

# From holistic mind to holistic soul: an analytical study of Ibn Rushd's philosophy

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## **Abstract:**

*Since the theory of any philosopher in the nature of existence as a whole had a clear effect on any issue of his philosophy, it was natural that the nature of the unit in which Ibn Rushd's philosophy and his own propensity towards (unity of existence), (unity of reason) and (unity of the soul) had a clear effect on many issues of his philosophy; the most prominent of which is in the issue of resurrection of self after leaving body. This opinion was the result of his opinion on the unity of the mind in particular. As far as the unity, universality and the two types of mind is concerned Ibn Rushd says:*

*1- A universal active type, that is a substance separate from man, and it is not subject to annihilation and not subject to mixing with matter; but rather is just like the sun from which all minds derive their lights.*

*2- An interactive type which is the human mind derived from the active public mind; therefore, it has a constant tendency to contact and join it. Hence, man self is in a constant tendency and a constant yearning for the one.*

**Keywords:** *Mind , Soul , Philosophy ,Existence ,Reason.*

## **Introduction.**

As there are many obvious effects in any matter of the theory of any philosopher in the nature of existence, it is normal for the sign of unity that characterizes the philosophy of Ibn Rushd (Averroes: English pronunciation: /ə'verooi:z/), for his particular tendency towards ((unity of existence, unity of mind, and (( unity of soul, to have an obvious effect in many matters of his philosophy. The most prominent matter of his is the idea of "the return" which he viewed in light of unity of mind particularly.

Ibn Rushd adopted the unity of mind and its universality in this existence and classified mind into:-

1- The general active type, an essence apart from human, eternal, that does not mix with matter, but it is the sun that illuminates all minds.

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2- The passive type; the human mind which is derived from the universal mind; the active. Therefore, it always has the tendency to communicate with it and gets involved with, thus, human soul always has the permanent tendency and continuous longing to the lord. (Al-Beisar, 1973)

### **Incidence and unity of soul.**

The problem of soul-incidence is a serious problem in Ibn Rushd's intellection, which he treated skillfully and dealt with it within a philosophical framework rarely found in any of the other walker philosophers'. The researcher in Ibn Rushd's philosophy, which is derived from his books, might have imagined that he did not mean to cure that problem or, at least, he did not intend it in his writings and he did not take it as a goal to examine in his researches .But, however, we can conclude his opinion in this matter from his few texts in different occasions. Ibn Rushd disagrees with those who adopt the incidence, he says:- (( I do not know any Wiseman adopting the idea of real soul-incidence, then he says that it remains except what he said ( he means Al-Ghazali) citing Ibn Sine's ideas. But all agreed upon its supplemental incidence, which is its relation with body abilities like the mirrors' when the sun beam contacts. For them, this is not the possibility of emergent corrupted pictures, but it is the possibility, as they claim, of the proof. The bearer is a nature, which is different from the nature of the raw material. (Moris, 1992)

So, Ibn Rushd rejects the idea of real incidence, arguing that all wise philosophers adopted the supplemental incidence. Supplemental incidence (( is that which exists for a period of time which is less than the time of existence of something else. (Comprehensive lexicography, 2000)

Ibn Rushd admits the concept of soul unity; soul is one and there are not various souls. He proves that by saying,

"Zaid is other than Amro in number. He is one Amro in the image; the soul. If Zaid's soul is other than Amro's in number as Zaid is other than Amro in number, Zaid's and Amro's souls will be two in number. The one in image is followed by numerical abundance, i.e. division. If soul does not perish when body does, or soul has a similar thing, so, it must be one in number when it leaves the body)) (Moris, 1992) It is clear to us that Plotinus' effect is clear in this matter. The whole view of Plotinus is that even if we assume that soul is a body, we can imagine its division by individuals' division while retaining its unity. In this respect, he has a known simile of water; If we divide an amount of water into several amounts, each amount will be an essence. These essences differ because each of which constitutes a different space, but, even though, they share the same nature because they are all water and all have the images of water, or the kind of water. This is the image of human soul which remains one despite variety of individuals. (Al-Ahwani, 1950)

But, does the idea of soul unity imply that soul is obsolescent? Ibn Rushd does not talk about the idea of soul obsolescence. Even though, it can be noticed that soul is timeless for him. He rejects the idea of partial souls because, when Almighty Allah endued man with the soul, it is the same one for all members of one species. Because the soul is endued by Almighty Allah, the soul is timeless. But he declares the idea of supplemental incidence which results from soul body contact, so how can that be explained? It is possible to say that, for Ibn Rushed, soul is both; incident and timeless at the same time. If it were possible to bring the two extremes in one phrase, it would be; It is timeless as it is one for all human beings. And it is supplement ally incident

as it exists in the outside world; Its contact with the Contactable physical capabilities. Here, a question arises; If human soul is one, Indivisible, and there aren't various souls, so how can the multiplicity of people of the human kind and their difference from each other be explained? What is the source of that variety and individuality? Ibn Rushd says that individuality results from body; The soul of Zaid and Amro is one and many, as if you say it is one in its image and many since many have it... He asserts this idea in another text when he says "numerical abundance results from the material". (Moris, 1992)The material means the raw material of man and the descriptive attributes, which contradict the attributes of the soul; length, width, expansion, and bias in a place and other qualities that neither mind nor soul can be characterized by, because they can't be described by greatness, quantity, length, which are not Suitable for their nature and contradictory with their essence.

Yet, how can soul, which is one in number, be divided on many bodies? Ibn Rushd answers this question, In response to Al-Ghazali having showed his text, as usual, in his book "Tahfut al-tahafut", when he says, "The division of one, which doesn't have greatness in size nor in quantity, is rationally impossible. So, how does one become two then a thousand then comes back one? This is acceptable with what has greatness in quantity; sea water goes into rivers and streams branching from them, then, it returns back to the sea. But, how is it possible to divide what doesn't have quantity? (Moris, 1992)

Ibn Rushd responds to al-Ghazali very clearly saying: ((saying that it can only be imagined in what has a quantity is partially false because it is true with what is incidentally dividable; what is dividable before being in a spontaneously dividable material. The spontaneously dividable material is the body, for instance. The incidentally dividable, for instance, is the division of whiteness of objects when objects and images are divided. The soul is incidentally dividable; it is divided according to its location. Soul is like light; as light is divided with the division of luminous objects, then it unites after the extermination of the objects, which is similar to soul body relationship. (Moris, 1992)

From what has been mentioned above, it is possible to summarize how Ibn Rushd views soul; It is obsolescent, though he believes in its supplemental incidence which is based on the emergent soul body relationship. He also views soul as one, and not multiple; Multiplicity results from the material. Therefore, Ibn Sina was rebuked for believing in incidence and multiplicity of souls.

Soul body relationship:

Ibn Rushd believes that despite the difference between their natures, soul is related to body in a way which is neither essential nor incidental, but a relation from another type, which is difficult to understand. It can be said to liken the relationship between Almighty Allah and the universe, to some extent; Almighty Allah manages the universe though Almighty Allah is immaterial. As universe does not mix with the Divine nature, soul does not mix with body. Ibn Rushd agreed with Al-Ghazali's view that man feels him\herself without being able to identify its position in the body. He said, " we know soul and many other things, but we do not know its extremes though we know soul with its existence. But we must know whether it exists in a body or not because if it exists in a body, body will be a considerable requirement. but if it does not exist in a body, body will not be a considerable requirement. This belief should be taken in consideration. As for Ghazali's

rejection for the view that man feels that soul is there in his\her body. If he\she can't recognize the organ in which it exists, it will certainly be true. Ancient scholars differed in this but knowing that it exists in the body does not mean that it has a structure since that is not obvious. People differed in this matter since past to present days. That difference results from the idea that; if body is an instrument of the soul, it will have no structure in, but if body is the position of the incident, soul will only have a structure in. (Moris, 1992)

### **The return of soul**

In Ibn Rushd's intellection, the idea of "return" is one of the complex problems, about which, there are debates and arguments among scholars who discussed it in a way that might have obscured it or, at least, shown it as contradictory, conflicting, or ambiguous. That may be due to the texts of Ibn Rushed; The researcher may find texts which assert the idea of survival and immortality of soul. Some other texts may denote the idea of soul destruction. That made some researchers either not take a decision about the matter or judge it as conflicting and contradictory. Ibn Tamia said, " In the matter of the incidence of the universe and the return of bodies, Ibn Rushd's view justified both views though, inside, he had a tendency to adopt his predecessor's view. (Muhammad, 1989) Mr. Farah Antwan believes that Ibn Rushed had two answers for this sensitive matter, which is now, a great pillar of humanity. Having read some of Ibn Rushed's books, before translating it, the researcher has found him clearly believing in the second life and punishment and reward. The researcher surprised; how do people consider such person infidel? But, having read about his philosophical doctrine and found out that he adopts Aristotle's view concerning soul and creation of the universe, the researcher has changed his mind; Ibn Rushed wrote as a believer man who surrendered to the traditions of his parents and grandparents, influenced by his heart not his mind. But when he searches, as a philosopher, by mind about the essence of mind and the essence of all reasons, he writes courageously like a lion rushing into the cave of the hidden fact. (Farah, 2007) Dr. Zainab Al-Khudhairi supports this view and says; "In his philosophical books, he was committed to the evidence of proof and directed by the field of philosophical treatment of Aristotle. While, in his other reconciliatory books; books; Tahafut Al-Tahafut, discovering proofs methods, and decisiveness of discourse, his thoughts were controlled by his attempt to reconcile between his ideas and religion. In other words, he says that, in his reconciliatory books, he tried not to collide with belief, in its simple form, which is understood by ordinary people. He believes that all religions are based on judgement and responsibility, which can only be understood through the idea of soul immortality and resurrection. He did not assert that he believes in the individual soul immortality. (Al-Khudiri, 1995)

If so, what is his real view of the problem of the return? or, in other words, is it possible to remove this discrepancy and agree upon one view that represents Ibn Rushed's real opinion? Below, are some points ending with his real opinion in the idea of the return: The requirement to admit the idea of the return is the return spiritual or physical? and the return of kind not number. Then, a summary of his opinion.

(A). It is required to admit the idea of the return.

Reading Ibn Rushd's books; Tahafut Al-Tahafut, the decisiveness of discourse, and discovering the proofs methods, one has no doubt that Ibn Rushed believed that:

First: There is another life, after this life, in which soul lives eternally, immortally, and non-ruined.

Second: There are rewards and punishments in the other life; After death, human souls are either happy and pleased for what they did in this life, or tortured and displeased for the earthly sins.

Ibn Rushd says; " All heavenly laws notified, through revelation, that soul remains. all scholars proved that souls remain. Souls must be purified from physical desires. If souls are pure, purifying them from physical desires will increase their purity. If souls are impure, purifying them from physical desires increases their impurity because they are badly affected by the sins they acquired in the earthly life. Impure souls feel deep sorrow for what they lost when being purified by leaving body, with which, nothing can be acquired. (Al-Jabiri, 1998) Ibn Rushd enjoined believing in the second life and making it a destination to the extent that he regarded whomever disbelieves in it as heretic. He regarded believing in life after death one of the origins of religion, which he prohibited anyone to interpret and regarded anyone doing so as infidel. (Al-Jabiri, 1999) He permitted religious authorities to kill anyone disbelieving in this origin as one of the origins of religion and a brain rule. Ibn Rushd's insistence on believing in immortality may be based on the evidence of concern. It may also be based on surrendering to the fact that there must be a destination for the universe. Destination of human beings is more obvious than any other existent. As man was created for certain actions, these actions must be man specific actions because each existent was created for the action which exists in that existent only (Al-Jabiri, 1998). Therefore, the man's destination must be in the man's not the animal's actions because such actions are talking soul's specific actions. Hence, the man's destination, as a human being, is not only to enjoy earthly pleasures, but also to differ from other existents for the man's certain features and soul-elements; Each existent has certain actions and destination. The more goals man achieves, the more integrity man's existence has. Since man is the most glorious existent under the moon horizon, man will have the highest destination and the best intention. Thus, destination of man is more obvious than all other existents. (Al-Beisar, 1973) The strongest evidences of Ibn Rushd that soul is immortal is the what Almighty Allah says; " It is Allah that takes souls (of men) at death and those that did not ( he takes) during their sleep: those on whom he has passed that decree of death, he keeps back ( from returning to life).

Here, sleeping is likened to death since, in both, soul actions are deactivated. As soul actions deactivation, at sleeping, does not lead to deactivating the soul itself, the matter is the same with death. Ibn Rushd believes that this evidence is valid for both private and public because it is a Quranic text which does not require interpretation, but it is taken as it is, which makes it publically understandable. Moreover, its meaning is based on mental introductions, which makes it private (Al-Beisar, 1973).

From the above evidences, it is possible to conclude that the deactivation of body, which is the soul instrument, does not deactivate the existence of soul itself, as the deactivation of the manufacturer's action, for the deactivation of the instrument, does not lead to the non-existence of the manufacturer himself. Then, Ibn Rushd relies on Aristotle's text in which he says; "if old man had an eye like the young man, he would have the same visibility (Moris, 1992). He interprets it in a way that supports his opinion; He thinks that people may get confused why the old man loses visibility. People think that it is due to invisibility. The matter is different; Invisibility is due to the instrument deactivation. He proves that through the deactivation of most parts of the instrument during sleeping, drunk, or diseases with which sensibilities are deactivated. He does not suspect that they are not full in these cases (Al-Beisar, 1973).

It is possible now to state that Ibn Rushd believes that soul is immortal, eternal, and everlasting which leaves no doubt that he admits what all heavenly laws agree upon calling it the final pleasure or the final torture.

### **Is the return physical or spiritual?**

For Ibn Rushd, all Heavenly laws admit the idea of the return. Yet, they differed in representing how pleased souls and tortured souls will be after death. These states vary from sensory Representation to Representation by Spirituality. The reason for the sensory representation is that the religious authorities realized these acts, by revelation, but those who adopted the spiritual existence representation did not realize. They thought that sensory representation is more understandable by the audience, "and the audience goes around it (Al-Jabiri, 1998). While spiritual representation seems to be less motivating for the audience, and the audience like it less. Spiritual representation is more acceptable for speaking arguing people, who are the least. Hence, there are three groups, each of which, views representation in a different way; In Islam, a group believed that both existences are the same; They believe that the two existences are from the same sort, but they differ due permanence and temporariness; Earthly existence is temporary and Heavenly existence is permanent. Another group believed that the existences are variant, yet, there are two opinions;

The first is that the existence which is represented by these tangible ideas is spiritual. They support their opinion by many famous evidences from the Islamic Shariah.

The second opinion is that the existence is physical, but it is different from the Earthly physicality because Earthly physicality is mortal, but Heavenly physicality is immortal (Al-Jabiri, 1998).

Ibn Rushd believes that the second opinion is acceptable as it is based on wholly agreed upon principles; Soul is immortal. It is impossible that soul returns to other bodies because bodies do not retain their Earthly physicality (Al-Jabiri, 1998). This reveals that Earthly raw materials of bodies may be successive; It forms the raw material of many bodies at different times since such bodies can't exist at the same period of time because their raw material is the same. As a clear example for that; A person dies, the body becomes dust, that dust becomes a plant, that plant becomes a food for another person, and that food forms the semen which another person is created from. (Elfeky, 1967)

The return is, then, for bodies which differ from Earthly bodies as long as, for each body, there is a certain identity, significant features, and fixed nature which are all unchangeable because any change in any of them will transform body into something else, cause a continuous flow, and make it impossible to identify natures of things. (Al-Jabiri, 1998)

### **The return is qualitative not quantitative.**

Although Ibn Rushd admits the physical return, he believes that returning bodies are semi-bodies, not the original bodies. Despite his belief in the return and soul immortality, he presented that return as a new idea; the proof thought. He proved that the soul return is qualitative, not quantitative. The difference between the two is that; The first means that soul is an essence. While, the second means that soul is an incident. The justification is that the return means the return of soul to its semi-previous state, and "semi" does not mean

the "essence". Therefore, Ibn Rushed believed that the returning objects are semi-objects, not the objects themselves because the perished object does not return as a person, but as a genus. So, they are two in number, especially, when adopting the idea that incident do not remain for two different times. (Elfeky, 1967)

It is noticeable that Ibn Rushed tries to re-conciliate between his ideas and his interpretation of existence; He believes that, for every object, there is a certain identity, and the perished can't return the same because the identity had gone. (Al-Iraqi, 1993)

### **Summing up Ibn Rushed's view of the return**

This is an introduction to Ibn Rushd's doctrine and his real opinion concerning this matter. Dr. Atif Al-iraqi says that Ibn Rushed's view of the return is one of the most debatable views in the history of Arabic philosophy, but he preserved it due to his law of interpretation and the three levels. He says, " it is impossible to reveal this science here". (Elfeky, 1967)

Ibn Rushd believes that soul is one and collective, incidentally, not essentially dividable, because what is essentially dividable is the body, for instance, and what is incidentally dividable is the whiteness in the objects. Ibn Rushed says, " soul is like light; as light is divided with the division of illuminating objects and reunites when they reunite; soul-body relationship is the same (Moris, 1992). Through this idea, Ibn Rushed tries to reject the idea of partial soul because when Almighty Allah swell out soul in man, it is one for all. Therefore, it should not be said that Zaid's soul is other than Amro's, but it is possible to say that Zaid is different from Amro due to other specific features for each of them, like knowledge, for instance. This made Ibn Rushed believe that immortality is total, not partial because soul is the essence of all bodies of human genus. Believing that soul immortality is total made Ibn Rushed reject the idea of physical reservation. If he admits the body returns, his doctrine becomes a doctrine that admits quantitative return, which he rejects. He clearly declared that the return is for semi-objects not the objects themselves (Moris, 1992). Therefore, he states that the return is spiritual only. If Ibn Rushed adopted the idea of physical return, all his view of collective soul would be completely demolished (Al-Iraqi, 1993). Ibn Rushed's belief that soul will return to semi-bodies of theirs proves that he adopts the idea of spiritual return.

But what justifies his belief of physical reward, in some of his books, is that people understand reward as physical and that makes them be motivated to work virtually as they can imagine in a practical and sensorial way (Elfeky, 1967). Some researchers think that, through discussing physical return, Ibn Rushed tried to show his reconciliatory method between Shariah and wisdom (Al-Iraqi, 1993). So, Ibn Rushed believes in a collective human return; Not each individual soul returns individually. He firmly rejects the doctrine which adopts the idea that partial proliferating souls do not perish. So, he tries to defeat Ibn Sina's doctrine. For Ibn Rushed, soul only exists when it integrates with the body. According to him, nothing is more eternal than collective mind or collective soul. (Al-Ahwani, 1957) This is, in fact, a contradiction with the instructions of Islamic belief and all heavenly laws. On the other hand, it reveals that Ibn Rushed, the rationalist, could not abandon his ideas and mental beliefs in which he always emphasizes that there are certain essential characteristics of everything. How does this fixed requirement return after demolishing? According to him,

this is against the idea of cause and causer, in which he believes and regards as the corner stone of the universal system. (Al-Iraqi, 1993)

### **Results:**

Most Muslim philosophers adopt the idea of spiritual return due to their introductions, which are:

For them, man or any considerable part, which man can call "I am from", is man's real essence. It is soul. Body, as whole, is not included in the considerable significance of man. It may be a position of the considerable significance of man though it is out of it.

Human soul is one yet, it has various powers, each of which, has its own effects on the physical instruments. Other powers do not need physical instruments. That is the mental power or the talking power, which concerns the human soul and it is considered the ever best human soul power.

Muslim philosophers often stick to the out appearance of soul definitions, whether Platonic or Aristotelian, but there is almost semi-unanimity on Aristotle's definition of soul; " Soul is the first perfection of a natural body to a living body by force." But then they became independent in their views; Farabi concludes a different conclusion from Aristotle's. He asserts that soul, in fact, is the integration of body. While, mind is the integration of soul. Man is the mind.

But Ibn Sina, despite his Aristotelian beginnings in his definition, like Farabi, he differs from Aristotle in the fact that soul is the image of body and meets with Plato in the idea of essentiality of soul. Human soul is an essence which is non-mixing with matter and individual in its structure and mind. He did so to avoid the embarrassment that he would have fallen in if he had adopted Aristotle's view in this matter, which would inevitably lead him to reject the soul immortality after death in the individual sense, which religions called for, and adopted by Ibn Sina, who did not have any other choice but to address this issue in order to reconcile between religion and philosophy because he lived in a Muslim community, in which the language of the Koran is explicit in proving the resurrection. Denying this idea means denying an origin of religion and the idea of judgment and responsibility. The interesting thing here is that Ibn Sina used the ideas of Aristotle to prove what Aristotle does not admit. He tried to prove the spirituality of soul and the distinction between it and the body through the ideas that are contained in the book of the soul for Aristotle; The senses are impaired or weakened by the impact of strong sensations. But it is clear that this conciliation is contradictory, because if soul is intrinsically independent, it can't be an image of the body also, because saying that the image is independent of its material is illogical.

For these philosophers, soul is a spiritual essence which is neither a body nor physical, because the essence that involves the mental images is a spiritual essence which is distinct from bodies; It is the talking soul, through which man realizes the absolute existent, "Almighty Allah", whose no physicality. What can realize non-physical objects cannot be a body because body can only realize body.



Based on his introductions, Ibn Rushd concluded that the return, as a collective human concept, is not a return of each soul individually. According to him, nothing is more eternal than a collective mind or a collective soul.

### **Conclusions**

1- Muslim philosophers, in general, believe in spiritual resurrection based on their introductions that pave the way to reach that position and that conviction.

2- Man is self (ego); it is the real self.

3 - Human self is one, but it is multi-force. Some of these forces work with physical machines, and there are other forces that perform their actions without a physical machine which are the mental forces.

4- Self is considered by Muslim philosophers is a spiritual essence.

5 - Ibn Rushd, according to his own introductions, concludes that the resurrection is holistic and general, not an individual one. He believes that there is nothing more eternal than the total mind or the total self.

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