
A STUDY ON LOVE-RELATED MENTAL ILLNESS AND ITS THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS: EXAMINING IBN QAYYIM AL JAWZIYYAH'S WORK

Nimas Puspapandari & Tajuddeen Sa'ad (Ph.D)

International Open University

ABSTRACT

The topic of love is an interesting discussion for researchers and laypeople. This is because love can be a driving force in daily activities, but if it is not managed properly, it can cause problems and become a manifestation of mental disorders. Love can influence various aspects of our lives, making it an important subject to discuss. This study was conducted to delve deeper into mental illness related to love, specifically based on Ibn Qayyim's thoughts about excessive forms of love, which he calls 'ishq. Ibn Qayyim discussed love with a deep view. Since the love discussed by Ibn Qayyim is about the definition of true love, the levels and types of love include mental illness related to love. In addition to explaining the definition of 'ishq, Ibn Qayyim also provides therapeutic suggestions related to 'ishq, which can be beneficial for Muslims as his works are based on the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Since Ibn Qayyim's thoughts as a Muslim were based on basic principles which are a source of guidance for every Muslim thus his work can be enlightening for the development of Islamic Psychology.

Keywords: *Love, 'ishq, Ibn Qayyim, Mental Illness, Excessive Love, Infatuation, Therapeutic Intervention.*

Corresponding author: Nimas Puspapandari can be contacted at puspapandari.psi@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Love is an interesting topic for both researchers and the public because it can have a significant impact on many areas of our lives. Psychological research initially showed little interest in love, but there has been significant growth in studying this subject over the past few decades. This has led to the development of a unique psychological perspective on love. Love is the wish to establish, maintain, or expand a close and ongoing relationship with another person or entity. Research on love emphasizes its importance for human well-being and behavior (Reis, & Aron, 2008).

Love can also be likened to an illness, such as addiction. Love addiction is marked by a compulsive need for love, as the individual seeks gratification from the object of their affection. Love addiction can result in dependency and can greatly impact relationships and social behavior (Hoppe, Molnar & Newell, 1965). Another form of addiction is narcissism. Narcissism is a form of addiction in terms of self-esteem (Baumeister & Vohs, 2001).

The concept of love in Islam blends spirituality and social responsibility, positively impacting various aspects of life and promoting ethical living (Karimullah, 2023). Exploring the concept of love from an Islamic viewpoint can result in profound and original thinking, which can benefit both young

individuals and humanity (Zahrin, Ibrahim & Fadzil, 2020). It can be a motivation for us to study about love from the Islamic perspective.

There are some Muslim scholars from the medieval era who discussed love. The discussion about love was conveyed by al-Razi (Alghani, 2014), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, and Ibn Taymiyyah (Rassool & Luqman, 2024). Muslims believe that Allāh's love is so great that He instilled the instinct of love in humans. True love is seen as a reflection of Allāh's love, and it is believed that the path to experiencing true love lies in connecting with Allāh (Abdin, 2004). It is thought that the source of all happiness stems from loving Allāh and loving what He loves (Ibn Qayyim, 2020).

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah was a pioneer of Islamic psychology during his time, although some contemporary Islamic psychologists do not acknowledge this fact. This may be because he belonged to a different school of thought. Ibn Qayyim was also a polymath scientist in the Salafi Athari tradition (Rassool & Luqman, 2024).

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, whose full name was Shams al-Din Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, was a scholar who received education in various fields. He authored over 60 books on Islam and various studies (Rassool, 2023). Some of the books written by Ibn Qayyim are *Tibb an-Nabawy*, *Tibb al-Qulub*, *ar-Ruh*, *ad-Daa wa ad-Dawaa*, *Manazil as-Sairin*, and *Zaad al-Ma'ad* (Rassool, 2023).

Ibn Qayyim made significant contributions to the advancement and deepening of the field of psychology. Among other topics,

he explained different types of thinking and delved into subjects such as love, the importance of mental health, motivation, happiness, and cognitive therapy (Rassool, 2023). In formulating the disease and its antidote, Ibn Qayyim utilized a comprehensive methodology and was meticulous in his understanding. His understanding was based on the Qur'ān and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Additionally, he applied a methodology that involved reason (*'Aql*), experimentation (*at-Tajribah*), and observation (*al-Mulāḥazah*) (Rassool, 2024).

Love addiction is part of excessive love that represents the compulsive need for love (Hoppe, Molnar & Newell, 1965). Narcissism is also characterized as an addiction of esteem (Baumeister & Vohs, 2001). This addiction can lead to the theory of *'ishq* (Ali et al, 2024). Whether it's about love or addiction, we can delve deeply to the explanation about love and its love-related mental illness which is called *'ishq*.

This literature study was carried out to explore Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's work related to mental illness, especially about *'ishq*, a mental illness that refers to excessive love. This study also explores therapies that can be used to treat it based on Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's promotion, especially in the book *Al Jawabul Kafi or Ad Daa Wa Ad Dawaa* in its translation from Arabic.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Thematic Analysis

One of the books that explained about love according to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah is *Al Jawab al Kafi Liman S'al 'An al-Dawa al-Shafi* or *The Disease and The Cure* which is translation of the book in English. This book discussed many things about love including the levels of love, the four types of love, the highest form of love, infatuation of love etc. All movement in the heavens and on the earth stems from a form of love. Love is the cause and purpose behind all movements (Ibn Qayyim, 2020).

2.2 Levels of Love

The love described by Ibn Qayyim is a definition of love that is not far from the purpose of human creation. His view is based on the Qur'an and Hadith as values that guide human life in this world. Therefore, the levels of love conveyed by Ibn Qayyim are related to servitude (*ta'abbud*). The levels of love include *tatayyum*, *al-'alāqah*, *as-sababah*, *al-gharam*, *al-'ishq*, and *ash-shawq* (Ibn Qayyim, 2021).

Tatayyum is the highest level of love and the ultimate form of love. In the first level of love there is *al-'alāqah* which means connection. It is named *al-'alāqah* since the connection of the one's heart and beloved. The next level is *as-sababah* which represents the heart devotion to the beloved. *Al-Gharam* is the next level of love characterized by the inseparability of the heart. *Al-'ishq* also becoming the next level of love which means infatuation or lovesickness. Next is *ash-shawq* or a longing, the level of love which represents the journey of one's heart to the beloved (Ibn Qayyim, 2020).

2.3 Various Types of Love

As mentioned before, there are four types of love according to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. The first one is *mahabbatullāh* or love devoted to Allāh. This type of love does not enable somebody to be saved from His punishment or to get His rewards because the Jews, the worshippers of the cross, and many others have this love.

The second is *mahabbatu man yuhibbullāh* which means the love of whatever Allāh loves. This love initiates individuals into Islam, freeing individuals from disbelief. The most beloved to Allāh are those who wholeheartedly embrace and steadfastly adhere to this love.

The third is *al-hubb lillāh wa fīhi* means the love for the sake of Allāh. This love is part of the consequences of loving whatever Allāh loves. Loving whatever Allāh loves can only be truly achieved when the love is purely for the sake of Allāh.

The fourth is *al-mahabbah ma'a Allāh* which means loving something alongside Allāh. It's also called as *al-mahabbah ash-shirkiyyah* means polytheistic love. Whoever loves something other than Allāh and does not love it for and because of Allāh has made it a rival to Allāh. This is the form of love of the polytheists.

There is also another love that is unrelated from the four types of love. This is a natural love. It is called *al-mahabbah at-tabī'iyyah*. This natural love is based on man's inclinations and instincts, like a thirsty person's desire for water, a hungry person's desire for food, and the need for sleep, marriage, etc. This love is not blameworthy unless it distracts a person from

remembering Allāh and diminishes their love for Him (Ibn Qayyim, 2021).

2.4 The Effect of Love

We are created in this world to worship Allāh. Therefore, all acts of kindness are expected to be done for the sake of Allāh. These acts need love for Allāh because the foundation of deeds is love. True love is to love Allāh at the highest level compared to love for anything else. Thus, love that is equal to or greater than love for Allāh will disrupt the heart and upset the balance of human nature (Ibn Qayyim, 2021).

In Ibn Qayyim's view, excessive love can make a person lovesick and is an act of infatuation. This occurs when love exceeds the typical limits. *'Ishq* is the term used to describe this excessive love that leads to lovesickness or infatuation. According to Ibn Qayyim, this type of love is considered a form of mental illness (Ibn Qayyim, 2021).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted through qualitative research methodology, by analyzing literature. The primary source of data for this study was the book 'Al Jawabul Kafi' by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (the Indonesian translation version) and 'The Disease and The Cure (the English translation version). Additionally, secondary data sources were employed, which included some books by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah and articles related to the study.

4. FINDINGS

The heart is like a king that leads the other members of the body. Therefore, goodness and deviant actions originate from the heart (Rassool, 2024). When the heart is damaged, it will result in damage to the will, words, and deeds. This will also lead to a deviation from true love. *ʾishq*, which is excessive love, deviates from true love. The book *Al Jawabul Kafi* (2021) contains two stories about *ʾishq*. The first story is about the excessive love of al-Aziz's wife for Prophet Yūsuf. The second story is about the *ʾishq* of Lūt's people. Both stories illustrate how their love for someone other than Allāh was excessive, causing damage to their actions and leading to actions prohibited by Allāh.

When someone experiences lovesickness, they are called *ʾāshiq*. This condition is categorized into three stages: beginning, middle, and the end. In the initial stage, a person experiencing *ʾishq* must try as hard as possible to prevent their desire to excessively see the person they love. If they cannot resist this desire and their heart longs to be with the person they love, they may enter an intermediate or the end stage (Ibn Qayyim, 2021).

ʾishq is described as an excessive form of love that leads to infatuation. This is contrary to true love, which is love for Allāh. The remedy for *ʾishq* is monotheism or worshiping Allāh only. Faith in Allāh is the key to dealing with mental disorders, which involves obeying all of Allāh's commands and avoiding His prohibitions. Additionally, Ibn Qayyim proposed therapy for mental illness through worship and cognitive restructuring. Worship-based therapy involves prayer, *dhikr*, patience, prayers, *istighfār*, and repentance.

While cognitive restructuring entails several fundamental principles for thinking about mental illness. These principles include recognizing life's problems or challenges, including one's own illness, as part of worldly tests. It is important for individuals to internalize the idea that life's tests serve to elevate their status in front of Allāh. This world is a place of testing, so comfort is not the only expectation. Muslims will be rewarded, and their sins forgiven regardless of what they face. They should also consider that others may be facing worse conditions, which can help them better cope with their own tests. Whatever they experience is related to the illness or trials they face, they cannot avoid this fate. However, the purpose of these tests is to assess their patience, not to punish them (Rassool, 2024).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ibn Qayyim based his thinking on the Qur'ān and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The true definition of love also refers to these two sources. True love is the love of Allāh. Therefore, love that is excessive and goes beyond the boundaries, as explained by Ibn Qayyim, is destructive. This harm originates from the heart. *'Ishq* is also a mental illness that deviates from *tawhid*. The cure for this disease is *tawhīd* or worshipping Allāh only.

Additionally, there are acts of worship that need to be performed as a way of obeying Allāh, which is part of worshipping Allāh. Repenting and avoiding Allāh's prohibitions is also part of worship. Prayer, remembrance of Allāh, patience, and supplication are also part of the worship recommended by Ibn Qayyim as therapy for someone suffering mental illness.

Furthermore, Ibn Qayyim proposed cognitive restructuring as part of therapy to treat mental illnesses.

This study delves into Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's interpretations of the term *'ishq* and his explanations. However, the analysis in this research is based on literature translated from Arabic into Indonesian or English, which is a limitation. Additionally, the scope of this research is confined to discussing Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's perspectives and does not compare them with other contemporary views or explore deeper connections with modern-day mental health issues related to love.

Given these limitations, we recommend further research to be conducted by referring to the original source, Ibn Qayyim's book in Arabic, as deeper insights can often be gathered from the original text. Furthermore, future research could involve comparing Ibn Qayyim's ideas with present-day mental health conditions associated with love.

REFERENCES

- Abdin, A. S. (2004). Love In Islam. *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*, 37(1), 92–102. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41444586>
- Alghani, J. abd. (2014). Mediaeval Arabic Love Theory Between Dissonance and Consonance: Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Zakariyyāʾ Al-Rāzī And His Argument Against 'ishq. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 67(3), 273–287. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/90004165>
- Baumeister, R. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2001). Narcissism as Addiction to Esteem. *Psychological Inquiry*, 12(4), 206–210. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1449473>
- Hoppe, K. D., Molnar, J., & Newell, J. E. (1965). Love- and Hate-Addiction in Delinquent Male Adolescents. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 13(4), 271–277. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45112029>
- Ibn Qayyim, A. (2021). *Al-Jawabul Kafi: Solusi Qur'āni dalam Mengatasi Masalah Hati (Translation from Al-Jawabul Kafi liman Sa'ala 'anid Dawa' Asy-Syafi')*. Al-Qowam.
- Ibn Qayyim, A. (2020). *The Disease and The Cure (Translation from Al-Jawab al-Kafi Liman S'al 'An al-Dawa al-Shafi. Hikmah Publications.*
- Karimullah, S. (2023). The Concept of Love in Islamic Thought: Between Spirituality and Human Relations. *Studi Multidisipliner: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman*. <https://doi.org/10.24952/multidisipliner.v10i2.8754>
- Rassool, G.H., & Luqman, M.M. (2024). *Dasar-Dasar Psikologi Islam: Dari Al-Kindi sampai Psikolog Muslim Masa Kini*

(Translation of *Foundation of Islamic Psychology*). Rene Turos Group.

Rassool, G.H. (2023). *Islamic Psychology: Perilaku dan Pengalaman Manusia dari Perspektif Islam* (Translation from *Islamic Psychology: Human Behaviour Experience from an Islamic Perspective*). Qaf Media Kreativa.

Reis, H. T., & Aron, A. (2008). Love: What Is It, Why Does It Matter, and How Does It Operate? *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(1), 80–86.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40212231>

Wahab, A., Faizal, A., Yusof, W.M., Azaruddin. (2024). An Analysis on Stages of Addiction According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's Theory of al-'ishq. *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development* 9(60): 14-20.
<https://doi.org/10.55573/JISED.096002>

Zahrin, S., Ibrahim, M., & Fadzil, F. (2020). The Psychology of Love in Islam and Implications for Education. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*.
<https://doi.org/10.30845/IJBSS.V11N12P8>.