



In Defense of Philosophy and the Necessity of Learning It, by Professor Al-Bukhari Hamana

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Abstract

Philosophy was downplayed due to its apparent conflict with religion and scientific thought, which led to its rejection by some as a waste of time. Philosophy is influential and dangerous because it incites questioning and demands clarity in all things. This questioning spurs dialogue, which in turn leads to the objective presentation of issues and problems. Such objective presentation compels us to confront these issues systematically. The methodology represents the deepest revolution humanity has ever known, 'because it alone can teach us something new.' Consequently, it is the most powerful intellectual tool that humanity has developed, particularly through the work of philosophers. This area is often associated with theoretical speculation. To defend his values, Dr. Al-Bukhari asks crucial questions about what philosophy can bring through questioning, critical dialogue, and methodology. These skills are essential in our universities to effectively address contemporary challenges and restore human dignity and cosmic status in the face of dominant materialism. Philosophy is thus presented as the way to happiness, combining reflection, power of the mind, and action.

Keywords: Philosopher, Doubt, Questioning, Dialogue, Learning, Attitudes.

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Introduction

The term "philosophy" evokes contradictory meanings and confusing images that raise doubts about its value and usefulness. Perceived as opposed to religion and Islamic beliefs, it has sometimes been banned by some Arab and Muslim thinkers, who accuse its practitioners of disbelief and corruption of values. Even within our universities, philosophy is often viewed with skepticism, perceived as a domain reserved for theoretical minds who stray into an imaginary world disconnected from everyday reality and concrete work. Philosophers are often seen as abstract intellectuals, aspiring to universal unity, which reinforces its perception as a discipline removed from practical life. Some argue that philosophy is moribund, an idea exemplified by Jean-François Lyotard who states that "philosophy as a structure or edifice has been destroyed" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 07). Thus, philosophy is perceived as lacking continuity and temporal and spatial anchoring, requiring specific conditions to survive.

Professor Al-Bukhari attempted to clarify this point in his book *Reflections on the World and Religion* (2012). He asks a series of questions to explain its importance. He praises their ability to reveal the intellectual risks, anxiety and spiritual experience that the philosopher's message entails. This leads him to question the relationship between philosophy and man, especially at a time that requires focusing on material goals and needs, while valuing science and practice.

Why fight? Under what conditions can we return to our hopes and assert our existence? What have we learned?

Doubt the value of philosophy

Human history shows that philosophy has often been rejected and despised by those who know it little. Many consider it an absurd knowledge. Scientific thought, which rejects all that is abstract, sees no value in what is spiritual or human. "There is no dignity, no freedom, no love, everything is oriented towards concrete results and utilitarian material interests." Working with philosophy is perceived as a waste of time, as it does not solve concrete problems. These are just illusions unrelated to life and reality, as Dr. Al-Bukhari said (2012).

"Philosophy produces no bread, no factories, no missiles. But can you get bread without philosophy? Is it reasonable to reduce the man to his belly? Is he simply living to

survive, or are there higher values than life and bread that justify sacrifices, such as dignity, freedom, loyalty, and love? (Al-Bukhari , 2012, p. 301).

It is clear that, under the influence of modern science and technology, as well as the colonial heritage, Algeria and the Arab-Islamic world gave priority to scientific and practical fields at the expense of literary, social and human research. This makes us wonder: what philosophy does Al-Bukhari propose for the Arab-Islamic man in the face of contemporary transformations? What is the role of this philosophy for the human being in general and for the Algerian in particular?

The first criticisms of philosophy, especially of its metaphysical aspects, came from figures like Abu HaMead Al-Ghazali (450 AH – 505 AH), Ibn Al-Saleh Al-Shahrozi (d. 643 AH) and Abdul Rahman bin Khaldun (732 AH – 808 AH). Their attacks were not only limited to devaluing philosophy, but also led to its criminalization and prohibition, under the pretext of heresy of its followers or corruption of its imitators (Al-Bukhari , 2012, p. 295).

The doctor rejects this position but justifies it as follows: "It is the result of objective circumstances that led to such a defense of philosophy. It is also the fruit of the extremism of the defenders of reason in the Arab-Islamic world in the 4th and 5th centuries A.H., who compared the Prophet to a philosopher and thus departed from the simplicity and innate nature of Islamic law "(Al-Bukhari , 2012, p. 296).

The statement of Muslim philosophers on the transcendence of philosophy is based on several reasons. These include religious extremism and the influence of Greek thought, including Aristotelianism. In addition, bloody conflicts and seditions in the Islamic world have caused confusion about doctrine. This has pushed Muslims to take a defensive stance regarding Islamic faith and unity, and to confront ideas contrary to the foundations of Sharia. They had to avoid deviations such as those from Judaism, Christianity, and Persian heresies. Attacks on ancient philosophers were often due to their contradictions and statements on theology, as well as the revelation of the secrets and weaknesses of their doctrines.

Abu HaMead Al-Ghazali considers philosophy as a type of knowledge with several branches and disciplines, such as logic, mathematics, naturalism, theology, ethics and politics. Al-Ghazali attacked philosophy only in the field of theology, where he found opinions contrary to certain aspects of Islamic belief. His goal was not to destroy, but to clarify and build. It aimed to establish religion and make truth a criterion, based on divine

light and heavenly support. Religion dominated his thinking, and his doubts about reason and logic served to defend faith and defeat philosophers. Al-Ghazali understood religion as natural and proper to man, rooted in human nature. He classified philosophers into three categories according to their opinions in theology: the Aldharids, the naturalists and the divinities. Al-Ghazali did not believe in the first two categories and supported the third (Marhaba,1983,p.650).

Dr. Al-Bukhari understands the position of some contemporary thinkers regarding philosophy, but he questions its current rejection under the pretext of its uselessness to Arab-Islamic societies. He states: “We must admit that the opponents of philosophy in the Arab and Islamic world succeeded yesterday and today in removing philosophy from the scene of Arab-Islamic life. They have been helped by several factors, the most important of which is:

1. The leaders of Arab regimes have often favored the physical construction and rapid modernization of their societies, left in ruins by colonialism. This priority has often been at the expense of man's cultural construction.

2. Philosophy, which refuses to provide easy consolations and insists on addressing problems in depth and in a clear way, is sometimes perceived as useless or fanciful. Some people even see it as an unrealistic dream (Al-Bukhari , 2012, pp. 298-299).

In Algeria, educational policy has focused on scientific subjects at the expense of literary, philosophical and humanitarian subjects. This is due to the impact and beneficial applications of science in everyday life. Science has contributed to social development and increased human control over nature. People are always looking to meet their material needs such as food, housing, medical care, communications, technology and the internet. However, they forget that their minds also need food. This explains the criticisms against philosophy, accused of not providing immediate solutions to problems and creating false problems (Al-Bukhari , 2012, p. 299).

Philosophy does not produce tangible and utilitarian results like science, which leads many to oppose it. These people are often accustomed to living in dependence on others and see progress only in the accumulation of imported machines and tools (Al-Bukhari , 2012, pp. 297-298).

The development of science and the diffusion of technology in various areas of life have led some to see science as the only way to progress and prosperity. However, people

often retain only fragments of science, without understanding its depth. Education focuses on science and its applications, specializing in specific areas, such as genetic biology. Science has become "knowing more and more about less and less". Supporters of liberal education and deep thinkers criticize this excessive specialization, as it threatens many values. It creates specialists rather than complete people, and does not promote the training of widely educated and self-aware individuals (Mead, trans. Zakaria, 1969, p. 46; Ozer, C. &Aslantas, 2023).

Interest in science at the expense of philosophy does not resolve differences, does not prepare man for life in this complex world, and has no value for human dignity. On the contrary, it leads to naive thinking in non-scientific fields such as social, human, political and moral. Science creates personalities that don't care about human feelings. This lack of feeling is described as treating people as "machines" or viewing them as mere physical subjects (Mead, trans. Zakaria, 1969, p. 47).

The specialized world often believes that increasing knowledge automatically resolves disputes. However, they are Increasing knowledge weakens human feeling and does not contribute to making good decisions. This is the role of philosophy. A broad field of interest reflects a philosophical position. The scope of mental activity is unlimited because it avoids specialization.

This leads me to say that the relationship between science and philosophy must be based on mutual respect. Even if science includes different branches, it comes from philosophy and still needs it. Authorities must consider the presence of philosophy in all disciplines. We can't help but philosophize and resist cultural invasion. We fight with the philosophy: "This is an important part of our cultural heritage, and a prerequisite for our progress. The facts of the past and present confirm that all human history is a history of philosophies. Living and conscious nations have put the philosophy forward. Plato saw her as the guardian of the Greek city, Ibn Rushd saw her as the little sister of Islamic law, and Descartes saw her as a measure of the progress of culture and civilization and a blessing from God "(Al-Bukhari , 2012, pp. 303-304).

What philosophy teaches me?

Philosophy is as old as humanity itself. It is an intellectual act by which man interprets his world and environment, begins to reflect on himself and the society around him, and develops human social relations. This process pushes him to clarify what is obscure and look for solutions to the problems he faces. Thus, philosophy begins as a critical process of the intellectual and cognitive ideas that man has developed. This moment marks the birth of awareness of problems that escape ordinary attention, requiring some distance and deep reflection (Qutal, 2015, pp. 58-59).

Philosophy is essentially related to thinking. It engages the mind in meditation on various topics and problem solving. This critical thinking process requires mastery of skills and thought mechanisms, as demonstrated by the experiences of philosophers through their writings. These philosophers practice philosophical reflection by analyzing problems and seeking solutions (Al-Bukhari , 2012, p. 297).

This begs the question: what can be learned from philosophy? How can one engage in questioning, dialogue and criticism to develop an appropriate understanding?

The skill prior to philosophical thinking is the ability to be surprised. This initial surprise generates questioning which, in turn, leads to the discovery of new knowledge. Surprise functions as a state of alertness, motivating and directing attention towards the quest for knowledge. It allows the man to see the familiar as strange and the strange as familiar.

Surprise is crucial to becoming a philosopher. A philosopher looks like a curious child who continually asks questions. Although philosophical questions concern all human beings, not all become philosophers. Most are too absorbed in their daily lives to marvel at the world. Philosophers, on the other hand, maintain a sensitivity similar to that of children throughout their lives, perceiving the world as something inexplicable, strange and mysterious (Gaarder trans. Hayat al-Huwayk, 2012, p. 25).

Man's wonder maintains his innocence and freedom. Surprise is a natural reaction to the impending destruction of oneself and one's environment. It is this ability to marvel that fuels philosophy, because without it, it would lose its *raison d'être*. Astonishment is an intense emotion, not only in the psychological sense, but as a deep and lasting torment. When we are gripped by this emotion, we confront our own existence in a frightening way.

It is an encounter with being, an opening towards its true essence, as the first Greek philosophers expressed it (Makawi, 1967, p. 94).

Man is astonished when confronted with the inexplicable. Philosophy, unlike a company aiming for material gains, is a quest for pure knowledge for knowledge itself. As Goethe observed in his old age, "wonder is the highest state that man can attain" (Makawi, 1967, p. 101). The philosopher, by constantly reaffirming his position, continually renews philosophy by encouraging curiosity and research, not to solve problems, but to preserve the process of endless questioning.

Philosophy promotes dialogue, an essential method where one explores concepts in interaction with oneself and with others. This is a fundamental skill of rational thinking. This dialogue requires the recognition of the existence and perspectives of others, even if they disagree with ours, for a respectful and enriching exchange (Al-Nashar, 2015, p. 169).

At its core, dialogue is a process of confrontation where we learn to listen to others. The philosopher, in this perspective, engages in a debate by defending his opinion inspired by his personal truth. Philosophy is thus defined as a confrontation that respects the right of everyone to think, rather than as an imposition of our truth on others. This process of mutual confrontation is enriching for all participants (Ibrahim, 1962, p. 7).

Dialogue represents the intellectual bond between individuals, based on respect for each other's truth to reach an impartial consensus, free from prejudice. Human relationships must be based on tolerance and understanding. Civilized dialogue promotes this interdependence and openness towards the world and others, thus stimulating the creation of new ideas (Ibrahim, 1962, p. 7).

The philosopher moves from questioning to criticism, an essential skill of philosophical thinking. This criticism encompasses general and philosophical opinions, challenging established beliefs and viewpoints. It constitutes the basis for the critical reflection necessary to avoid the blind acceptance of ideas and social norms (Ibrahim, 1962, p. 47; Aslantas, 2024). Philosophy, as a mental exploration to understand the truth of things, involves constant criticism of our actions and beliefs.

Philosophy is nothing but life: a critique of life and its analysis. This critique aims to reconcile aspects of social life, ideas and general objectives, in order to distinguish appearance from essence. She is also interested in finding the origins and roots of things and

phenomena. Without the criticism of myths, the Greeks would not have reached a reflexive thought, explaining phenomena according to natural causes, far from the superstitions and supernatural beliefs of primitive man.

Criticism includes the evaluation of philosophers among themselves, the critique of terms and meanings, as well as phenomena and problems encountered in everyday life, and the critique of knowledge and its methods. Philosophy allows man to use terms accurately and follow a logical sequence in the organization of ideas. Hence the importance of the method, essential to any scientific, literary, social, humanistic, artistic or other study. The thinker evaluates the validity and the different methods of access to knowledge. He analyzes the methods of science, religion, art and intuition, showing great interest in all the means used to acquire knowledge. The philosopher tests mental methods in various fields to understand what we can learn from them and evaluate them. (Translated by Zakaria and Mead, 1969, p. 19)

Current research in the specialized field of philosophy focuses on scientific programs and analytical methods, which requires the introduction of philosophy in our education departments. It is observed that most of our university students are good at gathering information and presenting opinions, but do not follow methodological rules in their research. This shows that there is no way for younger generations to learn systematic thinking and its rules, which is a task for philosophy teachers. Success in any field of research depends on the validity of the method used.

What philosophy does Dr. Al-Bukhari address?

Some critics of philosophy forget and underestimate its crucial role in the lives of people. Descartes asserts that philosophy distinguishes civilized peoples from savage and barbaric races. According to him, a nation is civilized only when it practices philosophy. Therefore, the presence of true philosophers is the greatest good for a state (Descartes, 1970, p. 558).

Descartes sees philosophy as an indicator of a nation's cultural and civilizational progress. It links the prosperity and decadence of peoples to their philosophical commitment. Philosophy is not an isolated field or a simple reflection on our knowledge. It is a living reality that influences and is influenced, persuading people beyond their initial beliefs. Al-

Bukhari asserts that philosophy is not intellectual fun or luxury, but an authentic vision of reality and an urgent call for change. History shows that nations have not made scientific progress without first advancing philosophically. It is no coincidence that today's Europe is scientifically and technologically advanced thanks to its solid philosophical foundations (Al-Bukhari ' 2012', pp. 299-300).

Philosophy contributes to the construction of civilization and to solving the problems posed by scientific progress, such as mechanical destructive effects, loss of meaning, anxiety, drug addiction, alcoholism, increasing crime, family breakdowns and the ethical challenges of the digital revolution (represented by biotechnology, media, communication, technology and globalization) (Al-Bukhari ' 2012', pp. 302-303).

The philosopher refuses to be a mere reflection of his time. He approaches the problems of his society through an Arab-Islamic culture, distancing himself from the solutions of advanced peoples while resisting foreign cultural invasion. This philosophy stems from everyday reality, examines its problems and anticipates its ambitions. Dr. Al-Bukhari aspires to a philosophy that awakens consciences and charts a clear path. "The philosophy we desire must emanate from our roots to express our hopes and reconcile our past and present, without being frozen in the past or unconsciously rushing into the future. »

This philosophy guarantees our authenticity while opening us to the various philosophies, cultures and global sciences. It must be able to make us live fully in the here and now, reviving the positive aspects of our past and deeply addressing the realities of our present (Al-Bukhari ' 2012', pp. 305-306).

Dr. Al-Bukhari supports authenticity and modernity. It seeks a philosophy that adapts to current sciences and contributes to scientific and cultural progress. It integrates spiritual and material aspects, covering all areas of life and complementing our daily lives. He also insists on the need to correct our perception of philosophy and its role in society. Its value lies in its relevance to the needs of the mind. He says, "If everyone lived in abundance and prosperity, and if poverty and disease were eliminated as much as possible, there would be much more to be done to create a virtuous society. The needs of the mind, even today, are at least as important as those of the body. Those who believe in the study of philosophy and do

not consider it a waste of time are those who appreciate it and feel the spiritual need for it” (Russell and translation by Abdou, 2016, p. 164).

Philosophy offers us possibilities and ways that help us in our search and expand our thinking. It allows us to understand the logic of processing and opens our eyes to all things. These are attitudes towards the problems we encounter. It encourages us to act without hesitation, even without certainty. Philosophy thinks about everything based on the principles of the mind. This trilogy inevitably leads to positive or negative attitudes. Philosophy consists of attitudes, and every position is justified in all human matters (Chetouti, 2009, p. 19).

Conclusion

Dr. Al-Bukhari wanted a philosophy that touched all areas. For him, philosophy is a response to the disastrous situation we are going through. It deals with fundamental issues and seeks to adopt an adequate position in the face of human problems, especially those of Algeria, related to thought, beliefs, ethics and economics. Philosophy relies on reason and reflection to solve these problems. It is impossible to progress without teaching philosophy in universities and institutes. Students often face problems that only philosophy can address. Its main role is to connect and combine various disciplines and sciences, interacting with questions like those posed by scientific progress.

Philosophy is serious and constantly renewing itself, influencing various aspects of our lives. All human history is nothing but the history of philosophies. We must continue to move forward without breaking our link with our past, our culture and our Arab-Islamic beliefs. It is essential to revive our heritage and aim for the horizons of the future to innovate and create a new philosophy that takes into account the specificity of the Arab person.

All this shows how important philosophy is and reveals the absurdity of the underestimation it undergoes today. Man is a set of possibilities, measured by what he accomplishes in his life.

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