

HARMONIZING THE CLASH OF SUFISM AND SHARIA IN AL GHAZALI'S THOUGHT

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Abstract

Al-Ghazali is an expert and great Muslim scholar who speaks up for moderate Sunni sufism, a sufism which is based on the doctrine of the asceticism of the Qur'an, Prophetic traditions, and the tradition of his companions. He succeeded in purifying Sufism from various deviations, and harmonizing Sufism with sharia, and making it "halal" for Sunnis. According to al-Ghazali, several terms in Sufism should be returned to the original teachings of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions. In his view, ma'rifah is knowing the secrets of God and His various rules about everything that exists. Heart becomes a means of understanding for a Sufi. So the highest and most noble pleasure is recognizing Allah Almighty, known as ma'rifah. A wise person ('arif) does not see other than Allah, and everything he or she knows in this existence is only Him and His various creations. In the knowledge of Mukasyafah for example, al-Ghazali wanted to avoid the mistakes of other Sufis who transgressed, such as Abu Yazid al-Bustami and Abu Manshur al-Hallaj with their philosophical concepts which tended to be very complicated.

Keywords: *Al-Ghazali, Tasawuf, Sharia, Purification, Harmonization*

I. Introduction

Imam al-Ghazali was known as a very influential and revered muslim cleric in muslim world.¹ He is also known to be an intelligent and productive ulama. He is known as an expert of Islamic jurisprudence (*faqih*), an Islamic theologian (*mutakllim*), expert on Sufism, a Sufi, and an education expert (*murabbi*) who is admired by many great scholars because of his expertise. He lived during the reign of Prime Minister Nizamul Muluk of the Kingdom of Bani Saljuk.

Azyumardi Azra suggested that al-Ghazali had successfully reconciled and harmonized Sufism and Sharia. This is important to observe because Sufism has been deemed to be deviant to sharia which is then followed by the emergence of

¹ Harun Nasution (Ed.) dan Tim Penulis IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia*, (Jakarta : PT Djambatan, 1992), p. 257.

antinomians, namely excessive Sufism which tends to violate the rules stipulated in sharia. With his monumental masterpiece, *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, al-Ghazali succeeded in returning Sufism to the Sunni teachings. According to Fazlur Rahman, as quoted by Azra, if al-Ghazali failed to harmonize Sufism with sharia, Sufism would have been a "separate religion" which would be a problem. Because of the great service of al-Ghazali, it is very necessary to know some aspects of his thoughts and life.

II. Intellectual Journey of al-Ghazali

His full name is Hujjat al-Islam Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Ghazali. He was born in Ghazalah in 450 H / 1057 AD. Ghazalah is a village located in Tus, Khurasan region, Iran. His father was a pious man who worked as a spinner of wool. His parents were fond of knowledge. His father passed away, when al-Ghazali was still a child.

When he was young, al-Ghazali studied from Ahmad al-Radzani, one of experts of Islamic Jurisprudence (*fakih*) in al-Ghazali's hometown, namely Tus. Furthermore, he studied at Jurjan to Imam Abu Nasr al-Isma'iliy. In addition, al-Ghazali then went to Naishapur to study to Imam al-Haramain Abu al-Ma'ali al-Juwaini, a very famous Asy'ariyah theologian.² Here he studied Theology, Law, Philosophy, Logic, Sufism, and Natural Sciences as explained by Harun Nasution.³

It was explained in his biography that al-Ghazali moved to Mu'askar after al-Juwaini died. He stayed there for about five years to teach officials and experts at the behest of Prime Minister Nizam al-Muluk regularly every two weeks.⁴ Because of his deep and brilliant ideas, al-Ghazali was appointed to be a Professor at Madrasah Nidzamiyah, Baghdad. In addition to teaching, al-Ghazali also responded to denials of the thoughts of the Bathiniyah group, philosophers and other schools.⁵ Thus al-Ghazali can be considered as a very knowledgeable scholar in various fields of study of Islamic sciences and various other fields.

During his stay in Baghdad, al-Ghazali experienced a great emotional shock due to his skepticism about everything. Such behaviour, according to Harun Nasution, seems to have arisen as a result of the theological lessons taught by al-Juwaini. As we all know, there are several different- even contradicting- theological streams in Islam. Then inner conflicts occurred in al-Ghazali's mind and arose questions, which one is

² Abu al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi al-Taftazani, *Sufi dari Zaman ke Zaman*, translated by Ahmad Rofi 'Utsmani, (Bandung : Pustaka, 1985), p. 148.

³ Harun Nasution, *Falsafah dan Mistisisme dalam Islam*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1995), p. 41.

⁴ Asmaran As, *Pengantar Studi Tasawuf*, (Jakarta: PT. Grafindo Persada, 1996), p. 323.

⁵ Ahmad Hanafi, *Pengantar Filsafat Islam*, (Jakarta : Bulan Bintang, 1990), p. 135.

right among the many schools of theology in Islam?⁶ In other words, al-Ghazali wanted to find a truth which truly represents the real truth, just as ten is more than three.

At first, this kind of knowledge was found by al-Ghazali in sensible matters, but apparently he thought it was a lie. Then he put his trust in reason, but it turned out that reason also could not be trusted. After it lasted for almost two months, finally God cured al-Ghazali's disease; his doubtfulness. This happened, as written by al-Ghazali in his work *al-Munqidz min al-Dhalâl*, not by well-structured reasoning or compiling information, but by the light given by Allah Almighty into his heart.⁷

In historical record, it is stated that al-Ghazali then revisited his path of life which had been traversed and he then tried to be honest to himself. He finally realized that his motivation in teaching so far had only been to gain a position and fame which was the lowest and despicable motivation. Therefore, he tried to free himself from this self-assertive attitude. This is, according to al-Taftazani, what later underlied the decline of al-Ghazali's position as a Professor in Madrasah Nidzamiyah.⁸ In other words, al-Ghazali realized that whatever was done must be based on sincerity, not by the worldly motivation, a position.

Furthermore, after stepping down from his position, al-Ghazali went to Damascus for ten years to meditate - precisely to contemplate - in one of the Umawi mosques. He then moved to Palestine to visit Hebron and Jerusalem while doing *'uzlah* in Bait al-Maqdis. After that, he performed Hajj and returned to his homeland, Tus.

Along with his activities leading *Khandaqah*, al-Ghazali also established educational institutions for prospective jurists in Tus. Al-Ghazali died at the age of 55 years,⁹ on Monday, the 14th of Jumadil Akhir 505 H / 19 December 1111 AD in his hometown, Tus.

III. Al-Ghazali's Works Literature

It is difficult to find an Islamic scholar similar to al-Ghazali in terms of his scholarship and writing productivity. Aside from being a Sufi - who usually tends to isolate himself from the crowd of people - al-Ghazali also wrote many scientific works. According to the records, no fewer than 228 pieces of work have been written by al-Ghazali. His writing is not only in one competency, but covers many fields of science,

⁶ Harun Nasution, *Falsafah dan Mistisisme dalam Islam*, p. 41.

⁷ Harun Nasution, *Falsafah dan Mistisisme dalam Islam*, p. 41.

⁸ Abu al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi al-Taftazani, *Sufi dari Zaman ke Zaman*, p. 150.

⁹ Harun Nasution (Ed.) dan Tim Penulis IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia*, p. 257.

such as Sufism, philosophy, logic, fiqh, and so forth. However, unfortunately, only about 54 titles¹⁰ have been found. While others are still not found.

Other opinions, such as the Islamic Literature magazine,¹¹ state that al-Ghazali's works found are 65 pieces plus 23 pieces in the form of pamphlets or brochures.

Another opinion that is not less important than are many other reliable sources was that al-Ghazali had 457 writings.¹² This is an explanation of 'Abdurrahman Badawi, as quoted by the publisher of Dar al-Fikr Beirut, in *Mukhtashar Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*.

Some of his monumental and infamous works among others are as follows¹³:

- ✓ Philosophy: Maqashid al-Falasifah, Tahafut al-Falasifah, dan Mi'yar al-'Ilm.
- ✓ Theology: Al-Risalah al-Qudsiyyah, Iljam al-'Awwam 'an 'Ilm al-Kalam, al-Iqtishad fi al-'Itiqad, dan al-Arba'in fi Ushul al-Din.
- ✓ Islamic Jurisprudence dan Its Principles: Al-Wajiz, al-Mustashfa min 'Ilm al-Ushul, Tahdzib al-Ushul, Asas al-Qiyas, dan al-Basith.
- ✓ Islamic Mysticism / Ethics: Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din, al-Munqidz min al-Dhalal, Minhaj al-'Abidin, Misykat al-Anwar, al-Durrah al-Fakhirah, Mukasyafat al-Qulub, Khalashat al-Tashanif fi al-Tashawwuf, dan Kimiya' al-Sa'adah.
- ✓ Other fields: Jawahir Alquran, al-Qisthas al-Mustaqim, Jawahir al-Kubra, Kitab al-Arba'in, Mizan al-'Amal, dan Yakut al-Ta'wil fi Tafsir al-Tanzil.

IV. Al-Ghazali's View toward Theologians, Philosophers, and Batiniyyah Sect

After deeply observing various schools at his era, namely the schools of theology, philosophy, and spirituality, al-Ghazali then preferred tasawuf (Islamic Mysticism). As quoted by Hamka, al-Ghazali did appreciate theologians since they have strived with their knowledge to defend well-structurally the oneness belief. But al-Ghazali felt that their proves were not time-tested.¹⁴ If they see a case from one perspective, there will be many perspectives unseen. It means that theology is relative and therefore, truth cannot be reached by theology.

¹⁰ Harun Nasution (Ed.) dan Tim Penulis IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia*, p. 257.

¹¹ Asmaran As, *Pengantar Studi Tasawuf*, p. 327.

¹² Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Mukhtashar Ihya' 'Ulmu al-Din*, (Beirut : Dar al-Fikr, 1993), p. 8.

¹³ D.B. Macdonald, "Al-Ghazali", *First Encyclopedia of Islam 1913-1936*, E.J. Brill's (Ed.), (New York : E.J. Brill, 1987), p 146-149. See also Dewan Redaksi Ensiklopedi Islam, "Al-Ghazali", *Ensiklopedi Islam*, (Jakarta : Ichtisar Baru Van Hoeve, 1993), p. 26-28.

¹⁴ Hamka, (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah), *Tasawuf : Perkembangan dan Pemurniannya*, (Jakarta : Pustaka Panjimas, 1993), p. 123.

On the other hand, al-Ghazali respected philosophers because, in his opinion, they have made use and sharpened their minds, particularly in learning exact and natural sciences. But, when it comes to theological discussion, philosophy is merely the product of human brain which cannot be always trusted. Aristotle, in al-Ghazali's opinion, seems to have found God, but after freely deepening it, al-Ghazali found that Aristotle's thought on God contradicts with religious concept. Furthermore, according to al-Ghazali, there are three opinions of philosophers that lead to heathendom. The three opinions are; first, this universe is impermanent, second, resurrection does not exist, and third, God does not know in details what happens in this world.¹⁵ This conclusion is made by Muhammad Abdl Hadi Abu Raidah and followed by Harun Nasution.

Al-Ghazali was also at odds with the Bathiniyah sect¹⁶ which was often polemic with Sunni.¹⁷ He rejects the opinion of this sect that the Imams are *ma'shum* (kept away from sinning). According to him and also the majority of Muslims, the infallible is only the Prophet Muhammad. Besides the Prophet, there were no Imams - like Hasan, Husen, Muhammad al-Kadzim and others who are infallible.

In the end, al-Ghazali concluded that theologians, philosophers, and adherents of the Bathiniyah sect in his time could attain essential truth. Therefore, according to al-Ghazali also, new breakthroughs must be sought to achieve that essential truth. Al-Ghazali then came to the conclusion that the ultimate truth would be achieved through Sufism.

V. Sufism in al-Ghazali's Perspective

After studying the schools of theology, philosophers, and adherents of the Bathiniyah sect, al-Ghazali finally chose the path of Sufism to find the ultimate truth. According to him, Sufis are the most essential truth seekers. More than that, the path of the Sufis is a blend of knowledge and its implementation. Meanwhile, morality is the fruit. The special features possessed by Sufis cannot be achieved only by learning, but more than that, they must also be able to achieve inner disclosure, spiritual condition, and rehabilitation of wrong doings.¹⁸ In Sufism, this kind of activities is also

¹⁵ Muhammad 'Abdul Hadi Abu Raidah (Diterjemahkan dari Teks berbahasa Inggris karya De Boer), *Tarikh al-Falsafah Fi al-Islam*, (Kairo : Lajnah al-Ta'lif wa al-Tarjamah wa al-Nasyr, 1938), p. 209. See also Harun Nasution, *Falsafah dan Mistisisme dalam Islam*, p. 45.

¹⁶ Al-Bathiniyyah is often associated to Syi'ah Isma'iliyyah, because Syi'ah Isma'iliyyah is a sect of Bathiniyyah. Further information can be obtained from Al-Nadwah al-'Alamiyah Li al-Syabab al-Islamiy, *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Muyassarah fi al-Adyan wa al-Madzahib al-Mu'ashirah*, (Riyadh : Wamy, 1972), p. 43.

¹⁷ Hamid Enayat, *Reaksi Politik Sunni dan Syi'ah : Pemikiran Politik Islam Modern Menghadapi Abad Ke-21*, translated by Asep Hikmat, (Bandung : Pustaka, 1988), p. 46.

¹⁸ Abu al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi al-Taftazani, *Sufi dari Zaman ke Zaman*, p. 165.

called *takhalli* and *tahalli*, namely leaving despicable qualities and adorning oneself with commendable qualities.

In his Sufism, al-Ghazali assembled *aqeedah*, *syariah*, and morals in a systematic and solid frame. It is said to be solid because the Sufism theories were born from intellectual efforts and personal experiences after carrying out intensive *suluk*, *riyadhah*, and *mujahadah*.¹⁹ Al-Ghazali was able to bind Sufism with revelations, both the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad.

His most monumental work, *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, show how great al-Ghazali's role is. The most prominent role is his ability to construct a milieu that can revive Muslims enthusiasm in studying religious sciences and practice them diligently. Furthermore, as Simuh said, what al-Ghazali wanted has been achieved, namely to revive and deepen the faith quality of Muslims and establish it, so that it radiates in the excitement of learning and practicing the teachings.²⁰ That is how Laily Mansur and Simuh elaborated and concluded.

Furthermore, in *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, al-Ghazali described the ways for a road-goer to Allah Almighty, from the beginning, the various phases, to the end. Regarding *maqamat* as the stages that must be passed by a Sufi (prospective Sufi) in getting closer to Allah, al-Ghazali gives and describes the *maqamat* by starting with repentance, then patience, fidelity, *zuhud*, *tawakkal*, love, *ma'rifah*, and ending with *ridha*.²¹ This explanation is concluded by Harun Nasution in his work philosophy and mysticism in Islam.

Furthermore, al-Ghazali outlines several terms in Sufism. This outlining is of characteristic of purification, reconciliation, and harmonization of moderate Sunni Sufism. Al-Ghazali's sufism terms are described in more detail in the following which includes *Al-Ma'rifah*, *Fana'* in *Tawheed* or *ridha*.²² Knowledge of *Mukasyafah*, science of spirituality disclosure (*Symbolic Mukasyafah*), Happiness, and Levels of Faith. Here is the description.

a) *Al-Ma'rifah*

Among essential differences of al-Ghazali from previous Sufis was that he had made Sufism as a way of knowing Allah (*ma'rifah*) whose characteristics and limitations are clearly defined.²³ According to al-Ghazali, *ma'rifah* is knowing the

¹⁹ H.M. Laily Mansur, *Ajaran dan Teladan Para Sufi*, (Jakarta : PT. RajaGrafindo Persada, 1996), p. 161.

²⁰ Simuh, *Tasawuf dan Perkembangannya dalam Islam*, (Jakarta : PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 1996), p. 159.

²¹ Harun Nasution, *Falsafah dan Mistisisme dalam Islam*, op. cit., p. 62.

²² Harun Nasution, *Falsafah dan Mistisisme dalam Islam*, op. cit., p. 62.

²³ Abu al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi al-Taftazani, *Sufi dari Zaman ke Zaman*, p. 171.

secrets of Allah and His various rules about everything that exists.²⁴ However, for al-Ghazali, *ma'rifah* is put in the first order than *mahabbah* (love) because *mahabbah* arises from *ma'rifah*. *Mahabbah* spoken by Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyah is *mahabbah* in the form of someone's love for those who do good to him/her, love that arises from affection and mercy of God to humans, which gives life, sustenance, pleasure and etc.

Furthermore, al-Ghazali said that *ma'rifah* and *mahabbah* were the highest level that could be achieved by a Sufi. Knowledge in *ma'rifah* has higher quality than does knowledge obtained by reason.²⁵ That is the comparison between *ma'rifah* and *mahabbah*.

According to other Sufis, such as al-Kalabadzi, there are two kinds of *ma'rifah*, namely *ma'rifat al-haqq* and *ma'rifat al-haqiqah*. The first type means the affirmation of the oneness of God Almighty for the attributes that He posses. Whereas the second type means that *ma'rifah* cannot be achieved in any way, because of the impenetrable nature of God and the impossibility to verify (*tahqiq*) His Lordship.²⁶ This is like what is stated in the Qur'an chapter Thaha verse 109 as follows.

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا (طه : ١١٠)

Allah knows what is (presently) before them and what will be after them, but they do not encompass it in knowledge. (Q.S. Thaha : 110).

A well-known interpreter, Ibn Kathir, explained that the verse means that God knows everything about His creatures, but these beings cannot know everything about Allah.²⁷ In other words, as interpreted by quoting the opinion of Ibn 'Abbas and several other prophet's followers, all beings will submit to Allah Almighty, Substance Who Is Alive and Not Dead, All Regulate the affairs of His creatures and Not Sleep, look after them, and He is the Perfect.

In discussing Sufism, al-Ghazali uses various imagery (*tamsil*) and analogy to make it clear and easy to understand. The existence of God in reality is actually imaged like sun. Whereas humans with their senses are imagined like bats. Bats during their lives cannot see the sun because their senses are too weak, not suitable for capturing sunlight that is too bright. Likewise, the human eye cannot see God's

²⁴ Harun Nasution, *Falsafah dan Mistisisme dalam Islam*, pl. 78.

²⁵ Harun Nasution, *Falsafah dan Mistisisme dalam Islam*, p. 78.

²⁶ Abu Bakr Muhammad al-Kalabadzi, *Al-Ta'arruf Li Madzhab Ahl al-Tashawwuf*, Verified and commented by Mahmud Amin al-Nawawi, (Kairo : Maktabat al-Kulliyat al-Azhariyyah, 1969), p. 159. Lihat pula Al-Kalabadzi, *Ajaran Kaum Sufi*, Translated by Rahmani Astuti, (Bandung : Mizan, 1990), p. 171.

²⁷ Al-Imam al-Hafidz Imaduddin Abu al-Fida' Isma'il ibn Katsir al-Qurasyi al-Dimasyqi, *Tafsir Alquran al-'Adzim*, Vol. III, (Beirut : Dar al-Khair, 1990), p. 184.

light because it is too bright. Whereas actually the substance of God is bright without any veil²⁸, as Simuh, a Muslim intellectual, explained al-Ghazali's thinking.

Al-Ghazali then gave further explanation about *ma'rifah* (understanding). The means of *ma'rifah* for a Sufi, according to al-Ghazali, is heart, neither feelings and nor reason. Heart, according to him, is not a part of body located on the left side of the human chest, but is a spiritual spark of the Godhead which is the essence of human reality. Thus, according to Asmaran, the word "heart" in al-Ghazali's perception is two kinds, namely the physical sense and the spiritual sense. While what is meant here is heart in the spiritual sense.²⁹ That is the explanation of al-Taftazani.

Still about heart, al-Ghazali explained that heart is like a mirror. Meanwhile, knowledge is a reflection of the image of reality reflected by it. If the mirror or heart is not clear, it cannot reflect the realities of knowledge. He further said that what makes a mirror or heart not clear is the body's lust. While obedience to God Almighty and the abandonment of the demands of lust precisely makes the heart shiny and bright³⁰, as explained by al-Taftazani.

On another occasion, al-Ghazali explained five reasons why truth is reluctant to appear in heart, namely³¹:

- ✓ The absence of the heart itself, such as in the case of children and crazy people.
- ✓ Dirt of immorality and abominations that accumulate on the surface of heart which is caused by uncontrolled lust.
- ✓ Deviating heart from the essential direction sought.
- ✓ The existence of cover, namely the remnants of lust or ruined aqidah (*faith*) occurred when still little.
- ✓ Ignorance of the desired direction.

Al-Ghazali described how heart becomes a medium of *ma'rifah* for a Sufi with the following example: "If we imagine a valley to which water flows from various rivers or maybe water breaks through the its cranny, so that the water is clearer or may also be a lot and heavy, so is the heart. Meanwhile, knowledge is like water, and the senses are like rivers. Sometimes knowledge infiltrates the heart through sensory rivers or thoughts, through various observations, so that the heart is filled up by knowledge. The rivers can be dammed by distancing oneself from the crowds and

²⁸ Simuh, *Tasawuf dan Perkembangannya dalam Islam*, p. 170.

²⁹ Asmaran As, *Pengantar Studi Tasawuf*, p. 333.

³⁰ al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi al-Taftazani, *Sufi dari Zaman ke Zaman*, p. 171.

³¹ Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Mutiara Ihya' Ulumuddin*, Terjemahan Iwan Kurniawan, (Bandung : Mizan, 1977), p. 200-201.

living alone or closing their eyes, while the heart depth can be dived by purifying it and removing various barriers so that the sources of knowledge emit from them”,³² as Asmaran explained.

Like other Sufis, al-Ghazali explained that essential *ma'rifah* can only be obtained through inspiration (*ilham*). *Ilham* can be said as knowledge given directly by God to certain humans without the process of reason observation or learning process³³ as explained by al-Taftazani.

b) Cessation of Being in *Tawheed* or *Mukasyafah* Knowledge

According to al-Ghazali, an '*arif*' does not see anything other than Allah and does not know anything other than Him. What he knows in this form is only Him and His various creations. Thus, he does not see everything merely as creations except that he sees their Creator and he refuses to call these creations heaven, earth, animal, or tree. On the contrary, instead he saw all of them as the creation of the One and Only True.

Clearly, according to al-Ghazali, the entire universe is God's creation. Therefore, whoever looks at the whole universe as Allah's creation, they know that it is Allah's creation, and love it because that is the creation of Allah, then there is nothing they see other than Allah, noone they know and noone they love except Allah Almighty.³⁴ Al-Taftazani added.

In such conditions, al-Taftazani explained further, "he is the one who truly believes in the oneness of God and sees nothing but Him". Even, he does not see something merely as it is, but sees its position as a servant of God Almighty. With such a description, al-Ghazali described the cessation experience in *tawheed* as the fruit of knowledge. On the contrary, he criticized those who were unable to express it correctly, as he stated: "this case (everything related to mortality), as known by Sufis, causes problems because of their inability to understand it, aside from being unable to explain it to scientists with sentences that lead to correct understanding, it may also be caused by their business with themselves and their belief that it is not their business to explain this problem."³⁵ This is what Al-Taftazani concluded, which caused a lack of understanding in recognizing Allah SWT.

From another side, al-Ghazali argues that the disclosure of *tawheed* realities which is revealed in *fana'* circumstances with ordinary words will deliver its

³² Asmaran As, *Pengantar Studi Tasawuf*, p. 333

³³ al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi al-Taftazani, *Sufi dari Zaman ke Zaman*, p. 171-172.

³⁴ al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi al-Taftazani, *Sufi dari Zaman ke Zaman*, p. 176.

³⁵ al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi al-Taftazani, *Sufi dari Zaman ke Zaman*, p. 176.

disclosure to various problems that have no limits.³⁶ Therefore, as al-Taftazani continued, it is suggested that it should not be explored.

c) Disclosing Knowledge (Symbolic *mukasyafah*)

In al-Ghazali's perspective, *mukasyafah* knowledge is a hidden knowledge and is only known by those who truly know Allah Almighty. Therefore, they only use special symbols and do not discuss them outside their own circle.

That is what al-Ghazali explained as follows:

"Such knowledge, which is only expressed through symbols, is not permitted to be known by every human being. That is the case of people whose knowledge is revealed by God to him, he must not reveal it to people whose knowledge is not revealed to them."

Through this statement, al-Ghazali wanted himself and other sufis to avoid the mistakes of Abu Yazid al-Bustami and Abu Manshur al-Hallaj who revealed essential reality. Because, according to him, a Sufi can reach various levels which cannot be expressed verbally. Every time a Sufi tries to express it in reality, there are real errors. Therefore, for those who understand it, according to al-Ghazali, should not act beyond limits.

d) Happiness

Happiness of everything, in al-Ghazali's perspective, is in its delicacy and pleasure. Then the delicacy of something should be according to someone's taste and character, because the nature of something is what was created for it. The delicacy of the eye, for example, is on panoramic images. The delicacy of the ear is in beautiful sounds and so are other organs, each of which has a certain delicacy.

A special delicacy of heart is the recognition of God, because heart is indeed created to know Him. The delicacy itself is the fruit of knowledge that was unknown before. Chess game is an example. If someone masters the game, then he keeps playing it and gets addicted. That is if the knowledge of Allah sticks in the heart, it will undoubtedly make a wise person happy and make him anxious to wait for witnessing Him.

In the view of al-Ghazali, the highest and most sublime pleasure is the recognition of Allah Almighty, known as *ma'rifah*.³⁷ al-Ghazali cannot think if one would choose another pleasure, unless the person is hindered from the pleasure of knowing God Almighty, because if something known is great, then the knowledge to it will be even greater. In addition, the pleasure obtained will also be even greater.

³⁶ al-Wafa' al-Ghanimi al-Taftazani, *Sufi dari Zaman ke Zaman*, p. 177.

³⁷ Mahjudin, *Kuliah Akhlaq Tasawuf*, (Jakarta : Kalam Mulia, 1996), p. 83.

All the pleasure associated with the body organs will disappear when the body dies. However, this is not the case with the pleasure of recognizing of Allah the Almighty. This kind of pleasure won't disappear forever. Even after death it will get stronger, because it can make humans come out of various darkness into bright lights.

e) Levels of *Iman*

It can be said that there are various levels of *iman* (faith). According to al-Ghazali, people's faith can be classified into three levels, namely: ³⁸

Regular people's (*awam*) faith is the faith of people who believe in information due to the trustworthy of the person delivering the information, namely the prophet.

Knowledgable's (*alim*) faith is the faith of people believing in something based on their own observation, analysis, and conclusions.

Witnessing ('*arif*) faith is the faith of those who believe after witnessing the ultimate truth obtained by their spiritual experience, without any *hijab* (veil) that prevents it.

The method which can be taken to reach the level of '*arif* faith is by breaking away from worldly influence (*zuhud*) and training oneself and soul by worshipping God and always remembering Him - which in Sufism terminology is called *al-suluk*. In this way, doubt can disappear by itself and eventually *ma'rifah* arises. Whereas the person who reaches it is called a guardian of Allah or "*wali*" whose position is under the Prophet. If the Prophet gets revelation and inspiration, then the guardian only gets inspiration.

VI. Closing

Al-Ghazali is an expert and great Muslim scholar who speak up for Sunni and moderate Sufism, namely Sufism based on the doctrine of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, also based on ascetic life, simple life, education and psychological exercise. In terms of his deep knowledge and sufism, al-Ghazali had greater influence and higher intellectuality than all other intellectuals in the era before and after him.

Al-Ghazali has contributed to the harmonization of Sufism and Shariah by constructing tasawuf to be "lawful/*halal*" among sharia or Sunni groups, having previously been "forbidden" due to the emergence of philosophical sufism as raised

³⁸ Abuddin Nata, *Ilmu Kalam, Filsafat, dan Tasawuf*, (Jakarta : Rajawali Pers, 1993), p. 182. See also, Mahjudin, *Kuliah Akhlaq Tasawuf*, p. 83-84.

by Abu Manshur al-Hallaj with the concept of al-Hulul, or Abu Yazid al-Bustami with the concepts of *al-ittihad*, *al-fana'*, and *al-baqa'*. According to al-Ghazali, the teachings in philosophical Sufism must be straightened out, and Sufism must be returned (purified) to sufism which is according to the teachings of the spirituality of the Qur'an, prophet's and his companions' tradition.

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