Truth, Religion, Discourse, Interpretation, Medieval Philosophy

Öz

Ebü'l-Velid Muhammed b. Ahmed b. Muhammed İbn Rüşd (Averroes), (1126-98), 12. yüzyılın en büyük İslam düşünürlerinden, fakihlerinden ve bilim adamlarından biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Eflatun ve Aristoteles'i başarılı bir şekilde yorumlamasının yanı sıra doktorluk, kadılık, devlet danışmanlığı ile döneminin teorik ve pratik problemlerinin bir sözcüsü vazifelerini üstlenmiştir. Filozof İbn Rüşd, kendini Aristoteles'im doğa felsefesini, psikolojisini ve metafiziğini açıklamaya ve savunmaya adanmıştı. Onların İslam doktrinleriyle uyumlu olması için özenle çalışmıştı. İbn Rüşd'e göre filozoflar, deliller veya kesinlik temelinde kurulan mantığın koruyucularıdır. Filozoflar mantığı sadece diyalektik bir araç olarak kullanan kişilerden veya hitabet amaçlı kullanan genel halktan ayrı tutulmalıdır. Bu çalışma İbn Rüşd'ün çerçevesinden felsefe ve din arasındaki uyumlu ilişkiyi incelemektedir ve İbn Rüşd'ün "hakikat" kavramına yönelik özgün yaklaşımıyla ilgili olmalarından ötürü felsefi ve kutsal bağlam arasındaki ilişkiye dair onun anlayışının iki yorumuna odaklanmaktadır: Bir tarafta Richard C. Taylor'ın hakikatin birliğine ilişkin yorumu, diğer tarafta ise Oliver Leaman'ın, İbn Rüşd'ün *Kitāb Faşl el-Makāl'deki* felsefi ve kutsal bağlam arasındaki ilişkiye dair onun anlayışındaki perspektif yönü vurgulayan yorumu. İbn Rüşd'ün birbirine tam zıt iki görüşü de kabul edebildiği iddia edilmektedir. İbn Rüşd, insanların tek olan gerçeğe iki farklı yoldan ulaşabileceklerine inanıyordu: din ve felsefe. Böylelikle din ve felsefe uyumu sağlanmış olacaktı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İbn Rüşd, Hakikat, Din, Söylem, Yorum, Ortaçağ Felsefesi

I. Philosophy, Religion and the Search for Truth

Among Muslim philosophers Averroes is a unique figure, because he gathered two seemingly opposites together. First, he is the only great jurist of Muslim philosophers; other Muslim philosophers had not been experts in Islamic jurisprudence.

For Ibn Rushd, both philosophy and religion aim at securing the truth. As religion allows anyone to attain this desired result, philosophy is restricted to a few people, who are versed in intellectual work so that they can use demonstrative arguments to investigate in depth the divine law. Hence, the hidden inner meaning of revealed truth can only be illuminated by philosophers through the employment of demonstrative arguments. For the other sections of society, a variety of arguments are available, dialectical for the theologians and rhetorical or poetical for the ordinary people. These possibilities allow for anyone to live a virtuous life in compliance with Islamic law based on his/her understanding thereof (Leaman, 1980).

In two of his renowned works: the *Decisive Treatise* (Hourani, 1961) and the *Incoherence of the Incoherence*, Ibn Rushd conveys two significant messages: firstly, that there is a connection between the divine law and wisdom or philosophy so that the pursuit of philosophy can be justified in the presence of the revealed law of Islam, and secondly, that philosophy guards and enriches religious life rather than obstructs it (Butterworth, 1996, 6-18). It is evident in both works the focus upon the difference between common and learned understanding of Scripture. As most people are unable to grasp the complexities of natural and human phenomena, they must be addressed and taught in a fashion different from that in which the educated are spoken to and instructed.

In his *Decisive Treatise* (Hourani, 1961), Averroes argues for the value of philosophy, and claims that the study of philosophy is required for anyone who should truly understand religion. He dealt with the question of the relationship between religion, tradition and community, on the one hand, and philosophy, science and free inquiry on the other (Mahdi, 1996,

256). Averroes argues that philosophy cannot contradict revelation in Islam, as they are two different methods of arriving at the truth, and “truth cannot contradict truth”; demonstrative truth and scriptural truth cannot conflict. He holds that “If the apparent meaning of Scripture conflicts with demonstrative conclusions it must be interpreted allegorically, i.e. metaphorically.” (Hourani, 1961).

Hence, the Double truth theory based on the idea that there are two kinds of truth, religious and philosophical, was not held by Ibn Rushd himself but was an innovation of the Averroists (Taylor, 2005, 183). Nonetheless, they perceived correctly the centrality of the concept of truth in his philosophical outlook (Najjar, 1996, 192).

In his *Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl wa-taqrīr mā bayna al-sharī'ah wa al-ḥikmah min al-ittiṣāl* or *Decisive Treatise*, Averroes establishes the relationship between philosophy and scripture, where he states that they are not incompatible. Both philosophy and scripture represent harmonious modes of reasoning in their expression of the truth. This characterization of philosophy and scripture as compatible and non-competing forms of discourse is an initial general account that is developed further by Averroes in the process of constructing the relationship between philosophy (Ḥikma) and scripture (Şarī'a).

In his study of the relationship between philosophy and scripture in *Faṣl al-maqāl*, Faizi concludes that “the harmonious and non-contradictory relationship between philosophy and scripture in *Faṣl al-maqāl* is best described as a ‘conditional hierarchy.’ With respect to the theoretical investigation of being, philosophy is superior to all other modes of discourse because it has the capacity to represent things “just as they are.” With respect to any other form of activity, multiple perspectives may serve as legitimate and equally valid guides to action (Faizi, 2016, 1-14.).

It should be noted that Averroes was the chief qāḍī (judge) of Córdoba, the Imam of the Great Mosque of Córdoba under the Almoravids, and a great philosopher. He dealt with religious issues while practicing philosophy in a way that reflects the dynamic of Islamic philosophy which provides a particular meaning for religion. In Islam, unity cannot manifest itself without entering into the world of multiplicity while remaining the

means whereby humanity is led from multiplicity to unity. The great emphasis of Islam upon unity, therefore, could not prevent diversity on the formal level nor could Islam have integrated a vast segment of humanity with diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds without making possible diverse interpretations of its teachings.

The discussion of the nature of the relationship between philosophy and scripture in Averroes's thought leads us to consider two recent interpretations of this issue. The questions to be asked are the following: Do philosophy and scripture form a hierarchical relationship? Does Averroes hold that scripture and philosophy are equally legitimate perspectives that offer parallel, non-competing accounts of the same phenomena? And how does Averroes, in his pursuit of truth, construct a harmonious relationship between philosophy and scripture?

2. Modes of Discourse

As shown above, Averroes distinguishes between three intellectual classes: philosophers, theologians and ordinary people. One might expect his philosophical technical works to be intended for fellow philosophers, not the general public or even the community of scholars. It is fair to say that his writings can be divided into "those in which he often gives his position in all its complexity and those in which he cautiously considers the abilities of his audience when voicing his understanding" (Taylor, 1991, 695-697). For Averroes, philosophy is a discourse that depends entirely upon demonstrative reasoning, while scripture, as a mode of discourse, uses demonstrative, dialectical and rhetorical reasoning for the formation of concepts and judgments.

The scriptural discourse is a privileged form of speech that secures a solid and accurate basis for researching the subject of truth. The hallmark of this discourse is its reliance on demonstrative reasoning (*burhān*) as the means by which concepts are formed and judgments are affirmed. It has the primary place in comparison with dialectical and rhetorical reasoning. Hence, as a mode of discourse, scripture uses demonstrative and non-demonstrative modes of reasoning alike. Averroes argues that the use of these modes of reasoning in scripture is due to the difference in the capacities of people in the

formation of concepts and judgments; bearing in mind that scriptural discourse must address individuals from diverse backgrounds. Thus, it contains dialectical and rhetorical arguments to convey its message to those who would not be able to follow a demonstrative argument (Hourani, 1961).

Taylor clarifies this point by arguing that Averroes “does not assert that there are different truths for these diverse classes of human beings. Those for whom the rhetorical mode of argumentation is most fitting require guidance of others if they are to assent to what happens to be the truth, since neither the premises nor the argument form as such contribute to the truth of the conclusion.” (Taylor, 2005, 185). He continues by emphasizing that the dialectical mode is most fitting is for those who are misled particularly by the starting points and foundations of arguments. Hence, they need guidance from those who know the truth of the premises. Taylor concludes by stating that in Averroes there is no doctrine of “Double Truth” such that philosophy has its truth and religion has yet another. Averroes is entitled to the unity of truth.

Averroes resolves the embedded tension between his conceptions of philosophy and scripture by upholding that these tensions arise because philosophical discourse relies purely on demonstrative proof and propositional content that is necessary and true, whereas scriptural discourse, in addition to demonstrative proof, depends upon symbolic, dialectical and rhetorical propositions that may not accord with truth (Faizi, 2016).

In *Faṣl al-maqāl*, Averroes considers philosophy as epistemologically superior to other modes of discourse, as demonstrative reasoning allows for a specific relation between concepts and judgments and the things upon which these concepts and judgments are made.

He writes: “[W]e the Muslim community know definitely that demonstrative study does not lead to [conclusions] conflicting with what Scripture has given us; for truth does not oppose truth but accords with it and bears witness to it.” (Averroes, 2012, 50). As is shown below, by holding that truth is one and can be reached in two different ways: religious and philosophical. Averroes was able to depict philosophy as purely demonstrative and scripture as a combination of demonstrative, dialectical, and rhetorical reasoning, while holding that both lead to truth and do not conflict with each other.

3. The Inner and The Apparent Meaning

In the context of ‘interpretation’ and Law (Şari‘a), questions arise as to whether or not there are definitive interpretations of the law. For Averroes, the law is the source of divine commands. They can also be referred to as Scriptures, because they are texts to be studied. More often, ‘interpretation’ is used in a restrictive way to refer to a sort of understanding that does not constitute the only probable valid understanding of the text in question and also contains a subjective component (Gracia, 1997, 140).

Averroes considered different kinds of texts for interpretation and took into account the different classes of people who interpret them. This leads to multiple interpretations to these texts. Different kinds of texts will require different understandings, where knowers will understand in different ways. Averroes places scripture into two categories: Some texts have only one meaning, and that is the meaning they seem to have (zāhir). Other texts, in addition to the meaning they appear to have, have a hidden or inner meaning (bātin). Hence, Averroes remarks that communicating the interpretation of scripture to the masses must focus on the apparent meaning, provided that it is presented by properly trained teachers so that the faith of the believers is not hurt.

Averroes advanced his idea of the inner meaning of revelation. Hence, he holds that the propositional content of scripture is either in agreement or at variance with the conclusions of demonstrative reasoning. Once the distinction between the apparent and inner meaning of scripture is made, the possible conflict between philosophy and scripture arises. The allegorical interpretation (ta’wil) is the means by which one can grasp the hidden meanings of texts. Averroes holds that “If the apparent meaning of Scripture conflicts with demonstrative conclusions it must be interpreted allegorically, i.e. metaphorically (Hourani, 1961). For Averroes, an allegorical interpretation entails the “extension of the significance of an expression from real to metaphorical significance, without forsaking therein the standard metaphorical practices of Arabic, such as calling a thing by the name of something resembling it or a cause or consequence or accompaniment of it, or other things such as are enumerated in accounts of the kinds of metaphorical speech.” (Hourani, 1961, 50).

This disagreement is due to the scripture's usage of symbolic language, dialectics, and rhetoric to convey its message to ordinary individuals. This leaves philosophers with the task of digging into the inner meanings of Scripture and appealing to allegorical interpretation.

Hence, philosophy applies the resources at its disposal to scriptural discourse, which depends on the application of philosophical tools in order to articulate its meaning. The use of symbolic language in scripture aims at denoting complex and intricate ideas that cannot be understood the masses.

As has been pointed out, philosophers have the required tools and methods of learning that enable them to construct demonstrative arguments and present allegorical interpretations of scripture. Theologians as well interpret texts allegorically, where these interpretations should not be judged as infallible. We must look into the relationship between symbols, images, metaphors and their referents that must lead to the truth.

These relationships can be organized in certain social structures by rules or customs. Hence, cultural and social factors may influence symbols and referents. In this context, it is likely that symbols may not necessarily relate to their referents. This would undoubtedly affect their relationship with the truth, as they become untrue beliefs. For Averroes, the connection between the symbol and the referent is organic rather than arbitrary.

Averroes continues by emphasizing that although hidden truth is only accessible to philosophers, God in His wisdom has also made it possible for others to access it through images and symbols. These images and symbols produce the apparent meanings of texts, while philosophers acquire their hidden meanings. The difference resides in the use of symbolic language (Hourani, 1961, 78). Averroes clarifies the four different ways in which people come to understand texts in the following:

One of them occurs when the method is common, yet specialized in two respects: i.e. where it is certain in its concepts and judgments, in spite of being rhetorical or dialectical. These syllogisms are those whose premises, in spite of being based on accepted ideas or on opinions, are accidentally certain, and whose conclusions are accidentally to be taken in their direct meaning without symbolization. Scriptural texts of this class have no

allegorical interpretations, and anyone who denies them or interprets them allegorically is an unbeliever.

The second class occurs where the premises, in spite of being based on accepted ideas or on opinions, are certain, and where the conclusions are symbols for the things which it was intended to conclude. Texts of this class, i.e. their conclusions, admit of allegorical interpretation.

The third is the reverse of this: it occurs where the conclusions are the very things which it was intended to conclude, while the premises are based on accepted ideas or on opinions without being accidentally certain. Texts of this class also, i.e. their conclusions, do not admit of allegorical interpretation, but their premises may do so.

The fourth class occurs where the premises are based on accepted ideas or opinions, without being accidentally certain, and where the conclusions are symbols for what it was intended to conclude. In these cases the duty of the elite is to interpret them allegorically, while the duty of the masses is to take them in their apparent meaning. (op. cit., 64 and Gracia, 1997, 143-144).

Thus, Averroes puts forward the conditions for four different kinds of understandings of the conclusions of Scripture. These conditions relate to the certainty with which the knower knows the premises presented in the texts and with the use of symbols in the conclusions. The determining factor for allegorical interpretation, however, is not the certainty with which premises are known, but the usage of symbols in the conclusions. Those texts whose conclusions use symbols may be subjected to allegorical interpretation, but those which do not, may not be subjected to such interpretation. Hence, what determines whether or not these methods involve allegorical interpretation is the use of symbols. Any text that uses symbols in its conclusions is open to allegorical interpretation and this entails that it has a hidden meaning. Texts that do not use symbols in their conclusions, on the other hand, have only an apparent meaning (op. cit., 144).

The possibility of applying allegorical interpretation hinges upon the usage of symbols in the text and their assigned meaning. The following cases are considered by Averroes: Firstly, where it is difficult to know both that there is symbolization and what is symbolized, such texts may be

interpreted allegorically only by the learned. Secondly, where it is easy to know both that there is symbolization and what is symbolized, such texts must be interpreted allegorically by everyone. Thirdly, where it is easy to know that there is symbolization but difficult to know what is symbolized, the masses must be told that only the learned are able to understand the true interpretation; or they must be given an easy allegorical interpretation, according to the rules laid down by Ghazālī. Fourthly, where it is difficult to know that there is symbolization, but easy to know what it symbolizes, it is preferable to deny the existence of symbolization (Hourani, 1961, 178-179 and Gracia, 1997, 144). Hence, the hidden meanings of Scripture are understood through the application of allegorical interpretation.

For Averroes, members of demonstrative class only may have access to texts with hidden meanings; they are not accessible to everyone. However, “it is possible for members of the demonstrative class to falsify incorrect interpretations of the hidden meanings of some sacred texts, but it is not possible for them to verify the correct interpretations of the meanings of sacred texts they alone are called to interpret.” (op. cit., 149).

For Averroes, it is possible to attain definitive interpretations of apparent meanings of Scripture, while it is not possible to obtain definitive interpretations of texts with hidden meanings, which are accessible only to members of the demonstrative class. In this respect, Averroes uses two kinds of justification; theoretical and practical. According to the theoretical justification, it is not possible to reach agreement on interpretation of texts which carries theoretical import.

To claim a single correct understanding of hidden meanings and communicating this understanding to the masses may lead to a state of disbelief among those who cannot understand these meanings and cause distrust in those who present the interpretations. To claim one correct understanding and to present it to the masses may cause conflict and misuse: “Thus the Mu’tazilites interpreted many verses and Traditions allegorically, and expressed their interpretations to the masses, and the Ash’arites did the same, although they used such interpretations less frequently. In consequence they threw people into hatred, mutual detestation and wars, tore the Scriptures to shreds, and completely divided people.” (Hourani, 1961, 68).

For Averroes, “With regard to an apparent text, when there is self-evident doubt whether it is apparent to everyone and whether knowledge of its interpretation is possible for them, they should be told that it is ambiguous and its meaning known by no one except God.” (op. cit., 66).

4. Ultimate Versus Different Points of View

If ‘interpretation’ is founded on rational grounds, then, Ibn Rushd holds, every member of the religious community will reach the required goals in accordance with Islamic law. In this way, ‘interpretation’ is a synonym of ‘reason’ (Stelzer, 1996, 19-55). Hence, Leaman recognizes that reality can be interpreted from different points of view. Hence, Averroes, explains the various ways in which people use language, where the multiplicity of meaning is an essential feature (Leaman, 1998, 236-239). According to Leaman, access to the real is not restricted to one specific point of view. This is often taken to imply that no way of seeing the world can be taken as definitively “true”, but does *not* necessarily entail that all perspectives are equally valid. Within this multi-perspective outline, the descriptions offered of a specific phenomenon vary according to the purpose of the exercise. If the aim is to describe a physical object such as an airplane, the description given by an ordinary person will be different from that of an aircraft engineer. According to Leaman, Averroes considers both descriptions of the airplane as equally accurate because the “accuracy of linguistic discourse is determined in relation to the context in which it is articulated” (Leaman, 1988, 9). Hence, Leaman concludes that Averroes allows for multiple, equally legitimate rationalities and works with a perspectival epistemological framework (Leaman, 1980, 181).

The non-demonstrative classes only have access to the apparent or literal meaning of symbols in scripture while the demonstrative class has the ability to interpret such symbols. Even though Averroes has identified real connections between symbols, their interpretations, and the truth—thereby showing that symbolization is not a purely conventional, linguistic phenomenon—he still has to resolve a pressing problem. Based on Leaman’s interpretation, Averroes adopts a framework that permits multiple points of view in the description of a certain phenomenon. Thus, the comparison of different points of view becomes viable in relation to certain aims and

purposes (Leaman, 2000, 171). Accordingly, when examining the performance of ethical action, no point of view has a privileged position. In this respect, Averroes emerges as an upholder of a multi perspective view of truth. This account of different modes of discourse/points of view stands in opposition to the framework that is firmly categorical in terms of the relationship between different modes of discourse.

We now turn to Taylor's position regarding Averroes's account of truth, as it offers an alternative interpretation based upon the principle of the unity of truth. Taylor argues that the "principle of the unity of truth plays a central role in Averroes' arguments, for otherwise it would be possible to hold there to be true propositions set forth in religion by dialectical argumentation founded on interpretation of religious scripture but which are at the same time incompatible with true propositions set forth in philosophy founded on demonstration." (Taylor, 2005, 185).

Averroes holds that the truth of religion and the truth of philosophy are one and the same. In the *Incoherence of the Incoherence*, he writes: "the religions are, according to philosophers, obligatory, since they lead toward wisdom in a way universal to all human beings, for philosophy only leads a certain number of intelligent people to the knowledge of happiness, and they therefore have to learn wisdom, whereas religions seek the instruction of the masses generally." (Averroes, 1930, 582). Thus, Averroes holds that the role of religion is the education of human beings in proper social values and conduct for their fulfillment and happiness. Yet it is necessary for those of the demonstrative class of philosophers to understand common religious propositions critically (Taylor, 2005, 187). For, there is a "single standard of truth" to which all forms of discourse are subjected for examination (Taylor, 2009, 226-227).

He writes:

... [W]hat Averroes is asserting... is that the primary approach to the understanding of reality and interpreting Religious Law is to be found with the Aristotelian method of philosophical demonstration and that all other methodologies are secondary to this. This is the deeper import of the principle of the Unity of Truth (Taylor, 2000, 10-11). Hence, Averroes distinguishes between the pursuit of truth in the theoretical and the practical sciences. In the theoretical domain, the

purpose of investigation is the truth itself, whereas in the practical domain, the purpose of inquiry is “truth in the form of good action.

According to Faizi (2016), Taylor’s examination of *Faṣl al-maqāl* constructs a rationalist Averroes, whose commitment to the “unity of truth” excludes the possibility of a non-hierarchical relationship between philosophy and other modes of discourse, including scripture (Taylor, 2009, 225-235).

Here we are confronted with two interpretations of Averroes’s understanding of the relationship between philosophical and scriptural discourse. We have Taylor’s interpretation in terms of the unity of truth, on the one hand, and Leaman’s interpretation, which accentuates the perspectival aspect in Averroes’s understanding of the relationship between philosophical and scriptural discourse in the *Decisive Treatise*, on the other.

According to Averroes, Scripture employs dialectical and rhetorical arguments to convince its audience and the contents of such arguments do not necessarily have ontological correlates that are identical to the ideas they produce in a person’s mind. It can be argued that the distinction between theoretical and practical truths is crucial for understanding Averroes’s stance on truth. We need to determine at the outset the purpose in approaching a certain phenomenon. For, it will determine the kind of discourse to be employed in its comprehension. Let us recall that Averroes classifies people into three intellectual groups: those liable to rational, polemical and rhetorical discourse. Members of the first group, i.e., philosophers are a minority compared to other groups. It is evident that no group is to suffer epistemologically from neglect, in view of the existence of these ways of reasoning in the scriptural discourse. When a certain contradiction arises between scripture and reason based on interpretation, the philosopher must reinterpret revelation in harmony with reason because reason provides the ultimate truth and the truth does not contradict itself. Furthermore, Averroes stresses the fact that philosophers are not allowed to share their reinterpretation of scripture with the masses. How can the relationship between philosophical and scriptural discourse be viewed, considering Leaman’s and Taylor’s reading of Averroes?

We have shown above that Leaman portrayed Averroes as a perspectival thinker, while Taylor emphasized the unity of truth, based on the distinction between theoretical and practical truths. Once this distinction is made, it can lead to a harmonious relationship between philosophy and religion based on pursuing philosophical inquiry into one theoretical truth and multiple practical truths.

Conclusion

Ibn Rushd believed in one truth that people can reach in two different ways: religious and philosophical. He maintained that truth is one and that truth never opposes truth, although it can be achieved through philosophy and religion. Thus, there should be harmony between both as the triumph of one is at the same time a triumph for the other. He sustained this conviction throughout his life undaunted by all the challenges and obstacles that he encountered and remained a vibrant voice and adamant inquirer into truth. He acknowledged the significant roles that religion plays in the growth of human powers towards their satisfaction in the highest intellectual insight into God and his creation. The distinction between three levels of discourse and of the audiences to which they are addressed is an important device in Ibn Rushd's attempt to contextualize philosophy in the Islamic environment. Hence, philosophy can be practiced only by the demonstrative class, the members of which possess a specific capacity and training. The two other classes are capable of reasoning only on the dialectical or rhetorical levels.

His reasons for requiring philosophy to venture into a religious domain reflect his rigorous, universal rationalism, an approach that was so appealing to European philosophers in the Middle Ages. Philosophers, according to Ibn Rushd, are the guardians of reason or rationality, which is based on proofs or certainty. They must be distinguished from those who use reason only as a dialectical tool or from the general public who use reason in a rhetorical way.

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