

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF *TAZKIYAH AL-NAFS* IN THE QUR'ANIC TAFSIR AND THE BOOK *MI'RĀJ AL-SA'ĀDAH* BY AḤMAD AL-NARĀQĪ

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Abstract: *The concept of tazkiyah al-nafs (purification of the soul) holds an important position in the Islamic tradition as it serves as the key to human spiritual and psychological development. Without purification of the soul, it is difficult for a person to achieve holistic growth, both in the inner dimension (faith and peace of heart) and in the dimension of personality (mind, morals, and character). Therefore, the study of tazkiyah al-nafs is highly relevant in efforts to understand the comprehensive formation of human personality. This research aims to examine the concept of tazkiyah al-nafs from the perspective of Qur'anic exegesis as well as the ethical-Sufi thought presented in Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah by Aḥmad al-Narāqī. The method employed is qualitative with a library research approach, utilizing primary sources including the Qur'an, both classical and contemporary exegesis, and al-Narāqī's work. The findings indicate that tazkiyah al-nafs is an internal process of cleansing the soul from blameworthy traits and adorning it with noble character. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes this concept, as in Q.S. Ash-Shams [91]: 9–10, which highlights the success of the purified soul. Meanwhile, in Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah, al-Narāqī elaborates the stages of tazkiyah through self-knowledge, mujāhadah (striving), ri'yādah (discipline), and murāqabah (self-vigilance), while also stressing the importance of reason and the sharia as means of purification. The implications of this study show that tazkiyah al-nafs is highly relevant to the development of Islamic psychology, particularly in formulating spiritual therapy and character education based on turāth values. Furthermore, the study opens opportunities for integrating classical Islamic concepts into contemporary psychology, focusing on a balanced approach to both the spiritual and mental dimensions of the individual.*

Keywords: *Aḥmad al-Narāqī, Al-Qur'an, Islamic Psychology, Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah, Tazkiyah al-Nafs.*

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Abstrak: Konsep *tazkiyah al-nafs* (penyucian jiwa) menempati posisi penting dalam tradisi Islam karena menjadi kunci utama bagi perkembangan spiritual dan psikologis manusia. Tanpa adanya penyucian jiwa, manusia sulit mencapai perkembangan yang utuh, baik dalam dimensi batin (iman dan ketenangan hati) maupun dalam dimensi kepribadian (mental, akhlak, dan karakter). Oleh karena itu, kajian tentang *tazkiyah al-nafs* memiliki relevansi besar dalam upaya memahami pembentukan kepribadian manusia secara menyeluruh. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji konsep *tazkiyah al-nafs* dalam perspektif tafsir al-Qur'an serta pemikiran tasawuf-etika dalam *Mi'raj al-Sa'adah* karya Ahmad al-Narāqī. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan kepustakaan (*library research*) melalui sumber primer berupa Al-Qur'an, tafsir klasik dan kontemporer, serta karya al-Narāqī. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *tazkiyah al-nafs* merupakan proses internal untuk membersihkan jiwa dari sifat tercela dan menghiasinya dengan akhlak mulia. Al-Qur'an menegaskan konsep ini berulang kali, antara lain dalam Q.S. Ash-Shams [91]: 9–10 yang menekankan keberuntungan bagi jiwa yang disucikan. Sementara itu, dalam *Mi'raj al-Sa'adah*, al-Narāqī menjelaskan tahapan *tazkiyah* melalui pengenalan diri, *mujābahadab*, *riyāḍab*, dan *murāqabab*, serta menekankan peran akal dan syariat sebagai sarana penyucian jiwa. Implikasi dari studi ini menunjukkan bahwa *tazkiyah al-nafs* memiliki relevansi signifikan dalam pengembangan psikologi Islam, khususnya dalam perumusan terapi spiritual dan pendidikan karakter berbasis nilai-nilai *turāth*. Lebih jauh, penelitian ini membuka peluang integrasi konsep klasik Islam ke dalam psikologi kontemporer yang berfokus pada keseimbangan antara aspek spiritual dan mental individu.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Ahmad al-Narāqī, Al-Qur'an, Mi'raj al-Sa'adah, Psikologi Islam, Tazkiyah al-Nafs.*

Introduction

The concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul) serves as the fundamental basis for shaping the spiritual character of a Muslim. This concept rests on four essential components: intellect, the *qalb* (heart), the *nafs* (self/desires), and the *rūḥ* (spirit). Within this framework, a person of sound intellect (*al-'āqil*) restrains and refuses to be governed by the desires of the *nafs*.¹ However, many Muslims today have not yet made the intellect or purification of the soul a priority in their religious life. For example, there is a decline in the moral behavior of students. Numerous cases occur among students, such as smoking, brawling, fighting, premarital sex, intoxication, drug abuse, hitting their teachers, and even acts of suicide.²

In addition, the phenomenon of *sound horeg* causes property damage due to high-intensity sound vibrations, such as cracked glass and collapsed roof tiles. There have even been cases of babies dying from exposure to loud noises, as well as residents experiencing physical discomfort caused by low-frequency sounds from *sound horeg*.³

1 Muhammad Yunan Harahap and Rustam Ependi, *Tazkiyatun Nafs dalam Membentuk Akhlakul Karimah* (Yogyakarta: PT. Green Pustaka Indonesia, 2023).

2 Iqbal Asid Maududin, Abas Mansur Tamam, and Wido Supraha, "Konsep Pendidikan Tazkiyatun Nafs Ibnul Qayyim dalam Menangani Kenakalan Peserta Didik," *Rayah Al-Islam* 5, no. 01 (April 2021): 140, <https://doi.org/10.37274/rais.v5i1.393>.

3 Elham Wulan Aprilian, Arif, and Sari Dewi Poerwanti, "Dampak Parade Sound Horeg Terhadap Kondisi Sosial Ekonomi Masyarakat Desa Bumirejo, Kabupaten Blitar," *Jurnal Interven-*

The ‘*aql*’ functions as the controller of the *nafs* and the guide toward the tranquility of the *qalb* as well as spiritual clarity. However, continuous exposure to sounds that disrupt concentration and inner peace can weaken this function of the ‘*aql*’. The sound *horeg* music disturbs mental calmness. Reason is not only the brain, but also a tool for reflection and for receiving wisdom. Too much noise can weaken contemplation, making people more absorbed in brief excitement than in deep thinking. In these activities, many respond excessively, which creates discomfort for some people in the surrounding community. This weakening of the ‘*aql*’s function, due to neglect of the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* and damaging exposures such as *sound horeg*, contributes significantly to the moral and spiritual crisis, especially among young Muslim generations, ultimately hindering the formation of a pure and strong spiritual character.

Previous studies on *tazkiyah al-nafs* can be classified into three aspects: First, according to Zain, al-Ghazālī employs the *tazkiyah* method as an effort to cleanse oneself from various kinds of spiritual diseases.⁴ Second, according to Fathuddin, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah considers *tazkiyah al-nafs* as a step to restrain the power of the *nafs* that constantly invites one toward evil. Thus, a Muslim who wishes to be safe in this world and the hereafter can keep their *nafs* submissive to the commands of Allah.⁵

The novelty of this study lies in the comparative analysis of the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* in the tafsir of the Qur’an and the classical work *Mi’rāj al-Sa’ādah*. The concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* is not only taught explicitly and clearly in the Qur’an, but also elaborated in detail in classical Sufi works, such as the classical book *Mi’rāj al-Sa’ādah* by Aḥmad al-Narāqī, a prominent 18th-century Shia scholar.

This study aims to enrich the Islamic scholarly tradition by examining the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* through a comparative approach between the Qur’anic tafsir and the book *Mi’rāj al-Sa’ādah*, written by Aḥmad al-Narāqī (al-Narāqī II), son of Muḥammad Mahdī al-Narāqī. The method employed is library research with a qualitative approach, involving textual analysis of Qur’anic verses related to the purification of the soul as well as the thought of al-Narāqī II in *Mi’rāj al-Sa’ādah*. The research questions addressed in this study are: (1) How is the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* explained in the Qur’anic *tafsir*? and (2) What is al-Narāqī II’s perspective on *tazkiyah al-nafs* in *Mi’rāj al-Sa’ādah* and its relevance to the understanding of the *tafsir*?

This research is highly important to conduct in the present era because the moral crisis, psychological pressure, and materialistic lifestyle increasingly distance

si Sosial 4, no. 1 (June 2025): 14, <https://doi.org/10.32734/intervensisocial.v4i1.20197>.

4 Mukhammad Zain, “Konsep Tazkiyatun Nafs dalam Membentuk Karakter Ulul Albab: Telaah Kitab Ihya’ ‘Ulumuddin Juz 4” (Skripsi, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, 2021), <http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/27614/>.

5 Muhammad Habib Fathuddin, “Konsep Tazkiyatun Nafs Menurut Ibnu Qoyyim Al Jauiyah dalam Kitab Madarijus Shalikin Serta Implikasinya Terhadap Pendidikan,” *Tadbir Muwahhid* 5, no. 2 (2016), 125, <https://doi.org/10.30997/jtm.v5i2.332>.

humans from the process of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul) taught in Islamic teachings. According to MacIntyre, he acknowledges that there is a significant moral crisis experienced by contemporary society. He states that in this era, humans face severe ethical chaos.⁶ In this context, examining the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* through the approach of Qur'anic exegesis and the thought of al-Narāqī II in the book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* proves useful as an effort to rebuild profound spiritual awareness. The preliminary conclusion of this study shows that *tazkiyah al-nafs* is not merely a concept, but a comprehensive method of self-transformation that integrates theological, ethical, and psychological aspects to achieve true happiness and closeness to Allah. This paper aims to explore the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* from two perspectives: revelation (Qur'anic tafsir) and the heritage of Sufi knowledge (the book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*). Thus, this discussion is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding between textual evidence (*dalīl naqlī*) and practical approaches in purifying the soul.

Purification of the Soul in the Qur'an

Etymologically, *tazkiyah al-nafs* originates from the Arabic language. The word *tazkiyah* has its root in *zakā*, which means pure, to grow, and to develop. Meanwhile, *nafs* means soul or the human self. Thus, literally, *tazkiyah al-nafs* can be understood as “purification of the soul” or “cleansing of the self.” However, this meaning is not limited to cleansing oneself from sins but also includes the idea of nurturing the potential for goodness within the human soul. In other words, purification is not only about removing the bad but also about fostering the good. In *Tafsir al-Mishbāh*, *tazkiyah* is regarded as a method to improve oneself from a lower level to a higher level of essence, character, and morality. *Tafsir al-Mishbāh* also explains the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* from the perspective of Indonesian Islam.⁷

One of the verses that discusses the purification of the soul is found in Q.S. Ash-Shams [91]: 9–10. This verse states that true happiness in life, both in this world and the hereafter, can only be achieved by those who strive to purify their souls from various spiritual ailments such as envy, jealousy, arrogance, and excessive love of worldly life. Conversely, those who allow their souls to be contaminated by their desires will suffer loss, not only in their spiritual life but also in the peace and meaningfulness they experience.

According to Sayyid Qutb, a person will be fortunate if they can utilize the potential within themselves to purify and develop the good potentials, and they will suffer loss if they weaken the good potentials in favor of evil.⁸ This verse

6 Khalif Muammar A. Harris, “Sekularisasi Etika dan Krisis Moral Masa Kini: Secularisation of Ethics and Contemporary Moral Crisis,” *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah dan Pemikiran Islam* 23, no. 2 (December 2021): 122–23, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol23no2.4>.

7 Syarif Hidayatullah and Ai Fatimah Nur Fuad, “Konsep Tazkiyatun Nafs Menurut Tafsir Al Misbah Karya Quraish Shihab,” *Attractive: Innovative Education Journal* 6, no. 1 (February 2024): 120, <https://doi.org/10.51278/aj.v6i1.1098>.

8 Sayyid Quthb, *Tafsir Fi Zhalil Qur'an: Di bawah Naungan Al-Qur'an*. (Jakarta: Gema

emphasizes that *tazkiyah al-nafs* is not an additional matter, but the core of human success according to the Islamic perspective. Q.S. Ash-Shams [91], especially verses 1 to 10, is among the most meaningful passages in the Qur'an regarding the nature of the human soul and human moral responsibility. Then in Q.S. Al-A'la [87]:14–15. Here, self-purification (*tazkiyah*) is directly linked to spiritual awareness and worship, especially *ṣalāt*, as a form of direct connection between the servant and their Lord. This verse indicates that the process of purifying the soul is not merely an inner exercise but must be accompanied by consistent worship practices. Remembering Allah (*dhikrullāh*) is the key to keeping the heart vigilant and protected from worldly temptations.

According to Buya Hamka in his *Tafsir al-Azhar*, the effort to purify oneself will not succeed without constantly remembering God. Engaging in *dhikir*, the remembrance of Allah, serves as the best control over the self. It instills within a person the awareness that God is always near, and remembering Allah is also accompanied by performing the five daily prayers, which include supplications and intimate calls (*munājat*), continually invoking God, and seeking His guidance. Prayer itself is also a form of *dhikir*.⁹ From these two verses, we can understand that purification of the soul in Islam is comprehensive: it involves both the inner dimension (intention, motivation, awareness) and the outer dimension (actions, worship, morals). We also need to know the paths leading to salvation. Three paths to salvation can be concluded, namely:

- a. Purification of the soul: Cleansing the heart from sin and bad character traits.
- b. Remembering Allah: Constantly remembering Allah wherever and whenever.
- c. Prayer (*ṣalāt*): A symbol of surrender and connection to the Creator.

Whoever passes through these three stages will attain true happiness and genuine pleasure. In other words, *tazkiyah* is a combination of internal spiritual effort and consistent external practice. The purpose of soul purification, according to revelation, is for humans to achieve true happiness, both in this world and the hereafter.

Tazkiyah al-nafs is an effort to improve and cleanse the heart. Meanwhile, Muḥammad 'Abduh sees *tazkiyah al-nafs* as *tarbiyah al-nafs* (education of the soul), all of which can be achieved through *tazkiyah al-'aqli* (development of intellect). The goal of all these is to purify the soul by avoiding all misguided and evil behaviors so that the heart can remain true to its original nature (*fiṭrah*).¹⁰ Soul purification is not merely about avoiding sin, but also about cleansing the heart from negative traits such as envy, arrogance, and jealousy, while nurturing noble

Insani Press, 2001), 281–83.

9 Abdulmalik Abdulkarim Amrullah, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* (Singapura: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 1989).

10 Lita Fauzi Hanafani and Radea Yuli A. Hambali, "Hakikat Penyucian Jiwa (Tazkiyat An-Nafs) dalam Perspektif Al-Ghazali," *Gunung Djati Conference Series* 19 (April 2023): 536–37.

virtues like sincerity, patience, and compassion. All of this aims to bring a person closer to Allah and fill their life with inner peace. With a purified soul, one can face life's trials with resilience and become a beneficial individual for others.

In the Qur'an, *tazkiyah al-nafs* or soul purification is regarded as the key to attaining true success, not only in this world but also in the hereafter. Allah explains that those who receive His guidance are the believers whose hearts find tranquility by constantly remembering Allah. By remembering Allah, the heart becomes peaceful, and the soul is calm, free from anxiety, fear, or worry.¹¹

Soul purification demonstrates that spiritual success, meaning a peaceful life, a pure heart, and a close relationship with Allah, cannot be achieved without a serious effort to cleanse oneself from negative traits such as envy, arrogance, laziness, and excessive attachment to worldly possessions. Hence, the Qur'an emphasizes that *tazkiyah al-nafs* is the path to inner victory and true happiness. Happiness does not come suddenly or by chance; rest assured, happiness has causes; it can be destined by Allah, but it is also something we must actively strive for ourselves.¹²

Spiritual success is not merely measured by the quantity of external acts of worship, but more profoundly by how one maintains a heart that is sincere, patient, and grateful under all circumstances. The Qur'an offers many examples of prophets and righteous individuals who achieved spiritual success precisely because they kept their hearts pure and submissive to Allah. Therefore, the relationship between *tazkiyah al-nafs* and spiritual success is very close. Soul purification serves as a foundational process that shapes a proper life attitude, strengthens the relationship with God, and brings inner peace that cannot be replaced by material achievements.

Individually, *tazkiyah al-nafs* is a crucial process for every person to cleanse their heart from negative traits such as envy, arrogance, excessive anger, and excessive love for worldly matters. In the Qur'an, Allah praises those who can purify their souls because it leads them to true happiness, both in this world and the hereafter. This process involves conscious efforts such as introspection (*muḥāsabah*), struggling against the desires of the soul (*mujāhadah*), and increasing worship and prayer. The method of *tazkiyah al-nafs* through the ritual of prayer (*ṣalāt*) is one way to heal the diseases afflicting the soul caused by reprehensible character traits. Prayer must be performed with *khushū'* (humble devotion) and full presence of heart in its conditions and pillars according to Islamic law, so that all the functions of prayer can be fully realized.¹³

If a person is able to maintain the purity of their soul, they will be calmer,

11 R. Tamtam Kamaluddin, Didin Hafidhuiddin, and Akhmad Alim, "Tazkiyatun Nafs dalam Al-Qur'an & Relevansinya Terhadap Terapi Spiritual Pada Era Disrupsi," *Islamic Literature: Journal of Islamic Civilisations* 1, no. 1 (July 2024): 68.

12 Hastra J. Altara, *Terapi Berpikir Positif Islami: Mukjizat Meraih Kesuksesan Dan Kebahagiaan Hakiki* (Yogyakarta: Araska, 2021), 40.

13 Khoirul Mustangin, "Metode Tazkiyatun Nafs (Penyucian Jiwa) Melalui Ibadah Shalat dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pendidikan Akhlak (Telaah Pemikiran Imam Al Ghazali)" (Skripsi, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2014), 108, <https://doi.org/10/medium.jpg>.

more patient, and have a better relationship with God and themselves. Socially, *tazkiyah al-nafs* also has a significant impact on the community. A person with a purified soul tends to be honest, just, patient, and caring towards others. This naturally creates a healthy, peaceful, and respectful social environment. In such a community, conflicts are easier to avoid because each member exercises self-control and good intentions in their interactions. As a result, *tazkiyah al-nafs* is not only for personal tranquility but also serves as an essential foundation for the formation of a civilized and compassionate society.

Structure and Purpose of the Book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*

Aḥmad al-Narāqī was a prominent Iranian scholar who lived during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Born in the city of Naraq into a devoutly religious family with a deep passion for knowledge, his father, Mahdī al-Narāqī, was also a renowned scholar recognized as the first Iranian scientist to pay close attention to Western research and discoveries in astronomy. From a young age, Aḥmad al-Narāqī displayed a profound interest in religious sciences, particularly in jurisprudence (*fiqh*), philosophy, and ethics. Although he possessed leadership and fame, he was deeply attentive to the condition of the weak and the needy, and through his compassion and kindness, he always became a refuge for them. His tireless efforts in seeking knowledge and perfection, his righteous ethics in guiding and directing, as well as his concern for the education and management of the students' lives, played an important role in the advancement of religion.¹⁴

The background of al-Narāqī's mystical thought is deeply influenced by the classical Islamic intellectual heritage, particularly the ideas of al-Ghazālī. For him, knowledge is not sufficient if understood merely rationally; it must be actualized through action and the cultivation of the soul. He viewed the core of Islamic teachings as the purification of the heart from spiritual diseases such as arrogance, envy, and excessive love of the world. Through his Sufi approach, al-Narāqī emphasized the importance of *muḥāsabah* (self-introspection), *riyāḍah* (spiritual discipline), and sincerity (*ikhhlās*) in worship. He aspired for humans not only to acquire knowledge but also to become virtuous, achieving true happiness through closeness to Allah. The book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* reflects his profound and compassionate understanding of the human soul searching for guidance. This work is a renowned contribution in the fields of Islamic ethics and mysticism. Aḥmad al-Narāqī explains that *tazkiyah* is the path to ultimate happiness (*sa'ādah*), which cannot be attained without mastering the desires of the soul (*hawā nafs*) and improving one's character.

Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah was written by Aḥmad al-Narāqī to guide humans toward true happiness, not only in this world but also in the hereafter. This work is a continuation and further development of *Jāmi' al-Sa'ādāh*, a monumental book in Arabic written in three volumes by his father, Muḥammad Mahdī al-Narāqī, one of the most prominent scholars of the 12th century AH/18th century AD and

14 Aḥmad bin Muḥammad Mahdī al-Narāqī, *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* (Teheran: Islāmiyyah, 1348), 2.

early 13th century AH/19th century AD. Besides *Jāmi‘ al-Sa‘ādāh*, Muḥammad Mahdī also authored several other significant works, aiming to revive Islamic ethics in a world increasingly preoccupied with materialism and neglectful of eternal spiritual values.¹⁵

In *Mi‘rāj al-Sa‘ādah*, Aḥmad al-Narāqī emphasizes that true happiness is not found in wealth or status, but in the purity of the soul, noble character, and closeness to Allah. By integrating religious teachings, sound reason, and spiritual experience, he presents a practical guide to life that speaks to the heart and can be applied by anyone seeking self-improvement. More than just a theoretical text, *Mi‘rāj al-Sa‘ādah* serves as an invitation to embark on an inner journey—a *mi‘rāj* or spiritual ascent from a low state to a higher rank. Through this work, Aḥmad seeks to help readers recognize the diseases of the heart, learn how to cure them, and cultivate virtuous ethics. His ultimate hope is that the book will serve as a mirror for self-reflection and a grounded path back to God.

The content of the book is divided into several main sections that depict the soul’s journey toward spiritual perfection. Al-Narāqī begins with a discussion on the essence of human beings and their souls, then continues with descriptions of reprehensible traits that must be cleansed, as well as commendable virtues that must be cultivated. His method of presentation is narrative-analytical, occasionally interspersed with quotations from the Qur’an, hadith, and scholarly opinions, enabling readers to follow the flow of thought clearly. He not only invites readers to know but also to reflect and practice, making this book a living and practical spiritual guide.

Mi‘rāj al-Sa‘ādah by Aḥmad al-Narāqī occupies an important position in the corpus of classical Islamic ethics and spirituality literature. *Mi‘rāj al-Sa‘ādah* is considered important not only because it discusses the theory of ethics, but also because it provides practical guidance for purifying the heart and improving the self. This book was written by the great 18th/19th-century scholar, Aḥmad al-Narāqī, who was widely known in the fields of jurisprudence, philosophy, and Sufism. It is called “classical” because it emerged from the older Islamic scholarly tradition, before the influence of modernity, and it is still used today as a reference in moral and spiritual education. The writings of the late al-Narāqī are respected and have been used as references by scholars, both during his time and afterward.¹⁶ This book is not merely an ordinary moral teaching manual but rather a comprehensive guide for the journey of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul), grounded in an integration of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), philosophy, and Sufism.

The uniqueness of this book lies in how al-Narāqī explains spiritual concepts with a rational and argumentative approach, while still respecting the values of sharia. He addresses not only the religious dimension of ethics but also its psychological and social aspects. With a profound yet well-structured delivery style, this book serves as a bridge between theological understanding and the inner

15 Muḥammad Mahdī al-Narāqī, *Jāmi‘ al-Sa‘ādāh* (*The Collector of Felicities*) (Iran: Islamic Propagation Organization, n.d.).

16 Narāqī, *Mi‘rāj al-Sa‘ādah*, 2.

experience needed in everyday life. Therefore, *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* remains relevant today, both in academic discourse, the development of Islamic psychology, and in the practice of character and spiritual formation for Muslim communities across generations.

In *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*, Mawlā Aḥmad al-Narāqī employs a Sufi approach that strongly emphasizes the importance of the heart and inner purification as the path to true happiness. He portrays the human soul as a spiritual journey that must pass through stages of cleansing from negative traits such as arrogance, envy, and worldly attachment. The book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* is a familiar name among the books of morals and is a very valuable work that has long been accepted and paid attention to both in theological schools and in literary circles among scholars, and has always been studied by both the general public and the special, and has benefited from its valuable contents.¹⁷ This process is carried out through spiritual exercises such as *muḥāsabah* (self-introspection), *murāqabah* (awareness of Allah's presence), and *mujāhadah* (struggling against the ego). Al-Narāqī not only explains these theoretically but also provides practical guidance on how one can train the soul to be closer to Allah and develop noble character. The book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* is a familiar name among ethical works and is a highly valuable text that has long been recognized and respected, both among theologians and literary scholars. It is consistently studied by both general and specialized audiences, and its valuable content has been widely utilized, with parts of it incorporated into textbooks.¹⁸

On the other hand, the philosophical approach in this book is evident in how al-Narāqī constructs logical and systematic arguments regarding the nature of humans, intellect, and the soul. He extensively integrates classical Islamic philosophical thought, such as the concept of balance between reason (*'aql*) and desire (*nafs*), as well as the importance of knowledge in guiding the soul towards perfection. In his view, true happiness can be attained when one deeply recognizes both the self and God, not only emotionally but also through rational understanding.¹⁹

Concept of Soul Purification in the Book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*

Know that the key to happiness in both worlds lies in knowing oneself, for knowing oneself helps a person to know the Creator.²⁰ In the book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*, Aḥmad al-Narāqī explains that the human soul has levels or a hierarchy that illustrates the extent to which a person can control their *hawā nafs* (desires). These levels begin with:

1. *Nafs Ammārah*.

Which is the soul inclined to urge one toward evil? At this stage, a person is

17 Narāqī, *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*, 13.

18 Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Mahdī al-Narāqī, "Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah," <https://lib.eshia.ir/>, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://lib.eshia.ir/10341/0/15>.

19 Narāqī, *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*, 26.

20 Narāqī, 26.

still controlled by base impulses such as anger, greed, and lust. They are unable to clearly distinguish between good and bad, let alone control their actions. Such a soul is easily trapped in sin and far from inner tranquility. For al-Narāqī, this is the initial condition that must be recognized and overcome through spiritual training and *muḥāsabah* (self-introspection). Biological *nafs* drive humans to satisfy their biological needs. In this aspect, humans are no different from animals, thus *al-nafs al-‘ammarah* is also referred to as *al-nafs al-hayāwaniyyah*.²¹

How to overcome it: First, *murāqabah*, be careful before acting. Every morning, I make a self-promise to avoid sin and disobedience. Second, *muḥāsabah* recording or self-introspection after acting. Every night, review our actions, see what we have done and what we have not done. Have we fulfilled all our obligations? And have our actions not violated sharia? Third, *Nafs al-riyāḍah*, self-discipline by limiting sleep (not excessively), eating, talking, and other unnecessary pleasures. Fourth, *tark majālis ahli al-ghaflah*, avoiding gatherings with negligent people, because associating with negligent individuals can strengthen the *nafs al-ammarah*.²² Fifth, *mukarrarah tawbah* Repentance repeatedly. Whenever we slip, we immediately return and repent as soon as possible.

2. *Nafs Lawwāmah*.

Refers to a person who begins to recognize their mistakes and feels uneasy when committing wrongdoings. At this stage, the heart becomes alive and actively responds when deviations occur. There are a sense of regret and a desire to improve oneself. This soul is more aware but still often falls into errors. In other words, this *nafs* is like someone who realizes they have been following their desires, then feels remorse for their sins and repents to Allah; this is what is called *nafs lawwāmah*.²³

Ways to overcome it: First, reflect on the harmful consequences of sin. This *nafs* is like someone who realizes they have been following their desires, then feels remorse for their sins and repents to Allah—this is what is called *nafs lawwāmah*. To overcome this state, one should first reflect on the harmful consequences of sin and repeatedly contemplate how damaging sins are both in this world and the hereafter. Second, study the lives of saints and Sufi masters, as they can strengthen one’s desire and determination to abandon sin. Third, avoid doubtful matters (*shubhat*); not only must one leave sins, but also things whose permissibility is uncertain. Fourth, worship with humility, such as performing night prayers, prolonged prostrations, and reciting the Qur’an with deep focus. Fifth, pray continuously, asking Allah for guidance, steadfastness, and sincerity with *dhikr*

21 Zulfatmi Zulfatmi, “Al-Nafs Dalam Al-Qur’an (Analisis Terma al-Nafs Sebagai Dimensi Psikis Manusia),” *Jurnal Mudarrisuna: Media Kajian Pendidikan Agama Islam* 10, no. 2 (July 2020): 192–208, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jm.v10i2.7838>.

22 Narāqī, *Mi‘rāj al-Sa‘ādah*, 90.

23 Usan Ripaan, “Tinjauan Neurosains Terhadap Konsep Nafs (Amarah, Lawwamah, dan Muthmainnah) Menurut Al-Ghazali dan Relevansinya Terhadap Pendidikan Islam,” *Islamadina: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 24, no. 2 (September 2023): 207, <https://doi.org/10.30595/islamadina.v24i2.13027>.

like: “O Allah, make my soul peaceful with Your pleasure.”

3. *Nafs Muṭma’innah*.

The tranquil soul that has fully surrendered to Allah. A person who reaches this level is no longer controlled by worldly desires; their life is filled with peace, sincerity, and conviction. According to al-Narāqī, attaining *nafs muṭma’innah* is not instantaneous but the result of a consistent inner struggle through knowledge, deeds, and *dhikr* (remembrance of God). This hierarchy of the soul serves as a spiritual map for humans on the journey toward true happiness. Meanwhile, according to Quraish Shihab, *nafs muṭma’innah* represents the totality within a person who has achieved complete tranquility, grounded in perfect faith values. The worship performed is solely aimed at attaining Allah’s pleasure.²⁴

In this book, Aḥmad al-Narāqī also explains that the human heart can be afflicted by various spiritual diseases that are not physically visible but greatly affect behavior and life’s happiness. These diseases include *riyā’* (the desire to be praised by others), *ḥasad* (envy), *‘ujb* (arrogance or feeling superior), and *ghadab* (uncontrolled anger). If left untreated, these ailments can harden the heart and distance a person from spiritual awareness. As long as the surface of the heart is not cleansed from traces of bad morals, knowledge and understanding will not be embedded in it, because knowledge and understanding are inner worship, just as prayer is outer obedience.²⁵

Al-Narāqī emphasizes that diseases of the heart are more dangerous than physical illnesses because they can damage one’s relationship with Allah and fellow humans, often without the person realizing it. Sin also becomes a cause of these heart diseases; sin can transform the heart from being healthy and upright to being sick and collapsed. Because of sin, the heart remains sick and troubled.²⁶ To treat these, al-Narāqī suggests an approach similar to soul therapy, namely through *muḥāsabah* (self-introspection), *murāqabah* (the awareness of always being watched by Allah), as well as spiritual exercises such as *dhikr* and increasing righteous deeds. For example, a person prone to *riyā’* is advised to perform good deeds quietly without others knowing. Someone who easily gets angry is encouraged to practice patience and remember that Allah loves those who restrain their anger. Healing the heart is not an instant process but requires patience, self-awareness, and continuous effort. According to al-Narāqī, a pure heart is the key to achieving true happiness and closeness to God.²⁷

In short, in the process of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, the three most important practices are:

- a. *Muḥāsabah* (self-introspection) teaches a person to evaluate their daily ac-

24 Nur Kholik Afandi, “Nafs Mutmainah Sebagai Dasar dalam Menciptakan Kesejahteraan Spiritual,” *El Buhuth: Borneo Journal of Islamic Studies*, June 10, 2021, 170, <https://doi.org/10.21093/el-buhuth.v3i2.3523>.

25 Narāqī, *Mi’rāj al-Sa’ādah*, 42.

26 Ibnul Qayyim al-Jauzi, *Terapi Penyakit Hati* (Jakarta: Qisthi Press, 2005), 104.

27 Narāqī, *Mi’rāj al-Sa’ādah*, 42.

tions, both outward and inward, so they can recognize sins or bad attitudes that often go unnoticed. With this habit, a person can more easily realize their mistakes and gradually improve them. *Muḥāsabah* becomes a kind of honest mirror that helps humans grow spiritually without having to wait for reprimands from outside. *Muḥāsabah* is a form of worship with very high value in the sight of Allah Swt. because it can gradually change a person's mindset, behavior, speech, and how they interact socially with the community, as well as strengthen the relationship between Allah Swt. and His servants.²⁸

- b. *Murāqabah* (awareness of Allah's supervision) instills the feeling that Allah Swt. Always sees, hears, and knows the contents of our hearts anytime and anywhere. This awareness fosters carefulness in behavior and keeps a person away from futile actions or sins.²⁹ *Murāqabah* is the union between God, nature, and oneself. In terms of its meaning, *murāqabah* is an effort to always feel watched over by Allah Swt. (*murāqabatullāh*). *Murāqabah* means mutual watching, spying, or paying close attention.³⁰
- c. *Mujābahadah* (the earnest struggle against the desires of the nafs) is a sincere inner struggle to resist negative impulses within oneself, such as laziness, envy, arrogance, or excessive love of the world. Without *mujābahadah*, the purification of the soul becomes difficult because the *nafs* tends to lead toward momentary pleasures. These three practices are not merely concepts but need to be continuously practiced so that the soul becomes calm, pure, and closer to Allah Swt. Al-Ghazālī in his *Iḥyā'* states: "*Mujābahadah* is the key (door) to guidance; there is no key to guidance except *mujābahadah*." Within *mujābahadah* are recitations of *dhikr*, *taḥlīl*, prayers, and litanies containing verses that can bring tranquility to the heart, and with a peaceful heart, one's behavior and conduct in daily life will improve.³¹

According to al-Narāqī, *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul) cannot be separated from the development of noble character. A pure soul is not only free from negative traits such as arrogance, envy, or uncontrolled anger, but is also adorned with virtuous qualities such as honesty, patience, humility, and compassion. In al-Narāqī's view, the process of *tazkiyah* is not merely about suppressing the desires

28 Reza Imelda and Muhammad Yunan Harahap, "Muhasabah An-Nafs untuk Mengenali Potensi Diri Siswa di Madrasah Aliyah Swasta Miftahussalam Medan," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kewirausahaan* 11, no. 2 (February 2023): 406, <https://doi.org/10.47668/pkwu.v11i2.748>.

29 Narāqī, *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*, 1067.

30 Muhammad 'Ainul Yaqin et al., "Dunia Spiritual Sebagai Wadah Inklusivitas-Multikultural: Studi Kasus di Dzikir Manaqib Syaikh Abdul Qodir Jailani Pondok Pesantren Al-Qodiri Jember 2016," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional 3rd Temu Ilmiah Jaringan Peneliti* 1, no. 1 (February 2017): 34.

31 Zuyyina Candra Kirana and Deden Dienul Haq, "Pembentukan Karakter Religius Santuri di Pondok Pesantren Fathul Ulum Kwagean Kediri Melalui Kegiatan Mujahadah," *Jurnal Kependidikan Islam* 12, no. 2 (August 2022): 228, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jkpi.2022.12.2.225-241>.

of the *nafs* but about transforming negative tendencies into positive strengths that bring a person closer to Allah. Good character is the fruit of a long process of consciously and consistently educating the heart and soul. Al-Narāqī emphasizes that anyone who wants to achieve true happiness must make noble character a spiritual path, not merely a social rule. He sees good character not only as a means to establish harmonious relationships with fellow humans but also as a way to refine the spirit and draw closer to the Creator. For Muslims, virtuous character (*maḥmūdah*) is exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad saw., because the traits and manners he possessed are praiseworthy qualities and serve as the best *uswatun ḥasanah* (good example) for all Muslims.³²

Therefore, *tazkiyah al-nafs* will not be complete without serious efforts to improve one's character. In daily life, this can be applied through self-introspection (*muhāsabah*), practicing patience in facing trials, and guarding one's speech and behavior to remain within the values of goodness. For al-Narāqī, noble character is a reflection of the clarity of the soul.

In the process of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, according to Aḥmad al-Narāqī, reason (*‘aql*) plays an important role as a guide. Reason is used to distinguish between good and bad, as well as a tool for self-reflection, so that a person can understand the condition of their soul. With reason, someone can evaluate their attitudes and intentions, then realize what needs to be improved. Reason also helps humans recognize the purpose of life and make wiser choices in selecting a life path that aligns with spiritual values.

Meanwhile, the heart (*qalb*) is the center of feeling and sincerity. A pure heart becomes the place where faith (*īmān*), love for Allah, and noble character grow. However, the heart is also easily afflicted by diseases such as envy, arrogance, and excessive love of the world if it is not guarded. Therefore, *sharī‘ah* comes as guidance for both outward and inward life. Sharia helps direct reason and heart to remain on the straight path. Islamic sharia affirms principles of humanity such as brotherhood, equality, and tolerance. Providing aid, ensuring security, and offering protection to those in need—even to enemies—is a noble teaching of Islamic sharia, which historically preceded the emergence of several modern international legal instruments on human rights.³³ Through worship (*‘ibādah*), moral rules, and the discipline of sharia, humans are trained to continuously purify their souls. These three elements—like reason (*‘aql*), heart (*qalb*), and sharia—complement each other and cannot be separated in shaping a pure personality that is close to God.

Aḥmad al-Narāqī also outlines stages in the process of soul purification, including:

32 Agus Syukur, "Akhlak Terpuji dan Implementasinya di Masyarakat," *Misykat Al-Anwar Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Masyarakat* 3, no. 2 (July 2020): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.24853/ma.3.2.1-22>.

33 M. Alvi Syahrin, "Memahami Pencari Suaka dan Pengungsi dalam Syariat Islam," *Opinio Juris* 3, no. 1 (2019): 2.

- a. *Takhallī*, Emptying oneself from bad traits such as *riyāʾ*, *ḥasad*, *ghībāh*.
- b. *Tahallī*, Filling oneself with good traits: *ṣabar*, *ikhhlās*, *zuhūd*.
- c. *Tajallī*, The opening of divine light in the heart after purification.

All of these are practical paths that must be undertaken by a servant or *sālik* (a spiritual wayfarer).³⁴

Comparison of Approaches to Soul Purification: The Qur'an & the Book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*

One important point of convergence between the Qur'an and the book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* by Aḥmad al-Narāqī is that both emphasize the importance of soul purification as the path to true happiness. The Qur'an clearly states that those who purify their souls will be successful. Meanwhile, al-Narāqī explains that a person will only achieve *sa'ādah* (true happiness) if they successfully control their *hawā nafs* (desires) and improve their character. Just as true prayer cannot be performed until the mind is cleansed of all external impurities, so too, until we remove all internal impurities, that is, bad qualities, from the mind, the light of true knowledge, free from any trace of doubt, will not shine upon it. And how can a defiled heart become the abode of true knowledge?³⁵

Fundamental values such as honesty, patience, and fear of Allah form the main foundation in this process, both in the Qur'an and in al-Narāqī's view. This shows that although al-Narāqī writes with a philosophical and mystical approach, the roots of his thought remain grounded in Qur'anic values. Moreover, the stages of the soul described in al-Narāqī's book, such as *nafs ammārah* (the soul inclined to evil), *nafs lawwāmah* (the self-reproaching soul), and *nafs muṭma'innah* (the peaceful soul close to Allah), are essentially more detailed explanations of the indications also present in the Qur'an.

The Qur'an mentions these three types of souls in several verses, and al-Narāqī develops them into practical guidelines to recognize the condition of the human soul. Both the Qur'an and al-Narāqī agree that the ultimate goal of *tazkiyah al-nafs* is to achieve Allah's pleasure and the tranquility of the soul, which manifests in a meaningful life in this world and eternal happiness in the hereafter. When the soul is purified, it enters the spiritual realm of sovereignty, from which it perceives and comes to know the future and receives knowledge of the unseen through means that can never be attained while awake and when the body is in its most alert state.

The Qur'an emphasizes that the purification of the soul is a command from Allah, part of worship, and the path to success in the hereafter. This purification is positioned as part of faith and obedience to God, with the main motivation being to attain Allah's pleasure and salvation on the Day of Judgment. Verses like "Indeed, successful is the one who purifies it" indicate that *tazkiyah* is a divine command that every Muslim must carry out as a form of servitude to Allah. Meanwhile, in the book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*, Aḥmad al-Narāqī explains the process of soul purification

34 Narāqī, *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*, 57–59.

35 Narāqī, 42.

through concrete steps that touch on the psychological side of humans, such as controlling *hawā nafs* (desires), introspection (*muḥāsabah*), and spiritual training (*mujaḥadah*). The parable of those who place too much importance on physical worship and forget the purity of their hearts and the darkness and filthiness of their souls, and do not pay attention to them, is like the grave of a dead person, whose outside is decorated, while inside there is a rotting carcass.³⁶

In other words, while the Qur'an provides direction and the purpose of life, the book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* equips us with a roadmap and spiritual tools to achieve it. *Tazkiyah al-nafs*, or the purification of the soul, is not merely an ethical practice or self-control, but also an essential form of worship in Islam. This shows that *tazkiyah* is a form of obedience with a profound spiritual dimension, the relationship between a servant and their Lord. Every effort to cleanse the heart from diseases like arrogance, envy, and excessive anger is considered an act of devotion to Allah. Thus, *tazkiyah* is not only for personal benefit but also a means to draw closer to Allah. On the other hand, *tazkiyah al-nafs* also serves as a spiritual therapy that can heal emotional wounds and mild psychological disorders. Many psychological problems, such as stress, anxiety, and loss of life's meaning, arise from a dirty heart or a soul distant from spiritual values. From a mental health perspective, *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God) and *tawakkul* (trust in God) function as treatment, prevention, and nurturing. Caring for the soul requires that every sufferer finds peace within by returning to religion (Allah).³⁷

In this context, practices of *tazkiyah* such as *muḥāsabah* (self-introspection), *murāqabah* (awareness of being watched by Allah), and *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) can be effective ways to calm the soul and improve one's perspective on life. The book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* emphasizes that a tranquil soul arises from a consistent process of self-purification. Therefore, *tazkiyah* not only shapes a person morally but also serves as a comprehensive path for inner healing. Whoever cleanses the surface of his heart from the dust of the natural world, ridding himself of even a little of his animal interests and desires, will undoubtedly attain power and beauty, for him a state of enlightenment and intellectual blessing whereby he becomes convinced that his essence is not of this physical world, but of another world.³⁸

In the process of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, the integration between divine revelation and Sufi experience is crucial. The Qur'an provides the primary foundation with divine guidance on how humans should purify their souls, from avoiding sin to cultivating noble character. However, applying these values in real life requires deep spiritual experience and practice as taught in the world of *tasawwuf* (Sufism). Here, *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* acts as a bridge between the revealed text and daily human practice. Aḥmad al-Narāqī not only quotes Qur'anic verses but also explains how

36 Narāqī, 44.

37 Masyhuri Masyhuri, "Prinsip-Prinsip Tazkiyah Al-Nafs dalam Islam dan Hubungannya dengan Kesehatan Mental," *An-Nida'* 37, no. 2 (November 2012): 100, <https://doi.org/10.24014/an-nida.v37i2.317>.

38 Narāqī, *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*, 31.

the human soul can gradually transform through concrete spiritual exercises such as *muḥāsabah* (introspection), patience, and controlling the *hawā nafs* (desires). This approach shows that soul purification is not sufficient by merely knowing Qur'anic theory, but also needs spiritual experience lived directly. Sufi experience gives deeper meaning to the message of revelation, so that the teachings of the Qur'an are not only understood intellectually but also felt deeply in the heart. Taftāzānī directs the Sufi experience toward a single object of focus, God.³⁹

Thus, *tazkiyah al-nafs* becomes a living, grounded process that touches the deepest aspects of humanity. This integration also opens space for the development of Islamic psychology, as it combines the knowledge of revelation and inner experience as the foundation for nurturing a complete soul.

In the fast-paced and stressful modern life, people often feel lost, easily stressed, and trapped in selfish or materialistic attitudes. In such conditions, the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, the purification of the soul, offers highly relevant guidance for building a strong inner character. Both in the Qur'an and in *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*, soul purification is not only about avoiding sin but also about organizing the heart to become more patient, sincere, honest, and full of compassion. These are the characteristics needed in today's era, where life's challenges are increasingly complex and humans are required to maintain integrity and empathy in dealing with others. Moreover, *tazkiyah al-nafs* teaches the importance of *muḥāsabah* (self-introspection)⁴⁰ and controlling the *hawā nafs* (desires), two very important things in a modern world full of distractions. When a person can continuously recognize and improve themselves, they will not easily be swept away by negative currents such as hatred, envy, or arrogance. Whoever knows his own soul knows his God.⁴¹ The character born from the process of *tazkiyah* is not only spiritually good but also mentally resilient and mature in attitude. This is why the classical values from the Qur'an and the thoughts of Aḥmad al-Narāqī remain relevant and are even greatly needed to shape a generation that is not only intelligent but also morally noble.

This comparison shows that the Qur'an emphasizes *tazkiyah al-nafs* as a theological command and the ultimate goal of happiness, while *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* offers practical methods through *muḥāsabah*, *mujāhadah*, and *murāqabah*. The integration of the two not only demonstrates the continuity between revelation and the Sufi intellectual tradition (*turāth*) but also opens the possibility for the emergence of a new conceptual model in Islamic psychology. In other words, the Qur'an provides the normative foundation and spiritual orientation, whereas al-Narāqī provides the practical tools that can be developed into a framework for modern psycho-spiritual therapy. This is the added value of this comparison: presenting a synthesis that can serve as a basis for formulating a holistic approach to Islamic psychotherapy, integrating theological, ethical, and psychological

39 Ikhlās Budiman, "Pengalaman Religius dalam Tafsir Ibn 'Arabi," *Kanz Philosophy: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 6, no. 1 (June 2016): 100.

40 Narāqī, *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah*, 1067.

41 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' Turāth al-'Arabī, 1983).

dimensions in a balanced way.

Contribution of Soul Purification to Islamic Psychotherapy

In Islam, healing of the soul is not only related to peace of mind but also to the purity of the heart and a person's closeness to their God (Allah). Humans also possess a spiritual dimension. This dimension is the *malakūti* dimension, which in philosophy is called the *rūḥ (nafs)*. This *nafs* is what, in the concepts of psychology and Sufism, is referred to as the soul.⁴²

The concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* can be seen as a form of Islamic psychotherapy, as it focuses on the process of cleansing oneself from spiritual diseases such as envy, jealousy, arrogance, excessive anger, and excessive love of the world. Islamic psychotherapy is an effort to address psychological problems by using methods based on Islamic principles derived from the Qur'an and Hadith.⁴³ In this context, *tazkiyah* is not merely a moral theory but a practical method to achieve soul balance and inner peace through a guided spiritual approach. Unlike modern therapies that often focus solely on cognitive or emotional aspects, *tazkiyah al-nafs* emphasizes a deeper spiritual dimension. A person is invited to recognize their soul's weaknesses and then engage in processes like *muḥāsabah* (introspection), *mujāhadah* (struggle), and *murāqabah* (awareness of God's presence). This approach not only addresses outward behavior but also improves the deepest motivations within a person. This is a significant added value, especially for Muslim communities that need therapeutic approaches aligned with their faith and beliefs.

By adopting *tazkiyah al-nafs* as a therapy model, a Muslim not only heals psychological wounds but also strengthens their relationship with Allah and improves their relationships with others. Sufi practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance), *tafakkur* (contemplation), and *muḥāsabah*, which focus on heart purification, self-control, and drawing closer to Allah, align well with modern psychological principles emphasizing emotional balance, self-acceptance, and meaningful living to enhance mental health.⁴⁴

In the modern world, full of pressure and identity crises, this approach offers new hope: that healing does not have to be separate from religious values. Indeed, in the silence of *dhikr* (remembrance), prayer, and sincere self-reflection, one can find true meaning in life and genuine peace. Therefore, the integration of *tazkiyah al-nafs* and modern psychology becomes an important step in building a comprehensive and grounded Islamic psychotherapy. This concept plays a

42 Siti Mutholingah and Basri Zain, "Metode Penyucian Jiwa (Tazkiyah Al-Nafs) dan Implikasinya Bagi Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Ta'limuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 1 (April 2021): 69–83, <https://doi.org/10.32478/talimuna.v10i1.662>.

43 Aditya Dedy Nugraha, "Memahami Kecemasan: Perspektif Psikologi Islam," *IJIP: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Psychology* 2, no. 1 (October 2020): 11, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijip.v2i1.1-22>.

44 Ema Fitriya, Nur Hani'ah, and Hanifatul Khofifah, "Tasawuf dalam Perspektif Psikologi: Harmoni Spiritual dan Kesehatan Mental," *AJMIE: Albikam Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Education* 5, no. 2 (2024), 292–93, <https://doi.org/10.32478/8zv7ag68>.

significant role in shaping good morals. In the purification process, a person is invited to recognize the weaknesses and spiritual ailments within themselves, such as arrogance, envy, excessive anger, or excessive love of the world. Through spiritual exercises like introspection (*muḥāsabah*), self-awareness (*murāqabah*), and self-control (*mujāhadah*), one begins to cleanse their soul and replace it with noble morals such as humility, patience, honesty, and compassion. These moral values are not only important in personal life but also form the foundation for building a harmonious and civilized society. Morality is a demand of behavior brought by values. Morality is essential to be internalized in daily life.⁴⁵

Tazkiyah al-nafs also helps a person achieve soul balance. In modern life, filled with pressure, many people experience anxiety, stress, or a loss of direction. Through the process of *tazkiyah*, a person is not only invited to draw closer to God but also guided to recognize their potential and live with a clear purpose. A balanced soul can accept itself, manage emotions well, and is not easily shaken by life's problems. Thus, *tazkiyah al-nafs* is not merely a religious concept but can also be a path to attaining true inner peace and mental health. The concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, or soul purification, plays a significant role in character education. In Islam, education focuses not only on intellectual intelligence but also on the formation of good morals and self-control. The connection between *tazkiyah al-nafs* and personal perfection can be illustrated by understanding *tazkiyah al-nafs* as an effort to shape a perfect individual realized through obedience and righteous deeds in their life. *Tazkiyah al-nafs* carries the mission and vision of sanctifying the entirety of human life, born from purified individuals.⁴⁶

Through *tazkiyah*, students are encouraged to become aware of the presence of negative traits within themselves, such as arrogance, envy, or laziness, and then gradually work to improve them. This process is crucial in building a character that is honest, humble, and responsible. For example, in Islamic schools, teachers can encourage students to routinely perform *muḥāsabah* (self-evaluation) every weekend to foster introspection and cultivate sincere intentions in learning.

In Islamic counseling, *tazkiyah al-nafs* becomes a highly relevant approach to help individuals manage emotions and cope with life pressures. A counselor can assist clients in understanding that feelings of anxiety, anger, or despair are not only psychological issues but are also related to the condition of the heart and spiritual connection. By instilling practices such as *murāqabah* (being aware that Allah is always watching) and *mujāhadah* (struggling against the desires of the nafs), clients are guided to heal themselves inwardly. For example, a counselor might use *dzikir* therapy during sessions. In Islamic psychology, *dzikir* is seen not only as an act of worship but also as a spiritual therapy that provides positive psychological effects. *Dhikir* helps individuals release negative feelings that may accumulate due

45 Adinda Bilqis Azizah et al., "Konsep, Nilai, Moral dan Norma dalam Pembelajaran PPKN SD," *Nusantara* 2, no. 1 (March 2020): 137, <https://doi.org/10.36088/nusantara.v2i1.681>.

46 Tijan Purnomo, "Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Tazkiyatun Nafs (Studi Situs di Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu Ar-Risalah Surakarta)" (Thesis, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2013), 5, <https://eprints.ums.ac.id/25667/>.

to trauma, such as anger, sadness, or even deep regret.⁴⁷

Another example is when a student who feels like a failure and wants to give up can be helped through the *tazkiyah* approach to realize that disappointment is part of life's tests and an opportunity to draw closer to Allah. The application of this concept can also be seen in mentoring programs at campuses or *pesantrens*, where mentors not only provide academic advice but also nurture good character and inner peace. For instance, a *santri* who often feels inferior because of coming from a simple family can be guided to understand their worth before Allah, not in the eyes of humans. The *tazkiyah* approach helps individuals avoid being trapped in worldly judgments and focus on the growth of their souls. Thus, character education and Islamic counseling become comprehensive means to form spiritually strong and emotionally healthy people.

In this modern era, the development of psychology has greatly helped humans understand the soul and behavior. However, Western approaches are often secular and do not fully consider the spiritual dimension. On the other hand, the heritage of classical Islamic knowledge, such as the book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* by Aḥmad al-Narāqī, is rich in spiritual values and ethics of the soul. Unfortunately, these two approaches often run separately. In fact, if combined, they can produce a more holistic approach that not only heals mentally but also guides spiritually.

The book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* teaches the importance of recognizing diseases of the heart, such as arrogance, envy, and excessive love of the world, then offers remedies through the approach of sharia and good character. This can be seen as a form of deep soul therapy. Meanwhile, modern psychology has observational, counseling, and diagnostic methods that are scientifically proven. These two approaches can actually complement each other. The classical heritage provides depth of meaning and life purpose, while modern theory provides systematic tools and techniques.

Therefore, a serious effort is needed to integrate both. Academics and practitioners of Islamic psychology need to re-examine classical literature with contextual and scientific approaches, then develop psychological intervention models that are not only scientific but also spiritually valuable. In this way, we not only heal inner wounds but also help someone grow into a calmer, more virtuous, and closer-to-God person. Studies on *tazkiyah al-nafs* in classical books like *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* show that the Islamic scholarly heritage possesses a wealth of concepts about the soul, emotions, and morality.

However, many of these concepts have not been explained in language and methods that are easily understood by the public or modern academia. Many find it difficult to understand the texts independently without direct guidance from a *ustaz*, especially those with limited Arabic proficiency.⁴⁸ Therefore, further

47 Yeni Satroma Dewi and Merri Yelliza, "Peran Bimbingan dan Konseling dalam Menerapkan Terapi Dzikir Untuk Pemulihan Trauma Akibat Luka Batin," *Indonesian Research Journal on Education* 4, no. 4 (October 2024): 1485, <https://doi.org/10.31004/irje.v4i4.1357>.

48 Ach Febri Hasan, "Dampak Metode Pembelajaran Interaktif Terhadap Kepahaman Santri dalam Belajar dan Memahami Kitab Klasik," *SUKIJO CiRCLE: Journal of Contemporary*

research can be directed to retranslate these classical concepts into the language of contemporary psychology. For example, how the concept of *nafs lawwamah* can be linked to the concept of self-awareness, or how *murāqabah* can become part of Islamic mindfulness practices.

It is also necessary to conduct more applied research, namely, testing the effectiveness of the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* in real-life contexts such as counseling, education, or character training. This research can take the form of case studies, experiments, or the development of Islamic psychology modules based on *turāth*. Psychology based on *turāth* can be explained in two patterns. First, a pattern grounded in concepts or terms from the Al-Qur'an and Hadith, and second, a pattern originating from the Islamic scientific heritage.⁴⁹

For example, how the daily practice of *muḥāsabah* can help students manage stress, or how the values of sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*) and contentment (*riḍā*) can strengthen mental resilience. Such an approach will demonstrate that the Islamic scholarly heritage is not only to be read but can also be applied in modern life. It is important for young researchers in the field of Islamic psychology to begin building bridges between modern psychological science and classical Islamic literature. Many concepts are already aligned in meaning, but they have yet to be integrated methodologically. Interdisciplinary collaboration, such as among experts in *tafsīr*, '*ulamā*' of *ṭasawwuf*, and psychologists, will greatly enrich this approach. Such research will strengthen the identity of Islamic psychology as a discipline and provide alternative solutions deeply rooted in spiritual values to address contemporary psychological challenges.

Conclusion

The concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* in the tafsir of the Qur'an is depicted as a fundamental and absolute process of purifying the soul in achieving spiritual happiness and the pleasure of Allah. The Qur'an emphasizes that spiritual success is not merely superficial self-control of the *nafs*, but a profound transformation encompassing motivation, behavior, and spirituality. This process includes the stages of the soul as elaborated more comprehensively in the book *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* by Mawlā Aḥmad al-Narāqī, which describes the levels of *nafs* starting from *nafs 'ammārah*, *nafs lawwāmah*, to *nafs muṭma'innah*, thereby constructing a comprehensive and practical conceptual framework to understand the dynamics of the human soul. Al-Narāqī's perspective in *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* enriches the understanding of *tazkiyah al-nafs* by presenting an integrative model of Islamic psychotherapy that combines classical spiritual aspects with applicable modern psychological approaches. This concept is not merely a moral theory or normative Sufi teaching, but a systematic and practical psychospiritual transformation through practices such as *muḥāsabah* (introspection), *murāqabah* (awareness

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49 Zainal Abidin, "Model-Model Pengembangan Kajian Psikologi dalam Diskursus Pemikiran Muslim Kontemporer," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 18, no. 1 (March 2013): 91–108.

of Allah's supervision), and *mujābah* (struggle against the desires of the *nafs*). This model bridges psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, making it highly relevant for the development of contemporary Islamic psychology and Islamic counseling practices in facing modern life challenges. Furthermore, this study implicitly underscores the need to reinterpret and translate classical scholarly heritage like *Mi'rāj al-Sa'ādah* into the language and methodology of modern psychology so that the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* can be more accessible and applicable in character education, counseling, and mental training contexts.

Empirical research is also necessary to test the effectiveness of these spiritual practices in real-life settings to strengthen their validity and relevance. Interdisciplinary collaboration between experts in *tafsīr*, Sufi scholars, and psychologists is crucial for developing a holistic and integrative model of Islamic psychotherapy. Overall, this research implies that *tazkiyah al-nafs* is not merely a theoretical concept taught in the Qur'an and classical Sufism but a practical and vital instrument in the mental and spiritual development of contemporary Muslim communities. Integrating spiritual values with modern scientific approaches becomes an essential strategy to shape individuals with noble character, emotional balance, and spiritual strength in facing the complexities of the present era.

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