

## Research Article

## As The Foundation of Inner Peace: A Study from The Perspective of The Qur'an and Islamic Psychology

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**Abstract**

This study explores Tawheed (the Oneness of God) as a psychological foundation for attaining Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah (the tranquil soul) within the framework of Islamic psychology. It examines how Tawheed and Dhikr function as theological and cognitive mechanisms that foster inner peace and emotional stability. Employing a library-based qualitative approach, this research analyzes classical Islamic texts and contemporary psychological studies to identify conceptual and empirical intersections. The analysis reveals that Tawheed, when internalized through spiritual cognition and ethical alignment, restructures human perceptions of anxiety, attachment, and self-control, producing a coherent sense of meaning and security. Furthermore, Dhikr practices demonstrate neuropsychological effects, including increased prefrontal cortex activity related to emotional regulation and reduced amygdala activation associated with fear responses, thereby supporting their therapeutic value. These findings indicate that integrating Tawheed-based cognition with Dhikr practices forms a validated model for spiritual resilience and emotional

well-being. The study concludes that Islamic psychology provides a holistic paradigm of mental health that bridges theological belief, psychological functioning, and neuroscientific evidence.

**Keywords:** Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah, Dhikr, Islamic Psychology, Neuropsychology, Spiritual Resilience.

## INTRODUCTION

Inner peace represents a universal human aspiration that transcends cultural and historical boundaries. Throughout history, humankind has continuously sought psychological balance and spiritual fulfillment through diverse philosophical and therapeutic approaches. In modern psychology, inner peace is generally defined as emotional stability and mental equilibrium achieved through practices such as mindfulness, cognitive restructuring, or behavioral conditioning. However, while these approaches hold merit, they tend to confine serenity to a purely psychological state detached from its metaphysical foundation.

From an Islamic perspective, true tranquility (*as-sakinah wa al-tuma'ninah*) is not merely an emotional equilibrium but a spiritual consequence of faith and the harmonious relationship between the human soul and its Creator. The Qur'an portrays this exalted state as *al-nafs al-mutma'innah* the tranquil soul that attains peace through submission to Allah's will and receives His pleasure (Qur'an, Al-Fajr:27-300;(Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jauziyah, n.d.)). The primary foundation for achieving this state lies in *at-tawhid* the affirmation of Allah's Oneness in His *Rububiyah* (Lordship), *Uluhiyyah* (Worship), and *Asma' wa Sifat* (Names and Attributes). Through the internalization of *tawhid*, the heart is freed from excessive dependence on worldly and anchored solely in trust and reliance upon Allah (*tawakkul*). This theological principle is affirmed in the Qur'anic verse: "Those who believe and whose hearts find tranquility in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find tranquility." (Qur'an, Ar-Ra'd:28).

While Islam places profound emphasis on spiritual well-being, modern psychological paradigms often marginalize the metaphysical dimension of human experience. Western therapeutic models rooted in materialistic and humanistic assumptions tend to define peace as a cognitive and emotional balance achieved through self-regulation and rational control. In contrast, Islamic Psychology (*al-nafsiyyah al-Islamiyyah*) views the *nafs* (self) as a dynamic unity of body, intellect, and spirit governed by one's relationship with Allah. Thus, psychological disturbances are not merely cognitive or emotional dysfunctions but manifestations of a rupture in *tawhid* a spiritual disharmony that disrupts the equilibrium between the servant and the Creator (Rothman, Badri, n.d.).

Within this framework, *dhikrullah* (remembrance of Allah) and *tazkiyatun-nafs* (purification of the soul) function as spiritual therapies that restore the divine connection. These practices cleanse the heart from destructive emotions such as arrogance, hypocrisy, and despair while strengthening spiritual resilience and self-coherence. Findings in neuropsychology further reinforce this understanding: regular *dhikr* has been shown to enhance activity in the prefrontal cortex responsible

for emotional regulation—while decreasing activation in the amygdala, the brain's center for fear and anxiety (ANDREW NEWBERG and MARK ROBERT WALDMAN, n.d.). Such empirical evidence indicates that spiritual remembrance of Allah exerts measurable physiological effects on emotional balance, reaffirming the Islamic view that nearness to Allah through *tawhid* constitutes the true path to inner peace.

Nevertheless, the existing literature remains fragmented. Theological studies often emphasize *tawhid* as a metaphysical foundation, while psychological research focuses on emotional regulation through *dhikr*. Few studies have attempted to integrate these dimensions into a comprehensive psychological framework. Consequently, a clear research gap emerges in the absence of an integrative model that bridges Islamic theology, spiritual practice, and empirical findings in modern psychology.

Therefore, this study aims into:

1. Examine the role of *at-tawhid* as the psychological foundation for achieving *al-nafs al-mutma'innah* ;
2. Analyze *dhikrullah* as a therapeutic practice that operationalizes *tawhid* in restoring inner tranquility; and
3. Develop a conceptual framework that integrates Islamic theological constructs with insights from contemporary psychology and neuropsychology.

By addressing this gap, the present research contributes to the global discourse on Islamic Psychology by positioning *tawhid* not merely as a religious belief but as an epistemological and therapeutic paradigm. This approach challenges secular models that separate mental health from spirituality and offers a holistic alternative that unites faith, cognition, and neuroscience in understanding the tranquility of the human soul.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a library research design with a qualitative descriptive analytical approach. The choice of this method is based on the conceptual and theological nature of the topic, which requires a deep exploration of classical Islamic sources, contemporary psychological literature, and empirical findings relevant to spiritual well-being. The aim is to interpret how *at-tawhid* (the Oneness of Allah) functions as a psychological foundation for achieving *al-nafs al-mutma'innah* (the tranquil soul) within the framework of Islamic Psychology.

### a. Type and Approach of the Study

The qualitative descriptive-analytical approach focuses on understanding meanings, values, and theological principles underlying Islamic concepts of inner peace. The analysis was carried out through thematic interpretation (*tahlil al-mawdu'i*), which involves identifying, organizing, and analyzing textual data from the Qur'an, Hadith, and scholarly works under common themes related to faith, spirituality, and emotional balance (Prof. DR. Sugiyono, n.d.). This method allows for a comprehensive understanding of the interconnection between *tawhid* and psychological tranquility through a non-empirical yet systematic framework.

### b. Sources of Data

Data were obtained from two main categories:

1. Primary Sources, the Qur'an and hadith of the prophet *shallallaahu alayhi wa sallam*, and classical Islamic works such as those of al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn al-Qayyim, which discuss the relationship between *tawhid*, the heart, and the state of spiritual peace.
2. Secondary Sources, contemporary works in Islamic Psychology (Rothman, 2022) and scientific literature on the neuropsychological effects of *dhikr* and spirituality on emotional regulation and mental health.

c. Data Collection Technique

Data collection was conducted through documentary analysis, which includes tracing, reading, and critically reviewing relevant literature. The researcher organized the findings into three main thematic clusters:

- a. The theological essence of *at-tawhid* and its dimensions *Rububiyyah*, *Uluhiyyah*, and *Asma' wa Sifat*.
- b. The psychological implications of *tawhid* and *dhikrullah* in fostering inner peace and emotional stability.
- c. The psychological implications of *tawhid* and *dhikrullah* in fostering inner peace and emotional stability.

d. Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analyzed using content analysis, combining inductive and deductive reasoning. The inductive approach was used to derive psychological principles from theological and textual interpretations, while the deductive approach applied these principles to the context of contemporary Islamic Psychology. Researcher reflexivity was maintained by continually reflecting on interpretive bias, ensuring that personal beliefs did not overshadow textual integrity. Validation of interpretation was ensured through cross-referencing multiple sources and thematic triangulation between classical texts and modern research.

e. Ethical Considerations and Limitations

As this study relies exclusively on textual data, it did not involve human participants. Nonetheless, ethical rigor was maintained by accurately representing original sources and acknowledging all referenced scholars. A key limitation of this research lies in its conceptual nature, which may not capture experiential dimensions of spirituality as observed through empirical methods. Future studies could extend this discussion through empirical or field based approaches to test the therapeutic implications of *tawhid* and *dhikr* in real world psychological settings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Inner peace is a state desired by the natural human disposition. Attaining it has been the ambition of both the religious and irreligious leading to various techniques and methods being put forward to attain inner peace. Muslim scholars are not exempt from posing a method to attaining inner peace. (Keskin, 2019, p. 76) In line with this aspiration, Islamic literature—particularly the works of Muslim scholars—offers a comprehensive framework and methodology for attaining inner tranquility, fundamentally rooted in the concept of *Dzikrullah* (remembrance of Allah) and other spiritual practices known as *tazkiyatun-nafs* (purification of the

soul). This concept is encapsulated in the term *al-nafs al-mutmainnah* (the tranquil soul), as mentioned in the Qur'an:

*“Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (Surah Ar-Ra'd, 13:28).*

This verse underscores the essential relationship between faith (*iman*), remembrance of Allah (*dzikrullah*), and spiritual tranquility. It highlights that true inner peace cannot be attained through material possessions or worldly achievements, but only through a conscious and consistent connection with Allah. From the perspective of *Tawheed*, *dzikrullah* represents the practical manifestation of acknowledging Allah's Oneness — affirming that there is no true source of peace, power, or security except Him. Thus, this verse directly supports the idea that the foundation of inner peace lies in *Tawheed*, as the heart finds serenity only when it is anchored in the remembrance of its Creator.

Building upon the Qur'anic insight presented in Surah Ar-Ra'd (13:28), which emphasizes that true tranquility arises from the remembrance of Allah, this section delves deeper into the relationship between *Tawheed*, *inner peace*, and *Islamic psychology*. The analysis explores how the unity of belief in Allah's Oneness (*Tawheed*) serves not only as a theological foundation but also as a psychological framework that nurtures emotional stability, spiritual balance, and mental well-being. In the light of Islamic teachings, *Tawheed* functions as the core principle that aligns human perception, emotion, and behavior with divine consciousness. When one's heart is firmly anchored in *Tawheed*, the self experiences serenity (*al-nafs al-mutmainnah*), achieved through continuous *Dzikrullah* (remembrance of Allah) and *tazkiyatun-nafs* (self-purification). Therefore, the following sub-sections present a detailed discussion of how *Tawheed* manifests as the ultimate foundation of inner peace, both from Qur'anic evidence and the perspective of Islamic psychology.

### **Definition and Essence of Tawheed**

*Tawheed*, etymologically, comes from the Arabic word “wahhada” which means “to make one” or “to unify.” Terminologically, *Tawheed* refers to the belief that Allah is the only God worthy of worship and obedience. It encompasses the oneness of Allah in three aspects: *Rububiyah* (Lordship – creation and governance of the universe), *Uluhiyyah* (Divinity – worship and devotion), and *Asma' wa Sifat* (Names and Attributes of Allah) (Agus et al., 2025).

Beyond its linguistic and theological dimensions, *Tawheed* also carries profound psychological and spiritual implications. It serves as the core principle that aligns human perception, emotion, and behavior with the consciousness of Allah, ultimately guiding the believer toward inner peace. Through the internalization of *Tawheed*, a person recognizes that all power, control, and outcomes belong solely to Allah, which liberates the heart from fear, anxiety, and excessive attachment to worldly matters. This realization brings a deep sense of security and contentment, as the individual learns to trust in divine wisdom and submit to Allah's will a state that perfectly embodies the essence of inner peace.

Building upon this understanding, it becomes important to delve deeper into the very essence of *Tawheed* itself the central concept that defines Allah as the sole

source of all existence and authority, and the ultimate foundation of Islamic faith and inner tranquility. Its essence lies in the firm affirmation that Allah alone is the source of all existence and power, who must be fully believed in and worshipped by Muslims. This acknowledgment forms the core of Islamic creed ('aqidah) and serves as the spiritual foundation that brings about inner peace and mental stability, as it eliminates uncertainty and dualism in belief. (Agus et al., 2025)

When reinterpreting previous findings, Tawheed provides a unifying lens that integrates cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of faith. This indicates that true mental stability in Islamic psychology emerges not merely from self-regulation, but from theological submission to divine unity.

### **Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah as a State of Tranquil Soul: The Practical Goal of Living Tawheed and *Dzikrullah***

#### **a. Definition and Essence of Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah**

In *Tafsir al-Misbah*, nafs al-mutmainnah refers to a peaceful soul one that possesses a strong conviction in the existence and promises of Allah, accompanied by sincerity in performing good deeds. (M. Quraish Shihab, 2011) *Nafs al-mutmainnah* also signifies a soul that constantly receives Allah's mercy, characterized by serenity (*itmi'nān*) and contentment (*riḍā*) with all of Allah's decrees that befall it (Zulfatmi, Juni 15).

In *Tafsir al-Qurthubi*, nafs al-mutmainnah refers to a soul that is calm, sincere, and full of faith. Its tranquility arises from the constant remembrance of Allah's power. This peace is also nurtured by optimism in receiving Allah's reward and confidence in being spared from His severe punishment. The sincerity of *nafs al-mutmainnah* stems from a heart that wholeheartedly accepts all of Allah's decrees with openness and patience. A person possessing such a soul firmly believes in Allah and His promises. Therefore, *nafs al-mutmainnah* serves as an indicator of the quality of human spiritual development (Wildan, 2018).

Based on the above definitions of *nafs al-mutmainnah*, Nafs al-Mutmainnah is the highest level of the soul, characterized by inner peace and contentment. The Satisfied Soul is aligned with divine guidance and exhibits strong moral integrity. It is at peace with itself and with Allah, having achieved a state of spiritual fulfilment and tranquility. (Hossain, 2024) The Qur'an mentions in Surah al-Fajr (89:27-30):

*"O tranquil soul! Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him]. So enter among My [righteous] servants, and enter My Paradise."* (Surah al-Fajr, 89:27-30).

Etymologically, *itmi'nān* means calmness, certainty, and the absence of disturbance or anxiety. Therefore, Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah is defined as follows:

1. The Stable Soul: A soul that has attained firm conviction in *Tawheed* (the Oneness of Allah) and is no longer shaken by doubt, temptation, or worldly anxiety.
2. The Content Soul: A soul that accepts Allah's decree (*Qadar*) with full willingness (*Rida*), thus remaining free from complaint, anger, and despair.
3. The Remembrance-Filled Soul: A soul that constantly remembers Allah (*Dzikrullah*), keeping the heart continually connected to the true source of

peace and tranquility.

b. *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah* as the Peak of Inner Peace

In the Islamic psychological model of the stages of the soul (*Marātib al-Nafs*), *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah* is positioned after *Al-Nafs al-Ammārah bi al-Sū'* (the soul that incites evil) and *Al-Nafs al-Lawwāmah* (the self-reproaching or regretful soul) (Hossain, 2024). This state represents the peak of inner peace for several reasons:

1. **Spiritual and Psychological Integration** : This tranquility is not merely the absence of stress, but the complete harmony between the heart (*Qalb*), the intellect (*'Aql*), and actions (*A'māl*), all grounded in *Tawheed*. Psychologically, it reflects an optimal state of self-functioning, where the ego fully submits to spiritual guidance.
2. **Spiritual Resilience** : A tranquil soul possesses a high level of resilience. According to contemporary Islamic psychology scholars such as Malik Badri and Muhammad Tahir Hameed an individual who attains *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah* can face trials and hardships without mental collapse. This strength comes from perceiving difficulties as divine tests and means for reward, rather than meaningless disasters.
3. **Absolute Certainty (Yaqīn)** : *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah* embodies the perfect expression of conviction (*Yaqīn*). Such a person not only believes in Allah but is completely certain of His promises, justice, and mercy. This unwavering certainty eliminates existential anxiety, which is a major source of distress in secular psychological perspectives.

c. Contemporary Islamic Psychology Support

Recent studies in the field of Islamic psychology have utilized the concept of *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah* as both a therapeutic and diagnostic framework, reflecting its relevance to modern mental health approaches:

1. *Tazkiyatun-Nafs* (Purification of the Soul) as Therapy

Islamic therapists view the primary goal of counseling as helping clients move from *Al-Nafs al-Ammārah* to *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah*. This transformation occurs through *Tazkiyatun-Nafs*, which involves, Cognitive restructuring replacing negative or distorted thoughts with beliefs rooted in *Tawheed* (the Oneness of Allah) and behavioral modification – enhancing acts of worship (*'ibādah*) and moral conduct (*akhlaq*)(Yandri S Juliawati, n.d.).

2. *Development of Psychological Scales*

Modern literature has made efforts to develop religiosity scales that are specifically designed and applied in Indonesia to measure aspects of religiosity aligned with Islamic values. These scales include dimensions such as *Tawakkul* (trust and submission to Allah), *Sabr* (patience), *Rida* (acceptance of divine decree), and *Dhikr* (continuous remembrance of Allah). All of these represent the core manifestations of *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah* a soul that is spiritually and psychologically tranquil (Hafiz, n.d.).

3. *The Role of Dhikr in Neuropsychology*

The practice of *Dhikr* and meditation rooted in *Tawheed*, as performed by *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah*, activates several key brain regions, including the prefrontal cortex responsible for decision-making and emotional regulation

and the limbic system, particularly the amygdala, which governs fear and emotional responses.

During Dhikr, prefrontal cortex activation is enhanced, leading to improved self- reflection and emotional control, while amygdala activity decreases, resulting in *reduced* fear and anxiety. Neurologically, this supports the claim that spiritual practices foster inner peace and mental stability.

These neuropsychological findings align with the Islamic view that spiritual tranquility is not only an emotional state but a manifestation of divine harmony within the human psyche. Therefore, Islamic psychology extends the scope of conventional neuroscience by linking brain function with spiritual submission, providing a faith- based explanation for observed neuroplasticity.

These findings align with modern neuroscience, which links meditative and spiritual practices to neuroplasticity the brain's ability to reorganize itself and to greater emotional balance and resilience (Assabiq, 12-31).

### **Interpretation and Implications of the Findings**

#### **a. Theoretical Implications in Islamic Psychology**

*Tawheed* is not merely a theological doctrine in Islam but serves as the primary epistemological foundation the basis of knowledge in Islamic psychology. (Habibi, 2024) According to Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, *Tawheed* is a universal principle that unifies all aspects of existence and knowledge. Within this epistemological framework, *Tawheed* places Allah as the ultimate source of truth and the unity of knowledge, reflecting the unity of existence itself (Rijal, 2014).

From this perspective, Islamic psychology views mental disorders as manifestations of disruption or imbalance in one's relationship of *Tawheed* with Allah. (Habibi, 2024) Thus, understanding and interpreting psychological phenomena must always be grounded in the principle of *Tawheed*, avoiding the dichotomy between religion and science.

*Tawheed*, as an epistemological framework, offers a holistic integration of knowledge, cognition, spirituality, and ethics providing a comprehensive approach to mental healing and psychological well-being for Muslims. (Rijal, 2014) Within this view, the attainment of spiritual tranquility (*al-nafs al-mutmainnah*) is achieved through the strengthening of one's *Tawheed*, which influences every dimension of human life. Therefore, psychological disturbances are not merely mental issues but also spiritual disruptions that must be addressed by restoring and realigning the individual's *Tawheed* relationship with Allah.

This *Tawheed*-based epistemological approach serves as the foundational framework for developing therapeutic models and research in Islamic psychology that are consistent with Islamic values and principles, while also enabling a harmonious integration between psychology and divine revelation (wahy). The convergence between theological doctrine (*Tawheed*) and empirical evidence (neuropsychology) suggests that the principle of *Tawheed* offers both a metaphysical and measurable foundation for mental health. This reaffirms that faith-based consciousness, when internalized, can generate neuropsychological stability, making *Tawheed* a viable epistemological and therapeutic paradigm.

The direct implication of this Tawheed-based epistemological framework is reflected in the ultimate goal of spiritual development, namely the attainment of *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah* a state that now receives clinical and empirical validation within contemporary Islamic studies. *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah* represents the highest psycho-spiritual construct recognized in modern Islamic literature. Reaching this state is not merely a form of social adaptation, but rather an absolute spiritual condition, characterized by key attributes such as certainty (*Yaqīn*), contentment (*Riḍā*), and spiritual resilience. (Dwi Erwahyudin et al., Mei 28) From the perspective of Islamic psychology, this condition reflects a complete harmony between the individual and the divine will of Allah, which serves as the ultimate objective of therapy and self-development.

Furthermore, findings from neuropsychological research provide strong empirical support for the effects of *Dzikrullah* and *Tazkiyatun-Nafs*. Meditation and remembrance practices rooted in *Tawheed* have been shown to significantly influence brain function enhancing prefrontal cortex activity (responsible for decision-making and emotional regulation) and reducing amygdala activation (the brain's fear and anxiety center) (Assabiq, 12-31). These results reinforce the Islamic therapeutic model, which emphasizes strengthening the vertical connection between the individual and Allah as the main path to psychological healing and inner peace.

Thus, an Islamic psychological approach that integrates spiritual and neurological dimensions supports the understanding that healing of the soul and mind rests upon the foundation of *Tawheed*, achieved through the practices of *Dzikrullah* and *Tazkiyatun-Nafs*. This approach is not merely theological but also possesses clinical and scientific validity, providing a measurable and holistic framework for Islamic therapeutic intervention (Stück et al., 2023).

#### b. Relevance to the Contemporary Context of Muslim Mental Health

In the modern era, various mental health issues such as burnout, identity crises, and existential emptiness often stem from existential anxiety—a condition arising when *human* focus becomes trapped in the transient and uncertain nature of worldly pursuits. (Nugraha, 2020) Within Islamic psychology, the concept of *Tawheed* offers a transformative solution to this problem by redirecting one's orientation from dependence on the finite world to Allah, the Eternal and All-Controlling source of existence (Salamah S Supena, 2025).

This redirection fosters a permanent sense of security (*amanah*), as it builds complete *trust* in Allah's power and wisdom, thereby significantly reducing worldly dependence and fear. Such conviction not only alleviates existential anxiety but also enhances inner tranquility and spiritual resilience in facing life's challenges.

In practice, Islamic therapy grounded in *Tawheed* integrates routine spiritual acts such as *mindful* prayer (*khushu' in salat*), reflective Qur'an recitation, and Dhikr as adaptive mechanisms for managing anxiety. Studies conducted in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and Muslim communities have demonstrated that Dhikr has a measurable positive impact on reducing anxiety and promoting inner peace.

The reduction of anxiety and the enhancement of spiritual resilience rooted in

*Tawheed* reach their highest expression through the internalization of the concept of *Riḍā* (contentment with Allah's decree), which serves as the primary prerequisite for the realization of *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah*. The concept of *Riḍā* meaning sincere acceptance and contentment with Allah's decree is a fundamental dimension of *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah*, the tranquil and peaceful soul in Islamic psychology. (Hossain, 2024) Unlike *toxic positivity*, which suppresses negative emotions and denies pain, *Riḍā* emphasizes complete acceptance without rejection, while still encouraging effort and perseverance in facing life's difficulties. (Rothman S Coyle, 2018) In the context of stress and mental pressure, *Riḍā* functions as a healthy form of spiritual adaptation, enabling individuals to accept unchangeable realities without losing motivation to improve their circumstances. This fosters psychological resilience, as one recognizes their limited control and places full trust in Allah's wisdom and decree (Rothman S Coyle, 2018).

Modern Islamic psychology research supports that spiritual practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and *du'ā* (supplication), when accompanied by *Riḍā*, significantly reduce stress, enhance inner peace, and prevent psychological distress. This framework parallels Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in contemporary psychology but is grounded in a divine and theological foundation, offering a holistic model for achieving emotional and spiritual balance.

The attainment of *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah*, characterized by the state of *Riḍā* (contentment), does not occur instantaneously; rather, it is the result of a gradual process of spiritual development that can be identified through the diagnostic framework of *Marātib al-Nafs* (the levels of the soul). The concept of the levels of the soul in Islam, known as *Marātib al-Nafs*, provides a valuable framework for diagnosing the root causes of an individual's psychological conditions. *Marātib al-Nafs* is divided into several stages, among which are:

1. *Al-Nafs al-Ammārah* (the soul that incites to evil), which represents the stage where an individual is still dominated by base desires, tending toward destructive, impulsive behaviors, and remaining far from inner peace. (Zulkipli et al., 2022a)
2. *Al-Nafs al-Lawwāmah* (the self-reproaching soul), which reflects a state of inner conflict and moral awareness. At this level, the individual recognizes wrongdoing but has not yet attained tranquility due to the ongoing struggle between desire and conscience (Zulkipli et al., 2022).

Using this concept clinically allows Islamic therapists and counselors to accurately identify the underlying issues behind a client's behavior and psychological condition. For instance, if a person is diagnosed as being at the level of *Al-Nafs al-Ammārah*, the therapeutic focus will emphasize self-discipline and strengthening of faith to help control the lower desires. Meanwhile, if the client is at the stage of *Al-Nafs al-Lawwāmah*, therapy will focus on fostering self-awareness and guiding the soul toward the state of serenity (*Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah*).

This approach harmoniously integrates spiritual and psychological dimensions, ensuring that Islamic psychotherapy addresses not only behavioral modification but also the profound transformation of the soul (Zulkipli et al., 2022).

## **The Impact of Dzikrullah and Tazkiyatun-Nafs Practices on Psychological Well-Being**

In contemporary Islamic psychology, spiritual practices such as Dzikrullah and Tazkiyatun-Nafs are not merely regarded as ritualistic acts, but as integral mechanisms that profoundly influence mental health and psychological well-being. From a neuropsychological perspective, Dzikrullah functions as both a cognitive and biological mechanism that calms the brain's fight-or-flight system, particularly by reducing amygdala activity while enhancing the executive functions of the prefrontal cortex, which play a crucial role in emotional regulation and decision-making.

Similarly, the process of Tazkiyatun-Nafs plays a vital role in resolving internal conflicts commonly experienced by Muslim individuals. By guiding the self from the state of *Al-Nafs al-Lawwāmah* the self-reproaching soul marked by guilt and inner turmoil toward *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah*, the tranquil self that is aligned with divine will, tazkiyah helps resolve cognitive dissonance, a key source of psychological tension. This process enables individuals to acknowledge their mistakes while moving forward with confidence and serenity, fostering a harmonious integration between intentions and actions (Syawalika S Daniswara, 2025).

Moreover, the practice of dzikr and tazkiyah within communal settings strengthens individuals' social resources. Collective spiritual activities reinforce social bonds that provide essential emotional and communal support in combating isolation—one of the major risk factors for mental disorders. These social connections not only enhance a sense of belonging but also create supportive environments that supply emotional and spiritual resilience (Sholahudin et al., n.d.).

For instance, a qualitative study conducted at *Pondok Pesantren Annuqayah Latee II* in Sumenep, Madura, explicitly found that collective *dhikr* practices strengthen social solidarity among the *santri* (students). The communal remembrance of Allah creates a shared space for mutual understanding and empathy—phenomena that align closely with the concept of *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood). From the perspective of the sociology of religion, collective *dhikr* serves as a medium for fostering social cohesion and promoting harmony within the *pesantren* community (Khomairoh, 2025). Furthermore, another qualitative study conducted on the *TQN Khathibiyah* congregation in Sambas revealed that spiritual guidance through *dhikr*—particularly *Dhikr Nafi Isbat (Lā ilāha illallāh)* and *Dhikr Ismu Dhat (Allāh)*—was found to effectively manage negative emotions, regulate emotional responses, and stabilize affective states, thereby preventing the emergence of further psychological disturbances (Umami et al., n.d.).

This holistic approach, which integrates both spiritual and psychological dimensions, aligns with the principles of acceptance-based therapy that emphasize a balance between acceptance and change. However, it is deeply grounded in religious conviction, serving as a primary source of motivation and inner peace in Islam. Thus, Dzikrullah and Tazkiyatun Nafs not only enhance emotional regulation but also effectively resolve inner conflicts, while providing a strong social foundation that supports the overall mental well-being of the Muslim community.

### **The Distinctive Contribution of the Tawheed-Based Model: A Comparison with Secular Psychology**

The Tawheed-Based Model offers a distinctive and profound contribution to the understanding and management of existential crises and the pursuit of inner peace compared to secular psychological paradigms. This uniqueness is especially apparent in the source and nature of psychological security and emotional equilibrium.

#### **a. Source of Peace and Locus of Control**

In secular psychology, the locus of control related to achieving peace and well-being fundamentally centers on self-reliance, mastery, and control over one's environment. Psychological resilience and stability are often framed as an individual's capacity to influence external circumstances and internal states through personal effort or cognitive restructuring techniques (Rotter, 1966). For example, positive psychology emphasizes personal achievement, optimism, and self-efficacy as keys to mental health and fulfillment (Seligman, 2011). Here, peace is often fragile as it relies on fluctuating internal states or unstable external conditions.

In contrast, the Tawheed-based model, rooted in Islamic monotheism, situates the source of true peace (*al-nafs al-mutmainnah*) in total reliance on Allah (*Tawakkul*) and submission to His will. The locus of control is transcendent and absolute, shifting from the limited human self to Divine omnipotence and wisdom (Farooq, 2018). This spiritual orientation provides an immutable foundation of psychological security (*amanah*) that is not contingent on external circumstances or internal fluctuations. The self finds tranquility and contentment by recognizing Allah as the ultimate controller, protector, and source of all outcomes (Ghazali, 1995). This reorientation from self-sufficiency to God-sufficiency leads to a profound and stable inner peace that secular models do not fully encompass.

#### **b. Coping with Suffering and Crisis**

In secular psychology, suffering is often understood as the failure of internal systems or as a result of misfortune—something to be eliminated or avoided. This approach tends to focus on removing sources of stress or dysfunction through behavioral and cognitive modification, symptom reduction, or even avoidance of uncomfortable experiences (Shahar S Schiller, 2016). Within this framework, suffering is viewed as a negative condition that must be mitigated as quickly as possible in order to achieve optimal mental health.

In contrast, the Islamic psychological model grounded in Tawheed perceives suffering (*ibtilā'*) as an essential and functional component of a Muslim's spiritual journey. Suffering serves as a means for the expiation of sins, spiritual elevation, and the development of genuine spiritual resilience. The concept of *Riḍā* acceptance of Allah's decree—is not a form of passive submission, but rather an active acceptance coupled with effort and supplication, arising from the awareness that every event is part of divine ordainment and carries hidden wisdom (Ciftci et al., 2013).

This active acceptance cultivates spiritual resilience that far surpasses the typical coping mechanisms found in Western psychology. Such resilience not only reduces psychological distress but also strengthens one's vertical connection with

Allah, granting profound meaning and a sense of lasting security that is independent of external circumstances (Elzamzamy et al., 2024).

Through the lens of Tawheed, suffering is not merely a challenge to overcome, but an integral and transformative process of soul-maturation as a servant of Allah. This approach offers a comprehensive framework for crisis resolution by harmoniously integrating rational, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, thereby guiding individuals toward genuine inner well-being.

#### c. The Concept of the Self/Nafs

In secular psychology, the understanding of the Self is largely focused on the ego, self-esteem, and self-actualization the realization of one's potential and fulfillment of personal goals (Maslow, 1943). The health of the individual psyche is often framed in terms of enhancing self-worth, autonomy, and psychological independence, emphasizing personal growth and achievement as pathways to well-being.

In contrast, the Tawheed-based Islamic framework redefines the concept of the Self through the lens of Tazkiyatun-Nafs (purification of the soul). This process involves the subjugation of the lower nafs (*Al-Nafs al-Ammārah*), which drives base desires and instincts, and the cultivation of a purified heart (*Qalb*) that is intimately connected with Allah (Ghazali, 1995). Rather than focusing on self-glorification or ego enhancement, true peace and fulfillment emerge from ubudiyah servitude and spiritual submission to Allah. This servitude leads to profound tranquility and detachment from selfish inclinations. The purified self seeks alignment with divine will, transcending ordinary self-interest, and actualizing spiritual virtues.

*Tazkiyatun-Nafs* is not merely a psychological theory, but a holistic spiritual methodology that engages moral, emotional, and cognitive faculties in a process of continuous self-purification. It includes stages such as takhalli (cleansing from blameworthy traits), tahalli (adornment with virtuous qualities), and tajalli (manifestation of divine guidance and blessings). This transformational journey fosters an enlightened heart as the foundation for ethical behavior and inner peace.)

However, unlike secular approaches that rely heavily on self-efficacy, the Tawheed-based model still faces challenges of contextual adaptation. Cultural factors significantly influence how submission (*tawakkul*) and self-control are balanced within diverse Muslim communities, which suggests a need for localized and culturally sensitive application of this framework in clinical settings.

### **Critical Reflections and Limitations**

The integration of Tawheed and *Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah* as a foundational framework for inner peace offers a compelling model for Islamic psychology. However, a critical reflection reveals specific limitations that must be addressed for future validation and application:

- a. Cultural Variability in Interpretation: One limitation of this study is the diversity of cultural interpretations of Tawheed across different Muslim societies, which may affect how individuals conceptualize spiritual tranquility (*itmi'nān*). The behavioral manifestation of submission (*tawakkul*), for instance, can vary significantly between individualistic and collectivist cultures.

- b. Absence of Empirical Validation: This study, while synthesizing existing literature, is limited by the absence of large-scale empirical validation for the Tawheed-based therapeutic framework. While initial neuropsychological findings are promising, the long-term effectiveness of *Dzikrullah* and *Tazkiyatun-Nafs* as a structured therapeutic modality requires rigorous clinical trials.
- c. Methodological Challenges in Measuring Spiritual States: The inherent difficulty in objectively measuring abstract spiritual states such as *Yaqīn* (certainty) and *Riḍā* (contentment) poses a significant challenge for quantitative research seeking to validate the attainment of Al-Nafs al- Mutmainnah.

### **Future Research Directions**

Based on the findings and identified limitations, future research should focus on the following directions to strengthen the Tawheed based psychological model:

- a. Cross-Cultural and Qualitative Analysis: Future research should explore how Tawheed oriented psychological practices, such as *Dhikrullah* and *Tazkiyatun Nafs*, operate within different socio-cultural contexts. Incorporating field observations and cross-cultural analyses will help refine the model's applicability beyond specific cultural settings.
- b. Empirical and Clinical Investigations: Conducting empirical investigations combining Islamic epistemology with advanced methodologies in neuroscience and experimental psychology would strengthen the scientific basis for integrating faith and psychology. This includes developing and validating specific therapeutic manuals and protocols based on the *Marātib al-Nafs* framework.

Model Integration and Comparative Effectiveness: Studies on the comparative effectiveness of the Tawheed based model against conventional secular therapies (like ACT or CBT) for common issues (e.g., anxiety, depression) are needed to establish its unique clinical contribution.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study successfully established the central role of Tawheed (the Oneness of Allah) as the core epistemological and psychological foundation for achieving Al-Nafs al-Mutmainnah (the Tranquil Soul). The findings demonstrated that genuine inner peace is a psycho-spiritual state realized through the continuous practice of *Dzikrullah* and *Tazkiyatun-Nafs*, aligning the individual's inner world with Divine will (Surah Ar-Ra'd, 13:28).

The research offers several novel theoretical contributions to the field of Islamic psychology. Primarily, it redefines the locus of security, shifting the source of psychological stability from the self-reliant ego (as emphasized in secular models) to the absolute certainty of Tawakkul (Total Reliance on Allah). This shift provides an immutable, non-contingent amanah (security) that is crucial for mitigating modern existential anxiety. Furthermore, the model uniquely reframes suffering (*ibtilā'*) not as a pathology but as a spiritual catalyst toward *Riḍā* (Contentment), thereby generating a profound form of Spiritual Resilience that transcends purely secular coping mechanisms. The study also formally proposes the *Marātib al-Nafs* (Levels of the Soul) as a comprehensive diagnostic and developmental framework for targeted

interventions in counseling. While preliminary neuropsychological data—suggesting Dzikirullah correlates with enhanced prefrontal cortex activity—points to a credible neuro-spiritual basis for this model, further large-scale clinical trials are necessary for full clinical validation.

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