

Study of Thematic Education on Narcissistic Phenomenon and Its Recovery Efforts through Tazkiyatun Nafs

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the phenomenon of narcissistic personality from the perspective of the Qur'an using a thematic exegesis (*tafsir maudhū'i*) approach. The focus is on identifying narcissistic traits as reflected in Qur'anic narratives, as well as exploring the Qur'an's response to such deviant personalities. This qualitative-descriptive research employs a library research method, drawing on primary data from relevant Qur'anic verses interpreted through authoritative exegetical sources such as *Tafsir al-Kabir* by Fakhruddin al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Manar* by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, and *Tafsir al-Wasith* by Sayyid Tantawi. The findings reveal that narcissistic personality traits—as defined in modern psychology, including an exaggerated sense of self-importance, an excessive need for admiration, and a lack of empathy—are clearly exemplified in figures such as Iblis, Pharaoh, Qarun, and segments of the Children of Israel. The Qur'an strongly condemns such behaviors as they contradict the core values of *tawhid* (monotheism) and human dignity. As a spiritual remedy, the Qur'an offers the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul), which involves three stages: *takhalli* (removal of blameworthy traits), *tahalli* (adornment with virtuous morals), and *tajalli* (manifestation of divine awareness within the self). These findings indicate that the Qur'an not only diagnoses deviant personality traits but also provides a holistic path of psychological and spiritual healing. This study contributes to the development of thematic Qur'anic interpretation and opens new avenues for integrating Islamic knowledge with contemporary psychological thought.

Keywords: *Narcissistic Personality, Thematic Exegesis, Tazkiyatun Nafs, Takhalli, Tahalli, Tajalli.*

Abstrak : Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji fenomena kepribadian narsistik dalam perspektif Al-Qur'an dengan menggunakan pendekatan tafsir tematik (*tafsir maudhu'i*). Fokus kajian diarahkan pada identifikasi karakteristik narsistik sebagaimana dicerminkan dalam narasi Al-Qur'an, serta tawaran solutif Al-Qur'an terhadap penyimpangan kepribadian tersebut. Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif-deskriptif dengan metode studi kepustakaan, menggunakan data primer berupa ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an yang relevan dan ditafsirkan melalui sumber-sumber tafsir otoritatif seperti *Tafsir al-Kabir* karya Fakhruddin al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Manar* karya Muhammad Abduh dan Rasyid Ridha, serta *Tafsir al-Wasith* karya Sayyid Thanthawi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepribadian narsistik—yang dalam psikologi ditandai dengan rasa penting diri yang berlebihan, kebutuhan berlebih akan pengakuan, dan empati yang rendah—dapat ditemukan dalam sosok-sosok seperti Iblis, Fir'aun, Qarun, dan sebagian Bani Israil. Al-Qur'an mengecam perilaku tersebut karena bertentangan dengan nilai ketauhidan dan kemanusiaan. Sebagai solusi, Al-Qur'an menawarkan pendekatan spiritual melalui konsep *tazkiyatun nafs* (penyucian jiwa), yang mencakup tiga tahapan: *takhalli* (pengosongan diri dari sifat buruk), *tahalli* (penghiasan diri dengan akhlak terpuji), dan *tajalli* (manifestasi kesadaran ilahiah dalam diri). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa Al-Qur'an tidak hanya mengandung kritik terhadap kepribadian menyimpang, tetapi juga mengarahkan manusia kepada proses penyembuhan jiwa yang integral, berbasis nilai-nilai etis dan spiritual. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan tafsir tematik dan integrasi antara keilmuan Islam dan psikologi kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: Kepribadian Narsistik, *Tafsir Maudhu'i, Tazkiyatun Nafs, Takhalli, Tahalli, Tajalli.*

Intoduction

The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam, serving as *hudan li al-nās*, a guidance for all of humanity. One of its characteristics is *syāmilun li kulli nawāḥī al-ḥayāt*, meaning it encompasses all aspects of human life, not only addressing legal-formal aspects like law and sharia but also reaching into moral, social, and psychological dimensions (Al Amin, 2025).

The development of information technology today has brought paradoxical effects. On one hand, it accelerates the flow of knowledge and facilitates global connections; on the other hand, it also triggers identity crises and moral degradation. Individualistic, hedonistic, and egocentric lifestyles have become more prominent. Unknowingly, this phenomenon contributes to the rise of Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), a personality disorder characterized by a sense of superiority, a craving for admiration, and a lack of empathy for others.

The phenomenon of NPD has now become a widely discussed topic, especially on social media. Many individuals are beginning to recognize the presence of narcissistic figures around them, whether in family relationships, partnerships, or among superiors. Manipulative, toxic behavior, and the pursuit of digital validation are clear manifestations of this disorder. According to data from Cambridge University (2024), the prevalence of NPD ranges from 0% to 6.2% of the population, and it significantly impacts difficulties in forming social relationships, anxiety, and even suicidal tendencies.

Narcissistic personality disorder has a considerable impact, not only on the people around the sufferer who become victims but also on the sufferers themselves. People with this disorder typically have difficulty forming social relationships due to their arrogant, toxic, manipulative, and empathy-lacking attitudes. As a result, many people avoid social relations with them. This condition negatively affects the sufferer. In some cases, they may experience issues such as stress, depression, excessive anxiety, addiction, and even resort to violence and suicidal tendencies (Ngwu et al., 2023).

Scientific studies on narcissism from an Islamic perspective have been conducted by several researchers. Afidatur Rohmah (2022) studied the term narcissistic in the Qur'an, such as *takabbur*, *ḥasad*, *‘ujub*, and *riyā’*, and linked it to both major and minor sins. Meanwhile, Naufal Waliyuddin (2022) explored collective narcissism in religious communities and suggested a Sufi approach, such as *muḥāsabah* and *tawāḍu’*, as an ethical and spiritual solution (Hasan & Tamam, 2017).

Research by Maemunah and Muzakki (2024) used a historical approach to examine narcissistic phenomena in the prophetic tradition, focusing more on the Prophet Muhammad's response to individuals with ego tendencies. Meanwhile, Nurintan (2021) emphasized the importance of self-control as a preventive mechanism against narcissism in the era of social media.

In contrast to these studies, this research presents a new approach through the method of *tafsīr mawḍū‘ī* (thematic exegesis), which systematically gathers and integrates relevant Qur'anic verses about arrogance, pride, the disease of the heart, and the purification of the soul. The goal is not only to describe the characteristics of NPD from the perspective of revelation but also to build a framework for spiritual recovery based on *tazkiyatun nafs*, including *takhallī* (the removal of bad traits), *taḥallī* (adornment with virtuous character), and *tajallī* (the acceptance of divine light in the heart). Thus, this research is transformative as it offers a Qur'anic solution to the modern soul crisis based on the integration of psychology and Islamic teachings (Naufal, 2024).

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach aimed at describing and analyzing the phenomenon of narcissistic personality from the perspective of the Qur'an through the method of thematic exegesis (*tafsir maudhu'i*). This approach was chosen because it is capable of systematically and thematically addressing contemporary issues by gathering Qur'anic verses related to a single theme, which are then analyzed integratively and contextually. The method of *tafsir maudhu'i* allows the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an on a particular issue, not fragmentarily as in *tafsir tahlili*.

The data sources in this research consist of two categories: primary and secondary sources. The primary source includes Qur'anic verses related to narcissistic traits and behaviors, such as arrogance, *riya'* (showing off), *ujub* (self-admiration), and love of praise. The secondary sources include authoritative exegesis books such as *Tafsir al-Kabir* by Fakhruddin al-Razi, *Tafsir al-Manar* by Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridha, and *Tafsir al-Wasith* by Sayyid Thanthawi. Additionally, this research refers to psychological literature, specifically the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), as well as Sufism literature such as *Amradh al-Qulub wa Syifa'uhā* by Ibn Taimiyah and *al-Thariq ila Allah* by Ali Jum'ah.

Data collection techniques are carried out through the method of library research, which involves reviewing and examining relevant literature in the fields of exegesis, psychology, and Islamic spirituality. The analysis procedure is conducted in several stages. First, the researcher identifies verses relevant to narcissistic traits based on indicators in the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder) fifth edition. Second, these verses are studied using the *tafsir maudhu'i* approach, paying attention to the context of revelation, the lexical meaning, as well as the moral and spiritual messages contained in them. Third, an elaboration is made between the narratives of Qur'anic figures such as Iblis, Fir'aun, Qarun, and Bani Israil and the modern concept of narcissism. Fourth, the researcher analyzes the Qur'anic solutions to this deviant personality through the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul), with stages of *takhalli* (removal of blameworthy traits), *tahalli* (adornment with virtuous traits), and *tajalli* (manifestation of divine awareness).

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, this research employs triangulation techniques, both source triangulation and theory triangulation. This is done by comparing the interpretive results from various classical and modern *mufasssir* (exegesists) and linking them with contemporary psychological theories and Islamic spiritual concepts. With this approach, the study is expected to present a synthesis between Islamic knowledge and psychology in explaining and providing solutions to the phenomenon of narcissistic personality in modern society.

Result and Discussion

A. *Tafsir Maudhu'i*

Tafsir maudhu'i consists of two words: *tafsir*, which means explanation, and *maudhu'i*, which means thematic. Therefore, *tafsir maudhu'i* refers to the interpretation of the Qur'an based on the same theme. In terms of terminology, *tafsir maudhu'i* is a method of interpreting the Qur'an by collecting all the verses related to a single theme, which are then studied and connected comprehensively and purposefully. The goal is to explore the Qur'an's views on that theme in its

entirety. According to Subhi Shalih, as quoted by al-Humaidi (2002), this method aims to reveal the Qur'an's stance on a particular issue in the light of all the verses related to it. This method is essential for addressing contemporary issues with a comprehensive approach (Marsiti, 2024).

The tafsir maudhu'i method emerged as a response to the need for a more thematic and structured understanding of the Qur'an. Since the time of the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'anic verses were revealed gradually, according to events and the needs of the community. The Prophet then explained the context of the revelation of some of these verses to his companions. After the Prophet's passing, the companions and tabi'in began to understand the Qur'an based on the context of the verses, the cause of revelation (sabab al-nuzul), and their lexical meaning. However, the need to explore a particular theme comprehensively only developed further in later periods. The continuous development of exegesis knowledge, along with the emergence of various challenges of the times, encouraged scholars to reorganize the method of understanding the Qur'an. From here, the thematic approach emerged, which involves gathering all verses related to a specific issue and then analyzing them integratively. This method then evolved into one of the important approaches in contemporary Qur'anic studies, as it is capable of addressing modern issues with a holistic and contextual Qur'anic foundation (Muslim, 2000).

Tafsir maudhu'i is highly relevant for addressing the challenges of contemporary issues. This method presents a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the Qur'an. A specific theme is traced across all related verses and then arranged into a unified meaning. This exegesis is complementary (takmili) to classical exegesis methods such as tahlili and ijmalī, which are partial and stand independently between verses. With this approach, the Qur'an is better able to address contemporary issues accurately. Another advantage is its ability to arrange verses in a thematic and coherent structure. This exegesis also highlights moral, social, and spiritual messages more strongly. Therefore, tafsir maudhu'i is considered an effective and applicable exegesis method for the future (M. Al-Ghazali, 2000).

Tafsir maudhu'i has a very significant urgency in explaining Qur'anic themes comprehensively and contextually. First, it can gather all the verses related to a single theme for comprehensive understanding. Second, this method is very helpful in reorganizing exegesis material and presenting it scientifically (Rafi, 2006). Third, it explains the Qur'an's intent on various types of guidance, both in matters of faith (aqidah) and sharia. Fourth, this exegesis serves as an effective tool for addressing contemporary problems based on a Qur'anic approach. Fifth, it is used to respond to doubts and reject deviant thoughts with an objective scientific method. Sixth, tafsir maudhu'i can reveal the i'jāz (miraculousness) of the Qur'an in addressing various issues of the times. Seventh, it also functions to relate the Qur'anic verses to various modern disciplines such as economics, politics, psychology, and education, thereby showing that the Qur'an is always relevant throughout time (Al-Humaidi, 2002).

B. Narcissistic Personality in Psychology

The term narcissistic or narcissism was first used by Havelock Ellis in a psychiatric context in 1898 in a satirical manner, then adopted by Freud in 1908 as a concept in psychoanalysis. Freud viewed narcissism as a pathological relationship a person has with themselves, reflecting a disorder in personality development (Grunberger, 2008).

In the Indonesian dictionary, narcissism means the state of loving oneself (Kebudayaan, 2016). In linguistic terms, narcissistic behavior refers to a person's feelings and perceptions about themselves, including self-confidence, self-esteem, the ability to manage emotions, and establish social relationships. In a positive sense, narcissistic behavior reflects positive self-worth and an awareness of personal value. However, in psychological terms, narcissistic traits are pathological, emerging when someone has difficulty regulating self-esteem, forming a fragile self-image that appears superior, and using social relationships to bolster their ego. Such narcissistic traits typically stem from negative emotional experiences or insecure parenting patterns, causing individuals to build manipulative relationships and lack empathy for others (Ronningstam, 2016).

In developmental psychology and psychoanalysis, pathological narcissism originates from problematic childhood experiences, particularly emotionally unresponsive parenting. When a child's emotional needs are unmet, they may fail to form a healthy self-image and develop narcissistic traits as a defense mechanism. Harsh, indulgent, or inconsistent parenting styles can also trigger narcissistic traits. Children who experience rejection or anger from their parents are likely to create an inflated self-image to mask emotional wounds. Social learning theory emphasizes that the way parents treat a child shapes how they view themselves, including the belief that they are more special than others (Yakeley, 2018).

Narcissistic behavior arises when a person becomes overly focused on themselves, feeling superior and more important than others. This can damage interpersonal relationships and make it difficult for individuals to empathize with others. Therefore, it is important for everyone to learn to value themselves appropriately and build healthy relationships with others (Harahap & Ependi, 2023).

Narcissistic behavior in psychology is categorized as a personality disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders fifth edition (DSM-5), referred to as Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). A person can be diagnosed with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) if they meet five or more of the nine diagnostic criteria listed in the DSM-5. These criteria are: (1) having a grandiose sense of self-importance, such as exaggerating achievements or talents and expecting recognition as superior; (2) being obsessed with fantasies of unlimited success, power, beauty, or ideal love; (3) believing they are special and can only be understood by high-status people or institutions; (4) requiring excessive admiration constantly; (5) feeling entitled and expecting to be treated as special in an unrealistic way; (6) exploiting others for personal gain; (7) lacking empathy or being unable to understand others' needs and feelings; (8) often feeling envious of others or believing others are envious of them; and (9) displaying arrogant and haughty behaviors or attitudes. The diagnosis is made only if these patterns are persistent, appear from early adulthood, and occur in various life contexts (Association., 2022).

C. Narcissistic Characteristics in the Qur'an

The Qur'an does not only function as a guide in aspects of worship and law but also as a mirror of human personality. Within it, Allah SWT reveals the deepest facets of human nature, including the tendencies to boast, seek praise, and feel superior to others. These attitudes often lead to moral deviations and spiritual destruction. Some verses even depict behavioral patterns that resemble what is now recognized in psychology as narcissistic traits.

1. Grandiose Sense of Self-Importance

In the Qur'an, many figures are depicted as having a grandiose sense of self-importance, which is an excessive feeling of self-importance, believing oneself to be superior, and demanding recognition without a proportional basis. This characteristic is vividly reflected in the attitudes and words of figures such as Iblis, Pharaoh (Fir'aun), Qarun, Nimrod (Namrud), and even some of the Children of Israel (Bani Isra'il) (Mursalin et al., 2023).

One of the clearest representations of grandiose self-importance in the Qur'an is the attitude of Iblis when he was commanded to prostrate to Prophet Adam. His refusal was not due to ignorance or weakness but because of a pride that went beyond limits. Iblis viewed himself as more noble than Adam simply because of the origin of his creation. The Qur'an states:

قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ

"Iblis said: 'I am better than him. You created me from fire, and You created him from clay.'" (QS. Al-A'raf: 12)

Sayyid Qutb (2003), in his Tafsir Fi Dhilali al-Qur'an, highlights that Iblis' refusal to prostrate to Adam was not just formal disobedience, but also a reflection of profound existential arrogance. Iblis's arrogance stemmed from a materialistic ego that believed fire was superior to clay. The statement "أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ" (I am better than him), according to Sayyid Qutb, is a declaration born from irrational self-glorification and a rejection of divine truth. This attitude aligns with the grandiose sense of self-importance found in Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), which is the belief that one is entitled to absolute admiration without objective justification. Sayyid Qutb explains that this type of illness is a form of *amrād al-qulūb* (disease of the heart) that is dangerous because it not only misguides the individual but can also lead to collective rebellion against the values of submission and humility in Islam.

Iblis's excessive self-confidence, believing he was superior to humans simply because he was created from fire, while humans were created from clay, shows his inability to objectively assess superiority. Superiority is not determined by origin but by utility and function. Just as gold is more valuable than stone not because of its color but because of its usefulness and rarity, clay, though seemingly inferior to fire, is the medium that sustains life. Likewise, humans have been endowed with intellect, making them superior to other creatures. Therefore, Iblis's reasoning for his arrogance was baseless, as he judged by appearance and not by essence or function. Iblis's error was in believing in his own superiority without objective grounds, and that's what distanced him from the truth (Karim & Hasibuddin, 2021).

2. Obsession with Fantasies of Success, Power, Beauty, or Unlimited Ideal Love

The second characteristic of narcissistic personality is an obsession with fantasies of success, power, beauty, or unlimited ideal love. This obsession pushes an individual to live in a fantasy of perfection and unrealistic self-image. This person will believe that all the achievements they have made in life are their success alone, without the contribution of others. In the Qur'an, this is illustrated in the story of arrogant figures such as Qarun, who was intoxicated by wealth and believed his greatness was solely due to the wealth he possessed. Allah says:

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيَتْهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي

Qarun said: "*I was only given it because of the knowledge I possess.*" (QS. Al-Qashash: 78)

In Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghaib, Fakhrudin al-Razi (1981) explains that the wealth Qarun acquired was due to his skill in 'ilm al-kimiya' (alchemy), the ability to process certain metals with specialized techniques and knowledge. With his expertise, he dominated the metal market in Egypt, making him extremely wealthy and respected. However, instead of using this knowledge as a means of gratitude, Qarun boasted and credited his success solely to his intelligence, never attributing it to Allah (Sayfudin, 2018).

This attitude reflects narcissistic personality traits, where a person believes their life's success is solely due to their personal superiority, and they use their expertise to look down on others. Furthermore, Qarun shows a fantasy of limitless success, imagining himself as someone who could never fail because he believed he had mastered the key to wealth. He lived in the illusion of his greatness, believing he was irreplaceable and that his success would last forever a narcissistic delusion that blinded him to reality and eventually led to his downfall (Mursalin et al., 2023).

3. Believing They Are Special and Can Only Be Understood by High-status People or Institutions

The third characteristic of a narcissistic personality is the belief that they are special and can only be understood by certain high-status individuals. They only value people who are socially, intellectually, or spiritually superior to them and tend to look down on those who are considered less educated, poor, or insignificant. In the Qur'an, such behavior is vividly reflected in the attitude of the hypocrites and other arrogant groups who refuse to follow the truth simply because it comes from ordinary people. This is clearly depicted in Allah's words:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"When it is said to them: 'Believe as others have believed,' they say, 'Should we believe as the foolish have believed?' Know that they are the foolish, but they do not know." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 13)

This verse was addressed to the hypocrites, especially among the Jews and elite Quraysh figures living in Medina. They refused to accept the teachings of Islam because they felt socially, intellectually, and even ethnically superior. The Jews, in particular, believed that they were the *sya'bullah al-mukhtar* (chosen people of God), which led them to feel unworthy of following the teachings brought by Prophet Muhammad, whom they considered inferior. When instructed to believe as the other believers did, they scornfully rejected, saying they would not follow the path of the *as-sufaha'* (the foolish), referring to the Prophet's companions who came from ordinary backgrounds (Al-Razi, 1981).

This rejection reflects a narcissistic personality trait, believing that only the elite can understand them, and belittling others they consider unworthy. This is a form of inner arrogance and spiritual blindness, as they judge the truth not by its substance but by the social status of the messenger. The Qur'an strongly rebukes this, stating that they are the truly ignorant, although they are unaware of their ignorance (Aslami, 2016).

4. Need for Excessive Admiration Continuously

The next narcissistic trait is the need for excessive admiration continually. A narcissist constantly seeks recognition and praise from others to maintain their self-image in public. They perform good deeds to gain sympathy and praise from society. For example, they may distribute giveaways to increase their popularity, making their kindness seem superficial and manipulative. In the Qur'an, such people are categorized as liars in religion. Allah says:

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يَرَاءُونَ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ

"(They are) those who show off (to be seen of people) and refuse to give even the smallest help." (QS. Al-Maun: 6-7)

Surat Al-Ma'un is disputed regarding its place of revelation, either Meccan or Medinan. Some exegetes argue it was revealed in Mecca due to its short and direct verses, while Sayyid Qutb (2003) tends to support the view that it was Medinan. This is based on the central theme of the surah, which addresses the phenomenon of hypocrisy that emerged during the Medina period. This surah condemns those who act to show off and refuse to help others.

Sayyid Qutb (2003) further explains that the phenomenon of *riya'* (showing off in worship) is a reflection of a spiritually and socially sick personality. He states: "They perform the movements of prayer, utter its supplications, but their hearts are not alive with it, nor do they live because of it." He adds: "They pray for show in front of people, not for sincerity to Allah." This behavior, according to Qutb, is not merely a flaw in intention but a form of worship that is devoid of soul and meaning, signaling a serious internal corruption. The admiration of others for the good deeds performed is their primary motivation, not love for God. This parallels the narcissistic trait of seeking external validation and using worship or good deeds as a platform for self-image (Fathuddin, 2016).

5. Feeling Entitled and Expecting Unjustified Special Treatment

A narcissistic personality also believes they have special rights and unjustified expectations for special treatment. An individual with these traits feels different and superior to others, demanding respect and special treatment. In the Qur'an, this is reflected in the behavior of some groups of Bani Israil. These groups are often depicted in the Qur'an with characteristics fitting the narcissistic personality. Allah says:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبُّهُ ۖ فَلَمِ يَعْذِبْكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ ۖ بَلِ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ ۚ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

"The Jews and Christians said: 'We are the children of Allah and His beloved.' Say, 'Then why does He punish you for your sins? No! You are but human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills, and to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, and to Him is the return.'" (QS. Al-Maidah: 18)

One of the most obvious forms of narcissistic personality in the Qur'an is the belief among some of the Children of Israel that they were the chosen people exclusively loved by Allah. They also believed they would be free from any sin or punishment. In Tafsir al-Tahrir and al-Tanwir, Ibn Ashur (1984) explains that their belief as "أبناء الله وأحباؤه" (children and beloved of Allah) is an unfounded claim of superiority, stemming from "their false beliefs that have been passed down from generation to generation."

Moreover, in another verse, the Children of Israel claim that they will be saved from hell, saying: "لن تمسنا النار إلا أياماً معدودة" (The fire will not touch us except for a few days). This statement reflects unrealistic expectations despite their violations. These claims show the entitlement characteristic of NPD, where someone feels entitled to special treatment even though they are morally and objectively undeserving.

6. Exploiting Others for Personal Gain

Narcissistic traits are not only reflected in arrogance and the craving for admiration but also in manipulative and exploitative behavior. One of the most dangerous forms of this disorder is the tendency to use others for personal benefit. They treat others as tools to achieve their ambitions for power and dominance. In the Qur'an, this characteristic is exemplified by Pharaoh (Fir'aun), the tyrannical ruler of Egypt, who used oppression as a political tool and for supremacy. He not only considered himself the highest but also constructed a social structure that oppressed others to maintain his status. This is depicted in Allah's words:

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَسْتَضِعُّ طَائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ يَتَّبِعُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

"Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into sects. He oppressed a group of them, killing their sons and sparing their women. Indeed, he was of the corrupters." (QS. Al-Qashas: 4)

In many cases of narcissistic personality, the individual tends to treat others not as equal partners but as tools for fulfilling their personal ambitions and interests. Pharaoh represents a symbol of power tyranny, oppressing others to strengthen his dominance and inflate his self-image. Al-Razi (1981) explains that the meaning of Allah's words in QS. Al-Qashas: 4, "يَسْتَضِعُّ طَائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ" refers to the phrase: "كان يستعبدهم ويستخدمهم في أخس الأعمال، ككنس الأسواق والحمل والبناء" ("He enslaved them and made them work in the most menial tasks, such as sweeping the markets, carrying goods, and building buildings.")

Sayyid Qutb (2003) describes Pharaoh's oppression not as incidental or just political power but as systematically and consciously constructed. Pharaoh "divided his people into groups" (يَسْتَضِعُّ طَائِفَةً مِنْهُمْ) not just to control them, but to create a social structure that reinforced his domination.

Pharaoh's oppression is not only an abuse of power but also a reflection of severe manipulative traits, treating others as tools to fulfill his personal ambitions. In psychology, this aligns with the sixth characteristic of Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), which is the tendency to exploit others for personal gain without empathy. Thus, the Qur'an not only tells history but also shows the moral decay that can arise from excessive narcissism.

7. Lack of Empathy

In the dynamics of a narcissistic personality, one of the most destructive patterns is the tendency to manipulate others for personal gain. After successfully leading others into error, they then absolve themselves from responsibility for the negative consequences that follow. This trait is very typical in narcissistic personality disorder, particularly the lack of empathy and the tendency to blame others. The Qur'an sharply illustrates this pattern through the story of Iblis in QS. Al-Hasyr: 16, when he said to mankind:

كُنْتُ لِلشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ، فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِنْكَ، إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"Indeed, I am free from you. Indeed, I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

Sayyid Thanthawi (1983) explains that Iblis is not only the main symbol of misguidance but also the most apparent example of a personality that is devoid of empathy and is manipulative. After successfully leading humans astray, Iblis shows no sense of responsibility or concern for the consequences of his actions. On the contrary, he shifts all the blame to humans and disassociates himself from what happens. This attitude is reflected in Allah's words: "ما أنا بمصرخكم وما أنتم بمصرخي" ("I cannot help you, nor can you help me"), a statement that shows Iblis never truly cared for those he misled.

8. Envy of Others' Achievements

One of the narcissistic personality traits (NPD) identified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) is deep envy of others. In the Qur'an, this jealousy (ḥasad) is depicted as a dangerous disease of the heart, which becomes the source of various destructive actions. One of the clearest examples is the story of Habil and Qabil (QS. Al-Mā'idah: 27-30), where Qabil kills his brother out of envy for the acceptance of Habil's offering by Allah. Allah says:

إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقُبِّلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ

"When they both offered a sacrifice and it was accepted from one of them but not from the other, he (whose sacrifice was not accepted) said: 'I will surely kill you!'" (QS. Al-Maidah: 27)

The story of Habil and Qabil is a classical illustration of the destructive impact of jealousy rooted in the personality. When Allah commanded the two sons of Adam to offer sacrifices, Habil offered the best of his livestock with sincerity, while Qabil chose poor, unworthy produce. Allah accepted Habil's offering and rejected Qabil's, which triggered deep jealousy to the point that Qabil said: "La aqtulannaka" (I will surely kill you). Interpretation shows that the primary cause of the murder was al-hasad (envy), as emphasized in the quote: "إنما تقبل الله من المتقين" (Indeed, Allah only accepts from the righteous) (Thanthawi, 1983).

This jealousy reflects the eighth characteristic of narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), which is envy toward others and the belief that others envy them. Qabil not only felt humiliated by Allah's rejection but also could not handle his feelings of defeat in relation to Habil. In this context, the Qur'an illustrates how envy not only destroys social relationships but also leads to extreme actions that violate human values.

9. Arrogance and Pride

The ninth characteristic of narcissistic personality disorder is the tendency to be arrogant, proud, and haughty. This attitude is an accumulation of beliefs about personal superiority and exceptionalism, as discussed in the previous characteristics. From the Qur'anic perspective, this attitude is clearly depicted in the story of Iblis, who refused to obey Allah's command to prostrate to Adam because he believed himself to be superior to him. Allah says:

أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

"He refused and was arrogant and became one of the disbelievers." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 34)

Sayyid Qutb (2003), in his exegesis, explains that Iblis' refusal to prostrate to Adam was not just a rejection of a command but also a reflection of the beginning of disobedience rooted in egoism and arrogance. Furthermore, Sayyid Qutb writes that Iblis is the "خليقة الشر" (creature of evil) who refused to submit because he felt ontologically superior. Iblis's arrogance and pride

arose from a sense of being special and superior, as well as an inability to accept the position or superiority of other beings.

D. Tazkiyatun Nafs as the Qur'anic Solution to Narcissistic Personality

Narcissism in the spiritual dimension of Islam can be categorized as part of *amrāḍh al-qulub*, or diseases of the heart. These heart diseases are caused by the temptations of desire and deviations in thinking, which can damage the sincerity of intentions and the truth of beliefs. When the heart is continuously exposed to these temptations, it becomes hardened and darkened, making it difficult to accept the truth and distinguish between what is right and what is wrong (Farīd, 1985).

Heart diseases such as *ujub* (self-admiration), *takabbur* (arrogance), and *riya* (showing off) reflect the characteristics of narcissistic personalities mentioned in the Qur'an. In addressing these types of *amrāḍh al-qulub*, Islam offers a solution through the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* or purification of the soul. *Tazkiyatun nafs* is a vital process for cleansing the heart from internal diseases originating from corrupted actions and intentions, such as *ḥasad* (envy), *kibr* (pride), *i'tidad bi-nnafs* (self-glorification), and *riya* (showing off). Ibn Taimiyah (1981) emphasized that a sick heart will not be healed except through *tazkiyatun nafs*, as Allah says: *قد أفلح من زكاها* (QS. Asy-Syams: 9). *Tazkiyah* here is not just about improving the outward aspect, but it also involves *ikhhlās al-niyyah wa taṣḥīḥ al-‘amal* (sincerity of intention and rectification of deeds), as these heart diseases stem from the corruption of both. Therefore, *tazkiyatun nafs* becomes the path to restore the heart to its purity and prepare it to accept valid deeds.

Ibn Miskawaih (2011) in *Tahdzīb al-Akhlāq* emphasizes the importance of treating the root cause of inner issues, controlling anger, and instilling true moral courage (*syajā‘ah*), which is bravery not driven by ego or dominance, but courage to face oneself, acknowledge weaknesses, and humble the heart. This approach is closely related to the principle of *tazkiyatun nafs* in Islamic ethics, which is the process of purifying the soul from undesirable traits such as arrogance, *riya*, *ujub*, and *ghurur*. *Tazkiyatun nafs* is not only intended to cleanse the heart but also to cultivate noble character based on sincerity, humility, and justice toward oneself and others. In this context, narcissism can be understood as a disease of the soul rooted in the impurity of the heart (*qaswat al-qalb*) and can be healed through spiritual discipline, introspection, *mujāhadah al-nafs* (struggle against desires), and moral guidance from Islamic traditions.

According to Ibn Sina (2005), the soul is an independent substance and is the driving principle in a human's life, not merely a result of bodily composition. This view underscores that the corruption of the soul, such as narcissistic traits, is a deviation from the true function of the soul and therefore requires the process of *tazkiyatun nafs* for its restoration.

The urgency of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) in Islam is greatly emphasized as the foundation of both spiritual and social personality development. Al-Razi (1981) in his explanation of the tafsir of Surah Al-Syams: 9 states that the phrase *قد أفلح من زكاها* signifies the urgency of *tazkiyatun nafs* as the main path to success. He also emphasizes that the success of the soul does not depend solely on outward appearances but is rooted in the process of cleansing the inner self from spiritual impurities, particularly three primary forces that can corrupt it: ignorance (*al-jahl*), desires (*al-shahwah*), and anger (*al-ghaḍab*).

In the context of narcissistic personality, this verse marks that success in performing tazkiyatun nafs is the path to true success in overcoming narcissism. Those who purify their soul are expected to free themselves from inner diseases like takabbur (arrogance), ujub (self-admiration), and riya (showing off). Therefore, tazkiyah is not only the path to salvation in the hereafter but also the process of soul recovery from the psychological disorder of NPD.

Tazkiyatun nafs is an effort to purify the soul, aiming to return a person to the path of God with a heart that is clean and filled with sincerity. In the Sufi tradition, this process does not occur instantaneously but involves structured spiritual stages. Sheikh Ali Jum'ah (2008) explains that there are three main stages that a salik (spiritual traveler) must go through in the process of returning to Allah, namely takhalli, tahalli, and tajalli. The first stage, takhalli (التخلي), is the process of emptying the soul of blameworthy traits such as arrogance, envy, and love for the world. After the heart is cleansed, the next stage is tahalli (التحلية), which involves adorning the heart with praiseworthy traits such as patience, gratitude, humility, and love for Allah. The peak is tajalli (التجلي), when the divine light begins to manifest in the heart as a result of the soul's cleanliness and moral beauty. At this stage, the servant will experience a deep spiritual closeness to their Lord and will be able to perceive the truth with a clear heart. These three stages form the essential foundation for the purification of the soul and the formation of spiritual character in Islam.

1. Takhalli / التخلي

In the framework of healing narcissistic personality, takhalli plays a very important role as the initial step in the process of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul). Takhalli means to empty or cleanse oneself of blameworthy traits that become obstacles between a person and spiritual perfection. The initial stage of takhalli in tazkiyatun nafs begins with sincere repentance, i.e., al-inkhilā' min al-ma'āṣī, completely freeing oneself from sin. Therefore, inkhilā' or this self-release becomes the foundation for subsequent stages such as tahalli and tajalli (Jum'ah, 2008).

In the context of narcissistic disorders, these blameworthy traits include excessive feelings of superiority, tendencies to exploit others, and a constant need for recognition. Two primary traits that root narcissistic behavior are al-kibr (arrogance) and al-mukhtal (self-glorification).

Al-kibr and al-mukhtal are traits hated by Allah, as expressed in QS. An-Nisa, verse 36. In Tafsir al-Manar, Imam Muhammad Abduh, as quoted by Rasyid Ridho (2005), explains that the characteristic of al-mukhtal is one who displays excessive self-importance and views themselves as more special than others. Such a person flaunts their advantages, whether in terms of wealth, social status, or knowledge, with the intention of gaining recognition and respect from society. A person like this believes they deserve special treatment because they consider themselves superior. They fail to recognize that all blessings come from Allah and should be used as a means to express gratitude and humility. On the contrary, the pride that resides within them prevents the development of empathy, appreciation for others, and humility.

Both traits, al-kibr and al-mukhtal, are the main roots of various personality deviations, including narcissistic personality disorder. In the process of tazkiyatun nafs, these traits must be the first to be removed from the soul, as they are the greatest barriers to achieving sincerity, humility, and awareness of one's servitude before Allah. Al-kibr instills an illusion of self-

grandeur, making someone feel superior and worthy of admiration, while al-mukhtal traps a person in a false image based on praise and recognition from others. As long as these traits persist in the soul, the effort of self-purification will not bring significant change.

The process of eliminating al-kibr and al-mukhtal must begin with muhāsabah, which means self-introspection. Muhāsabah involves acknowledging past mistakes and making a firm commitment to correct them. For instance, a person who once often boasted about themselves must control these tendencies to avoid falling into takabbur (arrogance).

The command to engage in muhāsabah is found in Surah al-Hasyr, verse 18:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَسْطُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مَّا قَدَّمْتُمْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

"O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow (the Hereafter). And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what you do." (QS. Al-Hasyr: 18)

Sayyid Thanthawi (1987) explains that muhāsabah is the primary means of preparing oneself for al-ghad (the Hereafter). It is stated that intizār al-ghad (waiting for tomorrow) is not valid except with muhāsabah of the soul. It is further emphasized that kull 'amal lam tuhāsib al-nafs fihī wa-turājī'uh (every action that has not been evaluated by the soul and reviewed is an error). Muhāsabah serves to correct mistakes and improve actions before a person regrets them in the hereafter. Therefore, muhāsabah is not just a reflection, but a spiritual necessity that ensures the heart remains straight and the deeds remain correct.

2. Tahalli / التحلي

Tahalli is the subsequent process in tazkiyatun nafs after the heart has been successfully cleansed in the takhalli stage. The process of tahalli in tazkiyatun nafs can only be effectively realized if the heart has undergone takhalli, that is, cleansing from various inner diseases such as arrogance (kibr), self-admiration (ujub), showing off (riya), and love of praise. Imam al-Ghazali (2010) in Kīmiyā' al-Sa'ādah explains that a purified soul must immediately be filled with noble traits such as patience (sabr), humility (tawadhu'), gratitude (syukur), and sincerity (ikhlas).

One of the most important points in tahalli is the cultivation of the attitude of tawadhu' (humility). Tawadhu' is not merely a moral attitude, but a spiritual foundation that guards the soul from tendencies to revert to narcissistic traits. A humble person does not see themselves as superior to others, does not crave recognition, and does not pursue praise, allowing them to remain calm, wise, and aware of their limitations as a servant of Allah. Thus, tawadhu' becomes the primary shield in maintaining the purity of the soul after purification.

The attitude of tawadhu' holds great significance in the therapy of narcissistic personality, as it stands in direct contrast to the core of narcissism itself. Tawadhu' can calm the soul, subdue the urge to stand out, and foster awareness of one's servitude before Allah and fellow humans. The Qur'an beautifully portrays this quality in Surah Al-Furqan, verse 63:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say, 'Peace.'"

Sayyid Qutb (2003) explains the importance of *tawadhu'* as the main characteristic of *ibad al-rahman*, the servants of Allah. He states that they are those who "walk upon the earth easily" (يمشون على الأرض هونا), meaning they walk calmly, gently, and without arrogance. This trait is not just an outward mannerism but reflects a calm, balanced personality that is far from arrogance, as expressed in the phrase: "ليست مشية تكبر، ولا خيلاء، ولا تصنع، ولا ترفع" ("It is not a walk of pride, arrogance, or pretension"). Moreover, Sayyid Qutb emphasizes that *tawadhu'* is not weakness but an inner strength that allows a person to appear with *waqar* (dignity), *sakina* (tranquility), and *jalal* (majesty). Therefore, this humility is not only the opposite of narcissism but also a form of spiritual maturity that reflects the character of those close to Allah and serves as a model in social interactions.

3. *Tajalli* / التجلي

The final stage of the *tazkiyatun nafs* process is *tajalli*, which is when divine light and the values of goodness manifest fully within a person, both cognitively and spiritually. At this stage, a person is not only free from the diseases of the heart (*takhalli*) and filled with virtuous traits (*tahalli*), but also reaches a high level of awareness in experiencing and practicing goodness purely. *Tajalli* gives rise to the *insān kāmil*, a complete and balanced individual, who is free from narcissistic personality traits because they no longer base their self-worth on external recognition. They perform good deeds because they understand the essence of goodness itself, not for self-image, praise, or social validation. Their awareness comes from within, a combination of enlightened intellect and a spirit connected to God. Thus, *tajalli* is the pinnacle of the soul's journey, where goodness is no longer just an action but has become an intrinsic quality of the person.

According to al-Farabi (1995), the human soul consists of three main faculties: *al-quwwah al-aqilah* (the rational power), *al-quwwah al-mutakhayyilah* (the imaginative power), and *al-quwwah al-ghaḍabiyyah* (the emotional or anger power) (p. 84). In individuals with narcissistic tendencies, *al-quwwah al-mutakhayyilah* often dominates, forming an exaggerated and unrealistic self-image. In this condition, *al-quwwah al-aqilah* becomes weak and unable to control, making it difficult for the individual to accept criticism or evaluate themselves objectively. When their self-image is disturbed, *al-quwwah al-ghaḍabiyyah* emerges as an excessive emotional reaction. However, when a person reaches the *tajalli* stage in the *tazkiyatun nafs* process, *al-quwwah al-aqilah* resumes its role as the main controller, balancing imagination and emotion. At this stage, the person becomes the *insān kāmil*, a complete and mature individual, who performs good deeds because they are aware of the value of goodness itself, not due to the desire for praise or recognition from others.

Conclusion

Through the *tafsir maudhu'i* approach, the Qur'an is not merely a holy book that guides in matters of worship and law, but also serves as an ethical and psychological guide in addressing contemporary mental health issues such as narcissistic personality disorder. By examining verses related to traits like arrogance (*kibr*), self-admiration (*ujub*), showing off (*riya*), and various forms of pride, we find that the Qur'an consistently condemns behaviors that lead to the inflation of the ego and the degradation of human values. At the same time, the Qur'an also offers an alternative path to

recovery through the concept of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul), which emphasizes the importance of inner reform, rectification of intention, and self-awareness as a servant before Allah.

Although the Qur'an does not explicitly mention the stages of tazkiyatun nafs, the process of purifying the soul is formulated in Islamic spiritual tradition through the stages of takhalli, tahalli, and tajalli. Takhalli means cleansing oneself from blameworthy traits such as pride (kibr) and showing off (riya); tahalli is the stage of adorning the soul with noble characteristics such as humility (tawadhu') and sincerity (ikhlas); while tajalli is the condition when divine light radiates in a purified soul. If this process is consistently followed, it will produce the *insān kāmil*, a complete and perfect individual who no longer relies on external recognition but instead sees goodness as a manifestation of intellectual and spiritual awareness.

Thus, the Qur'an is not only a light for external life but also the primary guide in healing and perfecting the human soul. Furthermore, this Qur'anic approach leaves room for constructive comparison with modern therapeutic models such as behavioral therapy, especially in aspects of self-control, behavior modification, and cognitive restructuring, thereby opening a space for dialogue between religious traditions and scientific psychological approaches in healing personality disorders.

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