The Genealogy of Hatred: An Analysis of Traditional Islamic Philosophy in the Contemporary World

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Abstract: *This study aims to explore the root causes of hatred from the perspective of classical Islamic philosophy by analyzing key concepts such as nafs (soul), ghadhab (anger), 'aql (intellect), and hikmah (wisdom) in the works of prominent Muslim philosophers: Al-Ghazali, Al-Farabi, and Ibn Miskawayh. The research is motivated by the increasing prevalence of hate speech and polarization in the digital public sphere, which reflects a deeper moral and spiritual crisis. Using a qualitative approach with library research and a historical-hermeneutic method, the study conducts a conceptual analysis of classical texts and links their insights to contemporary social phenomena. The findings indicate that hatred is not merely an emotional outburst but a symptom of moral failure, stemming from the dominance of uncontrolled desires and the marginalization of ethical reasoning. Al-Ghazali emphasizes that unmanaged anger (ghadhab) leads to destructive hatred when not purified through tazkiyatun nafs. Al-Farabi highlights the integrative role of intellect and heart, while Ibn Miskawayh underscores the importance of ethical training (riyāḍatu al-nafs) to prevent moral decay. These philosophical perspectives offer a comprehensive ethical framework for addressing hatred, surpassing the limitations of purely legal or psychological approaches. The implications of this study affirm the need for moral and spiritual education in both formal and informal institutions. It suggests integrating Islamic philosophical ethics into public policy and educational curricula as a preventive measure against hatred in digital and social spaces. The originality of this research lies in its synthesis of classical Islamic philosophical ethics with current global challenges, offering an alternative epistemological foundation for contemporary hate studies.*

Keywords: *Ethical Education; Ghadhab; Hatred; Islamic Philosophy; Tazkiyatun Nafs.*

A. Introduction

In today's increasingly interconnected digital landscape, hatred as a social emotion has evolved into an acute ethical crisis.[1] Phenomena such as hate speech, intolerance, and symbolic violence are no longer confined to physical spaces they have rapidly spread through social media, marking a significant shift in how society constructs relationships and generates conflict.[2] In Indonesia, data from the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) and Monash Data & Democracy Research

[1] Mochamad Ziaul Haq and Hasbi Sen, "Transforming Hate into Compassion as an Islamic Nonviolent Thought of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi," *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama dan Sosial Budaya* 6, no. 1 (2021): 13–30.

[2] Soudeh Ghaffari, "Discourses of Celebrities on Instagram: Digital Femininity, Self-Representation and Hate Speech," in *Social Media Critical Discourse Studies* (Routledge, 2023), 43–60; Paul Röttger et al., "HateCheck: Functional Tests for Hate Speech Detection Models," *arXiv preprint arXiv:2012.15606* (2020).

Hub (MDDRH) during the 2024 regional election campaign revealed that 18.15% of 2,512 TikTok videos reviewed across five provinces contained hate speech—either in the content itself or in the comments.[3] The targets of hate varied widely, ranging from the Rohingya ethnic group in Aceh, foreign investment in North Maluku, to religious and gender-based groups in West Java and West Nusa Tenggara. In West Java, hate narratives targeting Islamic groups and post-2019 presidential election sentiments still dominate the digital space.[4]

This situation is further supported by research from Monash University and AJI, which recorded over 182,000 hate speech posts on social media during the 2024 general election campaign. The highest number of attacks targeted Jewish communities, people with disabilities, ethnic Chinese, LGBTQ individuals, and Christian and Catholic groups. X/Twitter emerged as the main platform for hate dissemination, followed by Facebook and Instagram. Most posts took the form of identity-based attacks, insults, and incitement. This trend illustrates how hatred has become algorithmically institutionalized, forming a structured conflict ecosystem in the digital sphere with real-world potential to trigger polarization and violence.[5]

Considering these developments, relying solely on political or legal approaches to address hatred proves insufficient. Hatred must be understood as a deeper phenomenon—one that involves a moral crisis, the failure of soul cultivation (*nafs*), and the absence of a robust ethical framework to navigate differences. Therefore, traditional Islamic philosophy, with its rich intellectual heritage on *ghadhab* (anger), *ʿaql* (reason), and *adab* (ethical conduct), offers a timely and relevant lens to trace the roots of hatred in contemporary society.

As the intensity of hatred continues to rise in both social and digital spaces, the academic literature on hate speech has branched into various directions. Yet, it still lacks strong integration between contemporary phenomena and the foundations of Islamic philosophy. The first body of literature includes psychological and sociological studies of hatred, primarily rooted in Western modern thought. Erich Fromm[6] characterizes hatred as a form of pathological aggression, while Sara Ahmed[7] explores how hatred attaches itself to social bodies through affective relations. Arie Kruglanski[8] frames hatred in the context of extremism as a quest for existential meaning. More

[3] Nabilah Muhamad, "Twitter, Medsos Dengan Ujaran Kebencian Terbanyak Pada Kampanye Pemilu 2024," *Databoks. Katadata. Co. Id.*, 2024, https://databoks.katadata.co.id/teknologi-telekomunikasi/statistik/16c6c45ef50c346/twitter-medsos-dengan-ujaran-kebencian-terbanyak-pada-kampanye-pemilu-2024.

[4] AJI Indonesia, "Kampanye Pemilu 2024, Ujaran Kebencian Terhadap Kelompok Minoritas Meningkat," *AJI Indonesia*, 2024, https://aji.or.id/informasi/kampanye-pemilu-2024-ujaran-kebencian-terhadap-kelompok-minoritas-meningkat.

[5] Antara, "Hoaks Dan Ujaran Kebencian Paling Banyak Ditemukan Di TikTok Selama Pilkada Jabar 2024," *Tempo.Co*, 2024, https://www.tempo.co/pemilu/hoaks-dan-ujaran-kebencian-paling-banyak-ditemukan-di-tiktok-selama-pilkada-jabar-2024--1181444.

[6] Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil* (New York: Harper \& Row, 1964).

[7] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

[8] Arie W Kruglanski et al., "The Psychology of Radicalization and Deradicalization: How Significance Quest Impacts Violent Extremism," *Political Psychology* 35, no. S1 (2014): 69–93.

recent developments include James and McBride's[9] introduction of critical hate studies as an alternative framework for understanding hate speech through structural and symbolic dimensions, and Schweppe and Perry's[10] "continuum of hate," which maps the spectrum of hate-related violence from micro-level to systemic forms. However, these approaches remain confined to secular analysis and fail to address the ethical or spiritual roots of hatred.

The second category refers to contemporary Islamic studies that focus on radicalism and intolerance as manifestations of political and ideological hatred. Scholars such as Esposito,[11] Soroush,[12] and Arkoun[13] offer critical insights into religious fanaticism, epistemological absolutism, and identity exclusion in modern Islam. Nevertheless, most of these works are descriptive in nature and do not deconstruct the moral-ethical structure of hatred from the standpoint of classical Islamic philosophy. In addition, the issue of hate speech in digital contexts has been explored in critical media studies—for example, Fotia[14] examines the transformation of hatred toward the "enemy" in modern history; Ghaffari[15] analyzes hate speech targeting female celebrities online; and Cover[16] investigates identity disruption and ethical breakdowns in digital violence. In journalism studies, Markov and Đorđević[17] document how journalists become targets of hate speech through systematic anti-media narratives that carry substantial risk.

These observations reveal a critical gap in current academic discourse: the absence of an integrated framework that connects contemporary hate phenomena with the moral, spiritual, and rational perspectives of traditional Islamic philosophy. This study seeks to fill that gap by offering a conceptual synthesis that bridges modern manifestations of hatred with classical Islamic ethical thought.

The primary objective of this research is to explore and formulate the roots of hatred within the framework of classical Islamic philosophy. By examining key concepts such as *nafs*, *ghadhab*, *ḥikmah*, and *tazkiyah*, this study aims to provide a philosophical lens that enriches our understanding of hatred as a multidimensional phenomenon. The goal is to construct an ethical-philosophical framework based on the Islamic intellectual tradition to analyze hatred not merely as an emotional response or social occurrence but as a moral problem rooted in the corruption

[9] Zoë James and Katie McBride, "Critical Hate Studies: A New Perspective," *International review of victimology* 28, no. 1 (2022): 92–108.

[10] Jennifer Schweppe and Barbara Perry, "A Continuum of Hate: Delimiting the Field of Hate Studies," *Crime, law and social change* 77, no. 5 (2022): 503–528.

[11] John L Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[12] Abdulkarim Soroush, *Reason, Freedom, and Democracy in Islam: Essential Writings of Abdulkarim Soroush*, ed. Mahmoud Sadri and Ahmad Sadri (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[13] Mohammed Arkoun, *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (London: Saqi Books, 2003).

[14] Laura Fotia, "On Hate and the Enemy, from the 20th Century to Today: A Global View," *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea*, no. 45, 1 (2021).

[15] Ghaffari, "Discourses of Celebrities on Instagram: Digital Femininity, Self-Representation and Hate Speech."

[16] Rob Cover, "Digital Hostility, Subjectivity and Ethics: Theorising the Disruption of Identity in Instances of Mass Online Abuse and Hate Speech," *Convergence* 29, no. 2 (2023): 308–321.

[17] Čedomir Markov and Ana Đorđević, "Becoming a Target: Journalists' Perspectives on Anti-Press Discourse and Experiences with Hate Speech," in *Journalism and Safety* (Routledge, 2024), 78–95.

of the soul and the failure of ethical education. This research aspires to bridge the epistemic gap between contemporary hate speech studies and the wisdom of classical Islamic philosophy, which remains underutilized in modern discourse.

This study proceeds from the argument that, within the lens of traditional Islamic philosophy, hatred arises from a disoriented soul (*nafs*) dominated by base desires (*shahwah*) and destructive anger (*ghadhab*), while the rational faculty (*'aql*)—the ethical guide—remains suppressed. When reason fails to regulate the soul, individuals lose their internal balance and become vulnerable to hatred that violates their human nature. In this framework, hatred is not merely a negative emotion but a spiritual failure that must be corrected through moral cultivation and the purification of the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*) grounded in *ḥikmah* (wisdom), as articulated by thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Miskawayh, and Al-Ghazali. Through this approach, hatred can be managed by strengthening the rational and ethical dimensions of the self, thereby preventing its escalation into verbal, social, and digital violence today.

B. Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach using a library research design combined with a historical-hermeneutic method.[18] The primary focus of this research is to explore and reconstruct the roots of hatred within the framework of classical Islamic philosophy. The unit of analysis includes fundamental concepts such as *ghadhab* (anger), *nafs* (the soul), *akhlak* (ethics), and *ḥikmah* (wisdom), which are deeply discussed in the works of classical Muslim philosophers. The primary data sources consist of classical texts such as *Ara' Ahl al-Madīna al-Fadīlah* by Al-Farabi, *Ihya' Ulum al-Dīn* and *Mizan al-'Amāl* by Al-Ghazali, and *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* by Ibn Miskawayh.

To collect the data, the researcher conducted an in-depth review of philosophical documents, systematically noting direct quotations, key terminologies, and the conceptual formulations of each thinker.[19] The study employed thematic analysis by identifying key concepts and tracing the conceptual relationships between ideas across the selected texts.[20] This analysis incorporated a hermeneutic approach by interpreting the historical-philosophical contexts in which the texts were produced and engaging with their philosophical meanings through critical dialogue with contemporary issues.

The goal of this research is to construct a contextual and relevant conceptual framework that explains the phenomenon of hatred in the era of globalization by drawing upon the intellectual legacy of traditional Islamic philosophy.

C. Result and Discussion

The Psychological and Spiritual Roots of Hatred in Islamic Philosophy

In the classical tradition of Islamic philosophy, Imam Al-Ghazali stands out as one of the key thinkers who deeply examined the structure of the human soul, including anger (*ghadhab*) and

[18] Lynn Silipigni Connaway and Marie L Radford, *Research Methods in Library and Information Science* (Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2021).

[19] Shanti Bhushan Mishra and Shashi Alok, *Handbook of Research Methodology* (Educreation publishing, 2022).

[20] Elaine Denny and Annalise Weckesser, "How to Do Qualitative Research? Qualitative Research Methods," *Bjog* 129, no. 7 (2022): 1166.

hatred. In *Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, he asserts that anger is an element created by God from fire and placed within the human heart as one of the soul's fundamental powers to preserve its existence. Al-Ghazali writes:

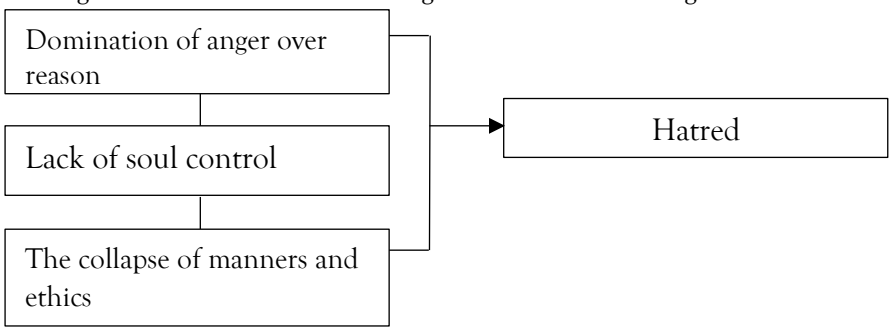
> "Know that anger is like a burning ember hidden in the heart, like embers under ashes." On the other hand, uncontrolled anger becomes the doorway to moral ruin: "Indeed, excessive anger, no longer restrained by reason, turns a person into a beast, devoid of the guidance of shari'a, acting blindly and irrationally".[21]

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reinforces this view in a hadith narrated by Muslim: *"The strong one is not the one who defeats others in wrestling, but the one who controls himself when angry"* (HR. Muslim). Al-Ghazali develops a typology of anger in three degrees: *at-tafrith* (the lack or suppression of anger), *al-i'tidal* (the balanced expression of anger), and *al-ifrath* (excessive, unrestrained anger). When the potential for anger loses the guidance of reason and wisdom, it transforms into destructive hatred. In this context, hatred is not a simple emotional reaction, but rather the result of spiritual disorientation and the corruption of the *nafs* (soul) that fail to be guided by reason and divine law.[22]

The findings from a close reading of Al-Ghazali's thought reveal that hatred in Islamic philosophy is not merely a psychological response to external events but rather a deep-seated symptom of a soul that has lost its internal balance. It stems from the domination of *ghadhab* unrestrained by reason (*'aql*) and disconnected from ethical orientation through *adab*. Hatred, therefore, is a spiritual disorder rooted in structural imbalance within the self—not simply a product of external social provocation. When individuals fail to manage their anger wisely, they not only pave the way for hatred but also risk plunging into broader moral and social collapse.

From an in-depth reading of *Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, at least three dominant patterns emerge in explaining the transformation of anger into hatred:

Figure 1. The Transformation of Anger into Hatred According to Al-Ghazali



Source: Research Findings, 2025.

Al-Ghazali's view suggests that the transformation of anger into hatred is a gradual, yet latent process rooted in an ungoverned soul. The first stage begins with the domination of *ghadhab* over reason. When the force of anger operates without rational and spiritual guidance,

[21] Imam al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulum Al-Din* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1992), 178–210.
[22] Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology* (OUP USA, 2009).

it exceeds proper bounds and becomes a destructive impulse. Al-Ghazali calls this state *al-ifrath*, a form of anger that has escaped its rightful proportions, in which reason can no longer serve as a guide and emotion becomes the ruler of the soul. In this condition, individuals easily fall into hatred because unchecked anger evolves into resentment and the desire to harm.

The second stage emerges when the soul loses its capacity for self-control. A soul that fails to undergo *tazkiyah* (purification) becomes fertile ground for negative emotions, including hatred. In such a state, people become reactive, hypersensitive, and easily triggered by worldly matters. This imbalance causes hatred to no longer function as a just response to injustice but instead reflects a soul filled with spiritual disease and moral disorientation. Hatred, therefore, is not merely an emotional expression but an indicator of internal ethical decay.

The third stage in this transformation is the collapse of *adab* (ethical conduct) and moral discipline in daily life. When anger is no longer subordinated to moral values and individuals lack a strong ethical framework, hatred grows unchecked, deviating from human dignity and virtue. In this spectrum, a person can no longer distinguish between righteous anger and impulses driven by ego. They lose the moral sensitivity to assess whether their emotional reactions are just or driven purely by selfish desire. Thus, according to Al-Ghazali, hatred is the result of anger not refined by reason, not purified by the soul, and not directed by ethical principles. As such, soul cultivation through *tazkiyat al-nafs* and moral education becomes the key to preventing anger from devolving into destructive hatred.[23]

This transformation model can be seen clearly in various cases of hate speech in Indonesia's digital space. One example involves a TikToker from Sampang, Madura, named Abdullah (a.k.a. Dullo). During a livestream, he reacted to negative comments from netizens and ended up expressing hate speech. In his statement to police investigators, he admitted, *"I couldn't hold back my emotions anymore. Since I started on TikTok in 2018, I've always held back my anger even when people insulted my mother with terrible words"*.[24] This confession illustrates how accumulated anger, left unmanaged and unfiltered by spiritual self-control, eventually erupts as hate speech. This case reflects the *al-ifrath* condition Al-Ghazali describes, in which *ghadhab* exceeds rational boundaries and transforms into verbal aggression.

Another relevant case involves Andi Pangerang Hasanuddin (APH), a civil servant researcher at BRIN, who directed hate speech at members of Muhammadiyah on social media. APH admitted he felt emotionally exhausted due to public debate over the Eid celebration date, and his post ended up sparking public outrage and contained threats of violence. In a press conference, the National Police's Criminal Investigation Agency stated, *"The individual admitted*

[23] al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulum Al-Din*, 230–235.

[24] Imam Wahyudiyanta, "Emosi Berujung Ujaran Kebencian Bikin TikToker Sampang Dijemput Polisi," *Detik.Com*, 2025, https://www.detik.com/jatim/berita/d-7784776/emosi-berujung-ujaran-kebencian-bikin-tiktoker-sampang-dijemput-polisi.

that he had reached an emotional breaking point. He became angry, and those words came out".[25] This is a concrete example of how *ghadhab* can exceed the limits of rationality when emotional fatigue erodes spiritual control. It aligns with Al-Ghazali's framework, in which unchecked anger that is not governed by *adab* and reason gives rise to hate speech, leading to social disintegration.

These two cases demonstrate that Al-Ghazali's classical insights remain relevant and applicable to contemporary contexts. Hate expressed through social media is not merely a technological or legal problem—it reflects a deeper crisis of spiritual decay (*nafs*) and the weakening of ethical values. Modern society, particularly in fast-paced and emotionally reactive digital spaces, becomes fertile ground for hatred to manifest. As a result, addressing hatred cannot rely solely on legal enforcement—it must involve reconstructing public ethics and fostering spiritual education grounded in *tazkiyat al-nafs*.

These findings support the conclusion that classical Islamic philosophy views hatred as a moral and spiritual pathology. Hatred is not a neutral response but a sign of a corrupted soul. When the *nafs* is not restrained by reason and not guided by wisdom (*ḥikmah*), *ghadhab*, a force meant to protect the self, instead mutates into destructive hatred. Therefore, overcoming hatred requires more than social education—it demands spiritual transformation, the strengthening of ethical reason, and the restoration of *adab* as a guiding orientation for communal life. Al-Ghazali himself affirms that "knowledge and righteous action are the only remedies that can extinguish anger once it ignites in the heart".[26] Thus, Islamic philosophy offers a powerful foundation for understanding that the true remedy for hatred begins with the transformation of the inner self.

The Role of Reason and Wisdom in Controlling Hatred

In classical Islamic philosophy, reason (*'aql*) functions not merely as a cognitive tool but as the leader of the soul, bearing moral and ethical responsibility. Al-Farabi structured human reason into three main levels: potential intellect (*al-'aql al-hayūlī*), actual intellect (*al-'aql bi al-fi'l*), and acquired intellect (*al-'aql al-mustafād*). Each level represents the human capacity to receive, perfect, and integrate knowledge into ethical action. For Al-Farabi, reason occupies the highest rank within the human constitution, as it reflects the emanation of the Active Intellect—the ultimate source of truth and revelation. As he wrote, *"When reason and the heart are united, man discovers the essence of his being".*[27] With this, Al-Farabi emphasized the need for harmony between rationality and emotion as the foundation for a meaningful and spiritually stable life.[28]

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[25] Norbertus Arya Dwiangga Martiar and Yosepha Debrina Ratih Pusparisa, "Pelajaran Dari Kasus Ujaran Kebencian APH, Polri Ingatkan Kehati-Hatian Manfaatkan Ruang Di Medsos," *Kompas.Id*, 2023, https://www.kompas.id/baca/polhuk/2023/05/01/tersangka-ujaran-kebencian-aph-mengaku-kesal-diskusi-berkepanjangan.

[26] al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulum Al-Din*, 178.

[27] Abi Nasr Al-Farabi, *Ara Ahli Al Madinah Al Fadhilah* (Kairo: Maktabah wa mathba'ah Muhammad Shabah wa awladuh, 1964), 80.

[28] Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, *Kitab Permulaan Pendapat Penduduk Kota Kebajikan* (Sumedang: Bron&Marim: 2023), 58.

Al-Farabi's model of the soul is not merely theoretical, it is also practical.[29] Reason must lead the various dimensions of the *nafs*, preventing them from being dominated by base desires or anger (*ghadhab*). He compared the relationship between human reason and the Active Intellect to that between the eye and the sun: *"Just as the eye sees by receiving light from the sun, so too does the intellect understand by receiving illumination from the Active Intellect".*[30] With enlightened reason connected to wisdom (*ḥikmah*), individuals can manage anger and prevent it from transforming into hatred. Al-Farabi believed that this integration of reason and emotion is reinforced through sustained moral and spiritual education. For him, education should not only train the intellect to think critically but also develop character and emotional regulation. Thus, we cannot prevent hatred through emotional suppression alone—we must guide the soul through reason and nurture wisdom to maintain inner balance amid social tension.

Ibn Miskawayh's perspective aligns with this view. He emphasized that good character arises from a well-balanced soul. He categorized the soul into three components: *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah* (the rational soul), *al-nafs al-sabuʿiyyah* (the irascible soul), and *al-nafs al-bahīmiyyah* (the appetitive soul). When the rational soul successfully governs the other two, noble traits such as patience, justice, and compassion emerge. However, if balance fails, the soul succumbs to injustice and hatred. Miskawayh stated, *"Character is a stable condition of the soul from which actions proceed without deliberation or consideration".*[31] He stressed the importance of *riyāḍatu al-nafs*—the continuous training of the soul to cultivate virtue. For him, ethical purification was not only a moral aim but also the path to *al-saʿādah al-quṣwā*—true happiness, untainted by hatred.

From both thinkers, we can formulate a conceptual framework that outlines three key principles for managing hatred: First, reason must act as a rational and steady guide in moments of emotional provocation. Second, ethics must function as the soul's purification tool, cultivating patience and tolerance. Third, moral education should serve as a long-term strategy to build inclusive and virtuous character. These elements converge in the broader philosophical project of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, or the purification of the soul. In this framework, overcoming hatred requires more than legal prohibition or social censure—it demands a spiritual and rational transformation that reaches the deepest structure of the human self.

This fragility of reason in regulating emotional impulses becomes evident in several hate speech cases in Indonesia. One notable case involved a TikToker from Sampang, Madura, who was arrested for hate speech during a live stream. He admitted that he could no longer hold back his anger after receiving repeated insults, particularly those targeting his mother. *"I just couldn't control my emotions anymore. Even though people insulted my mother, I used to keep quiet. But this time, I was truly angry,"* he said in a public apology.[32] This case illustrates how the failure of reason

[29] Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, *Kitab Permulaan Pendapat Penduduk Kota Kebajikan* (Sumedang: Bron&Marim: 2023), 79.

[30] Abi Nasr Al-Farabi, *Risālah Fī Al-'Aql* (Beirut: Dar al-Machreq, 1983), 68.

[31] Ahmad ibn Muhammad Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb Al-Akhlāq* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1966), 15.

[32] Wahyudiyanta, "Emosi Berujung Ujaran Kebencian Bikin TikToker Sampang Dijemput Polisi."

to control *ghadhab* leads to the eruption of emotions that could otherwise have been tempered—ultimately resulting in destructive hate speech.

A more complex case involves Andi Pangerang Hasanuddin (APH), a civil servant at BRIN, who posted religiously offensive hate speech targeting members of Muhammadiyah during an online debate about the timing of Eid celebrations. APH later explained that he wrote the offensive remarks while feeling *"emotionally drained and frustrated by the never-ending discussion"*.[33] His statement highlights how emotional fatigue, and unregulated anger can overwhelm reason, bypass wisdom, and manifest as hate speech with significant public consequences. APH himself admitted to feeling fear after realizing the scale of collective outrage provoked by his words.

These cases reinforce the conclusion that when reason fails to guide *ghadhab* and provide ethical judgment, hatred becomes inevitable. In this context, classical Islamic philosophy remains deeply relevant. The Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) has emphasized that *"hate speech is not a form of free expression, because true freedom is built upon reason and sound judgment"*.[34] This means that both digital and social spaces can only be healthy environments when governed by reason and ethics—not impulsive rage or unchecked emotional reactions.

Therefore, classical Islamic philosophy teaches that hatred is not a disorder to be suppressed through punitive means alone—it must be addressed through inner reconstruction guided by reason and wisdom. Reason is not simply a tool for thinking; it is the instrument for regulating and balancing emotion. Wisdom is not merely cognitive intelligence; it reflects spiritual maturity. The path to eradicating hatred, then, is the path to existential maturity—where reason, heart, and ethical action harmonize to form authentic humanity.

The Relevance of Islamic Ethical Philosophy in the Context of Globalization

In today's global landscape, society faces a profound ethical crisis, marked by increasing identity polarization, moral degradation, and the widespread proliferation of hate speech.[35] This crisis worsens as unfiltered information flows rapidly through digital media, allowing hatred to spread both instantly and systematically.[36] Komnas HAM Commissioner Amiruddin stated firmly, "Hate

[33] Martiar and Pusparisa, "Pelajaran Dari Kasus Ujaran Kebencian APH, Polri Ingatkan Kehati-Hatian Manfaatkan Ruang Di Medsos."

[34] Lisye Sri Rahayu, "Komnas HAM: Ujaran Kebencian Bukan Kebebasan Berpendapat," *Detik.Com*, 2019, https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4659371/komnas-ham-ujaran-kebencian-bukan-kebebasan-berpendapat.

[35] Abdallah Alsaad, Abdallah Taamneh, and Mohamad Noor Al-Jedaiah, "Does Social Media Increase Racist Behavior? An Examination of Confirmation Bias Theory," *Technology in Society* 55 (2018): 41–46, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2018.06.002; Dominik Hangartner et al., "Empathy-Based Counterspeech Can Reduce Racist Hate Speech in a Social Media Field Experiment," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 50 (2021): e2116310118; Iswandi Syahputra et al., "Escaping Social Media: The End of Netizen's Political Polarization between Islamists and Nationalists in Indonesia?," *Media Asia* 51, no. 1 (2024): 62–80.

[36] Y Muliono, "Hoax Classification in Imbalanced Datasets Based on Indonesian News Title Using RoBERTa," *2022 3rd International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Data Sciences: Championing Innovations in Artificial*

speech is hate speech—it is not freedom of expression. True freedom of expression must be built on rational thinking" (Rahayu, 2019). His statement underscores the stark gap between the ideal of free speech and the destructive practice of hate speech in societies that lack a strong moral foundation.

Within the framework of traditional Islamic philosophy, *tazkiyatun nafs*—the purification of the soul—serves as the ethical foundation for shaping a spiritually and rationally sound individual. This concept asserts that human beings must not only pursue outward piety but also cleanse their inner selves from destructive traits such as envy, anger, and hatred. Al-Ghazali considered hatred a manifestation of a spiritually untrained soul dominated by *ghadhab* (anger) and *shahwah* (desire). In *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, he emphasized that purifying the soul through knowledge and righteous action is the way to extinguish the flames of hatred burning within the human heart.[37]

A pattern of value nihilism increasingly characterizes modern society. During truth relativism and information fragmentation, many individuals lose their moral compass.[38] They tend to rely on emotion rather than reason in responding to conflict, making anger and hatred more immediate than empathy and rationality.[39] For instance, the case of Abdullah, a TikToker from Sampang arrested for hate speech during a live session illustrates this problem. *"I couldn't hold back my emotions anymore. Since joining TikTok in 2018, I've always restrained my anger,"* he told the police during questioning.[40]

Another case involves hate speech by BRIN researcher Andi Pangerang Hasanuddin (APH), who expressed hate toward members of Muhammadiyah due to exhaustion and emotional frustration in a debate over the timing of Eid. His statement, which included a death threat against a religious group, drew public outrage. In his testimony to the Indonesian Police's Criminal Investigation Department, APH admitted, *"I reached my breaking point" and "got emotional because the discussion wouldn't end"*.[41] These two cases show how a lack of inner control and moral grounding renders individuals incapable of distinguishing between criticism and hate speech.[42]

Intelligence and Data Sciences for Sustainable Future, AiDAS 2022 - Proceedings, 2022, https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus_id/85141775774.

[37] al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulum Al-Din*.

[38] Georgios Karakasis and Jonathan Lavilla de Lera, "Fight for Nothing: Fight Club and Nihilism in Capitalist Society," *Images. The International Journal of European Film, Performing Arts and Audiovisual Communication* 31, no. 40 (2022): 149–160.

[39] Jon Stewart, *A History of Nihilism in the Nineteenth Century: Confrontations with Nothingness* (Cambridge University Press, 2023).

[40] Wahyudiyanta, "Emosi Berujung Ujaran Kebencian Bikin TikToker Sampang Dijemput Polisi."

[41] Andri Moewashi Idharoel Haq and Mochamad Ziaulhaq, "Studi Kebencian: Analisis Komparasi Pemikiran Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1877-1960) Dan K. H. Ahmad Dahlan (1868-1923)," *MELINTAS* 35, no. 3 (March 2021): 258–278.

[42] Katie Brennan, "The Nihilism of the Oppressed: Hedwig Dohm's Feminist Critique of Nietzschean Nihilism," *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 52, no. 2 (2021): 209–233.

These cases demonstrate that hatred in the digital age is not merely an issue of emotional expression but a symptom of spiritual crisis and the failure of moral education. Classical Islamic philosophy offers an alternative approach through *tazkiyatun nafs* and ethical training as paths to inner balance.

Table 1. Patterns of Global Moral Crisis and the Relevance of Traditional Islamic Ethics

Social Pattern	Root Cause	Consequences	Islamic Philosophical Solution
Value Nihilism	Information fragmentation, identity crisis	Moral disorientation	Strengthening faith and reason through *tazkiyatun nafs*
Emotional Radicalization	Inability to manage conflict	Extreme hate expression	Moral education based on *ḥikmah* and patience
Ethical Disintegration	Digital polarization, egoism	Hate speech, verbal violence	Restoration of *adab* and soul training (*riyāḍah*)

Source: Research Findings, 2025.

The table above affirms that the roots of hatred in global society often stem from the absence of a firm ethical and spiritual foundation. In this context, moral education rooted in Islamic philosophy carries deep relevance. Islamic ethics is not only normative—it is performative. It demands awareness, soul training, and the strengthening of reason as tools for objectively discerning right from wrong.[43]

Character education and soul purification are not merely individual moral projects; they are collective strategies for confronting the challenges of globalization.[44] If *tazkiyatun nafs* becomes part of both formal and informal education, societies will develop greater resilience against digital provocation and social polarization. Concepts such as *ṣabr* (patience), *tawāḍuʿ* (humility), and *ḥusn al-ẓann* (positive thinking), which are central to classical Islamic ethics, can serve as protective boundaries against hatred that threatens social harmony.

The deeper interpretation of these findings is that classical Islamic philosophy, with its rich discourse on the inner dimensions of the human being, provides an alternative epistemology for addressing the global hatred crisis. It not only explains the phenomenon but also offers a solution grounded in spiritual and rational transformation. In a world increasingly ruled by impulsive opinion and instinct, this approach provides a much-needed balance through enlightened reason and a purified soul. Therefore, the relevance of Islamic philosophy lies not merely in its historical legacy but in its contemporary potential to offer solutions to the moral dilemmas of our time.

This study finds that in classical Islamic philosophy, hatred cannot be understood merely as an emotional outburst but must be seen as a moral and spiritual symptom rooted in the corruption of the soul and existential disorientation. Al-Ghazali, Al-Farabi, and Ibn Miskawayh

[43] N Taja, "Character Education in the Pandemic Era: A Religious Ethical Learning Model through Islamic Education," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 20, no. 11 (2021): 132–153, https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus_id/85121036916.

[44] A Sulhan, "Emancipating Islamic Education Management through Good-Quality Santri Character Cultures: Insights from Indonesia," *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research* 2023, no. 103 (2023): 197–214, https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus_id/85165946475.

frame hatred because of the domination of *nafs* (base desires), the weakening of rational control, and the loss of *adab* (ethical discipline) as a framework for social relationships. Hatred emerges when reason no longer serves as a guide and wisdom (*ḥikmah*) is excluded from decision-making.

Al-Ghazali's perspective reveals that hatred results from unchecked *ghadhab* (anger) unfiltered by reason and divine law. While anger may be a natural and initial emotional response, it can easily morph into destructive hatred if not directed through *tazkiyat al-nafs* (soul purification). Al-Farabi stresses the necessity of integrating reason and emotion to achieve soul balance. When reason fails to function as a moral compass, emotional impulses exceed their limits and manifest as hateful speech or actions. Ibn Miskawayh further adds that hatred stems from an untrained soul—making *riyāḍatu al-nafs* (soul discipline) essential for cultivating virtuous character and preventing the growth of hatred within the self.[45]

The study's findings also show that hatred emerges from various dimensions of social life. On a relational level, the data reveal that *"individuals who experience conflict, engage in negative interactions, compete unethically, and rush to judgment often generate hatred."* Utsman Najati reinforces this by stating that hatred is the opposite of love, arising when something is perceived as harmful or painful.[46] These insights demonstrate that hatred is both a psychological and ethical phenomenon, shaped by perceived threats to personal or group identity.

Furthermore, the research highlights how public spaces—ideally neutral and inclusive—often become symbolic battlegrounds that fuel identity conflict. The study notes that "when a specific structure is imposed upon the public sphere, a clash of wills inevitably follows," showing that hatred-driven conflict stems not merely from difference but from an ethical failure to embrace pluralism. This is evident in various digital incidents, such as the hate speech cases involving a TikToker from Sampang and BRIN researcher APH, both of whom illustrate how ego-driven emotion, detached from reason and morality, often results in hatred.

A comparative look at contemporary Western philosophy shows that hate speech is not only a moral concern in classical Islamic thought but also a key issue in modern philosophical discourse. Alexander Brown argues that hate speech should not be narrowly understood as merely emotional expression but rather as a category of heterogeneous social expression characterized by "family resemblances" across its various forms.[47] This view is strengthened by speech act theory, which explains hate speech as a form of subordinating action that reinforces structural injustice and hierarchical relations in society.[48] In this light, hate speech is not merely an individual or emotional act—it serves as an instrument of power within social dynamics.

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[45] Ibn Miskawaih, *Menuju Kesempurnaan Akhlak: Buku Daras Pertama tentang Filsafat Etika,* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), 56.

[46] Muhammad Utsman Najati, *The Ultimate Psychology: Psikologi Sempurna Ala Nabi SAW* (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 2008).

[47] Alexander Brown, *Hate Speech Law: A Philosophical Examination* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[48] A Di Rosa, "Performative Hate Speech Acts: Perlocutionary and Illocutionary Understandings in International Human Rights Law," *Age of Human Rights Journal* (2019),

The philosophical debate also reflects a tension between freedom of expression and civic responsibility. Mendiola[49] for instance, highlights the importance of the *duty of civility* in John Rawls' theory of public reason, arguing that public expression must adhere to standards of citizenship and should not violate the dignity of others. Within this framework, hate speech constitutes a breach of social responsibility, not a legitimate exercise of free speech. This aligns with the statement from Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), which affirms, *"Hate speech is hate speech—it is not freedom of expression. Real freedom is built on rational thinking"*.[50] The position reflects the view that true freedom must align with reason and human dignity.

Interestingly, some philosophical approaches propose preventive strategies through education. Barrientos Rastrojo,[51] in his research on Philosophy for Children, suggests that introducing philosophy from an early age serves as an ethical vaccine against hate speech, as it nurtures critical reasoning, empathy, and communal awareness. This approach resonates with Islamic philosophy, which emphasizes the early development of reason and *adab* through concepts such as *riyāḍatu al-nafs* and *tazkiyatun nafs*. Despite historical and ontological differences, both classical Islamic and contemporary Western philosophies converge on one point: hatred must be addressed through education and inner transformation, not merely legal sanctions.

By aligning classical Islamic and modern philosophical perspectives, this discussion reveals that the roots of hatred lie not only in individual psychology or fleeting emotions but in deeper epistemic, structural, and spiritual failures. This underscores the need for ethical and philosophical education that goes beyond rules about what may or may not be said—it must also cultivate an understanding of why speech should be guided by reason, wisdom, and empathy for others.

Therefore, the findings demonstrate that classical Islamic thought remains profoundly relevant in the modern world. In fact, the current spiritual crisis and social fragmentation call for philosophical approaches that address the core of human existence: who we are, how we live with others, and what moral grounds we draw upon in navigating differences. Islamic philosophy provides a conceptual framework to address these questions by emphasizing the unity of reason, heart, and action and by nurturing respect for the existence of others.

This reflection points to an urgent need to reform moral and spiritual education. It is no longer sufficient for education to merely develop technical and cognitive skills—it must also

https://www.scopus.com/record/display.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85074151020; C Bianchi, "Asymmetrical Conversations," *Grazer Philosophische Studien* (2019), https://www.scopus.com/record/display.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85072776603.

[49] J C M Mendiola, "A Limit to Hate Speech from the Rawlsian Conception of Public Reason: A Duty of Civility for Today's Societies," *Isegoria* (2022), https://www.scopus.com/record/display.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85148016455.

[50] Rahayu, "Komnas HAM: Ujaran Kebencian Bukan Kebebasan Berpendapat."

[51] J Barrientos Rastrojo, "Philosophy for Children and Teenagers as Prevention and Treatment of Hate Speech," *Isegoria* (2022), https://www.scopus.com/record/display.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85147986239.

shape inclusive, tolerant, and wise character. Concepts like *tazkiyatun nafs* (soul purification), *riyāḍatu al-nafs* (inner training), and *ḥikmah* (wisdom) must become integral parts of the educational curriculum from an early age. Unchecked hatred not only harms individuals but threatens to unravel the very fabric of pluralistic social life.

The policy implication of this study is the need to strengthen ethics curricula grounded in *adab* and *ḥikmah*, both in formal institutions like schools and universities and in informal spaces such as communities, families, and digital platforms. Government and educational institutions must integrate transformative Islamic spirituality into character education.[52] Teaching tolerance as mere slogans is not enough—what's needed is a deep cultivation of the inner self so that individuals can regulate anger (*ghadhab*), restrain desires (*shahwah*), and nurture compassion for others.

Overall, this discussion reinforces the position that classical Islamic philosophy holds rich epistemic and ethical resources for responding to the crisis of hatred in the global era. The way out of hatred does not lie in legal repression alone but in spiritual reconstruction rooted in reason, wisdom, and the awareness that to live together, we must become human beings not only intellectually sharp but also morally wise.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the roots of hatred in traditional Islamic philosophy are not merely emotional outbursts or psychological issues, but moral and spiritual symptoms rooted in the disorientation of the soul, the weakening of rational control, and the absence of ethical and *adab*-based (moral discipline) cultivation. Through the examination of the thoughts of Al-Ghazali, Al-Farabi, and Ibn Miskawayh, the study finds that hatred emerges from the dominance of *ghadhab* (destructive anger) and *nafs* (desire), which remain unchecked by reason (*ʿaql*) and unguided by wisdom (*ḥikmah*). In this context, hatred not only harms the individual internally but also damages the social structure through its expression in forms such as hate speech in digital spaces. All the philosophers meet in one point: the issue within human lays on axis between spiritual ascend with the intelect and in turn will make whole aspect of human is also in the apex of humanity. Meanwhile all other things are mere accidents that follow the substance.

By linking classical philosophy with contemporary social phenomena, this research offers an alternative perspective on hate speech studies, which have largely been dominated by legal and secular psychological approaches. It also enriches global ethical discourse by emphasizing the critical role of spiritual education—such as *tazkiyatun nafs* (soul purification) and *riyāḍatu al-nafs* (moral discipline)—in shaping an inclusive and dignified society.

The limitations of this study lie in its conceptual-philosophical scope, which does not yet include broader empirical approaches, such as fieldwork or surveys exploring public perceptions of hate speech. Additionally, the study focuses solely on three major classical Islamic

[52] E Heinze, *Criminalising Hate Speech: A Comparative Study*, 2024, https://www.scopus.com/record/display.uri?eid=2-s2.0-105002519648.

philosophers. Future research could explore the contributions of other figures within the Islamic tradition and broaden the global, interreligious, and intercultural context to develop more inclusive ethical and spiritual strategies for addressing the crisis of hatred.

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