

# Unique Interpretation of Necessity and Freedom in the Philosophy of Ibn Rushd Based on the Rejection of the Opinions of His Contemporaries

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## Abstract

The article delves into Ibn Rushd's perspectives on the notions of freedom and necessity, as a prominent figure within the Eastern Peripatetic movement. His stance is elucidated through his rejection of the prevailing notions held by his peers. Within the medieval philosophical landscape, the discourse surrounding freedom and necessity often revolved around reconciling religious and philosophical ideologies. The article particularly highlights discussions on fate and volition. In response to the controversy over whether people's actions are carried out by the necessity of fate or by their independent arbitrary actions, Ibn Rushd gives his arguments.

**Keywords:** Freedom, Fate, Dependence, Morality, Faith, Fatalism, Greed, God, Moral Goodness, Determinism, Theology

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## Introduction

Each aspect of the history of philosophy is illuminated by a bright, diverse, original, sometimes repetitive set of points of view with its own facet. So every era has its own brilliance and place. Representatives of Eastern Peripatetism, among others, made their contribution to Arab-Muslim philosophy, especially by opening the doors wide for the development of science. It is Ibn Rushd, who is considered a representative of this philosophical group, who deserves to be mentioned in this place. Ibn Rushd, or, in other words, Averroes, lived almost the entire XII century and is associated with all the events of this period, which are very important in the history of Muslim civilization. The 12th century witnessed the complete destruction of the Eastern Abbasids and the Spanish Umayyads as a result of an attempt to create a rational and scientific trend in Islamism. With the death of Ibn Rushd in 1198, Arab philosophy lost its last representative in his image, and the rule of the Koran over freedom of thought was ensured for almost six centuries.

The contemporary global phenomenon of reluctance or relinquishment (initially observed in local leadership and eventually extending to other roles) serves as a poignant example of humanity's failure to heed the lessons of history and society (Harrison, 2014). Presently, approximately half of the populace is willing to relinquish their voting rights and the associated responsibility. Moreover, in the face of impending "technological" pressures, this number may swell further. The inclination to relinquish freedom and accountability in favor of comfort is potent, bolstered by the influence of authority.

Consequently, given the pressing relevance of the study of freedom, it is imperative to explore its conceptualizations across various epochs (Raaflaub, 2004). An examination of Ibn Rushd's

perspectives, representing Eastern peripatetic thought, readily distinguishes the conception of freedom. When the notions of necessity and freedom intersect, the thinker's views manifest on the stage either through critique or outright rejection of the prevailing ideas of their time.

### **Literature review on the topic**

The scholarly contributions of Ibn Rushd, a prominent figure in Eastern peripatetic philosophy and an astute analyst of Plato's works, have undergone meticulous examination in accordance with the intellectual milieu of his time (Omar, 2015). Numerous researchers across philosophical, social, and historical disciplines, including the field of philosophy itself, have thoroughly scrutinized his oeuvre. This scholarly scrutiny has yielded a plethora of examples showcasing the depth of analysis applied to his works, alongside the identification of solutions that remain relevant to contemporary exigencies. Noteworthy among these researchers Pehar (2010), Adamson (2016), Woerther (2019), Mensia (2019), Di Giovanni (2018), and others, whose comprehensive explorations of Ibn Rushd's corpus are exemplified in a variety of formats, including monographs, essays, and articles.

### **Methods**

Throughout the course of the research, scientific-philosophical principles were employed, including systematicity, theoretical-deductive reasoning, analysis and synthesis, historical contextualization, logical rigor, and comparative analysis.

### **Results and Discussion**

An inherent characteristic of Arab-Muslim philosophy is its conspicuous tendency towards one-sidedness or monotony. Nearly all philosophers within this tradition, with the exception of Ghazali, exhibited a uniformity in their modes of thought and reliance on similar authorities. Any discernible variance among their teachings typically pertained to the extent of developmental elaboration achieved. Notable diversity and individuality, however, were primarily observed among those affiliated with religious sects within Islam.

The theological discourse within Islamic thought emerged shortly after the passing of the Prophet Muhammad, particularly concerning the interplay between freedom and destiny. The Qadaris, proponents of freedom, engaged in protracted debates with the Jabarites, advocates of predestination, on this expansive subject, drawing upon textual sources and intellectual arguments. Another focal point of contention pertained to the attributes of God. The prevailing monotheistic framework of Islam persistently challenged Christian doctrines such as the Trinity and the Incarnation, asserting notions like "God has no son, God has no mother, God does not beget, God is not begotten." These assertions spurred intense intellectual activity, with some philosophers conceiving of an abstract deity devoid of any positive attributes, while others, such as the Sifati (advocates of attributes) and the Tashbigi (comparators or analogizers), anthropomorphized God to varying degrees.

In an effort to avoid succumbing to absolute fatalism and materialistic anthropomorphism, the Ash'ari school sought reconciliation by blending elements of Jabari and Sifati teachings, albeit within certain limits. Conversely, the Ghassanid school posited a conception of God as a physical being dwelling in a specific location, depicted with bodily features such as legs, arms, and a throne.

Along with this extreme dogmatism, skepticism is represented by infinite groups. The Somanites rejected the possibility of learning through observation; they accepted only what could be touched or seen: they were known as unbelievers. The scholars, on the basis of another

kind of skepticism, based the reliability of the mind on the authority of an infallible imam. They are almost united with the Muslim Kabbalists, Batarians, who seek truth in letters and numbers.

Undisguised unbelief also formed a number of groups within Islam: the Karmats, the Fatimids, the Ismailis, the Druzes, the Assassins two groups that mixed fanaticism with mistrust, religious fervor with insolence, the courage of the freethinker with the superstition of the holy rites, and the coolness of the quietist. are groups with a bilateral nature. This is really a characteristic of Muslim insecurity. Under the guise of sanctity, it hides the most terrible immorality, the most brutal dishonesty, presenting the average appearance of a religious group and a secret society. Believing nothing and allowing everything is his formula. However, the ambiguous nature of the various names that Muslims use to denote non-believers does not always allow for the identification of views that are considered heresy (Arzt, 1995). For example, under the name of "Zindiki" communist groups of Bardezans and Mazdakis, with a monist character and free thinkers who only recognize things that can be proven (ahl-el-tahqiq, those who demand clarity) joined. The people did not strictly distinguish between those who believed and those who did not believe. Sometimes the name "zindiki" is expressed by sabism and idolatry.

These were the unique products of this great movement that encompassed all elements of Islamism from the 2nd to the 5th century. Liberal and rationalist theology, namely the theology of the Mu'tazilites (dissidents) attracted moderate minds for a while. Mu'taziliism in Islam is like Schleiermacher's expression of Protestantism. Revelation is the natural result of human ability; the doctrines which lead to salvation are under the control of the mind: only the mind is sufficient to know these doctrines; and it was always possible to know them, even before revelation. The school of Bassor, under the patronage of the Abbasids, was the center of that great reform movement, the most complete expression of which is reflected in the huge "Encyclopedia of the Pious Brothers". It contains an attempt to embody philosophy and Islamism, which apparently did not satisfy either the philosophers or the religious.

Thus, in addition to the legacy of Greek philosophy, Islamism itself provided fertile ground for intellectual exploration through a realm of rational inquiry known as "kalam," which bears striking resemblance to scholasticism. Initially, during the era of al-Mamun, the term "kalam" did not denote a distinct system before the advent of Greek philosophy among Muslims. Instead, it often concealed a realm of unrestricted inquiry. However, as philosophical attitudes became increasingly scrutinized, the role of "kalam" underwent a transformation. It transitioned from a vehicle of free inquiry to a bastion of defense against external philosophical assaults, adopting a doctrinal guise reminiscent of Christian theology, which predominantly relied on apologetics.

The primary objective of the Mutakallimun (the practitioners of "kalam") was to construct arguments against certain philosophers, to rejuvenate the world, and to justify the existence of a transcendent God who is detached from the world yet exerts influence upon it. They found the atomistic theory conducive to their polemical aims and thus embraced it fervently. According to their perspective, atoms are created by God, who possesses the power to annihilate them and perpetually generate new ones without cessation. God's agency is perceived as immediate and unrestricted, with every existing entity being directly created by Him. Both negative accidents (e.g., darkness, ignorance) and their substrates (substance) are bestowed by God, while positive accidents are regarded as manifestations of His grace. Thus, just as God is the source of life and motion, He is also the creator of death and stillness. The

human heart itself is considered nothing more than an ephemeral accident perpetually renewed by God.

Within this framework, causality is not ascribed to natural laws; rather, God alone is recognized as the ultimate cause. The Mutakallimun asserted that events are never inherently connected, and the structure of the universe could have unfolded differently. This system, championed by the Mutakallimun in opposition to the philosophers of Peripateticism, was undoubtedly devised for political purposes, yet it possessed an outward simplicity that appealed to the masses. Ibn Rushd, Maimonides, and the final proponents of Arabic philosophy would later intensify their efforts against this system, further accentuating the disparity between the tenets endorsed by popular belief and those derived from independent scientific inquiry.

Morality occupies very little place in Ibn Rushd's philosophy. In general, Aristotle's ethics, bearing the stamp of Hellenism, undoubtedly did not achieve the same success among the Arabs as his works on logic, physics, and metaphysics. In this matter, only Ibn Rushd's argument with the mutakallims about the principle of morality attracts our attention. The Mu'takallims asserted that good is what God wills, and that God wills it not because of an internal basis prior to his will, but only because he wills it. It is known that they ascribed to God the ability to bring self-contradictory things into existence and to impart his free will to the entire management of the universe. All these formed parts of a structured and agreed system, which Ibn Rushd relentlessly attacked at every opportunity. This time he had no difficulty in proving that such a moral teaching would destroy any notion of just and unjust, and would destroy the religion they sought to uphold. Ibn Rushd also defended genuine philosophical theories of freedom against the mutakallims. It is impossible to say that a person is completely free or completely subordinate. Considered freedom in the heart knows no limitations; but it is limited by the fatality of external conditions. The main reason for our actions is within us; but it collides with chance outside of us; this external thing that attracts us does not depend on us and is subject only to the laws of nature, that is, to divine providence. That is why the Qur'an describes man as a being in the hands of destiny or as a being with freedom in his actions. Such a point of view is taken as a middle ground between the views of the Jabarites and the teachings of the Qadaris. In the same way, he says elsewhere, that first matter is equally capable of undergoing opposite modifications, just as the soul is able to choose between two opposite actions. However, this freedom is neither a whim nor an accident. Active abilities know no state of indifference; it is only in the world of passivity that indifferent chance can be found.

The concept of goodness and evil in nature put forward by Ibn-Rushd fully corresponds to his pantheistic worldview, that is, to the interpretation of God as a symbol representing the system of natural determinations, from which it can be understood without a doubt that he cannot violate the existing laws in it. Thus the work becomes concerned with the interpretation of the goodness and evil that accompany human actions: in his time, the problem is divine grace and the responsibility that man must bear in the afterlife for his actions in this life on earth. was closely related to the question of freedom, but for the thinker of Cordova, his discussion essentially served only to philosophically formulate the issue of the relationship between freedom and necessity (Cordova, 2007).

In Islam, this issue has been the cause of heated debate for centuries, because the Qur'an itself contains statements that give it diametrically opposed interpretations. According to his verses, there was and is nothing in the world that is not determined by God's will; according to other verses, man has free will and therefore acts as a fully autonomous being in his actions. The first

group of verses affirms the omnipotence of the creator, but at the same time denies his justice, because it means that in the next world, people will be punished undeservedly for the deeds committed by their Lord on the Day of Judgment; The second group of Qur'anic verses affirms God's justice in this context, but on the other hand denies his power. In "The Book of Argumentation of Community Beliefs", the thinker of Córdoba wrote about the teachings of these Muslim theologians (theologians), namely the Mu'tazilites, who recognized the free will of man (Ibn Rushd, although he was not familiar with the details of their teachings (even if he did), examines the main ways of solving the dilemma in the Jabarites, who think about the absolute predestination of people's actions, and the compromisers, but, as Ibn Rushd says, the Ash'aris, who support the fatalistic view of the Jabarites. Cordova's thinker rejects both the absolute freedom of human will and the absolute destiny of human actions.

According to Ibn Rushd, people's actions cannot be completely predetermined, because then people would be no different from inanimate beings. Inanimate bodies have no need of the so-called will and choice, for which agriculture, military arts, shipbuilding, medicine, in short, all the crafts by which good is expediently obtained and evil destroyed there is no need to deal with the fields. But on the other hand, their actions cannot be considered completely free. First, we cannot act arbitrarily in this world because our actions are subject to external determinations. Second, our desire to perform a certain action is itself deterministic: external causes "not only contribute to or prevent the performance of the actions we want to perform, but also act as reasons why we want one of two opposites. does, because the Will is nothing but the desire to imagine something or to judge something, while this judgment arises from external circumstances independent of our choice" (Русд, 1973). And finally, thirdly, our desires are determined by a particular temperament, which is caused by one or another combination of elements in our body.

Ibn Rushd rejects both the libertarian position of the Mu'tazilites and the deterministic position of their opponents. The supposed "intermediate" position of the Asharites, in his opinion, is completely meaningless, since the only meaning they attach to a human "grip" is the difference between an involuntary movement of a human hand and an involuntary convulsive (trembling) movement. But since no action depends on us, we cannot give up on it, and therefore in both cases we make decisions or are forced to. Thus, the convulsive (trembling) movement, as well as the movement of the hand, which allegedly occurs with a "grip" or arbitrarily, are actually considered identical, the only difference between them is only semantic or verbal (Adamson, 2016). Thus, Ibn Rushd abandoned these views in order to form his position. From this it can be seen that both the volitional deeds of a slave created by God, as well as actions caused by any deed, based on the influence of others, and actions committed by him forcibly, are committed under the will of the Creator. Because it is through these feelings, the reasons that he gives, that he can do something freely. That is, only Almighty God knows both the consequence and the cause of any free human work. Thus, all these relationships do not contradict each other or oppose each other, but are harmonious and complement each other.

## Conclusion

Ibn Rushd's comprehension of the dynamic between freedom and necessity is elucidated through his elucidation of the concept of necessity, as delineated in his interpretation of the taxonomy that categorizes these two concepts. He expounds that the term "necessity" encompasses three distinct senses. Firstly, it denotes a dependency on external factors for existence, as exemplified by the need for breathing in an animal supplied with blood. Secondly, it conveys a sense of obligation, diametrically opposed to the notion of choice, often

characterized by ancient Greek poets as akin to a form of torment or distressing circumstance. Lastly, it denotes an inherent property of something possessing a particular attribute, as evidenced by the assertion of the eternal nature of the sky.

In contrast, freedom or "choice," according to Ibn Rushd, does not fall under the purview of necessity but rather represents one manifestation thereof – namely, obligation. He contends that proponents such as the Jabarites and the Ash'aris construe freedom as either mediated by spiritual impulses or as the sole determinant of all actions in the world, irrespective of individual agency. Ibn Rushd rebuffs the Ash'ari doctrine positing the fatalistic predestination of every individual action, asserting instead that the inclination towards good or evil is determined by various "intermediate" factors shaping one's temperament, will, and cognition .

While acknowledging that human will and intellect are subject to the dictates of necessity, Ibn Rushd posits that this necessity concurrently impels individuals towards the pursuit of goodness. Genuine goodness or happiness, he posits, can only be attained when the rational soul governs the instinctual actions of the animalistic faculties, directing them towards pursuits deemed permissible by the practical intellect at the appropriate time and level. However, owing to the inherent diversity of human inclinations, absolute happiness can only be realized within an ideal state wherein the speculative virtues, accessible to the select few, complement the cultivation of practical virtues accessible to all.

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