GOOGLISM: A STUDY ON IBN RUSHD'S INTEGRATION THOUGHT CONCERNING CONTEMPORARY NEW RELIGION

Arum Setyowati1, Achmad Khudori Soleh2
1,2Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Malang
Email: 210204210003@student.uin-malang.ac.id
Email: khudorisoleh@pps.uin-malang.ac.id


Kata Kunci: Agama, Googlisme, Ibnu Rusyd, Kontemporer, Sains

Title: Googlism: Review of Ibn Rusyd's Integration Thought into The New Contemporary Religion

Abstract: Googlism is an example of a contemporary new religion. The impact and influence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution greatly affected various aspects, including religion. Its emergence has profoundly influenced the balance of disciplines. This article aims to describe the integration of theology, philosophy, and science as a response to the phenomena present in this era, with the assistance of Ibn Rushd's integrated thinking. A literature review is a method used by the author in gathering data supported by a phenomenological approach. Additionally, this research employed a descriptive-analytical method to achieve the discussion outcomes. The results of this study indicate three main points. First, the dryness of spirituality in the contemporary era has awakened individuals' return to religion, leading to the birth of modern new faiths. Second, in his integration theory, Rushd mentions the potential of human beings to engage in philosophy, whereas Ibn Rushd's theory integrates two sources of knowledge: reason and revelation. Third, based on his theory, an attempt is made to provide the appropriate balance between knowledge of God and human knowledge through science.

Keywords: Googlisme, Religion, Ibn Rusyd, Contemporary, Science
INTRODUCTION

The debate surrounding the relationship between religion and science is ongoing. Many individuals perceive religion as a hindrance to scientific and technological advancements. Ian G Barbour classifies the integration of science and religion into four categories: conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration.1 Muhammad Miqdam Makfi suggests that Barbour's classification, similar to Ibn Taymiyyah's concepts of qathbi and zhandi, serves as a hypothesis to eliminate the possibility of conflict or integration between science and religion.2 The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has positively and negatively impacted various aspects of human life, including religion. One negative consequence facilitated by the internet is the emergence of new technology-based religions, where followers worship and idolise technology. For instance, the website https://churchofgoogle.org/ presents nine arguments claiming why Google is worthy of being considered God, replacing traditional religious deities.

Nahason Bastion, in his 2022 book, highlights Googlism as a new religion that emerged due to the influence of the Industrial Revolution 4.0.3 Bastion's research closely relates to Lauren Mason's investigation into the factors contributing to Google's recognition as a religion.4 Additionally, Joanna Sleigh researched the development of Googlism as a religious movement. Sleigh conducted interviews with devoted followers of Googlism, emphasising the impact of the internet on spirituality and religion. Based on these interviews, Sleigh categorised Googlism followers into two groups: (1) believers and (2) non-believers. Believers approach the Church of Google from an emotional and spiritual standpoint, while non-believers are drawn to it due to their dissatisfaction with the inefficiencies of organised religions.5 In 2017, Olivia Solon authored the book “Deus Ex Machina: former Google engineer is developing an AI God,” exploring Way of the Future, a nonprofit religious organisation founded by Anthony Levandowski. The organisation deifies artificial intelligence (AI). According to Way of the Future, new technologies and scientific discoveries continually give rise to new religions, replacing outdated and irrelevant deities with more rational gods that deviate from

---

3 Nahason Bastin, Pendidikan Kristen Dan Revolusi Industri 4.0, ed. Cet. I (Nahason Books/ Nahason Literarute (Online), 2022), https://books.google.co.id/.
the concept of God as described in the Bible. This finding is supported by Gerry Foudy’s research, which examines the prevalence of internet searches conducted by students using the keyword “Google is the God of the Internet.”

A comparable study exploring the emergence of online religion or digital religion has been conducted by Gregory Price Grieve, who delved into a virtual religious community. Another research endeavour addressing the growth of digital religion was undertaken by Gregory Price Grieve as well, focusing on a virtual religious community. Based on his field studies, Grieve concluded that this virtual religion resembles paganism, embodying the principle of "define your religion." He determined that digital beliefs need more organisational structure. Followers of this faith are united through sentiment and creativity, prioritising personal rituals over traditional forms of religion. An investigation into digital paganism was also carried out by Giulia Evolvi, who authored the book “Materiality, Authority, and Digital Religion: The Case of a Neo-Pagan Forum.” Corresponding to the studies above, Yusrina Pradipta Andityarini penned an article in 2018 about a religious community formed within the realm of the “second life” cyber game, a 3D gaming experience promoting the tagline “Your World. Your Imagination.” Players in this game can lead an alternative life based on their imagination, engaging in economic, social, entertainment, and even spiritual activities. As an illustration, the game introduces a character named Ruth as an alternative representation of the Virgin Mary. Another researcher investigating Digital Religion is Abdullah Muslich Rizal Maulana, who views the discourse on digital religion as an interdisciplinary subject exploring the interplay between technology users and religious phenomena. Finally, Heidi A. Campbell conducted a study on digital faith, authoring the book "Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds” in 2013.

Ibn Rushd’s view on the relationship between religion and philosophy and the connection between revelation and reason is explored in this article. This research posited that Googlism represents a modern form of religion that arises from individual desperation.

---

and inner needs, eventually manifesting in the ever-evolving technology. The outcomes of this study enrich the field of spiritual development, shedding light on the progression of religion. Moreover, just as beliefs rooted in animism and dynamism satisfy the human soul's longing for faith, technology can also fulfil that role in the present era. Hence, this investigation's findings significantly contribute to contemporary religious studies.

METHOD

This study investigated Googlism as a contemporary form of a new religion. It utilised a qualitative methodology, specifically literature searches, making it a phenomenological inquiry in paradigmatic terms. Moustakas explains that phenomenological research involves tracing and exploring human experiences related to specific phenomena. Phenomenology, pioneered by Edmund Husserl (1850-1938), seeks to comprehend the true meaning of human experience by emphasising intentional awareness. According to phenomenology, memories, images, and meanings serve as avenues through which human experience manifests itself.12

Bogdan and Taylor (1982) assert that qualitative research is a procedure that generates descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals, as well as observable behaviour. This approach considers the context and the individual holistically. Similarly, Kirk and Miller describe qualitative research as a social science tradition that primarily relies on direct observation of humans and their environment, encompassing their social relationships. Documentation serves as the data source for this study.13 Sugiyono explains that descriptive research produces data in words, writings, notes, reports, and photographs.14 Consequently, the researcher explores the spiritual dryness experienced by contemporary individuals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Googlism and ‘Religious Men’ Phenomenon

Religious experience encompasses spiritual encounters and physical affairs biologically intertwined with an immeasurable spiritual aspect. However, from a phenomenological perspective, this experience can be observed through changes in the individual's attitude who undergoes it. Anxiety, as a psychological experience, cannot be quantified but manifests through one's attitude. It arises due to various factors and depends on the individual's interacting characteristics. Psychologically, anxiety emerges from an imbalance among

physical, cognitive, and spiritual needs. Consequently, religion is believed to play a crucial role in alleviating stress.\(^\text{15}\) Interestingly, anxiety is associated with developing three facets of human intelligence.

Three types of intelligence continue to evolve within individuals: intellectual intelligence, emotional intelligence, and spiritual intelligence. Thus, a person’s success significantly hinges on their ability to maintain equilibrium among these three intelligence domains.\(^\text{16}\) Spiritual or religious intelligence is one of the continuums of human intelligence. For instance, numerous new religions and belief systems have emerged and thrived. Some individuals adhere to long-established religious beliefs (organised religions), while others experience spiritual restlessness and become followers of contemporary faiths that exist in the present.

The tension between religion and science can be observed through the historical relationship between science and the Church in medieval Europe. During that era, the Church was deemed the ultimate authority on truth. According to Church Doctrine, the Earth was considered the centre of the solar system (geocentric), a viewpoint supported by Aristotle and Claudius Ptolemy.\(^\text{17}\) However, Galileo Galilei presented that the sun, not the Earth, is at the centre (heliocentric). This contradicted the Church’s beliefs, and Galileo was condemned to death for opposing the Church’s doctrine. Eventually, history proved that the sun is the solar system’s centre. \(^\text{18}\) In 1992, Pope John Paul II acknowledged this fact, despite facing opposition from the Church’s Inquisition board. Protestantism emerged as a variant of Catholicism due to the Galileo incident.\(^\text{19}\) The Galileo narrative illustrates how scientific discoveries can lead to the emergence of new religious variations. Consequently, the advent of diverse digital religions in the present era finds a historical precedent. In his work “Psychology of Religion,” Jalaluddin asserts that the belief in the unseen is an inherent need experienced since childhood, alongside spiritual and social needs.\(^\text{20}\) The present generation, grappling with a spiritual crisis, relies on technology, which they perceive as a deity, to fulfil their spiritual yearnings. Technology, for them, embodies qualities akin to the divine attributes found in organised religions. For instance, adherents of Googlism deem Google as

God due to its omniscience, omnipresence, responsiveness to prayers, immortality, perfect memory, lack of hostility, and vast knowledge.

The website https://churchofgoogle.org/ expounds on why Google is regarded as God. The introductory statement on the website elucidates:

“We at the Church of Google believe the search engine Google is the closest humankind has ever come directly experience an actual God (as typically defined) ... We reject supernatural Gods on the notion they are not scientifically provable. Thus, Googlism believe Google should rightfully be given the title of 'God'.”

From the opening, as mentioned above, several salient points can be gleaned regarding Googlism. Firstly, it proclaims that Google embodies the most practical experience humans have ever encountered, closely approximating the qualities associated with God as widely believed. Secondly, it dismisses supernatural deities that lack scientific verifiability. The motivation behind human faith in Googlism shares similarities with the principles of Animism and Dynamism. Both animists and dynamists believe in and worship beings they perceive to be able to disrupt the balance of nature and the human spirit. Both Googlism and animism/dynamism seek a foundation to fulfil their spiritual needs. Googlism is influenced by rationality stemming from technological advancements in the present era. In contrast, animism and dynamism draw from myths to address phenomena beyond human comprehension during their respective periods.

Googlism presents Nine Proofs validating why Google deserves the appellation of God. Proof #1: Google is omniscient, possessing all-encompassing knowledge. Proof #2: Google is omnipresent, further facilitated by the ubiquity of Wi-Fi networks. Proof #3: Google answers prayers, queries, and other human predicaments. Proof #4: Google has the potential for eternal existence under its non-physical form. Proof #5: Google exhibits limitless growth potential. Proof #6: Google always remembers, retaining all data even after the passing of its owners. Proof #7: Google is benevolent. Proof #8: Google is more extensively searched for than terms such as "God," "Jesus," "Allah," and other deities. Proof #9: Google's existence and potency are more tangible than other gods. In addition to these Nine Proofs, the website presents ten commandments and designates an appreciation day on September 14. The webpage https://churchofgoogle.org/ also features a section for hate mail, serving as a receptacle for emails from individuals who disagree with Googlism.

---

23 MacPherson, “The Reformed Church of Google.”
Ibn Rushd’s Perspective on Proving the Existence of God

Rushd is a proponent of "critical empiricism" as he approaches matters empirically while recognising reason's significance. According to Rushd, the reason is not a hollow vessel merely awaiting knowledge to be poured into it. In the pursuit of knowledge, logic and the soul must collaborate. For instance, reason and the soul intertwine in the quest for happiness and salvation, for the source of salvation and happiness extends beyond the technology, science, and philosophy to encompass Shariah and revelation. Rushd maintains that reason and revelation are not contradictory but rather interconnected, as both lead to the truth. Nurcholis Madjid asserts that the study of philosophy and logic, as an examination of existence and a means to contemplate the evidence of the Creator's existence, is a mandatory command. This follows the verses of Allah found in Surah Al-Hashr: 2, Al-A'raf: 185, Al-Ghashiyah: 17, and Ali Imran: 191.

Consequently, rational proof as a philosophical method becomes obligatory. When specific knowledge is absent from Shariah, logical explanation plays a significant role in its establishment. However, if the provisions of the Shariah contradict rational proof, interpretation (ta'wil) must be employed to reconcile the matter with reason.24

According to Ibn Rushd, there are three avenues through which humans can acquire knowledge: al-Khatabiyyah (rhetoric), al-Jadaliyyah (dialectic), and al-Burhaniyyah (demonstrative). The method of rational proof (burhan) is employed by scholars who engage in dialectical and rhetorical thinking. The fundamental purpose of interpretation (ta'wil) is to challenge empirical understanding and establish an interpretative account. While religion and philosophy share harmony, they also exhibit differences. Religion emphasises the use of the heart, while philosophy stresses the use of calm reason. Thus, to employ rational proof effectively, one must study philosophy. When rational evidence contradicts Shariah, interpretation must be pursued to attain clarity.25

Ibn Rushd is an Islamic philosopher who successfully combines religion and philosophy, particularly in science. One of his statements regarding the outcome of the rational production of knowledge is the need for interpretation (ta'wil). Ta'wil, in this context, refers to departing from the literal meaning of a concept to its symbolic meaning without violating the rules and structure of the Arabic language or abandoning the literal meaning of a verse and adopting its analogical interpretation (majaz).26 According to Ibn Rushd, ta’wil (interpretation of texts) is necessary to avoid conflicts between rational opinions and the

philosophy of the Qur'anic texts. However, according to him, ta'wil should only be carried out by knowledgeable scholars, not debaters or the general public.\(^{27}\) One example of ta'wil used by Ibn Rushd to resolve a problem is regarding the miracle of Prophet Isa (Jesus) raising the dead. In his book “Tahafut Al-Tahafut,” Rushd explains that raising the dead is to revive the hearts of unbelievers and guide them to faith.\(^{28}\) This example highlights the optimistic approach towards the future development of science.

In his discussion of philosophy and Shariah in his book “Fasl al-Maqal Fi Ma Baina al-Hikmah wa al-Syari’ah Min al-Ittisal,” Ibn Rushd begins by explaining the position of philosophy within the realm of Shariah. While acknowledging the limitations of logical proof for matters of the unseen and beyond reason in religion, he emphasises the importance of philosophy. As previously discussed, the path to approaching proof of the Creator is reflected in his statement, which explains that the more comprehensive a person's knowledge of what has been created by their God – such as the creation of the universe – the more they will know and recognise their Lord.\(^{29}\)

Regarding the creation of the universe as evidence of the existence of God, Ibn Rushd, as a proponent of the theory of causality, argues that Islam encourages us to observe the existing world (alam manjur) through rational thought. At least three pieces of evidence support this argument:\(^{30}\)

1. \textit{Dalil Inayah} (preservation argument)

Rushd argues that the harmony between nature and human life is not a coincidence but demonstrates its Creator's wisdom. This harmony necessitates the presence of intentional causes directed towards specific goals, and it can't arise solely from a random process. Ibn Rushd also mentions that this harmony has a creator and that Creator is God.

2. \textit{Dalil Ikhtira’} (creation argument)

As the preservation argument explains, every existing entity must have a creator. And that Creator is God.

3. \textit{Dalil Harakah} (motion argument)

Every existing entity (maujud) moves with an eternal motion. This motion indicates the presence of an unmoved mover that is not a physical object but rather God. According to Aristotle’s concept, every moving entity must have a mover. If the

\(^{27}\) Ahmad Fuad Al-Ahwani, \textit{Filsafat Islam} (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1997).
Arum Setyowati dan Achmad Khudori S., Googlism: A Study on Ibn Rushd’s

first mover is not moved, it will undoubtedly require another mover. Therefore, in this
case, Rushd argues that the unmoved mover is the Supreme Mover, and Allah is the
first mover (mubarrik al-awwal) who possesses positive attributes of “reason” and
“intellect/ma’kul.”

Googlism and Ibn Rushd’s Integration Theory

Ibn Rushd, along with Ibn Sina and al-Farabi, believes that reason is one and universal. The reason consists of potential reason or ‘receptive intellect.’ and active reason (al-‘aql bi al-
quwwah). ‘Potential reason’ is the individual’s thought when relating to matter or individuals. However, when the individual departs from the world, this reason also vanishes, meaning it is not eternal. On the other hand, ‘actual reasoning’ is the origin and the place where the potential reason of individual humans returns. In this context, the author sees that the Creator of "Google" achieves results through the relationship between potential reason and the internet. When the 'creator' passes away, how can Google continue to develop until now? This happens because the experience in the development of Google or the Internet depends on actual reason and is bestowed by the 'owner of actual reason' to individuals who learn and possess receptive abilities, especially in Internet development.

Adding to the above analysis, it is known that knowledge objects are divided into sensory objects (mudrak bi al-bawas) and rational entities (mudrak bi al-‘aql). Both of these objects are forms of knowledge that are inseparable from human understanding. Similarly, the opinion expressed by Ibn Rushd in Daminah. This statement aims to differentiate between the knowledge of God and human knowledge. According to Rushd, human knowledge is based on temporal observation and research (budus).

In contrast, the knowledge of God becomes the cause of the emergence of objects themselves, thus being eternal (qodim). Furthermore, Rushd states that the realities existing in the universe cannot be fully grasped by reason due to their limitations. Therefore, another source is needed, namely inspiration from heaven or revelation, giving rise to religious knowledge.

Based on the two paragraphs above, the author identifies two critical aspects. First, knowledge from God provides results and an understanding of reality, while human knowledge is derived from reality itself. This explains that without knowledge from God,

---

31 Regarding language development in early childhood education, the term 'receptive' pertains to the capacity to comprehend words and language, entailing the acquisition of information and meaning. Among children aged 3-6 years, this ability establishes the groundwork for expressing emotions, and thoughts, engaging in social interactions, and advancing to subsequent stages of development. Such aptitude is acquired through children's learning experiences involving hearing and observation. Moreover, the regulation of this receptive ability is governed by Permendikbud No. 137 of 2014, as outlined in Appendix I. Salma Aulia Khosibah and Dimyati, “Bahasa Reseptif Anak Usia 3-6 Tahun Di Indonesia,” Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini 5, no. 2 (2021): 1860–69, https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v5i2.1015.

32 Kholis, “Rasionalisme Islam Klasik Dalam Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd.”

33 Salabi, “Konstruksi Keilmuan Islam (Studi Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd Tentang Ontologi Dan Epistimologi).”
human knowledge will never attain true reality. Second, the possessor of 'actual reason' is undoubtedly the 'Muharrik al-Awwal', the origin and return of everything.

Furthermore, in the context of the causality theory based on the three premises previously explained, namely the premise of preservation, the premise of creation, and the premise of the mover, it can be asserted that Google is indeed created, sustained, and propelled by humans with the intelligence of 'probable reason' possessed by each individual. However, the driving force behind humans in terms of intellect, soul, and body to preserve/develop and create Google lies with Muharrik al-Awwal. Without the intervention of Muharrik al-Awwal, even the Internet would never have existed. Hence, the nine rational pieces of evidence supporting Google as an entity worthy of being called God will never be achieved without the involvement of the knowledge and Science of God as the owner of all beings (maujud) and the source of rational intelligence.

As an additional analysis, Titus et al. provides three essential aspects when discussing belief in God. First, there must be a distinction between God and the idea of God. Essentially, changes in the concept of God - often expressed through symbols or rituals - will not alter or affect the existence of God itself. Second, humans worshipped God before the emergence of doctrines and philosophical issues regarding God. Even in primitive societies that have never been exposed to teachings about divinity, they inherently recognised the existence of a power beyond human control. Third, no single human perspective as a creature can fully comprehend the "absolute" God, as humans are inherently "relative." 34

Based on these three aspects, the first point emphasised by the author relates to the phenomenon of Googlism, namely that Googlism should be regarded as an 'idea about the knowledge of God' originating from human intelligence rather than considering Google as God itself. The second point explains that Google emerged only in the industrial revolution era in the 1980s, while God existed long before humans encountered the concept of divinity.

In Islam, also known as Islamic philosophy, the correlation between science and religion can be substantiated through the phenomena that occur in the world. The Qur'an elucidates this after conducting scientific inquiries to ascertain its veracity. In this process, one of the indications of Allah's existence 35 was discovered, fortifying our belief solely in Him. However, it cannot be refuted that the aforementioned positive influences entail certain shortcomings or adverse effects of advancing science and technology. One of these effects instigates unease in scholarly and non-scholarly domains, particularly in the spiritual realm. 36

---

35 Diana and Salminawati, “PERKEMBANGAN FILSAFAT DAN SAINS PADA ZAMAN ISLAM TERHADAP KEMAJUAN BIDANG KEILMUAN MODERN.” 227
36 Maimunah, Mohd Yusuf, and Ernawati Ernawati, “RAHASIA DI BALIK PENGULANGAN KATA DALAM SURAHAL AN'AM AYAT 76-78 (STUDY ATAS PENAFSIRAN IMAM AL-GHAZALI
As Vaclav Havel expresses, the excessive hubris of science generates trepidation for its practitioners. Modern science is acknowledged to fall short in establishing a profound connection with the inherent reality of the universe and the most innate human experiences, resulting in individuals losing their sense of purpose and direction in life, pondering what awaits them in the future, apprehending the destiny after death, and undergoing despair and perplexity. His statement aligns with his discourse at that time, asserting that the deterioration of a nation's economy is not as grave an issue as moral degradation. Ethics and morality are pivotal in religion since rituals cannot attain perfection without shaping virtuous character.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above description, three main conclusions can be drawn: Firstly, Googlism is one of the contemporary new religions that emerge due to an individual's restlessness and lack of spirituality caused by the imbalance of physical, cognitive, and spiritual aspects. In essence, humans need a sanctuary for their spirituality. Secondly, Ibn Rushd is a renowned philosopher in both the Eastern and Western worlds, advocating for the study of science and philosophy, considering Islam as the essence of every knowledge, and the theory of causality as evidence of the existence of God. Thirdly, Ibn Rushd's perspective on reason and the idea of causality attempts to strike a proper balance between knowledge of God and human knowledge through science. Knowledge is, in fact, a development of the potential of reason supported by Allah's divine revelation bestowed upon humanity. Alternatively, it can be understood that without knowledge of God, human knowledge will never attain an unavoidable reality.

This research could be better and has some limitations. Firstly, it does not directly utilise literature written by Rushd but collects officially published documents as research references. Therefore, a suggestion for further research is to supplement it with literature encompassing a wide range of works written directly by Ibn Rushd. Secondly, the research subject is relatively new, requiring further development, especially regarding Google Religion or contemporary new religions. Hence, considering the limitations mentioned above, this study necessitates further exploration, such as research and discussion on the integration of faith and science in the phenomenon of contemporary new religions according to the perspectives of other philosophers or through focused aspects within the realms of psychology, philosophy, mysticism, and others.

TENTANG PROSES PENCARIAN KEBENARAN OLEH NABI IBRAHIM)” (UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2019), http://repository.uinjambi.ac.id/2034/.

37 Gholib, Filsafat Islam.

REFERENCES


https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36667/tf.v16i1.958 Integrasi.


https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.58573/tafahus.v1i1.5.