



THE POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING A SAKINAH FAMILY IN MARRIAGES INVOLVING INDIVIDUALS WITH NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER

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Abstract :

Marriage in Islam aims to achieve tranquility (*sakinah*), affection (*mawaddah*), and compassion (*rahmah*), as emphasized in the Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rum [30]:21. However, the realities of modern life reveal growing psychological challenges within marriages, one of which emerges when a spouse suffers from Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). This disorder is characterized by an inflated sense of self-importance, a constant need for admiration, and a lack of empathy toward others. This study adopts an interdisciplinary approach combining psychology and Islamic family law through a qualitative-descriptive analysis, exploring the possibility of building a *sakinah* family when one partner has NPD. The findings indicate that the egocentric and empathy-deficient traits of narcissism fundamentally contradict the principles of *rahmah* and *mawaddah*, which are the spiritual essence of an Islamic household. Drawing on empirical data from the APA (2013), Campbell & Miller (2011), and Harvard Medical School (2018), individuals with NPD tend to form manipulative and unstable relationships. From an Islamic perspective, such behavior violates the command of *mu'āsyarah bil ma'rūf* as stated in Qur'an Surah An-Nisa [4]:19. Nevertheless, Islam leaves room for recovery through psychological therapy, spiritual guidance, and Islamic family counseling. The legal maxim *adh-dhararu yuzāl* ("harm must be eliminated") provides the moral foundation for allowing separation when the relationship causes emotional distress and the loss of inner peace.

Keywords : *Sakinah* family, Narcissistic Personality Disorder, marital psychology, Islamic law

INTRODUCTION

A *sakinah* family constitutes the primary foundation for the formation of a moral and civilized society. In Islam, marriage is positioned as a sacred institution aimed at realizing inner tranquility (*sakinah*), love (*mawaddah*), and compassion (*rahmah*), as affirmed in Qur'an Surah Ar-Rum [30]:21. This objective places the household as a spiritual space that guarantees psychological serenity, relational justice, and respect for the dignity of each spouse.

Nevertheless, the reality of modern family life demonstrates that the ideal objectives of marriage are often hindered by various psychological factors, one of which is Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). This disorder is characterized by an excessive sense of self-importance, a constant need for admiration, and a lack of empathy, which, within the context of marriage, frequently gives rise to dominant and manipulative relational patterns (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Such conditions have the potential to undermine the principle of *mu'asharah bil ma'ruf* and erode the inner tranquility that constitutes the core of a *sakinah* family.



Previous studies in the field of psychology indicate that relationships involving individuals with NPD tend to be unstable and pose a high risk of psychological suffering for their partners (Campbell & Miller, 2011; Ronningstam, 2018). Meanwhile, studies in Islamic family law have largely emphasized the normative concept of a *sakinah* family without specifically engaging with issues related to personality disorders. This circumstance reveals a significant gap between psychological approaches and normative Islamic legal scholarship.

Based on this context, the present study seeks to examine the possibility of realizing a *sakinah* family within a marriage involving an individual diagnosed with Narcissistic Personality Disorder by employing an interdisciplinary approach that integrates psychology and Islamic family law. This study is expected to contribute scholarly novelty (*state of the art*) by situating the phenomenon of NPD within the framework of *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*, particularly in relation to the protection of life (*hifz al-nafs*) and human dignity (*hifz al-'ird*) within the institution of marriage.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive method with an interdisciplinary approach integrating clinical psychology and Islamic family law. The research is conducted in the form of a library study (*library research*) aimed at understanding the characteristics of Narcissistic Personality Disorder and its impact on marital relationships and household harmony.

This research does not involve a specific field location, as all data are derived from scholarly literature. The researcher plays an active role as the primary research instrument in collecting and interpreting data. The subjects of the study consist of the concept of Narcissistic Personality Disorder and the concept of a *sakinah* family in Islam. The primary data sources include the DSM-5 (APA, 2013), literature on family psychology, as well as primary Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith. Supporting data are obtained from relevant journal articles and previous research findings.

Data are collected through documentation techniques and analyzed using descriptive-comparative analysis. This analytical approach is employed to compare narcissistic relational characteristics with the values of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*, as well as to assess the potential for relational recovery through psychological therapy and Islamic spiritual guidance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Narcissistic Personality Disorder and Marital Dynamics

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is a personality disorder characterized by an excessive need for admiration, an emotional ambition to control others, and an inability to offer genuine empathy toward others. Individuals with this disorder tend to construct and maintain a "grandiose" or superior self-image, which they preserve through various forms of social manipulation, including manipulation directed at their spouses (American

Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Within marital relationships, individuals with NPD frequently exhibit a relational pattern known as “idealization–devaluation–discard,” namely idealizing the partner during the early stage of the relationship, subsequently devaluing them, and ultimately discarding or neglecting them when the partner no longer fulfills their expectations (Campbell & Miller, 2011). This relational pattern not only inflicts deep emotional wounds but also undermines trust, dignity, and spiritual balance within the household.

Numerous empirical studies indicate that individuals with NPD commonly employ manipulative behaviors such as love bombing, gaslighting, and playing the victim in order to maintain emotional control over their partners (Ronningstam, 2018). These patterns generate toxic psychological dynamics in which love is transformed into an instrument of domination, and the household loses the value of *sakinah* that constitutes the core objective of marriage in Islam.

Love Bombing and Emotional Exploitation

At the initial stage of a relationship, individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) often present themselves as extraordinarily charming, friendly, romantic, attentive, and seemingly the most affectionate partners. They possess a keen understanding of the right words to say, the appropriate ways to demonstrate care, and the strategies required to create the impression that they are the ideal partner. It is at this stage that the phenomenon of love bombing begins: an overwhelming outpouring of attention, praise, and exaggerated expressions of affection, not driven by genuine love, but by a desire to create emotional dependency and psychological dominance over the partner (Campbell & Miller, 2011).

Initially, love bombing generates a sense of emotional euphoria in the victim. The victim feels as though they have found a perfect figure who understands and loves them unconditionally. Every form of attention, gifts, and romantic words leads the victim to believe that the relationship is a divine destiny. Yet beneath this surface, individuals with NPD gradually reduce love to an emotional transaction. Love is “sold,” trust is exchanged for insincere intimacy, and a relationship that should be sacred is transformed into a means of sustaining dominance.

In *The Handbook of Narcissism and Narcissistic Personality Disorder*, Campbell and Miller (2011) explain that love bombing constitutes a form of relational manipulation that produces pseudo-affective euphoria, causing victims to lose their ability to assess reality objectively. Victims are led to believe that true love must be proven through total sacrifice, to the extent that moral and spiritual boundaries become blurred. Affection that should preserve dignity and sincerity is transformed into intimacy devoid of trustworthiness (*amanah*), when individuals with NPD exploit emotional and even physical closeness to satisfy ego-driven ambitions, gain social validation, or establish psychological control over their partners (Ronningstam, 2018).

Psychologically, victims are often unaware of this trap. Feeling profoundly loved, they begin to adjust every aspect of their lives to please the

perpetrator. Gradually, the love that once provided comfort turns into suffocating pressure. Attention that was once warm becomes a tool of control; words of praise are replaced by insinuations; sweet promises evolve into demands, excessive jealousy, and suspicion. When victims attempt to question these changes, perpetrators distort reality through gaslighting, accusing victims of being overly sensitive or ungrateful for the “affection” they have received.

This stage frequently culminates in moral and ethical exploitation. Emotional, and even physical, intimacy is instrumentalized as a means of manipulation to obtain personal gain, ego satisfaction, or self-justification. From an Islamic perspective, such behavior constitutes *zulm* (oppression), as it betrays love that should be grounded in sincerity, trust (*amanah*), and respect for one’s spouse. In Islam, love is an act of worship that cultivates compassion (*rahmah*) and reinforces the principle of *mu’asharah bil ma’ruf* (kind and honorable conduct), rather than a means of domination or an instrument for exploiting desire.

Thus, love bombing represents a form of counterfeit love engineered by individuals with NPD to appear beautiful on the surface while concealing poison beneath. It is gentle in words, warm in demeanor, yet spiritually destructive. This phenomenon not only shatters the victim’s self-worth but also erodes the spiritual essence of marriage itself. Love, which should serve as a source of *sakinah*, is transformed into a source of harm (*madarrah*), violating the principle of *rahmah* and erasing the sacred meaning of the Islamic household as taught by Allah SWT in Qur’an Surah Ar-Rūm [30]:21.

Gaslighting and the Distortion of Reality

If love bombing represents the sweet beginning of a trap, then gaslighting is the subtle poison that works gradually once emotional attachment has been established. Gaslighting is a form of psychological abuse characteristically employed by individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)—a sophisticated mode of psychological manipulation that causes partners to doubt their own thoughts, feelings, and even their perception of reality (Ronningstam, 2018). The perpetrator does not need to shout, insult, or act aggressively; through a calm tone, rational appearance, and inverted logic, they are able to make their partner feel guilty for matters that are not their fault.

At the initial stage, victims typically experience confusion. They are convinced that they have seen, heard, or experienced their partner’s harmful behavior, yet the perpetrator responds with statements such as, “You remember it wrong,” or “You’re too sensitive; it’s just your feelings.” These seemingly simple phrases, when repeated continuously, become powerful psychological weapons that erode the victim’s self-confidence. Gradually, the victim begins to question their ability to judge reality, blame themselves for overreacting, and ultimately lose trust in their own perceptions and intuition.

In clinical psychology, gaslighting is recognized as part of a strategy of coercive control, namely emotional domination aimed at subjugating another person’s will through doubt and confusion (Stern, 2007). Research conducted by Ronningstam at Harvard Medical School (2018) explains that individuals with

NPD employ gaslighting to maintain emotional dominance and psychological control within relationships. The objective is not to engage in dialogue or resolve problems, but rather to instill deep uncertainty in the partner, as individuals who doubt themselves are far easier to control.

Within marital life, this pattern produces serious consequences. Victims become mentally disempowered, experience persistent feelings of guilt, suffer from sleep disturbances, severe anxiety, and even chronic depression without fully understanding the underlying cause. Contemporary clinical studies indicate that victims of narcissistic manipulation frequently experience cognitive dissonance, an internal conflict between the reality they perceive and the false narratives continuously imposed by the perpetrator (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This condition forces victims to live in psychological uncertainty and results in the erosion of personal identity.

From an Islamic perspective, gaslighting constitutes *ta'addī* (transgression) against a spouse's rights and *zūlm* (oppression) against the inner dignity of the human being. Islam strictly prohibits all forms of control that destroy the integrity of the human soul. Truth in Islamic teachings is likened to light, whereas repeatedly reinforced falsehood is darkness that deceives. Gaslighting obscures the light of truth with a subtle fog of deception, rendering the victim unable to distinguish between sincere love and destructive control. Moreover, this behavior clearly contradicts the principle of *mu'āsharah bil ma'rūf* (living together in kindness) as commanded in the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَجِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْضَلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ
بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾

“O you who believe! It is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will, nor should you constrain them in order to take back part of what you have given them, unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike something in which Allah has placed much good.” (Qur'an, An-Nisa' [4]: 19)

A marriage built upon manipulation and deception will never attain *sakinah*. It may appear harmonious on the surface, yet beneath it lies silent inner suffering. In Islamic thought, gaslighting is not merely a psychological violation, but also a spiritual betrayal of the values of *amanah* (trust), honesty, and *rahmah* (compassion) that constitute the sacred foundation of marriage.

Playing the Victim and the Manipulation of Sympathy

If gaslighting destroys perception, then playing the victim shatters logic and the heart. Individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) frequently assume the role of the victim, projecting an image of themselves as the one who suffers the most, is the least understood, and is the most harmed. They may cry, demean themselves in front of others, or narrate stories of their extraordinary “sacrifices” and “sincerity,” whereas in reality it is they who have inflicted emotional and moral harm upon their partners (Miller, 2016). This tactic operates subtly yet lethally. Individuals with NPD reverse emotional reality, exchanging the positions of perpetrator and victim. When their partner attempts to express grievances, they respond with statements such as, “You have no idea

how much I am hurt by your behavior,” or “I am like this because you provoked me.” Such statements, when repeated continuously, generate destructive psychological effects: victims feel guilty for matters that are not their fault. Over time, partners lose the ability to defend themselves, as every attempt at clarification culminates in counteraccusations and manipulative displays of distress.

In family psychology, this behavior is known as defensive projection, an ego defense mechanism in which an individual projects their own faults and feelings of guilt onto others in order to protect their self-image (Feist & Feist, 2010). Miller’s study (2016) demonstrates that playing-the-victim behavior in narcissistic individuals produces chronic emotional exhaustion, obstructs healthy communication, and fosters disproportionate guilt in their partners. Victims live in an inner dilemma: on the one hand, they wish to resist; on the other, they feel morally culpable because they are perceived as having “hurt” a partner who appears fragile. According to Jalaluddin (2010), emotional manipulation within marital relationships often emerges as a manifestation of a pathological and imbalanced need for self-validation, which ultimately “holds love hostage” within an unhealthy relationship. Hurlock (2012) further asserts that relationships dominated by guilt and emotional dependency give rise to moral distortion, wherein love is employed not as an act of giving, but as a means of subjugation.

From an Islamic perspective, such behavior constitutes a form of moral deception and spiritual betrayal of the values of *ṣidq* (truthfulness) and *amanah* (trustworthiness) that serve as the foundation of marital relationships. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated:

“The signs of a hypocrite are three: when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is entrusted, he betrays the trust.” (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Al-Ghazali, in *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulum al-Dīn*, emphasizes that truthfulness is the mirror of faith, whereas falsehood is the root of moral decay and inner unrest (*qaswat al-qalb*).

Thus, playing the role of the victim to conceal injustice against one’s spouse is not merely an act of dishonesty, but also a denial of the principle of *mu’asharah bil ma’ruf* (Qur’an, An-Nisa’ [4]: 19). Within marriage, truthfulness is the light that preserves *sakinah*. In its absence, love transforms into a dark fog that misleads, and the home that should serve as a place of tranquility becomes an arena of ego-driven conflict that breeds anxiety and unrest.

Playing Monkey (Social Triangulation) and Moral Violence

Another form of manipulation frequently employed by individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is playing monkey or social triangulation—an intricate and dangerous emotional game. In this pattern, the perpetrator deliberately involves a third party to provoke jealousy, test loyalty, or fragment the partner’s emotional focus, with the aim of maintaining control and psychological superiority (Campbell & Miller, 2011). The perpetrator may compare their partner with others, repeatedly mention admired figures, or use

third parties as a means of self-justification, such as saying, "See, even my friends agree that I am not wrong." Such seemingly casual statements in fact contain profound moral violence, inflicting inner wounds and destabilizing the partner's sense of self-worth.

Triangulation operates subtly, not through direct attacks, but by gradually eroding the victim's dignity. The partner begins to question themselves: Are they less attractive, less capable, or less valuable in the eyes of the person they love? Over time, this condition generates trust-related trauma and the destruction of self-esteem, as love-which should function as protection-transforms into an arena of comparison and veiled humiliation.

In social psychology, such patterns are categorized as relational aggression, namely moral violence expressed through interpersonal relationships in order to humiliate, weaken, or isolate an individual without the use of physical force (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). The perpetrator derives a sense of power from controlling the emotions of others, while the victim loses emotional safety within a space that should provide inner refuge. This behavior often goes unrecognized because it is disguised as merely "testing one's partner." Psychologically, however, such actions implant feelings of inferiority, erode self-confidence, and foster existential anxiety (Jalaluddin, 2010). In long-term relationships, social triangulation gives rise to emotional detachment a distancing that destroys spiritual intimacy between husband and wife.

Islam views such behavior as *fahsha'* (indecent conduct) and *ithm* (moral sin), as it undermines the honor of the marital bond that is commanded to be preserved through affection and honesty. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ issued a stern warning:

"It is not lawful for a person to cause enmity between a husband and his wife." (Reported by Abu Dawud, No. 2175)

Social triangulation constitutes a form of emotional betrayal that slowly kills *loven* not through shouting, but through suffocating comparison. In the Islamic worldview, marriage is not a stage for proving who is more loved, but a space where two souls find tranquility in one another (Qur'an, *Ar-Rum* [30]: 21).

Thus, anyone who deliberately sows seeds of jealousy, envy, or comparison between spouses has, in effect, uprooted the very foundation of *sakinah* from the household. From the perspective of *maqasid al-shari'ah*, such actions obstruct the realization of *hifz al-'ird* (the protection of honor) and *hifz al-nafs* (the preservation of inner tranquility), two of the principal objectives of marriage in Islam.

Moral and Ethical Deviation in Individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder

If love bombing functions as the bait, gaslighting as the poison, playing the victim as the veil that conceals injustice, and playing monkey as the lure that creates emotional chaos, then all of these patterns ultimately culminate in the moral deviation of individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). This deviation is not always visible to the naked eye, as it does not leave physical wounds; rather, it operates subtly within the inner realm through concealed

humiliation, emotional manipulation, and disregard for the most fundamental human values.

Individuals with NPD do not love in order to provide tranquility, but rather to exercise power. In contemporary psychology, this phenomenon is referred to as *ethical cruelty*, namely a condition in which love and trust are not used to cultivate goodness, but instead to control, manipulate, and subjugate one's partner (Ronningstam, 2018). The series of manipulations previously constructed functions as a cycle: love bombing creates a false euphoria of love that intoxicates the partner with excessive attention and praise; gaslighting gradually dismantles the victim's self-confidence; playing the victim conceals the perpetrator's wrongdoing behind fabricated sorrow; and playing monkey prolongs control by introducing third parties into a relationship that should be exclusive and sacred.

Research presented in *The Handbook of Narcissism and Narcissistic Personality Disorder* (Campbell & Miller, 2011) demonstrates that individuals with NPD frequently exhibit exploitative relational patterns, emotional inconsistency, and infidelity. They continuously seek external validation to reinforce their superior self-image. When their partner no longer provides the required "ego supply," individuals with NPD often seek new sources of admiration, whether in the form of emotional, social, or sexual relationships outside of marriage.

Empirical findings by Twenge and Campbell (2018) further reinforce this conclusion, indicating that individuals with narcissistic tendencies exhibit significantly higher levels of infidelity and extramarital behavior. This is because they perceive relationships as arenas of competition and self-affirmation rather than as emotional commitments (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). What they pursue is not genuine love, but *admiration supply* a continuous influx of praise and validation necessary to sustain a fragile and illusory sense of self-worth.

From an Islamic perspective, such behavior constitutes a form of injustice and betrayal toward one's spouse. Allah SWT affirms that marriage was not created as a battleground for ego, but as a path toward tranquility and compassion (Qur'an, Ar-Rūm [30]: 21). The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also reminded:

"The best among you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best among you to my family." (Reported by al-Tirmidhī, No. 1162)

Ultimately, all pillars of the *sakinah* family collapse from within: inner peace disappears as it is replaced by fear and anxiety; *mawaddah* fades as love is transformed into an instrument of manipulation; and *rahmah* vanishes as empathy is supplanted by exploitation.

When measured against the framework of *maqasid al-shari'ah*, such behavior clearly violates *hifz al-nafs* (the protection of the soul) and *hifz al-'ird* (the protection of human dignity). Individuals with NPD who turn love into a means of domination not only wound their partners, but also betray their own *fiṭrah* as beings who are meant to embody compassion and justice.

The gravest wrongdoing of an individual with NPD is not when they inflict physical harm upon their spouse, but when they destroy trust, extinguish

the meaning of love, and obscure the face of *rahmah* within the household. When love loses sincerity, marriage loses its *Sakinah* for love without *rahmah* is merely a shadow, not a light.

The Concept of a Sakinah Family from Islamic and Psychological Perspectives

After understanding the complexity of moral violence and emotional manipulation in relationships involving individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), a fundamental question arises: is it still possible for a *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* family to be realized under such conditions? To address this question, it is essential to first examine the concept of the ideal family in Islam and the psychological structures that sustain it.

From the Islamic perspective, a *sakinah* family is not merely a social institution, but a spiritual microcosm in which two souls learn to spread compassion, cultivate faith, and provide mutual tranquility. Allah SWT states:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

“And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reflect.” (Qur’an, Ar-Rūm [30]: 21)

Ibn Kathīr interprets this verse as a depiction of tranquility that emerges from Allah’s mercy, not from domination or control by one party over the other. True love within marriage does not oppress; rather, it heals the soul and strengthens faith (*Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*). Similarly, Quraish Shihab explains that *mawaddah* is active love—love manifested through sacrifice, empathy, and gentleness, rather than merely feelings of attraction or physical desire (Shihab, 2017).

From a psychological standpoint, an ideal household is a space in which emotional, spiritual, and social needs converge in harmony. The family functions as a medium for the actualization of affection, open communication, and shared spiritual growth. Modern family psychology (Hurlock, 2012) emphasizes that a healthy household is characterized by reciprocal affection, relational justice, and spiritual intimacy—three elements that closely align with the values of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*. However, when this ideal framework is compared with the characteristics of individuals with NPD, a significant personality clash becomes evident. Individuals with narcissistic personality disorder exhibit behavioral and psychological patterns that fundamentally contradict the spiritual and psychological values that sustain an Islamic household:

Islamic Principles	Psychological Needs	Barriers In NPD
Faith (Iman) & God\consciousness (Taqwa)	Self-regulation & spiritual awareness	Inflated ego, difficulty engaging in self-reflection
Justice & Responsibility	Balanced and equitable relationships	Tendency to blame the partner

Communication & Mutual Consultation (Shura)	Dialogue and empathy	Inability to listen to alternative perspectives
Compassion & Empathy	Emotional security	Deficient empathy, conditional love
Shared Worship	Spiritual connection	Excessive self-focus

This imbalance is precisely what causes individuals with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) to potentially undermine the emotional and spiritual equilibrium that constitutes the very essence of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*. In many cases, the household which should function as a sanctuary of safety and tranquility instead becomes a terrain of fear, control, and concealed inner suffering.

When examined through the framework of *maqasid al-shari'ah*, marriage is intended to uphold five fundamental objectives of welfare: *hifz al-din* (protection of religion), *hifz al-nafs* (protection of the soul), *hifz al-'aql* (protection of intellect), *hifz al-'ird* (protection of dignity and honor), and *hifz al-nasl* (protection of lineage). If a marital relationship instead undermines one or more of these objectives such as by causing psychological trauma, erosion of personal dignity, or damage to a spouse's honor – then such a relationship has failed to fulfill the purposes of the Shari'ah.

Accordingly, classical jurists (*fuqaha'*) have affirmed the legal maxims: "*al-maṣlahah muḥakkamah*" (public welfare constitutes a binding legal consideration) and "*al-darar yuzal*" (harm must be eliminated). This means that when a marital relationship with an individual suffering from NPD results in real and ongoing harm such as emotional abuse, loss of inner peace, or moral oppression Islam does not obligate the preservation of such a marriage. On the contrary, Islamic law provides space for *iṣlah* (reconciliation and reform), and when genuine reform proves unattainable, divorce becomes a legitimate and honorable final recourse, undertaken to safeguard the welfare of the soul and the dignity of the aggrieved party.

Marriage is envisioned as a *madrasah ruḥiyyah* a spiritual school in which individuals learn to restrain their ego and embody divine compassion. However, when one party refuses to provide tranquility, rejects self reflection, and persistently inflicts harm upon the other, the very essence and purpose of marriage are rendered void.

Analysis of Islamic Family Psychology and Proposed Solutions

The conflict between the spiritual values of the Islamic family and the inner dynamics of individuals suffering from Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) demonstrates that this disorder is not merely a psychological issue, but also an ethical and religious moral problem that directly touches the core of *maqasid al-shari'ah*. Within the framework of clinical psychology, NPD is classified as part of Cluster B Personality Disorders, characterized by emotional instability, an extreme need for admiration, and an inability to demonstrate

genuine empathy (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Individuals with this disorder typically employ pathological defense mechanisms such as projection, gaslighting, and social triangulation to preserve the illusion of self-superiority. As a result, spouses often experience *relationship trauma*, namely chronic emotional wounds caused by repeated psychological abuse. Clinical studies indicate that victims of narcissistic relationships frequently suffer from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), loss of self-confidence, and profound emotional confusion (Ronningstam, 2018).

The narcissistic relationship cycle is paradoxicaln deeply toxic yet difficult to escape. This occurs due to a pattern of *intermittent reinforcement*, in which affection is given inconsistently loving at one moment and cruel the next causing the victim to become psychologically dependent on the false hope that the initial love will return. In social psychology, this dynamic is referred to as *trauma bonding*, an emotional attachment formed through dependency and fear of abandonment. Such conditions require psychotherapeutic intervention, including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or Schema Therapy, to help victims identify irrational thought patterns, establish healthy personal boundaries, and restore their identity and self-worth (Young, Klosko, & Weishaar, 2003).

From an Islamic perspective, marriage is not merely a social contract (*'aqd madani*), but a sacred covenant (*mitshaqan ghalizan*), as emphasized in QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 21. Its primary purpose is to establish *sakinah* through love (*mawaddah*) and compassion (*rahmah*), not domination and suffering. When a marital relationship instead generates fear, trauma, or the erosion of personal dignity, it has failed to fulfill the objectives of *maqasid al-shari'ah*. Classical Islamic legal maxims affirm: "*al-darar yuzal*" (harm must be eliminated) and "*al-maṣlahah muḥakkamah*" (public welfare constitutes a binding legal consideration). Based on these principles, Islam does not obligate individuals to remain in relationships that clearly inflict psychological and spiritual harm. The Prophet ﷺ further stated:

"There should be neither harm nor reciprocating harm." (Reported by Ibn Mājah, No. 2341).

Accordingly, maintaining a relationship with an individual suffering from NPD who persistently inflicts emotional wounds is not an expression of patience, but rather a neglect of the principles of *rahmah* and justice within marriage. In the framework of *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*, safeguarding the soul (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) and protecting dignity (*ḥifẓ al-'ird*) take precedence over preserving the formal status of a marriage that has lost its meaning. Therefore, Islam opens two equally honorable paths: *iṣlah* (reconciliation) through counseling and spiritual introspection, or *tafriq* (divorce) when harm cannot be effectively remedied.

Psychotherapeutic and spiritual approaches may function synergistically in the process of healing. From a psychological standpoint, cognitive behavioral therapy assists victims in restoring self-awareness and overcoming false guilt. From a spiritual perspective, *muḥasabah* (self reflection) and *taubatan naṣuḥa* (sincere repentance) serve as means of purifying the heart, preventing the transformation of pain into hatred. Islam teaches a balance between psychological recovery and spiritual purification, as genuine love can only

emerge from a heart cleansed of egoistic impulses.

In addressing cases of psychological abuse resulting from narcissistic behavior, an integrated program involving clinical psychologists, religious institutions, and the Religious Courts is essential. Every marital dispute suspected of involving personality disorders should be accompanied by comprehensive psychological assessment, ensuring that legal decisions are not merely formalistic but oriented toward *maṣlahah*. Simultaneously, Islamic educational and da'wah institutions should develop curricula on Islamic Marriage Psychology, aimed at teaching individuals how to recognize manipulative forms of love and how to cultivate relationships grounded in *mu'asharah bil ma'ruf* (living together in kindness), as commanded in QS. An-Nisa' [4]: 19.

Ultimately, individuals with NPD love not out of a desire to give, but out of a desire to dominate; they seek love for themselves, not from themselves. This is a form of love devoid of *rahmah*. Islam teaches that true love is sacrifice, not domination; affection is sincerity, not an instrument of control. The Prophet ﷺ said:

“The best of you are those who are best to their families, and I am the best among you to my family.” (Reported by At-Tirmidhi, No. 1162).

An ideal marriage in Islam is not about who is strongest or most admired, but about who is most capable of providing tranquility, safeguarding trust, and spreading compassion. When ego is restrained by faith and love is purified by *rahmah*, the household becomes a refuge for the soul a garden that nurtures *sakinah*, not a battlefield that inflicts wounds.

CONCLUSION

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is a personality disorder that is fundamentally incompatible with the principles of *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* in the Islamic family framework. Manipulative patterns such as love bombing, gaslighting, playing victim, and social triangulation create emotional dependency, inner humiliation, and the loss of a sense of safety within marriage. From an Islamic perspective, such behaviors constitute *zulm* (injustice), as they violate the principle of *mu'āsharah bil ma'ruf* (living together in kindness) and betray the trust of love that is meant to bring tranquility.

Marital relationships that generate psychological trauma and undermine personal dignity fail to fulfill the objectives of Islamic law, particularly the protection of the soul (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) and the preservation of honor (*ḥifẓ al-'ird*). The legal maxim *adh-dhararu yuzāl* affirms that harm must be eliminated, even through separation when efforts at reconciliation are no longer feasible. Therefore, a *sakinah* family cannot flourish within a relationship dominated by ego and manipulation. True love in Islam is grounded in faith, justice, and compassion not in domination.

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