

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AL-GHAZALI AND IBN ARABI'S THEODICY THOUGHTS ABOUT DIVINE LOVE

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Abstract

This research discusses the Covid-19 virus as an example of a case of suffering from the problematics of Theodicy, because Covid-19 has claimed lives, suffered economically, socially and academically, so that it appears that God is not all-just, not all-loving and not all-merciful. This research is qualitative research using descriptive analysis methods and comparative methods. This type of research is a literature review (Library Research) which uses a philosophical approach, and uses theodicy theory in the Covid-19 case. Primary data sources in this research include the works of Ibn Arabi, namely "al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah". Meanwhile, in Al-Ghazali's work, namely "Ihya Ulumuddin" part "Al-Mahabbah wa asy-Syauq wa al-Uns wa ar-Ridha". The results of this research are that Ibn Arabi and Al-Ghazali both answered that the Covid-19 suffering incident that was revealed by God to humans was not a form of wrath or punishment from God so that He is claimed to be God who is not Most Just, Not Most Merciful, and not all-loving, but as a manifestation of God, all-good, all-just, full of love and affection for His servants. However, the two have differences, namely in their path (the focal point of thought), Ibn Arabi's thinking which has a Sufistic pattern, namely on the basis of "Divine Love" with the focal point of adhering to the unity of existence (Wahdat al-Wujud). Meanwhile, in Al-Ghazali's thought, the style of his discussion is more Sufi in nature, namely on the basis of "Divine Love" with a focus on knowledge of God.

Keywords: Al-Ghazali, Divine Love, Ibn Arabi, Theodicy

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas tentang virus Covid-19 sebagai contoh kasus penderitaan permasalahan Theodicy, karena Covid-19 telah merenggut nyawa, menderita secara ekonomi, sosial dan akademis, sehingga nampaknya Tuhan tidak maha adil, tidak maha pengasih dan tidak maha penyayang. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode analisis deskriptif dan metode komparatif. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah tinjauan pustaka (Library Research) yang menggunakan pendekatan filosofis, dan menggunakan teori teodisi pada kasus Covid-19. Sumber data primer dalam penelitian ini antara lain karya-karya Ibnu Arabi yaitu "al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah". Sedangkan pada karya Al-Ghazali yaitu "Ihya Ulumuddin" bagian "Al-Mahabbah wa asy-Syauq wa al-Uns wa ar-Ridha". Hasil penelitian ini adalah Ibnu Arabi dan Al-Ghazali sama-sama menjawab bahwa peristiwa penderitaan Covid-19 yang diturunkan Tuhan kepada manusia bukanlah suatu bentuk murka atau hukuman dari Tuhan sehingga Dia diklaim sebagai Tuhan yang bukan Tuhan. Maha Adil, Bukan Maha Penyayang, dan tidak maha pengasih, melainkan sebagai wujud Tuhan yang maha baik, maha adil, penuh cinta dan kasih sayang terhadap hamba-hamba-Nya. Namun keduanya mempunyai perbedaan yaitu pada jalurnya (titik fokus pemikirannya), pemikiran Ibnu Arabi yang berpola sufistik yaitu berlandaskan "Cinta Ilahi" dengan titik

fokus berpegang pada kesatuan wujud (Wahdat). al-Wujud). Sedangkan dalam pemikiran Al-Ghazali, gaya pembahasannya lebih bersifat sufi, yaitu atas dasar "Cinta Ilahi" dengan fokus pada ilmu tentang Tuhan. Kata Kunci : Al-Ghazali, Cinta Ilahi, Ibnu Arabi, Teodisi



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INTRODUCTION

In living life, life cannot be separated from suffering and happiness which are closely connected to human actions, attitudes and thinking. Etymologically, suffering comes from the Sanskrit word "dhara" which means something unpleasant. In terms of terminology, according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), suffering is a condition that is considered inferior. Evil is considered detrimental, suffering is considered unpleasant.¹ There are two reasons for the emergence of crime or suffering, namely through natural disasters and social interactions. Crimes in social relations, violations can include intimidation, sexual harassment and physical violence. Then there are non-physical crimes, such as restrictions on the human mind. The collapse of ideology occurred in the West in the Middle Ages, where the power of truth from the church occurred in people's lives.²

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that a good activity is something that provides a more dominant level of enjoyment. Vice versa, if suffering is dominant then the action can be called bad.³ Examples of good problems are helping other people in need, acting morally, not killing, being filial to parents, acting according to religious teachings, and not causing chaos, as well as thoughts that do not cause division in humanity, including moral badness and immoral badness. Moral vices are bad human actions that cause misery, corruption, murder, adultery, etc. Meanwhile, non-moral crimes are the negative effects of natural conditions, such as a prolonged dry season which causes a lack of clean water and plants die.⁴ An example of the Covid-19 virus outbreak that has occurred is the latest Omicron variant.⁵ The Covid-19 virus is an example of crime or suffering

¹ Suharso dan Ana Retnoningsih, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Semarang: Widya Karya, 2011), Hlm. 247.

² Bertrand Russel, *Sejarah Filsafat Barat* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2016), Hlm. 767.

³ Bagus Nurwahyu Akhmad Faridatullah et al., "Ibn Athaillah's Theodicy Thoughts About Ugliness," *Jurnal AL-AFKAR: Journal For Islamic Studies* 6, no. 3 (2023): 546–61, <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v6i3.701>.

⁴ W. Suratman, "Musim Kemarau Datang, Hati-Hati Kekeringan," in *Siaga BNPB* (BNPB: Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana, 2019), <https://siaga.bnpb.go.id/hkb/berita/musim-kemarau-datang-hati-hati-kekeringan>.

⁵ Thea Arbar, "Mengenal Covid-19 Varian Baru Omicron Yang Bikin Cemas Dunia," 2021, <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/tech/20211127144434-37-294887/mengenal-covid-19-varian-baru-omicron-yang-bikin-cemas-dunia>.

in this case because the Covid-19 virus has many impacts, such as causing deaths,⁶ causing suffering in terms of academics,⁷ social life,⁸ the economy,⁹ trade and employment, to the point that many companies went bankrupt.¹⁰

The Covid-19 virus is a virus that was discovered in the city of Wuhan in Hubei, China, and is very contagious. This city was the first place with many Covid-19 patients and news spread about its spread very quickly. Since the end of 2019, a severe outbreak has occurred in several areas and at different times after spreading its wings since December 1 2019. On March 11 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that this incident was a pandemic with more than 118 countries affected by this outbreak. As many as 121,000 people from all over the world have contracted and spread this disease. The struggle to survive against the Covid-19 pandemic requires human resources from aspects of culture, public health, religion, economics, medicine, politics, and science and technology (IPTEK).¹¹ On January 31, 2020, a public health crisis was declared internationally. Experts have applied various methods of decoding the SARS-CoV-2 genome to accelerate vaccine development to effectively prevent the increase in infection rates regarding the Covid-19 Pandemic.¹²

Theodicy is an attempt to explain why evil or suffering occurs in relation to the existence of God. Theodicy problems occur when people see ugliness, suffering, poverty, epidemics and diseases that have claimed many lives, including the Covid-19 outbreak which has had a huge impact on the innocent.¹³ So a fundamental question arises for people who doubt God's love, "*why has the Almighty, Compassionate and Merciful God until now only allowed the Covid-19 outbreak which has claimed many lives and been involved in various disasters? various ills from an academic, economic and socialist point of view? Why would a loving God allow or even create evil? Could it*

⁶ Tuti Marjan Fuadi dan Irdalisa, "Covid 19: Antara Angka Kematian Dan Angka Kelahiran," *JSAI: Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia* 1, no. 3 (2020): 199–211.

⁷ Niken Bayu Argaheni, "Sistematik Review: Dampak Perkuliahan Daring Saat Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Mahasiswa Indonesia," *PLACENTUM: Jurnal Ilmiah Kesehatan Dan Aplikasinya* 8, no. 2 (2020): 99–108.

⁸ Willy Wildan, "Dampak Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Kehidupan Sosial Masyarakat," 2022, <https://retizen.republika.co.id/posts/24437/dampak-pandemi-covid-19-terhadap-kehidupan-sosial-masyarakat>.

⁹ Ulfa Arieza, "Babak Belur Ekonomi Dihajar 1,5 Tahun Pandemi," 2021, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/ekonomi/20210811220610-532-679242/babak-belur-ekonomi-dihajar-15-tahun-pandemi>.

¹⁰ Muhammad Irham, "Virus Corona: UMKM Diterjang Pandemic Covid-19 Sampai Kembang Kempis," 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-51946817>.

¹¹ Ahmad Naufal Dzulfaroh, "Hari Ini Dalam Sejarah: WHO Tetapkan Covid-19 Sebagai Pandemi Global," 2021, <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2021/03/11/104000165/hari-ini-dalam-sejarah--who-tetapkan-covid-19-sebagai-pandemi-global?page=all>.

¹² Tony Doludea, "Pandemi COVID-19 Dan Teodisi Abad 21: Sebuah Renungan Atas Yang Jahat Dan Penderitaan Manusia," 2021, <https://borobudurwriters.id/kolom/pandemi-covid-19-dan-teodisi-abad-21-sebuah-renungan-atas-yang-jahat-dan-penderitaan-manusia/>.

¹³ Yoshy Hendra Hardiyan Syah, "Pemikiran Teodisi Ibn Arabi Tentang Keburukan," *JAQFI: Jurnal Aqidah Dan Filsafat Islam* 7, no. 1 (2022): 61–85.

be that he is not the most loving and loving one that we already know and think? Or is it possible that He is all-merciful but not all-powerful?" Therefore, humans actually experience disease outbreaks, and there is misery and poverty, so in this case it can be concluded that God cannot possibly be as merciful and merciful as anyone thinks.¹⁴

Viewed from an Islamic perspective, it also involves the thoughts of Islamic philosophers such as Ibn Sina, Al-Kindi and Mulla Sadra and theologians in explaining the evil, evil and suffering that occurs.¹⁵ Some philosophers, such as Ibnu Sina, Al-Kindi, and Mulla Sadra, view happiness and suffering in a dualistic way and some reject one or the other. Ibn Arabi and Al-Ghazali developed an understanding of happiness and suffering.

According to Al-Ghazali, *"The suffering of Covid-19 is a manifestation of His love and compassion. Because suffering from Covid-19 is a gift of unlimited favors that has been given by God to humans. So that humans can pray, pray, muhasabah, dhikr, purify their souls, ask forgiveness and repent to Him. because God longs to meet His faithful servant who loves Allah, there is nothing more enjoyable for a human than being with and meeting his lover (God), so that he is no longer disturbed by worldly problems, namely through the suffering he receives. The greater God's love for humans, the greater the suffering that humans will receive, so that humans can become perfect and more classy humans"*.¹⁶

According to Ibn Arabi, *"God implements suffering as an opportunity for humans to achieve the highest happiness, because God is good and full of compassion. No evil or suffering comes from God, but only happiness. Everything that comes from God is His goodness and love. Goodness comes from Your hand, while evil is not attributed to You"*.¹⁷

RESEARCH METHODS

The author is interested in the *Theodicy* of Ibn Arabi and Al-Ghazali's thoughts to increase faith, devotion, and get closer to God with all the spiritual potential of humans within themselves against various kinds of bad phenomena (suffering). These two philosophers consistently discuss divine love in their books and give the highest value to love. This article highlights Covid-19 as evidence of suffering in *Theodicy*. In this article, the author focuses on the points of similarity and difference in Al-Ghazali and Ibn Arabi's thoughts about Divine Love, with the theory of love brought by Al-Ghazali and Ibn Arabi as an answer to the problems of *Theodicy* through the case of

¹⁴ John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), Hlm. 134.

¹⁵ M. Lutfi Mustofa, "Kejahatan Dan Campur Tangan Tuhan," *Jurnal Psikologi Dan Psikologi Islam* 1, no. 1 (2004): 62–68, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18860/psi.v0i0.360>.

¹⁶ Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulumuddin*, Terj. Achm (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2019), Jilid 9, Bab 26, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 192.

¹⁷ Ibn Arabi, *Al-Futuhat Al-Makiyyah: Risalah Tentang Ma'rifah Rahasia-Rahasia Sang Raja Dan Kerajaan-Nya*, ed. Harun Nur Rosyid (Jepara: Darul Futuhat, 2019), Jilid 4, Bab 43, Hlm. 51.

the Covid-19 virus. This article is based on a type of qualitative research using descriptive analysis methods and comparative methods through data collection (*Library Research*), then using a philosophical approach, namely Ibn Arabi's thoughts contained in the book *al-Futuhah al-Makkiyah* and Al-Ghazali's thoughts. which is contained in the book *Ihya Ulumuddin* in the *Al-Mahabbah wa ash-Syauq wa al-Uns wa ar-Ridha* book in examining the concept of Divine love as an answer to Theodicy through the Covid-19 case.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Theodicy

The term theodicy, etymologically theodicy comes from English, namely "Theodice" which consists of two syllables, namely the Greek word "Theos" which means "God", and "Dike" which means justice. Therefore, theodicy is a theological and philosophical study that seeks to demonstrate God's omniscience, omniscience, and omnipotence over all creation. According to the author of the Dictionary of Philosophy, Lorens Bagus, explaining this definition, he only provides several definitions for this term. *First*, theodicy can be interpreted as science designed to justify God's relationship with humans. *Second*, theodicy is an effort to defend God's rights when God orders natural disasters and allows humans to suffer, suffer and be evil. *Third*, God's presence as an effort to uphold God's omnipotence in line with natural disasters, evil, suffering and suffering.¹⁸

The term theodicy is often juxtaposed with the terms Philosophy of God and Philosophy of Religion. Because technically philosophy is more universal and neutral. When we want to discuss the study of divinity, theodicy can clearly present conclusions about God, either in terms of absolute being (The God as Absolute Being) or if we use Blaise Pascal's term for the study of theodicy. First, as "*Le dieu des Philosophes et des Savant*" (*God of philosophers and scientists*). *Second*, Theodicy can also clearly present God as a personal being (*The God a Personal of Spirit*) which Pascal can term with the term "*Le Dieu des d'Abraham, d'Isaac et de Jacob*" (The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Theodicy appeared around 341-270 SM. Theodicy discussion, first initiated by a modern German philosopher named Gottfried Wilhelm Von Leibniz (1647-1716), "*Theodicy Essay: On God's Goodness, The Freedom of Man, and The Origin of Evil*". The use of the term theodicy was indeed coined by Leibniz, but this issue had been discussed for quite a long time before the 3 modern centuries in the time of Leibniz, namely the philosopher Epicuros. The philosopher Epicurus (341-270 SM) was an Ancient Greek philosopher who first created a forum for discussing this issue by supporting and using many questions related to God's presence in the

¹⁸ Sujiat Zubaidi, "Antara Teodisi Dan Monoteisme: Memaknai Esensi Keadilan Tuhan.," *TSAQAFAH: Jurnal Peradaban Islam* 7, no. 2 (2011), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v7i2.2>.

midst of suffering. *First*, God is Good but not Almighty, so He has no right to deny suffering. *Second*, God is Almighty but God is not All Good, He does not want to deny suffering. *Third*, God is not all-good or all-powerful, so suffering is still everywhere. Fourth, God is all-loving and all-powerful, but He creates suffering. An extraordinary study, the aim is to find solutions to problems related to God's intervention in all things.¹⁹

Based on the definition above, theodicy is a matter of how humans maintain and defend the belief that God is just when suffering occurs in the world, but it also involves the fact that God is just.²⁰ Denying the existence of evil and human suffering is not part of theodicy. Likewise, denying the existence of the Almighty, All-Wise and Perfect God as the Creator and Sustainer of the world and universe (universe) is not at all included in the theodicy system. However, theodicy is the center of human philosophical efforts, able to understand and explain the existence of God through real facts and evil and suffering in human life.²¹

Definition of Love

In general, love can be interpreted as an "emotional field", an emotional field that leads a person to the peak of true happiness and gives birth to a deep feeling of satisfaction. For example, if we love other people, we will also be happy to share kindness with them, and happy to gather with them. So they have a bonded relationship with us in their lives. Love gives birth to a special feeling deep in our hearts. With love deep in our hearts, we will be willing and willing to make sacrifices for the people we love.²² Thus, the ultimate principle of humanity is love. Like a parent's love for their child and our love as servants for God. With a servant's love for God, a servant will always be obedient, obedient and sacrifice everything that is commanded by God and anything that is prohibited by God. With a deep sense of love for God, this love influences the way we live.²³

Therefore, love becomes a concept, a concept that can guide humans towards a better life and guide humans to become perfect humans (*al-Insan al-Kamil*). Love can lead humans to a better life, when love enters the philosophical discussion space through the medium of religion.

¹⁹ Longo Angela, *Plotinus and Epicurus: Matter, Perception, Pleasure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), Hlm. 78.

²⁰ Esther Gunawan, "Meneropong Makna Penderitaan Manusia Menurut Konsep Teodise C.S. Lewis," *Veritas: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pelayanan* 16, no. 1 (2017): 15–32, <https://doi.org/https://dx.doi.org/10.36421/veritas.v16i1.8>.

²¹ Syafieh, "Kejahatan Dan Campur Tangan Tuhan (Sebuah Tinjauan Teodisi Dan Teologi Islam)," *LENTERA: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2019): 69–84, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32505/lentera.v1i1.671>.

²² Elia Angela and Olivia Hadiwirawan, "Keyakinan Cinta Mengatasi Rintangan Dan Ideal: Kaitan Dengan Cinta Dan Harapan Pada Hubungan Romantis Di Dewasa Awal," *Jurnal Seurune: Jurnal Psikologi Unsyiah* 5, no. 1 (2022): 1–22.

²³ Rochelle Sammel, *Emosi: Bagaimana Mengenal, Menerima, Dan Mengarahkannya* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1986).

Like love in Islam, when the universe was created by God because of love. So the creation of the world is described as a manifestation of the actions of God who is believed to love His creation, both in whole and in part. Regarding the matter of God creating the universe out of love, as stated in the Qudsi hadith that, "*I am a hidden treasure (source of all sources). I want (Love) to be known. So I created the universe. Thanks to My (Love), they know Me*".

Love (Mahabbah) for Suffist

A word whose meaning is endlessly drained and discussed endlessly in various pages of social and religious life is love. Talking about love (mahabbah) for Sufis, of course in understanding and explaining this love there are very diverse opinions, the various opinions of Sufis are often due to differences in the results of their spiritual experiences in taking the path of Allah, taking a spiritual journey to Allah. The Sufis' explanations in explaining Mahabbah are as follows: *First, Al-Ghazali. Al-Ghazali said that, "Indeed, love for Allah Ta'ala is the highest goal of all levels (maqamat) to be achieved and the highest degree. After someone reaches the state of mahabbah (love), there is no other state except only its fruits, such as longing, peace, pleasure, and others. And there is nothing before this state of love except opening the way to it, such as repentance, patience, asceticism, and others. When they deny the existence of the state of love, it means that they actually also deny the existence of peace, longing, the beauty of prayer, and all the things that are common in love, as well as all its impacts"*.²⁴

Second, Ibn Arabi. Ibn Arabi said that, "Love is the essence of all creeds. Love of God is the basis for all forms of worship. Worship means loving the object of worship, and that love is a principle that permeates all existence and binds them together. God loved to be known and so He created creatures. God loves them with the proof that His mercy is more dominant, takes precedence over His wrath and His compassion permeates all of His creation until they all end happily (happy ending) and creatures love Him".²⁵ *Third, Suhrawardi. Suhrawardi said that, "Love is the foundation for all glory, because love is basically a gift which is the basis for all the inclinations of the heart to always be with the loved one and pay attention to the beauty or beauty of the beloved figure"*.²⁶ *Fourth, Abu Yazid al-Bustomi. He said that, "Love (Mahabbah), is ignoring the big things that come from you, and looking big at the small things that come from your Beloved. Furthermore, he said that the essence of love is when ittihad occurs"*.²⁷ *Fifth,*

²⁴ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulumuddin*, Jilid 9, Bab 36, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 220.

²⁵ A. E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy Of Muhyid Din Ibnul Arabi* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1939), Hlm. 151.

²⁶ Syihabuddin Umar Suhrowardi, *Puncak Pengetahuan Ahli Makrifat* (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 2007), Hlm. 155.

²⁷ Abd. Halim Rofi'ie, *Cinta Ilahi Menurut Al-Ghazali Dan Rabi'ah Al-Adawiyah* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 1997), Hlm. 92.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Isa. He said that, *“Love has no clear boundaries, except love itself. Definitions do not actually add clarity. The definition of love is its form. Because, the definition is having knowledge. While love is a feeling that fills the hearts of those who love. What's inside is a passionate feeling. All that is said about love is merely about its effects, expressions of its fruits and explanations of its causes”*.²⁸

The Covid-19 virus is seen as problematic for Theodicy

The Covid-19 virus is a virus discovered in the city of Wuhan in Hubei, China, and is very contagious. This city was the first place with many Covid-19 patients and news spread about its spread very quickly. The Covid-19 virus which is an example of crime or suffering in this case is because the Covid-19 virus has many impacts, such as causing deaths,²⁹ causing suffering in terms of academics,³⁰ social life,³¹ the economy,³² trade and employment, to the point that many companies have gone bankrupt.³³

Basically, theodicy appears as a kind of attempt to respond to events of evil or suffering which are always associated with claims about power, omnipotence, and everything about God. The Covid-19 pandemic has now left us for two years and has left behind and claimed many lives of suffering, pain and sorrow. The mystery of the evil and suffering experienced by humans before the Almighty God, who is able to create inspiration so that humans do not drift and drown in suffering.³⁴ The problem of theodicy first emerged when humans witnessed various evils, suffering, poverty, epidemics and diseases that claimed many lives. The Covid-19 outbreak has a more devastating impact, especially for the innocent people who are its victims.³⁵

So this can raise a fundamental question for people who doubt God's love, *why has God, the Almighty, Compassionate and Merciful, until now only allowed the Covid-19 outbreak which has claimed many lives and been involved in various disasters? various ills from an academic, economic and socialist point of view? Why would a loving God allow or even create evil? Is it possible that He is not the most merciful and loving one that we already know and think? Or is it possible that He is all-merciful but not all-powerful?*

²⁸ Syekh Abdul Qadir Isa, *Hakekat Tasawuf* (Jakarta: Qisthi Press, 2011), Hlm. 277.

²⁹ Irdalisa, “Covid 19: Antara Angka Kematian Dan Angka Kelahiran.”

³⁰ Argaheni, “Sistematik Review: Dampak Perkuliahan Daring Saat Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Mahasiswa Indonesia.”

³¹ Wildan, “Dampak Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Kehidupan Sosial Masyarakat.”

³² Ulfa Arieza, “Babak Belur Ekonomi Dihajar 1,5 Tahun Pandemi.”

³³ Irham, “Virus Corona: UMKM Diterjang Pandemic Covid-19 Sampai Kembang Kempis.”

³⁴ Tony Wiyaret Fangidae, “Dari Teodisi Dan Antropodisi Menuju Teo-Antropodisi: Mengasahi Allah Dan Sesama Di Tengah Pandemi Covid-19,” *Veritas: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pelayanan* 19, no. 2 (2020): 151–68, <https://doi.org/https://10.0.142.69/veritas.v19i2.372>.

³⁵ M Nur Prabowo S, “Teodisi Islam Esoteris: Pemikiran Isa Nur Al-Din Ahmad Al-Syazili Tentang Tuhan Dan Kejahatan,” *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Literature and Muslim Society* 3, no. 1 (2018): 1–22.

Wahdat Al-Wujud Ibn Arabi

The discussion of Ibn Arabi's thoughts on *Wahdat al-Wujud* is Ibn Arabi's most central thought and finds or has implications for his views on the concept of Theodicy. Ibn Arabi's thoughts on *Wahdat al-Wujud* can be said to be the Unity of Being, where the concept of Ibn Arabi's thought was first established, echoed, introduced and presented by him. Thus, the concept of *Wahdat al-Wujud* is often seen as the pinnacle of wisdom in Sufism, namely the experience of Sufism. Regarding Wahdat al-Wujud, "What Exists" is only a Single Being, where the meaning of Single Being here is that everything in this universe is Tajalli (manifestation) of the one, namely God. This single form encompasses all existing phenomena and at the same time serves as a source of rationality (reason) that radiates throughout the universe. The entire study of Ibn Arabi's philosophy is the theory of tajalli.³⁶

Ibn Arabi began a discussion about God (*al-Haqq*) as He who is absolute in the relationship of the universe (*al-Khalq*) which is very phenomenal and relative, that this mystical experience in his highest Sufism is not merely a very speculative concept, but an experience. Mysticism in Sufism is obtained based on the feeling and experience of Sufism, namely in very intense (communicative) conversations with God. As in his book *Futuh al-Makkiyah* Ibn Arabi said that, Glory be to Allah, O One who created everything. Regarding the definition of *Wahdat al-Wujud* that, a concept of Ibn Arabi's thought which proclaims "*La Maujudat illa al-Wujud al-Wahid*" which means that nothing exists except the One Being and the One is spelled out a number of numbers in "*Ta'ayyunat*". However, this saying does not mean that He is saying to the entity that exists in the same way that a number of humans say, nor does it mean that it is the nature of humans to say. In Islamic theology, at least from Irfan's perspective, it not only emphasizes a belief in the oneness/singularity of God, but also emphasizes the belief in the oneness/singularity of all reality. In other words, this does not reduce the nature of God's transcendence (*tanzih*) in the slightest. This theological way of understanding also sees God as inseparable from other things. In short, it can be said that, other existences originate from Him and in fact other existences (*maujud*) are part of the manifestation (*embodiment*) of God's being.³⁷

Therefore, God is not only transcendent but also immanent (*tasybih, uniting, or sharing existence with nature*). All that exists (*form or existence*) and anyone who exists (*existence*) is part of the singleness and unity of God's being. This is why the doctrine of the uniqueness of existence cannot be called pantheism but might more accurately be called existential monism

³⁶ Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (California: University of California Press, 1984), Hlm. 126.

³⁷ Dewi Nur Asiyah, "Pandangan Ibn Al-Arabi Mengenai Wahdat Al-Wujud Dan Konsep Kebahagiaan," *Jurnal Spiritualita: Journal of Ethics and Spirituality* 2, no. 2 (2021): 73–82, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30762/spiritualita.v5i2.844>.

(*tawhid of existence*).³⁸ Regarding this matter, as is also clearly stated in the Qur'an, "say, God is one (undivided/perfect/ininitely abundant), only on Allah is the dependence (as the source of the existence of everything else), not begotten (single, the beginning and the end), and there is no one like (not the same/not at the same level as Him)" (QS. Al-Ikhlash [112]: 1-4).

Biography of Ibn Arabi

Ibn Arabi was born on 27 Rama and 560 H (17 August 1165 M) in Murcia, Andalusia (Murcia in Spain now), he was born in a very beautiful city in the Mediterranean Costa Blanca area, located between the Valencia-Almeria area. In 567 H/1173 M, Murcia was still controlled by a Muslim government, namely in the hands of the Almuwahhidun (al-Mohads dynasty). Ibn Arabi died in Damascus in 1240 M. His full name was Asy-Shaykh Al-Akbar Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi ra. is Muhammad Ibn Ali Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Abdillah al-Hatimi at-Ta'i. If you look at Ibn Arabi's genealogy, Ibn Arabi's grandfather and father previously served in administration and the military during the reign of Muhammad Ibn Mardanis. Ibn Arabi's extended family had a very close relationship with the oldest pious people, which shows that they came from an ancient Arab lineage in the Bani Tayy line.³⁹ Ibn Arabi is known as one of the greatest Sufi teachers, even the greatest of all time. Meanwhile, he is known as the highest figure in the achievements of human spirituality, so he is nicknamed with the title Sheikh al-Akbar and the Generator of Religion (Muhyi al-Din). Ibn Arabi died on 28 Rabiutsani 638 H. Ibn Arabi's body was buried in the Bani Zaki cemetery, a hill area called Qashiyun-Salihyya, which is in the land of Damascus.⁴⁰

Biography of Al-Ghazali

The full name of Hujjatul Islam is Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Ahmad Al-Ghazali ath-Thusi an-Naisaburi. Imam Al-Ghazali was born in 450 H in the city of Khurasan-Thusia, the second largest city after the city of Naisabur-Persia. He is a jurisprudence scholar who is an expert in Sufism who adheres to the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence and he adheres to Al-Asy'ari monotheism. In the city of Thusia, Al-Ghazali studied jurisprudence since childhood, then he moved to the city of Naisabur-Persia to deepen his knowledge of jurisprudence with an Imamul Haramain at the Al-Wazir Nizhamul Malik Palace, he studied very seriously until he graduated in the same time very short. Nizamul Malik Palace is a favorite stopping place for ulama. Because of Al-Ghazali's intelligence and intelligence, he

³⁸ Khamid Khamid, "Wahdat Al Wujud Dan Insan Kamil Menurut Ibnu Al Arabi (Kajian Tasawuf Modern)," *Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an; Membangun Tradisi Berfikir Qur'ani* 10, no. 1 (2017): 100–108.

³⁹ Ibn Arabi, *Fushush Al-Hikam: Mutiara Dan Hikmah Keilahian Yang Terpancar Dari Cahaya-Nya*, Terj. M. Sabrur Ali (Yogyakarta: DIVA Press, 2018).

⁴⁰ S Hirtenstein, *The Unlimited Mercifier: The Spiritual Life and Thought of Ibn Arabi* (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 1999).

eventually became the center of attention of the ulama of that era, and was more respected and admired by the local community than his own teacher. Imam Al-Ghazali died on Monday 14 Jumadil Akhir 505 H. Al-Ghazali's body was buried in the al-Thabiran cemetery, an area with the same name as the cemetery, which is in Thusi country.⁴¹

Arabi's Thoughts About Divine Love as an Answer to Theodicy in the Covid-19 Case

In this discussion, the author analyzes Ibn Arabi's thoughts about love, so that the purpose of his thoughts is expected to be able to answer or respond to the issue of Theodicy, where the issue of Theodicy tends to question justice, compassion and God's power, and humans can respond well to suffering. that God has given to humans, one of which is suffering in the Covid-19 case. Therefore, the Covid-19 outbreak has a more devastating impact, especially for believers who are its victims. So it can raise a fundamental question for people who doubt God's love, *why does God, the Almighty, Compassionate and Merciful, only allow the Covid-19 outbreak which has claimed many lives and is shrouded in various sufferings both from an academic, economic and socialist perspective? Why would a loving God allow or even create suffering? Could it be that he is not the most loving and loving one that we already know and think? Or maybe He is Most Merciful but He is not All Powerful?*

When discussing suffering which falls within the scope of theodicy studies. Regarding the issue of good or bad, suffering or happiness from Ibn Arabi's perspective, it is very clear that Ibn Arabi is still consistent with the theory of *Wahdat al-Wujud* which he created, because for Ibn Arabi everything that happens in this universe is revealed by God. Indeed, nothing is bad or suffering, but is truly good for His servants

As Ibn Arabi answered, "*God is an Absolute Being who is not limited by anything, and all His actions actually have complete goodness for His servants, so that in Him there is not the slightest badness or evil in anything that God does. Because in reality He is balanced by absolute nothingness, namely pure goodness which has no evil or badness in it*".⁴² Ibn Arabi explained that everything that exists in the world (the realm of reality) is a combination of existence (*wujud*) and absence (*adamiyat*), like darkness and light. Everything that exists in this universe is nothing other than a "locus" of God's manifestation and its relationship to darkness or suffering is something that covers the reality of God. So, Ibn Arabi said that humans are also in a middle position, namely between existence and absence; position between happiness and suffering.⁴³

⁴¹ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulumuddin*, Jilid.1, Prolog, Biografi Al-Ghazali, hlm. 7.

⁴² Arabi, *Al-Futuh al-Makiyyah: Risalah Tentang Ma'rifah Rahasia-Rahasia Sang Raja Dan Kerajaan-Nya*, Jilid 4, Bab 43, Hlm. 51.

⁴³ Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistik, 1971), Hlm. 82.

Regarding the matter of His love, His justice, and His mercy, as quoted by F. Schuon in Ibn Arabi's opinion that, "*In essence, God is Good, Fair, Full of compassion, reflected in the values of truth contained in by many religions and beliefs. For Ibn Arabi, God with these qualities, it is impossible for God to simply leave the majority of humanity in suffering, misery, ignorance, error, and the destruction of a number of hopeless civilizations, even though they fervently pray for help, salvation, and enlightenment of His guidance*".⁴⁴

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says:

مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ ۗ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا ۖ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا

It means: "Whatever good (favor) you obtain (comes) from Allah, while whatever bad (disaster) befalls you is caused by your own (mistake). We sent you (Prophet Muhammad) as a Messenger to (all) mankind. Allah is sufficient as a witness" (QS. An-Nisā' [4]: 79).

Based on this verse, it can be understood that He is the most merciful of the merciful, His mercy covers everything and surpasses His wrath. As stated in the Hadith Qudsi "*My mercy precedes My wrath*" (HR. Bukhari dan Muslim).

So from Ibn Arabi's explanations above, it can be understood that for Ibn Arabi the issues of suffering and happiness always go hand in hand. Like a black dot on a painting, if the eye only focuses on the black dot (suffering), then the painting (God's will) looks completely bad, so God is judged as an Evil God, a God who is not merciful, and not Most Fair. However, if you look at the painting (God's will) as a whole and complex, then the black dots (suffering) actually become a factor of beauty (aesthetic value) for human life, to make humans perfect, strengthen faith, and make humans rise in rank or be more classy. by His side. In Islam, disasters such as the Covid-19 outbreak are a form of test given by God to His servants who always have faith and are always grateful and draw closer to Him. Therefore, a servant's faith in God can be recognized for its steadfastness if it has received and undergone a difficult or light test by enjoying, undergoing and accepting it with grace (sincerity/open-heartedness).

As in the analysis of Ibn Arabi's theodicy when applied to the Covid-19 case study, from the sufferer's perspective, the Covid-19 virus is often considered an example of evil given by God, as in the statement above which relates to God's love. Then Ibn Arabi said that "*what appears to*

⁴⁴ Frithjof Schuon, *Islam and the Perennial Philosophy* (London: World of Islam Festival Publishing Company, 1976), 135.

be suffering is actually goodness in the way God gives His servants the highest happiness".⁴⁵ This means that what is meant by badness or suffering is goodness from God's gift which originates from His Love, so that it is disguised as a form of badness in order to make humans more resilient, strong in faith, patient in living life with tests and trials. There is nothing that comes from Al-Haqq except goodness; only good is not mixed with bad. Everything that comes from God is only goodness based on God's Love and Mercy.

One example of God's Love and Mercy on the economic impact on entrepreneurs is the effect caused by the Covid-19 Virus, namely that previously entrepreneurs only sold their businesses offline with the usual turnover income they obtained and even a drastic reduction in turnover during Covid-19. Covid-19 took place, as time went by, with the decline in the number of Covid-19 infections and the realization of the vaccine program, entrepreneurs switched marketing systems (innovated) online through digital markets such as Lazada, Shopee, Shopee Food, Grab Food, and Bukalapak. As time goes by, entrepreneurs feel an increase in their turnover. So this online marketing system provides happiness for entrepreneurs due to the increase in turnover. Regarding the above matter, the increase in turnover is a manifestation of His goodness and compassion who still cares about His servants.⁴⁶

As Ibn Arabi quoted the words of the Prophet SAW that, "*All good is in Your hands, and all evil is not attributed to You*". The phenomenon of the Covid-19 outbreak is linked to the concept of Ibn Arabi's theodicy that the Covid-19 virus is not actually depicted as something bad, which is accepted by humans. However, God's way of sending down the Covid-19 pandemic is as a form of warning to humans against all their mistakes. There are examples of mistakes made by humans, such as environmental problems caused by humans' greed for material things, not maintaining cleanliness both for themselves and their livestock, wet markets, disobeying God's commands, doing what God forbids, and in the form of His mercy making humans be aware of one's mistakes so that one can always remember God in all phenomena, activities and spiritual potential.⁴⁷

So, regarding this problem, Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala said:

مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ ۗ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا ۖ وَكَفَىٰ
بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا

⁴⁵ Arabi, *Al-Futuhah Al-Makiyyah: Risalah Tentang Ma'rifah Rahasia-Rahasia Sang Raja Dan Kerajaan-Nya*, Jilid 4, Bab 43, Hlm. 50.

⁴⁶ Rais Agil Bahtiar, "Dampak Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Sektor Usaha Mikro, Kecil, Dan Menengah Serta Solusinya.," *INFO Singkat* 13, no. 10 (2021): 19–24.

⁴⁷ Arabi, *Al-Futuhah Al-Makiyyah: Risalah Tentang Ma'rifah Rahasia-Rahasia Sang Raja Dan Kerajaan-Nya*, Jilid 4, Bab 43, Hlm. 51.

It means: “*Whatever good (favor) you obtain (comes) from Allah, while whatever bad (disaster) befalls you is caused by your own (mistake). We sent you (Prophet Muhammad) as a Messenger to (all) mankind. Allah is sufficient as a witness*” (QS. An-Nisā' [4]: 79).

Therefore, the Covid-19 outbreak is considered as a form of warning so that humans realize their mistakes and immediately repent and should improve further and draw closer to God with all the human spiritual potential that exists within them. As Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala said:

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرٍ لِّمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْيَ السَّمْعِ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

It means: “*Indeed, in this there is a warning for those who have a heart or who use their hearing and witness*” (QS. Al-Qāf [50]: 37).

Then in another letter, Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala said:

قُلْ يُعَادِي الَّذِينَ اسْرِفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ
الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

It means: “*Say (Prophet Muhammad), My servants who exceed the limits (by tyrannizing) themselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins, except the sin of shirk. Indeed, He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful*” (QS. Az-Zumar [39]:53).

Even though God has the nature of wrath, it is a characteristic of Ibn Arabi's Sufi thinking that it is very clear that His mercy is broader, more encompassing than everything, and takes precedence over His wrath. As for the status of "His wrath" it is included in badness or evil. Because everything that happens, including the Covid-19 outbreak, will definitely end with a moment of happiness (Happy Ending). The happiness in question is dying in the state of Khusnul Khatimah and being placed in His heaven.

As in *Futuh al-Makkiyah*, Ibn Arabi said that, "*suffering such as in the Covid-19 outbreak comes from the nature of Allah's wrath, but on the other hand it is a manifestation of His mercy which is caused by His pleasure. His pleasure is very broad and is in His mercy and has no end, whereas His wrath (evil) is only temporary and will definitely end.*" When we see the phenomenon of prosperity or happiness and suffering, we will definitely say that suffering and prosperity definitely have conditions, namely the condition of God (*Al-Haqq*) who is called the Most Giver of Trials and Suffering (*Al-Mubli*), the Most Giver of Favors (*Al-Mun'im*), and the Giver of Doom (*Al-Mu'zzib*).⁴⁸ In fact, the universe is divided into happiness and misery, which is caused by His names. Therefore, divinity automatically demands the birth of suffering (*bala*) and prosperity (*afiyah*) in the universe.

⁴⁸ Arabi, Jilid 4, Bab 48, Hlm. 152.

Based on Ibn Arabi's explanations above, it can be understood that all types of suffering sent down by God, especially the Covid-19 outbreak, are not an illustration of God being evil but rather God being good, loving and affectionate towards His servants. (humans), by means of God reducing or providing suffering, the aim is to provide opportunities for humans to achieve the highest happiness and rise in rank. With the presence of suffering, God's goodness and compassion become obscured, giving rise to the view that God is evil, like the analogy of black dots on a beautiful painting. So in essence there is no evil or suffering that comes from God except happiness. All suffering, especially the Covid-19 outbreak, which comes from God is essentially a manifestation of God's goodness which is based on His love and compassion. Goodness or happiness comes entirely from Your Hands, while badness or suffering is not so dependent on You.

Al-Ghazali Thoughts About Divine Love as an Answer to Theodicy in the Covid-19 Case

In this discussion, the author analyzes Al-Ghazali's thoughts about love, so that the purpose of his thoughts is expected to be able to answer or respond to the issue of Theodicy, where the issue of Theodicy tends to question justice, compassion and God's power, and humans can respond well to suffering. The suffering given by God to humans, one of which is suffering in the Covid-19 case.

Therefore, the Covid-19 outbreak has a more devastating impact, especially for believers who are its victims. So it can raise a fundamental question for people who doubt God's love, *why does God, the Almighty, Compassionate and Merciful, only allow the Covid-19 outbreak which has claimed many lives and is shrouded in various sufferings both from an academic, economic and socialist perspective? Why would a loving God allow or even create suffering? Could it be that he is not the most loving and loving one that we already know and think? Or maybe He is Most Merciful but He is not All Powerful?*

Al-Ghazali answered that, there are arguments that explain the signs that a servant is loved by Allah. For example, the Messenger of Allah said that, "If Allah loves a servant, He will surely test him with danger and difficulty. If He really loves her, then He will make her iqtina." "What is iqtina?" He answered, "Allah will not allow that servant to have wealth and family" (HR. Ath-Thabrani).

There is a story of a conversation between Al-Ghazali as a teacher and his student. Then Al-Ghazali said that, *"If you have claimed to love Allah, then you will be able to see when Allah tests you with happiness, suffering and danger. Know that if Allah has tested you, it means that Allah loves you and longs to meet you. Before you meet Allah, Allah first wants to purify you"*. Then Al-Ghazali's student asked the teacher, *"My teacher, how can I know or see some of this*

love?" Then Al-Ghazali answered that, "*My student, has He tested you with something you love, then you prioritize Him over other things?*" Then the student answered that, "*not yet, my teacher*". Then Al-Ghazali answered that, "*Don't expect too much from getting His love. Truly, He will not give His love to a servant unless He tests him first*".⁴⁹

Based on the explanation above, it can be understood that the suffering caused by the Covid-19 outbreak is not simply because God is not all-merciful and not all-loving, but rather as proof of God's love for humans. With His love, in the end Allah tests a servant by giving him happiness, suffering and danger. Because Allah is in love and longs to meet His servant, before a servant meets Allah, Allah first wants to purify the servant.

Then Al-Ghazali said that, "*one way to release the grip of love for world problems from the heart is to take the path of asceticism, which is accompanied by patience and bound by fear and hope. Because with this path, it opens the path of love (mahabbah) to Allah*".⁵⁰ Based on Al-Ghazali's words, it can be understood that Covid-19 is a worldly problem. If a servant loves Allah, then he uses Covid-19 as an intermediary in taking the path of asceticism, enjoys Covid-19 patiently and gets closer, and uses it to meet his beloved (Allah).

Al-Ghazali said that, "*to increase your love for Allah is to do more good deeds to cleanse your heart from the world, then keep that heart clean as long as possible*".⁵¹ Based on Al-Ghazali's words, it can be understood that, when Allah gives suffering in the form of Covid-19, then if a servant loves Allah and wants to strengthen his love for Allah, then he will take advantage of the momentum of Covid-19 by doing more good deeds to can cleanse his soul and heart, so that he can meet his lover (Allah). Then Al-Ghazali said that, "*when a servant is suffering, among the signs of the servant's love for Allah SWT is that there is pleasure in his heart by sitting in silence to pray to Allah, reading the Qur'an more and more, he is diligent in doing Other Sunnah prayers, such as the tahajjud prayer, make good use of the calm of the night, etc. whether you are in a state of pain or happiness. Just as a person who loves God is someone who has peace in his heart regarding the suffering he is receiving*".⁵²

Based on Al-Ghazali's words above, if we are drawn into Covid-19, it can be understood that when a loving servant is hit by a suffering or disaster such as Covid-19, then that disaster or suffering becomes an intermediary to take the path of asceticism and find pleasure in praying to Allah, talking and whispering with his lover, until the suffering sent down by God can no longer be felt by a servant.

⁴⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulumuddin*, Jilid 9, Bab 10, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 162.

⁵⁰ Al-Ghazali, Jilid 9, Bab 1, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 104.

⁵¹ Al-Ghazali, Jilid 9, Bab 1, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 105.

⁵² Al-Ghazali, Jilid 9, Bab 10, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 265.

As Rasulullah SAW said, "*Whoever loves meeting Allah, Allah will surely love meeting him*" (HR. Bukhari and Muslim). Then Allah has conditioned the sincerity of that love with jihad in His path. When His servants say, "*We love Allah*", then Allah makes fighting in His cause and martyrdom as proof of that love. What is meant by fighting in this context is accepting and living everything that God has sent down, such as suffering from Covid-19. So that with all the struggles that are carried out when suffering, until death comes, that person has died as a martyr, has lost his struggle in the way of Allah. Because when he was experiencing suffering, he preferred to obey Allah so that he could get closer to Him by carrying out Sunnah worship and hoping to get a position closer to Him. Allah has also bestowed the characteristic of itsar (prioritizing other things before himself) to those He loves. In fact, at that moment his heart was immersed in the pleasure of loving Him so that he was no longer disturbed by worldly problems such as suffering in the Covid-19 case.⁵³

Then Al-Ghazali said that, "*Indeed Allah has servants who love Him and feel at peace with Him. They have no regrets for what they lost. Whatever Allah wills will definitely happen, and reach them, and whatever escapes them is His best decision for you*".⁵⁴ Based on Al-Ghazali's words above, it can be understood that as we know the Covid-19 incident which has claimed many lives, then as a true lover, in his heart he feels and has calm, no regrets, and there is sincerity in his heart. For what he lost, namely the loss of loved ones such as relatives, family and friends who have died due to Covid-19. Because for a true lover, he realizes that every soul will surely die, everything that happens and befalls a lover is His best will and decision which originates from God's love for all His servants who love Him.

Based on Al-Ghazali's thoughts which have been explained above, the common thread in Al-Ghazali's thoughts to answer or respond to the question of Theodicy in the case of Covid-19 is that the event of Covid-19 suffering sent down by God to humans is not a form of wrath. or punishment from God so that He is claimed to be God, not Most Just, Not Most Merciful, and Not Most Compassionate, but rather as a manifestation of God's love and affection for His servants. So with the presence of Covid-19 suffering, this suffering is a gift of unlimited favors that has been given by God to humans. With the presence of this gift of pleasure, humans can take advantage of the momentum of suffering that God has given humans to take the path of asceticism, namely always praying, praying, muhasabah, dhikr, cleansing their dirty hearts and souls, and asking for forgiveness and repenting to Him. Because, God longs to meet His servant who always maintains his love for Allah, so there is nothing more enjoyable for humans than just being with and meeting his lover (God), so that a servant who loves Allah is no longer bothered

⁵³ Al-Ghazali, Jilid 9, Bab 1, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 171.

⁵⁴ Al-Ghazali, Jilid 9, Bab 1, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 183.

by problems. worldly, namely through the suffering he received such as the Covid-19 outbreak. The greater God's love for humans, the greater the suffering that humans will receive, in order to become perfect and more classy humans.

Comparative Study of Al-Ghazali's Thoughts About Divine Love as the Answer to Theodicy in the Covid-19 Case

In this next discussion, the author presents a comparison of the thoughts of two Islamic philosophers, namely Al-Ghazali and Ibn Arabi. These two figures are very different in their thoughts, but they both have similarities regarding love, which is why the two Islamic philosophers' thoughts about love are an answer to the problematics of Theodicy which is the case of the Covid-19 outbreak. The following is an explanation starting from the points of similarity first, then continuing with the points of difference.

1. Equality point

When the two of them answered the problem of Theodicy in the Covid-19 case, Ibn Arabi and Al-Ghazali both answered that the Covid-19 suffering incident that was sent down by God to humans was not a form of wrath or punishment from God so that He was not claimed to be God. Most Just, not Most Merciful, and Not Most Merciful, but as a form of God, He is Most Kind, Most Just, full of love and affection for His servants. Therefore, with these characteristics of God, it is impossible for God to just let the majority of humanity drag on in suffering, misery, ignorance, error, and the destruction of a number of hopeless civilizations, even though they fervently pray for help, salvation, and the illumination of His guidance. Thus, both of them focus their attention on everything that is sent down by Him based on His will, which is a manifestation of His beautiful plan.

2. Difference point

Even though Ibn Arabi and Al-Ghazali both answered that the Covid-19 suffering event that was sent down by God to humans was not a form of wrath or punishment from God so that He was claimed to be God who is not Most Just, Not Most Merciful, and Not Most Merciful. Compassionate, but as a form of God, He is Most Good, Most Just, full of love and affection for His servants. However, the two have differences, namely on the road (focus point). This means that both of them discuss with one goal, namely God who is full of love and compassion, but in different ways. The path referred to here is Ibn Arabi's Sufistic thinking, namely on the basis of "Divine Love" with a focus on adhering to the central concept, namely the unity of existence (Wahdat Al-Wujud). Meanwhile, Al-Ghazali's thinking is also the same, namely by using language and analogies that are

easily understood by all groups and the style of his discussion is more Sufi in nature, namely on the basis of "Divine Love" with a focus on knowledge of God.

The characteristics of the argument which reflect that Ibn Arabi adheres to his central concept, namely the unity of existence (*Wahdat Al-Wujud*), is as Ibn Arabi said, "*God is an Absolute Being who is not limited by anything, and all His actions actually have complete goodness. for His servants, so that in Him there is not the slightest evil or evil for anything that God does. Because in reality He is balanced by absolute nothingness, namely pure goodness which has no evil or badness in it*".⁵⁵ Then Ibn Arabi said that "*what appears to be evil or suffering is actually goodness in the way God gives His servants the highest happiness*".⁵⁶

Based on Ibn Arabi's expression above, it can be understood that, Ibn Arabi explains that what is meant by badness or suffering is goodness from God's gift which originates from His beloved case, so that it is disguised as a form of badness in order to make humans stronger, stronger in faith, patiently live life with trials and tribulations. There is nothing that comes from Al-Haqq except goodness; only good is not mixed with bad. Everything that comes from God is only goodness based on God's Love and Mercy. So, everything that exists in the world (*the realm of reality*) is a combination of existence (*wujud*) and absence (*adamiyat*), like darkness and light. Everything that exists in this universe is nothing other than a "locus" of the manifestation of God and its connection with darkness or suffering is something that covers the reality of God. So, Ibn Arabi said that humans are also in a middle position, namely between existence and absence; position between happiness and suffering.

Then there are the characteristics of the argument which reflect Al-Ghazali's more Sufistic style of discussion, namely on the basis of "*Divine Love*" with a focus on knowledge of God, as Al-Ghazali said that "*when a servant is suffering, among the signs a sign of a servant's love for Allah SWT is that there is pleasure in his heart by sitting in silence to pray to Allah, reading the Qur'an more often, diligently performing other Sunnah prayers, such as the tahajjud prayer, making good use of the calm of the night, and so on. whether you are in a state of pain or happiness. Just as a person who loves God is someone who has peace in his heart regarding the suffering he is receiving*".⁵⁷ Then Al-Ghazali said that, "*one way to release the grip of love for world problems from the heart is to take the path of asceticism, which is accompanied by patience and bound*

⁵⁵ Arabi, *Al-Futuhah Al-Makiyyah: Risalah Tentang Ma'rifah Rahasia-Rahasia Sang Raja Dan Kerajaan-Nya*, Jilid 4, Bab 43, Hlm. 51.

⁵⁶ Arabi, Jilid 4, Bab 43, Hlm. 50.

⁵⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulumuddin*, Jilid 9, Bab 10, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 265.

by fear and hope. Because with this path, it opens the path of love (mahabbah) to Allah".⁵⁸ Then Al-Ghazali said that, "to increase your love for Allah is to do more good deeds to cleanse your heart from the world, then keep that heart clean as long as possible".⁵⁹ Then Al-Ghazali said that, "Indeed Allah has servants who love Him and feel at peace with Him. They have no regrets for what they lost. Whatever Allah wills will definitely happen, and reach them, and whatever escapes them is His best decision for you".⁶⁰

Based on Al-Ghazali's thoughts which have been explained above, the common thread in Al-Ghazali's thoughts to answer or respond to the question of Theodicy in the case of Covid-19 is that the event of Covid-19 suffering sent down by God to humans is not a form of wrath. or punishment from God so that He is claimed to be God, not Most Just, Not Most Merciful, and Not Most Compassionate, but rather as a manifestation of God's love and affection for His servants. So with the presence of Covid-19 suffering, this suffering is a gift of unlimited favors that has been given by God to humans. With the presence of this gift of pleasure, humans can take advantage of the momentum of the Covid-19 suffering that God has given to humans to follow the path of asceticism, namely always praying, praying, muhasabah, dhikr, cleansing their dirty hearts and souls, and asking forgiveness and repenting to Him. Because, God longs to meet His servant who always maintains his love for Allah, so there is nothing more enjoyable for humans than just being with and meeting his lover (God), so that a servant who loves Allah is no longer bothered by problems. worldly, namely being disturbed by the suffering he received, such as the Covid-19 outbreak. The greater God's love for humans, the greater the suffering that humans will receive, in order to become perfect and more classy humans.

CONCLUSIONS

The point of similarity and point of difference between Al-Ghazali and Ibn Arabi in answering the problem of Theodicy in the Covid-19 case is that Ibn Arabi and Al-Ghazali both answered that the Covid-19 suffering event that was sent down by God to humans was not a form of wrath or punishment. from God so that He is claimed to be God who is not all-just, not all-merciful, and not all-loving, but as a form of God who is all-good, all-just, full of love and affection for His servants. However, the two have differences, namely in their path (focus point of thought). This means that both of them discuss it with one goal, namely focusing on God who is

⁵⁸ Al-Ghazali, Jilid 9, Bab 1, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 104.

⁵⁹ Al-Ghazali, Jilid 9, Bab 1, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 105.

⁶⁰ Al-Ghazali, Jilid 9, Bab 1, Al-Mahabbah wa Asy-Syauq wa al-Uns, Hlm. 183.

full of love and compassion, but in different ways. The path referred to here is Ibn Arabi's Sufistic thinking, namely on the basis of "Divine Love" with a focus on adhering to the central concept, namely the unity of existence (Wahdat Al-Wujud). Meanwhile, Al-Ghazali's thinking is also the same, namely by using language and analogies that are easily understood by all groups and the style of his discussion is more Sufi in nature, namely on the basis of "Divine Love" with a focus on knowledge of God.

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