



## **THE TEACHINGS OF AL-GAZALI'S RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND MODERATION**

**(An Examination of Al-Gazali's Thoughts on Faith and  
Infidelity in the Book of *Fasl Al-Tafriqah Bayna Al-Islam  
Wa Al-Zandaqah*)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study aims to analyze and understand Al-Gazali's teachings on religious tolerance and moderation through his views on faith and disbelief as contained in his work, *Fasl Al-Tafriqah Bayna Al-Islam Wa Al-Zandaqah*. This research is qualitative research with a text analysis approach. The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data, data collection techniques using library research and text analysis, data analysis using content analysis and contextual interpretation, and data validity consisting of source triangulation and source criticism. The results of the study show that Al-Ghazali's teachings on religious tolerance and moderation, as described in *Fasl al-Tafriqah bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqah*, offer a view that rejects extremism in assessing a person's faith, while emphasizing the importance of a fair and moderate approach. Al-Ghazali asserts that the assessment of an individual's faith is the exclusive right of God, not humans. Al-Ghazali teaches that a person's beliefs should not be used as a reason to justify discrimination or violence. Al-Ghazali's teachings on tolerance and moderation are not only relevant in the context of Islamic history but also serve as a universal guide. This study is expected to contribute academically by adding to the wealth of literature related to Al-Ghazali's thoughts on religious tolerance and moderation,*

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while also broadening our understanding of the concepts of faith and disbelief according to his views.

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## A. Introduction

Al-Ghazali, also known as Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, was a Muslim scholar who lived in the 11th century AD.<sup>1</sup> He is recognized as one of the most influential figures in the history of Islamic thought. His works not only contributed greatly to Islamic philosophy and theology, but also covered various aspects of social and spiritual life. One important aspect of Al-Ghazali's teachings is tolerance and moderation in religion. This concept becomes very relevant in the context of a society that consists of various religious groups and beliefs. Al-Ghazali conveyed this message of tolerance and moderation through his various written works, especially in his famous work, "*Fast al-Tasriqah bayn al-Islam wa al-Zandaqah*" (Separation Between Islam and Infidel). Tolerance in Al-Ghazali's view not only means respecting the religious beliefs of others, but also appreciating diversity in religious understanding and practice. He emphasized the importance to coexist peacefully with people from different religious backgrounds, and to build good relationships with them.

Al-Ghazali's teachings of tolerance and moderation have been a source of inspiration for many Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers throughout history. His contribution to promoting interfaith dialogue and interfaith harmony has been widely recognized, and the values he advocated remain relevant in efforts to build an inclusive and harmonious society today. By understanding and applying these teachings of tolerance and moderation, it is hoped to maintain peace and justice in the increasingly complex religious diversity of this modern era. Tolerance teaches to be able to coexist with all groups

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<sup>1</sup> Al Halim Kusuma and Laila Rahmadani, "Imam Al-Ghazali Dan Pemikirannya," *Jurnal Ekshis* 1, no. 1 (2023): 23–31, <https://doi.org/10.59548/je.v1i1.18>.

not only from those of the same religion but also from those who are not of the same religion, people whose lives prioritize tolerance are not easy to punish or label others when there are things that do not agree with them. In general, Al-Gazali suggests being able to accommodate diversity and study so as not to punish based on prejudices that are not at all justified in religion.

Al-Gazali's thoughts on religious tolerance have been studied by several Muslim scholars with different focus of study and approach. Some of these studies are: *Al-Ghazali's Sufistic Ethical Thought: Steps to Moderate Morals* (2021) by Umar Faruq Tohir;<sup>2</sup> *The Concept of Husn Al-Khuluq According to Al-Ghazali and Its Relevance to the Attitude of Religious Moderation* (2022) Karyar Abdul Ghafur;<sup>3</sup> *Tolerance, Truth and Happiness According to Al-Ghazali* (2022) by Achmad Khudori Soleh;<sup>4</sup> *Religious Moderation Paradigm: Revitalizing the Function of Islamic Education in a Multicultural Context from the Perspective of Imam al-Ghazali's Thought* (2023) by Ulyan Nasri and M. Tabibuddin;<sup>5</sup> *Multicultural Education Religious Moderation Paradigm Perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali* (2024) by Irmawati and Dina Mardiana;<sup>6</sup> *Islamic Moderation (Wasathiyah Islam) Perspective of the Qur'an, As-Sunnah and the Views of the Ulama and Fuqaha* (2020) by Khairan Muhammad Arif;<sup>7</sup> In addition to research that focuses on Al-Gazali's thoughts on moderation, many works are also found that discuss moderation, Islam, Iman, Kafir and so on, including: "Definition, Concept and Theory of Religious Tolerance,"

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<sup>2</sup> Umar Faruq Tohir, "Pemikiran Etika Sufistik Al-Ghazali: Langkah-Langkah Memoderasi Akhlak," *Al-I'jaz: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an, Falsafah Dan Keislaman* 3, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.53563/ai.v3i1.50>.

<sup>3</sup> Abdul Ghafur, "Konsep Husn Al-Khuluq Menurut Al-Ghazali Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Sikap Moderasi Beragama," *Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy* 3, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajipp.v3i2.5563>.

<sup>4</sup> Achmad Khudori Soleh, *Toleransi, Kebenaran Dan Kebahagiaan Menurut Al-Ghazali* (Unit Penerbitan UIN maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> Ulyan Nasri and M. Tabibuddin, "Paradigma Moderasi Beragama: Revitalisasi Fungsi Pendidikan Islam Dalam Konteks Multikultural Perspektif Pemikiran Imam Al-Ghazali," *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan* 8, no. 4 (2023): 1959–66, <https://doi.org/10.29303/jipp.v8i4.1633>.

<sup>6</sup> Irmawati Irmawati and Dina Mardiana, "Pendidikan Multikultural Paradigma Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Imam Al-Ghazali," *Hikmah* 21, no. 1 (2024): 35–47, <https://doi.org/10.53802/hikmah.v21i1.366>.

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Khairan Arif, "Moderasi Islam (Wasathiyah Islam) Perspektif Al-Qur'an, As-Sunnah Serta Pandangan Para Ulama Dan Fuqaha," *Al-Risalah* 11, no. 1 (2020): 22–43, <https://doi.org/10.34005/alrisalah.v11i1.592>.

*Insani Science* (2020) by Khadijah Muda and Siti Nor Azhani Mohd Tohar;<sup>8</sup> *Religious Tolerance Narrative on Youtube Account 'Jeda Nulis* (2022) by Zaini Ainul Haq;<sup>9</sup> *Interfaith Tolerance in Islamic Perspective* (2023) by Guruh Ryan Auliya;<sup>10</sup> *Religious Tolerance in the Perspective of the Quran* (2023) by Afriani Afriani, Azza Najmia, and Nada Mauila;<sup>11</sup> *Construction of Religious Moderation Values in the Perspective of Philosophy of Religion* (2022) by Theguh Saumantri;<sup>12</sup> *Application of Moderation in Muslim and Non-Muslim Interactions in the Perspective of Prophetic Tafsir* (2018) by Muhammad Alan Juhri;<sup>13</sup>

Based on the results of reading the articles above, researchers have not found discussions that specifically discuss the concept of tolerance and moderation of Al-Gazali, especially through the approach of faith and disbelief conveyed in his work *Fasl Al-Tafriqah Bayna Al-Islam Wa Al-Zandaqah*. Therefore, it can be said that the difference in this research focuses on the teachings of tolerance and religious moderation of Al-Gazali conveyed through his work, *Fasl Al-Tafriqah Bayna Al-Islam Wa Al-Zandaqah*. This research seeks to dig deeper into Al-Gazali's thoughts related to tolerance and moderation in Islam and see how his ideas can provide guidance for interfaith relations, this research is very interesting to do considering there is still no previous research that focuses on the same study.

This study aims to analyze and understand the teachings of Al-Gazali's religious tolerance and moderation, through his views on

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<sup>8</sup>Khadijah Muda and Siti Nor Azhani Mohd Tohar, "Definisi, Konsep Dan Teori Toleransi Beragama," *Sains Insani* 5, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.33102/sainsinsani.vol5no1.179>.

<sup>9</sup>Zihni Ainul Haq, "Narasi Toleransi Beragama Pada Akun Youtube 'Jeda Nulis,'" *Pusaka* 10, No. 1 (2022), <Https://Doi.Org/10.31969/Pusaka.V10i1.673>.

<sup>10</sup>Guruh Ryan Aulia, "Toleransi Antar Umat Beragama Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Jurnal Ushuluddin: Media Dialog Pemikiran Islam* 25, No. 1 (2023), <Https://Doi.Org/10.24252/Jumdp.V25i1.36240>.

<sup>11</sup>Afriani Afriani, Azza Najmia, And Nada Mauila, "Toleransi Beragama Dalam Perspektif Al-Quran," *Basha'ir: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 2023, <Https://Doi.Org/10.47498/Bashair.V2i2.892>.

<sup>12</sup>Theguh Saumantri, "Konstruksi Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Agama," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 24, no. 2 (2022): 164, <https://doi.org/10.22373/substantia.v24i2.14854>.

<sup>13</sup>Muhammad Alan Juhri, "Aplikasi Moderasi Dalam Interaksi Muslim Dan Non-Muslim Perspektif Tafsir Nabawi," *Ushuluna: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 1, no. 2 (2020): 145–63, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ushuluna.v1i2.15295>.

faith and disbelief contained in his work, *Fasl Al-Tafriqah Bayna Al-Islam Wa Al-Zandaqah*. This research is expected to academically provide benefits that will enrich the literature on Al-Gazali's thoughts in the context of religious tolerance and moderation, as well as deepen understanding of the concepts of faith and disbelief from his perspective. The results of this research are practically expected to provide a broader and deeper understanding for the community, especially in developing an attitude of religious tolerance and moderation. This is important to support harmony and prevent conflicts between religious communities. From the aspect of Islamic studies, this research is expected to be a reference for related studies in exploring the teachings of tolerance and moderation in Islam that have been described by classical scholars such as Al-Gazali, so as to produce an understanding that is relevant in the context of modern life. Socially, this research can help strengthen the basis of religious tolerance in society, reduce extremism, and encourage interfaith harmony in a diverse environment.

## B. Literature Review

### a. The Concept of Tolerance and Religious Moderation in *Fasl al-Tafriqah*

Religious tolerance and moderation are two very important principles in Islam, as an effort to maintain harmony in a diverse society.<sup>14</sup> This concept involves respect for other beliefs and an open attitude in diversity, the concept of tolerance in Islam is of course the reference is the Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah. For the Quran, at least it refers to Surah Al-Baqarah verse 256. This verse states that there is no compulsion in religion. Everyone has the freedom to embrace religion in accordance with their respective beliefs. In another verse surah al-Baqarah verse 62, it is explicitly explained that believers (Muslims), Christians, Jews, Sabaines and anyone who believes in Allah and the last day and does righteous deeds, they get a reward on

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<sup>14</sup> Agus Arifand et al., "Membangun Harmoni Dan Toleransi Melalui Moderasi Beragama," *Ta'rim: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Anak Usia Dini* 4, no. 2 (2023): 164–77.

the side of God.<sup>15</sup> In the context of sources from the Sunnah of the Prophet, the concept of tolerance in Islam is based on the Medina Charter. This charter took place in 622 in Medina and consists of 47 articles based on the numbering made by Joseph Schacht (1902-1969). The charter is an agreement that binds the Aus and Khazraj tribes, the two main tribes in Medina who are often hostile even though both are Muslims, as well as an agreement between the Prophet and the Jewish community. In this agreement, the Prophet guaranteed freedom of religion to the Jews in Medina.<sup>16</sup>

Various Muslim scholars, including Al-Gazali, emphasize the importance of moderation as the foundation of harmonious social interaction. In addition, the Islamic teaching that is emphasized in living life, especially in society, is to apply the principle of *wasathiyah*, better known as moderation and tolerance. Regarding moderation, many scholars have explained its meaning, one of them is Yusuf al-Qaradhawi. He is known as a moderate Ikhwan figure who is critical of Sayyid Quthb's thought, which is considered to trigger the emergence of radicalism, extremism, and views that tend to accuse other groups as *thaghut* or infidels (*takfiri*).<sup>17</sup>

The word "*moderation*" comes from the English word, "*moderation*," which means to be gentle but not excessive. Moderation in its original sense implies balance or justice, i.e. keeping things in the middle, neither excessive nor deficient. Moderation also reflects the wisdom of avoiding extremes or shortcomings. In English, the term is often associated with a sense of normalcy, standards and impartiality. Overall, moderation emphasizes harmony in principles, ethics, and character, both in viewing other individuals as fellow human beings and in managing state institutions. Based on these various definitions, moderation can be understood as an attitude of

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<sup>15</sup>Achmad Khudori Soleh, *Toleransi, Kebenaran Dan Kebahagiaan Menurut Al-Ghazali*.

<sup>16</sup> Achmad Khudori Soleh.

<sup>17</sup> Awaliya Safithri, Kawakib, and Hasbi Ash Shiddiqi, "Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Dan Toleransi Antar Umat Beragama Dalam Menciptakan Kerukunan Masyarakat Di Kota Pontianak Kalimantan Barat," *Al Fuadiyah : Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 4, no. 1 (2022): 13–26, <https://doi.org/10.55606/af.v4i1.7>.

caution and self-control to choose the middle way in order to create a good outcome.<sup>18</sup>

Religious moderation is an effort to maintain a balance between two things; for example, the principles of justice and balance are essential for religious moderation. These two values have similar meanings, namely the balance between two poles. This balance can be more easily achieved if one has insight, determination, and firmness. To understand religious moderation in Islam, there are several concepts that complement a moderate attitude in religion: *First*, *Tawassuth* (middle), carrying out attitudes so as not to be extreme and avoiding rigid religious understanding; *Two*, *Tawazun* (balance), practicing teachings in a polite way, covering aspects of the world and the hereafter, and maintaining principles to avoid deviation; *Three*, *I'tidal* (straight), Upholding justice and fulfilling responsibilities proportionally; *Four*, *Tasamuh* (tolerance), Understanding and appreciating differences, both in religion and other aspects of life; *Five*, *Musawah* (equality), not harming others because of differences in beliefs or habits; *Six*, *Shura* (deliberation), solving problems through discussion to reach an agreement that benefits all parties; *Seven*, *Ishlab* (reform), maintaining old good values while accepting innovations for the common good; *Eight*, *Aulaniyah* (priority), distinguishing which should take precedence based on urgency; *Nine*, *Tathawwur wa Ibtikar* (development and innovation), Consistently striving to meet the needs of change and improvement.<sup>19</sup>

Chart1: The Concept of Religious Moderation



<sup>18</sup> Susanti, "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Masyarakat Multikultural," *Tajdid: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman Dan Kemanusiaan* 6 (2022): 4.500-5000.

<sup>19</sup> Susanti.

### b. The concept of Iman and Kafir

Iman comes from the Arabic word for *tasdiq* or "to justify."<sup>20</sup> Faith is a belief in the heart that believes and accepts the existence of God and believes in all the teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad SAW.<sup>20</sup> With faith, one recognizes the obligatory and impossible attributes of Allah SWT. Faith makes a believer feel happy and entitles him to heaven in the hereafter.<sup>21</sup> This discussion about faith and *kufr* arose during the reign of Ali bin Abi Talib. The death of caliph Uthman bin Affan made Ali bin Abi Talib the strongest candidate to become the fourth caliph. But he was challenged by some of the companions of the Prophet who also wanted to become caliph, especially Talhah and Zubaer from Mecca and received support from Aisha ra, which ended in a battle fought by the two companions of the Prophet and Aisha ra. The battle took place in Iraq in 656, and was repulsed by Ali and his troops. Talhah and Zubaer were killed, while 'Aisha ra was sent back to Mecca.<sup>22</sup>

Literally, the word *kufr* means "to cover up something," while in the sense of the term, *kufr* refers to a person who covers up blessings and is not grateful for them, and refuses to recognize the oneness of Allah, His attributes, His books, and His messengers. Ibn Jarir at-Tabari defines *kufr* as the rejection of the truth, i.e. the attitude of covering up the truth that one has, so that the existence of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH cannot be known by others. In Arabic, *kufr* means "to cover something," so even the night is called *kafir* because of its darkness that covers everything. Ibn Kathir divided the disbelievers into two types. First, disbelievers who think that their actions and beliefs are right, when they are wrong. They are likened to a mirage in the desert, which looks like water but is actually just barren land. Likewise, the good deeds they do will not benefit them in the hereafter because they are not accepted by Allah.

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<sup>20</sup> Shofil Fikri, Agung Izul Haq, and Ummu Aiman, "Perspektif Beberapa Aliran Islam Tentang Dasar Keyakinan Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualis: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Tasawuf* 10, no. 1 (2024): 75–88, <https://doi.org/10.53429/spiritualis.v10i1.766>.

<sup>21</sup> Yuni Puspitaningrum, "Konsep Iman, Kufur, Dan Nifaq," *Ta'dib: Jurnal Penidikan Islam Dan Isu-Isu Sosial* 18, no. 2 (2020): 28–41.

<sup>22</sup> St. Jamilah Amin, "Penetapan Hukum Bagi Pelaku Dosa Besar, Iman Dan Kufur Dalam Aliran Teologi," *Delictum : Jurnal Hukum Pidana Islam*, 2020.

Second, *jabil basit*, the disbelievers who only follow their leaders without using the reason that Allah gave them, so they are confused and do not know the direction. These disbelievers are compared to rotten tomatoes and a dark sea. Ibn Kathir also explained that disbelievers are people who cover up and hide the truth, and reject what was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.<sup>23</sup>

### **c. Relevance of Tolerance and Moderation Concepts**

The concepts of tolerance and moderation have a very important relevance in the lives of modern societies that are increasingly diverse, both in religious and cultural aspects. Tolerance, which means accepting differences and appreciating diversity, encourages people to develop mutual respect, even when differences of belief or opinion arise. Moderation, which teaches balance and moving away from extremes, plays an important role in maintaining social stability, as extremism tends to undermine harmony and cause conflict. Therefore, tolerance and moderation can be considered the foundation for achieving a peaceful and harmonious society.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to strengthening human relations, tolerance and moderation also contribute to building an inclusive and just society. In the social and political context, moderation encourages policy-making that does not favor or ignore the interests of certain groups, thus preventing injustice and discrimination. Meanwhile, tolerance encourages wider acceptance of diverse cultural and religious identities, making society more inclusive. Both concepts are also aligned with universal values such as equality, justice and brotherhood, which are important cornerstones in creating a more peaceful and prosperous world.<sup>25</sup>

The relevance of tolerance and moderation is becoming increasingly crucial in the face of global challenges, such as conflicts between nations, terrorism, and radicalization. By applying the values

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<sup>23</sup> Muhaemin, "Kafir Dalam Al-Qur'an Studi Atas Penafsiran Mahmud Yunus Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Karim," *Jurnal Pengkajian Al-Qur'an Dan Budaya* 14, no. 2 (2021): 360.

<sup>24</sup> Safithri, Kawakib, and Ash Shiddiqi, "Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Dan Toleransi Antar Umat Beragama Dalam Menciptakan Kerukunan Masyarakat Di Kota Pontianak Kalimantan Barat."

<sup>25</sup> Arifand et al., "Membangun Harmoni Dan Toleransi Melalui Moderasi Beragama."

of tolerance, individuals and communities can avoid conflicts caused by differences, and through moderation, people are expected to be able to take more thoughtful and calm steps in addressing these differences. The application of these two concepts can help the world community overcome divisions and create a global environment that supports each other and promotes peace.

## C. Methods

This research is a qualitative research with a text analysis approach.<sup>26</sup> This research uses two approaches, the first is the historical approach, which is used to understand the context in which Al-Ghazali wrote the book *Fasl al-Tafriqah Bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqah*, including the socio-political and religious conditions of his day, second, the hermeneutic approach, used to interpret the texts in the book of *Fasl al-Tafriqah Bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqah* with the aim of understanding deeper meanings related to the concepts of faith, disbelief, tolerance, and religious moderation.

The data sources in this research consist of primary data, namely the book *Fasl al-Tafriqah Bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqah* by Al-Ghazali, and secondary data, taken from related literature that discusses Al-Ghazali's thoughts, including books, articles, and previous research relevant to the topic of tolerance and religious moderation. The first data collection technique is in the form of *library research*, by collecting data through literature studies, namely by reading, reviewing, and analyzing relevant sources. Furthermore, text analysis, the data is analyzed through critical reading of the text of the book *Fasl al-Tafriqah Bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqah* and interpretation of Al-Ghazali's thoughts. The first data *analysis* technique is *content analysis*, the data obtained from Al-Ghazali's book is analyzed using content analysis techniques to identify and categorize the main ideas related to faith, disbelief, tolerance, and religious moderation. *Second*, contextual interpretation, after analyzing the content, the data is interpreted in the historical and social context in which Al-Ghazali lived, to understand the relevance of these teachings in the present

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<sup>26</sup>M.Hum Tamaulina Br. Sembiring, SH., M.Hum., Ph.D Irmawati, S.Sn., M.Pd Muhammad Sabir, S.Pd., M.Pd Indra Tjahyadi, S.S., *Metodologi Penelitian (Teori Dan Praktik)* (Karawang: CV Saba Jaya Publisher, 2004).

context.<sup>27</sup> Data credibility and validity, in this study, consists of Source Triangulation, namely by comparing and contrasting data from various literature sources to increase the credibility of the research results. Source critique will be conducted to assess the authenticity and relevance of the sources used, so that the research results can be academically accounted for.<sup>28</sup>

## **D. Results**

### **a. The concept of faith and disbelief in the book *Fasl al-Tafriqah***

*Faishal al-Tafriqah baina al-Islam wa al-Zandaqah* (The dividing line between Islam and Atheists/zindiqs)" is one of the important works of the famous scholar Abu Ḥamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE). In this work, al-Ghazali develops the Islamic understanding of the concepts of faith and disbelief. Disbelief of others with a different understanding often occurs. Someone usually still accuses a believer of disbelief even though he still prays, fasts and gives zakat. Disbelieving people should be in accordance with Shariah. Shari'ah only allows the disbelief of people who have completely left Islam, not recognizing Allah as God, rejecting the Prophet Muhammad as His messenger, and of course, rejecting his teachings.

In al-Ghazali's view, people who accuse someone of disbelief without proof that the person has rejected the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad are, in fact, disbelievers. This model of disbelief also occurred during al-Ghazali's time, where many scholars disbelieved their ideological opponents simply because of differences of opinion. In a pluralistic community, through the concept of *tashawwuf akhlaki*, al-Ghazali advised believers to respect all disbelievers, however, al-Ghazali also forbade believers to become disbelievers, because according to him, disbelief can hinder the process of *tazkiyah al-nafs*. Departing from these conversations, al-Ghazali has formulated five criteria for the quality of a person,

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<sup>27</sup>Sugiyono, *Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R & D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2020).

<sup>28</sup> CHt. Prof. Dr. H.M. Sidik Priadana, MS Denok Sunarsi, S.Pd., M.M., *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif*, 1st ed. (Tangerang: Pascal Books, 2021).

believer or disbeliever, namely *al-wujud al-dzati*, *al-wujud al-hissi* (sensory), *al-wujud al-khayali* (imaginary), *al-wujud al-aqli* (rational), and *al-wujud al-syibhi* (metaphorical).<sup>29</sup>

Al-Ghazali explained that faith is belief in the heart, confession with the tongue, and deeds. Real faith is not only intellectual knowledge but also a manifestation of deep conviction in the heart that is reflected in one's actions and behavior. Faith in al-Ghazali's concept also involves recognition of the main principles of Islam such as belief in Allah, apostles, holy books, angels, the Day of Judgment, and good and bad destiny. Whereas *kufr* in the view of al-Ghazali is a person who does not trust Allah and the Messenger and what he brings, not only because of differences in viewpoints regarding the existence of Allah or differences in the madhhabs adopted. As long as in their hearts still cling to the phrase *La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad rasulullah*, they are among those who *mushodiqin* (justify), not those who dispute (*almunaqidin*). Jews and Christians are categorized as disbelievers because they deny the Messenger of Allah and the teachings he brought.<sup>30</sup>

Chart 2: The concept of faith and disbelief in the book of *Fasl al-Tafriqah*



### b. Relationships between Muslims in Al-Ghazali's Perspective

Relations among Muslims according to Al-Ghazali are based on moral values, morals, and deep religious understanding. Al-Ghazali, a great thinker in Islam, emphasized the importance of improving the heart and morals in building social relations among Muslims. According to him, human relationships are not just social

<sup>29</sup> Imâm Al-Ghazâlî, "Islam, Kafir, & Ateis (Faishal Al-Tafriqah Baina Al-Islam Wa Al-Zandaqah)," 2022, 1–59.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Ghazâlî.

interactions, but also a form of worship to Allah SWT. Every Muslim is obliged to uphold the principles of justice, honesty, and compassion towards others as a form of love for the Creator. This principle became the basis for Al-Ghazali to encourage harmonious relations between Muslims, where each individual acts as a representative of Islamic values.<sup>31</sup>

In Al-Ghazali's view, relations between Muslims must be based on the principles of brotherhood and solidarity. He cites the concept of *ukhuwah islamiyah* (brotherhood in Islam) as an important foundation for interaction. For Al-Ghazali, Islamic brotherhood is not only manifested in physical form, but also in feelings of mutual love, understanding and help for one another. Every Muslim is seen as part of a body, so any action that hurts or harms a Muslim is considered to hurt the whole community. With this principle, Al-Ghazali argues that relations between Muslims will be more solid and lasting if they are based on a sense of empathy and care.

In addition, Al-Ghazali reminded Muslims of the importance of maintaining adab and ethics in dealing with others. He argues that it is not enough for relations between Muslims to be based on the laws of sharia, but it is also necessary to pay attention to *adab* (ethics) related to respect for the rights of others.<sup>32</sup> For example, in daily interactions, a Muslim should always respect others, avoid gossip, and guard his or her tongue so as not to hurt the feelings of others. By maintaining these manners, Muslims can create a healthy social environment, where peace and mutual trust can be established. Al-Ghazali emphasized that good manners not only make one loved by people, but also bring one closer to Allah.<sup>33</sup>

Al-Ghazali views that relations between Muslims must be based on sincere intentions to seek Allah's pleasure. According to him, any form of kindness done to others will be worth worship if it is intended to get closer to Allah. Therefore, in every interaction, a

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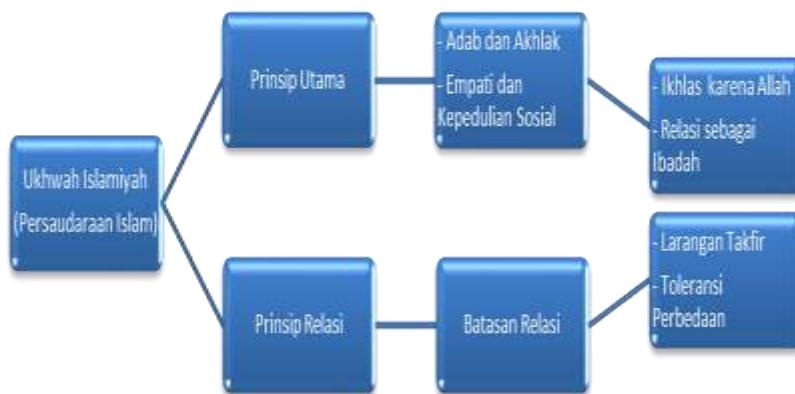
<sup>31</sup> Jamaludin -, "Tinjauan Hukum Islam Terhadap Relasi Agama Dan Negara Dalam Perspektif Al-Ghazali," *Mutawasith: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 3, no. 2 (2020): 186–99, <https://doi.org/10.47971/mjhi.v3i2.235>.

<sup>32</sup>Kusuma and Rahmadani, "Imam Al-Ghazali Dan Pemikirannya."

<sup>33</sup> Maula Sari and Marhaban, "Hubungan Ilmu Dan Agama Dalam Perspektif Imam Al-Ghazali," *At-Tajfir* 15, no. 1 (2022): 30–43, <https://doi.org/10.32505/at.v15i1.4095>.

Muslim must distance himself from selfishness or the desire for praise. Al-Ghazali believed that with sincere intentions, Muslims can create a harmonious society, filled with compassion, and far from disputes. This sincerity in dealing with others is considered by Al-Ghazali as the highest form of devotion, which not only strengthens the bonds of brotherhood among Muslims, but also makes the relationship a charity that is pleasing to Allah SWT.

Chart 3: Inter-Muslim Relationships from Al-Ghazali's Perspective



### c. The Relevance of Al-Ghazali's Concept of Tolerance and Moderation in the Modern Context

Al-Ghazali's thoughts on tolerance and moderation offer a relevant view in facing the challenges of an increasingly complex modern world. Al-Ghazali emphasized the importance of maintaining balance in religious, social, and political life. In the context of today's pluralistic society, moderation (*wasathiyah*) is an important foundation for creating harmony. Al-Ghazali rejected extremism and promoted an inclusive approach to differences, both in religious understanding and in social life. This can be a solution to prevent conflicts that often arise due to intolerance and polarization.

The tolerance taught by Al-Ghazali is not a passive attitude, but an active action to understand and appreciate diversity. In a multicultural global context, these values are indispensable for building dialog across cultures and religions. Al-Ghazali taught the

importance of respecting the rights of other individuals and groups to have different beliefs, without compromising the basic principles of religion. This value is important to counter the exclusivity narrative that often becomes the root of social conflicts, both at the local and international levels.<sup>34</sup>

Al-Ghazali's concept of moderation is also relevant in facing various moral and ethical challenges in the modern era. He advocates moderation as a way of avoiding extremes, both in spiritual and material aspects. For example, in dealing with the consumption of technology and information, moderation is needed to maintain a balance between the benefits and potential dangers. This principle can be applied in various fields, including economics, politics and education, in order to create an equitable and sustainable society.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, the relevance of Al-Ghazali's tolerance and moderation is seen in his attempt to bring reason and revelation together. In a modern world where science and religion are often conflated, this approach provides a harmonious perspective. By taking tolerance and moderation as guidelines, society can build respectful relationships, both among individuals and in the context of interstate relations. Al-Ghazali's thoughts serve as a reminder that diversity is a wealth to be preserved, not a threat to be avoided.

Chart 4: The Relevance of Al-Ghazali's Concept of Tolerance and Moderation in the Modern Context



<sup>34</sup>Al-Ghazâlî, “Islam, Kafir, & Ateis (Faishal Al-Tafriqah Bainâ Al-Islam Wa Al-Zandaqah).”

<sup>35</sup> Alwi Shihab, “Respon Al Quran Terhadap Moderasi Beragama Dan Relevansinya,” *AL Fawatih* 3, no. 2 (2022): 170–82.

## E. Discussion

Al-Gazali views faith as a strong belief in the heart in the truth of Islamic teachings, supported by verbal confession and consistency in action. According to him, faith is not just a statement or claim of Islam, but must include appreciation of the oneness of Allah and the message of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Al-Gazali emphasized that faith is not something static, but can increase or decrease according to the level of belief and charity of an individual. In this case, Al-Gazali points out that someone who has sincere beliefs and strives to implement the teachings of Islam with sincerity can be said to have faith.<sup>36</sup>

Al-Gazali explains kafir as a condition of denying or rejecting the basic principles of Islam. However, he placed strict limits on disbelief, warning that carelessly disbelieving someone could lead to division among Muslims. Al-Gazali argues that there is an element of uncertainty in assessing the beliefs of a person's heart, so only Allah can determine with certainty the status of a person's faith or disbelief. He also elaborated that not every action or thought that deviates from mainstream Islam can be classified as disbelief; there is room for differences of opinion in Islam.<sup>37</sup>

Al-Gazali's cautious attitude towards disbelief is reflected in his principle of moderation. In *Fast al-Tafriqah*, he warns that the attempt to disbelieve others without a solid basis is a dangerous act, because it can cause injustice and eliminate the sense of brotherhood among the people. Al-Gazali distinguishes between errors in theological understanding or *furu'* (branches of religion) and outright disbelief, and emphasizes the importance of tolerance for differences that do not touch the core of the Islamic faith.<sup>38</sup>

Al-Gazali argued that in some situations, people can still be considered believers despite differences in understanding certain aspects of the religion, as long as they still adhere to the main

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<sup>36</sup> Al-Ghazâlî, “Islam, Kafir, & Ateis (Faishal Al-Tafriqah Bainâ Al-Islam Wa Al-Zandaqah).”

<sup>37</sup> Al-Ghazâlî.

<sup>38</sup> Umar Faruq Thohir STAI Zainul Hasan Probolinggo and Kata kunci, “Pesan Damai Al-Ghazali; Sebuah Konsep Kafir Dan Mukmin Dalam Perspektif Tasawuf Akhlâqî,” n.d., 1–24.

principles of Islam. He avoids disbelieving Muslims who hold different theological views, such as the different views among the various sects and schools of thought.<sup>39</sup>

In Al-Ghazali's view, relations between Muslims should be based on the principles of moderation, tolerance and brotherhood. Al-Ghazali, who lived amidst various theological differences among the schools of Islam, emphasized the importance of maintaining unity and avoiding divisions caused by differences of opinion in matters of *furu'* or branches of religion.

Al-Ghazali, a great Islamic scholar, offers a concept of tolerance and moderation that is very relevant in dealing with the dynamics of modern society. His thinking is based on the principle of *wasathiyah* (moderation) which prioritizes balance in living life, both in the religious, social and political spheres. These values are important considering that the modern world is faced with the challenges of globalization, pluralism, and conflict due to extremism. Al-Ghazali's thought emphasizes the importance of an inclusive attitude towards differences and the need to avoid excessive fanaticism.

In the context of pluralism, Al-Ghazali's tolerance is reflected through his teaching to respect differences in views and beliefs. Al-Ghazali understood that diversity is part of sunnatullah (God's decree) that must be accepted with an open attitude. This attitude is particularly relevant in the global era, where interactions across cultures, religions and nations are intensifying. By emulating Al-Ghazali's tolerance, modern society can develop constructive dialogue between groups, so as to reduce conflict and build social harmony.

The moderation taught by Al-Ghazali also provides important lessons for the modern world, which is often trapped in polarization, both at the individual and collective levels. Al-Ghazali offers a middle way concept that avoids extremism in all aspects of life, including in religion and politics. In everyday life, this moderation can be realized through a wise attitude in addressing

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<sup>39</sup> Al-Ghazâlî, "Islam, Kafir, & Ateis (Faishal Al-Tafriqah Bainâ Al-Islam Wa Al-Zandaqah)."

sensitive issues such as differences in political views, differences in religious interpretations, and other social issues.

In addition, the relevance of Al-Ghazali's tolerance and moderation is seen in his attempt to bring together reason and revelation as the basis for decision-making. In a modern world that often contrasts science and religion, this approach provides a foundation for society to integrate the two harmoniously. Thus, Al-Ghazali's thought can be a solution to the challenges of modern society that wants a balance between technological progress and spiritual values.<sup>40</sup>

## F. Conclusion

Based on the explanation mentioned, it can be concluded that Al-Ghazali's teaching of religious tolerance and moderation, as contained in his work *Fastl al-Tafriqah bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqah*, shows the depth of Al-Ghazali's thinking in understanding the relationship between faith and disbelief. Al-Ghazali offers a view that rejects extremes in assessing one's faith and emphasizes the importance of a fair and moderate approach. Al-Ghazali asserts that the judgment of individual faith is not the domain of humans, but God's prerogative. This thinking is particularly relevant in the modern context, where religious and cultural pluralism demands mutual respect and tolerance. Al-Ghazali taught that one's beliefs should not be an excuse to justify discriminatory or violent actions. The moderation offered by Al-Ghazali encourages Muslims to maintain a balance between commitment to religious teachings and respect for diversity. Al-Ghazali's teachings on religious tolerance and moderation are not only relevant within the framework of Islamic history, but also a universal guide that can be applied in building peace and harmony in this modern era.

This research is expected to make an academic contribution by adding to the wealth of literature related to Al-Ghazali's thoughts in terms of religious tolerance and moderation, as well as expanding insights into the concepts of faith and disbelief according to his

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<sup>40</sup> Shihab, "The Quranic Response to Religious Moderation and Its Relevance."

views. Practically, the results of this research are expected to provide a deeper understanding for the community in developing an attitude of religious tolerance and moderation, which is an important element to support the creation of harmony and prevent conflicts between religious communities. In the field of Islamic studies, this research is expected to be a reference for similar studies that focus on the values of tolerance and moderation in Islam, as formulated by classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali. This research is also expected to help produce an understanding that is relevant to the dynamics of modern life. From a social perspective, this research is expected to strengthen the foundation of religious tolerance in society, reduce the potential for extremism, and promote harmony in pluralistic social life.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, this study focuses on the book *Fast al-Tafriqah bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqah* as the main source of Al-Ghazali's thoughts on faith and disbelief, so it does not fully represent all of Al-Ghazali's ideas related to religious tolerance and moderation. This research focuses more on textual and conceptual analysis, so it has not touched the applicative aspects in depth. This means that the relevance of Al-Ghazali's thought in the modern context is only studied at the theoretical level without being equipped with empirical data from its implementation in today's society. This can limit the generalization of the research results in providing practical solutions to the problems of religious tolerance and moderation in the modern world. This research is limited to the Islamic context, so that the contribution of Al-Ghazali's ideas in interfaith dialog has not been fully explored. The scope of this research is limited by the availability of relevant and authentic reference sources.

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