

## **Purity of the Heart from Worldly Possessions as an Implementation of Zuhud in the View of Al-Ghazali**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to critically analyse the behaviour of zuhud, especially in the view of Imam al-Ghazali. This research uses a qualitative method using a literature study approach. The results of research and discussion show that zuhud according to imam al-Ghazali is an act that prioritises the hereafter over the world and people who always leave the world's possessions. It does not mean the absence of wealth in the world, but the purity of the heart from the treasures of the world itself. This research concludes that based on the study of Sufism, zuhud is the level or maqomat of an effort to get closer to Allah. This study also discusses the views of the Qur'an and hadith regarding the attitude and behaviour of zuhud. In essence, zuhud is an inner condition that is not polluted by the ambition of worldly possessions.

**Keywords:** Al-Ghazali; Worldly; Treasure; Zuhud

### **Introduction**

Modern society today is interpreted as a society that tends to be secular. Relationships between members of society are no longer based on tradition and brotherhood. People feel free from the control of religion and ideology, while having a sense of the sacred to the world, placing human life in a historical context, and displaying noble values (Handayani, 2019). However, according to imam al-ghazali in the book *Ihya Ulumuddin* argues that If you realise this, then know that distancing yourself from other than Allah SWT and seeking His pleasure is the highest degree. You can achieve this by knowing the height of the degree. So do not take food, clothing, marriage, and whatever you need except to live. This is true zuhudan (Zakaria, 2016). Therefore, the study of zuhud needs to be discussed and studied in depth.

The results of previous research related to zuhud in the perspective of Imam al-Ghazali have been carried out by a number of researchers. Among other things, the latest research has been conducted by Ahmad, Zaini Mahmud (2020), *"The Concept of Zuhud in Islamic Economic Management*

*According to Imam al-Ghazali's View in Kitab Ihya Ulumuddin*”, Postgraduate Programme of IAIN Palangka Raya. This researcher has attempted to examine the concept of zuhud in Islamic economic management according to the views of Imam al-Ghazali in the book of *ihya ulumuddin*. The results of this study indicate that: 1) The concept of zuhud in general is an attitude of distancing oneself from everything related to the world. A zuhud person should not have his heart shackled or his heart not bound by worldly things and not make it a goal. It is only a means to achieve a degree of piety which is a provision for the hereafter. 2) The concept of zuhud according to Imam Al-Ghazali in Islamic economic management in the book of *ihya ulumuddin* is the position of those who take the path of the hereafter and are not interested in worldly nature but are more interested in the interests of the hereafter. Imam Al-Ghazali stated that zuhud is not forbidding the halal or wasting wealth, but zuhud is that you trust more in what is in the hands of Allah than what is in your hands. The essence of zuhud is to keep away from worldly nature and turn away from it (Mahmud, 2020).

The results of previous research and current research have both similarities and differences. Previous research and current research both examine zuhud in the view of Imam al-Ghazali. The difference is that previous research discussed the concept of zuhud according to Imam al-Ghazali in Islamic economic thought in the book of *Ihya Ulumuddin*, while current research discusses zuhud in general in the perspective of Imam al-Ghazali.

The word zuhud comes from the word *zahada*, which means *raqab'anshay' wa tarakahu*, which means not being interested in something and leaving it behind. *Zahada fi aldunya*, means to remove oneself from the world. A person is called a *zahid*, *zuhhad*, or *zahidun*, when he or she engages in zuhud activities. *Zuhdan* is a plural form that means small or little. Sulaiman al-Darani, explains that the term zuhud means avoiding everything that can keep us away from Allah (Nasution, 2019). Allah has explained in one of His words (surah al-Syura: 20):

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ آءِآخِرَةٍ نَزَدْنَا لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ آءِآخِرَةٍ نَزَدْنَا نُوْتَهُ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي آءِآخِرَةٍ مِنْ نَصِيْبٍ

“Whoever desires the gain of the Hereafter, We will increase it for him, and whoever desires the gain of the world, We will give him a portion of the gain of the world, and he will have no share in the Hereafter”.

There are many more words of Allah in the Qur'an that explain that one must have a zuhud attitude towards this world, and consider the life of this world with all its pleasures and beauty as mere bait for a more eternal afterlife. According to many narrations, the Prophet Muhammad SAW

always lived simply and was *zuhud* towards the world. In one narration, it is mentioned that the Prophet lived in a small, simple thatched hut with his wives. Each room was separated by plane tree trunks glued together with mud (Hafiun, 2017).

According to Imam al-Ghazali, many people think that *zuhud* is a person who only abandons worldly possessions. But this is not the case. Although *zuhudan* is related to wealth, it is also related to rank and authority. *Zuhud* is related to inner feelings (Fauzi & Utara, 2024).

According to al-Junaidi al-Baghdadi (W 289 AH), Sufism is the process of cleansing the heart of human traits (Bashariyah), controlling lust, making room for spiritual traits, clinging to true knowledge, practising things that are more important based on one's own immortality, giving advice to others, keeping promises seriously to Allah SWT, following the sharia teaching. Based on the explanation above, this research attempts to compile a research formula, namely the formulation, questions and research objectives. The main problem or problem formulation of this research is that there is *zuhud* in the perspective of Imam al-Ghazali. In line with the main problem, the formulation of the research problem, the question of this research is how Imam al-Ghazali's perspective or point of view on *zuhud*. This research aims to discuss about *zuhud* according to Imam al-Ghazali and the prophet Muhammad SAW (Khoiruddin, 2016).

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### **Research methods**

This research is a qualitative research based on literature review. The research phase was conducted through the collection of primary and secondary literature. This research classifies data based on the formulation of the research (Darmalaksana, 2020). The primary data of this research is the book *Ihya Ulumuddin* by Imam al-Ghazali. Secondary data used as reinforcement and complementary in the form of works and theories that discuss primary sources, then the Qur'an, hadith, fiqh books, tafsir, and the thoughts of experts who discuss *zuhud* from the perspective of Imam al-Ghazali (Mahmud, 2020).

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Definition of Zuhud

Scholars define zuhud differently. A zuhud person does not rejoice at the abundance of his wealth, nor does he grieve at the loss of his wealth. According to the narrative of Zunun al-Misri quoted by Amir al-Najjar, a zuhud is a person who is spiritually zuhud because he leaves mortal pleasures in order to achieve eternal pleasures. The definition of zuhud according to Zunnun al-Misri was continued by Anas Ismail Abu Daud. Zuhud means giving up the pleasures of the world and seeking the pleasures of the hereafter (*tarku raahat ad-dunya thaliban li raahat al-akhirat*).

Imam al-Ghazali mentions in the book of *ihya ulumuddin* that zuhud is about a person's dislike of the world because he turns away from the hereafter, or he turns to other than Allah. People who leave stones, earth, and the like cannot be called zuhud. In fact, the one who is called a zuhud person is the one who abandons dirhams and dinars, because stones and earth are not in the realm of things that are favoured (Imam al-Ghazali, 2019).

In addition, Imam al-Ghazali also defines zuhud as an attitude that aims to reduce attachment to the world and avoid it with full awareness. The attitude of zuhud towards the world is to make the world a path to the Creator (Pahlevi, 2022).

According to Imam al-Ghazali, the perfect life of zuhud is a life of zuhud within zuhud. In other words, he does not think too much about his life as a zuhud. Whoever leaves this life thinking that he has left something, so does he praise the world. For one who has the eyes of the heart, the world and possessions are meaningless. In terms of reasons, abstinence can be divided into three stages: 1). The motive for zuhud is fear of hellfire (khauf). This is the abstinence of the fearful (al-Khaifun). 2). The motive for zuhud is the love of the pleasures of the hereafter in the paradise promised by Allah SWT which is higher than the first. This is the zuhud of those who have hope (al-Rajun). Prayers based on hope (al-Raja') are better than prayers based on fear (al-Khauf). For the hope of love (mahabbah). These three are great motivators for those who want to cultivate penance. Hence, the above points are to avoid paying attention to other than Allah, to purify oneself from other than Allah, and to humble oneself to other than Allah (Alghifari et al., 2022).

## 2. Zuhud in the Qur'an and Hadith

Allah says, in the Qur'an Surah al-Qhashash: 77

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

“And seek in that which Allah has bestowed upon you (the happiness) of the Hereafter, and forget not your share of the pleasures of this world, and do unto others as Allah has done unto you, and do not cause corruption in the earth, for Allah loves not those who cause corruption.” (Q.S al-Qashash [28]: 77)

This verse explains that when we have wealth, we are encouraged to be zuhud. Because zuhud does not mean that the person is poor or rich, but the task of zuhud is to bring a person closer to Allah even though he is wealthy. Goodness can be obtained in two places: in this world and in the Hereafter. Then Allah says that we should not forget our happiness in this world because it only comes from Allah.

Sayyid Qutub, in his book Tafsir, says, “This ruling reflects God's upright Manhaj, the human heart, and the balance of wealth that binds people. “It states in outline the obligatory attitude. However, this does not prevent them from acquiring some wealth in this life. Wealth is also a gift from God, so do good when you use it, do good when you utilise it, do good to those around you, and do good with gratitude.” (Abdul Muqit, 2020). Allah says in the Qur'an, Surah al-Hadid: 20

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ وَّرِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهَيِّجُ فَتْرَتَهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ ۗ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ ٢٠

“Know that the life of this world is but play, and carelessness, and adornment, and boasting among yourselves, and vying for wealth and children. (It is like the rain whose crops amaze the farmers, then they dry up and you see them turn yellow, then they are destroyed. In the Hereafter there is a severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and His pleasure. The life of the world (for those who are careless) is but a deceptive pleasure.” (Qs. al-Hadid:20).

According to Hasbi Shiddiqiey in his tafsir al-Nur, a Muslim should not spend his life for temporary pleasures. For the disbelievers, the world is considered an ornament and valuable. This world is full of deceptions, which can bring people who are concerned with the world to hell. what is meant by the world where people are too busy with their worldly affairs so

that they forget about the affairs of the hereafter. A good world is a bridge to the hereafter. One should use the world to gain rewards in the hereafter.

As shown by the mufasir in interpreting verse 20 of surah al-Hadid, many people are deceived by this world. In other words, people tend to focus on materialistic things, making them forget their real goal, which is the hereafter. As such, the favours that Allah bestows upon people should help them earn Allah's pleasure, not the other way around. In addition, this verse emphasises the importance of having the trait of wara' in a person, which means avoiding things that are unclear as to their status as halal or haram for fear of their haramness. Because there are many people who are obsessed with something that is materialistic (Ridho & Fatcholi, 2021).

Hadith narrated by Ibn Majah from Abu 'Ubaydah b. Abi al-Safardari from Sihab b. "Ubbad from Khalid b. " Amr al-Qurasi from Sufyan al-Tsawri from Abu Hazim from Abu al-'Abbas Sahl b. Sa'd al-Sa'idi reported that a man came to the Messenger of Allah and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, show me a deed that if I do it, Allah and the people will love me!', and he replied,

أَزْهَدُ فِي الدُّنْيَا يُحِبُّكَ اللَّهُ، وَأَزْهَدُ فِيمَا عِنْدَ النَّاسِ يُحِبُّكَ النَّاسُ

"Zuhud towards the world does not mean forbidding halal things or wasting wealth, but feeling that the heart is more attached to what is in the sight of Allah than to the wealth that is owned, and hoping more for the reward of the calamity that meets, rather than the calamity itself is not there. (Saad, 2006).

### 3. The Virtue of Being Zuhud

According to Imam al-Ghazali, the essence of zuhud is an inner condition that is not polluted by the ambition of worldly possessions. This was raised by Imam Al-Ghazali when recounting the zuhud of the great Islamic scholar Imam Malik ra who was wealthy and generous. Imam Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) was a zuhud person in whom worldly possessions did not enter his heart and mind. While he was a great scholar who was wealthy.

وليس الزهد فقد المال وإنما الزهد فراغ القلب عنه ولقد كان سليمان عليه السلام في ملكه من الزهد

It means, 'Zuhud does not mean the absence of worldly possessions. Zuhud is the purity of the heart from worldly possessions. The Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) himself, in the midst of his glittering power, was a zuhud person,"

Zuhud has three degrees. The first level is that he is zuhud in the world and he longs for it. His heart is inclined towards the world. His lusts turn to the world but he tries hard to prevent it. This level of zuhud is also called the pre-zuhud stage, at this stage humans are usually more inclined to worldly things, but continue to strive to achieve ma'rifatullah and

eliminate their worldly desires (Dewi, 2021). The second level is the one who renounces the world easily, because he despises it by associating it with what he hopes for. Then the third level is the highest level. This is the degree of a person who cannot see his Duhud. He cannot see that he has given up something because this world has no value. So he is like the one who leaves the pottery and takes the pearl (Fauzi & Utara, 2024).

Allah swt gives the disbelievers this trait, i.e. preferring the life of this world over the life of the hereafter. Therefore, the understanding of the believer is given with the opposite trait of the disbeliever, namely favouring the life of the hereafter over the life of the world (Imam al-Ghazali, 2019). In the hadith narrated by Hudhayfah r.a., from the Messenger of Allah (saw) he said, which means:

“Whoever prioritises this world over the Hereafter, Allah will test him with three things: Sorrow that does not separate from his heart forever, poverty that does not cover him forever, and gluttony that does not fill him forever”.

Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), said ‘The world is like a bridge. So cross that bridge, and do not build on it.’ It was asked of Prophet Jesus ‘O Prophet of God, suppose you were to command us to build a house in which we would worship God?’ Prophet Jesus said, ‘Go, you people, and build a house on the water.’ They said, ‘How can a building stand on water?’ The Prophet Jesus said, ‘How can an act of worship that is accompanied by the love of this world be established?’.

Sufyan ats-Tsauri once said, ‘The world is a land of custom, not a land of rectitude. It is also a land of labour, not a land of joy. Whoever encounters it will not rejoice in the luxuries of this world, nor will he be saddened by the narrowness of this world (Imam al-Ghazali, 2019).

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of scientific research and literature studies above, the author concludes by using a Sufism approach that according to Imam al-Ghazali, *zuhud* is a person's dislike for the life of the world because he loves Allah and everything that brings him closer to Allah SWT. In the Al-Quran letter al-Qashash verse 77 confirms that when we have wealth, we are encouraged to be *zuhud*. This research is expected to open insights related to the attitude and behaviour of *zuhud* for life in society and can motivate in harmonising the affairs of the world and the hereafter. This research has limitations in terms of references because the book used is a translated book. So this study recommends further research to be able to use references in the original book. In addition, future research can also study *zuhud* with different books and approaches.

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