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Islamic Legal Philosophy from the Perspective of Al Ghazali



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ABSTRAK

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan menjelaskan secara komprehensif konstruksi filsafat hukum Islam menurut al-Ghazali serta relevansinya dalam konteks kontemporer. **Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis terhadap karya-karya al-Ghazali dan literatur pendukung. **Temuan:** Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa al-Ghazali berhasil mensintesis antara pendekatan normatif, rasional, dan spiritual dalam memahami hukum Islam. Ia menegaskan bahwa inti syariat adalah menjaga lima prinsip pokok (*al-ḍarūriyyāt al-khams*): perlindungan agama, jiwa, akal, keturunan, dan harta. Melalui kerangka *uṣūl al-fiqh* yang sistematis, ia mengembangkan konsep *maṣlaḥah* sebagai dasar pertimbangan hukum selama tidak bertentangan dengan nash yang *qath'i*. **Implikasi:** Pemikiran al-Ghazali tetap relevan sebagai fondasi teoretis dalam merespons dinamika sosial dan perkembangan zaman, termasuk isu-isu kontemporer seperti ekonomi syariah, bioetika, dan teknologi digital, tanpa meninggalkan prinsip dasar syariat.

Kata Kunci: Filsafat Hukum Islam, Al-Ghazali, *Maqāsid Al-Shari'ah*, *Maslahah*

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to comprehensively explain the construction of Islamic legal philosophy according to al-Ghazali and its relevance in the contemporary context. **Method:** This study uses a literature review with a descriptive-analytical approach to the works of al-Ghazali and supporting literature. **Findings:** The results of the study show that al-Ghazali successfully synthesized normative, rational, and spiritual approaches in understanding Islamic law. He emphasized that the essence of Sharia is to protect five basic principles (*al-ḍarūriyyāt al-khams*): protection of religion, life, reason, lineage, and property. Through a systematic *uṣūl al-fiqh* framework, he developed the concept of *maṣlaḥah* as the basis for legal considerations as long as it does not conflict with *qath'i*. **Implications:** Al-Ghazali's thinking remains relevant as a theoretical foundation for responding to social dynamics and developments, including contemporary issues such as Islamic economics, bioethics, and digital technology, without abandoning the basic principles of *Sharia*.

Keywords: Islamic Legal Philosophy, Al-Ghazali, *Maqāsid al-Shari'ah*, *Maslahah*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic law is not only understood as a set of normative rules, but also as a system with a deep philosophical dimension (Al-Zuhayli, 1986). The increasingly complex development of society demands a more substantive approach to understanding *Sharia* law (Kamali, 2003). In this context, Islamic legal philosophy is important because it serves to reveal the objectives, wisdom, and rationality behind legal provisions (Auda, 2008).

The increasingly complex development of modern society presents various new issues in the social, economic, family, and technological fields. This condition demands an approach to Islamic law that is not rigid but remains based on the basic principles of *Sharia*. In this context, al-Ghazali's thinking is relevant because it offers a methodological framework that balances revelation and reason, text and context, as well as normative and spiritual aspects.

Among classical scholars, al-Ghazali occupies a strategic position because he successfully combined the approaches of *fiqh*, *usul fiqh*, theology, and Sufism.⁴ His thoughts on *maqāṣid al-shariah* became an important foundation in the development of Islamic legal theory into the modern era (Al-Ghazali, 2013). Therefore, studying Islamic legal philosophy according to al-Ghazali is relevant to understanding the dynamics of Islamic law in greater depth (Auda, 2008).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research design. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the construction of Islamic legal philosophy according to al-Ghazali through a study of relevant textual sources. This library research focuses on al-Ghazali's thoughts, particularly those related to the concepts of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and *maṣlaḥah* in the framework of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. The qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the philosophical, normative, and epistemological dimensions of al-Ghazali's thoughts in depth. Thus, this study does not aim to produce statistical generalizations, but rather a contextual and analytical understanding of the construction of Islamic legal philosophy developed by al-Ghazali.

Data was collected through several techniques. First, a primary literature review was conducted on al-Ghazali's major works, particularly *al-Mustaṣfā min Ilm al-Uṣūl*, *Iḥyā'Ulūm al-Dīn*, *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, and *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*. Second, a secondary literature review was conducted on supporting literature in the form of books, scientific journals, and academic works discussing al-Ghazali's thoughts and the development of Islamic legal philosophy in general.

Data analysis was conducted descriptively and analytically through several stages: data reduction, which involved sorting and focusing on data relevant to the research theme; data presentation, which involved organizing data into thematic categories to facilitate understanding; and drawing conclusions, which involved interpreting data to identify patterns and meanings related to the construction of Islamic legal philosophy according to al-Ghazali. The focus of the analysis covers three main aspects: the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, the theory of *maṣlaḥah*, and al-Ghazali's legal epistemology. To maintain data validity, this study applied source triangulation techniques by comparing and confirming data obtained from various primary and secondary sources to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings.

RESULTS

Brief Biography of Al-Ghazali

Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali's full name is Abu Ḥamid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭusi al-Ghazali. He was born in Ṭus, Khurasan, in 450 AH/1058 AD and died in 505 AH/1111 AD (Al-Ghazali, 2013). He is known as a multidisciplinary scholar who mastered fiqh, usul fiqh, theology, philosophy, and Sufism (Griffel, 2009). Since childhood, al-Ghazali had shown extraordinary intelligence. He studied fiqh under Ahmad al-Radhakani in Tus, then continued his studies in Naisabur under Imam al-Juwayni (Imam al-Haramayn), a great scholar of the Shafi'i school of thought. Under his teacher's guidance, al-Ghazali mastered various disciplines, including logic and philosophy. In the field of fiqh, he affiliated himself with the Shafi'i school and studied under Imam al-Juwayni in Naisabur. His intellectual career reached its peak when he became a professor at the Nizamiyah Madrasah in Baghdad during the Seljuk dynasty, a prestigious position that demonstrated his scientific authority in the Islamic world at that time (Al-Ghazali, 2013).

Al-Ghazali's intellectual journey was marked by a phase of criticism of pure rational philosophy and an attempt to reconstruct Islamic epistemology by placing revelation, reason, and spiritual experience in proportion (Griffel, 2009). His monumental works, such as *al-Mustashfa min 'Ilm al-Ushul*, became the main reference in the study of *usul fiqh* (Al-Ghazali, 2013). In addition, his great work *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* shows how Islamic law is not only related to outward rules, but also integrated with moral and spiritual values. Through his thoughts, al-Ghazali is not only known as a theologian and jurist, but also as a figure who renewed the way of thinking in Islamic legal studies, whose influence is still felt today.

The Concept of Islamic Legal Philosophy According to Al-Ghazali

According to al-Ghazali, Islamic law was revealed to realize human welfare in this world and the hereafter (Al-Ghazali, 2013). He rejected the view that understood the law solely in a textual sense without seeing the purpose behind it (Al-Zuhayli, 1986). In his perspective, the Sharia has a rational dimension that can be understood through the usul fiqh method (Kamali, 2003). Al-Ghazali emphasized that all provisions of sharia law essentially aim to uphold five fundamental principles of human life (Al-Ghazali, 2013). These principles are known as *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* (Auda, 2008). These five principles form the basis for assessing whether a law brings benefit or causes harm (*mafsadah*). The concept of *maqāṣid* is al-Ghazali's greatest contribution to Islamic legal philosophy (Al-Ghazali, 2013). He formulated that the objectives of sharia are to preserve:

1. Religion (*ḥifẓ al-din*) Preserving religion means protecting faith, worship, and religious values so that they are maintained in the lives of individuals and families. Sharia regulates various provisions so that people can practice their religion properly. An example in family law is the legalization of marriage to preserve honor and avoid adultery;
2. Life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) Preserving life means protecting human safety and dignity from all forms of danger, violence, and actions that destroy life. An example in family law is the prohibition of domestic violence;

3. Intellect (*hifẓ al-‘aql*) Protecting the intellect means protecting human thinking abilities from anything that could damage them, both physically and morally. An example in family law is the obligation of parents to provide education to their children;
4. Progeny (*hifẓ al-nasl*) Protecting offspring means ensuring the clarity of lineage, honor, and the continuity of generations in a lawful and honorable manner. An example in family law is the legalization of marriage to legitimize the relationship between husband and wife;
5. Property (*hifẓ al-māl*) Preserving wealth means protecting ownership and management of wealth so that it is not misused or unfairly harmed. An example in family law is the obligation of the husband to provide for his wife, the regulation of dowry in marriage, and the fair distribution of inheritance.

According to al-Ghazali, these five objectives are universal and serve as benchmarks for establishing laws (Auda, 2008). He also divides human needs into three levels (Kamali, 2003):

1. *Daruriyyat* (primary). *Daruriyyat* are basic necessities that must exist for the survival of humanity and religion. If these needs are not met, it will cause great damage (*mafsadah*) in life. *Daruriyyat* are directly related to five main principles: protecting religion, life, reason, lineage, and property. Examples in family law are: a) Valid marriage → preserving lineage (*hifẓ al-nasl*) and religion (*hifẓ al-dīn*); b) Prohibition of adultery → protecting lineage and family honor; c) The obligation of maintenance → preserving life (*hifẓ al-nafs*) and the livelihood of family members; d) Inheritance rules → preserving wealth (*hifẓ al-māl*).
2. *Hajiyyat* (secondary). *Hajiyyat* are needs that do not threaten life if they are not fulfilled, but if ignored will cause difficulties and hardship in life. The aim is to provide convenience and avoid difficulties (*raf‘ al-ḥaraj*). Examples in Family Law are: a) *Rukḥṣah* in dowry → dowry does not have to be expensive, it can be simple so as not to be burdensome; b) Permission for divorce when the household is not harmonious → to avoid prolonged suffering.
3. *Taḥsiniyyāt* (complements). *Taḥsiniyyāt* are complementary/perfecting needs related to ethics, manners, and moral beauty. If they are not fulfilled, they do not destroy life, but they reduce perfection and harmony. Examples in Family Law are: a) The recommendation to treat one's spouse well (*mu‘āsharah bi alma‘rūf*); b) Etiquette in marriage, such as the marriage sermon and *walimah*; c) The recommendation to give children good names.

This division shows that Islamic law is systematic and considers the urgency of human needs. In addition to rational and normative aspects, al-Ghazali also emphasizes the spiritual dimension in Islamic law. For him, the ultimate goal of Sharia is not only social order, but also moral guidance and purification of the soul. Therefore, Islamic law must be understood as a system that harmoniously integrates legal, moral, and spiritual aspects. Furthermore, within the framework of his legal philosophy, al-Ghazali pays great attention to the concept of *maslahah*. He defines *maslahah* as everything that preserves the objectives of *Sharia* (Al-Ghazali, 2013). However, he rejects the free use of *maslahah* without methodological restrictions (Al-Zuhayli, 1986). Al-Ghazali divides *maslahah* into three categories:

1. *Maslahah Mu'tabarah* is a benefit that is clearly recognized by the text (the Qur'an or Hadith) or supported by valid evidence. This means that the Sharia explicitly or implicitly accepts and establishes it.
2. *Maslahah Mulghah* is a benefit that appears rationally good but contradicts clear textual evidence, and thus cannot serve as a legal basis.
3. *Maslahah Mursalah* is a benefit that is not directly mentioned in the text, but there is also no argument against it, and it is in line with the general objectives of Sharia.

According to al-Ghazali, *maslahah mursalah* can be used as a basis for law as long as it does not contradict the text and *maqasid* (Al-Ghazali, 2013). This approach shows a moderate stance between textualism and rationalism (Auda, 2008). Al-Ghazali's concept of *maslahah* is grounded in the preservation of the objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-syari'ah*): the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. Everything that guarantees these five principles constitutes *maslahah*, while any neglect in their preservation constitutes *mafsadat*. Crucially, Al-Ghazali insists that *maslahah* must be rooted in the textual sources of Islamic law (*nash syara'*) and not in reason alone. He stipulates that for *maslahah* to be legally valid, it must fulfill three indispensable conditions: it must be *daruriyyah* (essential and related to a primary necessity), *qathiyyah* (certain and indisputable), and *kulliyyah* (universal in scope, benefiting the Muslim community as a whole). This strict methodological framework demonstrates that Al-Ghazali's approach to *maslahah* is both principled and bounded, resisting arbitrary or pragmatic manipulation of Islamic law (Kudaedah, 2020). The classical framework of *maslahah* continues to provide the logical foundation for contemporary Islamic legal reasoning, serving as the bridge between normative texts and evolving social realities (Fadhila, Wulandari & Putri, 2025).

Al-Ghazali's Epistemology of Law

The epistemology of law in Abu Hamid al-Ghazali's thinking stems from an effort to place the sources and methods of Islamic legal knowledge in proportion between revelation, reason, and spiritual experience. He not only discusses what law is, but also how law is known (*manhaj al-istinbāt*) and what the basis of its legitimacy is its truth

1. The role of reason and revelation. Al-Ghazali places revelation as the primary source of law, but still provides space for reason. He rejects extreme rationalism, but also criticizes rigid literalism. In his view, reason serves to understand and develop law, not to replace revelation (Kamali, 2003). In his work *al-Mustashfa min'Ilm al-Uşul*, Al-Ghazali systematically explains the methodological structure of *istinbāt law*, including the use of *qiyas* (analogy) and *maslahah* considerations that remain based on *nash* (Al-Ghazali, 2013). This shows that his legal epistemology is integrative between revelation and reason. This integrative epistemology has a direct bearing on the function of Islamic legal philosophy in the development of *ijihad*. Islamic legal philosophy is the knowledge of the essence, secrets, and objectives of Islamic law, both concerning its material content and the process of its establishment. It is the philosophy used to radiate, strengthen, and preserve Islamic law so that it conforms to the intent and purpose of Allah in establishing it on earth, namely the welfare of all humankind, making it truly "*salihun likulli zaman wa makan*" (suitable for all times and places). In this

framework, the role of reason and revelation in establishing Islamic law becomes the central study of Islamic legal philosophy. Shodikin (2016) further affirms that understanding the objective of the law's establishment in Islam is equally as important as understanding the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith, since the purpose of the law is also comprehended from the values and spirit contained in divine revelation. Critically, *ijtihad* — as the methodological bridge between unchanging texts and evolving realities — cannot be separated from Islamic legal philosophy, because the process of *ijtihad* is almost entirely dependent on intellectual capacity in interpreting the Qur'an and Hadith against problems and legal events that arise in society.

2. Criticism of pure philosophy. Al-Ghazali criticized philosophers who relied too much on reason in understanding reality. This criticism is clearly seen in his work *Tahafut al-Falasifah* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers). However, he did not reject logic as a tool of thinking (Kamali, 2003). It can be understood that al-Ghazali did not reject philosophy as a whole, but rather criticized certain aspects of philosophy that were considered contrary to Islamic teachings. His criticism was selective and methodological, not a total rejection of rationality. His criticism can be summarized as follows:
 - a. Criticism of rational metaphysics. In *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, al-Ghazali argues that philosophers rely too much on reason in metaphysical matters. He criticizes three main doctrines that are considered contrary to Islamic beliefs: the belief that nature is *qadim* (eternal), the view that God only knows universal things, not particulars, and rejection of bodily resurrection in the afterlife. He stated that these three views contradict the principles of revelation and therefore cannot be accepted in Islamic theology. It is important to emphasize that the widespread view portraying Al-Ghazali as an enemy of philosophy arises from a partial reading of his philosophical corpus. Al-Ghazali in fact played a crucial role in naturalizing philosophy within the framework of Islamic theology. Rather than destroying the tradition of rational inquiry, al-Ghazali selectively integrated philosophical methods especially Aristotelian logic into Islamic legal and theological discourse, thus demonstrating that his approach was one of critical engagement rather than outright rejection. This perspective underscores that the *Tahafut al-Falasifah* should not be read as a representation of conflict between philosophy and dogma, but rather as evidence of Al-Ghazali's effort to place rationality proportionally within the bounds of revelation (Assyabani, 2020). In addition, another study highlights that the philosophical debate between al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd does not indicate the collapse of the rational tradition in Islam, but rather the rich diversity of epistemological approaches, in which Al-Ghazali emphasized the integration of revelation, reason, and spiritual intuition, while Ibn Rushd supported demonstrative rationalism. Both positions, when taken together, reflect the dynamism of the Islamic intellectual heritage.
 - b. Criticism of claims of rational certainty. Al-Ghazali rejected the claim that the metaphysical arguments of philosophers were demonstrative and certain. In *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*, he explained that reason has limitations and cannot grasp the whole of reality, especially matters of the unseen. For him, revelation remained the highest source of truth, while reason served as a tool for understanding revelation, not replacing it.

- c. Moderate Stance on Logic Despite criticizing philosophical metaphysics, al-Ghazali did not reject logic as a tool for thinking. In *al-Mustashfa min'Ilm al-Uşul*, he even integrated logical methods into *ushul fiqh* to maintain the validity of legal arguments.
- d. The concepts of *maqāṣid* and *maṣlaḥah*. One of al-Ghazali's most important contributions to legal epistemology is the formulation of the objectives of sharia (*maqāṣid al-shari'ah*). He states that all Islamic law aims to preserve five basic principles (*al-ḍarūriyyāt al-khams*): religion, life, reason, lineage, and property. Through this concept, legal knowledge is not only based on text, but also on an understanding of the purpose of the law. He allows the use of *maṣlaḥah mursalah* as long as it does not contradict the *nash* and is in line with the *maqāṣid*. Thus, Islamic law is both rational and normative.
- e. Integration of logic and *ushul fiqh*. Al-Ghazali also integrated the method of logic (*manṭiq*) into the study of *ushul fiqh*. He viewed logic as a tool of thinking that helps maintain the consistency and validity of legal arguments. Although he criticized philosophers in *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, he did not reject logic as a methodological instrument.
- f. The spiritual dimension in epistemology. Unlike many other legal scholars, al-Ghazali added a spiritual dimension to legal epistemology. According to him, true knowledge is not only obtained through texts and reason, but also through purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al nafs*). This can be seen in his work *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn*, in which law is understood as a means of shaping character and approaching God.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that Islamic legal philosophy, as viewed by Al-Ghazali, is an intellectual manifestation that dialectically integrates normative, rational, and spiritual dimensions. Al-Ghazali positions law not merely as an instrument of formal legality, but as a means to achieve *maṣlaḥah* (public interest) oriented toward the protection of the essence of humanity. This affirms that, in Al-Ghazali's view, sharia is dynamic and adaptive to social change without losing its grounding in revelatory authority. Al-Ghazali's emphasis on the *al-ḍarūriyyāt al khams* (five fundamental principles) indicates that the purpose of Islamic law is to maintain the stability of life through the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al nafs*), reason (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) (AlGhazali, 2013).

This principle of protection aligns with the fundamental values of the Qur'an, which affirm that Allah desires ease and the common good for His servants. As emphasized in his methodological framework, the existence of Islamic law aims to safeguard the social order from corruption (*mafsadah*). In this context, Al-Ghazali divides the hierarchy of human needs into three levels: *daruriyyat* (primary), *hajiyyat* (secondary), and *tahsiniyyat* (complementary) (Kamali, 2003). This division confirms that Al-Ghazali's philosophy of law places great emphasis on a scale of priorities in addressing human problems, where protection of primary needs must take precedence to prevent broader social chaos. Al-Ghazali's strategy in integrating logic (*manṭiq*) into the structure of *uṣūl alfiqh* demonstrates how rational reasoning can function as a servant of revelation. From a legal epistemological perspective, the use of logic enables the process of *istinbāt* (legal deduction) to become more systematic, consistent, and methodologically accountable. Al-Ghazali in *Tahāfut*

al-Falāsifah does indeed criticize speculative philosophical metaphysics, yet he retains logic as an essential tool for thinking to ensure the validity of legal arguments. This creates space for responsive yet controlled *ijtihad*, preventing Islamic law from becoming trapped in rigid literalism or unrestrained extreme rationalism.

Furthermore, the theory of *maṣlaḥah mursalah* proposed by Al-Ghazali reinforces the urgency of legal flexibility in addressing modern challenges. The use of *maṣlaḥah* as the basis for legal consideration—provided it does not contradict a definitive text (*nash qath'i*) demonstrates that Al-Ghazali recognized the tension between a limited text and an ever-evolving social context (Zuhayli, 1986). However Al-Ghazali imposes strict limitations: such public interest must be universal (*kullī*), certain (*qath'i*), and urgent (*daruri*). This approach serves to prevent the risk of the profanation of law or the use of *maṣlaḥah* for pragmatic political and economic interests that could diminish the sacred value of the Sharia itself (Auda, 2008).

It is equally instructive to compare al-Ghazali's position on *maṣlaḥah* with that of Imam Malik. Imam Malik accepted *maṣlaḥah mursalah* more broadly as an independent legal source applicable to matters of public benefit, al-Ghazali applied a far more restrictive approach, insisting that *maṣlaḥah* must remain anchored to the existing textual sources and cannot operate independently of the *nash*. This comparative perspective reveals that al-Ghazali's contribution lies not merely in introducing *maṣlaḥah* as a concept, but in constructing its boundaries with methodological rigor. Such strictness was intentional: al-Ghazali sought to ensure that the flexibility of Islamic law did not degenerate into relativism. His framework thus represents a carefully calibrated balance, ensuring that Islamic law remains responsive to human welfare while retaining its normative integrity grounded in divine revelation (Haq, Azahra & Parhan, 2025).

The synthesis of law and spirituality offered in *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn* provides a new dimension for contemporary legal philosophy. For Al-Ghazali, legal compliance must not be merely external but must be accompanied by the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*). True legal knowledge is attained through the integration of text, reason, and inner experience (Griffel, 2009). From this perspective, the revitalization of Islamic law in the modern era cannot be achieved through mere physical regulatory reform alone; rather, it must address the strengthening of public ethics and morality. Islamic law must be capable of serving as a solution to the crises of spirituality and humanity amidst the currents of modernization and digital technology.

In a comparative study of al-Ghazali, Asy-Syatibi, and Ibn Khaldun published in *Al-Mazaahib*, he demonstrates that each thinker has distinct perspectives in Islamic legal philosophy as the foundation for the existence or absence of Islamic law. Al-Ghazali and Asy-Syatibi share the position that law must be grounded in revelation there is no legal legitimacy without a textual foundation (*nash*). Both agree on the role of *maṣlaḥah* as the objective of law, so that any law established based on texts must conform to *maqashid asy-syari'ah*. A key distinction emerges, however: while al-Ghazali provides strict epistemological boundaries placing reason under the authority of revelation, Asy-Syatibi elaborates more systematically on the interrelationship among categories of *maṣlaḥah* (*dharuriyat*, *hajiyyat*, and *tahsinīyat*) an elaboration that al-Ghazali had not yet fully developed. Ibn Khaldun, by contrast, represents a rationalist strand emphasizing the role of human reason in reading the divine message, illustrating the rich breadth of Islamic legal-philosophical tradition (Wahyuni, 2022).

In the contemporary context, Islamic legal thought has long experienced stagnation because it was built on deductive thinking using a positivistic paradigm, deriving law from texts through purely linguistic analysis. A transformation is now underway from a literalist to a teleological paradigm, from *taqlid qauli* toward *taqlid manhaji*. Maulidi draws on Auda's systems approach, which positions *maqasid syariah* as a philosophical framework for legal reasoning, treating law as an element of an interconnected system oriented toward the welfare of humanity. In this approach, law cannot be understood as a single, isolated entity it is inherently linked to social and natural sciences, and the broader realities of human life. The assumption that law is final and unchanging regardless of evolving reality is precisely the stagnation that *maqasid*-based thinking seeks to overcome (Maulidi, 2022). This contemporary reformulation resonates with al-Ghazali's foundational insight that the objectives of the law — protecting religion, life, reason, lineage, and property must always remain the guiding orientation of legal reasoning, regardless of the complexity of contemporary problems.

CONCLUSION

The concept of Islamic legal philosophy in al-Ghazali's perspective places *maqasid al-shari'ah* as the core of lawmaking. The concept of *maqasid al-shari'ah* that he formulated includes the protection of religion, life, reason, lineage, and property, which form the normative and philosophical foundation for understanding and developing Islamic law. Through a systematic *uṣūl al-fiqh* framework, al-Ghazali places *maṣlaḥah* as an important instrument in *istinbat* law, while adhering to the authority of *nash* and strict methodological boundaries. His thinking shows a harmonious synthesis between revelation and reason, between the normative and rational dimensions, and between the legal and spiritual aspects. With this approach, Islamic law is not only understood as a formal rule, but also as a means of moral guidance and social order maintenance. In the contemporary context, the *maqasid* and *maṣlaḥah* framework offered by al-Ghazali has proven to be highly adaptable in responding to various modern issues without losing the basic principles of sharia. Therefore, al-Ghazali's legal philosophy remains relevant and strategic as a theoretical foundation for the development of *ijtihad* and the renewal of Islamic law in the modern era.

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ETHICAL STATEMENT

This research is carried out by adhering to the principles of research ethics that uphold respect for human rights, human dignity, fairness in the treatment of research subjects, balance between benefits and risks, and scientific integrity, which includes honesty and openness in reporting data and research results.

AI DECLARATIONS

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI)–assisted tools were used to support the literature review process in the introduction, particularly for identifying relevant studies and improving clarity of synthesis. All interpretations, critical analyses, and scholarly judgments remain the full responsibility of the authors.