

Comparison of the Concept of Tazkiyatun Nafs in the Perspectives of Al-Ghazali and Buya Hamka

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Abstract

This article aims to compare the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Buya Hamka on tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul) and identify the steps taken by both in forming a spiritually pure personality. This study uses a qualitative method with a comparative approach. Data collection techniques were carried out through a literature review of Al-Ghazali's major works, namely Ihya' Ulumuddin and Bidayatul Hidayah, as well as Buya Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar, supplemented with other supporting literature. Data analysis was carried out using a descriptive-qualitative approach to examine each figure's approach to the concept of spiritual purification. The results of the study show that Al-Ghazali describes three stages of tazkiyatun nafs: takhalli (emptying oneself of bad traits), tahalli (adorn oneself with good morals), and tajalli (witnessing the presence of Allah). Meanwhile, Buya Hamka offers five steps: befriending good people, using reason wisely, controlling desires and anger, thinking before acting, and knowing oneself. Although they have different approaches, both emphasise the importance of moral and spiritual dimensions in the process of purifying the soul.

Keywords: Tazkiyatun Nafs, Al-Ghazali, Buya Hamka

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan pemikiran tasawuf tazkiyatun nafs antara Al-Ghazali dan Buya Hamka, serta mengungkap langkah-langkah yang ditempuh keduanya dalam membentuk pribadi yang bersih secara spiritual. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan komparatif untuk menganalisis perbedaan dan persamaan pemikiran kedua tokoh. Data dikumpulkan melalui studi pustaka yang bersumber dari karya utama Al-Ghazali, yaitu Ihya' Ulumuddin dan Bidayatul Hidayah, serta Tafsir Al-Azhar karya Buya Hamka, didukung oleh literatur sekunder relevan lainnya. Analisis data dilakukan secara deskriptif-kualitatif untuk mengkaji struktur pemikiran dan pendekatan tazkiyatun nafs masing-masing tokoh. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Al-Ghazali memformulasikan tazkiyatun nafs dalam tiga tahap utama: takhalli (pembersihan diri dari sifat tercela), tahalli (penghiasan diri dengan akhlak terpuji), dan tajalli (penyaksian terhadap keagungan Allah). Sementara itu, Buya Hamka mengusulkan lima langkah dalam tazkiyatun nafs, yakni berteman dengan orang saleh, menggunakan akal untuk berpikir jernih, menahan syahwat dan amarah, mempertimbangkan tindakan sebelum bertindak, serta mengenal jati diri. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa

meskipun keduanya memiliki pendekatan yang berbeda, keduanya menekankan pentingnya dimensi akhlak dan spiritual dalam penyucian jiwa.

Kata Kunci: Tazkiyatun Nafs, Al-Ghazali, Buya Hamka

Introduction

Tazkiyatun nafs or purification of the soul is an important concept in Sufism that emphasises the process of cleansing the human soul of bad traits towards spiritual perfection. In this context, Sufis view inner purity as the key to approaching Allah SWT. This process involves not only outward worship, but also continuous spiritual practices, such as mujahadah, muraqabah, and muhasabah. In the Qur'an, specifically in Surah Asy-Syams verse 8, Allah states that every soul has been given the potential to choose between evil and good. Therefore, tazkiyatun nafs becomes an effort for humans to direct that potential towards goodness. Amidst moral challenges and moral crises in modern life, this concept is very relevant to be studied and actualised in the character building and spirituality of individual Muslims.

Several articles have raised the theme of tazkiyatun nafs from a Sufism perspective. For example, an article by Maulidiyah et al. (2024) examines tazkiyatun nafs in an Islamic psychotherapy approach (Maulidiyah, Rasya Fitri, Hilma, & Kibtiyah, 2024). Additionally, in Istiqomah's (2024) research, the focus is more on examining and applying the concept of tazkiyatun nafs according to Hamka as a model of Islamic psychospiritual therapy in overcoming mental disorders, with an emphasis on a deep understanding of the definition and stages of tazkiyatun nafs (Nafis, 2024). Meanwhile, in the research by Bayhaqi et al. (2024); Ratna, et al. (2024), it is discussed from the perspective of character education (Bayhaqi et al., 2024; Ratna Dewi, Abusiri, Subhan, 2024). Meanwhile, in Subaidi's (2023) research, the main focus of this study is to analyse and examine Islamic religious education based on tazkiyatun nafs as a strategic approach to strengthen the personality competencies of teachers in Madrasah Aliyah through the process of soul purification and the instilling of Sufi values in educational practices (Subaidi & Jahari, 2023).

Although the concept of tazkiyatun nafs has been widely studied, studies that directly compare the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Buya Hamka on this theme are still limited. In fact, both figures have made significant contributions to the development of Islamic thought, especially in the aspects of Sufism and morality. Al-Ghazali is known as a reformer in systematic Sunni Sufism (Nadiyah, 2024). Meanwhile, Buya Hamka is better known for his approach in interpreting and contextualising Sufi teachings in modern life (Prakoso, 2019; Salihin, 2016). These differences in background provide a broad analytical space to see how the two understand the process of soul purification and the practical approaches they offer. Therefore, this article aims to fill this gap by presenting an in-depth comparison between two schools of thought that are rooted in Islamic values but have different characteristics and formulations.

This article aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Buya Hamka on the theme of tazkiyatun nafs and describe the steps taken by each in shaping the spiritual self. Through this study, it is hoped that similarities and differences in the approaches of these two figures in formulating strategies for purifying the soul can be found. The benefit of this article is to contribute scientifically to the development of Sufism and



Islamic ethics studies, as well as to serve as a reference for educators, spiritual practitioners, and academics in implementing the concept of tazkiyatun nafs contextually. In addition, the results of this study can also enrich the treasure trove of contemporary Islamic thought by offering a synthesis between classical heritage and modern thought in the formation of society's morals and spirituality.

Research Method

This research focuses on a comparative analysis of the concept of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul) in the thoughts of Imam Al-Ghazali and Buya Hamka, particularly in exploring the similarities and differences in their spiritual approaches. This study uses a qualitative design with a character study approach and content analysis of each figure's major works. Primary data sources were obtained from the books *Ihya' Ulumuddin* and *Bidayatul Hidayah* by Al-Ghazali, as well as *Tafsir Al-Azhar* by Buya Hamka. Secondary data in the form of supporting literature such as books, scientific articles, and relevant previous research results were used to strengthen the analysis. The analysis process was carried out by systematically examining the text content, identifying the key elements of the tazkiyatun nafs concept from each figure, then conducting an in-depth interpretation and comparison process to find methodological and conceptual similarities and differences between the two.

Research Results and Discussion

A. Draft of Self-Purification According to Al-Ghazali's Perspective

1. Biography of Al-Ghazali

Al-Ghazali was one of the most influential Muslim scholars and thinkers in the Islamic world during the Middle Ages (Sicca, 2021). His full name was Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Ahmad at-Tusi al-Ghazali. He was born in the village of Ghazalah, a small area in the city of Tus, Persia (now Iran), in 450 AH (1058/1059 AD) and died on 4 Jumadil Akhir 505 AH (1 December 1111 AD) in the Tabiristan region. Al-Ghazali came from a modest family; his father, Muhammad, worked as a goat hair weaver and wool seller. Despite living in economic hardship, Al-Ghazali's father was known as a man who loved knowledge and had the noble aspiration that his children would become pious and faithful. To realise this hope, he paid great attention to his children's education. However, fate had other plans, and Al-Ghazali's father died when Al-Ghazali was still a child. Before his death, he entrusted Al-Ghazali and his siblings to a friend who was a Sufi, to continue their education and religious guidance (Wikipedia, 2024).

Al-Ghazali began his basic education in his hometown, Tus. At the beginning of his education, he began to study Arabic and Persian until he became proficient with a teacher named Ahmad bin Muhammad Razkafi (Jauhari, 2018). With his interest and perseverance in pursuing knowledge, Al-Ghazali began to study various disciplines, including Islamic sciences, logic, fiqh, philosophy, and the four madhhabs from several well-known teachers. For example, he studied fiqh from Sheikh Ahmad ibn Muhammad Ar-Radzakani in the city of Tus (Ahmad & Siregar, 2015). After completing his

education in his hometown with a renowned teacher, he went to Jurjani and studied with Imam Abu Nushr al-Isma'ili (Sofiaturohmah, 2022).

After completing his education in Jurjani, Al-Ghazali then went to Naisabur and studied with Abu al-Ma'ali al-Juwaini (Imam Haramain) at the Nizamiyah Madrasah. There, he also studied various disciplines, such as Fiqh, Ushul Fiqh, and Mantik as well as Tasawuf under the guidance of Abu Ali al-Faramadi (Aziza, 2024). With his expertise, Al-Ghazali was given several titles, including, first, Al-Ghazali Ath-Thusi, second, Asy-Syafi'i, and third, Hujjatul Islam (Al-Lathif, 2020). Apart from being a scientist, he was also an active writer in various fields such as Fiqh, Aqidah, Usul Fiqh, Philosophy, Kalam, and Sufism. Some of his monumental works include the books "Ihya Ulumuddin and Bidayat Al-Hidayah" (Zaini, 2017).

The book *Ihya Ulumuddin and Bidayatul Hidayah* is considered Al-Ghazali's magnum opus, which seeks to revive religious knowledge (Badruttamam, 2022). These books combine Sharia teachings with deep spirituality, covering various aspects of Muslim life such as worship, muamalah, morals, and ethics (Fadlullah, et. al., 2023). Through these books, Al-Ghazali sought to answer various problems faced by the ummah. These books are the main references in Sufism and morality, as Al-Ghazali explains the stages of purification of the soul in detail and provides practical guidance for achieving sincerity and closeness to Allah (Hasan & Rafif, 2020).

2. Self-Purification in Al-Ghazali's Thought.

According to Al-Ghazali, *Tazkiyatun Nafs* is an essential process in a Muslim's spiritual journey, in which individuals are expected to eliminate bad traits and develop noble character as a step towards approaching Allah. As mentioned in the Qur'an, Surah As-Shams, verses 9-10:

Meaning: "Blessed are those who purify it (the soul), and woe to those who defile it." (QS. Ash-Shams: 9-10)

The above verse shows that purifying the soul is a fundamental thing that must be done by humans in this world, because if we as humans have done so, then it can result in a pure soul. If we are already pure, then what we express will be good morals, and vice versa. The better our soul is, the better the things that come out of it. These actions are a reflection of the inner self, namely the heart. The heart or soul can only be known through inner knowledge (Yosa, 2023).

The knowledge that can be used to purify oneself is Sufism, as the subject of study in this discipline is the discussion of "*Tazkiyatun Nafs*." Purifying the heart is very important through the *Tazkiyatun Nafs* method because without this method, humans cannot approach God or the Most Holy. Therefore, studying Sufism is mandatory because humans cannot escape from mistakes and shortcomings, and often humans are affected by diseases of the heart, so it is important to learn how to purify the heart (M.

The concept of *Tazkiyatun Nafs* is very important in purifying the heart, where this concept not only includes ways to eliminate bad traits, but also developing good morals (Humaini, 2008). To achieve a pure soul, one must actively strive to purify one's heart from all kinds of sins and strengthen one's spiritual relationship with Allah through

practices such as dhikr, prayer, and self-reflection. Someone who has done these things will surely feel a positive change in their life at some point (Nur'aini &. In this context, Al-Ghazali explains that Tazkiyatun Nafs is an essential effort to achieve closeness to Allah and improve one's spiritual quality (Tanjung, 2024).

As a scientist and philosopher who studied various disciplines, one of Imam Al-Ghazali's greatest contributions was his thinking on Tazkiyatun Nafs, which is the process of purifying the soul and developing morality in order to draw closer to Allah. According to Al-Ghazali, the concept of Tazkiyatun Nafs refers to the process of purifying the soul with the aim of eliminating bad traits and developing good traits.

There are three methods used in self-purification: takhalli, tahalli, and tajalli. These three methods are interrelated and sequential.

a. *Takhalli*

Takhalli is the first step in the process of self-control, which is the process of cleansing the soul of various despicable traits (madzmūmah morals) and destructive desires. According to Al-Ghazali, bad traits such as hasad (envy), su'udzon (prejudice), takabbur (arrogance), riya' (showing off worship), and ghadzab (excessive anger) must first be cleansed from the heart before a person can instil goodness. Sufis divide sins into two categories: external sins and internal sins. External sins are committed by parts of the body such as the tongue, hands, and eyes, while internal sins originate from hidden diseases of the heart, which are more dangerous because they are difficult to recognise and treat. Takhalli is the basis for purifying the soul because without emptying oneself of bad traits, the soul has no room to receive the light of goodness (Kuliah Al Islam, 2025).

One of the main methods in takhalli is repentance. According to Al-Ghazali, repentance is not merely a ritual of confessing sins, but a conscious and profound process that has psychological and spiritual impacts. True repentance can be therapeutic for the soul: it reduces the burden of guilt, relieves inner stress, and revives hope and awareness of Allah's love. In this context, repentance functions as a healer of the soul from spiritual wounds caused by sin. Therefore, the process of takhalli must be carried out with sincerity and honesty, because only by cleansing the heart of inner sickness can a person move on to the next stage, which is to deliberately beautify oneself with noble character.

b. *Tahalli*

Tahalli is the next stage after a person has cleansed their soul of despicable traits (takhalli). At this stage, the soul that has been cleansed of evil begins to be adorned with praiseworthy traits (akhlak maḥmūdah). According to Al-Ghazali, tahalli is not merely adding goodness, but accustoming the heart and behaviour to noble spiritual values (This process is carried out through consistent spiritual practice and good deeds. Dhikr is the main method because, in addition to strengthening the relationship between the heart and Allah, dhikr also softens the soul and calms the mind. Tahalli includes training in cultivating patience, perseverance in worship, and the habit of avoiding worldly distractions. Through tahalli, a person trains to shape

their character so that remains stable in goodness and makes noble character a permanent habit (Daulay, Dahlan, & Lubis, 2021).

In addition to dhikr, tahalli also involves enhancing spiritual qualities such as increasing the recitation of the Qur'an, deepening religious knowledge, and strengthening faith and piety. Positive traits such as zuhud (detachment from worldly matters), wara' (caution in matters of halal and haram), tawakal (surrender to Allah), and ikhlas (doing good without worldly interests) are part of the morals that need to be instilled in the tahalli process. In practice, tahalli encourages a person not only to avoid sin, but also to be proactive in spreading goodness and forming a complete Islamic personality. Al-Ghazali argues that a person will not be able to achieve true closeness to Allah if they only stop at avoiding sin; there must be an active effort to instil good values within oneself. Tahalli, therefore, is an important step in achieving spiritual perfection.

c. *Tajalli*

Tajalli is the peak stage in the process of self-control after a person has successfully passed through the two previous stages, namely takhalli (emptying oneself of despicable morals) and tahalli (adorn oneself with praiseworthy morals). At this stage, a person's soul becomes clean, clear, and open to receiving the light of God (Sugianto, 2011). Tajalli literally means "appearance" or "radiance", which in a spiritual context refers to a person's inner experience of feeling the presence and greatness of God deeply (Syarifudin, 2019). A soul that has reached this position is no longer influenced by worldly desires or urges, but is fully motivated by true love and devotion to God. All forms of worship and charity are performed not to obtain worldly rewards, but solely for God.

At the tajalli level, a person is described as having reached *nafs mardhiyyah*, which is a state of the soul that is pleasing to Allah. According to Al-Ghazali, this level is the highest stage in the spiritual journey of humans, where personal will is completely merged with the will of Allah. People at this level have inner peace, absolute honesty, and total surrender to Allah, unconditionally and without expecting anything in return. Their every action reflects true inner sincerity, and their hearts are filled with divine love that is unshaken by the world. Tajalli is not a momentary mystical experience, but rather a spiritual condition achieved through long practice, consistency in worship, and a continuous struggle against desire. Therefore, tajalli has become a symbol of spiritual perfection in Al-Ghazali's Sufism teachings.

According to Al-Ghazali, self-control is a gradual and profound process that aims to purify the soul and bring oneself closer to Allah. This process begins with takhalli, which is purifying the soul from despicable traits and sins through sincere repentance, then continues with tazkiyah, which is beautifying the soul with praiseworthy morals through spiritual practices such as dhikr, tilawah, and strengthening faith. The culmination is tajalli, where the soul has been purified and is able to receive the light of the Divine, achieving total surrender to the will of Allah. At this stage of spiritual purification, a person lives only to worship with sincere love for Him. Al-Ghazali



emphasises that these three stages complement each other and must be practised continuously so that a Muslim can achieve inner purity, spiritual peace, and true closeness to Allah SWT (Mutholingah, 2021).

B. The Concept of Tazkiyatun Nafs According to Buya Hamka's Perspective.

1. Biography of Buya Hamka

Abdul Malik Karim Amrulloh, commonly known as Buya Hamka, was born in Maninjau, North Sumatra, on 16 February 1908/13 Muharram 1326 AH. His nickname is an abbreviation of his full name, and the title Buya is a term used for Minangkabau people, derived from the word Abi, meaning father or respected person. Buya Hamka's parents were Sheikh Abdul Karim ibn Amrulloh, known as Haji Rosul and Siti Shafiyah Tanjung. His father was a pioneer of the Islah (Tajdid) Movement in Minangkabau, which was founded in 1906 after he returned from Mecca (Hamka, 2014).

Buya Hamka grew up in a society that adhered to a matrilineal system. He learned the basics of religion from an early age with his father. At the age of 6, Haji Rosul took Buya Hamka to Padang Panjang. At the age of seven, he studied at a village school with classical subjects, such as nahwu, shorof, mantiq, bayan, fiqh, etc., using a memorisation system, and at night he studied how to read the Qur'an correctly until he finished.

At the age of 10, Haji Rosul established an educational institution called "Sumatera Thawalib" in Padang Panjang. Buya Hamka continued his education at his father's institution after studying at a village school. At this institution, Buya Hamka deepened his knowledge of religion and Arabic. In addition to studying at school and other educational institutions, he also studied religion at suraus and mosques led by Syaikh Ibrahim Musa, Syaikh Ahmad Rasyid, Sutan Mansur, R. M., and other prominent scholars in the area.

Due to Buya Hamka's enthusiasm for learning, he travelled to various regions in search of knowledge. At the age of 16, he moved to Java to study and gain knowledge about the modern Islamic movement from HOS Tjokroaminoto, Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, RM Soerjopranoto, and KH. Fakhruddin. In addition to studying religion, Buya Hamka also developed his talent for writing. Despite opposition from his family, Buya Hamka succeeded in producing a written work entitled Siti Rabiah.

At the age of 30, Buya Hamka did not immediately decide to become an Islamic scholar even though he was a prominent figure and preacher from the Muhammadiyah organisation in the city of Medan. Buya Hamka's intelligence was evident in his self-taught thinking in various fields of knowledge, such as philosophy, literature, history, sociology, and politics, both in Islamic and Western sciences. His proficiency in Arabic enabled him to study the works of great scholars and poets in the Middle East, including the works of Zaki Mubarak, Jurji Zaidan, Abbas Al-Aqad, Mustafa Al-Manfaluti, and Hussain Haikal.

2. Self-Purification in Buya Hamka's Thought

The concept of Tazkiyatun Nafs according to Buya Hamka, as explained in his work "Tafsir Al-Azhar", is as follows: (Hamka, 2003)

a. In Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 129.

The word Yuzakkihim is interpreted as purifying oneself from unclear beliefs, polytheism, and idol worship. In addition, the word is also interpreted as purifying oneself from hatred, envy, jealousy, and betrayal. Considering these two interpretations, purifying the soul is not only done to the body but also to the spirit so that humans can distinguish between pure and impure beliefs. By performing this purification, the human mind and intellect will be opened so that humans can live their lives safely.

b. In Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 151

The interpretation of the word Yuzakkihim in this verse is to purify oneself from ignorance and moral decline due to polytheistic beliefs (associating partners with Allah).

c. In Al-Qur'an Surah Ali Imran: 164

The meaning of Yuzakkihim here is given as an example of physical and spiritual cleansing, namely by performing wudhu when performing prayers, performing obligatory bathing after performing rituals, and presenting one's best appearance when going to the mosque to pray or worship. Additionally, cleansing the soul from despicable traits, such as envy, arrogance, hypocrisy, conceit, and stinginess, is achieved through the principle of Tawhid (obedience to Allah).

d. In Q.S. Al-Jumu'ah: 2

In Q.S. Al-Jumu'ah, it is explained that, in addition to purifying the soul from unclear beliefs, a person also purifies themselves from false beliefs so that their soul and body are not led astray by impure things.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that Buya Hamka's concept of Tazkiyatun Nafs is the process of purifying the human soul from shirk, kufr, and all despicable traits. According to him, Tazkiyatun Nafs can be achieved by increasing obedience to Allah SWT, carrying out all the teachings commanded in the Qur'an and also the examples set by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, increasing charity to those in need, and maintaining relationships with fellow human beings by behaving politely.

Happiness will come to a healthy soul and body. A healthy soul will radiate light (Nur) in a person's eyes. Likewise, a healthy body can open the mind, make the mind smarter, and cleanse the soul. Therefore, maintaining the health of the soul and body is very important by practicing healthy habits, including:

1) Associating with good people

One's circle of friends has a significant influence on one's mindset, where trust and confidence in individuals can be formed within a circle of friends. Choosing a good circle of friends that can benefit oneself and others is highly recommended in maintaining mental and physical health, because once one has fallen into an unhealthy circle of friends, it takes a long time to recover.

If someone has a principle in their life to always maintain their morals and character, when they do something bad, they will feel that they have violated the

principles they have set for themselves. Bad deeds here are not only based on someone's behaviour that violates the law, but also in the form of using foul language and violating applicable laws and norms.

A good person is someone who is not only able to give advice but also able to accept advice from others, not only able to learn the theory of goodness but also able to practise it. Everything they do is always at the right level, neither too little nor too much, because in fact, anything excessive can harm oneself and others, and anything lacking can be futile.

2) Training the mind to think

Sharpening the mind every day is one way to maintain mental health. By thinking every day, even if it is not too difficult, one's ability to understand thoughts can be improved. If a person's brain is not sharpened every day, over time it will become like a blunt knife, resulting in ignorance. A person with a sharp mind will be able to think faster to draw conclusions from a problem. If this is balanced with learning to increase one's existing knowledge, it is like someone who has a sharp knife "*ker* " that is sharpened every day. As the saying goes, "knowledge is like the ocean, the deeper you dive, the more magical things you will find in it".

3) Controlling desires and anger

A rational person will be able to control their desires and control themselves so as not to follow desires that cause anger. They will use desires and anger as a defence for themselves. When someone does not have desires and anger, they will be oppressed by people who have both. The way to control one's desires is to control oneself to eliminate unpraiseworthy behaviour. Get into the habit of reminding others to always behave well and instil this in yourself as a principle of life. If we remain silent when we see unpraiseworthy behaviour, it is the same as opening up greater opportunities for others to do it more often.

Shaping one's personality with good behaviour or good morals can be instilled from an early age. Everything a child does is a reflection of their parents' behaviour. Parents who are highly aware of the importance of instilling good character in their children will try to set a good example for their children to emulate. Additionally, a child's circle of friends and social environment also shape their temperament. Therefore, as parents, we must be able to choose and filter a good and healthy environment.

4) Management (consider before acting)

Before carrying out a task, one must consider its benefits and dangers. According to Buya Hamka, doing something without first thinking it through is a waste of time and energy. Therefore, before doing something, one must plan the steps and goals to be taken so that they are more structured.

5) Understand yourself

Everyone wants glory for themselves. However, not many realise their own weaknesses. In fact, the biggest shame is shame about oneself. Jalinus At-Thabib highlights that if someone wants to know their weaknesses, they must find loyal

friends who can give advice when we make mistakes. When someone makes a mistake, sometimes they cannot avoid hurtful insults. The pain we feel when someone insults us is a human trait of loving ourselves. As humans, let us introspect before reprimands come. Check first or realise your mistakes as soon as possible.

C. A Comparison of Tazkiyatun Nafs from the Perspectives of Al-Ghazali and Buya Hamka

The concept of self-control or purification of the soul according to Al-Ghazali and Buya Hamka offers unique yet complementary perspectives in the effort to achieve inner peace and closeness to Allah. Both agree that purification of the soul is a fundamental aspect of a Muslim's spiritual life. However, the approaches and emphases of each figure differ. To clarify the differences and similarities between the two, the following is presented in Table 1. A conceptual comparison of self-control according to Al-Ghazali and Buya Hamka:

Table 1. Comparison of Tazkiyatunnafs

| No | Aspect of Comparison | Al-Ghazali | Buya Hamka |
|----|----------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Approach | Contemplative-Internal | Rational-Practical-Social |
| 2 | Primary Goal | Purity of soul and spiritual closeness to God | Purity of soul and spiritual closeness to God |
| 3 | Main Stage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Takhalli</i> (freeing oneself from reprehensible behaviour) - <i>Tahalli</i> (adornment with virtuous behaviour) - <i>Tajalli</i> (illumination of the soul by divine light) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Associating with good people - Training the mind to think - Controlling desires and anger - <i>Tadbir</i> (thinking before acting) - Knowing oneself |
| 4 | Teaching Focus | Spirituality, Inner Self, Worship, Self-Reflection | Behaviour, social interaction, self-control, social awareness |
| 5 | Primary Sources | <i>Ihya' Ulumuddin, Bidayatul Hidayah</i> | Tafsir Al-Azhar |

From the above comparison, it can be concluded that although Al-Ghazali and Buya Hamka both emphasise the importance of tazkiyatun nafs (self-control) in developing a well-rounded Muslim personality, they have different approaches and emphases, depending on their respective intellectual backgrounds and social contexts. Al-Ghazali emphasises spiritual and inner aspects through profound Sufi stages, while Buya Hamka presents a more rational and practical approach, relevant to the dynamics of modern social life. The two complement each other in offering a model of spiritual purification that is not only oriented towards a vertical relationship with God, but also towards the horizontal dimension of social life. Therefore, the synthesis of these two figures' thoughts can be an important reference in



establishing a balance between individual spirituality and the social responsibilities of contemporary Muslims.

Conclusion

This study shows that Al-Ghazali and Buya Hamka's thoughts on spiritual purification not only reflect distinctive Sufi and moral approaches, but also open up space for the integration of the spiritual-transcendental and social-practical dimensions of Islam. Although different in their methodological formulations, both are based on the urgency of inner development as a path towards the formation of a holistic and ethical personality. Therefore, the concept of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul) from these two figures offers a synthesis of relevant values in facing moral challenges in the modern era.

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