

Bulletin of Indonesian Islamic Studies

journal homepage: https://journal.kurasinstitute.com/index.php/biis



The Meaning of Life in the Thought of Al-Gazālī and Viktor Frankl: A Comparative Study of Spiritual and Psychological Approaches to Authentic Happiness

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to analyze the concept of happiness through the lenses of al-Gazālī's Sufism and Viktor Frankl's logotherapy. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the study employs library research to gather data from various primary and secondary sources, including al-Gazālī's Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn and Frankl's Man's Search for Meaning. The analysis is conducted through a descriptive-analytical method, exploring the similarities and differences between these two frameworks in their interpretations of the search for meaning in life as a pathway to happiness. The findings demonstrate that both al-Gazālī's Sufism and Frankl's logotherapy argue that happiness is not solely reliant on material conditions; instead, it is intricately linked to the meaningfulness of life, which can be discovered through worship, personal experiences, creativity, and the attitudes we adopt when confronting challenges. Al-Gazālī asserts that true happiness can be attained through a spiritual approach that involves drawing closer to God, while Frankl posits that individuals possess the freedom to find meaning in their lives. This study proposes a holistic transformative model that bridges the spiritual and psychological aspects of the search for life's meaning by integrating these two approaches. This research makes both theoretical and practical contributions in understanding and leveraging the concept of life's meaning to attain genuine happiness.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep kebahagiaan dalam perspektif tasawuf al-Gazālī dan logoterapi Viktor Frankl. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif dengan studi kepustakaan. Data dikumpulkan dari berbagai literatur primer dan sekunder, seperti karya al-Gazālī Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn dan buku Frankl Man's Search for Meaning. Analisis data dilakukan melalui pendekatan deskriptifanalitis dengan menelaah kesamaan dan perbedaan kedua konsep tersebut mengenai makna kebahagiaan hidup. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa baik dalam tasawuf al-Gazālī maupun logoterapi Frankl, kebahagiaan tidak hanya bergantung pada aspek material, tetapi juga berkaitan dengan makna hidup yang ditemukan melalui ibadah, pengalaman, penciptaan, dan sikap dalam menghadapi tantangan. Al-Gazālī menekankan bahwa kebahagiaan sejati dapat dicapai melalui pendekatan spiritual dengan mendekatkan diri kepada Tuhan, sementara Frankl berpendapat bahwa individu memiliki kebebasan untuk menemukan makna hidupnya. Dengan menggabungkan kedua pendekatan ini, penelitian ini mengembangkan model transformatif yang holistik, menghubungkan dimensi spiritual dan psikologis dalam pencarian makna hidup. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi teoritis dalam memahami dan mengaplikasikan konsep makna hidup untuk mencapai kebahagiaan yang hakiki.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: 25-03-2025 Revised: 02-06-2025 Accepted: 04-06-2025

Keywords:

Authentic Happiness; Al-Gazālī's Sufism; Meaning of Life; Victor Frankl's Logotherapy.

Histori Artikel

Diterima: 25-03-2025 Direvisi: 02-06-2025 Disetujui: 04-06-2025

Kata Kunci:

Kebahagiaan Hakiki; Logoterapi Viktor Frankl; Makna Kehidupan; Tasawuf Al-Gazālī.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Amidst rapid technological advancements and easy access to information, modern society faces an increasingly glaring existential paradox: increased digital connectedness does not always align with the depth of meaning in life that individuals feel. This phenomenon is reflected in the results of the 2022 National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (I-NAMHS), which revealed that around 15.5 million Indonesian adolescents aged 10 to 17 experienced at least one mental health problem in the past 12 months. This is equivalent to one in three adolescents in Indonesia. This condition indicates a deep meaning of life crisis among the younger generation, which requires serious attention from various parties.¹ In the face of the crisis of the meaning of life that plagues modern society, the thoughts of Imam Al-Gazālī and Viktor Frankl offer a profound perspective on the search for meaning and true happiness.

Imam Al-Gazālī emphasized the importance of purification of the soul 'tazkiyatun nafs' and the knowledge of God 'ma'rifatullāh' as the path to ultimate happiness. According to Al-Gazālī, tazkiyatun nafs is the process of purifying the soul from bad traits and replacing them with noble traits, so that one can achieve true happiness in this world and the hereafter. Meanwhile, ma'rifatullāh is an effort to know God as closely as possible, so that in the end it will be able to see God with its conscience.²

Viktor Frankl, through the logotherapy approach he developed, stated that the most fundamental drive in human beings is the search for the meaning of life, including when in a condition of unavoidable suffering. Logotherapy itself is a form of psychotherapy formulated by Frankl, a psychiatrist who was also a Holocaust survivor. The essence of logotherapy is the belief that humans are able to find meaning in their lives despite being in a very difficult situation, and it is this meaning that acts as the main driving force in living life.³

Viktor Emil Frankl is known as the pioneer of logotherapy and was an Austrian psychologist. His thoughts on the meaning of life were born from his personal experience as a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp. Frankl was born in Vienna, Austria, a city known as the center of European culture and the birthplace of many famous figures. He was born on March 26, 1905 into a Jewish family as the second child of Gabriel Frankl and Elsa Frankl. Since childhood, he has been raised in an environment that instills the spiritual values of Judaism, which later has a great influence on his thinking, especially in understanding the concept of the meaning of life.⁴

Al-Gazālī was a Muslim thinker who contributed greatly to Islamic scholarship. He often moved from place to place to deepen his knowledge and teach it, which he later

¹Gloria, "Hasil Survei I-NAMHS: Satu dari Tiga Remaja Indonesia Memiliki Masalah Kesehatan Mental," Universitas Gadjah Mada, 24 Oktober 2022, https://ugm.ac.id/id/berita/23086-hasil-survei-i-namhs-satudari-tiga-remaja-indonesia-memiliki-masalah-kesehatan-mental/.

²Ghozali, M., & Dewi, C. K. (2021). "Konstruksi Kebahagiaan dalam Pandangan al-Ghazālī: Antara Misykāh, Kīmyā' dan Mi'yār." *Jurnal Ushuluddin dan Studi Islam*, 1(2), 123–145. https://doi.org/10.28918/jousip.v1i2.4248.

³Akhirul Mukharom, R., & Arroisi, J. (2021). "Makna Hidup Perspektif Victor Frankl: Kajian Dimensi Spiritual dalam Logoterapi." *TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 20(1), 91–115. https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v20i1.139.

⁴ Alex Pattakos and Stephen R. Covey, Prisoners of Our Thoughts: Viktor Frankl"s Principles for Discovering Meaning in Life and Work (Oakland: BerrettKoehler Publishers, 2010), 30, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004.

expressed in *al-Munqid min al-Dalal*. His thoughts attracted the attention of many scholars, both supporters, opponents, and those who assessed them objectively. As a defender of the *Asy'ariyah* school, he balanced reason and revelation in understanding divinity. However, realizing the limitations of rationality, he eventually chose Sufism as the path to ultimate truth.⁵

With the thoughts of Victor Frankl and Al-Gazālī, the connection between their thoughts in this research lies in the effort to understand the concept of the meaning of life and ultimate happiness (material object) through philosophical and psychological approaches (formal object). However, there is a gap that needs to be bridged, namely how to integrate Al-Gazālī's spiritual perspective with Viktor Frankl's existential psychology approach to obtain a complete understanding of the meaning of life and ultimate happiness. This research aims to bridge the gap by examining in depth the thoughts of the two figures and finding common ground between spiritual and psychological approaches in understanding the meaning of life and ultimate happiness.

The world is constantly changing, whether it's constructive or destructive, and it's inseparable from human life. Whenever the environment changes, people have to make personal decisions as a result of their interactions with the world. If a person fails to determine the direction of his or her life in the midst of the many options available, anxiety can arise, potentially threatening the meaning of his or her life. On the other hand, if a person manages to find direction and make the right decisions when facing a crisis, they will have a positive emotional experience which is one of the important factors in finding meaning in life. Now, the biggest challenge for all of us is how to continue to find meaning in life amidst the rapid changes caused by modernization.

In the midst of views that distance Sufism from Islamic teachings, al-Gazālī actually offers a Sufistic approach based on the Qur'an and Hadith. The work *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* is filled with Islamic arguments that support the teachings of Sufism. Spiritual concepts such as *zuhud*, *riḍā*, *tawakkal*, and others have a strong basis in the Qur'an and Hadith. Therefore, the style of Sufism developed by al-Gazālī is more ethical-practical (*khulūqī-'amalī*) than philosophical. Al-Gazālī's approach to Sufism was widely accepted by Muslims, despite criticism from figures such as Ibn Rushd.

However, this criticism did not weaken al-Gazālī's position because the arguments in $Ihy\bar{a}'$ ' $Ul\bar{u}m$ al- $D\bar{\imath}n$ were considered very solid. In fact, in the context of modern Islam, which is often characterized by religious expressions that tend to be rigid, al-Gazālī's Sufistic thought is even more relevant.

Concepts such as *maḥabbah* 'love', *tawhīd* 'the oneness of God', *makhāfah* 'fear of God', and *ma'rifah* 'spiritual knowledge' are still very meaningful in human life. According to al-Gazālī, love for Allah is reflected through compassion for others. Understanding monotheism encourages individuals to grow closer to Allah by cleansing themselves of sin, avoiding attachment to worldly treasures '*zuhud*', surrendering completely to Allah '*tawakkal*', and accepting all of His provisions with sincerity '*riḍā*'.

If these spiritual stages are practiced consistently, one will reach the level of *ma'rifah* or deep understanding of Allah. Such Sufistic teachings remain relevant to modern society

⁵Atabik, A. "Telaah Pemikiran Al-Ghazali tentang Filsafat."Fikrah: Jurnal Ilmu Aqidah dan Studi Keagamaan 2, no. 1 (2014): 19–38.

which often experiences alienation. In this situation, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* comes as a source of calm that provides spiritual solutions for human life.⁶ The meaning of life is personal and unique because each individual has the freedom to determine their own way of finding and creating meaning in life. This process is the responsibility of each individual and cannot be left to others, because only he or she really experiences and feels the meaning. Everyone has a different meaning of life, it can even change from time to time.

However, humans still have the ability to find meaning in life in various situations, including when facing difficult conditions. The search for the meaning of life often causes inner tension, but this is necessary to maintain psychological health. A healthy personality has a dynamic between what has been achieved and what remains to be strived for. This tension encourages individuals to keep trying to achieve goals that give meaning to their lives. The ongoing struggle makes life more vibrant and full of happiness. Without meaning in life, a person can lose the reason to continue living. Overall, the meaningfulness of life reflects the extent to which a person can develop their potential and capacity, and how they achieve their goals to give meaning to their lives.

Meaning of life is an important aspect of life that must be owned and fulfilled by every individual throughout their life journey. There are three main sources in the meaning of life, namely creative value, experiential value, and attitudinal value, which play a role in shaping a person's understanding of the meaning of life. This concept was first introduced by Viktor E. Frankl in his work published in 1992, where he emphasized that the meaning of life is a means for individuals to achieve their life goals. In this case, the meaning of life can be interpreted as values that are formed from an individual's response to his or her condition and environment in each phase of life.⁷

In Mukharom and Arroisi's work entitled *The Meaning of Life in Victor Frankl's Perspective: A Study of the Spiritual Dimension in Logotherapy*, he examines Viktor Frankl's concept of logotherapy with a focus on the spiritual dimension. Frankl argues that the search for the meaning of life is the main motivation of humans, even in the face of suffering. The spiritual dimension in logotherapy is considered an important element in helping individuals find the meaning of life.⁸

This study of Viktor E. Frankl's Meaning of Life in the View of Islamic Psychology integrates Viktor Frankl's view of the meaning of life with the perspective of Islamic psychology. It is emphasized that the search for the meaning of life can be a solution to the existential crisis experienced by individuals, and that an Islamic spiritual approach can enrich this understanding.⁹

One of the relevant articles reviews the application of Imam Al-Gazālī's theory in the context of Islamic counseling, specifically in an effort to help Generation Z find the meaning of their lives. The paper highlights how the principles of Al-Gazālī's thought can

⁶A. Fasya, "Konsep Tasawuf menurut Al-Ghozali," JOUSIP: Journal of Sufism and Psychotherapy 2, no. 2 (2022): 153–166.

⁷Husni Hanafi, dkk., "Adopsi Nilai Budaya Osing dalam Kerangka Objektivitas Meaning of Life." (Malang: Jurnal Pendidikan, 2018), Vol. 3, No. 9, 1237.

⁸R. A. Mukharom dan J. Arroisi, "Makna Hidup Perspektif Victor Frankl: Kajian Dimensi Spiritual dalam Logoterapi," TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin 20, no. 1 (2021): 91–115, https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v20i1.139.

⁹R. Utari dan A. R. Rifai, "Makna Hidup Menurut Viktor E. Frankl dalam Pandangan Psikologi Islam," Jurnal Ilmiah Penelitian Psikologi 7, no. 2 (2020): 40–51, https://doi.org/10.22236/jippuhamka.v7i2.9262..

be used as a basis for counseling practices to guide the younger generation to understand the purpose and value of life more deeply. Through a spiritual approach that emphasizes purification of the soul and recognition of God, this counseling aims to address the crisis of meaning experienced by the younger generation.¹⁰

In this research the focal point lies on the deep integration between Islamic spiritual approaches and Western existential psychology in understanding the meaning of life and true happiness. This research combines Al-Gazālī's concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* with Viktor Frankl's logotherapy to create a holistic approach to understanding the meaning of life. Previously, studies such as that conducted by Gumiandari have discussed the spiritual dimension according to these two figures separately. However, this study offers a more in-depth synthesis between the two approaches.¹¹ In the face of an increasing existential crisis in the digital age, this combined approach provides a relevant solution. The study by Mukharom and Arroisi highlights the importance of logotherapy in helping individuals find the meaning of life, but has not comprehensively integrated the spiritual aspects of Islam.¹²

This research also highlights the fundamental differences between Al-Gazālī's theocentric and Frankl's anthropocentric views, and how they can complement each other in forming a complete understanding of the meaning of life. As such, this research offers a new contribution to the fields of philosophy and psychology by bringing together two different approaches to understanding the meaning of life and true happiness, particularly in the context of existential challenges in the modern era.

The main objective of this study is to harmonize Al-Gazālī's spiritual views with the existential psychology approach developed by Viktor Frankl, in order to build a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of life and the essence of true happiness. Through this integration, it is hoped that this study will be able to make an important contribution to the development of philosophy and psychology, as well as offer an applicable approach for individuals who are searching for the meaning of life amid the complexity of modern life.

B. METHODS

This research uses the library research method as the main technique in data collection. Data was collected through in-depth review of written sources such as books, scientific journals, articles, and other documents relevant to the research topic.¹³ This process involves reading, recording, and processing information from literature related to the psychological, philosophical, and spiritual aspects of the meaning of life.¹⁴ This

¹⁰B. A. Ekanata, F. Dahlia, dan D. Setiyadi, "Penerapan Konseling Islami Berbasis Teori Imam Al-Ghazali dalam Meningkatkan Makna Hidup Generasi Z,"Counsellia: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling 14, no. 2 (2024): 15–28, https://doi.org/10.25273/counsellia.v14i2.22271.

¹¹S. Gumiandari, *Dimensi Spiritual Menurut Viktor Frankl & Imam Al-Ghazali (Sebuah Telaah Komparatif)* (Skripsi, IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, 2021).

¹²R. A. Mukharom dan J. Arroisi, "Makna Hidup Perspektif Victor Frankl: Kajian Dimensi Spiritual dalam Logoterapi,"TAJDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin 20, no. 1 (2021): 91–115, https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v20i1.139.

 $^{^{13}{\}rm Zed},$ M. (2004). Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.

¹⁴R. K. Sari, "Penelitian Kepustakaan Dalam Penelitian Pengembangan Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia," Jurnal Borneo Humaniora 4, no. 2 (2021): 65, https://doi.org/10.35334/borneo_humaniora.v4i2.2249.

technique allows researchers to access various perspectives and theories that have been developed previously, so as to build a solid and comprehensive theoretical framework.¹⁵

This research uses a descriptive qualitative data analysis method with a content analysis approach. Through this technique, researchers can examine in depth the content of the text being studied by identifying, categorizing, and interpreting the meanings hidden in it. 16 In this context, the theories used include Al-Gazālī's concepts of *tazkiyatun nafs* and *ma'rifatullāh*, and Viktor Frankl's logotherapy. By combining these two approaches, the researcher seeks to find common ground between the spiritual and psychological dimensions in understanding the meaning of life and ultimate happiness.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, this research applied the source triangulation technique. This technique is done by comparing and confirming information from different sources, such as books, journals, and scientific articles, in order to obtain a deeper and more objective understanding.¹⁷ In addition, the researcher also checks the consistency of the data and the resulting interpretations, and ensures that the analysis carried out is in accordance with the context and purpose of the research. Thus, the validity and reliability of the research results can be well maintained.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Concept of Happiness through the Lenses of Al-Gazālī's Sufism and Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy

Changes that occur in the world, both those that provide benefits and those that have a negative impact, are an inseparable part of human life. In the face of these changes, individuals are required to have the ability to make the right decisions in order to maintain the direction and meaning of their lives. The inability to make choices amidst the various alternatives available can lead to existential anxiety and restlessness. Conversely, individuals who are able to adapt and make wise decisions will gain positive emotional experiences, which ultimately contribute to the meaningfulness of their lives.

In facing this challenge, al-Gazālī's thought provides a solution through a Sufism approach that remains based on Islamic teachings. In his work, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, al-Gazālī emphasized that spiritual concepts such as *zuhud* 'simplicity in worldly life', *ridā* 'willingness to accept God's provisions', and *tawakkal* 'surrender to God' have a strong foundation in the Qur'an and hadith. According to him, true happiness can only be achieved through closeness to God and by reducing attachment to worldly things that are temporary. The Sufism approach developed by al-Gazālī is more ethical-practical than philosophical, so that it can be implemented in everyday life as a guide for individuals in finding the meaning of their lives.

Although al-Gazālī's Sufistic approach has been criticized, especially by Ibn Rushd who emphasized rationality in understanding Islamic teachings, his thoughts remain relevant, especially in a modern context that is often characterized by existential tension

¹⁵Milya Sari dan Asmendri, "Penelitian Kepustakaan (Library Research) dalam Penelitian Pendidikan IPA,"Natural Science 6, no. 1 (2020): 45, https://doi.org/10.15548/nsc.v6i1.1555.

¹⁶L. J. Moeloeng, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017).

¹⁷P. Nurengga Budiastuti, R. Rosdiana, dan A. Ekowati, "Analisis Langkah-Langkah Model Pembelajaran Discovery Learning dalam Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Teks Cerita Inspiratif Kelas IX SMP di Kabupaten Bogor Utara,"Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program 3, no. 1 (2023): 39–45, http://journal.unpak.ac.id/index.php/triangulasi.

and anxiety. Concepts such as *maḥabbah* 'love of God', *tawḥīd* (oneness of God), and ma'rifah (spiritual knowledge) are still the answers to humanity's search for the meaningfulness of life amid the dynamics of modern life.

Meaning of life describes how a person gives meaning to his or her life, including in building hope and finding the reasons behind every action taken to maintain the meaningfulness of life. Frankl argues that the meaning of life is a process of finding values and goals that have deep significance in one's life. This meaning does not originate from within the individual alone, but is found through experience and involvement in daily activities. In achieving the meaning of life, each individual needs to make decisions that reflect both freedom and responsibility. Thus, the search for the meaning of life can be realized through various interactions and activities that a person does in everyday life.¹⁸

Meaning of life can be experienced by individuals from infancy to old age. According to Muijnck, children already have the meaning of life in the form of actions, although they are not yet able to express it verbally. In adolescence, the achievement of the meaning of life begins to appear when a person feels prosperous with his life. The age of 16 to 18 years is the right period to guide adolescents in finding the meaning of their lives, because at this stage they are trying to understand their identity. Individual life meaning is obtained through two main components, namely subjective and objective. Subjective components include personal experiences, perspectives, and individual assessments of their lives. Meanwhile, the objective component includes aspects of cultural, moral, and ethical values that develop in the surrounding environment. The meaning of individual life is formed through a combination of personal experience and the influence of the social environment, which together determine the direction of one's life and its impact on the surrounding community.¹⁹

Frankl describes Meaning of Life as being obtained through the search for three different types of values, namely creative values, experiential values, and attitudinal values. First, Creative values are values that individuals obtain through activities that are productive, innovative, or creative in creating something new in the world, such as through work, employment, or leadership roles. Examples: 1) Work, but the meaning of life lies not in the work but in the attitude and way of working that reflects personal involvement in the work; 2) Doing good and making a positive contribution to the environment is a form of actualization of deep creative values, reflecting individual involvement in creating the meaning of life through actions that benefit oneself and the surrounding community.

Second, experiential values are values that a person acquires when he/she feels or is involved in a life experience, such as the value that arises from the experience of love or how a person interprets the concept of a true friend. For example: Living beauty, feeling love, and understanding truth are important aspects in shaping the meaning of one's life. In this context, love plays a central role as a very important value in developing a meaningful life. Through the experience of loving and being loved, individuals can feel deep inner happiness and fulfillment, which in turn enriches their meaning of life.

¹⁸Juwita Finayanti et al., "Teknik Ngudari Reribed untuk Mengarahkan Meaning of Life," *Jurnal Pendidikan* 4, no. 3 (2019): 274, Malang.

¹⁹Finayanti et al., 285.

Third, attitudinal values are values that are formed as a response reflected in an individual's attitude towards the destiny or circumstances they experience. For example, how a student behaves when facing failure in an exam at school. This value highlights that the suffering experienced by a person can still have meaning for him as long as it is faced with the right attitude.²⁰

The three sources of value in Meaning of Life are formed through a process of evaluation of individual conditions and the surrounding environment. Therefore, in this evaluation process there is an element of objectivity that allows a person to find and determine the meaning of life that is suitable for him or her.²¹

2. Harmony Between Logotherapy and Islamic Teachings

The concept of the meaning of life proposed by Viktor Frankl shows harmony with the values of life in Islam. Frankl emphasizes the importance of finding the meaning of life through personal responsibility and a deep search for purpose, even in the face of suffering. In Islam, every aspect of human life is considered part of worship, in accordance with the main purpose of its creation. As Allah says in the Qur'an Surah al-Zāriyāt verse 56, "And I did not create the jinn and humans but that they may serve Me". The existence of humans and the universe is a manifestation of Allah's will to test the extent to which humans are able to show their loyalty in worshiping and devoting themselves to Him. Thus, in both Frankl's and Islam's views, the search for the meaning of life is closely related to individual responsibility and devotion to a higher purpose.²²

An approach based on human philosophy has the ability to restore individual freedom, which then becomes the basis in logotherapy to understand human existence. In this view, humans are seen as beings who have the freedom to change their lives according to their will in order to realize the meaning of life that they believe in. The meaning of life itself has a crucial role in life, as it is closely related to the reason and purpose of one's existence. The meaning is objective, outside the human self, and challenging to achieve. According to logotherapy, humans have the freedom to determine their attitude and psychological condition, because they are a whole unity of physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions.²³

Victor Frankl is a figure in humanistic psychotherapy and a pioneer of logotherapy. Logotherapy is an approach in psychiatry that recognizes the existence of a spiritual dimension in humans, in addition to physical and psychological aspects. Frankl argues that the search for the meaning of life and the drive to achieve it is the main motivation in human life in order to obtain the desired meaningfulness. He also emphasized that spirituality has an important role in human existence. In logotherapy, human beings are seen as an integrated whole of biological, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual

²⁰H. D. Bastaman, *Integrasi Psikologi dengan Islam Menuju Psikologi Islami* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1995), 195.

²¹Hanafi, H., Hidayah, N., & At, A. M. (2018). *Adopsi Nilai Budaya Osing dalam Kerangka Objektivitas Meaning of Life*. http://journal.um.ac.id/index.php/jptpp/

²² Rio Pebrian, dkk. 2018. Spiritualitas, Doa dan Prestasi Belajar. Belajea; Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Vol. 3 No. 02.

²³Viktor E. Frankl, *The Will to Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy* (New York: Meridian, 1988), 32.

dimensions. The spiritual dimension itself is considered a source of health that remains intact and uninterrupted, even when a person faces physical or mental illness.²⁴

Logotherapy has three main concepts, namely first, there is meaning in every aspect of life, both in happiness and suffering. Second, humans have the freedom to determine their will. Third, individuals are able to respond to various forms of suffering and tragic events they experience. These three concepts are interconnected with human existence, which is characterized by aspects of spirituality, freedom, and responsibility.²⁵

In the logotherapy approach developed by Viktor Frankl, there are two main techniques used to help individuals overcome anxiety and find meaning in their lives. The first technique is paradoxical intention, where individuals are encouraged to consciously face their fears or anxieties in a way that contradicts their instincts, such as deliberately thinking about or doing the things they fear. The goal of this technique is to reduce excessive tension and anxiety by changing the individual's attitude towards frightening situations. The second technique is dereflection, which involves shifting the individual's attention from excessive focus on themselves and their internal problems to attention on more meaningful external things, such as helping others or pursuing greater goals. By shifting the focus away from themselves, individuals can reduce anxiety symptoms and find deeper meaning in their lives.²⁶

3. Integrating Spirituality and Psychotherapy: A Path to a Meaningful Life

In his spiritual work titled *Kimiyā al-Sa'ādah*, Imam Al-Gazālī outlines the approach of Sufism as the main path to achieving true happiness in this world and the hereafter. Through this book, he emphasises the importance of purifying the soul and self-recognition as the initial steps in drawing closer to Allah. Al-Gazālī offers various spiritual methods, such as self-introspection, controlling desires, and enhancing the quality of worship, all aimed at guiding individuals towards a meaningful life filled with true happiness. Thus, *Kimiyā al-Sa'ādah* not only serves as a guide to Sufism but also as a roadmap to eternal happiness through closeness to the Creator, among other things:

First, knowing oneself is an essential first step in the spiritual journey to know God. As explained by Imam Al-Gazālī in *Kimiyā al-Sa'ādah*, a deep understanding of the essence of oneself, both the outward and inward aspects, becomes the key to understanding the existence of Allah. This is in line with the saying of the Prophet Muhammad, *"Whoever knows himself will know his Lord."* By contemplating creation and the purpose of life, humans can realise their closeness to the Creator, which ultimately guides them towards deeper devotion and piety.

Second, in the spiritual view of Islam, the human intellect holds the highest position as a tool for contemplating and understanding the existence of Allah. The ability of the mind to reflect and seek truth makes it the primary means of knowing God. Knowledge of God is the highest form of knowledge that can be attained by humans, and its attainment brings individuals deep happiness and inner satisfaction. Thus, the use of reason to

²⁴ Dhania Riskiana Putri dan Puji Prihwanto, "Aplikasi Psikologi Transpersonal Sebagai Pendekatan dalam Konseling" Jurnal "Talenta Psikologi" Volume XI Nomor 01, 64-66.

²⁵Viktor E. Frankl, *The Will to Meaning: Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy* (New York: Meridian, 1988), 17.

²⁶Rahman, A. A., *Sejarah Psikologi: Dari Klasik Hingga Modern (2nd ed.)*. (Rajawali Pers, 2018).

contemplate the existence and attributes of God is an essential step in the spiritual journey towards true meaning in life.

Third, in the view of Imam Al-Gazālī, worldly life demands humans to maintain a balance between the outward and inward aspects. He emphasized the importance of maintaining the body through good physical care and health, as well as nurturing the soul by purifying it from despicable traits and drawing closer to Allah. This balance is considered the key to achieving true happiness and closeness to the Creator. As explained in his works, Al-Gazālī stated that the body and soul have complementary roles in the human spiritual journey, where the body serves as a means to perform worship, while the soul is the essence of consciousness and servitude to Allah.

Fourth, in Islamic teachings, the Qur'an and Sunnah emphasize the existence of life after death, including the concepts of heaven and hell as rewards and punishments for human deeds. However, it is often forgotten that there is also a spiritual dimension to the afterlife, namely spiritual paradise and spiritual hell. Spiritual heaven refers to the inner peace and happiness felt by individuals who are close to Allah, while spiritual hell depicts the inner suffering caused by spiritual distance from Him. Imam Al-Gazālī in his works emphasizes the importance of this understanding, reminding that the afterlife is not only related to physical conditions but also to spiritual conditions that affect the quality of life in thisworld and the hereafter.

Imam Al-Gazālī in his monumental work *Kimiyā al-Sa'ādah* explains that love for Allah *'maḥabbah'* is the highest station in Islamic spirituality. He identified several factors that can awaken such love: (1) Awareness of oneself as a gift from Allah. A person who loves themselves and realizes that all the perfection within them is a gift from Allah will be encouraged to love the Creator. (2) Love for those who are loved by Allah. Loving those who are loved by Allah, such as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the saints, is a manifestation of love for Allah. (3) Recognizing the similarity of humans to Allah. As the Prophet Muhammad said, *"Indeed, Allah created man in His likeness,"* which indicates that humans have the potential to love Allah through the divine attributes within themselves.

Through these factors, Imam Al-Gazālī emphasizes the importance of $ma'rifatull\bar{a}h$ 'knowledge of Allah' as the foundation for achieving true love for Him. This process involves the purification of the soul and the control of desires, which in turn leads individuals to true happiness in this world and the hereafter.²⁷

Al-Gazālī argues that in essence, humans constantly seek peace in life to achieve a balance between worldly life and the hereafter, so that their souls can experience tranquility. In relation to the human life's goal of always striving to draw closer to Allah, Al-Gazālī offers several steps to achieve it. These steps include $muq\bar{a}rabah$, which is the process of introspection in identifying one's shortcomings; $muh\bar{a}sabah$, which is evaluating the deeds that have been done; and $muj\bar{a}hadah$, which is the effort to discipline oneself to always adhere to the known truth. This is in line with what Allah has stated in the Qur'an, Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 28: *Those who believe and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah. Remember, only by remembering Allah do hearts find peace.*

²⁷Slamet Riyadi dan Fauzi Bahreisy,Kimiya al-Sa'adah (Kimia Ruhani untuk Kebahagiaan Abadi),(Jakarta: Zaman, 2001), 132-142.

The verse explains that dhikr plays an important role in calming the soul and illuminating a person's heart, thereby encouraging them to do good deeds and avoid sinful actions. When the soul is completely free from worldly negligence and constantly remembers Allah, the urge to worship and avoid His prohibitions will arise, ultimately leading humans to true happiness. For individuals who have a spiritual closeness to Allah, dhikr becomes a means to cleanse the heart from various worldly influences. According to Al-Gazālī, through dhikr, one can unveil the veil that covers the heart until reaching a deeper spiritual awareness.²⁸

The happiness and inner peace of a person are closely related to how often they remember Allah through dhikr. The more intensely someone engages in dhikr, the greater the tranquility they feel. On the contrary, if someone neglects to remember (God), then negative or satanic energy can affect them, causing feelings of restlessness and tightness in the chest. (1) In the practice of Sufism, the remembrance of the oneness of God with the phrase "Lā ilāha illallāh" is believed to be one of the effective methods to achieve happiness and inner peace. According to Sufi teachings, the recitation of this phrase is not only done with the tongue but also with full awareness and deep contemplation of its meaning. Through this method, it is hoped that individuals can feel closeness to Allah, achieve inner peace, and attain true happiness. (2) To maintain a state of happiness, one is advised to practice silent remembrance of God, known as zikir khafi. This dhikr is performed by repeatedly mentioning the name of Allah, such as *Allāhu Allāh... Allāhu Allāh*, so that the heart remains connected to Him.²⁹

The human soul has two tendencies: a tendency towards goodness on one side, and a tendency towards evil on the other side. So that the soul always tends towards goodness, humans must also strive to be good. To be good, humans must always be close to their God. To be close to God, humans must increase their remembrance, which means remembering Allah. Dhikr is very important for humans. This is because, in addition to bringing the servant's soul closer to their God, dhikr can also calm the servant's heart. With a calm heart, a person will become happy in their life.³⁰

Happiness is a fundamental aspect of human life. True happiness is not only worldly but also encompasses a spiritual dimension. The limitations in understanding the essence of happiness often lead to mistakes in evaluating it. One common misconception is to consider wealth, status, and position as the sole sources of happiness. Although these factors can bring happiness, their existence is not the only determinant, because happiness can still be felt without relying on those things.

As beings endowed with reason, humans have the capacity to think, ponder, and reflect on life. This ability to think allows individuals to understand a deeper meaning of happiness. Aristotle defined happiness as a condition that brings pleasure and satisfaction. Meanwhile, according to Diener, happiness is closely related to life satisfaction, which includes a comprehensive evaluation of various aspects of a person's

²⁸W. Asmita dan I. Irman, "Aplikasi Teknik Zikir dalam Konseling terhadap Kesehatan Mental," Al-Ittizaan: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam 5, no. 2 (2022): 80–85.

²⁹M. Bisri, "Pengaruh Zikir terhadap Ketenangan dan Kebahagiaan Manusia, Perspektif Qurani,"Ulumuddin: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman 7, no. 2 (2017): 87–102.

³⁰ Asmuni, A. (2018). Zikir Dan Ketenangan Jiwa Manusia (Kajian Tentang Sufistik-Psikologik). *Prophetic: Professional, Empathy, Islamic Counseling Journal*, 1(01).

life. Diener also emphasizes the relationship between happiness and health, where many individuals fail to appreciate the importance of being grateful for their health and instead sacrifice it in pursuit of things they believe will bring happiness.³¹

True happiness can actually be found in the simple things around us, even originating from within ourselves. This aligns with the thoughts of Jalaluddin Rumi, who stated that everything already exists within humans, so the search for true happiness must begin from within oneself. This statement reinforces the view that humans have been created with perfection and endowed with various potentials by God.

The key to experiencing happiness is the attitude of self-acceptance towards all the conditions faced. This acceptance is a form of gratitude to God, oneself, others, and the universe. As previously explained, a person's psychological condition, whether in the form of thoughts or feelings, will manifest in real actions. Therefore, by instilling positive thoughts and feelings, happiness will come naturally without having to be excessively pursued. This principle aligns with the law of attraction, which states that the energy we emit will attract experiences that resonate with our feelings and thoughts. Further discussion on the application of this concept will be explained in the next section.³²

Here is a direct quote from $Ihy\bar{a}'$ ' $Ul\bar{u}m$ al- $D\bar{\imath}n$ by Imam al-Gazālī regarding the meaning of true happiness, accompanied by the Arabic text and its translation. First, true Happiness is Knowledge of Allah.

True pleasure is knowing Allah Ta'ala, for that is the pinnacle of happiness

This quote is found in the Book of *al-'Ilm*, the beginning part of the Revival, where al-Gazālī emphasizes that *ma'rifah* 'knowledge' of Allah is the primary purpose of human creation and the source of true happiness.

Second, happiness achieved through the purification of the soul.

Happiness will not be attained except by purifying the heart from despicable morals and adorning it with noble ethics

This is found in the Book of *Riyāḍah al-Nafs*, where al-Gazālī explains the importance of *tazkiyah al-nafs* 'purification of the soul' as a path to true happiness.

Third, Worldly happiness is fleeting.

Whoever seeks happiness in this world is deceived; truly, happiness is in the hereafter

³¹S. Bakri dan M. A. Wahyudi, *Quantum Sufi: Transformasi Diri dengan Energi Ilahi* (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2021), 13.

³²Bakri dan Wahyudi, *Quantum Sufi*, 14.

In the Book of *al-Zuhd*, al-Gazālī warns that pursuing worldly happiness without an orientation towards the hereafter is a form of deception.

Fourth, happiness is closeness to God.

True happiness is closeness to Allah and feeling at peace with Him

This quote shows that the essence of true happiness according to al-Gazālī is an intimate and loving relationship with Allah.

Fifth, knowledge and action as the path to happiness

Knowledge and deeds are the path to the happiness of the hereafter

In the Book of *al-'Ilm*, al-Gazālī emphasizes that true knowledge and consistent practice are the keys to achieving eternal happiness. These quotes emphasize that according to Imam al-Gazālī, true happiness does not lie in worldly pleasures, but rather in the knowledge of Allah, the purification of the soul, righteous deeds, and closeness to Him.³³

Meanwhile, in modern psychology, Viktor E. Frankl offers the concept of the Meaning of Life, which focuses on how individuals can find and create meaning in their lives. Frankl emphasizes that humans have the freedom to determine the meaning of their lives and can attain it through three main sources, namely: (1) Creative Values, where individuals find meaning in life through creation, innovation, and contribution to the world, such as through work, art, or leadership. (2) Experiential Values, which are meanings found by individuals through life experiences, such as meaningful social relationships, affection, and appreciation of beauty. (3) Attitudinal Values, which refer to how individuals respond to suffering or challenges in life. Even in difficult situations, one can still find meaning in life if they are able to approach it correctly.

The concept of the meaning of life according to Viktor Frankl, which emphasizes the search for life's purpose as the main motivation of humans, aligns with the Islamic view that places worship and devotion to Allah as the primary purpose of human life. Frankl argues that the search for the meaning of life is a profound existential drive that can be found through work, love, and suffering. This is in line with Islamic teachings, which state that human life has a primary purpose, namely to worship and serve Allah. Thus, there is a harmony between Frankl's views and Islamic values in emphasizing the importance of the search for life's meaning as the core of human existence. In Islam, the meaning of life is closely related to the concept of monotheism and servitude to Allah, as explained in the words of Allah in Surah Al-Zāriyāt verse 56: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." Not only suffering is often considered to erase the meaning of human life, but also the reality of death. However, it should be realized that the only element in life that is not eternal is the unfulfilled potentials. When that potential is

³³bu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulumuddin: Menghidupkan Ilmu-ilmu Agama*, terj. KH. Abdul Halim Mahmud (Jakarta: Pustaka Amani, 2011).

realized through concrete actions, it immediately becomes part of someone's life history. All experiences that have occurred, whether in the form of actions, choices, or achievements, will be stored in the dimension of the past that cannot be erased. It is precisely because it has become part of the past that the experience gains a form of eternity that is no longer dependent on time. Therefore, the temporal limitations of life do not automatically render it meaningless, because all realities that have manifested remain and can be remembered throughout time.³⁴

The meaning of life actually lies in the responsibility of humans to determine what potential will be realized during their lives. In every phase of life, humans are faced with choices, and the decisions made will become an eternal mark of their existence. Unfortunately, many people only focus on the transience of life and neglect the values that have been accumulated from past experiences. Logotherapy emphasizes that the limitation of time should not be met with pessimism, but rather encourage someone to live actively and meaningfully. Like someone who keeps every old calendar page marked with notes of life, humans should take pride in the journey of life they have traversed, including love, work, and even the suffering endured with courage. All of that is not just a memory, but an important part of the existential identity that cannot be taken away by time or by future generations.³⁵

Actually, it is not easy for a doctor diagnosing or anyone to provide a general answer about the meaning of life. Because the meaning of life is very subjective, differing for each individual and can change over time, even within hours. Therefore, what is more important is not seeking a general definition of the meaning of life, but rather understanding the specific significance of a person's existence in a particular moment. Giving a general answer about the meaning of life is as irrelevant as asking a chess grandmaster, "What is the best chess move ever?" Answers like that will never be absolute, because every move must be considered based on the context of the game and the characteristics of the opponent. Similarly, in life, meaning cannot be separated from the conditions and roles that a person is currently experiencing.³⁶

Every individual has a role, responsibility, and mission that is unique and irreplaceable by anyone. A person's life cannot be repeated, and therefore every challenge that arises in life is also unique and personal. Therefore, the question of the meaning of life should not be posed as a passive inquiry but should be understood actively, as it is life itself that is "asking" humans. In facing that question, the most authentic answer can only be given through a sense of responsibility towards the decisions, actions, and roles carried out in daily life. This is why logotherapy places responsibility at the core of human existence; not merely understanding life, but responding to its call with full awareness and commitment.³⁷

Both in the thoughts of al-Gazālī and Frankl, there is a common view that the meaning of life is not something given easily, but must be sought and created through human interaction with the world and its relationship with God. In the increasingly dynamic and

³⁴Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (n.p.: SFILE.MOBI, n.d.), [chap 3].

³⁵Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (file MOBI, n.d.), chap 3

³⁶Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (file MOBI, n.d.), chap 5

³⁷Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (file MOBI, n.d.), chap 5

challenging modern context, these concepts remain relevant as a foundation for individuals in finding and living a meaningful life.

D. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, it was discovered that the search for the meaning of life is a fundamental aspect of human existence. Both through the perspective of Sufism developed by al-Gazālī and the approach of Viktor Frankl's logotherapy, individuals have the potential to find meaning in life through various mechanisms, such as the performance of worship, engagement in life experiences, creative processes, and attitudes in facing challenges. The understanding and application of these values contribute to the enhancement of psychological well-being, inner peace, and a more meaningful life.

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