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Averroes

*Collected Works*



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*The Collected Works of*

**AVERROES**

(1126-1198)



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Version 1

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**AVERROES OF CÓRDOBA**



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*Works of Averroes*



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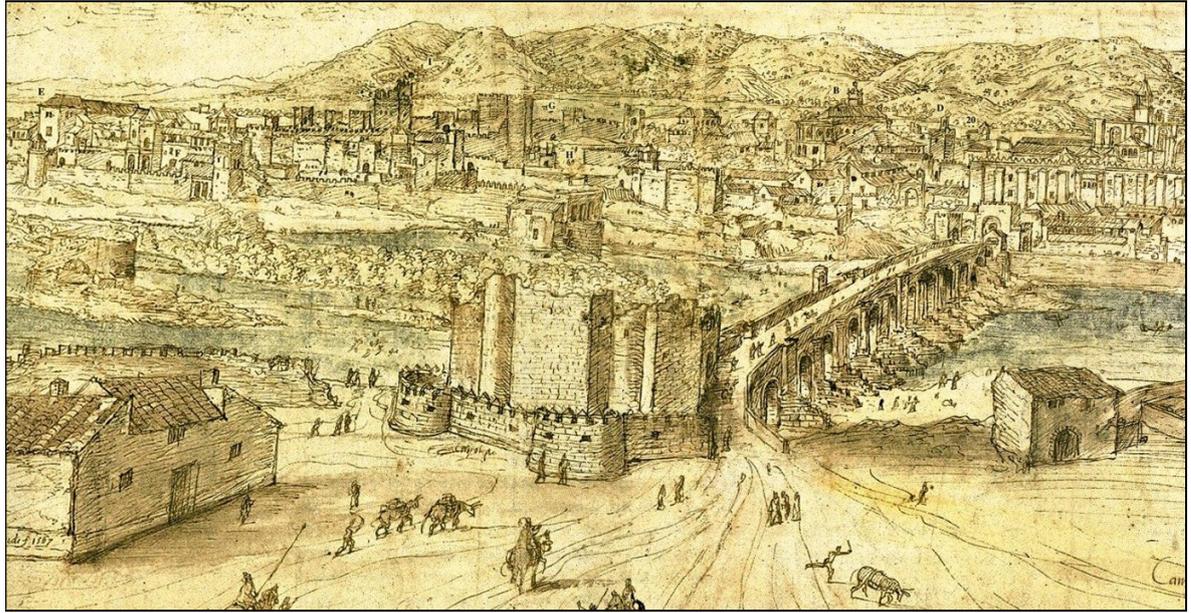
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## The Translations



*Córdoba, a city in Andalusia, Spain — Averroes' birthplace*



*Detail of 'Panoramics of Córdoba' by Anton van den Wyngaerde, 1567*

## The Decisive Treatise



### OR, DISCOURSE ON THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

*Translated by Mohammad Jamil-ur-Rehman, 1921*

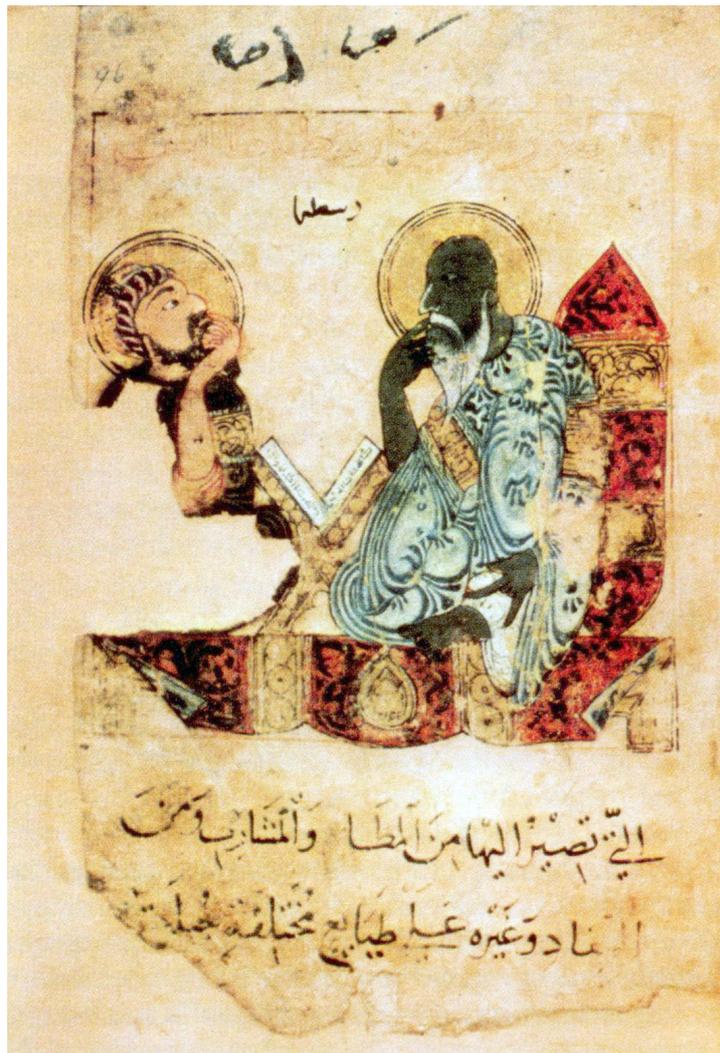
Ibn Rushd (1126-1198), archaically Latinized as ‘Averroes’, was an Andalusian Muslim polymath and jurist, who wrote about diverse subjects, including philosophy, theology, medicine, astronomy, physics, psychology, mathematics, law and linguistics. A strong proponent of Aristotelianism, Averroes attempted to restore what he considered the original teachings of Aristotle and opposed the Neoplatonist tendencies of earlier Muslim thinkers, such as al-Farabi and Avicenna. He also defended the pursuit of philosophy against criticism by Ash’ari theologians such as Al-Ghazali. Averroes argued that philosophy was permissible in Islam and even compulsory among certain elites. He also believed that scriptural text should be interpreted allegorically if it appeared to contradict conclusions reached by reason and philosophy.

During his lifetime, philosophy came under attack from the Sunni tradition, especially from theological schools like the Hanbali school and the Ash’arites. In particular, the Ash’ari scholar al-Ghazali (1058-1111) wrote *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, a scathing and influential critique of the Neoplatonic philosophical tradition in the Islamic world and against the works of Avicenna in particular. Among others, Al-Ghazali charged philosophers with non-belief in Islam and sought to disprove the teaching of the philosophers using logical arguments.

The following philosophical treatise critically examines the alleged tension between philosophy and religion, concluding that philosophy (in particular, Aristotelian philosophy) is not in opposition to — and in fact, works in tandem with — Islamic thought. Averroes argues that some Muslims have an obligation to study philosophy and that the subject should be considered an Islamic science. The treatise also contains several other unique ideas, including Averroes’ assertion that the Quran should sometimes be read in a non-literal way. In essence, *The Decisive Treatise* represents an important and influential attempt to reconcile religion and philosophy in the mid-medieval period.



*Averroes as depicted by Andrea di Bonaiuto da Firenze in 'Triumph of St. Thomas Aquinas', Cappellone degli Spagnoli, c. 1360*



*An Arabic illustration of Aristotle teaching a student, c. 1220. Aristotle's works are the subject of extensive commentaries by Averroes.*

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AVERROES HAS MENTIONED IN HIS DECISIVE DISCOURSE.



*Statue of Averroes in Córdoba*

## DEDICATION TO DR. AZIMUDDIN AHMAD



SIR,

It was at your feet that I first learned to appreciate historical and literary research, and the following pages constitute the earliest fruits of that literary labour of mine the impetus for which I am proud to have received from you. I crave your indulgence for my taking the liberty of dedicating the same to your revered name, with the hope that it will not fail to attract the same generous sympathy from you as you have always shown to your pupil.

Mohammad Jamil ur Rehman

## PREFACE



IT WAS AS a Fellow of the Seminar for the Comparative Study of Religions at the College, Baroda, that the present work was begun. The subject was taken up in the first place as a parallel study to that contained in a paper in the Indian Philosophical Review, Volume II, July 1918, pp. 24-32 entitled "Maimonides and the Attainment of Religious Truth." But as I proceeded with my investigation I thought it might be best to let Averroes speak for himself. For this reason I have here translated certain treatises of Averroes, as edited in the Arabic text by D. H. Muller in "Philosophie und Theologie von Averroes." Munich 1859. I am confident that the book will prove an interesting one and will explain itself to the reader without any introduction on my part. Though owing to my appointment at Hyderabad I resigned my position at Baroda soon after commencing this work I wish here to express my thanks to Professor Alban G. Widgery of Baroda for his constant sympathy with and encouragement for my work in and out of the Seminar. He has also kindly accepted the book for inclusion in the Gaekwad Studies in Religion and Philosophy. I am indebted to him for a complete revision of the manuscript and for the onerous work of seeing the book through the press. I am also indebted to my brother Mutazid Wali ur Rehman, B.A. for valuable help in rendering many obscure passages.

Mohammad Jamil ur Rehman

*Osmania University,  
Hyderabad.*

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