

## Eschatology in Islamic Philosophy from the Perspective of Al-Ghazali

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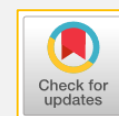
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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze Al-Ghazali's perspective on eschatology in Islamic teachings and the implications of his thoughts on the understanding and beliefs of Muslim individuals. The research methodology employed is literature analysis, examining Al-Ghazali's works related to eschatology and interpreting his views within the context of Islamic philosophy. The findings indicate that Al-Ghazali regards eschatology as an integral part of Islamic teachings that is crucial for preparing oneself to face the afterlife. Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of developing good morals, abstaining from sins, and maintaining a connection with God and fellow human beings. The implications of Al-Ghazali's perspective on the understanding and beliefs of Muslims are that the focus should primarily be on the hereafter while living in this world. Al-Ghazali's contribution in enriching the insights and understanding of eschatology from the perspective of Islamic philosophy includes the reinterpretation of eschatological concepts, the integration of philosophy and theology, and the development of profound philosophical reflections. This research demonstrates that Al-Ghazali's perspective on eschatology in Islamic teachings has significant implications for the understanding and beliefs of Muslims. Al-Ghazali's thoughts provide a valuable contribution in expanding the understanding of the afterlife and prioritizing the preparation for the hereafter. It offers a deeper comprehension of Al-Ghazali's views on eschatology and motivates Muslims to lead their lives in this world with a broader and responsible perspective.

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## Introduction

Eschatology, as part of Islamic teachings, has been a captivating topic that has drawn the attention of many scholars and religious practitioners (Al-Walid, 2012). Eschatology delves into the afterlife, encompassing topics such as death, the Day of Judgment, hell, and paradise, along with various events and signs that precede the end of times (Zakarya, Hafidz, Martaputu, 2023). Approaches and perspectives on eschatology within Islamic teachings can be understood through various lenses, including the philosophical standpoint.

One significant figure in the history of Islamic thought who held crucial views on eschatology and philosophy is Al-Ghazali (Nasution, 2022). Al-Ghazali, a renowned scholar, is recognized as a consistent Islamic thinker who harmoniously integrated religious teachings and philosophy (Rhain et al., 2023). He made significant contributions to the development of Islamic religious and philosophical knowledge, earning him a distinguished place in the history of Islamic thought.

Despite the importance of Al-Ghazali's thoughts and contributions to Islamic eschatology and philosophy, there remains a gap between theory and reality in the understanding of eschatology within Islamic teachings (Triana et al., 2023). Several gaps between theory and reality regarding Islamic eschatology can be explained as follows (Al-Ghazali, 2023). Firstly, although eschatology is a crucial part of Islamic teachings, many Muslims still lack a comprehensive understanding of its concepts and implications in their daily lives. This gap may arise due to a lack of socialization and education about eschatology and the importance of preparing oneself for the afterlife.

Secondly, there exist differing views and interpretations of eschatology within Islamic teachings, leading to variations in understanding and beliefs among Muslims (Nurul Umah Fijanati, Hafidz, Sukadi, 2023). This diversity can result in debates and conflicts concerning the comprehension and application of eschatological concepts in daily life.

Thirdly, the influence of local culture and traditions on the understanding and practice of eschatology within Islamic teachings. This gap may emerge due to a lack of accurate understanding and interpretation of eschatological concepts and their implications in daily life. It can lead to differences in views and practices of eschatology between one community and another.

The main theoretical foundation in this theme is Islamic theology. Al-Ghazali is a prominent theologian who made significant contributions to Islamic theological thought (Effendi, 2021). Al-Ghazali's understanding of eschatology is based on Islamic theological beliefs, such as faith in the Day of Judgment, the afterlife, the reckoning of deeds, and the rewards and punishments in the hereafter. This theoretical foundation serves as the primary basis for understanding Al-Ghazali's views on eschatology in Islamic teachings and how these theological concepts shape his thoughts.

The second theoretical foundation is the philosophy of religion. Al-Ghazali is also a philosopher who contributed to the philosophy of religion. In understanding eschatology, Al-Ghazali employs a philosophical approach to explain eschatological concepts rationally and logically (Nasution, 2022). For instance, he discusses the concept of the immortality of the soul, divine justice, and the relationship between human actions and fate in the afterlife. The foundation of the philosophy of religion aids in delving deeper into Al-Ghazali's perspective on eschatology and provides rational arguments supporting these beliefs.

By using the theoretical foundations of Islamic theology and the philosophy of religion, the analysis and understanding of eschatology from Al-Ghazali's perspective can be conducted in a more detailed and structured manner. These theoretical foundations help connect Al-Ghazali's thoughts with the Islamic theological context and the philosophical thoughts on religion, enriching the understanding of eschatology in Islam according to Al-Ghazali's perspective.

Therefore, by adopting Al-Ghazali's perspective on eschatology in Islamic philosophy, this article will further discuss the relevance of Al-Ghazali's views in addressing the gaps and

differences in understanding eschatology in Islamic teachings, as well as its implications in preparing oneself for the afterlife.

Previous research tends to focus on the general views of eschatology in Islam, while this study is more centered on Al-Ghazali's perspective on eschatology. It also explores how Al-Ghazali's views on eschatology in Islam influence his other philosophical thoughts, such as thoughts on reason, faith, and wisdom. Additionally, it delves into the relevance of Al-Ghazali's thoughts on eschatology in Islam to the challenges and issues faced by Muslims in the modern era.

This research is crucial because Al-Ghazali is a significant figure in the history of Islamic scholarship, and his views need to be examined more profoundly. Understanding Al-Ghazali's thoughts comprehensively is essential to see how the concept of eschatology influences his other thoughts. Understanding the concept of eschatology can also provide guidance for Muslims in facing the challenges of the modern world.

Based on the above considerations, the researcher formulates the following research questions: What is Al-Ghazali's perspective on eschatology in Islamic teachings, and how relevant is it in preparing oneself for the afterlife? What are the implications of Al-Ghazali's views on the understanding and beliefs of Muslims regarding eschatology in Islamic teachings? What is the contribution of Al-Ghazali's views in enriching insights and understanding of eschatology from the perspective of Islamic philosophy?

## Method

The research methods that can be employed to explore Al-Ghazali's views on eschatology in Islamic teachings include literature review and text analysis (Zed, 2008). Literature review can be conducted by reviewing various works that discuss Al-Ghazali's thoughts, particularly those related to eschatology in Islamic teachings. Additionally, text analysis can be performed by studying and critically analyzing Al-Ghazali's books that address eschatology.

In conducting a literature review, researchers can use systematic and structured literature search methods (Syaiful Anam, 2023) to find relevant literature on the research topic (Nazir, 1988). Furthermore, researchers need to evaluate and critically analyze the literature used to ensure the accuracy and validity of the information obtained.

For text analysis, researchers need to engage in careful reading and understanding of the historical and social context behind the studied books (Samsu, 2021). Additionally, researchers can use hermeneutic analysis methods to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Al-Ghazali's views on eschatology in Islamic teachings.

In this research, qualitative approach can also be employed to depict and explain in detail Al-Ghazali's views on eschatology in Islamic teachings. The qualitative approach is useful for understanding the historical and social context behind Al-Ghazali's thoughts and providing a detailed description of his views on eschatology (Rukin, 2019).

By utilizing systematic and structured research methods, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of Al-Ghazali's views on eschatology in Islamic teachings and its relevance in preparing oneself for the afterlife.

## Results and Discussion

Eschatology in Islamic philosophy from the perspective of Al-Ghazali plays a crucial role in guiding Muslims to direct their lives towards the afterlife. According to Al-Ghazali, eschatology is a fundamental part of Islamic creed that every Muslim must understand and believe. From Al-Ghazali's perspective, eschatology deals with the afterlife and the end times. The concept of the end times in Islam has several signs that must be understood and guarded

against by Muslims. One of the signs of the end times is the emergence of Dajjal or the Antichrist, who will mislead humanity.

In understanding Islamic eschatology, Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of preparing oneself with righteous deeds to face the afterlife. The concept of the afterlife demands that Muslims improve themselves and worship with full consciousness and sincerity.

Further discussion also addresses the concepts of Hell and Paradise in Islam according to Al-Ghazali. He teaches that Hell and Paradise are realities that must be believed in and prepared for. Additionally, Al-Ghazali discusses intercession or assistance in Islam, which is related to Allah's forgiveness.

The research results indicate that eschatology in Islamic philosophy from the perspective of Al-Ghazali plays a vital role in guiding Muslims to understand the afterlife. The concepts of the end times, Hell, Paradise, and intercession become crucial parts of preparing oneself to face life after death.

### **1. Definition of Eschatology**

Eschatology is a concept that originates from the Greek language, where "*eschatos*" means "*last*" or "*end*," and "*logos*" means "*science*" or "*knowledge*." In general, eschatology refers to the study of the end times, life after death, and the ultimate fate of humans and the universe (Supriatna, 2020; Syahputra, 2018).

In this context, eschatology refers to a branch of theology or philosophy that studies and analyzes beliefs, doctrines, and perspectives regarding the end times, life after death, resurrection, final judgment, heaven, hell, and the end of the universe (Hasyim, 2009; Supriatna, 2020). The theological term eschatology focuses on understanding the ultimate purpose of human existence and the role of God in determining the ultimate fate of humans and spiritual salvation.

### **2. Eschatology in Islamic Philosophy**

Eschatology in Islamic philosophy is a branch of study that explores the afterlife, the ultimate goal of humanity, and the final fate of the universe within the framework of Islamic philosophical thought. It involves an understanding of life after death, the final judgment, heaven, hell, and the process of bodily resurrection (Safaruddin, 2013). Islamic philosophical eschatology seeks to comprehend the essence, meaning, and purpose of human life and its relationship with the universe.

In Islamic philosophical eschatology, there is an emphasis on the pursuit of wisdom and profound knowledge about the afterlife. Islamic philosophers question the nature of existence, the essence of humanity, its relationship with God, and the role of the afterlife in fulfilling human potential fully (Abdilah, 2016). They analyze concepts such as destiny, absolute justice, eternal life, and the purpose of life in a philosophical context.

The thought of eschatology in Islamic philosophy plays a crucial role in deepening the understanding of human existence, the search for the meaning of life, and the relationship between the material and spiritual worlds (Hasyim, 2009). Islamic philosophers strive to bridge theological and rational understandings in questioning the nature of life after death and its implications for human life in this world (Hasyimiyah, 2005).

Ibn Rushd argues that eschatology involves the concept of life after death, where humans will face the final judgment that determines their ultimate fate. He also emphasizes the importance of developing reason and knowledge in understanding and preparing for the afterlife (Muslih, 2017). Ibn Rushd views eschatology as a moral and ethical foundation that provides direction and purpose for human life in this world.

Meanwhile, al-Ghazali also states that eschatology is the study of the afterlife and the final fate of humans. For him, the afterlife has a tangible existence and significant implications in living life in this world (Nurfadhilah, 2022). Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of spiritual and moral preparation to face the final judgment and attain true happiness in the afterlife.

In the perspectives of Ibn Rushd and al-Ghazali, eschatology becomes a crucial topic in the thoughts and beliefs of Muslims. Both encourage Muslims to contemplate their life's purpose, deepen their understanding of the afterlife, and prepare themselves spiritually and morally. Their thoughts provide valuable insights into eschatology in the context of Islamic philosophy, highlighting the importance of making the afterlife the primary focus in living life in this world.

### 3. Al-Ghazali's Views on Eschatology in Islamic Teachings

Al-Ghazali, full name Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad Al-Ghazali, was born in the city of Tus, Persia (now Iran) in the year 1058 AD. He was a renowned Islamic scholar and philosopher in the Islamic world during the 12th century. He studied at various prominent Islamic educational institutions of his time, such as Nishapur, Jurjan, and Baghdad (Al-Lathif, 2020). Additionally, he also delved into various fields of knowledge, including philosophy, mathematics, and Sufism (Hasyimiyah, 2005).

Al-Ghazali was highly prolific in writing books that covered a wide range of topics within Islam. Some of his most famous works include *"Ihya Ulumuddin,"* which discusses Sufism, *"Tahafut al-Falasifah,"* addressing the relationship between philosophy and Islam, and *"Al-Munqidh min ad-Dalal,"* which narrates his spiritual journey (Nisa, 2016). Imam Ghazali's works significantly influenced the development of Islamic thought during his time and continue to be influential to this day.

In the context of eschatology, Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of truly knowing God and understanding the teachings of Islam in their entirety. He underscores the significance of learning Islamic teachings from authentic sources and avoiding incorrect understandings or innovations. According to him, only by understanding Islamic teachings correctly can humans receive guidance from Allah and attain salvation in the afterlife (Nashihin, Aziz, Adibah, Triana, & Robbaniyah, 2022). Therefore, he teaches the importance of deep learning and understanding of Islamic teachings as a way to prepare for the afterlife.

Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of tawakkal, or reliance on Allah, in navigating life in this world. According to him, tawakkal to Allah is the attitude of releasing oneself from worries and anxieties and relying entirely on Allah (Sulaiman, 2023). In the context of eschatology, tawakkal to Allah becomes the key to obtaining happiness in the afterlife. Therefore, for Al-Ghazali, tawakkal is one of the essential practices to be undertaken in preparing for the afterlife (Huda, 2022).

Al-Ghazali's views on eschatology not only influence the beliefs of Muslims regarding the end times but also impact their everyday lives. Life in the afterlife is the true life, and life in this world is merely a preparation (Sulaiman, 2023). Therefore, he teaches the importance of preparing for the afterlife through obedience to Allah and performing righteous deeds. For Al-Ghazali, obedience to Allah is the key to attaining salvation in the afterlife. He emphasizes the importance of adhering to Islamic Sharia and avoiding all forms of sinful acts while striving to increase faith and piety towards Allah (Al-Ghazali, 2016).

Al-Ghazali's perspective on the resurrection, both physical and spiritual, asserts that after death, humans will experience a resurrection in both their physical and spiritual forms. This resurrection will be accompanied by judgment before Allah, determining their fate in the afterlife. The resurrection, both physical and spiritual, forms the basis of Islamic beliefs regarding the end times and the revival after death (Al-Ghazali & Al-Hanafi, 2008).

Al-Ghazali provides explanations about the signs of the apocalypse and the signs of the Day of Judgment. According to him, signs of the apocalypse will manifest worldwide before the occurrence of the Day of Judgment. He details these signs in his works, such as *"Ihya' Ulum al-Din."* Additionally, he expresses views on how humans will be judged and punished by Allah on the Day of Reckoning. On the Day of Judgment, all good and bad deeds will be weighed, and individuals will receive corresponding rewards or punishments (Sulaiman, 2023). According to Al-Ghazali, belief in the Day of Judgment is one of the pillars of faith that must be embraced by all Muslims.

In Al-Ghazali's perspective, the afterlife is a realm where everlasting happiness can be attained. He emphasizes the importance of performing good deeds throughout life on Earth. According to him, the good deeds done during one's lifetime serve as provisions for achieving happiness in the afterlife (Hasyim, 2009). Moreover, he teaches the significance of helping fellow humans and doing good to others as a form of righteous deeds that can earn rewards in the afterlife.

In the field of eschatology, Al-Ghazali holds influential and significant views on resurrection, the Day of Judgment, paradise, and hell, which have been widely quoted by scholars and intellectuals in the Muslim world then and now (Hanafi, 2017). Eschatology refers to the study of the end times and related events, such as death, judgment, resurrection, and the Day of Reckoning. In Al-Ghazali's thought, eschatology is an integral part of Islamic doctrine, and he puts forth many influential views in the intellectual history of Islam.

Al-Ghazali asserts that paradise and hell are real places, and humans must generate good deeds to reach paradise. According to him, paradise is a place where humans can experience eternal happiness, while hell is a place where humans will endure unimaginable torment (Hanafi, 2017). This perspective is integral to Islamic doctrine and influences the way of life of Muslims.

However, even as Al-Ghazali teaches about the concept of hell and paradise, he also reminds humans not to focus solely on the rewards of the afterlife. He advocates for humans to perpetually engage in goodness and perform acts of kindness sincerely, without expecting rewards, as goodness done with sincerity brings benefits and happiness in both this world and the afterlife (Shuhari & Hamat, 2015).

In Al-Ghazali's view, the afterlife is not something separate from worldly life; rather, the two are interconnected and influence each other. He deems worldly life as a test and preparation for the afterlife. Thus, Al-Ghazali underscores the importance of living a good life in this world and performing good deeds as preparation for the afterlife. The Islamic eschatological perspective from Al-Ghazali's viewpoint encompasses beliefs in the Day of Judgment, the concept of hell and paradise, and the importance of leading a virtuous life in preparation for the afterlife. This perspective has had a significant impact on the development of Islamic thought, particularly in Sufism and Islamic philosophy.

#### **4. Implications of Al-Ghazali's Eschatology on the Faith of Muslims**

Al-Ghazali's perspective on eschatology reveals a dynamic connection between the afterlife and the worldly life, where every action and deed in this world will influence one's life in the hereafter. (Qusyairi, 2015) The implication of this view is the importance of maintaining goodness in everyday actions and deeds to attain happiness in the afterlife. This concept is highly relevant in the context of the lives of Muslims today, where the numerous challenges and temptations of the world can lead to neglect of the hereafter.

Al-Ghazali teaches about the significance of self-reflection and the control of desires to achieve perfection in the afterlife. The implication is that Muslims are expected not only to focus on the physical and material aspects of life but also to train themselves in self-control and spiritual development. (Sahuri, 2017; Shuhari & Hamat, 2015) This becomes increasingly crucial in the modern era where materialistic and hedonistic demands are growing stronger, making it easy for individuals to fall into detrimental behaviors for themselves and others.

Furthermore, Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of improving relationships with fellow humans and the environment. The implication is the importance of maintaining peace and tolerance among people of different religions and preserving the environment as a trust from Allah SWT. This is particularly vital in the current global context, where conflicts among religions and environmental degradation are becoming more prevalent. (Azaman & Badaruddin, 2016)

According to Al-Ghazali, it is essential for Muslims to understand that death is inevitable, and individuals must be prepared to face it by improving themselves and enhancing the quality of their worship. The first implication emphasizes the importance of

understanding that life in this world is temporary, and the primary goal of human life is to achieve eternal happiness in the afterlife. (Fahmi, 2016) This encourages Muslims to maintain good moral character and enhance their worship to reach this ultimate goal.

The second implication highlights the importance of understanding the signs of the apocalypse and the conditions of the afterlife so that Muslims can prepare themselves to face it. In this regard, it is crucial for Muslims to have sufficient knowledge about Islamic teachings and to understand the religion correctly, enabling them to avoid behaviors and beliefs that contradict Islamic teachings. Moreover, Muslims should avoid sinful behaviors and strive to improve their worship. (Shuhari & Hamat, 2015)

The third implication emphasizes the importance of patience and reliance on Allah in facing the trials and tribulations of life, as these are part of the tests given by Allah SWT. This attitude also teaches Muslims not to despair and to continue improving themselves, even in challenging and challenging situations. (Patahillah, 2014) In this context, Muslims' understanding and belief in eschatology in Islamic teachings serve not only as a spiritual foundation but also as a moral and ethical guide in everyday life.

## 5. Al-Ghazali's Contribution to Islamic Philosophical Eschatology

Al-Ghazali has made a significant contribution to enriching insights and understanding about eschatology from the perspective of Islamic philosophy, which can be explained as follows.

*Reinterpretation of Eschatological Concepts:* Al-Ghazali conducted a critical examination of religious teachings related to the afterlife, deeds accountability, and the Day of Judgment. (Al-Ghazali & Al-Hanafi, 2008) Through philosophical thinking and in-depth analysis, he provided a broader and more detailed understanding of these concepts, enriching the perspectives of Muslims and offering a deeper insight.

*Rational Arguments for the Afterlife:* Al-Ghazali presented rational arguments that reinforced the belief in an afterlife and the Day of Judgment. He used philosophical methods to weave religious teachings with logic and rationality that could be intellectually comprehended. This helped strengthen the understanding and belief of Muslims in eschatology by providing a robust argumentative foundation. (Al-Ghazali, 2020) He emphasized that awareness of death and the afterlife helps guide human life toward higher and eternal goals.

*Integration of Philosophy and Theology:* Al-Ghazali successfully integrated philosophy with theology in understanding eschatology. He demonstrated that Islamic philosophy could serve as a means to deepen the understanding of eschatological beliefs. (Safaruddin, 2013) In his works, Al-Ghazali combined rational thinking with religious teachings to provide a strong foundation for understanding concepts like life after death, deeds accountability, and the afterlife. This contribution enriched the perspectives of Muslims by offering a more comprehensive and integrated understanding of eschatology.

*Connection Between Eschatology and Ethics:* Al-Ghazali emphasized the link between eschatology and ethics and morality. (Safaruddin, 2013) He taught that preparation for the afterlife involves the formation of good moral character. Al-Ghazali underscored the importance of developing proper conduct, avoiding sin, and performing righteous deeds. (Hasanah, Akhyar, Muzana, Saifuddin, & Monica, 2021) This contribution enriched the understanding of Muslims by connecting eschatological concepts with real actions in daily life, motivating them to lead meaningful and responsible lives.

*Refutation of Secular Views:* Al-Ghazali provided a significant contribution in refuting secular views that might disregard or doubt the existence of life after death. (Nashihin, 2017) He used critical thinking and strong arguments to reject views that were inconsistent with religious teachings on eschatology. (Prantika, 2023)

*Influence on Islamic Philosophical Tradition:* Al-Ghazali's impact on the Islamic philosophical tradition is evident in his influential works such as "*Ihya Ulumuddin*" and "*Tahafut al-Falasifah*." These works significantly contributed to the development of philosophical and eschatological thought in the Islamic world. His writings became essential

references for later Muslim philosophers, guiding their understanding of eschatology and inspiring philosophical reflections on it. (Nisa, 2016)

In conclusion, Al-Ghazali's meaningful contribution to enriching insights and understanding about eschatology from the perspective of Islamic philosophy is evident. His reinterpretation of concepts, integration of philosophy and theology, emphasis on ethics, and refutation of secular views have provided a more profound and integrated understanding of eschatology. Al-Ghazali's influence on the Islamic philosophical tradition has left a valuable intellectual legacy for the development of eschatological thought in the Islamic world. Through his contributions, Al-Ghazali has offered a deeper and more reflective philosophical understanding of life after death and the afterlife in Islamic teachings.

## Conclusion

In Al-Ghazali's perspective on eschatology in Islamic teachings, it is crucial to understand and use it as a guide in preparing for the afterlife. According to Al-Ghazali, preparation for the afterlife goes beyond merely performing worship and fulfilling obligations; it also involves self-discipline in mastering good character and cultivating awareness of the importance of avoiding sins. The implication of Al-Ghazali's view emphasizes the significance of cultivating awareness that worldly life is temporary, while the afterlife is the ultimate goal that must be prepared for diligently. According to him, the afterlife is an inevitable reality that cannot be avoided, urging Muslims to pay attention to how they lead their lives in this world to better prepare for the afterlife. Al-Ghazali's contribution to Islamic philosophical perspectives on eschatology enriches insights by emphasizing the importance of developing good character, such as being honest, just, and beneficial to others. Additionally, he highlights the importance of avoiding sins and maintaining a connection with God and fellow human beings. This can serve as a foundation for Muslims to live consciously and responsibly in this world, preparing themselves for a better afterlife.

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