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THE LEGACY OF IMAM AL-GHAZALI IN THE SCIENCE OF TASAWUF

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ABSTRACT

The legacy in the development of Sufism by Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (1058-1111 AD) in the evolution of Sufi thought and its continuing impact on Islamic spirituality. As a Muslim figure who has a special position in the Islamic intellectual tradition, Al-Ghazali succeeded in creating a harmonious synthesis between the deep and open dimensions of Islamic teachings. The methodology applied is through the reconciliation of the spiritual experience of the Sufis with the principles of theological and jurisprudential Islam that are structured. This journal analyzes in depth the concept of moral education according to Al-Ghazali and its relevance to the challenges of contemporary Islamic education. Al-Ghazali is known as a Muslim thinker who pays special attention to the aspect of moral development in the education system. His view emphasizes that education should not be limited to intellectual development, but must include the spiritual and moral aspects of students. In his perspective, morality is the essence of human perfection. The results of the study show that the values of moral educatio developed by Al-Ghazali have significant relevance in answering moral problems in the modern era. In facing the current of globalization and moral degradation, Al-Ghazali's approach that emphasizes the balance between knowledge, implementation, and spiritual dimensions becomes very crucial. This journal concludes that Al-Ghazali's concept of moral education can be an alternative solution in formulating an Islamic education system that touches the human dimension comprehensively. Therefore, the implementation of moral values in education needs to be carried out systematically through exemplary behavior, habituation, and internalization of values, as formulated by Al-Ghalzai.

INTRODUCTION

Imam Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE), also known by the title Hujjatul Islam (Defender of Islam), is one of the most influential figures in the history of Islamic thought. Born in Thus, Khurasan (now Iran), Al-Ghazali led a dynamic intellectual life, transitioning from a theologian and philosopher to a Sufi after experiencing a spiritual crisis. Al-Ghazali's spiritual transformation had a significant impact on the development of Sufism and Islamic thought as a whole (Al-Attas, 2001:1).

This study aims to explore the legacy of Al-Ghazali's Sufism and its relevance in the context of contemporary Islamic thought. This study is important because Al-Ghazali's thought bridges the gap between the esoteric and exoteric dimensions of Islam, and offers a moderate and balanced approach to spirituality. As Nasr (2008:1) states, Al-Ghazali succeeded in integrating Sufism into the framework of Islamic orthodoxy, so that Sufism is no longer seen as a teaching that contradicts the Sharia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method. The primary sources used are Al-Ghazali's own works, especially "Ihya Ulumuddin" (Reviving the Sciences of Religion), "Kimiya-e Sa'adat" (Chemistry of Happiness), "Mishkat Al-Anwar" (Niches of Light), and "Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal" (Liberator from Error). Meanwhile, secondary sources include various contemporary scientific works that study Al-Ghazali's thought in the context of Sufism and Islamic spirituality. Data analysis is conducted using a hermeneutic approach to understand the historical and philosophical context of Al-Ghazali's thought.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Background of Al-Ghazali's Sufism Thought

Al-Ghazali's intellectual and spiritual journey provided the foundation for his Sufism thought. As explained in his autobiography, "Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal", Al-Ghazali experienced an existential crisis that prompted him to leave his prestigious academic position at the Nizamiyah Madrasah in Baghdad and live the life of a Sufi for almost ten years (Al-Ghazali, 2002:4). This spiritual experience catalyzed the transformation of his thinking from a rational-philosophical approach to a spiritual-experiential approach.

The socio-historical context of Al-Ghazali's time was characterized by the fragmentation of Islamic thought between formalistic jurists, scholastic theologians, rationalist philosophers, and ecstatic Sufis. This encouraged Al-Ghazali to seek synthesis and middle ground in Islamic thought, especially in its spiritual dimension according to (Al-Taftazani 1985:4). Al-Ghazali

lived at a time when Sufism began to develop as a systematic discipline, but also faced challenges from orthodox circles because it was considered to deviate from normative Islamic teachings (Yusuf 2019:4).

Al-Ghazali's Basic Concepts of Sufism

Al-Ghazali's Sufism was built on several basic concepts that became the foundation for his spiritual teachings:

1. Integration of Sharia and Essence

Al-Ghazali emphasized the importance of balance between the exoteric (sharia) and esoteric (hakikat) aspects of Islam. In "Ihya Ulumuddin", true Sufism should not contradict the Shari'ah, but should be the embodiment of a deep understanding of the meaning behind religious practices (Al-Ghazali, 1997:5). Al-Ghazali succeeded in bringing Sufism from pantheistic tendencies to a more orthodox theological framework, so that Sufism could be accepted by mainstream Islam. (Schimmel 1975:5)

2. Tazkiyatun Nafs (Purification of the Soul)

The concept of purification of the soul is one of the central elements in Al-Ghazali's Sufism. In order to attain ma'rifat (true knowledge of Allah), one must first cleanse his heart of despicable traits (madhmumah) and adorn it with praiseworthy traits (mahmudah). This process involves the systematic practice of mujahadah (spiritual struggle) and riyadhah (spiritual exercise). (Al-Ghazali 1997:6). Al-Ghazali's concept of tazkiyatun nafs was influenced by the teachings of Al-Muhasibi and Al-Qusyairi, but Al-Ghazali developed it with a more psychological and practical approach. (Rahman 2016:6)

Tazkiyatun nafs has a dual meaning: purification and healing. In Sufistic terms, this concept refers to the process of purifying the soul from various spiritual diseases by adopting Allah's asmas and attributes as manifestations of morality (takhalluq). Thus, tazkiyatun nafs includes three dimensions of the process: tathahhur (cleansing), tahaqquq (realization), and takhalluq (adoption of divine morals). (Zargar, 2011:56-57)

The term tazkiyah implies purification of the soul from various forms of spiritual diseases and defects, then actualizing this purity in the behavior of daily life, as well as adorning the purified soul with noble traits that are a reflection of the asma and the great attributes of Allah.

Tazkiyatun nafs is a systematic effort to purify and reform the soul from various contaminations, and improve its spiritual quality through various forms of virtue, acts of worship, and steps of mujahadah (spiritual struggle). In essence, tazkiyatun nafs is the process of purifying the soul and heart from various sins and despicable traits that contaminate it, as well as improving spiritual quality through the development of praiseworthy traits that are approved by Allah SWT

and positive potentials through worship, mujahadah, and various implementations of virtue, so that the heart and soul reach the maximum state of purity and goodness, which in turn leads to the formation of good and praiseworthy traits and behavior. (Burckhardt, 2008: 75-77)

Tazkiyatun nafs seeks to return humans to their essential nature, namely the nature of tawhid, faith, Islam, and ihsan, accompanied by efforts to strengthen and develop these potentials so that each person can maintain closeness to Allah, improve spiritual quality through instilling values and implementing religious teachings. The ultimate goal of tazkiyatun nafs is the achievement of piety to Allah SWT. Piety can only be realized through purification of the soul, while purity of the soul cannot be realized without piety, so the two have a mutually reinforcing interdependence relationship. (Chittik, 1989: 210-212)

3. Maqamat and Ahwal

Al-Ghazali adopted and developed the concepts of maqamat (spiritual stations) and ahwal (spiritual states) that had existed in earlier traditions of Sufism. In "Ihya Ulumuddin", he describes various maqamat such as repentance, patience, gratitude, trust, mahabbah (love), and ma'rifat, and ahwal such as khauf (fear), raja' (hope), and uns (intimacy) (Al-Ghazali 1997:6). Al-Ghazali's understanding of maqamat and ahwal is more systematic and psychological than that of earlier Sufis, and this approach makes it easier for non-sufis to understand. (Baldick 1989:7)

Tasawwuf, as a spiritual path in Islam, recognizes the concept of "maqamat" (spiritual stations) and "ahwal" (spiritual states) which are stages and experiences that a salik (spiritual path traveler) goes through in his journey towards closeness to Allah SWT.

Maqamat are spiritual levels that a salik must attain and pass through gradually through sincere spiritual effort and practice. Maqamat are permanent and must be achieved in sequence:

1. **Taubat (Repentance)**: Abandoning all sins and returning to God with sincere regret.
2. **Wara' (Prudence)**: Avoiding things that are doubtful and doubtful, not only those that are haram.
3. **Zuhud (Asceticism)**: Not being attached to the material world and renouncing the love of the world.
4. **Faqr (Spiritual Poverty)**: The feeling that one does not own anything, and everything belongs to Allah.
5. **Sabr (Patience)**: Steadfastness in facing trials and practicing obedience to Allah.
6. **Tawakkal (Surrender)**: Surrendering all matters to Allah after putting in maximum effort.
7. **Ridha (Willingness)**: Accepting all of Allah's provisions gracefully and without objection.

4. Ma'rifat as the Ultimate Goal

For Al-Ghazali, the highest goal of the spiritual journey is to achieve ma'rifat, which is direct knowledge of God obtained through spiritual experience (dzauq) not solely through rational reasoning (Al-ghazali, 2001:7). In "Mishkat Al-Anwar" explains that ma'rifat is the light that Allah shines into the heart of a servant who has been purified states that Al-Ghazali's concept of ma'rifat is different from the concept of Muslim Peripatetic philosophers who emphasize discursive knowledge, because Al-Ghazali emphasizes experiential knowledge involving the heart (qalb) not just the intellect ('aql). (Iqbal 1930:7)

In his conceptual elaboration, Al-Ghazali asserts that ma'rifat is a spiritual epistemological condition characterized by the absence of doubt in the acquisition of knowledge. In this context, the knowledge in question is the essential understanding of Allah SWT and His attributes. The achievement of ma'rifat is the essence of the process of taqarrub or the servant's approach to Allah. According to Al-Ghazali, the instrument to achieve spiritual enlightenment is not emotion or ratio alone, but the heart that has been purified from various negative contaminations.

In Al-Ghazali's Sufism perspective, the heart is understood as a divine spiritual element that represents the essence of humanity. This purified heart corresponds to a clear conscience. However, it is important to note that ma'rifat in Al-Ghazali's conception does not solely rely on subjective intuition, but must be within the normative framework of sharia (Al-Quran and Hadith) and oriented towards moral improvement and social ethics.

Al-Ghazali classified humans into three levels based on their cognitive and spiritual capacities. First, the general public (*lay*) who have a simple mindset and tend to be literal. Second, the elitists (*khawas*) who have the ability to think sharply and deeply. Third, the dialectical group (*al-mujadalah*) who have the rhetorical ability to persuade and refute arguments. Among these three groups, the most dominant are the first and second groups. The general public is often only able to identify explicit signs and information, while the khawas have the capacity to interpret implicit meanings and identify the fundamental idea behind phenomena. When one is able to understand and implement spiritual concepts, authentic happiness will be found. (Al-ghazali, 2018:87-89)

Al-Ghazali's Legacy in the Development of Sufism

Al-Ghazali's contribution to Sufism has had a lasting and widespread impact in various aspects:

1. Reconciling Sufism with Islamic Orthodoxy

One of Al-Ghazali's most important legacies is his success in bridging the gap between

Sufism and Islamic orthodoxy. Prior to Al-Ghazali, Sufism was often viewed with suspicion by the fuqaha (Islamic jurists) because of the ecstatic tendencies and theopathic expressions of some controversial Sufis such as Al-Hallaj. Al-Ghazali succeeded in showing that true Sufism actually deepens the understanding and appreciation of sharia, not negates it. (Hodgson 1974:8)

Explains that Al-Ghazali laid the foundations of sunni Sufism which is moderate and in line with the principles of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah. Through his work "Ihya Ulumuddin", Al-Ghazali presented Sufism as an inner dimension of Islam that is complementary to its outer dimensions, not as an alternative or substitute. (Zarrinkub 2000:9)

2. Systematization of Sufism

Al-Ghazali made a significant contribution to the systematization of Sufism. In "Ihya Ulumuddin", (Al-Ghazali, 1997:10) organized the concepts of Sufism in a methodical and structured manner, combining theoretical and practical aspects. (Ernst, 1997:10) explains that Al-Ghazali's approach to Sufism is encyclopedic and comprehensive, covering the theological, ethical, psychological and practical aspects of the spiritual life.

Al-Ghazali's systematization of Sufism had a far-reaching impact on the development of later Sufism literature. Works such as Suhrawardi's "Awarif al-Ma'arif" and Ibn Arabi's "Futuhat al-Makkiyah", although different in some aspects, still show the methodological influence of Al-Ghazali's approach (Chittick, 1989:7).

3. Spiritual Psychology

Al-Ghazali pioneered the psychological approach in Sufism through his in-depth analysis of the human soul and its spiritual dynamics. In "Kimiya-e Sa'adat", (Al-Ghazali, 2000:10-11) outlines the structure of the human soul consisting of nafs (soul), qalb (heart), ruh (spirit), and 'aql (intellect), and explains how each of these dimensions interacts in one's spiritual journey.

According to (Haque, 2004:11), Al-Ghazali's analysis of psychological conditions such as riya' (showing off), ujub (pride), hasad (envy), and ghadab (anger), as well as his methods of dealing with them, demonstrate a deep psychological understanding that is relevant today. (Mohamed, 1995:11) even states that Al-Ghazali's psychological approach in Sufism can be seen as the forerunner of Islamic spiritual psychology which was then developed by later Sufis and Muslim thinkers.

4. Sufistic Ethics

Another important legacy of Al-Ghazali is the development of a comprehensive Sufistic ethic. In contrast to philosophical ethics that tend to be rationalistic or fiqh ethics that tend to be legalistic, Al-Ghazali's Sufistic ethics emphasizes inner transformation and purification of intentions as the basis of moral action. In "Mizan al-'Amal", (Al-Ghazali, 1995:11) explains that

the moral value of an action is not only determined by its conformity with external rules, but also by the spiritual quality of the intention and the state of the culprit's heart.

Al-Ghazali's ethics represents a synthesis of various ethical traditions in Islam, including Qur'anic ethics, philosophical ethics, and Sufi ethics, integrated within a coherent spiritual framework (Fakhry 1994:11). Al-Ghazali's ethics provided the foundation for the subsequent development of Sufi ethics in the Islamic tradition, which emphasized the unity between the outer and inner dimensions of moral behavior. (Hourani 1985:12)

DISCUSSION

The Relevance of Al-Ghazali's Legacy in Contemporary Contexts

Al-Ghazali's Sufi thought continues to have relevance in the context of contemporary life, both in the theoretical and practical dimensions:

1. Spirituality in Modern Society

In the midst of the spiritual crisis facing modern society, Al-Ghazali's Sufism offers a comprehensive and balanced approach to spirituality. Al-Ghazali's approach to spirituality does not require the rejection of the material world, but rather teaches how to live a worldly life with an awareness of the transcendent dimension (Winter 1995:13). Al-Ghazali's Sufism provides an alternative to the reductive and consumeristic spirituality often found in modern society. (Nasr 2007:13)

2. Interfaith Dialogue and Spiritual Traditions

The universalistic dimension of Al-Ghazali's spirituality opens up opportunities for dialogue between Islam and other spiritual traditions. Al-Ghazali's emphasis on direct spiritual experience (dzauq) as a source of knowledge provides an epistemological foundation for interfaith dialog that transcends dogmatic differences (Shah-Kazemi, 2002:13). Some comparative studies between Al-Ghazali and Christian mystics such as St. Augustine and Meister Eckhart show significant parallels in their understanding of the spiritual journey (Gianotti, 2001:13).

3. An Integrative Approach to Knowledge

Al-Ghazali's legacy in integrating various fields of Islamic science - jurisprudence, kalam, philosophy and Sufism - can be a model for an integrative approach to knowledge in the context of contemporary Islamic education. Al-Ghazali's approach to knowledge that emphasizes the unity between rational and spiritual knowledge can provide an alternative to modern education systems that tend to be fragmentary and secular. . (Al-Attas 2001:1)

4. Psychology and Mental Health

Al-Ghazali's analysis of the dynamics of the human soul and his methods of purification have relevance in the context of contemporary psychology and mental health. Al-Ghazali's psychological concepts such as muhasabah (self-introspection), muraqabah (self-surveillance), and tafakkur (contemplation) can be integrated into Islamic counseling and psychotherapy practices (Badri, 2000:14). Several empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Al-Ghazali's Sufism-based interventions in treating psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, and stress (Abdel-Khalek & Lester, 2012:14).

CONCLUSION

Imam Al-Ghazali's legacy in Sufism represents a comprehensive and enduring intellectual and spiritual contribution. Through a synthesis between the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of Islam, Al-Ghazali succeeded in bringing Sufism to a moderate and balanced middle ground, making it acceptable in the mainstream of Islamic thought. Al-Ghazali's concepts of Sufism such as tazkiyatun nafs, maqamat and ahwal, and ma'rifat not only enriched the treasures of Islamic spirituality, but also provided a foundation for the development of ethics, psychology, and epistemology in the Islamic tradition.

In the contemporary context, Al-Ghazali's Sufism continues to have relevance as an alternative to reductive spirituality in modern society, a model for interfaith dialog, an integrative approach to knowledge, and a foundation for the development of Islam-based psychology and mental health. Further research is needed to explore other dimensions of Al-Ghazali's legacy and its application in the context of contemporary life, especially in the areas of character education, conflict resolution, and community development.

Al-Ghazali successfully integrated the exoteric (sharia) and esoteric (hakikat) dimensions of Islam. Through his monumental work "Ihya' Ulumuddin" (Reviving the Sciences of Religion), he showed that true Sufism must rest on a solid foundation of sharia. This contribution made Sufism widely accepted among Shari'ah scholars after it had previously been rejected.

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