



MIRROR FOR PRINCES IN MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC POLITICS: JUSTICE IN THE NASIHAT AL-MULK AL-GHAZALI

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Abstrak: *Mirror of princes* atau cermin bagi para penguasa merupakan sebuah genre karya para ilmuwan dan tokoh agama yang disusun untuk menawarkan pedoman dan arahan bagi para penguasa. Genre ini tersebar luas di Eropa dan dunia Islam para era klasik dan pertengahan dengan tujuan untuk menyediakan panduan moral dan praktis bagi para pemimpin yang ditulis dalam banyak judul. Salah satu karya utama dalam genre ini adalah karya Imam Al-Ghazali berjudul “*Tibruḥ al-Masbūk fī nasīhat al-mulk*”. Teks ini dapat dilihat sebagai sebuah karya persusif dalam bidang pemikiran politik, yang berisi panduan akidah, etika, dan panduan praktis dalam pengelolaan kekuasaan. Karya ini terdiri dari pengantar dan tujuh bab yang membahas teologi Sunni, keadilan dan politik, struktur pemerintahan dan etika pejabat, gelar-gelar bagi penguasa, kebijaksanaan para filsuf, signifikasi akal dan para pemikir serta posisi perempuan. Teks ini dalam dunia Islam memiliki kemiripan dengan teks dari tradisi Persia dan tradisi Romawi. Salah satu nasehat penting al-Ghazali adalah keadilan memiliki hubungan yang sangat erat dengan kelanggengan kekuasaan.

Kata Kunci: cermin para penguasa, nasehat, keadilan, pemikiran politik, al-Ghazali.

Abstract: The Mirror for Princes genre comprises works by scholars and religious figures designed to offer guidance and advice to rulers. This genre was widespread in both Europe and the Islamic world during the classical and medieval eras. In the Islamic world, these works aimed to provide moral guidance and practical advice to leaders under various titles. One notable example is Imam al-Ghazali's “*al-Tibruḥ al-Masbūk fī Nasīhat al-Mulk*.” This paper employs a literature study approach to analyze the text, examining the book's manuscript to understand how scholars conveyed

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advice to Islamic rulers in the Middle Ages. The text can be seen as a persuasive form of political thought, offering rulers theological, ethical, and practical guidance. Al-Ghazali's manuscript on al-mulk comprises an introduction and seven chapters, addressing topics such as *Sunni* theology, justice and politics, the structure of ministries and the ethical conduct of their secretaries, the titles of kings, the wisdom of philosophers, the significance of reason and thinkers, and a discussion of the position of women. The existence of mirror for princes' manuscripts in the Islamic world shares similarities with political texts from the Persian and Roman empires. One of al-Ghazali's important advice to rulers is that justice is closely related to the permanence of power.

Keywords: *Mirror for Princes, advice, justice, political thought, al-Ghazali*

INTRODUCTION

Specula principum, or Mirror for the princes, is a genre of writing in classical and medieval political literature that contains moral guidelines for rulers or princes. This genre summarizes various works that serve as theoretical and ethical guidelines rather than presenting empirical data.¹ In this genre, political ideas are conveyed in the form of advice.² Medieval Europeans recognized these genres of works as “*political advice texts*”.³ And are also generically called *speculum regis*.⁴

During the Islamic golden age, it was common for scholars to offer guidance to the ruling authorities. In Islamic civilization, this genre is known in various versions, such as *Sirajul Mulk* al-Turthusi from Tortosa, Islamic Spain, *Manhajul Masluk fi siyaset al-mulk al-Syaizari*, to *Nasihah al-Mulk* Imam al-Ghazali, and many other versions. In terms of language, this work is written in various languages of the Islamic world, including Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.⁵ In Arabic, the *mirror for princes* genre is usually called

¹ Clifford E Bosworth, “An Early Arabic Mirror for Princes: Ṭāhir Dhū l-Yamīnain’s Epistle to His Son ‘Abdallāh (206/821),” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 29, no. 1 (1970): 25–41.

² Roberto Lambertini, “Mirrors for Princes,” in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy* (Netherlands: Springer Netherlands-Dordrecht Netherlands: Kluwer Academic ..., 2011), 791–97.

³ Lisa Blaydes, Justin Grimmer, and Alison McQueen, “Mirrors for Princes and Sultans: Advice on the Art of Governance in the Medieval Christian and Islamic Worlds,” *The Journal of Politics* 80, no. 4 (2018): 1150–67.

⁴ Denise Aigle, “The Conception of Power in Islam: Persian Mirrors of Princes and Sunni Theories (11th–14th Centuries),” *Reading Medieval Sources* 13 (1977): 136.

⁵ Carole Hillenbrand, “A Little-Known Mirror for Princes by Al-Ghazāl?,” *Words, Texts and Concepts Cruising the Mediterranean Sea*, 2004, 593–601.

Nasihat al-Mulk (advice for kings), *andarnamēh* or *pandnameh*, and *advicename* in Turkish.⁶

The princes seek advice and guidance on how to wield power effectively, thereby developing strong leadership qualities. This type of writing is typically directed to a ruler during a specific period, either because they are requested to do so or for other reasons. In Islamic literature, this genre is also known as part of the *adab* corpus (ethics).⁷ According to Abbas, the works related to this corpus are focused on translating various classical works from Greek, Persian, and Indian texts into Arabic during the Umayyad caliphate era. The early translations included Aristotle's "*The Letter of Aristotle to Alexander*", an apocryphal correspondence between Aristotle and Iskandar Zulkarnaen (Alexander the Great); *Kalila and Dimna*, a fable from India translated by Ibn Muqaffa' (720-757); and the Testament of Ardashir, a letter from the Persian king to his son named Sapur, which contains advice on leading the Sassanid empire.⁸

The translation of foreign works in Islam has influenced the growth of Islamic civilization. The expansion of the Islamic caliphate to the former empires of Rome, Persia, and India brought the Islamic world into closer contact with other worlds, including the world of Greek civilization. Not surprisingly, great works from various civilizations were also absorbed into the Islamic world, particularly during the Golden Age of Islam. During this era, there was a strong emphasis on the development of science, accompanied by a significant military presence. In Indonesia, this trend was reflected in the works of scholars during the Islamic sultanate, such as Nuruddin ar-Raniry's "*Bustan al-Salatin*" (The King's Garden), which is also found in the Malay Islamic world.⁹ And *Taj al-Salatin* (The Crown of the Kings) by Bukhari al-Jauhari.¹⁰

This article intends to review the advice given to kings and princes in the Islamic world, which falls into the category of the "mirror for princes"

⁶ Bosworth, "An Early Arabic Mirror for Princes: Ṭāhir Dhū l-Yamīnain's Epistle to His Son 'Abdallāh (206/821)."

⁷ Bosworth.

⁸ Makram Abbès, "The Arabic Mirrors for Princes as Witnesses to the Evolution of Political Thought," *A Critical Companion to the Mirror for Princes Literature*, 2023, 314–42.

⁹ Norhayati Hamzah, Arba'iyah Mohd Noor, and Tatiana Denisova, "The Book of Bustan Al-Salatin By Nur Al-Din Al-Raniri As Historical Text: The Structure And Purpose of Writing," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 9, no. 2 (2014): 29–44.

¹⁰ Nabila Yasmin, "The Islamization of The Malay Worldview A Study of Malay Historical Literature *Taj Al-Salatin*," *Tsaqofah & Tarikh: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan* 5, no. 2 (2020): 39–48.

genre. The advice is found in a work by Imam al-Ghazali titled "*Tibrul Masbuk fi Nasihat al-Mulk*," hereafter referred to as "*Nasihat al-Mulk*." It was originally written in Persian and later translated into Arabic by one of Imam al-Ghazali's students. The concept of justice discussed by al-Ghazali will be the subject of this study.

Justice is a core concept in the Mirror for Princes genre. The exhortation to apply justice in governance was strongly emphasized by al-Ghazali and other Islamic scholars in their various works. The writings can be relied upon to refute the modernist criticism that pre-modern Islamic politics was limited in its discussion of justice.¹¹ To answer this criticism, the emphasis on justice can be read in al-Ghazali's works.

Al-Ghazali's works, especially after he pursued Sufism, are complete of messages of justice, not only in politics but also in economics.¹² However, this paper only limits itself to al-Ghazali's idea of justice in relation to the durability of power. Al-Ghazali's hypothesis is that the more just a power is, the longer it will last.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach using the content analysis method. Text studies involve research that centers on the analysis or interpretation of written materials based on their context. This type of research can be utilized to explore an individual's thoughts as expressed in published manuscripts. The specific text used in this study is the text of the Book of *Nasihat al-Mulk* by Imam al-Ghazali, which has been validated. The text is in Arabic, which is a translation of the original Persian language text authored by al-Ghazali. The stages of content analysis carried out are as follows: (1) Selecting the text to be studied; (2) narrowing the unit of analysis studied; (3) determining the theme that will be given focus; (4) examining the socio-political background of the emergence of texts; (5) analysis and interpretation.

¹¹ Fadi Zatar and Omar Fili, "Justice and the Just Ruler in the Islamic Mirror of Princes," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 41, no. 3-4 (2024): 34-55.

¹² S. Mohammad Ghazanfar and Abdul Azim Islahi, "Economic Thought of Al-Ghazali," Jeddah: Scientific Publishing Centre, King Abdulaziz University

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Al-Ghazali biography

Al-Ghazali was born in Tus, Khurasan, Persia in 450 AH/1058 AD. His full name is Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Ghazali al-Tusi al-Shafi'i. The naming of al-Ghazali has been disputed by scholars. Some argue that the name al-Ghazali is based on a place called Ghazalah in Tus. Others believe that the name comes from the profession of yarn spinning or weaving that al-Ghazali's family practiced. There is also a pronunciation of al-Ghazali's name with a double *zai* (*tashdid*), which results in it being read as al-Ghazzali.¹³

Al-Ghazali studied religion in his village after his parents passed away. His father was a pious man. Al-Ghazali and his brother Ahmad enrolled in the madrassa, pursued their education in Jurjan, and then returned to their village. After residing in Tus for a period, al-Ghazali pursued his studies in Naisabur, where he received education from the eminent scholar Imam al-Juwaini. Imam al-Juwaini, also known as Imam al-Harramain, was highly regarded in the academic community for his teachings. After spending an extended period in Naisabur, al-Ghazali journeyed to Baghdad, where he took up a position as a professor at the prestigious Nizamiyah campus. His stature as a revered scholar was further solidified when he was appointed as the head of the campus by the Prime Minister of Seljuk, Nizam al-Mulk.

Al-Ghazali critically analyzed philosophical ideas that he believed deviated from Islam in his book "*Tahafut al-Falasifah*" (Incoherence of Philosophy). Despite holding prestigious positions in the Seljuq sultanate and producing influential works, he chose to leave his positions and embark on a transformative Sufi journey. It is believed that a profound awakening led him to relinquish these roles, entering a pivotal phase of his life during which he authored his renowned masterpiece, "*Ihya 'Ulumiddin*." Al-Ghazali passed away in 505 AH (1111 AD) in Tus.¹⁴

The Role of the Intellectuals of al-Ghazali

The renowned scholar Watt asserts that Al-Ghazali holds a significant place among Islamic scholars, with his influence extending far

¹³ Yasmin, "The Islamization of The Malay Worldview: A Study of Malay Historical Literature Taj Al-Salatin."

¹⁴ Yasmin.

and wide. His role as a pivotal figure in shaping the perception of Islam in the Western world is noteworthy¹⁵. Al-Ghazali's works were highly influential, earning him the title of *Islamic hujjatul*. His work covers various fields including philosophy, theology, ethics, law, politics, education, and *usul al-fiqh*.

In the field of philosophy, one of al-Ghazali's most famous works is his criticism of philosophers in the book *Tahafut al-Falasifah* (The Incoherence of Philosophers). This book criticizes philosophical ideas that do not align with Islamic beliefs, explains thoughts that are consistent with Islam, and discredits specific philosophical ideas as being against the faith. Ibn Rushd responded to this criticism with another book called "*Tahafut Tahafut al-Falasifah*" to counter al-Ghazali's attack.

Al-Ghazali made significant contributions in the field of law by authoring practical fiqh books like *Al-Wajiz* and *Al-Wasit*. Additionally, he delved into the field of Kalam theology, producing insightful treatises and books such as *Iljam al-Awam*, *Munqid min al-dhalal*, and *Qistashul Mustaqim*, among many others. In the realm of ethics, al-Ghazali penned numerous insightful treatises on the topics of worship and human interaction. Expanding his scholarly reach, al-Ghazali crafted his seminal work titled *al-Mushtasfa* in the domain of *usul al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence). Delving into the realm of politics and governance, al-Ghazali composed the book *al-Tibrul al-Masbuk fi Nashihat al-Mulk* in Persian, showcasing his expertise in this area.

Socio-political Setting of al-Ghazali's Era

Al-Ghazali's life is situated within the historical context of the Saljuq sultanate period, a time marked by significant Islamic cultural and political developments. He was deeply influenced by the political and intellectual dynamics of the era, which were deeply intertwined with the powerful Turkish clan, known as the Oghuz Turks. The Saljuq Sultanate held sway over vast territories, extending from Syria, Iraq, and Iran to Central Asia, and reaching the borders of China. This expansive reach had a profound impact on the socio-political landscape within which Al-Ghazali's intellectual career flourished. The name Saljuq is taken from the 10th-century leader Saljuq Ibn Duqaq bin Timur.¹⁶

¹⁵ W Montgomery Watt, *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali* (Simon and Schuster, 2020).

¹⁶ Eric Ormsby, *Ghazali: The Revival of Islam* (Simon and Schuster, 2012).

The influence of the Saljuq dynasty was divided among five distinct kingdoms. Firstly, the Great Saljuq (*al-Saljaqah al-'Udhma*) held dominion over Khurasan, Ray, Jibal, Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, and Ahwan from 329 AH/1039 AD to 522 AH/1127 AD. Secondly, the Saljuq Kirmani governed from 432 AH/1041 AD to 522 AH/1188 AD. Thirdly, the Seljuks of Iraq and Kurdistan ruled from 511 AH/1117 AD to 590 AH/1193 AD. Fourthly, the Seljuks of Syria reigned from 478 AH/1094 AD to 511 AH/1117 AD. Lastly, the Roman Seljuks (Rum) held sway from 470 AH/1077 AD to 700 AH/1300 AD.¹⁷

The Seljuk Empire embraced the *Sunni* ideology and faced opposition from the influential *Bathinias* of the *Ismailiyid* sect, a Shiite group located in Persia. When al-Ghazali began his career as a prominent scholar, the Seljuq Empire had a well-known prime minister. His name is *Nidham al-Mulk*, and he comes from the same area as al-Ghazali. *Nidham al-Mulk* founded the *Nidhamiyah* campus in Baghdad, intending to counter the influence of Ismaili theology, which relied on strong logic, among other things. This competition can be described as the contest between the Ash'ari (*Sunni*) theology, embraced by the Seljuq, and the Shia Ismaili Batiniyah theology, as well as with philosophers.¹⁸

The *Nidhamiyah* campuses played a significant role in influencing the Seljuq rulers and nurturing new scholars. These campuses received financial support from the state and waqf, leading to their rapid development despite the competition among *Sunni* schools. During the era discussed by Ahmet Kuru, a crucial patronage system emerged between the Seljuq rulers and the scholars. This system not only fostered a close relationship between the two parties but also served as a mechanism to regulate the religious landscape of the time. The role of political patronage was instrumental in nurturing and advancing scientific developments during this period.¹⁹

Nidham al-Mulk also militarized the economy with the *iqta* system as a powerful source of military funding. The *iqta* system had the effect of weakening the influence of the landlords and local rulers under the Seljuq rule. The education system was funded by the waqf system and financing

¹⁷ Zaki Mubarak, الموازنة بين الشعراء (Hindawi Foundation, 2022).

¹⁸ Gerhard Bowering et al., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* (Princeton University Press, 2012).

¹⁹ Ahmet T Kuru, *Islam, Otoritarianisme, Dan Ketertinggalan* (Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2021).

from state sources. This system was key to the longevity of Seljuq rule and was later emulated by other empires, including the Ottoman Empire in Turkey.²⁰

Politically and ideologically, the Seljuqs had bad relations with the Fatimid dynasty and the Ismaili Hashishin. This hostility led to the assassination of *Nidham al-Mulk* by the radical Hasidic sect. The Hashayin group, which became known in the West as assassins, was a radical Ismaili sect in Syria that was well known in the West, especially during the Crusades. They carried out assassinations of prominent political and religious figures.²¹

Al-Ghazali's relationship with the Seljuq empire was not always harmonious and full of dynamics. Although he was initially very supportive of the empire through the various intellectual and judicial positions he held, after four years as a leader at the *Nidzamiyah* college, al-Ghazali resigned and left all the positions he had to pursue the Sufi path. Not many accurate answers can be obtained to the reasons for al-Ghazali's resignation, except that it was related to his anxiety about the negligent life of the world. Some say that al-Ghazali regretted his devotion to state authority. However, this was refuted by al-Ghazali's return to the *Nidzamiyah* college after a Sufistic journey and writing *Ihya 'Ulumiddin*. According to Ahmed T. Kuru, the relationship between scholars and rulers, with reference to the phenomenon of al-Ghazali and the Seljuq, is based on historical-political rather than theological construction.²²

Justice in Al-Ghazali's *Nasihat al-Mulk*

Nasihat al-Mulk is a Persian-language work written for Sultan Muhammad bin Malik Shah al-Saljuqi. The text consists of seven chapters with varied themes from theological, ethical, to technical matters of government. The first chapter deals with matters of faith or theological issues related to faith. Al-Ghazali writes:

"Know, O sultan, you are a creature that has a Creator. That Creator created nature and everything in it. He is One, with no partner. There is no other like Him. He is a being in the beginning that is not preceded by anything. He is eternal nothingness, for His eternity is nothingness. His

²⁰ Kuru.

²¹ LEWIS Bernard, "The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam" (Londres, Weidenfeld et Nicholson, 1967).

²² Kuru, *Islam, Otoritarianisme, Dan Ketertinggalan*.

existence must be eternal; there is no way leading to nothingness. He exists by His Substance. Everything else needs Him, and He does not need anything else. He exists by Himself, and others exist by His cause."

The above description is the main point of monotheism conveyed by al-Ghazali to the sultan. Furthermore, al-Ghazali elaborated in detail about the attributes of God, the afterlife as part of the principles of faith, discussion of the Messenger, the tree of faith (*shajarat al-iman*), the basics of justice and awareness consisting of ten things, namely (1) recognize power and its dangers; (2) always seek advice from scholars and avoid bad scholars; (3) do not tolerate injustice, including injustice from state officials; (4) position and power can create arrogance and cruelty, so you must prioritize forgiveness; (5) putting oneself in the shoes of the people to understand that what one dislikes is also disliked by the people; (6) not keeping those who have needs waiting, not delaying service to them for the sake of sunnah worship; (7) not neglecting oneself with luxurious clothes and food, there is no justice without modesty; (8) when you can exercise authority with gentleness and leniency, do not do it with harshness and cruelty; (9) earning the favor of the people in a way that is in accordance with the sharia, not being deceived by praise and recognizing weaknesses by asking the people honestly; (10) not seeking support from the people in a way that violates the sharia.

Next, still in the introduction chapter, al-Ghazali describes two sources of water for the growth of the tree of faith. First, recognizing the world as a transitory place and that humans are only travelers in it. Second, understanding the souls of others by seeing that every soul will experience birth, travel in life, and will finally exit this world in a state of safe faith. These two thoughts are thoughts that every king and even every human being must understand.

Al-Ghazali explains each part of his advice, accompanied by sound evidence from the Qur'an, hadith, stories of the Companions of the Prophet, the lives of previous caliphs, expressions from philosophers, and past stories that have a connection with the theme of the advice. Al-Ghazali's discussions seem systematic and deductive.

Al-Ghazali tells the story of a messenger of the Roman emperor who came to see Amirul Mukminin Umar bin Khatab as follows:

"The Roman Emperor sent a messenger to Umar ibn Khatab to investigate and witness his condition and life. When the messenger entered Medina, he asked the people of Medina, "Where is your king?" The people of Medina replied, "We do not have a king, we have a leader (amir), he is in front of the city of Medina." When the envoys met Umar, they found him sleeping in the sun on the hot sand. He was covered with a cloth, and sweat was pouring from his body onto the sand. This caused respect in the envoy's heart. He said, "A king who rules the world would not be this strong. But you, O Umar, uphold justice, you are safe and can sleep (anywhere). At the same time, our king is always in a state of worry and anxiety. I testify that your religion is the true religion. Had I not been a messenger, I would have embraced Islam. But I will go back to being a Muslim."

In addition to the old stories, al-Ghazali narrated other stories containing advice. These stories are from Islam and also from outside Islam. It is perhaps hoped that the stories will give more interest to the sultan to follow the moral guidelines he compiled because they are supported by historical empirical data in the form of stories that have happened in the past. The introduction section closes with five stories. In the fifth story, al-Ghazali tells the story of Iskandar Zulkarnain (Alexander the Great) when he met a nation that placed graves in front of their houses. When he asked them why they did that, they replied that they would never forget death as it had been experienced by those before them.

Al-Ghazali concludes the introduction with a theological argument. Whoever knows the world and has in his heart the knowledge of the lives of others who have passed, it will be easy for him to take care of his world, and it will strengthen the tree of faith in his chest. The tree will grow, develop, and its branches will increase; in the end, it will meet Allah with a safe faith. This method is quite commonly used by al-Ghazali in his other works, especially *Ihya' ulumiddin*.

Justice and the Permanence of Power

In the first chapter, al-Ghazali presents the concepts of justice, politics, kings, and the course of their lives. Al-Ghazali mentions:

"Know and be certain that Allah, the Almighty, has chosen two types of people from amongst the Children of Adam: Prophets, whose duty it is to convey proofs to His servants and to explain the way to Him. Secondly, the

kings are in charge of keeping their servants from harming other servants. Their authority is a rope to bind the good life of their people with their wisdom..."

Al-Ghazali also described the sultans as *dhillullah*, who are understood to be the executors of God's law on earth, so they must be obeyed and listened to. Therefore, the sultan must do justice to his people and must not do evil and cause damage. Al-Ghazali reminded:

"The unjust sultan will perish, his power is not eternal, because the Prophet Muhammad SAW mentioned, "power can last in disbelief, but it will not last in injustice." In history, it is mentioned that the Magi once ruled for four thousand years because of their justice and equal treatment of their people."

A just leader is a leader who is fair among his people and avoids evil and destructive actions. A just leader will create prosperity and security for the people. Conversely, if the leader is unjust, there will be instability and damage among the people. Al-Ghazali gave some examples of just leaders and unfair leaders, along with the condition of the country at the time they led.

Power will last if it is exercised in justice among the people and takes care of them equally. Justice can be realized if kings have the principle that injustice is forbidden by their religion and culture, promoting the country and the welfare of the people. The stories of the kings of the past are lessons for their successors that leaders are judged by what they do, writes al-Ghazali. Their reputation and good name depend on what they do. If they do good, then their names will be remembered in kindness. If they are unjust, they will also be mentioned as unfair. Therefore, al-Ghazali advised:

"It is incumbent upon a person to sow the seeds of goodness, and to remove from himself ugliness and disgraceful behavior. Especially if he is a king, that will preserve his good name and reputation. He will not be the one spoken of negatively by others."

Al-Ghazali suggests that talking about the goodness of human reputation after they die is their second life in the world. Therefore, historical education is crucial to be written and conveyed to people. They can learn from it. Countries will be famous because of the justice of their leaders.

Al-Ghazali also described that every leader wants a good legacy for the next generation. If the country is prosperous, the people will be satisfied and grateful. This is based on the teachings of scholars and philosophers that religion is strong with power, power will be strong with the army, the army will be strong with the availability of costs, costs will exist if the country is prosperous, the country will prosper with justice for the people. Conversely, power, the state, and the people will be destroyed if power is held by unjust people.

Al-Ghazali explained that injustice is divided into two. First, structural injustice, namely the injustice of leaders against their people, the injustice of the strong against the weak, and the injustice of the rich against the poor. Second, the injustice of man against himself by committing sin. Immorality and injustice were the source of the destruction of the power of kings and princes.

CONCLUSION

The genre of mirrors for princes is intellectual writings that contain advice to kings and princes. One of al-Ghazali's works, entitled *Nasihat al-Mulk*, is part of this genre in the Islamic world. The basic ethics discussed by al-Ghazali are the relationship between justice and the perpetuation of power. The narrative of justice is one of the main narratives in *Nasihat al-Mulk*.

The basis of justice built by al-Ghazali in his work is the theology of tawheed. However, according to al-Ghazali, the sustainability of power is determined by justice in the exercise of power, not by obedience. Even pagan power can last if it is built on justice, and conversely, a believer's power can collapse if it is not based on justice. Comparatively, al-Ghazali presents an example of the lasting power of the Pagans because of justice in the case of the fire-worshipping kings (*Majusi*) who could last long in their rule of justice. This was also the case with the kings of pre-Islamic Persia.

Al-Ghazali's standard of justice is to sow goodness, eliminating destructive and despicable behavior. For al-Ghazali, justice for kings and princes is the sculptor of a legacy that will make them remembered for all time. The legacy of justice will be the second era of fame of kings after their death.

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