

Analyzing the Happiness Mysticism from Al-Ghazali's Thought on People with Disabilities in the Modern Era

Nur Zaenab

Theology and Islamic Philosophy, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Indonesia

nzaenabnz@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the concept of happiness from the perspective of al-Ghazali's mysticism and its relevance to people with disabilities in the modern era. Drawing on al-Ghazali's theological, philosophical, and Sufi insights, the research examines how spiritual well-being, moral refinement, and closeness to God serve as core elements in achieving true happiness, beyond material or physical limitations. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study analyzes classical Islamic texts alongside contemporary literature on disability studies. The findings reveal that al-Ghazali's emphasis on inner purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), gratitude, and patience offers a transformative framework for understanding happiness among individuals with disabilities. In the modern context, this mystical approach can help challenge societal stigma, promote inclusivity, and encourage a more holistic view of human flourishing. The research concludes that integrating al-Ghazali's spiritual paradigm with contemporary perspectives on disability can foster both personal resilience and social acceptance, paving the way for a more compassionate and equitable society.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social exclusion exacerbates loneliness and can prevent participation in spiritual life or broader community activities (UN News, 2025). The perception that Sufism is a classical teaching that is far from modernity stems from the fact that it cannot be separated from the formal, empirical, and often irrational role of the tarekat. Therefore, Sufism must move beyond its classical issues by incorporating modern social sciences as a foundation for thinking, alongside the Quran and Hadith, to address the challenges of the times (Falach, 2021). In this context, it is important to consider Al-Ghazali's concept of happiness, which can serve as a foundation for understanding the relationship between Sufism and contemporary challenges. Regarding this issue, the author collected literature related to the research topic, namely the concept of happiness according to Al-Ghazali. As Yusuf Suharto and Ishmatun Nihayah explained in their research, first, happiness can only be achieved through a combination of knowledge and righteous deeds

(Suharto & Nihayah, 2021). Knowledge acts as a crucial gateway, and good deeds are the apex of that knowledge. Knowledge guides humanity to eternal bliss. However, worldly contentment is a delusion. Unless humanity may gain wisdom about worldly happiness by an understanding of happiness mysticism. This can be accomplished by studying the virtues of the soul, the body, the external environment, and spiritual guidance. Al-Ghazali's writings place considerable emphasis on the hierarchical nature of happiness, categorizing it into five distinct levels, each consisting of four virtues. This framework is specifically characteristic of al-Ghazali and does not originate from Greek philosophy or other Islamic thinkers such as Ibn Sina, al-Farabi, or Ibn Miskawaih.

Then Wasiatul Mahfidhoh Jaya Ningrum researched prospective Sufis who wanted to go through the maqamat, including repentance, patience, asceticism, trust in God, and gnosis (Ningrum, 2023). This research will include a discussion of al-Ghazali's thoughts and how al-Ghazali's Sufism influenced everyday life. Not only that, al-Ghazali's influence has spread across various regions of the Islamic world to this day. Regarding happiness, he emphasizes al-Ghazali's view that happiness is the ultimate goal of the Sufi path, as the fruit of recognizing Allah. Fourthly, through a Sufi approach, al-Ghazali sought to return Islam to its fundamental and historical sources and to give a place to emotional religious life (esoteric) within his system.

Furthermore, Toni Pransiska's research reveals historical facts related to the involvement and contribution of disabled scholars in the glory and civilization of Islam (Pransiska, 2017). This is because history has never recorded any great Islamic thinkers, whether in the fields of Aqidah, Sufism, Philosophy, Fiqh, Tafsir, or Hadith, who came from among the disabled. The implications of the absence of such studies, let alone a disability perspective, are easy to predict: there is a tendency toward generalization (*ta'mīm*) in providing needs and accessibility to facilities or resources for humans without considering people with disabilities (Johari & Soraya, 2020). This research was conducted to provide a detailed description and information about Islam's view on disability. Additionally, through this research, we can identify and document the actual contributions made by disabled scholars throughout Islamic history, such as those from the groups of companions, *tabi'in*, and scholars. It turns out that many of the companions and scholars with disabilities have made contributions and achievements according to their capacities and abilities, such as Abdullah bin Ummy Maktum and Imam Tirmidzi. Therefore, this study delves into the companions and scholars with all their contributions and achievements for the advancement of Islam and the development of Islamic intellectualism.

In addition, Fatakhul Huda examines the concept of happiness in al-Ghazali's perspective as when humans have been able to subdue their animalistic desires (Huda, 2019). He further explores al-Ghazali's pursuit of happiness through his work *Kimiya al-Saadah*, which consists of eight important elements, namely: first, knowing oneself; second, knowing Allah; third, knowing the world; Fourth, understanding the afterlife. Fifth, spirituality through music and dance. Sixth,

meditation and remembrance of Allah. Seventh, marriage. Eighth, love for Allah SWT. This research also explains that a person will achieve perfection if they can discipline themselves through the path to happiness offered by al-Ghazali. Without happiness, human life will be miserable because it is not accompanied by the awareness that we are creatures dependent on the Almighty.

Meanwhile, research conducted by Mohd Khir Johari bin Abas and Aida Soraya binti Yusof in *Kimiya' al-Sa'adah* shows that Al-Ghazali places more emphasis on the spiritual (soul) than the physical (Johari & Soraya, 2020). This is in line with his concept of knowledge, namely *zahir* knowledge and *batin* knowledge. Outer knowledge pertains to human interactions, encompassing worship and other bodily activities. Inner knowledge, on the other hand, pertains to the dealings of the heart. Spiritual elements also serve as the driving force behind bodily activities. Al-Ghazali uses several terms to explain his perspective on human nature in the book *Kimiya' al-Sa'adah*, including body, soul, heart, mind, and spirit. Further explaining the analogy presented by al-Ghazali, the body is likened to a kingdom, with all its members and senses as its soldiers, the heart as its king, and the body's members as its soldiers. Each has its own role, yet they are all interconnected as a whole.

Looking at previous research that has made Al-Ghazali the subject of study and has a common thread of discussion, namely historical and literary Sufism of happiness, the researcher sees an opportunity to discuss Al-Ghazali in relation to his concept of happiness for people who are unfamiliar with Sufism, as well as analyzing the dimensions of Al-Ghazali's Sufism of happiness for people who are still unfamiliar with it, including people with disabilities (Arroisi et al., 2023). This research is qualitative in nature, with the primary data being Al-Ghazali's work titled "The Alchemy of Happiness," referring to the Arabic edition, "*Kîmiyâ' al-Sa'âdah*." The secondary data for this research consists of books, documents, and writings related to Al-Ghazali. Data collection in this study was conducted through a literature review. Initially, relevant themes regarding the concept of human happiness according to Al-Ghazali were identified and described. The collected information was then analyzed to interpret the results of thematic grouping, ultimately leading to conclusions about how people with disabilities perceive happiness within the Sufi framework.

2. METHODS

This qualitative study uses a library research strategy to analyze al-Ghazali's mystical concept of happiness (*sa'adah*) and its relevance to the existential predicament of individuals with disabilities today. The primary focus is on al-Ghazali's philosophical and spiritual ideas, notably as articulated in his writings such as *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, *Kimiya' al-Sa'adah*, and *al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl*. These scriptures lay the groundwork for understanding his definition of ultimate happiness as a process of self-purification, remembrance of God (*dhikr*), and withdrawal from excessive worldly pursuits (Soleh, 2022).

Secondary sources included in the research include scholarly publications, books, and prior studies on Islamic mysticism, disability studies, and spiritual well-being. The approach employs content analysis to extract crucial concepts such as spiritual awareness, divine proximity, and the unification of material and spiritual existence. This study also takes an interpretative approach to connecting traditional Islamic thought with the modern socio-spiritual difficulties that persons with disabilities experience. Although not empirical, the study aims to provide conceptual insights into how al-Ghazali's mystical perspective can provide an alternative interpretation of happiness for people whose lives are frequently marginalized by materialistic and ableist norms in modern society (Yahya et al., 2020).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Imaging the Happiness Mysticism According to Imam Al-Ghazali's Thought

Despite entering the modern era, the condition of people with disabilities today appears stagnant in determining the meaning of happiness amid the abundance of life choices and the rapid cultural changes in society. This occurs because one of the contributing factors is that people with disabilities require more time to adapt to themselves, develop survival skills, and integrate into their surroundings. In the context of spiritual happiness, this can be achieved through various means. In the human context, Sufism emphasizes the spiritual aspect over the physical aspect, related to the temporary nature of worldly life, while in terms of understanding, Sufism emphasizes inner interpretation over outer interpretation. Therefore, the study of Sufism is very important, especially for the Muslim community in general and Islamic religious leaders in particular, given that society today faces various challenges in worldly and religious spiritual life (Carter, 2024). Studying and understanding Sufism is hoped to serve as an effective means of finding solutions to these various issues. Guided by the Qur'an and authentic Hadith as the absolute doctrine of Islamic teachings, Sufi values have existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Sufism is clearly evident in the Prophet's behavior and actions, which reflect extremely high and noble moral standards. This is closely related to the Prophet's role as Allah's messenger, whose mission was to improve and perfect human morality (Yahya et al., 2020).

One of the most famous Sufi figures is Imam Al-Ghazali, a scientist and prominent Sufi figure, who was given the title *hujjat ul-Islam*. Throughout his life, he was a seeker of knowledge, as evidenced by his works, which cover various branches of science. As a Sufi figure, he is known as a scholar of Islamic jurisprudence with his work "*al-Mustashfa*," and he is also recognized as a philosopher with his work "*Tahafut al-Falasifah*" which critiques the philosophical concepts of his time. He believed that the philosophical teachings of the philosophers had crossed boundaries, which deeply concerned him about the corruption of the philosophical community's creed. Therefore, he took the initiative to correct philosophical thought by proposing Sufi principles as a bridge to reconcile Sharia with Sufism, which had clashed during that era. This was successfully achieved through his greatest work, *Ihya' U'lum al-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences).

Furthermore, as the source in this research, his work titled *Kīmiyā' al-Sa'adah* is among the last books produced by al-Ghazali before his death (al-Ghazali, 1991). In that book, Al-Ghazali begins his discussion by addressing several fundamental issues related to human life.

Al-Ghazali deliberately wrote a work specifically titled *Kīmiyā' al-Sa'adah*, which means “The Chemistry of Happiness,” in which he discusses the nature of the heart, its uniqueness or wonder, and the army of the heart (al-Taftazani & al-Ghanimi, 2002; Ningrum, 2023). The heart was indeed created specifically to receive the light of divine knowledge from Allah. Therefore, once the heart has received this light of divine knowledge, happiness will naturally emerge. In this regard, Al-Ghazali has described how humans can achieve true happiness, beginning with an understanding of the physical body and ultimately leading to an understanding of the essence of the heart and the ability to control it. (Munif, 2020).

In his book *Kimiya' al-Sa'adah*, Al-Ghazali makes a very interesting analogy about the human body that is easy to understand. Al-Ghazali uses the analogy that the human body is like a city:

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ كَالْمَدِينَةِ، وَالْيَدَيْنِ وَالْقَدَمَيْنِ وَجَمِيعِ الْأَعْضَاءِ ضِيَاعُهَا، وَالْقُوَّةَ الشَّهَوَانِيَّةَ وَالنِّهَا،
وَالْقُوَّةَ الْغَضَبِيَّةَ شَحْنَتُهَا، وَالْقَلْبَ مَلِكُهَا، وَالْعَقْلَ وَزِيرُهَا، وَالْمَلِكُ يَدْبِرُ هُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَقَرَّ مَمْلَكَتُهُ
وَأَحْوَالُهُ، لِأَنَّ الْوَلِيَّ وَهُوَ الشَّهْوَةُ كَذَّابٌ فَضُولِيٌّ مِخْلُطٌ، وَالشَّخْنَةُ—هُوَ الْغَضَبُ—شَرِيرٌ قَتَالٌ
خَرَابٌ. فَإِنْ تَرَكَهُمْ الْمَلِكُ عَلَى مَا هُمْ عَلَيْهِ هَلَكَتِ الْمَدِينَةُ وَخَرِبَتْ، فَيَجِبُ أَنْ يُشَاوَرَ الْمَلِكُ
الْوَزِيرَ، وَيَجْعَلَ الْوَلِيَّ وَالشَّخْنَةَ تَحْتَ يَدِ الْوَزِيرِ، فَإِذَا فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ اسْتَقَرَّتْ أَحْوَالُ الْمَمْلَكَةِ
وَتَعَمَّرَتِ الْمَدِينَةُ. وَكَذَلِكَ الْقَلْبُ يُشَاوَرُ الْعَقْلَ، وَيَجْعَلُ الشَّهْوَةَ وَالْغَضَبَ تَحْتَ حُكْمِهِ، حَتَّى
تَسْتَقَرَّ أَحْوَالُ النَّفْسِ، وَيَصِلَ إِلَى سَبَبِ السَّعَادَةِ مِنْ مَعْرِفَةِ الْحَضَرَةِ الْإِلَهِيَّةِ. وَلَوْ جَعَلَ الْعَقْلُ
تَحْتَ يَدِ الْغَضَبِ وَالشَّهْوَةِ هَلَكَتِ نَفْسُهُ، وَكَانَ قَلْبُهُ شَقِيًّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ

“The human body can be likened to a city, where each part has a specific role. The hands and feet, along with the five senses, function as the city's workforce. Desire represents the citizens, while anger functions as the security forces. The heart functions as the ruler, with reason acting as its advisor. The kingdom is often influenced by the residents (desire), which can lead to excesses and complications. Similarly, the security forces (anger) can trigger harmful actions and cause chaos. It is crucial for the ruler to manage all aspects effectively to ensure the stability of the kingdom. If the authorities neglect this duty, they will soon face chaos and disaster. Therefore, it is vital for rulers to engage in dialogue with advisors to control desires and anger through reason. Achieving this balance will result in a peaceful and prosperous city. The heart must consistently communicate with reason, ensuring that desires and anger are properly regulated, enabling positive behavior and a fulfilling life. Conversely, if reason is overpowered by desires and anger, true happiness will be difficult to attain and will bring one closer to destruction in the afterlife...” (al-Ghazali, n.d.; Arroisi, 2019).

Al-Ghazali claims in his work that the ultimate goal of the Sufi path is happiness, which he believes is the result of knowing Allah. According to *Kimiya al-Sa'adah*, this idea of happiness

forms the basis of his philosophy. He also discusses this theory in more detail in *Ihya Ulum al-Din*. Al-Ghazali asserts that knowledge is the foundation for pursuing happiness and that knowledge always leads to charitable deeds. By emphasizing how satisfying it is to concentrate on knowledge, he stresses the importance of learning because of its inherent benefits. Thus, it is undoubtedly obtained as a means to the hereafter and its happiness, as well as a path to draw closer to Allah. However, achieving this goal is only possible through knowledge. The ultimate goal of humanity is eternal happiness. The most effective way to achieve this happiness is through good deeds, which are based on knowledge. However, understanding how to perform good deeds is crucial to realizing this happiness. Thus, the foundation of happiness, both in this world and the hereafter, is rooted in knowledge. Al-Ghazali's theory of happiness combines a psychological perspective, highlighting that all forms of knowledge stem from the pursuit of pleasure or happiness (Ningrum, 2023).

Al-Ghazali continues that everything has a sense of happiness, pleasure, and satisfaction. Pleasure is obtained when one does everything that is commanded by one's nature. The nature of everything is everything that is created for it. The pleasure of the eyes in beautiful images, the pleasure of the ears in melodious sounds, and so on for all the limbs. The pleasure of the heart is only felt when one knows Allah (*ma'rifah Allah*), for it was created to do so. Everything that is unknown to humanity, when it is known, brings happiness, like a chess game—when one understands it, one is pleased, and if one is separated from the game, one will not abandon it and will be eager to return to it. Similarly, those who have attained knowledge of Allah feel joy and cannot wait to witness Him, for the joy of the heart is knowledge. Every time knowledge increases, so does the joy. Therefore, when a person knows the minister, he will be happy, and even more so if he knows the king, his happiness will be even greater (al-Ghazali, 2002).

There is no existence in this world that is more noble than Allah SWT, for all nobility comes from Him and is His. All the wonders of nature are His work. There is no knowledge (*ma'rifah*) more noble than knowledge of Him. The meaning of this explanation can be summarized as follows: the joy of knowing God is more important than merely achieving illusory worldly happiness. Just as the best view is the opportunity to see God rather than any beauty on this earth. All worldly pleasures depend on the soul and will end with death, while knowledge (*ma'rifah*) of divinity depends on the heart and does not vanish with death, for the heart does not perish, and its pleasures will be greater, its light deeper as it emerges from the depths of darkness into the realm of light (Zaini, 2016).

The following is al-Ghazali's definition of happiness, summarized from several pages in his book *Mizan al-'Amal*. *First*, happiness can be understood as a state of eternal fulfillment, characterized by pleasure that does not lead to fatigue, joy free from sorrow, abundance without deficiency, perfection untainted by imperfection, and glory unaccompanied by shame. *Second*, furthermore, happiness in the afterlife encompasses all aspects of human desires and pleasures that contribute to this state. Happiness symbolizes eternity that is not affected by the limitations of time

and its limitations. Because of this nature, it is not necessary to encourage people to achieve it, nor is it necessary to condemn negligence after the existence of happiness is known. *Thirdly*, happiness, according to Al-Ghazali, is the hope and demand of humanity throughout the ages, and to attain it, humanity must understand the theory and apply it (al-Ghazali, 1989).

Fourth, al-Ghazali states that happiness is the attainment of divine inspiration when one is cleansed of the impurities of desire, so that one “*sees paradise while still in this world, for the highest paradise is in one's heart.*” he is able to break free from and overcome desire, and the mind is liberated and freed from the bondage of desire. Human beings are also engrossed or focused on contemplation and analysis (nazar) as well as the study of the kingdom of heaven and earth, and even the examination of themselves and the marvelous creation of God. Sixth, the happiness and perfection of the soul lie in its being imprinted with the truths of divine matters and uniting with them, as if the soul or self were Him. Seventh, the perfection that can be attained is the ability to be with the angels in the higher dimensions of the universe (ufuq al-alam) near Allah. Eighth, indeed, everything that leads to goodness and happiness is sometimes also referred to as happiness (al-Ghazali, 1989).

3.2 Visualizing the Happiness Mysticism According to the Muslim Perspective in Facing the Modern Era

Some people only pursue happiness or physical, external pleasures, forgetting about the happiness of the hereafter and the happiness of divine guidance. They think that satisfying their stomach and sexual desires is the goal and peak of happiness. However, when humans forget the purpose of their creation, they are no different from livestock driven by their biological instincts. Like Aristotle, al-Ghazali equates happiness with the supreme good or *al-khairat* of humanity. He distinguishes between two types of happiness: transcendent happiness and worldly happiness, which differs from Aristotle's approach (Suharto & Nihayah, 2021). According to him, the former is true happiness, while worldly happiness is merely a form of happiness that is flawed or metaphorical, or true happiness only when it aids in achieving eternal happiness. His focus on the urgency of otherworldly happiness does not divert his attention from other types of happiness or goodness. In fact, he states that anything conducive to the ultimate good is also a form of goodness or happiness (Suharto & Nihayah, 2021).

In *Kîmiyâ' al-Sa'âdah*, there is the following passage, “*The purpose of improving one's character is to purify the heart from the filth of lust and anger, so that it becomes clean and flawless, like a mirror that can reflect the light of God.*” Thus, human desires are the foundation of the wall that separates humans from God. The effort to remove that veil is achieved through practices that enhance spiritual awareness, ultimately leading to ma'rifatullah the recognition of God. These practices are the essence of Sufism, which should not be confined to a particular group alone. This quote is in line with the words of Allah SWT, which are as follows, “*Worship your Lord until those who believe come to you*” (Zahri, 1984).

According to a number of sources, there are at least eight common diseases in modern society, including: 1) The rigid separation of specialized science from other fields of knowledge, resulting in cultural isolation from outside influences in human reasoning, which tends to confuse society; 2) *Split personality* resulting from a life devoid of divine values and the aforementioned overly specialized science; 3) Excessively individualistic and rationalistic lifestyles that lead to a shallow sense of faith, piety, and humanity; 4) An overly individualistic and rational approach to life can result in a superficial understanding of faith, commitment, and human relationships; 5) Hedonistic beliefs that permeate human life due to the tendency to justify any means; 6) Excessive self-confidence and pride in one's own abilities, coupled with a lack of faith in higher guidance and a sense of acceptance; and 7) Stress and frustration can occur in every human experience. Additionally, this can lead to feelings of isolation or alienation, even when surrounded by others (Rozi, 2017).

Defining happiness is not an easy task, as each person has a different perspective and understanding of this term. However, at its core, these differences can be traced back to the categorization of this term, namely whether happiness is categorized as worldly or eternal. For those who define happiness solely in terms of material pleasure, it can be inferred that they either neglect the concept of eternal happiness or simply do not believe in such a form of happiness. For those who define happiness in terms of both material and spiritual aspects, or spiritual aspects alone, it can be said that they are people who believe in the afterlife as a place of endless happiness (Suharto & Nihayah, 2021).

The example of true happiness for friends is the Prophet Muhammad SAW. For case in point, a blind man, Abdullah ibn Umami Maktum, was appointed as a muezzin alongside Bilal ibn Rabbah, who had the opportunity to fight alongside the Prophet in spreading Islam (al-Mahalli, 2007). Abdullah ibn Umami Maktum was a companion from the Quraysh tribe who was part of the first group to migrate to Medina, arriving there before the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Abdullah ibn Umami Maktum was an ordinary person in the city of Mecca, living for himself. No one had ever heard his voice, and no one recognized his appearance. Even his name was a matter of dispute. The people of Medina believed his name was Abdullah ibn Umami Maktum, but the people of Iraq believed his name was Amru ibn Umami Maktum. Nevertheless, they all agree that his mother's name was Atikah bint Abdullah bin Ma'ish and his father's name was Qais bin Zaidah. He was the son of Khadijah bint Khuwalid's aunt. He was called Ummu Maktum because when his mother gave birth to him as a blind child (*a'mā*), she did so secretly (*maktūm*) so that no one would know (al-Basyā, 1992). Although he was visually impaired, his spirit was eager to learn and understand everything he heard. He used his hearing as a substitute for his sight; whatever he heard was never forgotten, enabling him to recount what he had heard with great clarity. Abdullah bin Umami Maktum was a prominent companion of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and one of the first to embrace Islam (*as-sābiqūna al-awwalūn*). He faced the same difficulties and challenges as other

Muslims in Mecca, demonstrating extraordinary sacrifice, resilience, and patience. Like the other companions, he endured oppression at the hands of the Quraish tribe. Despite the brutality he faced, he remained steadfast and unwavering in his faith (Pransiska, 2017).

3.3. Learning about Happiness is Essential for People with Disabilities in the Future

The role of Sufism emphasizes the innate nature of human beings. Sufism is understood as a divine potential that functions to shape world civilization and the course of history. Sufism also influences various activities, such as politics, economics, culture, and society. Additionally, Sufism acts as a guide to prevent the human dimension from being tainted by the flaws of modernization, which seem to lead to anomalies in values and moral decline. Sufism is believed to guide humanity toward achieving moral excellence and the supremacy of morality (Ubabuddin, 2018). The importance of Sufism in the lives of ordinary people, such as those with disabilities, lies in its role as a balancing force in life. This is because, based on the current reality, contemporary life is already marked by various behaviors resulting from the misuse of technological advancements and the relentless pursuit of worldly activities. Meanwhile, in real life, Sufism is often deemed unnecessary because it does not provide material benefits, which are often fleeting and may not even be advantageous in the long run. In this highly advanced era, Sufism is not only necessary but also strongly recommended to help individuals control themselves from the currents of modern life. Sufism nurtures the soul and intellect through a series of practices designed to free humanity from worldly distractions, enabling them to embody noble behavior and draw closer to Allah SWT. At its core, Sufism is a path of spiritual and mental growth aimed at fostering a deeper connection with God (Nuraini & Marhayati, 2019).

To further understand the inner struggle to truly know oneself and God, we can view our body as a kingdom; the soul as its king, and the senses and other faculties as its soldiers. Reason can be likened to the prime minister, desire to the tax collector, and anger to the law enforcer. Under the pretext of collecting taxes, desire always seeks to seize everything for its own benefit, while anger tends to act harshly and brutally. Tax collectors and police must always be kept under the king's control, but they need not be killed or oppressed, as they have their own roles to fulfill. However, if desire and anger overpower reason, the soul will inevitably collapse. A soul that allows lower faculties to dominate higher ones is like someone handing over a maiden to a dog, or a Muslim to a tyrannical non-Muslim king. Cultivating the traits of demons, animals, or angels will produce a character corresponding to them, which on the Day of Judgment will manifest in visible form, such as lust becoming a pig, anger becoming a dog and a wolf, and purity manifesting in the form of an angel (al-Ghazali, 2001). By cleansing our hearts of lust and anger, this moral discipline is like a reflection of divine light, like a clear mirror.

How amazing it is that the rational mind (intellect) of humans is abundant with knowledge and power. Thanks to both, humans can master art and science, travel from Earth to space as fast as lightning, map the sky, and measure the distance between stars. Thanks to knowledge and power,

it can also catch fish from the oceans and birds from the sky, even subdue wild animals like elephants, camels, and horses. The fifth sense of this creature functions similarly to five open doors facing the outside world. But the most amazing of all is the heart, because to reach the invisible spiritual realm, one needs a heart that functions as an open window. This can be explained by the fact that even when we are asleep and our senses are closed, an open window will receive various images from the invisible world. Even messages about the future can be depicted during that sleep. Thus, the essence of *Lauh Mahfuzh* seems to transform into a mirror reflecting everything that exists (Ilahiah, 2021). However, even during sleep, worldly thoughts can cloud this mirror, causing distorted perceptions. However, when death arrives, these disturbances vanish, revealing the true nature of reality with great clarity. This aligns with the meaning of contained in Surah Qaf verse 22, “*You are heedless of this matter. We will remove the veil from your eyes, and give you clear vision on that day*” (al-Ghazali, 2001).

Based on the above explanation, it can be understood that true happiness cannot be separated from gnosis—knowing God. Every faculty within the human being is drawn to everything for which it was created. Desire takes pleasure in fulfilling its urges, anger seeks revenge, the eyes delight in beautiful sights, and the ears enjoy hearing melodious sounds. The concept of the soul was developed by humanity to articulate the essence of truth. As a result, one experiences joy and peace in this pursuit. Even in seemingly insignificant activities, such as playing chess, one finds satisfaction (al-Ghazali, 2001). Furthermore, as one gains more substantial material knowledge, the level of enjoyment increases. One may be pleased to be appointed prime minister, but one would be far more pleased to be closer to the king, who might reveal various secrets to him.

In essence, Sufism is not limited to a particular group, but encompasses all Muslims who recognize Islam as a way of life and faith as their main guiding principle. Sufism is complemented by the element of *Ihsan*, which requires Muslims to believe that every action is under the watchful eye of Allah SWT. Sufism is an individual obligation because all Muslims are required to purify their souls and adorn themselves with virtuous values, as has been discussed. Therefore, it is essential for individuals to study and internalize the values of Sufism and apply them in their lives, as the ultimate purpose of life is to seek the pleasure of Allah SWT (Azaman & Badaruddin, 2013).

Sufism throughout the centuries, especially in its later stages, has seen a decline in influence, roughly from the eighth century Hijriyah until the present day. The reason for this is that these figures primarily focused on commenting on and summarizing Islamic texts, often prioritizing various types of rituals and formal practices. This emphasis sometimes distanced them from the core principles of their own teachings. It should also be noted that, in certain phases of its development, Sufism has been influenced by philosophical theories and has adopted some philosophical terminology and characteristics, yet its initial growth remained distinctly Islamic. Many Orientalists who have studied Sufism have mistakenly attributed it to sources outside of Islam (Fauzi, 2017). To this day, Sufi orders emphasizing practical education have persisted, such

as the Rifa'iyyah order, the Qadariyah order, the Ahmadiyah order (founded by Syayid Ahmad al-Badawi), the al-Birhamiyah order (founded by Sheikh Ibrahim al-Dasuqi), and several other orders.

Modern society today is deeply fascinated by the teachings of Sufism or spirituality, regardless of wealth or poverty, especially among those who have never had direct exposure to the science of Sufism. Are they genuinely seeking to enhance their spiritual connection with Allah SWT, or is it simply a matter of tradition? Throughout the ages, Sufis have genuinely sought to worship and connect with God as closely as possible, ultimately achieving ma'rifat (gnosis) of Him. Sufism is derived from its sources in the Quran and Sunnah, and from the religious or mystical experiences of worshipping God, and has been further developed in detail by its adherents. In describing the sayings of the Sufis, one of them is repentance. Al-Junaid stated that repentance has three meanings. First, regretting one's mistakes; second, resolutely deciding not to return to what is forbidden; and third, responding to the complaints directed at oneself.

Furthermore, sincerity can hinder good deeds due to human hypocrisy, while performing them can stem from tendencies toward polytheism. True sincerity indicates that Allah has healed you from this disease. Additionally, regarding asceticism, Abu Hafis states that true asceticism only exists in permissible matters. Al-Juraiyri also explains patience, which does not distinguish between happy or suffering circumstances, accompanied by tranquility in both. Regarding gratitude, Ruwaym says, "*Gratitude is when you exhaust all your abilities.*" Regarding the meaning of remembrance (*dhikr*), Al-Hasan al-Bisri teaches to seek sweetness in three things: performing the prayer, obeying, and remembering only Allah, as well as reciting the Qur'an. "*If people do not find sweetness in these three things, then know that the door has closed (for you).*" At another time, someone asked Ja'far ash-Shiddiq, "*Why do we pray but our prayers are never answered?*" He replied, "*It is because you are praying to a God about whom you have no knowledge*" (Fauzi, 2017).

Sixth is love (*mahabbah*) Abu Abdullah al-Qasyairi: "*The essence of love means that you give your whole self to the One you love until nothing remains of you for yourself.*" Seventh is about contentment (*ridha*). According to Dzun Nun al-Misri, there are three signs of contentment: not having a choice before Allah's decree is made, not feeling bitterness after Allah's decree is made, and feeling the passion of love amidst trials. And Abul Hasan al-Farisi states that a person's piety has an outer aspect and an inner aspect. The outer aspect is the practice of sharia, and the inner aspect is intention and striving. And finally, regarding tawakal, Sahl bin Abdullah said there are three signs of one who trusts in Allah, "*He does not beg, he does not refuse anything (given), and he does not withhold anything (that will be given)*" (Fauzi, 2017).

From this description, it follows that the pinnacle of worldly happiness is glory, status, and power, free from sorrow and anxiety, and always in pleasure and joy. According to al-Ghazali, to achieve all of this, one must also have knowledge and good deeds (al-Ghazali, 1989). The happiness referred to here is, of course, temporary or temporal in nature. According to al-Ghazali, the pursuit

of worldly happiness alone is a failure on the part of humanity to attain the path to happiness, due to their weak faith in the Day of Judgment. The wise person, or al-'aqla, will immediately seek the pleasures of the hereafter. This person understands the importance of sacrificing certain momentary pleasures to obtain greater rewards in the hereafter. Al-Ghazali asserts that true happiness can be achieved through the integration of knowledge and virtuous actions (Suharto & Nihayah, 2021). Knowledge is a very important prerequisite, and righteous deeds are the perfection of knowledge. This is in line with the importance of understanding happiness in the hereafter, while worldly happiness is sometimes illusory, deceptive, or true if it helps happiness in the hereafter. Thus, happiness can be achieved by cultivating and harmonizing the four virtues of the hereafter, which include the virtue of the soul, the virtue of the body, the virtue of the outer self, and the virtue of divine guidance.

4. CONCLUSION

If we examine the symptoms of humanity in this modern era, which is fraught with various problems and spiritual emptiness, then it is time to find solutions for improvement in aspects of social life. This is where Sufism plays an important role in shaping moral values. At this level, Sufism plays a role in freeing oneself from emptiness and spiritual suffering to achieve steadfastness in the search for God. For the essence of Sufism is oriented toward establishing a direct connection with God, so that one can feel His presence and be freed from sorrow, sadness, anxiety, and distress. The most fundamental teachings of Sufism can serve as a solution to address the challenges faced by modern society, particularly through self-reflection or self-evaluation, known in Sufi terminology as muhasabah. From this, Sufi figures consistently uphold the remembrance of God (dzikrullah) in all their actions, through speech, heart, deeds, and daily behavior. There is no time except to maintain and preserve *hablum minallah* and *hablum minannas*. To serve and dedicate this life solely as a gift from God. Ultimately, many people embrace Islam due to its influence, leading many who were previously disobedient and tyrannical to repent. The underlying reason for this change lies solely in moral teachings. According to al-Ghazali, it is foolish for humans to neglect the promised happiness of the hereafter, even though this does not indicate that humans do not believe in Allah. The bad character that causes humans to neglect this ultimate happiness is due to the various sins of the heart that they commit. It is hoped that by delving into the concept of happiness from al-Ghazali's perspective, one can understand the importance of Sufism as a science through which one gains knowledge about the purification of the soul, the improvement of character, and the development of both the outer and inner self to attain eternal happiness.

Happiness, therefore, is an inevitable achievement. However, in reality, some people only pursue happiness or physical, external pleasures, forgetting about the happiness of the hereafter and the happiness of divine guidance. They believe that the fulfillment of physical and sexual desires is the goal and pinnacle of happiness. Yet, when humans forget the purpose of

their creation, they are no different from livestock driven by their biological instincts

5. REFERENCES

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