

**A CRITICAL STUDY OF ISLAMIC
PHILOSOPHY: AN ATTEMPT TO
RECONSTRUCT THE DOGMA OF
ABSOLUTISM OF TRUTH**

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Abstract: All forms of knowledge and truth in essence are not really the complete truth, there are always aspects of weakness and shortcomings, even in the field of science that is considered the mother of all knowledge or what is called philosophy itself. If there are no shortcomings from the ontological side (the essence of science), there must be shortcomings from the epistemological side or both completely, for example, then there will definitely be a weak side in the axiological field. Thus, it is necessary to continuously conduct studies or deepening of all existing fields of knowledge without exception to maintain the preservation of knowledge in the life of the human race. Truth is a reference for all forms and models of science to bridge the neutrality of science as an object of analysis that will remain open to all forms of criticism and change in order to continuously give birth to truths. There is no final word in a truth and no field of science has the right to claim truth as the single truth to the reality that is widespread in the life of mankind. Truth is the truth itself. This, not only for one particular scientific field, such as the field of philosophy, for example, is also not a reflection of some other sciences. Philosophy as the parent of science is not automatically a certain field that can claim a single truth, in fact there are many gaps to position philosophy as a field of ancient science that leaves many problems related to the validity of truth that has many faces or many variants in it. We will find the completeness of the truth in the owner of the truth himself. As for the others, it is an overflowing shadow of the owner of the truth himself. The approach in this critical study of philosophy, the author focuses more on religious criticism of some logical deviations or philosophical perspectives from the perspective of sharia, where it has tarnished the truth of religion through the postulates of truth that have been informed by religion through revelation texts.

Exposing the falsehood of the burhani postulates possessed by philosophy by presenting argumentative evidence of religion on several existing philosophical problems, especially the logical rebuttal data put forward by Al-Gazali on several issues that are considered deviant from the philosophical way of thinking by several Greek philosophers represented by Ibn Sina and al-Farabi in the Islamic world.

Keywords: Studies, Critical, deconstruction, dogmatic and philosophical

1. INTRODUCTION

Philosophy is often referred to as the *mater scientiarum* or the mother of all sciences. He opened up a space for critical reflection on various aspects of human life and knowledge. However, in its development, philosophy is not just a collection of theories, but a method of critical thinking that requires self-assessment, interpretation, analysis, and in-depth evaluation. Critical study of philosophy leads us to the understanding that philosophy is the foundation of critical reason that bridges truth, ethics, and logic (Rafar, 1995).

However, this does not necessarily make philosophy a discipline that is clean from defects or errors of thinking, especially those related to certain parts of the systematic way of thinking, which are related to the discourse of Godliness and some ways of drawing conclusions about the universe (Al-Gazali, 1966).

It turns out that the comment on the science of philosophy that is famous as a critical and explanatory science does not always end cleanly, aka purely from errors, and is even categorized into fatal, misguided and misleading errors if compared to several references such as the theology of Islamic teachings.

Pemujaan berlebihan terhadap eksistensi keilmuan filsafat ini - yang diidentifikasi- sebagai keilmuan yang berfikir sampai ke akar-akarnya dan menguak segala bentuk dinding kokoh metafisik ini, tidak lekang dari hal atau sesuatu yang menyisakan problem besar terutama jika dinisbahkan ke dalam dunia Islam secara umum, terutama terkait dengan beberapa materi persoalan ketuhanan dan kealaman sebagian. Hal inilah yang perlu menjadi perhatian kita dalam rangka membatasi keluasan dan kedalaman berfikir filsafat sampai pada titik terang terhadap objek materi yang dijelaskannya (Al-Gazali, 1966).

Finally, in this simple explanation, we can compare the acquisition value of the product of thinking, the results or fruits of philosophy also have limits that must be given clear limits, so as not to be excessive and not misleading. The significant impact of the results of philosophy that lacks control in certain fields in discussing

or studying certain materials, has a serious impact on human life, especially in the context of human religion, when it is found that humans are firm in holding the principles of their religion, especially when it comes to their theological aspects.

Dismantling the above problems, it is necessary to have a model of limitation and pattern of interaction with philosophy so that there are no errors in scientific practice and there is no negative stigma on the other hand towards philosophy. In addition, we must be objective and proportionate to this science, that it has a myriad of benefits for the birth of new knowledge from its womb. In this way, we can position and place this scientific objectivity and neutrality (Rafar, 1995).

2. METHOD

This research is a qualitative critical study with a library *research approach*. The method used is a descriptive-critical analysis of philosophical texts and religious texts, especially the works of Al-Gazali and Muslim philosophers. Primary data sources include the book *Tabafut al-Falasifah* by Al-Gazali, *Maqosidul Falasifah*, and the work of Ibn Rushd. Secondary sources include a wide range of historical literature on Islamic philosophy, philosophical textbooks, and the writings of intellectuals such as Sayyed Hossein Nasr, Majid Fakhry, Ibrahim Madkour, as well as contemporary thinkers such as Karl R. Popper and Thomas Kuhn. The analysis technique is carried out by identifying philosophical arguments, then deconstructing the claim of absolute truth through ontological, epistemological, and axiological approaches. The validity of the data is obtained through critical reading and comparison between texts.

3. RESULTS

a. The historical traces of philosophy in the Islamic tradition

Talking about philosophy historically in Islamic *turast* is certainly not born in a perfect sense, but if we pay attention to its traces, we have indeed found traces of philosophy that have grown

and been practiced in the early history of revelation. Therefore, if we pay attention to the concept of philosophical thought in terms of the values of the virtues of life or the affirmative truths of revelation and the policy of prophetic behavior, then we can claim that this philosophical treasure has been found in the Islamic world. Although philosophy as a science or theory may not be said to have been born immediately, philosophy as a teaching and practice of holy life and righteous deeds can actually be said to exist in the lives of the early generation of Muslims (Madkour, 1996).

This is proven to be clearly recorded in the historical traces of the lives of the prophet and his companions. It may not be in the same terms or designations as the mention of the famous name in the Greek world as a designation called "*philosophy*" but the value or practice and meaning of the term are clearly displayed in the actions and wisdom of the prophet's life. And the name as the experts call philosophy is not exactly the same as the name of philosophy itself. But again, the values and daily practices shown in the lives of the Prophet and his companions show actions or values commensurate with the significance of the meaning of philosophy itself.

Names and terms may be different, but the substance of the teachings and ideology of science can be said to be the same, almost indistinguishable. In *early Islamic turast*, the term noble teachings, virtuous actions were found and equated with the model of all forms of virtue with the term "*wisdom*". This is in many verses in the Qur'an and the *liturgy* of hadith, little is found and almost all of the teachings of Islam speak of the projection of truth and goodness. It is found in all Islamic teachings which can all be called the teachings of virtue and goodness. Philosophy with all its ontological, epistemological and axiological theories impresses the same teachings, as taught by religious texts.

Thus, philosophy or in the language of religious texts is called wisdom is knowledge and actions and even character or traits that are the direct source of existing values of truth or virtue. This is clearly seen in the attitude and actions of the Prophet who is

sovereign by Allah SWT as a direct messenger as well as a teacher of philosophy or wisdom itself. This is in line with the information of revelation in surah *al-Jumu'ab* verse 2 as follows (Al-Qur'an, 1430 H):

هو الذي بعث في الأميين رسولا منهم يتلوا آياته ويزكيهم ويعلمهم الكتاب
والحكمة وان كانوا من قبل لفى ضلال مبين (الجمعة: 2)

“Meaning: It is Allah who sent a Messenger among them the *Ummiyyin* (the people who are still awake), recited to them the verses of their Lord, taught them purity and taught them the book of guidance in life and taught them the values of *wisdom*, even though they were in error before.” (QS. *Al-Jumu'ab*: 2).

To explain the meaning and *the* relationship between the corresponding meaning and value can also be shown by other verses in the Qur'an, for example in a verse on (QS. *al-Baqarab*:269) which reads as follows:

ومن يؤت الحكمة فقد أوتي خيرا كثيرا (البقرة: 269)

“Meaning: And whoever is endowed with *wisdom*, it means that he has been given a lot of goodness” (Q.S. *Al-Baqorob*:269).

Sayyed Hossein Nashr, for example, as a 20th-century Muslim intellectual, can find some of his writings that consider the root of philosophy to be not much different from the root of *wisdom* contained in prophetic texts. A number of other Muslim intellectuals have also put forward this as something that has an equivalent meaning that is interrelated. They argue that the meaning of *wisdom* and *philosophy* is something that is commensurate and meaningful. Where its use in the Islamic world can be found in the 2nd or 3rd century Hijri (Nashr, 1996).

b. Philosophy cannot be independent; Self-Criticism of Philosophical Truth

Basically, philosophy was born not alone and even preceded by pagan and mythical thoughts. For centuries it was displaced by man's anxiety over pseudo-and unfounded confinement, and then

systematic and confirmed logical thoughts were born. This means that on top of this genial philosophical thinking has a very heroic background that its existence is a response from human dependence on big things outside of itself which manifests into human dissatisfaction itself (Yazdi, 2003). Thus, the forerunner of the revival of philosophy was born through an extrinsic dialectic of pseudo-answers that do not satisfy the human mind that traces things through a causal system that then turns into the intrinsic dialectic of man who finds his identity through a substantive dialectic that sees that these truths actually begin to exist because of the thought and processing of the human soul itself.

Humans begin to realize that their existence has been nothing but a form of rational human beings who play the subjective self that sees and thinks about something that starts from how humans themselves exist. This subjective condition then becomes a justification for human understanding to develop knowledge that comes from how to maximize one's potential through a complementary subjective dialectic in the structure of the human body itself. There is an awareness of human beings having abilities and truths, starting from how humans think and reconstruct their own thoughts and reap logical and affirmed answers until the truth of coherence emerges through rational logical justifications that enter the realm of human thought.

But again, it is not empty of experiences related to systems outside of itself, whether in the form of myths or folklore or so on. This means that this is a necessity for the existence of philosophical science that is born from extrinsic causes that reach its climax by knocking on the door of human consciousness which leads to the epistemic colossal discovery of the existence of external impulses which then gives birth to a great understanding of the meta-conscious human that dialectics prove the emergence of a magical baby named human who has an important grace in him called reason/philosophy (Yazdi, 2003).

c. Three Critical Pillars; Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology

As a discipline, philosophy rests on three main aspects on which it is based; *First*, Ontology (Bakker, 1992): Examining the essence of "what" is being studied. Critical studies here question the nature of existence, including the objectivity of knowledge. At least the nuances of criticism of all forms of knowledge "exist" become a critical perspective on all forms of knowledge systems that have emerged. This can be used as a critical method to be able to find everything that has not yet been revealed. Thus ontology can ask something that has never been known before. So that it allows for continuous updates to something. In this pattern, critical studies in philosophy at the same time demonstrate its invulnerability from the position of criticism. That is the importance of critical studies (Bakker, 1992).

Second, epistemology (Yazdi, 2003): Examining the "how" of knowledge is obtained. It involves an analysis of the methods, validity, and limitations of science. This second pillar implies the certainty of valid knowledge in terms of the sources recorded in the interaction of the object subject. Source criticism efforts look at the foundation in occupying all forms of things according to their portions. And this, epistemological critical attitudes are so swooping down on the establishment of science or any field that there is no idol of knowledge or stagnation of truth. At this level, the study of epistemological criticism opens up opportunities for continuous novelty and dismantles the establishment of the hegemonic tradition of one knowledge over another or one power over another. The mirror of this approach must remain in all living systems so that there is no cave of closure at the level of phenomena. All forms of establishment often arise as a result of the lack of critical dimensions of this epistemic method.

Third, axiology (Kattsoff, 1996): Discussing "what it is for" to use. This aspect highlights the ethical, moral, and aesthetic values that underpin the scientific process. To maintain the preservation and novelty of knowledge or traditions and teachings, it is very important to put the concept or axial method as a catalyst in its realization in the real world of humans. Many things are sometimes

met with surprise because they no longer see the important aspects of normativity, usefulness, and sustainability as needed, without negating one of the specific parts of its broader structure. Often the sustainability of something is measured by its usefulness at a purely pragmatic level, without wanting to place something in proportion to see the context of its meaning more deeply and broadly. This is where the function of axiological criticism lies in order to bridge the continuity of an idea or idea or knowledge according to its magnetism.

Philosophical studies or Islamic studies often ignore this axiological method so that the values of novelty themselves are not created. In the sense that every exposure and phenomenon that appears before us is often not executed due to the lack of access to this axiological method as an objective stabilizer on the other hand. Meaning is often lost in the midst of certain needs and goals, such is the importance of this method in Islamic scientific studies.

d. Philosophy as the Foundation of Critical Reason

Everything has a spirit. And the spirit of philosophy is the so-called critical reason itself. Something cannot be judged or touched except through the spirit of philosophy itself. This includes the study of philosophy. There is nothing to escape from this critical reasoning model. Because this is a great way to open up opportunities to approach something so that there is no surprise and stagnation.

The same thing will happen to this scientific discipline of philosophy if it no longer uses this foundation in all forms of theory. Critical thinking (Bertens, 2002) in philosophy involves the ability to sort information, seek truth, and find solutions to human problems. The role of philosophy in critical thinking encompasses three important aspects; First, logic. Involves arguments and analysis to evaluate claims of truth. Second, ethics. Provide an understanding of moral values and concepts in the development of knowledge. Third, Reflection. Encourage fundamental questions such as "what can be known" or "what is true".

4. DISCUSSION

a. **Critical Studies: Going Beyond All Forms of Paradigm**

In critical studies, there is no immunity to criticism, for example, philosophical discourse especially those influenced by Frankfurt's Critical Theory, criticizes the positivist paradigm that tends to reduce social science methods to the equivalent of natural sciences. Anti-establishment and attacking absolutism in all types of science is a form of critical study that is strongly emphasized by thinkers such as Karl R. Popper (Popper, 2002) and Thomas Kuhn, who highlight the importance of critical evaluation so that science is not stagnant and able to adapt to new realities. Popper emphasized how critical study is the dismantling of all forms of authority that hold knowledge hostage in its entirety. Similarly, Kuhn strongly emphasizes the revolutionary system in all forms of authority that is indicated to put something in an unattainable position, aka established, which requires revolutionary attitudes or actions in all fields, including in the field of science.

Critical studies also show that philosophy plays an important role in the formation of critical reason in humans, although its implementation still faces challenges in methods and problems of knowledge transmission. This critical study inspires a positive force for the revival of science that provides opportunities for any field of knowledge to achieve its progress, as well as marking the step of the development of knowledge that is increasingly advanced and independent with a note that science is not immune to criticism and open to all forms of progress. Thus, it can be concluded that the truth of science, including philosophy, is not endless with criticism or correction for its sustainability and continuity.

b. **Forms of Criticism (Fallacy) of Falsehood of Philosophy**

We find many criticisms and rejections of some philosophical arguments that are considered misleading in the theological realm which proves that this is a direct criticism of the

existence of philosophers. Some of the content or material of philosophy is forms of deviations from the logic of philosophy. For example, the criticism and direct rebuttal by a Muslim philosopher represented by Imam Al-Gazali is related to some errors of logical inference of philosophical thought (Al-Gazali, 1966).

One of Al-Gazali's monumental works that criticizes the way of thinking of philosophers which is considered a mistake in their way of thinking is clearly stated in the famous masterpiece called *Tabaqut al-Falasifah* (incoherence of philosophers), this work was born solely as a response as well as a direct rebuttal to some of the philosophers' errors of thinking that were considered fatal.

This book is a critical response to the thought of philosophers, especially the *Avicennian school* pioneered by Ibn Sina, which is considered to be contrary to the teachings of Islam. The purpose of Al-Gazali in writing this book is to make Muslims aware of the confusion of thinking caused by the influence of philosophy that deviates from the faith. On the other hand, he wanted to show that many of the claims of philosophers cannot be proven logically and are contrary to revelation (Al-Gazali, 1966).

In his book, Al-Gazali mentions three doctrines that are considered to be very contrary to religious doctrine. These three doctrines can mislead Muslims. These doctrines are; 1. The world is eternal. Philosophers argue that the universe has no beginning, while Islam teaches that nature was created by Allah and has a beginning. 2. God knows only general things. Philosophers claim that God does not know specific things (such as individual detailed actions), whereas Islam believes that Allah is omniscient of all things, including the smallest details. 3. There is no physical awakening; philosophers reject the resurrection of the body after death, even though this is one of the pillars of faith (Al-Gazali, 1966).

Al-Gazali used the methods of logical criticism and sharp argumentative criticism to point out inconsistencies in philosophical thought. He emphasized that the field of metaphysics

cannot be studied with reason alone (Al-Gazali, 1966), because it involves things that are beyond the reach of ordinary senses and logic. He also answered and strengthened the position of revelation before philosophers about the existence of revelation that has a higher authority in determining the truth about supernatural things (Al-Gazali, 1966). Nevertheless, Al-Gazali did not reject all philosophical science. Al-Gazali still acknowledges the truth in the fields of logic, mathematics and natural sciences as long as it does not contradict religion.

This work of al-Gazali is one of the most important works in the history of Islamic thought. His criticism sparked a long debate, and was even refuted by Ibn Rushd in his book *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (Ibn Rushd, 1968). But al-Gazali's work, at least, succeeded in limiting the influence of philosophy that was too liberal and strengthening the position of Islamic theology at that time.

5. CONCLUSION

The critical study of philosophy emphasizes that philosophy is not a rigid science, but a dynamic one. It serves as an evaluative mechanism that constantly questions the foundations of science. By using the ontology, epistemology, and axiology approaches critically. Philosophy helps humans not only to "know", but also to understand the "why" and "how" of that knowledge plays a role in civilization. However, in the name of philosophy, which offers paradigms that build and offer enlightenment in the whole of human life, it still bears an important burden for our attention, especially the religious ummah, which still leaves correction to some criticism of the truth that is considered misleading and becomes a systemic problem for the entire epistemic, ontological and axiological edifice. The truth no longer implies the truth on certain scientific objectifications, but it is wiser for us to rely on the creator of knowledge itself, namely Allah SWT.

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