



The Issue of Reconciling Religion and Philosophy in Islamic Thought

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Abstract:

One of the most important aspects of Islamic philosophy, and one of the most significant areas of innovation within it, is the issue of reconciling religion and philosophy, or reason. This has been a fundamental issue for Islam throughout its long history. The interaction between Islamic culture and Greek philosophy produced a complex interplay of different intellectual currents, which later escalated into sharp divisions. One group, represented by scholars of Islamic law and philosophy, and supported by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, believes that philosophy and Islamic law are inherently contradictory and unrelated. Another group of philosophers champions philosophy and sees no connection between the two (Islamic law and philosophy). A third group, led by Ibn Rushd (Averroes), seeks to reconcile these differences and establish a framework for dialogue.

Keywords: Philosophy, Religion, Reason, Transmission, Religion, Copernicus.

Introduction:

Islamic philosophy constitutes one of the defining moments in the history of philosophy and its development. Although Muslim philosophers translated and commented on the works of Greek philosophy, particularly the writings of Plato and Aristotle—the translation movement being the most significant point of contact between Muslims and Greek philosophy, having begun in the late first Islamic century and gained momentum under the Abbasids, while the earliest translators were of non-Arab origin—Ya‘qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi emerged as the first Muslim translator and soon became the first philosopher in Islam. He devoted himself to interpreting Aristotle’s books and composing philosophical treatises in mathematics, medicine, chemistry, astronomy, and metaphysics, producing approximately 241 books and epistles.

From this point, Islamic philosophy began to take shape, distinguishing the medieval period and rising to the level of other philosophical traditions. At the same time, it developed its own distinctive concerns, shaped by the nature of Islamic society, its culture, and its religion. Among the most prominent of these concerns was the question of the relationship between wisdom and the Shari‘a, or between philosophy and religion.

In light of this, the following questions may be raised: How did Muslim philosophers address this problematic? And is it possible to reconcile wisdom and the Shari‘a, or reason and revelation?

1/- The Meaning of Religion and Philosophy:

Religion—in its simplest definition—is a creed, a law, and a moral framework to which the believer is committed. Cicero states in his book *On the Laws*: “Religion is the bond that connects man to God.” Kant defined it in his work *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* by stating: “Religion is the consciousness of our duties insofar as they are founded upon divine commands.” Father Chatel, in *The Law of Humanity*, stated: “Religion is the totality of the duties of the creature toward the Creator: man’s duties toward God, his duties toward the community, and his duties toward himself.” (Ahmad-al-Rumh, December 24, 2021)

As for the meaning of philosophy, it remains ambiguous even among some of its advocates, who define it as the “love of wisdom,” or as the persistent pursuit of wisdom through continuous questioning, while the philosopher is described as “the lover of wisdom.” Philosophy, then, means living life with wisdom and rationality.

Ibn Rushd says: “If the activity of philosophy is nothing more than the investigation of beings and the reflection upon them insofar as they indicate the Artisan, that is, insofar as they are made things, then beings indicate the Artisan only through knowledge of their craftsmanship. And the more complete the knowledge of their craftsmanship, the more complete the knowledge of the Artisan. Since the Law has indeed recommended reflection upon beings and urged people to do so.” (Ibn, 1968, p. 27)

2/- The Relationship Between Religion and Philosophy:

Tawfiq al-Tawil explained in his book *The Story of the Conflict Between Religion and Philosophy* that there is no conflict between religion and philosophy, nor between science and religion. He states: “An examination of the history of reason alongside faith shows that we know of no conflict between them that led to the enslavement of reason and the crushing of its adherents,” (al-Tawil, 2019, p. 9) because truth is the ultimate end sought both religiously and philosophically, and the search for it was the task of the earliest philosophers just as it was the aim of religion.

This does not mean, however, that the relationship between philosophy and certain historical Islamic figures was entirely harmonious. Rather, the disagreement was with the advocates of literalist, text-bound reasoning, who sought to estrange Muslims from everything related to philosophy and falsely misinterpreted the Prophet’s statement when he sought refuge in his Lord from “knowledge that is of no benefit.” They claimed that he was referring to the sciences of the ancients, namely Greek philosophy. This is an invalid interpretation for which there is no evidence.

They had earlier denounced *‘ilm al-kalam*—Islamic theology—because it addresses matters of faith and belief through rational inquiry, a discipline developed by the Ash‘arites and the Maturidites, and because, in some of its aspects, it makes use of philosophical tools. Textualist reason is a form of reason that was ideologized over centuries through the alliance between political authority and jurists. One of the consequences of this alliance was hostility toward, and opposition to, the Islamic philosophical current. In order to discredit the rationalist trend—the Mu‘tazilites, the Maturidites, and the Ash‘arites—they demonized philosophy, accused it of heresy, and warned against engaging in it. (Ahmad-al-Rumh, December 24, 2021)

Many religious scholars warned against philosophy and prohibited both its teaching and its study. Ibn Taymiyyah regarded it as a useless science, and before him Abu Hamid al-Ghazali divided philosophers into three categories: the *dahriyyun*, or materialists/atheists, whom he considered heretics; the second



category, the naturalists, who denied resurrection despite acknowledging the existence of a creator of the universe, and he also declared them unbelievers; and the third category, the “metaphysicians,” namely the later philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, whom he likewise declared unbelievers, along with their followers among the Islamic philosophers, such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and others. (al-Ghazali, 2020, p. 14)

However, Ibn Rushd rose in defense of the philosophers and responded to al-Ghazali in his famous work *Tahafut al-Tahafut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*, demonstrating the possibility of reconciling philosophy and religion. He cited Qur’anic texts in support of this position and clarified the necessity of drawing benefit from the philosophical heritage. He further explained that interpretation removes the appearance of contradiction from all ambiguity, and that the opposition between religion and philosophy is merely illusory, “for truth does not contradict truth.” If a contradiction appears between reason and transmitted text—religious truth and philosophical truth—then the transmitted text is subject to interpretation in order to remove the ambiguity; for, as Ibn Rushd maintains, “God cannot have granted us intellects and then revealed to us laws that contradict them.” (Ahmad-al-Rumh, December 24, 2021)

2-1/- The Separatist Trend:

There are those who argue that it is impossible to employ reason in religious matters, on the grounds that each domain possesses characteristics that distinguish it and separate it from the other. Religion, for instance, presents matters of faith as unquestionable givens that cannot be subjected to discussion or rational scrutiny, as in the Qur’anic verse: “The Most Merciful established Himself upon the Throne.” (Surah Taha, verse 05.) Thus, the individual is required to believe in such statements as they are, without inquiring into their nature, because religion is divine revelation that is infallible, free from error, and transcendent above human limitations.

Philosophy, by contrast, is of human origin and is grounded in reason, which is limited and relative, and therefore incapable of fully apprehending the ultimate truths of things. Historical experience further confirms, according to this view, that reason is deficient and prone to error, particularly in matters of belief and issues related to the unseen. For this reason, some maintain that when the Mu‘tazilites rationalized religion, they departed from its foundational principles, thereby opening the possibility of affirmations that contradict divine justice. Consequently, the primary cause of the perceived conflict between reason and transmitted revelation, according to this perspective, lies in subjecting the Qur’anic and prophetic texts to rational judgment and elevating reason to a position of authority, dominance, and control over these texts. Yet reason, being inherently limited, cannot serve as the arbiter in interpreting the texts of the Qur’an and the Sunnah, since its capacity for comprehension is restricted.

This view is reinforced by Ibn Khaldun, who acknowledged that reason is limited and that matters of the unseen lie beyond its scope; therefore, reconciliation between religion and reason is not possible. Similarly, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali maintained that reason is well suited to mathematical and logical inquiry but remains inadequate in divine matters. He stated: “If their metaphysical sciences had been as rigorously demonstrated and as free from conjecture as their mathematical and logical sciences, they would not have disagreed about them, just as they did not disagree in arithmetic.” (al-Ghazali, p. 77)

Accordingly, al-Ghazali did not object to the philosophers’ mathematical sciences; rather, his objection concerned conjecture and confusion in the domain of metaphysics. He studied Greek philosophy and the

works of al-Farabi and others, and he authored *Maqasid al-Falasifa (The Aims of the Philosophers)*, in which he presented the doctrines of the philosophers prior to undertaking their critique and refutation. Following this, he composed his well-known work *Tahafut al-Falasifa (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)*, in which he responded to the ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, as well as to Muslim philosophers like al-Farabi and others, whom he accused of abandoning religion due to their reliance on reason and their imitation of the ancient philosophers.

It is evident that philosophers are not all of one kind in matters of faith, just as Muslim scholars did not adopt a uniform stance toward philosophy. The campaign against philosophy and philosophers was indeed severe; yet none of its proponents were able to produce a Qur'anic text that prohibits free thought or rational inquiry. It is also possible that al-Ghazali's position had a political dimension, especially considering that he was accused of having ties with the Seljuk sultans, who employed him and promoted a form of popular Sufism to divert Muslims from political and worldly concerns. This is because the philosophical orientation tends to raise suppressed questions that are unsettling to authoritarian rule. If the Salafi trend uses textual evidence to oppose despotism, philosophy, in turn, inspires the intellect to develop an awareness that rejects it. Among the most eloquent expressions of this idea is the statement of Victor Hugo: "We stand with religion against its men." (Ahmad-al-Rumh, December 24, 2021)

However, al-Ghazali did not declare the philosophers unbelievers in an absolute sense across all their views, but only with regard to specific issues. The evidence for this lies in his statement: "As for matters other than these three, concerning their treatment of the divine attributes and their affirmation of divine unity therein, their doctrine is close to that of the Mu'tazilites. Likewise, their position on the necessary connection of natural causes is explicitly stated by the Mu'tazilites in their doctrine of generation. Indeed, all that we have transmitted from them has been affirmed by certain groups within Islam, except for these three principles. Whoever deems it permissible to declare the innovators among the Islamic sects unbelievers will also declare them unbelievers on these grounds, while whoever refrains from excommunication will limit it to these three issues alone." (al-Ghazali, 2020)

2-2/- The Integrative Trend:

There exists, however, an opposing and divergent perspective that defends the close and intrinsic relationship between religion and philosophy. Among its foremost proponents is al-Kindi, who is regarded as the pioneer of philosophy within the Islamic intellectual milieu. He considered engagement in philosophy a necessity, yet he did not privilege the opinions of the philosopher over what is conveyed by the Prophet, nor did he elevate philosophical knowledge above that which is revealed through religion.

Al-Kindi did not contemplate reconciling the two domains—religion and philosophy—until he became convinced that true philosophy, as he defined it, is "the knowledge of things in their true realities." From this standpoint, philosophy is deeply connected to religion, since the knowledge of things in their true realities constitutes the very essence of the mission brought by the prophets. Thus, he brought together true religion and true philosophy upon shared aims and common truths. He rejected the claim that the pursuit of philosophy, understood as the knowledge of things in their realities, constitutes disbelief. On the contrary, he held that its study is obligatory, provided that it proceeds in harmony with religion and



serves it faithfully by rationally demonstrating the truths conveyed by the prophets. (Ibrahim, 23/08/2017)

It appears that the objectives al-Kindi assigns to philosophy—namely, the knowledge of truth and acting in accordance with it—are fully aligned with the fundamental purpose of religion. Indeed, both religious truth and philosophical truth are one and the same, and there is no contradiction between them. Any apparent discrepancy arises only at the level of the literal meaning of the text, particularly when reason is not properly engaged.

Al-Kindi also speaks of what he calls the “science of the cause,” which seeks to attain knowledge of the First Cause (God), as the origin of all other existents. This is a metaphysical science, or what is referred to as first philosophy, concerned with the primary principles of existence. Through the knowledge of these principles, one gains comprehensive understanding of all beings. Consequently, he regarded the science of the cause as nobler than the science of the effect, since the latter is merely a consequence. From this perspective, philosophy is the most noble of sciences because it is the science of truth.

Among the most significant Muslim philosophers who addressed the problem of the relationship between wisdom (philosophy) and the Shari‘a (religion) is Ibn Rushd (1126–1198), one of the greatest philosophers of Islam and among the most distinguished commentators on Aristotle. He found within Aristotelian philosophy the possibility of establishing a rational philosophical framework that led him to distinguish between religion and philosophy at the level of method, without setting them in opposition at the level of ultimate purpose (Ibrahim, December 24, 2017). Among his most important works are *Tahafut al-Tahafut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)* and *Fasl al-Maqal fi ma bayna al-Hikma wa al-Shari‘a min al-Ittisal (The Decisive Treatise on the Connection Between Philosophy and Religion)*. (Ibn, 1968, p. 35)

Ibn Rushd defended philosophy with great determination, seeking to restore to it some of the vitality it had nearly lost following al-Ghazali’s critique. He was accused of heresy, persecuted, and even exiled; both he and his son were expelled from the mosque and prevented from praying with the community. At that time, a widespread hostility toward philosophy prevailed in society, particularly after the campaign led by al-Ghazali. The dominant view in Andalusian society held that philosophy was entirely alien to Islam, and that anyone engaged in it deserved to be accused of atheism and heresy. This unjust stance compelled Ibn Rushd to defend both philosophy and authentic philosophical inquiry. He sought to demonstrate, through rational and scriptural evidence alike, that there is neither conflict nor contradiction between religion and philosophy.

In this regard, Ibn Rushd’s effort aligns with those who worked on reconciling the two, affirming that philosophy, as a method grounded in intellectual endeavor and acquisition, leads to the same truth to which religion calls. He states: “If these revealed laws are true and call for reflection that leads to the knowledge of truth, then we, the Muslim community, know with certainty that demonstrative reasoning cannot lead to a contradiction with what is conveyed by the Law. For truth does not contradict truth; rather, it accords with it and bears witness to it.” (Ibrahim, December 24, 2017)

Ibn Rushd’s undertaking was undoubtedly arduous. Philosophy had become prohibited, and philosophers were subjected to persecution. The impact of al-Ghazali’s critique in *Tahafut al-Falasifa (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)* remained deeply influential throughout the Islamic world. How,

then, could Ibn Rushd demonstrate the compatibility of religion with a mode of thought whose adherents had been declared unbelievers in some matters and innovators in others by al-Ghazali? While al-Kindi had faced hostility from critics of philosophy, he did not encounter a systematic work dedicated to dismantling its foundations and excommunicating its adherents. It was sufficient for him to engage in debate with his detractors and to demonstrate the necessity and benefit of philosophical inquiry. (Ibrahim, December 24, 2017)

Ibn Rushd, by contrast, was confronted with a highly structured work that meticulously critiqued the views of Muslim philosophers, authored by a prominent figure of Ash‘arite theology and Sufi thought, whose disciples were widely dispersed and wielded significant influence across various strata of society. How, then, could philosophy regain its standing and be vindicated?

Ibn Rushd recognized that the only viable path was to respond with a work that refuted the arguments presented in al-Ghazali’s book, which he entitled *Tahafut al-Tahafut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*. It is important to note that al-Ghazali did not intend to demolish philosophy as such; otherwise, he would have entitled his work “The Incoherence of Philosophy.” Rather, his aim was to refute and expose the weakness of the views of Muslim philosophers, particularly al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, which is why he named his work *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*.

In any case, Ibn Rushd sought to pave the way for restoring confidence in philosophy. His rigorous approach rendered his treatment genuinely scientific, grounded in demonstrative proof. For him, reconciling religion and philosophy does not entail reducing them to a single entity. He did not overlook the independence of religion from philosophy, yet this independence does not necessarily imply contradiction between them.

Philosophy, according to Ibn Rushd, is a form of rational reflection upon existing beings with the aim of drawing lessons from them and, through this process, attaining knowledge of the Creator—God. The revealed Law, in turn, calls for the practice of philosophical inquiry insofar as it constitutes rational reflection on beings for the purpose of knowing the Creator. Ibn Rushd relied on transmitted evidence, particularly by citing Qur’anic verses, in order to affirm the position he defends—namely, the legitimacy of philosophical practice from a religious perspective.

He states: “We affirm with certainty that whatever demonstrative reasoning leads to, if it appears to conflict with the apparent meaning of the revealed text, then that apparent meaning is open to interpretation in accordance with the principles of Arabic interpretation. This is a matter about which no Muslim doubts and no believer hesitates. Indeed, the certainty in it only increases for those who have engaged in this method, experienced it, and sought to reconcile rational knowledge with transmitted knowledge.” (Ibn, 1968, p. 36)

A similar approach is found in the work of al-Farabi, through his reconciliatory effort between religion and philosophy. He observed that reconciling the two is necessary for a civilizational advancement in which both domains cooperate to contribute to human well-being. However, in pursuing this objective, he resorted to interpreting scriptural verses in a manner that would articulate the philosophical views he upheld. Dr. Muhammad Kamal Ja‘far maintains that al-Farabi remained firmly committed to his Islamic faith and expresses regret over the attacks directed against him, including accusations of disbelief and heresy, as seen in the works of Ibn Kathir and al-Ghazali—who specifically targeted him, alongside Ibn



Sina, in *Tahafut al-Falasifa (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)*—as well as al-Shahrastani, al-Razi, and others.

Al-Farabi was not so captivated by philosophy that he forgot his religious convictions, nor was he among those who would sacrifice their faith for the sake of intellectual pursuits. It is noteworthy that when he outlined the conditions to be observed by the seeker of wisdom, he placed the learning of the Qur'an and the sciences of the Shari'a at the forefront, without neglecting any of the pillars of the law or the ethical norms of the Prophetic tradition. There is therefore no valid basis for the accusations concerning his intentions or purposes. Such claims are unsupported by evidence, lack demonstrative proof, and amount to conjecture, speculation, and the misinterpretation of al-Farabi's texts. (Ibrahim, December 24, 2017)

From the foregoing, it becomes evident that the philosopher Abu Ishaq al-Kindi sought to clarify the fundamental aims of philosophical thought, which, in their essence, do not contradict what religion has conveyed and called for. Likewise, al-Farabi demonstrated that the difference between religion and philosophy is merely a difference in modes of expression, while their objectives remain the same. In the western Islamic world, Ibn Rushd undertook the defense of philosophy, demonstrating that it is indeed sanctioned by the Law. However, Muslims did not further develop Ibn Rushd's philosophy nor continue along its rational trajectory. Instead, his philosophical legacy was transmitted to Europe, where it later became one of the foundational pillars of the European Renaissance.

2-2-1/- Reconciliation Between Religion and Philosophy in Terms of Content:

The Noble Qur'an calls for the pursuit of knowledge and the deep understanding of matters pertaining to both religion and worldly life, and this cannot be achieved without the use of reason. For this reason, most Qur'anic verses are directed toward the intellect, inviting it to observe, investigate, and reflect upon all created beings, and to understand the phenomena that surround human existence. This constitutes an explicit call to philosophize, addressed directly to the intellect itself, as expressed in the verse: ﴿Let man then observe from what he was created﴾.

Human beings cannot engage in interpretation except through the use of reason. The Qur'an mentions the intellect forty-seven times, and cosmic phenomena are subjected to rational consideration through the expression "do you not reason" (ta'qilun) on twenty-four occasions. Hence, Ibn Rushd states: "God has given us two books: a perceptible book and a readable book; we read in this one what we read in the other." (Bougli Hassan, 2007, pp. 134-135)

2-2-2/- Reconciliation Between Religion and Philosophy in Terms of Principles:

Within Islamic philosophy, one finds continuous attempts to bring closer together doctrinal principles and philosophical reflection, due to their shared intellectual motivations, legislative purposes, and civilizational necessities.

A - The Limits of the Use of Reason in the Text:

The cornerstone of Islam is the doctrine of *tawhid* (divine unity), which entails absolute submission to the existence of one God who created the universe, governs it, and to whom all things ultimately return. This is a matter that does not admit interpretation or dispute. In addition to affirming God's existence, the divine self-description includes numerous attributes, such as justice and knowledge, among others. Likewise, God attributes to Himself actions and qualities such as establishment (*istiwa'*), hearing, and

sight. These must be interpreted in a manner that preserves divine transcendence, in order to purify God from any form of deficiency or anthropomorphism.

By interpretation, we mean an intellectual process that shifts a term from its literal meaning to a figurative one. As Ibn Rushd explains: “It is the transfer of a word from its literal indication to a figurative indication, without violating the conventions of the Arabic language in metaphorically naming a thing by what resembles it or by its cause...” There are four groups that have practiced interpretation as a necessary form of intellectual exertion: jurists, theologians, philosophers, and Sufi scholars. (Bougli Hassan, 2007, p. 136)

B - The Limits of the Use of Reason in Matters of the Unseen:

Muslims have not reached a consensus regarding the extent to which reason should be employed in interpreting religious texts, nor have they agreed on the degree to which reason may intervene in matters of the unseen. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali explicitly affirmed the limitation and incapacity of reason in dealing with metaphysical matters, which, in his view, must simply be believed in without subjecting them to rational scrutiny. Similarly, Ibn Khaldun classified “issues such as the Hereafter, the reality of prophecy, and the truths of the divine attributes as belonging to a domain that lies beyond the scope of reason.”

On the other hand, among the Islamic thinkers who did apply reason to matters of the unseen were the philosophers and the theologians (*mutakallimun*), albeit through distinct methodological approaches. (Bougli Hassan, 2007, pp. 137-138)

2-2-3/- Reconciliation Between Religion and Philosophy in Terms of Purpose:

The attempts to reconcile Islam—as a divine legislation and a comprehensive system of life grounded in belief and faith in unseen realities—with Greek philosophy—as a human intellectual system founded on logic and rational demonstration, and not governed by any religious authority—were driven by a necessity imposed by the need for civilizational openness and the pursuit of truth.

A- Between the Rationalization of Religion and the Religious Framing of Reason:

01- Rationalization of Religion:

The Ikhwan al-Safa (Brethren of Purity), a secret political group, sought to transform the political system that was grounded in the Shari‘a, particularly at a time when religion had become a justification for oppressive policies. They aimed to establish a common reference for political judgment grounded in reason. Accordingly, they held that philosophy stands above the Shari‘a and that true happiness is intellectual in nature. They maintained that there is no way to purify the Shari‘a—which had been “contaminated by ignorance and mixed with error—except through philosophy... and when Greek philosophy and the Shari‘a are harmonized, perfection is achieved.” In this way, religion becomes rationalized, meaning that it is no longer based solely on faith or the heart, but also on reason.

02- Religious Framing of Reason:

The fear of a potential conflict between reason and religion led to subordinating reason to religion and confining it within strict boundaries defined by the Shari‘a. This, in turn, contributed to the closure of the gates of independent reasoning (*ijtihad*). (Bougli Hassan, 2007, pp. 139-140)

2-2-4/- The Possibility of Bringing Them Closer in Terms of Access to Truth:



The intellectual conflict that arose between philosophers, representing the rationalist current, and jurists, representing the religious current, was prolonged and complex. The repeated alignment of political authority with one side or the other, depending on its interests, prompted the philosopher Ibn Tufayl to compose the allegorical narrative *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*. In this work, he presents the idea of complementarity between philosophy and religion, demonstrating that both ultimately lead to the same truth. The narrative seeks, in essence, to simplify philosophy, make it more accessible, and justify it in the face of waves of excommunication launched by conservative circles, while also encouraging proponents of philosophical thought to return to faith. (Bougli Hassan, 2007, p. 140)

2-2-5/- The Possibility of Bringing Them Closer in Terms of Method:

Whenever the conflict between philosophy and religion intensified, reaching levels of excommunication and even violence, there would follow periods characterized by attempts at rapprochement, reconciliation, and integration. It was observed that there exists a methodological convergence between the two, as both are grounded in the necessity of establishing proof and demonstration. As stated in the Qur'an: }Bring forth your proof, if you are truthful{(Surah al-Baqarah, verse 111.)

Despite the difference in their respective domains—since the Shari'a addresses matters that philosophy does not, and philosophy addresses matters that the Shari'a does not—there is no inherent conflict in this distinction. As for the matters addressed by both, they fall into two categories: those in which both agree, which present no difficulty, and those in which they appear to diverge, which require interpretation in order to achieve reconciliation. In this sense, they converge and complement one another: revelation comes to perfect reason, while reason serves to elucidate what the Shari'a has conveyed. (Bougli Hassan, 2007, p. 143)

3/- Factors of Convergence Between Religion and Philosophy:

Philosophy constitutes one of the pathways through which knowledge of the Creator may be attained. Therefore, it cannot be categorically accused of atheism, as there are numerous points of convergence between religion and philosophy. The paths to knowing the Creator are as numerous as the breaths of living beings, and philosophy represents one of these paths. Among the most significant factors of convergence is that both philosophers and prophets remain enduring figures, living on through their remembrance, their ideas, and their answers, in addition to their profound contributions to human ethics. This is a dimension that some religious adherents have failed to fully appreciate. (Ahmad-al-Rumh, December 24, 2021)

Furthermore, philosophy addresses questions that science is unable to answer, particularly metaphysical questions, and it is in this domain that it converges with religion. Since philosophy signifies wisdom, all prophets have possessed this eminent quality. Indeed, no prophet mentioned in the Qur'an is described without also being associated with wisdom alongside prophethood. The concept of wisdom (*hikma*) is mentioned eighteen times in the Noble Qur'an, including the verse: {"Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses, teach them the Book and wisdom, and purify them. Indeed, You are the Almighty, the All-Wise"},(Surah al-Baqarah, verse 129.) and also: {"And Allah has sent down to you the Book and wisdom"}(Surah al-Nisa', verse 113) . The Qur'an further affirms that abundant good belongs to those endowed with wisdom: {"And whoever is given wisdom has certainly been given much good, and none will remember except those of understanding"}(

Surah al-Baqarah, verse 269) . Thus, just as every prophet embodies an element of philosophy—based on the aforementioned definition—so too does every philosopher embody an element of prophethood, in terms of wisdom and rational insight. (Ahmad-al-Rumh, December 24, 2021)

Today, the need for both religion and philosophy has become an urgent human necessity. Humanity cannot be left at the mercy of a science dominated by large multinational corporations, which direct it according to their own interests and manipulate it through an aggressive materialism, shaping human existence in accordance with strategies driven by profit and gain. From this perspective, the need for both religion and philosophy becomes evident. The philosophical thinker Mohammed Arkoun states: “Man cannot live without religion, as anthropology itself affirms; however, the believer must realize that religion undergoes manifestations and transformations.”

Philosophy responds, through a rational and reflective logic, to the questions posed by the human intellect concerning the alienation of humanity in an age marked by scientific advancement and economic greed. Religion, in turn, provides the spiritual dimension in an era characterized by human emptiness imposed by a materialism that permeates every aspect of lived experience in the name of science. Thus, while philosophy offers rational answers to existential inquiries, religion enriches the human soul with spirituality, elevating its humanity. (Ahmad-al-Rumh, December 24, 2021)

4/- The Role of Philosophy in the Enlightenment Process:

Philosophy plays a fundamental role in illuminating both the intellect and the heart, rescuing them from false and distorted forms of religiosity, and liberating human beings from the constraints of a parallel form of religion that is devoid of human depth and weakened in its rational foundation. Through its enlightening insights, philosophy restores to reason its functional role in understanding reality. Indeed, philosophy represents the highest expression of enlightenment and serves as its very foundation.

In 1784, a German journal posed a question to philosophers: What is Enlightenment? The response of the philosopher Kant became the most widely accepted: Enlightenment is the emergence of the individual from the state of self-imposed immaturity, which results from the inability to use one’s own understanding without the guidance of another. Thus, enlightenment becomes the rallying cry of philosophers: “Dare to use your own understanding.” (Ahmad-al-Rumh, December 24, 2021)

Accordingly, when enlightenment began its trajectory, it encountered resistance from society, often incited by religious institutions. Society, constrained by such illusions, aligned itself with religious authorities against the philosophers of enlightenment, reflecting a form of “masochistic” attachment to falsehood. The Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno described this phenomenon as “sacred ignorance.” He did not express anger when the Church condemned him for heresy and sentenced him to death by burning because of his enlightened ideas. Rather, what deeply saddened him was the sight of an elderly woman who approached and threw a piece of wood into the fire. When she was asked why she had done so, she replied: “It is the command of the Church.” To which he responded: “Curse be upon sacred ignorance.” (Ahmad-al-Rumh, December 24, 2021)

5/- Did Philosophy Clash with Religion?

Philosophy did not come into conflict with religion itself; rather, it clashed with religious authorities and rejected their control over society. While it is often claimed that philosophy introduces doubt through its questioning, such doubt is, in fact, commendable when it serves as a path toward knowledge. This is



illustrated in the Qur’anic dialogue between Abraham and his Lord: {“And [mention] when Abraham said, ‘My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead.’ [Allah] said, ‘Have you not believed?’ He said, ‘Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be reassured.’ [Allah] said, ‘Take four birds and commit them to yourself.

Then [after slaughtering them] place on each hill a portion of them; then call them—they will come to you in haste. And know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.”} (Surah al-Baqarah, verse 260).

Doubt, therefore, is permissible within the pursuit of faith, as it serves as a pathway to genuine knowledge. Religion has not presented faith as mere submissive acceptance devoid of rational awareness. The Prophet himself affirmed the legitimacy of doubt by stating: “We are more entitled to doubt than Abraham” (Reported by Muslim in his *Sahih*, as well as by al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* in the “Book of Tafsir.)

Nevertheless, there are those who consider philosophy to be disbelief and heresy, and who view enlightenment as antagonistic to religion.

This rational approach, however, is required of all, though it varies in degree. Mohammed Abed al-Jabri, in his reformist project *Critique of Arab Reason*, classified reason into three categories: the *gnostic* (or intuitive) reason, as found among Sufi traditions and popular religious belief; the *textual* (or discursive) reason, characteristic of the traditional Islamic school that focuses on transmitted texts without genuine rational engagement; and the *demonstrative* reason, which he regarded as a mature form of reason concerned with causality and the search for underlying principles. This latter form represents philosophical reason, if one may so describe it, exemplified by the Mu‘tazilites and reaching its highest expression in the thought of the Islamic philosopher Ibn Rushd. (Ahmad-al-Rumh, December 24, 2021)

Conclusion:

There is no fundamental conflict between philosophy and religion, as both seek truth and strive toward the happiness of humankind. Philosophy represents the intellectual capacity for critical thinking in opposition to illusion, while religion provides the capacity to live life itself and to understand its meaning. René Descartes states in his work *Principles of Philosophy*: “Philosophy alone distinguishes us from the savage and barbarous peoples; and the civilization and culture of a nation are measured by the extent to which true philosophy flourishes within it. Therefore, one of the greatest blessings that God can bestow upon a country is to grant it true philosophers.”

Accordingly, the study of the relationship between reason and revelation as a philosophical phenomenon should not be confined to purely historical inquiry, nor reduced to an engagement with antiquated ideas. Such a reductive approach is unproductive in the context of the present time.

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