

Ibn Rushd's Rationality as an Effort to Combat Superstition: An Epistemological Analysis of Islamic Thought

Alpin Harianto

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

25205031019@student.uin-suka.ac.id

*Correspondence

DOI: [10.38073/aijis.v3i2.4225](https://doi.org/10.38073/aijis.v3i2.4225)

Received: January 2026

Revised: February 2026

Accepted: February 2026

Published: March 2026

Abstract

This article examines Ibn Rushd's rationality as an epistemological strategy in combating superstition (*khurafat*) within the Islamic intellectual tradition. The main issue addressed is the persistence of religious practices and beliefs that lack a solid rational and epistemic foundation, often sustained through blind *taqlid*, textual literalism, and methodological errors in understanding revelation. This phenomenon highlights the urgency of reintroducing a rational framework for a responsible interpretation of Islamic teachings. The study aims to analyze Ibn Rushd's concept of rationality, particularly the status of reason, the *burhan* method, and his critique of irrational patterns of religiosity, as well as to assess its relevance in the contemporary Islamic context. This research employs a qualitative library-based method using an epistemological and historical-philosophical approach to Ibn Rushd's major works and recent academic studies. The findings indicate that Ibn Rushd's rationality does not stand in opposition to revelation; rather, it functions as an instrument for purifying religion from distortion and superstition. By positioning reason as a means of verifying religious understanding, Ibn Rushd offers a model of religiosity that is critical, moderate, and intellectually responsible. This article contributes to strengthening rational Islamic thought as a constructive alternative in responding to contemporary religious challenges.

Keywords : Ibn Rushd, Rationality, Superstition.

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji rasionalitas Ibn Rushd sebagai strategi epistemologis dalam upaya pemberantasan khurafat dalam tradisi pemikiran Islam. Masalah utama yang dikaji adalah maraknya praktik dan keyakinan keagamaan yang tidak memiliki dasar rasional dan epistemik yang kuat, yang sering kali bertahan melalui *taqlid* buta, literalisme tekstual, dan kesalahan metodologis dalam memahami wahyu. Fenomena ini menunjukkan pentingnya menghadirkan kembali kerangka rasional dalam memahami ajaran Islam secara bertanggung jawab. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep rasionalitas Ibn Rushd, khususnya kedudukan akal, metode *burhan*, serta kritiknya terhadap pola keberagamaan irasional, dan menilai relevansinya dalam konteks Islam kontemporer. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan epistemologis dan historis-filosofis terhadap karya-karya utama Ibn Rushd serta kajian akademik mutakhir. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa rasionalitas Ibn Rushd tidak bertentangan dengan wahyu, melainkan berfungsi sebagai instrumen pemurnian agama dari distorsi dan khurafat. Dengan menjadikan akal sebagai alat verifikasi pemahaman keagamaan, Ibn Rushd menawarkan model keberagamaan yang kritis,

moderat, dan bertanggung jawab secara intelektual. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada penguatan diskursus pemikiran Islam rasional sebagai alternatif konstruktif dalam merespons tantangan keberagamaan di era modern.

Kata Kunci: Ibn Rushd, Rasionalitas, Khurafat.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of superstition (khurafat) in religious practice remains a serious issue within Muslim communities. Superstition often manifests in the form of irrational beliefs, religious interpretations that are not grounded in accountable knowledge, and ritual practices that rely on symbols lacking a solid rational foundation. This problem not only leads to distortions in the understanding of Islamic teachings but also contributes to the weakening of intellectual traditions and the proliferation of blind *taqlid* that is, interpretation devoid of critical reasoning. Within this context, rationality as an epistemological foundation of Islam becomes a crucial issue to be reexamined, particularly through the thought of a major intellectual figure such as Ibn Rushd. Contemporary studies demonstrate that rationality within the classical Islamic tradition continues to be regarded as a prerequisite for developing a critical and intellectually robust religious discourse.¹

The significance of discussing Ibn Rushd's rationality in the context of critiquing superstition lies in his position as a Muslim philosopher who consistently advocated the integration of reason and revelation. Ibn Rushd regarded reason as a crucial epistemic instrument for understanding both reality and religious texts, while firmly opposing the dominance of dogmatic and literalist modes of thought. Contemporary studies examining rationalism and classical Islamic epistemology reflect an academic need to reassess the role of reason within the Islamic tradition, particularly in its function of mediating between revelation and human reasoning.

A number of previous studies have examined Ibn Rushd's thought from various perspectives. First, a study by Nur Kholis (2017)² positions Ibn Rushd as a representative of classical Islamic rationalism, emphasizing the importance of reason in understanding revelation and rejecting a sharp dichotomy between philosophy and religion. Second, the research conducted by Ibad and Khalim (2022)³ highlights the epistemological relationship between revelation and reason in Ibn Rushd's thought, focusing on the legitimacy of reason as a valid source of knowledge in Islam. Third, Khattab (2019)⁴ study analyzes the position of reason and scriptural texts (naṣṣ) in Ibn Rushd's thought,

¹ Nur Kholis, "Rasionalisme Islam Klasik Dalam Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd," *International Journal Ihya' Ulum Al-Din* 19, No. 1 (2017): 213–44, <https://doi.org/10.21580/Ihya.18.1.1740>.

² Nur Kholis.

³ Muslikhul Ibad And Ahmad Dwi Nur Khalim, "Epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd (Telaah Relasi Wahyu Dan Rasio)," *An-Nur: Jurnal Studi Islam* 14, No. 1 (2022): 80–92, <https://jurnalannur.ac.id/index.php/An-Nur>.

⁴ Mohammad Ali Khattab, "Reason And Narration With Ibn Rushd (Averroes)," *Advances In Social Sciences Research Journal* 6, No. 10 (2019): 274–96, <https://doi.org/10.14738/Assrj.610.7101>.

demonstrating how rationality functions as a hermeneutical instrument in the interpretation of religious texts, particularly through the concept of *ta'wil*. Fourth, Sidiropoulou (2015)⁵ connects Ibn Rushd's critique of literalism with the problem of Qur'anic interpretation, situating it within the context of an Islamic enlightenment project that challenges rigid and ahistorical textual readings. Fifth, Firdaus and Riyadi (2025)⁶ compare the legitimacy of rational interpretation in the thought of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Taymiyyah, underscoring the differences in their epistemological approaches to the authority of text and reason.

Although these studies make significant contributions to understanding Ibn Rushd's rationality and epistemology, most of them remain focused on normative-philosophical aspects, discussions on the relationship between reason and revelation, or comparative analyses among thinkers. Studies that specifically frame Ibn Rushd's rationality as an epistemological strategy for combating superstition are still relatively scarce in the mainstream literature. This article addresses this gap by integrating an analysis of Ibn Rushd's epistemology with the contemporary problem of superstition, thereby offering a novel contribution that is both analytical and applied to the development of Islamic philosophical discourse.

The key aspects examined in this article include: first, the concept of rationality in Ibn Rushd's epistemology, particularly how reason is positioned as a legitimate epistemic authority; second, Ibn Rushd's critique of forms of epistemic deviation such as *taqlid* and literalist interpretation, which have the potential to give rise to superstition; third, the implications of Ibn Rushd's rationality as a strategy for purifying religious understanding in contemporary Islamic contexts, without negating the spiritual dimension of Islam; and fourth, the limits of Ibn Rushd's rationality, situated between the critique of superstition and the authority of revelation.

In contrast to previous studies that situate Ibn Rushd's rationality primarily within philosophical-theological debates or normative discussions on the relationship between reason and revelation, this article specifically frames Ibn Rushd's rationality as an epistemological strategy for combating superstition. This study is not only historical-philosophical in nature but also offers an applied approach to understanding contemporary religious problems. Accordingly, this research is expected not only to contribute to the development of classical Islamic philosophy but also to offer an applicable epistemological perspective for responding to the problem of irrationality in contemporary religious practices.

⁵ Chryssi Sidiropoulou, "Qur'anic Interpretation And The Problem Of Literalism: Ibn Rushd And The Enlightenment Project In The Islamic World," *Religions* 6, No. 3 (2015): 1082–1106, <https://doi.org/10.3390/Rel6031082>.

⁶ Ahmad Najibul Firdaus And Abdul Kadir Riyadi, "The Legitimacy Of Rational Interpretation Between Ibn Taymiyyah And Ibn Rushd," *Al-Kawakib* 6, No. 1 (2025): 129–52, <https://doi.org/10.24036/Kwkib.Vxix>.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach based on library research as its primary methodological strategy. The library research method is considered appropriate because the focus of the study is a conceptual analysis of Ibn Rushd's epistemological thought and its implications for the problem of superstition, which requires an in-depth examination of written sources rather than field observation. This qualitative library research is descriptive and systematic in nature, involving the careful reading, selection, and analysis of relevant literature, including books, scholarly journals, academic articles, historical documents, and both classical and contemporary works addressing Islamic epistemology and philosophy. Library research is also regarded as an effective method for constructing a theoretical framework, identifying scholarly gaps, and developing comprehensive conceptual arguments, as emphasized in methodological studies of library research in Islamic education that highlight the role of systematic textual analysis in academic inquiry.⁷

In its implementation, data were collected from recent academic literature related to epistemology, rationality, and critiques of irrational practices such as superstition. Data processing was conducted using a descriptive–critical technique, involving the reading, interpretation, and correlation of ideas across these sources in order to formulate conceptual patterns and theoretical understandings relevant to the research objectives. The analysis includes content analysis, the linkage of theoretical perspectives with findings in Islamic intellectual studies, and an argumentative evaluation of epistemic claims presented in the literature. Methodologically, this research is also grounded in the framework of qualitative research as explained by John W. Creswell, who emphasizes that qualitative research aims to explore and interpret meanings embedded in texts, ideas, and social phenomena through a systematic process of interpretation across multiple data sources. Within this framework, qualitative library-based research enables scholars to analyze philosophical and religious concepts through critical engagement with both primary and secondary texts. This approach is particularly relevant for examining classical intellectual traditions such as the works of Ibn Rushd's, where the primary data consist of philosophical writings and scholarly interpretations rather than empirical field data.⁸

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rationality in Ibn Rushd's Epistemology: The Status of Reason and the *Burhan* Method

Ibn Rushd's (Averroes') epistemological thought places reason as the primary instrument in the pursuit of knowledge and truth, in accordance with the rationalist tradition of Islamic philosophy that integrates revelation and logic. In his view, reason is not merely an auxiliary tool but a legitimate and necessary epistemic means for

⁷ Abdurrahman, "Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan Dalam Pendidikan Islam," *Adabuna : Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran* 3, no. 2 (2024): 102–13, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.38073/adabuna>.

⁸ Muhammad Rijal Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif," *Humanika, Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum* 21, no. 1 (2021): 33–54, <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1>.

understanding both the practical sciences and metaphysical knowledge. This perspective affirms that rationality does not conflict with revelation; rather, it reinforces a deeper and more coherent understanding of religious texts.⁹ Within the framework of classical Islamic epistemology, Ibn Rushd asserts that reason possesses an evaluative capacity to assess the validity of knowledge claims, including those arising from religious interpretation. He rejects a sharp dichotomy between reason and scriptural texts, arguing that revelatory texts themselves depend on the use of reason as the medium through which they are properly understood.¹⁰

Ibn Rushd's thought affirms that reason and revelation should not be positioned in opposition to one another. Rather, reason functions as a legitimate means for understanding and interpreting revelatory teachings, not as their rival or substitute. Within this framework, Ibn Rushd argues that when religious texts appear to conflict with empirical reality, the method of interpretive reasoning (*ta'wil*) constitutes an appropriate and rational approach to ensuring harmony between religious injunctions and human rationality.¹¹

Within the framework of classical Islamic epistemology, Ibn Rushd emphasizes that reason possesses the capacity to evaluate and assess the truth of statements both in the empirical realm and in religious interpretation. This perspective indicates that the sources of knowledge in Islam are not confined solely to revelation but also include rationality as a valid source of knowledge when exercised in a systematic and consistent manner. This view provides a methodological foundation for openness to scientific inquiry and logical reasoning within the Islamic intellectual tradition.¹² Through a rational and methodological approach, Ibn Rushd sought to overcome the tension between philosophy and religion that had developed within the Islamic tradition, while also promoting a model of Islamic education that is critical and intellectually grounded.¹³

One of the key aspects of Ibn Rushd's epistemology is the *burhan* method, or demonstrative reasoning, which refers to a form of logical argument that arrives at indubitable truth through precise processes of inference. *Burhan* is regarded as superior to other modes of knowledge, such as *bayani* (rhetorical reasoning), because it integrates rational evidence with systematic deduction. Accordingly, *burhan* serves as the

⁹ Muslikhul Ibad And Ahmad Dwi Nur Khalim, "Epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd (Telaah Relasi Wahyu Dan Rasio)," *An-Nur: Jurnal Studi Islam* 14, No. 1 (2022): 80–92, <https://jurnalannur.ac.id/index.php/an-nur>.

¹⁰ Khattab, "Reason and Narration with Ibn Rushd (Averroes)."

¹¹ Sidiropoulou, "Qur'anic Interpretation and the Problem of Literalism: Ibn Rushd and the Enlightenment Project in the Islamic World."

¹² Agus Susilo Saefullah, Abdul Hakim, And Rijal Fadillah, "Islamic Education In Ibn Rushd's Epistemological Perspective: Sources Of Knowledge, Methods Of Attainment, And The Integration Of Religion And Philosophy," *Jurnal El-Badr* 1, No. 2 (2025), <http://jurnal.qolamuna.id/index.php/elbadr>.

¹³ Abdulrashid Musa and Ibrahim Labbon, "Reflection on the Islamic Philosophical Contributions of Ibn Rushd: An Educational Overview," *Fajr Islamic Journal* IV, no. June (2019), https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Abdulrashid-Musa-2/publication/361282649_Reflection_on_the_Islamic_Philosophical_Contributions_of_Ibn_Rushd_An_Educational_Overview/links/62a8a6986886635d5cd91b0e/Reflection-on-the-Islamic-Philosophical-Contributions-o.

methodological foundation through which Ibn Rushd ensures that the knowledge attained is scientific in nature and epistemically accountable.¹⁴ Furthermore, Ibn Rushd maintains that rationality is not only relevant to philosophy but also opens broader interpretive possibilities for revelatory texts through *ta'wil*, or rational interpretation. He rejects literalist understandings that deny the capacity of reason to engage critically with sacred texts, arguing that sound understanding must be grounded in a harmony between revelation and reason. This approach forms the basis of his rejection of epistemic dogmatism, which often gives rise to superstition in religious practice.¹⁵

Ibn Rushd's thought also positions rationality as a safeguard of objectivity in the process of knowledge acquisition. By grounding knowledge in inferential logic and systematic argumentative structures, he seeks to avoid epistemic distortions arising from prejudice or irrational doctrines. This view aligns with contemporary perspectives that maintain a robust Islamic epistemology must regard reason as a critical tool for evaluating truth claims, both in the domains of theology and science.¹⁶ Accordingly, the position of reason in Ibn Rushd's epistemology is not merely instrumental but constitutes the very foundation of an epistemic structure capable of discerning truth from false claims. This approach offers an epistemic model for addressing religious deviations that arise from irrational forms of understanding, thereby representing a significant contribution to intellectual purification within the contemporary Islamic tradition.¹⁷

From the foregoing discussion of Ibn Rushd's epistemology, it becomes evident that rationality is not positioned merely as an auxiliary tool for understanding religion, but as a fundamental epistemic principle that determines the validity of knowledge claims. Ibn Rushd's emphasis on the *burhan* method demonstrates that truth must be attained through coherent demonstrative argumentation that is open to rational scrutiny. Within this framework, religious knowledge that lacks an adequate rational foundation including beliefs and practices rooted in superstition loses its epistemic legitimacy. Ibn Rushd's rationality thus functions as a filtering mechanism that distinguishes faith grounded in knowledge from beliefs derived from irrational assumptions.

Furthermore, the integration of reason and revelation in Ibn Rushd's epistemology indicates that the critique of superstition is not aimed at religion itself, but at the ways in which religion is understood and practiced by humans. His rejection of literalism and blind *taqlid* does not signify a denial of sacred texts; rather, it constitutes an effort to safeguard the integrity of revelatory meaning from distortion resulting from flawed interpretation. In this framework, rationality operates as a hermeneutical bridge that enables religious texts to be interpreted proportionately in accordance with human

¹⁴ Fahrul Kharis Nurzaha And Ahmad Khudori Soleh, "Rasionalisme Hukum Islam Perspektif Ibnu Rusyd," *Raudhah Proud To Be Professionals Jurnal Tarbiyah Islamiyah* 1, No. 10 (2022): 204–18, [Http://Ejournal.Stit-Ru.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Raudhah/Article/View/187](http://Ejournal.Stit-Ru.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Raudhah/Article/View/187).

¹⁵ Ibad And Khalim, "Epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd (Telaah Relasi Wahyu Dan Rasio)."

¹⁶ Ibnurusd Al Hafied And Eka Nurmayanti, "Paradigma Dan Rasionalitas: Telaah Kritis Pemikiran Thomas Kuhn Dan Ibnu Rusyd," *KARTIKA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 5, No. 3 (2025): 1450–62, [Https://Lptnunganjuk.Com/Ojs/Index.Php/Kartika](https://Lptnunganjuk.Com/Ojs/Index.Php/Kartika).

¹⁷ Ibad And Khalim, "Epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd (Telaah Relasi Wahyu Dan Rasio)."

intellectual capacities, thereby allowing religion to remain rational, functional, and emancipatory.

The epistemological implications of Ibn Rushd's thought are highly significant for efforts to combat superstition within the Islamic tradition. Rationality does not operate repressively by negating the spiritual dimension; rather, it functions constructively by cultivating critical awareness among believers, enabling them to distinguish between authentic religious teachings and beliefs arising from epistemic error. Accordingly, Ibn Rushd's rationality can be understood as a strategy of religious purification oriented toward strengthening Islamic reasoning. It is not merely an elite philosophical project, but a foundational framework for mature, responsible religiosity that is free from irrationality.

Ibn Rushd's Critique of Superstition: Between *Taqlid*, Literalist Understanding, and Epistemic Deviation

Ibn Rushd consistently criticizes religious tendencies characterized by blind *taqlid* that is, the uncritical adherence to tradition or authority without rational consideration because such practices, in his view, close off the space for critical thinking and render religious understanding stagnant or even misguided. In both classical and contemporary Islamic traditions, *taqlid* is often associated with the reinforcement of particular scholarly authorities; however, when it is not accompanied by critical reasoning, it has the potential to become a source of epistemic distortion that fosters irrational forms of understanding. This type of critique remains relevant to contemporary discussions on the renewal of Islamic thought, which emphasize the necessity of *ijtihad* grounded in rationality rather than the mere reproduction of dogma.¹⁸

Ibn Rushd's stance on *taqlid* is closely connected to his rejection of literalist approaches to understanding religious texts. He observes that deriving meaning solely from a literal reading often produces interpretations that are epistemically deficient, as they fail to take into account context, purpose, and rational judgment in interpretation. Such literalist approaches, which dismiss *ijtihad* and rational reasoning, risk fostering practices that are inconsistent with sound rational principles and thus approach the category of superstition in religious experience.¹⁹

In *Faṣl al-Maqal* and his other works, Ibn Rushd demonstrates that reason and revelation exist in epistemic harmony, such that the interpretation of sacred texts must take human rationality into account as a means of attaining sound understanding. This view constitutes a direct critique of tendencies that regard textuality as the sole point of reference without dialogue with rational inquiry. In contemporary contexts, such an

¹⁸ Teuku Safir Iskandar Wijaya, "Teologi Rasional Ijtihad Dan Dogmatis Taqlidi Penalaran Filsafat Kalam," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 19, no. 1 (2017): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.22373/substantia.v19i1.2916>.

¹⁹ Ahmad Najibul Firdaus and Abdul Kadir Riyadi, "The Legitimacy of Rational Interpretation between Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Rushd," *Al-Kawakib* 6, no. 1 (2025): 129–52, <https://doi.org/10.24036/kwkib.vxix>.

approach remains highly relevant for addressing literalist interpretations that often reinforce unfounded beliefs or superstition.²⁰

Ibn Rushd's critique of epistemic deviations such as superstition is also closely related to his opposition to dogmatic modes of knowledge that stifle intellectual creativity. He argues that legitimate knowledge must undergo rational verification rather than being accepted solely on the basis of unexamined tradition. This emphasis resonates with contemporary discourses in theology and *uṣul al-fiqh* that critique narrow forms of textualism, which often struggle to respond to the challenges of modern knowledge without falling into dogmatic tautology.²¹

Furthermore, Ibn Rushd's critique of *taqlid* and literalism does not imply a wholesale rejection of traditional authority; rather, he seeks to situate tradition within a sound and verifiable epistemic framework that avoids claims lacking a robust rational foundation. This point is crucial, as in many contemporary religious contexts, supernatural claims or irrational practices are often justified through literal interpretations of texts without evidentiary grounds that can be rationally examined or logically substantiated. Ibn Rushd's approach helps to open a dialectical space between text and reason, thereby reducing the likelihood of such epistemic deviations.²²

Conceptually, Ibn Rushd's critique of epistemically deviant religious practices paves the way for a reconstruction of religious understanding that is more inclusive of reason while still preserving the spiritual dimension without sacrificing rationality. Accordingly, his approach offers an epistemic model capable of minimizing the proliferation of superstition and strengthening intellectually responsible religious understanding, while remaining relevant to contemporary cultural and intellectual challenges.²³

Ibn Rushd's critique of *taqlid* and literalist interpretation demonstrates that the problem of superstition is not merely related to the content of belief, but is rooted in flawed methods of acquiring and validating religious knowledge. From the perspective of Ibn Rushd's epistemology, knowledge that does not undergo rational reasoning whether due to blind adherence to authority or the literal reading of texts devoid of contextual consideration loses its justificatory foundation. Accordingly, superstition is understood as a logical consequence of epistemic failure rather than simply a moral or theological deviation.

Furthermore, Ibn Rushd's rejection of literalism affirms that revelatory texts cannot be detached from human intellectual capacity as the interpreting subject. Rationality functions as a hermeneutical instrument that safeguards religious understanding from becoming trapped in rigid surface meanings that are potentially misleading. In this context, superstition emerges when texts are treated as legitimating irrational claims without dialogue with reason. Ibn Rushd's critique is therefore

²⁰ Firdaus and Riyadi.

²¹ Wijaya, "Teologi Rasional Ijtihad Dan Dogmatis Taqlidi Penalaran Filsafat Kalam."

²² Wijaya.

²³ Wijaya.

constructive in nature: it does not negate the authority of revelation, but rather rejects modes of religiosity that deactivate reason as an integral element in comprehending the divine will.

The epistemological implications of Ibn Rushd's critique are highly relevant to contemporary religious conditions, in which religious claims are often maintained on the basis of tradition, symbols, or charismatic authority without rational verification. By positioning rationality as an evaluative standard, Ibn Rushd offers an intellectual mechanism for distinguishing between religious teachings that are epistemically accountable and beliefs that arise from epistemic deviation. Therefore, his critique of *taqlid* and literalism is not merely historical in nature, but also provides an effective conceptual framework for the systematic and sustainable eradication of superstition.

Rationality as a Strategy for Religious Purification: The Relevance of Ibn Rushd's Thought in Contemporary Islam

Rationality in Ibn Rushd's thought does not remain confined to the theoretical-philosophical level; rather, it functions as a strategy for purifying religion from various forms of epistemic deviation, including superstition. By positioning reason as a valid instrument for understanding revelation, Ibn Rushd seeks to restore religion to its fundamental aims, namely truth and human well-being. In the context of contemporary Islam, this approach remains highly relevant for addressing tendencies toward emotional and symbolic forms of religiosity that lack critical engagement with irrational religious claims.²⁴

Rationality in Ibn Rushd's thought emerges as a crucial strategy for purifying religious understanding from epistemic deviations, including superstitious practices and religious claims. Through the harmonization of reason and revelation, he seeks to reorient religion toward a logical, verifiable, and rational mode of understanding without negating its spiritual dimension. Such an approach is particularly relevant in confronting interpretive tendencies dominated by literalism without rational contextualization, which in certain cases give rise to religious claims that lack epistemic accountability.²⁵

Ibn Rushd's rational approach is also highly relevant in contemporary Islamic contexts that face challenges of anti-intellectualism, characterized by skepticism toward or rejection of rational thought and philosophy in religious life. By positioning reason as a partner in the discourse of revelation, Ibn Rushd encourages Muslims not merely to accept traditional claims and practices passively, but to critically examine and understand religious teachings. This aligns with modern scholarship that regards rationality as a crucial element in the revitalization of contemporary Islamic thought, making it more inclusive of developments in scientific knowledge.²⁶

²⁴ Ibad And Khalim, "Epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd (Telaah Relasi Wahyu Dan Rasio)."

²⁵ Normuslim and Latifah, "Epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd, Al-Ghazali, Dan Ibnu Sina: Perspektif Filsafat Islam," *JIS: Journal Islamic Studies* 3, no. 3 (2025): 249–60, <https://doi.org/10.71456/jis.v3i3.1492>.

²⁶ Firdaus And Riyadi, "The Legitimacy Of Rational Interpretation Between Ibn Taymiyyah And Ibn Rushd."

In efforts to eradicate superstition, Ibn Rushd's rationality can be regarded as an epistemic selection mechanism a tool for distinguishing between beliefs grounded in reason and claims that lack rational justification. This approach clarifies that certain forms of belief prevalent in Muslim societies, often presented as religious, are in fact products of irrational thinking that warrant critical reassessment. By using logic and argumentation as the basis for evaluation, communities are better equipped to critically engage with claims that lack evidential support.²⁷

Furthermore, the rationality advocated by Ibn Rushd is closely linked to the advancement of moderation in religious practice. By rejecting literalist extremism and unfounded claims, he provides a balanced middle path between faith and reason. Contemporary studies indicate that such a rational orientation not only fosters a religious understanding that is more responsive to the challenges of the modern era, but also strengthens tolerant and dialogical attitudes within pluralistic societies.²⁸

Another important aspect of the relevance of Ibn Rushd's rationality is its role in deconstructing religious mystification, which often arises from unverified interpretations. Rationality provides a framework that enables Muslims to analyze and understand religious values within a logical structure, ensuring that religious phenomena are no longer conflated with mythical or irrational elements that deviate from the *maqasid al-shari'ah*. Accordingly, this approach not only addresses superstition but also reinforces an Islamic intellectual tradition that is adaptive to modern scientific inquiry and contemporary hermeneutics.²⁹

Moreover, the relevance of Ibn Rushd's rationality becomes evident when linked to efforts to contextualize Islamic teachings within education and society. Rationality, when harmonized with revelation, supports religious educational approaches that remain open to developments in modern scientific knowledge, enabling Muslims to draw upon classical philosophical thought to address contemporary challenges without compromising their religious identity.³⁰ In addition, Ibn Rushd's strategy of rationality facilitates the cultivation of a moderate religious attitude capable of restraining calls for literalist and exclusive extremism. Within this framework, rationality does not imply secularism or opposition to revelation; rather, it serves as the foundation for a religious understanding that is inclusive, adaptive, and dialogical.³¹

Overall, Ibn Rushd's thought presents a sustainable epistemic model for cultivating a healthy, critical, and responsible religiosity without sacrificing spirituality.

²⁷ Nur Kholis, "Rasionalisme Islam Klasik Dalam Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd."

²⁸ Normuslim and Latifah, "Epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd, Al-Ghazali, Dan Ibnu Sina: Perspektif Filsafat Islam."

²⁹ Firdaus and Riyadi, "The Legitimacy of Rational Interpretation between Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Rushd."

³⁰ Arum Setyowati And Achmad Khudori Soleh, "Googlism: A Study On Ibn Rushd's Integration Thought Concerning Contemporary New Religion," *Jurnal Penelitian Keislaman* 19, No. 1 (2023): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.20414/jpk.v19i1.7082>.

³¹ Illa Fadhliya Lalahwa, Agus Gunawan, And Muhajir Muhajir, "The Relationship Between Religion And Reason In The Context Of Islamic Education Philosophy From The Perspective Of Ibn Rushd And Ibn Taimiyah," *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam* 3, No. 2 (2024): 111–19, <https://doi.org/10.38073/aljadwa.v3i2.1432>.

He provides a robust rational foundation for reforming religious practices, making them more resilient against irrational claims and more relevant within contemporary cultural and intellectual contexts.³² Rationality should not be understood merely as logical reasoning, but as a dialogical process that brings together tradition, religious teachings, and contemporary socio-cultural dynamics.³³ This rational approach provides space to reinterpret customary and cultural values without abandoning the principles of Islamic *shari'ah*. This concept aligns with Ibn Rushd's idea of *ta'wil*, which entails providing a contextualized understanding of religious texts when tensions arise between reason and empirical reality.³⁴

When positioned as a strategy for the purification of religion, Ibn Rushd's rationality demonstrates that the eradication of superstition cannot be achieved solely through normative or moralistic approaches; rather, it must begin with a reform of religious thought itself. By making reason an instrument of epistemic selection, Ibn Rushd emphasizes that the legitimacy of a belief or religious practice depends on its capacity to be justified rationally. Within this framework, superstition is not merely a theological error, but the outcome of methodological failure in understanding and validating religious teachings.

Furthermore, the relevance of Ibn Rushd's thought in the context of contemporary Islam lies in its capacity to address the persistent challenges of anti-intellectualism and the mystification of religion. Rationality functions as a balancing force between faith and reason, ensuring that religion is not reduced to merely an emotional or symbolic experience immune to critique. Through this approach, religiosity is guided to remain open to dialogue, scientific knowledge, and social change, without compromising its spiritual and ethical dimensions. Ibn Rushd's rationality thus serves as a foundation for a form of religious moderation that is not only social but also epistemological.

The broader implication of Ibn Rushd's approach is the formation of a model of religiosity that is critical, mature, and intellectually responsible. Rationality is not positioned as a threat to faith, but rather as a means of safeguarding religion from distortion, manipulation, and irrational claims that harm the community. Accordingly, Ibn Rushd's thought offers a significant contribution to contemporary Islamic intellectual discourse, particularly in the systematic effort to eradicate superstition while revitalizing a rational and humanistic Islamic intellectual tradition.

³² Nur Kholis, "Rasionalisme Islam Klasik Dalam Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd."

³³ Sharif Islam, "The Ibn Rushd Syndrome: In Search of Rational Muslim," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3211293>.

³⁴ Nabila Huringiin and Sayyid Muhammad Indallah, "Rationality in Science: A Comparison Study Between Ibnu Rusyd and Rene Descartes," *Al-Risalah* 13, no. 1 (2022): 92–107, <https://doi.org/10.34005/alrisalah.v13i1.1549>.

The Limits of Ibn Rushd's Rationality: Between Critique of Superstition and the Authority of Revelation

It is important to emphasize that, for Ibn Rushd, rationality does not imply separation from revelation; rather, it exists in a functional relationship with it. He views reason as having a legitimate epistemic domain in understanding both reality and revelation, yet this domain is neither absolute nor autonomous. From his perspective, reason should be positioned as a critical instrument tasked with elucidating the meaning of revelation when literal interpretation proves inadequate, rather than as an independent source of truth. In this context, rationality functions as an interpreter of revelatory texts, bridging the gap between the text and the complex empirical reality.³⁵

The limits of rationality become evident when Ibn Rushd rejects rational claims that attempt to supplant the authority of sacred texts, while still insisting that reason must be subjected to logical scrutiny, even in matters of religious interpretation. In cases where literal interpretation conflicts with coherent rational principles, he proposes *ta'wil* as a legitimate hermeneutical method, rather than as an evasion of revelatory authority. Here, rationality serves as a hermeneutical instrument that allows religious understanding to avoid falling into irrational interpretations that contribute to superstition.³⁶

Ibn Rushd exercises great caution in positioning rationality as an evaluative standard. He rejects two extremes: entrusting all interpretation solely to reason without reference to revelation, and, conversely, closing off the role of reason in interpreting religious texts. Accordingly, the limits of rationality in his framework lie in the principle that reason and revelation must enrich one another, rather than dominate each other. This stance helps prevent the reduction of religion to merely an emotional or textual experience, which is vulnerable to epistemic distortions such as superstition.³⁷

The limitations of rationality in Ibn Rushd's thought are also reflected in his approach to the audience. He distinguishes between the general public and the intellectual elite regarding the use of philosophical argumentation in interpreting religious texts. High-level rationality and philosophical *ta'wil* are deemed appropriate for those with strong intellectual capacity, while the general public is guided by simpler and more literal interpretations. This approach demonstrates that rationality has a contextual and pragmatic scope of applicability without diminishing the authority of revelation.³⁸

The limits of rationality proposed by Ibn Rushd, in fact, strengthen rather than weaken the legitimacy of religion in confronting irrational claims. Rationality serves as an epistemic selection tool that distinguishes between religious claims that can be justified

³⁵ Ibad And Khalim, "Epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd (Telaah Relasi Wahyu Dan Rasio)."

³⁶ Firdaus And Riyadi, "The Legitimacy Of Rational Interpretation Between Ibn Taymiyyah And Ibn Rushd."

³⁷ Suyono Yono, "Dialektika Epistemologi Islam Klasik Dan Pendidikan Agama Islam Modern: Analisis Filosofis Atas Relevansi Pemikiran Al-Ghazali Dan Ibn Rushd," *Imtiyaz: Jurnal Ilmu Keislaman* 9, No. 3 (2025): 728–44, <https://doi.org/10.46773/Imtiyaz.V9i3.2555>.

³⁸ Saeed Fayzul Hayat, Achmad Abubakar, And Halimah Basri, "Epistemologi Al-Qur'an: Studi Atas Integrasi Wahyu Dan Akal Dalam Tafsir Kontemporer," *Invention: Journal Research And Education Studies* 17, No. 2 (2025): 515–31, <https://e-jurnal.iainsorong.ac.id/index.php/Tasamuh>.

intellectually and those arising from methodological errors or a *taqlid* mindset. Thus, within Ibn Rushd's framework, rationality does not eliminate the spiritual dimension; rather, it ensures that religious understanding remains grounded in authentic revelation and sound logic.³⁹

Epistemologically, the limits of rationality in Ibn Rushd's thought indicate that the critique of superstition is not directed at the metaphysical or spiritual dimensions of Islam, but at the ways in which humans produce and legitimize religious knowledge. By positioning reason as a tool of verification, Ibn Rushd shifts the issue of superstition from the normative-theological realm to the methodological-epistemic domain. In other words, a belief is not considered problematic because it pertains to the suprarational or the unseen, but because it lacks valid rational or textual justification. Within this framework, rationality functions as a filtering mechanism that distinguishes between knowledge-based faith and beliefs arising from flawed epistemic procedures, such as blind *taqlid* and ahistorical literalism.

This analysis confirms that Ibn Rushd's project of rationality is both corrective and preventive. It is corrective because it deconstructs flawed structures of religious knowledge, and preventive because it establishes a cognitive framework that inhibits the future reproduction of superstition. By limiting rationality within the horizon of revelation, Ibn Rushd avoids two equally problematic extremes: mystical irrationality and secular rationalism. This middle-ground position demonstrates that the purification of religion cannot be achieved solely through moral exhortation or normative assertion, but must begin with the reform of religious thought itself. Thus, Ibn Rushd's rationality is not only relevant as a discourse in classical philosophy, but also serves as an epistemological foundation for a critical, mature, and intellectually responsible Islamic religiosity in the contemporary era.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Ibn Rushd's rationality constitutes a robust epistemological foundation for the eradication of superstition within Islamic intellectual tradition. By positioning reason as a legitimate instrument of knowledge and harmoniously integrating it with revelation, Ibn Rushd emphasizes that the validity of religious understanding must be grounded in rational argumentation that can be justified. Through the *burhan* method, critique of blind *taqlid*, and rejection of textual literalism, Ibn Rushd deconstructs the epistemic roots of superstition, namely failures in the process of knowledge justification. Accordingly, superstition is not understood merely as a theological deviation, but as a consequence of methodological errors in understanding and validating religious teachings.

Furthermore, the relevance of Ibn Rushd's thought in the context of contemporary Islam lies in its ability to offer a constructive and sustainable strategy for the purification of religion. Rationality is not positioned as a threat to faith or spirituality; rather, it serves as a means to safeguard the integrity of Islamic teachings from distortion, mystification, and harmful irrational claims. By revitalizing the rational tradition within Islam, Ibn

³⁹ Kaipal Wahyudi, "Filsafat Ibnu Rusyd Hubungan Akal Dengan Wahyu," *Indonesian Journal Of Islamic And Social Science* 1, No. 2 (2023): 5–24, [Http://Repo.Iain-Tulungagung.Ac.Id/5510/5/Bab 2.Pdf](http://Repo.Iain-Tulungagung.Ac.Id/5510/5/Bab%202.Pdf).

Rushd's thought provides a significant contribution to fostering religious moderation, promoting critical Islamic scholarship, and cultivating a mature and intellectually responsible religiosity. This study also opens avenues for further research on the application of epistemological rationality in addressing contemporary religious and social challenges.

REFERENCES

- Abdurrahman. "Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan Dalam Pendidikan Islam." *Adabuna : Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran* 3, no. 2 (2024): 102–13. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.38073/adabuna>.
- Fadli, Muhammad Rijal. "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif." *Humanika, Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum* 21, no. 1 (2021): 33–54. <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1>.
- Firdaus, Ahmad Najibul, and Abdul Kadir Riyadi. "The Legitimacy of Rational Interpretation between Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Rushd." *Al-Kawakib* 6, no. 1 (2025): 129–52. [https://doi.org/DOI: https://doi.org/10.24036/kwkib.vxix](https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.24036/kwkib.vxix).
- Hafied, Ibnurud Al, and Eka Nurmayanti. "Paradigma Dan Rasionalitas: Telaah Kritis Pemikiran Thomas Kuhn Dan Ibnu Rusyd." *KARTIKA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 5, no. 3 (2025): 1450–62. <https://doi.org/https://lptnunganjuk.com/ojs/index.php/kartika>.
- Huringiin, Nabila, and Sayyid Muhammad Indallah. "Rationality in Science: A Comparison Study Between Ibnu Rusyd and Rene Descartes." *Al-Risalah* 13, no. 1 (2022): 92–107. <https://doi.org/10.34005/alrisalah.v13i1.1549>.
- Ibad, Muslikhul, and Ahmad Dwi Nur Khalim. "Epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd (Telaah Relasi Wahyu Dan Rasio)." *An-Nur: Jurnal Studi Islam* 14, no. 1 (2022): 80–92. <https://doi.org/https://jurnalannur.ac.id/index.php/An-Nur>.
- Islam, Sharif. "The Ibn Rushd Syndrome: In Search of Rational Muslim." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3211293>.
- Khatab, Mohammad Ali. "Reason and Narration with Ibn Rushd (Averroes)." *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* 6, no. 10 (2019): 274–96. <https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.610.7101>.
- Lalahwa, Illa Fadhliya, Agus Gunawan, and Muhajir Muhajir. "The Relationship between Religion and Reason in the Context of Islamic Education Philosophy from the Perspective of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Taimiyah." *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam* 3, no. 2 (2024): 111–19. <https://doi.org/10.38073/aljadwa.v3i2.1432>.
- Musa, Abdulrashid, and Ibrahim Labbon. "Reflection on the Islamic Philosophical Contributions of Ibn Rushd: An Educational Overview." *Fajr Islamic Journal* IV, no. June (2019). https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Abdulrashid-Musa-2/publication/361282649_Reflection_on_the_Islamic_Philosophical_Contributions_of_Ibn_Rushd_An_Educational_Overview/links/62a8a6986886635d5cd91b0e/Reflection-on-the-Islamic-Philosophical-Contributions-o.
- Normuslim, and Latifah. "Epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd, Al-Ghazali, Dan Ibnu Sina: Perspektif Filsafat Islam." *JIS: Journal Islamic Studies* 3, no. 3 (2025): 249–60.

<https://doi.org/10.71456/jis.v3i3.1492>.

Nur Kholis. "Rasionalisme Islam Klasik Dalam Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd." *International Journal Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din* 19, no. 1 (2017): 213–44. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ihya.18.1.1740>.

Nurzeza, Fahrul Kharis, and Ahmad Khudori Soleh. "Rasionalisme Hukum Islam Perspektif Ibnu Rusyd." *RAUDHAH Proud To Be Professionals Jurnal Tarbiyah Islamiyah* 1, no. 10 (2022): 204–18. <http://ejournal.stitru.ac.id/index.php/raudhah/article/view/187>.

Saeed Fayzul Hayat, Achmad Abubakar, and Halimah Basri. "Epistemologi Al-Qur'an: Studi Atas Integrasi Wahyu Dan Akal Dalam Tafsir Kontemporer." *Invention: Journal Research and Education Studies* 17, no. 2 (2025): 515–31. <https://doi.org/https://e-jurnal.iainsorong.ac.id/index.php/Tasamuh>.

Saefullah, Agus Susilo, Abdul Hakim, and Rijal Fadillah. "Islamic Education in Ibn Rushd's Epistemological Perspective: Sources of Knowledge, Methods of Attainment, and the Integration of Religion and Philosophy." *Jurnal El-Badr* 1, no. 2 (2025). <https://doi.org/http://jurnal.qolamuna.id/index.php/elbadr>.

Setyowati, Arum, and Achmad Khudori Soleh. "Googlism: A Study on Ibn Rushd's Integration Thought Concerning Contemporary New Religion." *Jurnal Penelitian Keislaman* 19, no. 1 (2023): 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.20414/jpk.v19i1.7082>.

Sidiropoulou, Chryssi. "Qur'anic Interpretation and the Problem of Literalism: Ibn Rushd and the Enlightenment Project in the Islamic World." *Religions* 6, no. 3 (2015): 1082–1106. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel6031082>.

Wahyudi, Kaipal. "Filsafat Ibnu Rusyd Hubungan Akal Dengan Wahyu." *Indonesian Journal of Islamic and Social Science* 1, no. 2 (2023): 5–24. [http://repo.iain-tulungagung.ac.id/5510/5/BAB 2.pdf](http://repo.iain-tulungagung.ac.id/5510/5/BAB%202.pdf).

Wijaya, Teuku Safir Iskandar. "Teologi Rasional Ijtihad Dan Dogmatis Taqlidi Penalaran Filsafat Kalam." *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 19, no. 1 (2017): 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.22373/substantia.v19i1.2916>.

Yono, Suyono. "Dialektika Epistemologi Islam Klasik Dan Pendidikan Agama Islam Modern: Analisis Filosofis Atas Relevansi Pemikiran Al-Ghazali Dan Ibn Rushd." *IMTIYAZ: Jurnal Ilmu Keislaman* 9, no. 3 (2025): 728–44. <https://doi.org/10.46773/imtiyaz.v9i3.2555>.