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**The Educational Philosophy
of
Abū Bakr al-Rāzī**

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Ankara 2025

About the Author

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His main research interests include religious education, the history of education, educational theory, and the sociological aspects of education. He is proficient in German, English, and Arabic.

To my beloved parents...

About the Book

The Educational Philosophy of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī

This study offers a thorough exploration of the intellectual and educational legacy of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (Rhazes), one of the most influential figures of the Islamic Golden Age. Set within the socio-cultural context of the 9th and 10th centuries, the research investigates how al-Rāzī's rationalist philosophy, scientific methodologies, and moral perspectives contributed to the development of a transformative educational vision rooted in reason, inquiry, and social responsibility. Emphasizing the universal capacity of human reason (‘aql), al-Rāzī advanced an egalitarian approach to education, asserting that disparities in knowledge are primarily due to differences in opportunity and effort, rather than innate ability. His systematic scientific approach, characterized by empirical observation, hypothesis formation, and logic, laid the foundations for modern scientific inquiry, especially in medicine and chemistry. Furthermore, his metaphysical and cosmological reflections reveal an effort to harmonize rational understanding with spiritual and theological pursuits, highlighting his balanced engagement with science and spirituality. His writings emphasize the ethical responsibilities of scholars and physicians, advocating for moral virtues such as humility, compassion, and integrity—integral to societal progress. The socio-cultural environment of Baghdad and Rayy, centers of knowledge during the Abbasid era, played a crucial role in shaping his ideas, with institutions like Bayt al-Ḥikma facilitating the transmission and development of scientific and philosophical traditions. Al-Rāzī's educational philosophy, which integrates empirical science with moral virtue and social justice, remains highly relevant, inspiring contemporary models of inclusive and critical education. His legacy exemplifies an innovative synthesis of diverse cultural influences, emphasizing reason and moral responsibility as pillars of scientific and educational advancement. This study synthesizes biographical data, philosophical contributions, and historical context to underscore al-Rāzī's enduring impact on both Islamic and Western intellectual traditions. Ultimately, his work exemplifies a rational, ethical approach to education and science, offering valuable

insights for modern educational reform and scientific inquiry grounded in moral integrity and social equity.

Keywords: Religious Education; Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā³ al-Rāzī; Reason and Critique Inquiry; Scientific Methodology; Educational Philosophy; Rational Inquiry; Socio-cultural Context; Ethical Science

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PREFACE

The pursuit of knowledge has always been at the heart of human civilization, guiding societies toward enlightenment, progress, and understanding of the natural and spiritual worlds. Within this enduring quest, the contributions of polymaths and scholars of the Islamic Golden Age stand as a testament to the profound integration of science, philosophy, education, and social responsibility. This book aims to explore and elucidate the multifaceted legacy of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, one of the most influential figures in medieval Islamic thought, whose pioneering approaches continue to inspire contemporary discussions on education, scientific methodology, and ethical practice.

The core motivation behind this study is to examine how al-Rāzī's educational philosophy, scientific methods, and social commitments reflect an integrated worldview founded on reason, empirical inquiry, and moral responsibility. Situated during a period characterized by extraordinary intellectual dynamism and cross-cultural synthesis, al-Rāzī's work embodies an advanced understanding of the interconnectedness between scientific discovery and social progress. His emphasis on an experimental approach, critical thinking, and knowledge accessibility predates many modern pedagogical principles, making his legacy relevant not only for historians of science and philosophy but also for educators and policymakers seeking innovative educational paradigms.

This volume is, therefore, an endeavor to bridge the historical and contemporary, highlighting how the principles articulated and practiced by al-Rāzī remain vital in addressing current challenges within education and scientific development. By analyzing primary sources -such as al-Rāzī's original writings and accounts by pioneering historians- and engaging with the

interpretations of modern scholars, this work seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of his enduring influence. Special attention is given to his belief in the universality of knowledge, the importance of reasoned inquiry, and his social vision for equitable access to education.

Moreover, this study emphasizes interdisciplinary integration, illustrating how al-Rāzī's scientific endeavors—particularly in medicine and chemistry—were deeply intertwined with his philosophical outlook. His methods, grounded in systematic observation, experimentation, and rational analysis, serve as exemplars of the scientific spirit that fueled advancements during the Islamic Golden Age. In addition, his educational principles advocate for critical inquiry, independent judgment, and moral integrity, underpinning a model of learning that prioritizes individual development alongside societal benefit.

As the world faces unprecedented scientific, social, and ethical challenges, revisiting al-Rāzī's legacy offers valuable insights. His commitment to knowledge accessibility and social justice echoes current aspirations for inclusive and equitable education systems. His integration of empirical science with ethical responsibility underscores the necessity for education to foster not only technical proficiency but also moral character and social consciousness.

This volume aspires to inspire educators, researchers, and policymakers to reconsider the roles and aims of education. It encourages a reflection on how ancient philosophies, imbued with a rational and empathetic spirit, can inform modern practices—promoting a culture of inquiry, innovation, and social responsibility. By doing so, this work seeks to preserve and transmit the intellectual heritage of al-Rāzī, ensuring that his invaluable contributions continue to resonate within future generations.

Finally, I express my gratitude to all scholars whose meticulous research and insightful interpretations have shaped this

study. Their efforts underpin our collective endeavor to understand and honor the profound legacy of one of history's most visionary thinkers.

Yakup KAYA

