

Backbiting and Its Consequences on The Psychological Dimensions of The Perpetrator: An Analysis from The Perspectives of The Qur'an and Hadith

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the psychological impacts of backbiting (*ghibah*) on the various dimensions of the human psyche from the perspectives of the Qur'an and Hadith. The research employs a qualitative method using a library research approach by analyzing relevant Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, and scholarly literature related to Islamic psychology. The findings indicate that backbiting exerts destructive effects on five major dimensions of the human psychological structure: *an-nafs* (the self), *al-'aql* (intellect), *al-qalb* (heart), *ar-rūh* (spirit), and *fiṭrah* (innate human disposition). Psychologically, engaging in gossip may trigger stress, anxiety, feelings of guilt, envy, and emotional instability, which can disrupt an individual's mental and spiritual balance. From the Qur'anic perspective, this behavior is likened to consuming the flesh of one's deceased brother (Qur'an 49:12), while the Hadith categorizes it as a grave sin capable of eroding the rewards of good deeds. This study highlights that controlling one's speech is not merely a moral obligation in Islam but also functions as a psychological and spiritual mechanism for maintaining inner balance and achieving spiritual tranquility (*as-sakānah*).

Keywords: *Ghibah, Psychological Dimension, Qur'an, Hadith, Islamic Psychology*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dampak psikologis dari perilaku menggunjing (*ghibah*) terhadap berbagai dimensi kejiwaan individu dalam perspektif Al-Qur'an dan Hadits. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kepustakaan (*library research*), yang menelaah ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an, hadits Nabi Muhammad SAW, serta literatur ilmiah yang relevan dengan psikologi Islam. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa perilaku *ghibah* memberikan dampak destruktif terhadap lima dimensi utama dalam struktur psikologis manusia, yaitu *an-nafs* (jiwa), *al-'aql* (akal), *al-qalb* (hati), *ar-rūh* (ruh), dan *fiṭrah* (potensi dasar manusia). Secara psikologis, *ghibah* dapat memicu munculnya stres, kecemasan, rasa bersalah, iri hati, serta ketidakstabilan emosional yang berpotensi merusak keseimbangan mental dan spiritual individu. Dalam perspektif Al-Qur'an, perilaku ini dianalogikan sebagai tindakan memakan daging saudaranya yang telah meninggal (QS. Al-Hujurat: 12), sedangkan dalam hadits Nabi SAW, *ghibah* dikategorikan sebagai dosa besar yang dapat menghapus pahala amal kebaikan. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa menjaga lisan tidak hanya merupakan

tuntunan moral dalam Islam, tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai mekanisme psikologis dan spiritual dalam menjaga keseimbangan jiwa serta ketenangan batin (*as-sakīnah*).

Kata Kunci: *Ghibah, Dimensi Psikologis, Al-Qur'an, Hadits, Psikologi Islam*

A. Introduction

As a country with a Muslim-majority population, Islamic values exert a significant influence on the behavior and worldview of Indonesian society. The Qur'an and Hadith function not only as religious texts but also as fundamental sources of guidance that regulate various aspects of life, including social ethics and the control of speech.¹ As social beings, humans are continuously engaged in dialogue and communication in their daily lives. Within these interactions, conversations about others often arise in their absence, whether discussing their virtues or their shortcomings. In any case, Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) have explicitly prohibited such behavior in Islamic teachings, and those who engage in it are warned of its sinful consequences.

However, many Muslims still do not fully understand the negative consequences of backbiting for themselves. Most people only recognize that such behavior is considered sinful and will be accounted for in the hereafter. In reality, its impacts are far more complex than commonly assumed. The phenomenon of backbiting is rarely explained from scientific perspectives, particularly in psychological and neurological studies. As a result, some Muslims continue to engage in such behavior due to a lack of awareness regarding its negative effects on their own mental health. Backbiting not only harms social harmony but also affects the psychological condition of the perpetrator, potentially leading to feelings of arrogance, anxiety, low self-esteem, and a decline in inner peace.²

Examining the negative impacts of backbiting from the perspectives of the Qur'an and Hadith is important for understanding how Islamic values can serve as a foundation for strengthening individuals' psychological well-being. This approach suggests that the prohibition of backbiting is not merely a moral injunction, but also carries profound implications for mental health, emotional balance, inner tranquility, and the spiritual quality of

¹ Fitri Nazila Ulfa, Nurmahni Harahap, and Halimatus Sakdiah, "Program Edukasi Dan Pendampingan Untuk Mengatasi Pengaruh Body Shaming Terhadap Kesehatan Mental Remaja Di MTsN 1 Banda Aceh," *Journal of Health Innovation and Community Service* 3, no. 2 (October 15, 2024): 157–62, <https://doi.org/10.54832/jhics.v4i2.311>.

² Nelan Maroqi, "Uji Validitas Konstruk Pada Instrumen Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale Dengan Metode Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)," *Jurnal Pengukuran Psikologi Dan Pendidikan Indonesia (JP3I)* 7, no. 2 (2019): 92–96, <https://doi.org/10.15408/jp3i.v7i2.12101>.

human life. By examining Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions related to backbiting, this study seeks to provide scholarly contributions to understanding the relationship between social behavior and psychological well-being. Furthermore, this study aims to reinforce the awareness that controlling one's speech constitutes an essential part of maintaining mental health within the Islamic perspective. In this context, Islamic teachings function not only as ethical guidance but also as a preventive framework against psychological disturbances arising from unethical human behavior.

Although the concept of *ghibah* (backbiting) has been widely discussed in Islamic literature, most studies tend to focus on legal aspects, social ethics, and its eschatological consequences. Meanwhile, studies that specifically integrate the perspectives of the Qur'an and Hadith with modern psychological theories related to personality structure, emotion regulation, executive function, and cognitive-affective dynamics remain relatively limited. Contemporary psychological research has examined phenomena such as *spontaneous trait transference*, *emotional contagion*, impulsivity, and self-regulation. However, studies that systematically relate these phenomena to the concepts of *an-nafs*, *al-'aql*, *al-qalb*, *ar-rūḥ*, and *fitrah* within the framework of Islamic psychology are still scarce. This gap forms the basis for the urgency of the present study, which seeks to develop a conceptual synthesis between normative Islamic sources and scientific psychological approaches in order to explain the intrapersonal impacts of backbiting on the psychological structure of individuals.

Based on this background, the research questions of this study are as follows: (1) How are the psychological dimensions of human beings conceptualized in the perspectives of the Qur'an and Hadith; and (2) How does the behavior of *ghibah* affect the dimensions of *an-nafs*, *al-'aql*, *al-qalb*, *ar-rūḥ*, and *fitrah* when examined through the integration of Islamic psychology and modern psychological theories. Theoretically, this study draws upon self-regulation theory, theories of executive function and impulse control, the concept of emotions as adaptive processes, and personality constructs within social psychology. These theoretical frameworks are subsequently analyzed within the perspective of *tazkiyatun nafs* and the concept of controlling one's speech in Islamic teachings. Thus, this study not only strengthens the normative religious argument against *ghibah*, but also provides a psychological foundation for understanding its prohibition as a form of protection for individuals' mental health and spiritual balance.

B. Methode

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with an interpretive paradigm aimed at understanding the conceptual meaning of *ghibah* (backbiting) and its implications for the psychological dimensions of individuals from the perspectives of the Qur'an and Hadith. This approach is chosen because the object of the study does not consist of numerical data, but rather normative texts and scholarly literature that require in-depth interpretation. Methodologically, this research adopts a phenomenological–conceptual orientation, seeking to explore the essential meaning of *ghibah* as a social behavior as well as an inner experience that may influence the psychological structure of human beings.

This research is designed as a library study (*library research*). The primary sources consist of Qur'anic verses and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad that address the prohibition of *ghibah*, self-control, and the psychological dimensions of human beings. Secondary sources are drawn from Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), Hadith commentaries, literature on Islamic psychology, and contemporary psychology journals discussing concepts such as self-regulation, executive function, emotional dynamics, *spontaneous trait transference*, and mental health. Data collection was conducted through documentation and systematic literature review of relevant and credible sources.

The data were analyzed using the content analysis method. The analytical process consisted of several stages: (1) Identifying texts relevant to the themes of *ghibah* and psychological dimensions; (2) Categorizing concepts based on the dimensions of *an-nafs*, *al-'aql*, *al-qalb*, *ar-rūh*, and *fitrah*; (3) Interpreting the meaning of the texts thematically; and (4) Integrating the analytical findings with modern psychological theories as a comparative–conceptual framework. To ensure the validity of the study, source triangulation was conducted by comparing various Qur'anic commentaries, Hadith interpretations, and psychological literature. Through this approach, the study seeks to produce a comprehensive and non-partial understanding of the relationship between backbiting behavior and individuals' mental and spiritual well-being.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

Researcher/Author and Year	Source	Research result
Agustiar, (2020).	The Meaning Of Al-Qalb	He concluded that the concept of <i>al-qalb</i> in the Qur'an is not only physically meaningful, but also as the heart of understanding, moral

		And Disclosure In Al-Qur'an .	awareness and acceptance of truth. When Al- <i>qalb</i> is in a healthy condition, the individual is able to understand reality consciously, both at the level of emotional and spiritual.
Al-Ghazali, (2008).		Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din Juz 3	This perspective is reinforced by Al-Ghazali's thinking, which places <i>the heart</i> as the core of human personality. A person's inner state is largely determined by the state of their heart. A guarded heart, always create peace and a clear mind. Conversely, a narrow heart can cause anxiety and a loss of direction in life.
Astuti Samad, (2015) .	SA	The Concept of the Spirit in the Perspective of Western and Islamic Educational Psychology.	This research refers to the differences in the concept of <i>the soul</i> from the perspective of Western and Islamic Educational Psychology. Western Psychology's orientation is towards cognitive and empirical aspects, while Islam views <i>the soul as a</i> as a holistic foundation of spiritual resources, intellectual, and character formation in the process education.
Baumeister, (1999).		The Self in Social Psychology	The context of <i>self</i> in this book is that Social Psychology is dynamic in the process of human development which is formed through experience, social interaction, self-regulation, and ways of interpreting life. Baumeister states that self-identity plays an important role in the formation of character, life motivation, and human ability to regulate behavior in accordance with social norms.
Hartati, S. and Rezi, M. (2019).		Psychological Dimensions in the Qur'an (Textual Analysis of the Verses of the Qur'an).	Hartati and Rezi emphasized that the psychological concepts in the Qur'an play an important role in the formation of character, mental stability, and the development of an ideal human personality that is oriented towards moral and spiritual values.
Kemper, TD and Lazarus, RS (1992).		Emotion and Adaptation.	This research states that emotions are adaptive responses that arise from an individual's cognitive assessment of their environmental situation. Emotions function as an adaptive mechanism that helps individuals adjust, make decisions, and maintain psychological balance.
Reynolds BW, MR, Miller AK, Whiteside DM, and Combs D. (2019).	Basso	Executive function, impulsivity, and risky behaviors in young adults.	The executive function has an important role in control impulsive attitudes and minimize individual involvement in social issues. Weaknesses in executive functions such as strategizing, self-control, and decision making-are implicated in an increased

		tendency for impulsive behavior. These findings suggest that low cognitive regulation abilities may influence wise <i>self-control</i> , so that a person is more vulnerable to negative consequences in psychological and social aspects.
Skowronski, (1998).	J.J. Spontaneous Trait Transference: Communicators Take on The Qualities They Describe in Others.	The phenomenon of <i>spontaneous trait transference</i> occurs when a person When describing other people, we automatically associate them with the traits they mention about ourselves. This finding suggests that language choice in social interactions plays an important role in shaping personality perceptions, both of others and of the individual communicating.
Syifaullah, N. (2025).	Backbiting in the Perspective of Hadith.	Prohibition <i>Ghibah</i> in the perspective of the hadith is like the behavior of gossiping or cursing which has a negative impact on the psychology of both the perpetrator and the listener, such as damaging interpersonal relationships, growing prejudice, and reducing personal integrity.
Wendy, (2018).	The Way You Describe Others Is the Way People See You.	This book explains that the way a person describes others has a significant influence on how they are perceived by those around them. Wendy emphasizes that the choice of language used in socializing not only reflects an assessment of others but also shapes the speaker's personality.

Based on the analysis of the verses of the Qur'an, the Hadith of the Prophet SAW, as well as Islamic and modern psychology literature, it was found that the behavior of backbiting has a direct relationship with five main psychological dimensions in the structure of human personality, namely: (1) An-nafs, (2) Al-'aql, (3) Al-qalb, (4) Ar-rūḥ, and (5) Fitrah. The results of this study are compiled based on thematic categorization through content analysis of primary and secondary sources.

1) Backbiting and Domination of An-Nafs al-Ammārah

The analysis results show that backbiting occurs when an individual is dominated by an-nafs al-ammārah bi al-sū', a soul that tends to drive towards evil. Quranic texts related to the soul's impulses indicate the potential for inner conflict between the tendencies of fujūr and taqwā. In this context, backbiting becomes a manifestation of inferiority complexes, envy, and the need for self-compensation. Data from modern psychological literature shows agreement with these findings, namely that backbiting behavior is often related to insecurity, low self-

esteem, and the need for social validation. Thus, it can be concluded thematically that backbiting is rooted in an imbalance in the structure of the soul.

2) Al-'Aql Regulation Dysfunction (Cognitive Function and Impulse Control)

The second finding indicates that backbiting is associated with weak rational regulation (al-'aql). Verses that urge humans to think and use reason indicate that reason's function is to control lustful impulses. In practice, backbiters tend to act impulsively and lack rational deliberation before speaking. Psychological literature on executive function and inhibitory control supports this finding. Individuals with low cognitive regulation are more prone to impulsive behavior, including spreading negative information without considering the consequences. Therefore, thematically, backbiting is correlated with impaired self-control on the cognitive dimension.

3) Damage to the Heart and Decreased Empathy

Analysis of the Quran and Hadith texts shows that the heart (al-qalb) is the moral and spiritual center of a person. Backbiting has been identified as a factor that hardens the heart and reduces moral sensitivity. Thematically, it was found that backbiting contributes to decreased empathy and increased negative prejudice. These findings align with the concept of spontaneous trait transference in social psychology, where traits expressed to others can be reassociated with the speaker. This suggests an internal psychological impact on the perpetrator's self-perception and social image.

4) Disturbances in the Spiritual Dimension and Loss of Spiritual Peace

From a spiritual perspective, backbiting is found to be a behavior that pollutes the spiritual dimension. The hadith text about al-muflis demonstrates the spiritual consequences of verbal behavior that harms others. Thematically, the analysis results indicate that backbiting is associated with inner anxiety, loss of tranquility (as-sakinah), and distances individuals from profound spiritual experiences. Spiritual psychology literature indicates that repeated negative behavior can hinder the development of life's meaning and inner well-being.

5) Deviation from Nature and Moral Identity Crisis

The research also shows that backbiting is a deviation from human nature. This natural tendency toward kindness and empathy is distorted when individuals habitually belittle others. Psychologically, this condition can potentially give rise to false superiority, defensive narcissism, and an excessive need for external validation. Thus, overall, the research findings demonstrate that backbiting is not merely a violation of social ethics but also an indicator of an imbalance in human psychological and spiritual structures.

2. Discussion

1) Identification of Psychological Dimensions of the Qur'an and Hadith

The psychological dimensions in the Qur'an and Hadith consist of the soul (nafs), reason (aql), heart (qolbu), spirit (ruh), and fitrah (natural disposition). The psychological dimensions in the Qur'an are:

a. An-Nafs (Soul)

Linguistically, the word "An-nafs" comes from the root word ن ف س (na-fa-sa) which means *soul, or self. Human*. In the Qur'an, the term is used to represent the totality of human personality, encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. Terminologically, according to scholars of Islamic interpretation and psychology, An-nafs is the inner element of humans that is the center of consciousness, desires, emotions, and moral impulses, which determine the direction of a person's behavior, whether towards goodness (submission to Allah) or evil (lust). The verse in the Qur'an that discusses An-Nafs reads:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ۖ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

"And for the sake of the soul and its perfection, Allah inspired to it (the path of wickedness and piety)." (QS. Ash-Syams [91]: 7–8)

This verse emphasizes that within humans there is a dual potential: *nafs al-fujūr* (evil impulse) and *nafs al-taqwā* (good impulse). Therefore, *the nafs* becomes a field of inner conflict between these two forces. The Levels of the Nafs in Islamic Psychology Studies according to Muslim scholars and intellectuals (such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Qayyim, and Al-Raghib al-Asfahani) explain that *the nafs* has several levels of spiritual and psychological development. The Qur'an explains in detail the levels of mental conditions that every human being possesses, such as:

- *Nafs Ammarah bi al Suu'*: A soul that tends to lead to evil or lust. (QS. Yusuf [12]: 53). If it is related to psychology, the soul tends to evil and follows lust. The characteristics are egoism, envy, anger, and likes to find fault with other people.
- *Nafs al Lawwaamah*: The soul that reproaches itself because it realizes its mistakes, reflects self-awareness. **God willing** (QS. Al-Qiyāmah [75]: 2). Psychologically, a soul that is self-aware and regrets mistakes will feel guilty, then introspect to become a better person than before.
- *Nafs al Muthmainnah* النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ: A soul that is calm and peaceful because it always remembers Allah and obeys His commands. (QS. Al-Fajr [89]: 27–28). In the science of monotheism, this term can be called Ihsan. A soul that is calm, stable, and close to God will experience inner peace, patience, and sincerity . Therefore, it will not cross their

minds to commit crimes that are forbidden and disliked by Allah SWT and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

In the context of modern psychology, *an-nafs* can be equated with personality or soul (psyche). Islamic psychology views *an-nafs* as a spiritual and moral entity oriented towards Allah SWT.³

b. Al-Aql (Reason and Thought)

Linguistically, the Arabic word 'insan' (عقل) consists of the letters 'ain (ع), qaf (ق) and lam (ل). The word literally means to refer to the ability to control something or to restrain it, whether in the form of words, thoughts or behavior. Human who always uses their reason wisely and can regulate good and bad deeds before action it is a human being who has succeeded in controlling his lusts, then he cannot be controlled impulsively and spontaneously.⁴ The terminology, according to classical Muslim scholars and intellectuals, *Al-'Aql* it is the inner potential of humans that is used to understand, regulate good and bad deeds, and directing the will according to the guidance of revelation (Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah, *Madarij as-Salikin*). In other words, *Al-'aql* is not only intellectual intelligence, but also moral and spiritual wisdom. *Al-'aql* and *An-nafs* are two inner forces that influence each other, *An-Nafs* Encourages action based on impulse and emotion while *Al-'Aql* as a driving force directs, weighs and controls which shows devotion and goodness. Or shows *fujūr* (bad) actions if not controlled. This is the verse of the Qur'an that explains *Al-'Aql*:

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

"Do you preach righteousness and fail to practice it yourselves, although you read the Scripture? Do you not understand?" (Q. S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 44)

This verse admonishes those an inconsistent person between their knowledge and their actions. In the context of Islamic psychology, reason is not only a tool for logical thinking, but also a means of moral reflection for assessing one's own actions. In a religious context, this meaning contains a moral message, that a rational person is not only clever at thinking, but is also able to control his lusts and weigh the moral consequences of every action. *Al-'aql* in Islam does not only mean logical intelligence, but also includes moral and spiritual awareness. Intellect is a gift from God that functions for understand revelation, restraining lust, and directing the soul towards peace and truth.

c. Al-Qolbu (Heart)

³ Muhamad Rezi, Sasmarti Sasmarti, and Helfi Helfi, "MEROKOK DALAM TINJAUAN HUKUM ISLAM (Studi Nash-Nash Antara Haram Dan Makruh)," *ALHURRIYAH: Jurnal Hukum Islam (ALHURRIYAH JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC LAW)* 3, no. 1 (June 22, 2018): 53, <https://doi.org/10.30983/alhurriyah.v3i1.534>.

⁴ A. M. Aqqad, *Al-Insan Fiy Alquran Al-Karim* (Kairo: Dar al-Islam, 1379).

Etymologically, the word *qalb* comes from the letter **ق-ل-ب (qa-la-ba)** which means to change direction, turn around, or turn. Therefore, the term *qalb* in the Quran is often used to refer to something that is constantly changing or changing state, for example, the human heart which can become firm, hard, sick, or change to calm. Terminologically, *al-Qalb* in Islamic psychology studies is used to refer to the inner center of humans which includes spiritual, emotional and cognitive aspects, not just the physical heart organ. This meaning reflects that the human heart is dynamic and easily changes, both towards good and bad.⁵ Imam Al-Ghazali explained that *the heart* is not merely a physical organ, but rather the spiritual core of a human being, the center of consciousness, knowledge, and morality.⁶ The following verses from the Quran explain about heart:

فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارَ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبَ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ

"Indeed, it is not the eyes that are blind, but it is the heart in the chest that is blind." (QS. Al-Hajj [22]: 46)

This verse emphasizes that true blindness is not physical blindness, but rather spiritual blindness. In the context of Islamic psychology, this describes the condition of someone who has lost moral awareness and empathy even though they are still intellectually functioning. Therefore, *the heart* acts as a spiritual perception tool that determines a person's inner sensitivity to truth and error.

إِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ

"Indeed, in the body there is a lump of flesh; if it is good, the whole body is good; if it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted. You know, that lump of meat is the heart." (HR. al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

From a psychological perspective, this hadith illustrates *the heart's function* as the moral, spiritual, and emotional center of a person. If the heart is filled with good intentions, then good behavior and speech will come itself. Conversely, a corrupted heart will manifest itself in evil deeds and bad behaviour.⁷

d. Spirit (Spirits)

Humans are created with the potential of reason, heart and spirit which makes them special creatures, and are equipped with psychophysical potential. Spirit is a spiritual or life element pure, which gives life to the body, and is one of the dimensions in the psychological and spiritual structure of humans according to the Islamic perspective. The spirit is the

⁵ Agustiar, *The Meaning of Al-Qalb and Disclosure in Al-Qur'an* (Riau: UIN SUSKA RIAU, 2020): p-121.

⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din* (Beirut: Mizan, 2008).

⁷ Agustiar, *The Meaning Of Al-Qalb And Disclosure In Al-Qur'an*.

immaterial element that Allah breathed into humans, giving them life and spiritual awareness. The spirit is not identical to the nafs or the heart, but it has a more fundamental function in the human inner structure: orientation to God and the afterlife. From the perspective of Islamic psychology, preserving the spirit through worship, spiritual awareness, and morality means maintaining an individual's psychological and spiritual health.⁸

e. Nature (Creation)

The meaning of Fitrah refers to the basic innate or fundamental nature of humans who tend to know God. Etymologically, the meaning of *Al-Fitrah* comes from the word *fitrah* (الفطرة) derived from the root word فطر (fa-ṭa-ra) which means to divide, create, or bring something out of its original state.

From this meaning, *fitrah* is understood as the original or innate state of humans since their creation by Allah, which leads to truth and goodness, and belief in their Lord. Terminologically, from an Islamic perspective, fitrah is the innate potential that Allah has planted in humans since the beginning of creation, namely the tendency to know and worship Allah, as well as the intuitive reasoning power of conscience that allows humans to distinguish good from evil.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] human. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know." (QS. Ar-Rum [30]: 30)

In the context of Islamic psychology, fitrah is also referred to as the "nature of the soul" or "spiritual disposition," a psychic innate characteristic that drives humans toward divine values, worship, and virtue. Fitrah is the spiritual and psychological nature of humans, the innate potential to know God, love goodness, and seek truth. Nature plays a significant role in shaping personality and mental health. When humans stray from their natural values (for example, through behaviors like gossiping, backbiting, envy, or hatred), they experience inner dissonance and psychological distress. By returning to nature through repentance, dhikr, and good morals, a person can find peace of mind (*as-sakinah*) and balanced psychological health.⁹

⁸ Astuti Samad, "The Concept of the Spirit in the Perspective of Western and Islamic Educational Psychology" p-7. *The Concept of the Spirit in the Perspective of Educational Psychology Phenomena* (2015): 2.

⁹ Sabarrudin Sabarrudin et al., "Psikologi Manusia Dalam Al-Qur'an Dan Hadits," *ANWARUL* 3, no. 1 (February 1, 2023): 83–96, <https://doi.org/10.58578/anwarul.v3i1.841>.

In addition to the psychological dimensions found in the holy book, psychological dimensions are also found in the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which consist of the emotional, affective, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions. The explanation of the psychological dimensions in the Hadith is as follows:

a) Emotional Dimension (Self-Control and Anger)

يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ

Meaning: "A strong person is not one who wins in wrestling, but a strong person is one who can control himself when angry." (HR. al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

The psychological meaning and relevance of this hadith is that true strength is not determined by physical strength, but rather by a person's ability to maintain emotional control when overcome by anger. In a psychological context, this demonstrates the importance of emotional regulation, anger management, and *self-control* as indicators of mental health. Individuals who are able to control their anger have good emotional stability and are able to maintain harmonious social relationships.

b) Cognitive Dimension (Moral Awareness and Common Sense Consideration)

كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ كَذِبًا أَنْ يُحَدِّثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ

"It is enough for someone to be considered a liar if he tells everything he hears." (Narrated by Muslim)

This hadith reminds us not to spread every piece of information we hear without thinking critically. In the context of psychology, this indicates cognitive-reflective function, namely the ability to assess the truth and impact of an action before it is carried out. Individuals who have moral awareness and rational thinking will avoid impulsive behaviour.¹⁰

c) Affective Dimension (Empathy and Cleanliness of Heart)

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

"None of you is a true believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." (HR. al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

The psychological meaning and relevance of this hadith is that it emphasizes to its followers that the perfection of faith lies in one's ability to empathize and cultivate compassion for others. Psychologically, this relates to the affective dimension, namely the ability to understand and feel the emotions of those around us (*empathy*), which is the foundation for healthy and constructive social interactions.¹¹

¹⁰ Ikhwan Fuad, "Menjaga Kesehatan Mental Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Hadits," *Journal An-Nafs: Kajian Penelitian Psikologi* 1, no. 1 (June 30, 2016): 31–50, <https://doi.org/10.33367/psi.v1i1.245>.

¹¹ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din*.

d) Spiritual Dimension (Peace of Mind and Inner Purity)

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or be silent." (HR. al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

The meaning and psychological relevance of this hadith emphasizes that a person's faith is reflected in his ability to guard his words. Silence is better than speaking which causes harm. In spiritual psychology, this describes the balance between thoughts, emotions, and spirituality, which is the basis of *inner peace*.

Based on the hadiths above, it can be identified that the psychological dimensions in Islam include:

- Emotional dimension: Controlling anger and negative impulses.
- Cognitive dimension: Awareness of thinking and moral consideration before acting.
- Affective dimension: The ability to empathize and show compassion towards others.
- Spiritual dimension: Inner balance and purity of heart through control of speech.

These four dimensions are interrelated and form the basis for the formation of a mentally and spiritually healthy Muslim personality.¹²

The Negative Impact of Gossiping on the Psychological Dimension of Individuals

According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, gossiping is talking about another person's shortcomings, such as cursing or slandering. This means that gossiping is a social activity involving someone talking about the bad things, shortcomings, or shame of another person behind their back, whether it is true or not. In spiritual language, this act can be called gossiping. *Backbiting* is considered a major sin in Islamic teachings because it can hurt others and damage their reputations. Backbiting can be done through speech, writing, or gestures.¹³

Doctor Jennifer Dolgado stated that someone who likes to spread negative emotions to those around them, such as gossiping, insulting, or using bad or harsh words, the brain automatically captures and absorbs these negative emotions as part of themselves. When someone is talking about someone else, it is not considered as talking about them but rather about themselves, because basically, the brain's neuro can not distinguish the narrative put forward by the speaker's speech whether it is talking about themselves or others. So in short,

¹² Aqqad, *Al-Insan Fiy Alquran Al-Karim*.

¹³ Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, "Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)," 2024.

the brain concludes that we are talking about ourselves. For example, if we are gossiping about someone like "that person is very strange," then the brain will assume that we are like the person being talked about, namely "strange". And without realizing it, the person who is backbiting will automatically understand in their brain that the person is like the person being talked about. And this can be said to be the term "*spontaneous trait transfer*". Where the brain often remembers the person you are talking to rather than the subject being discussed.¹⁴

Research conducted by Skowronski and colleagues (1998) introduced the term "you are what you saying". This describes a phenomenon known as *spontaneous trait transference*, a process in which the traits we use to describe others are attributed back to ourselves. The research also suggests that this relationship can persist over the long term. However, it's important to remember that this phenomenon is not based on logic or objective truth. While a person may not possess the negative characteristics they describe in others, the research result by Skowronski et al. suggests that *spontaneous trait transference* is not a rational attribution, but rather a subconscious association that occurs without our awareness.¹⁵ Furthermore, the study found that the trait transfer process is not as simple as transferring positive impressions of individuals who praise others, or negative impressions of individuals who belittle others. The transfer is *trait-specific*, indicating that each characteristic discussed has its own tendency to stick with the speaker.

Although the term "backbiting" is not explicitly mentioned in the Quran and Hadith, both prohibit similar behaviors, such as insulting, criticizing, and mocking. Buya Hamka's interpretation emphasizes that this verse serves as a moral warning to believers to maintain social etiquette. A believer should ideally focus more on improving their own shortcomings than on finding fault with others, while the opposite attitude reflects a weak faith.¹⁶

In the various perspectives that have been explained previously, there are several correlations with the verses of the Qur'an and Hadith which state that the behavior of gossiping is the same as swallowing bad behavior into oneself (the gossiper), which reads:

وَلَا يَغْتَابَ بَعْضُكُمُ بَعْضًا أَيُّجِبُ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَحِيمٌ
"And do not gossip about each other. Is there anyone among you who likes to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Then of course you will feel disgusted with him. And fear Allah.

¹⁴ John J Skowronski et al., "Spontaneous Trait Transference: Communicators Take on the Qualities They Describe in Others.," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74, no. 4 (1998): 837–48, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.4.837>.

¹⁵ Wendy and J.D Patrick, "The Way You Describe Others Is the Way People See You," *Psychology Today*, 2018.

¹⁶ Zafran Syabil et al., "Body Shaming Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an (Studi Analisis Ayat-Ayat Body Shaming Dalam Tafsir Fath Al-Qadir)," *Ibn Abbas: Jurnal Ilmu Alquran & Tafsir* 7 (2024): 38–55, <https://doi.org/10.51900/ias.v7i1.22550>.

Indeed, Allah is the Most Accepting of Repentance, the Most Merciful " (QS. Al-Hujurat: 12).

From the meaning of this verse, it can be explained that gossiping is the same as eating the flesh of a dead person, meaning that the meat has become a corpse. The corpse here is likened to the bad things about another person being discussed by the gossiper. The meaning of "corpse" (the flesh of a dead person) here is not only likened to dirt, but rather a form of our brain's action that automatically assumes the bad things being discussed are part of the gossiper or backbiter. Therefore, without realizing it, the gossiper is the same as swallowing another person's shame, which transforms into a part of themselves.

The explanation above is related to the Hadith, which states that the reward of the backbiter will be absorbed by the person being gossiped about, while the sins of the person being gossiped about will be transferred to the backbiter. The evidence for this Hadith states:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ أَتَدْرُونَ مَا الْمُفْلِسُ قَالُوا: الْمُفْلِسُ فِينَا مَنْ لَا دِرْهَمَ لَهُ وَلَا مَتَاعَ «فَقَالَ: إِنَّ الْمُفْلِسَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَأْتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِصَلَاةٍ وَصِيَامٍ وَزَكَاةٍ وَيَأْتِي قَدْ شَتَمَ هَذَا وَقَذَفَ هَذَا وَأَكَلَ مَالَ هَذَا وَسَفَكَ دَمَ هَذَا وَضَرَبَ هَذَا فَيُعْطَى هَذَا مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ وَهَذَا مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ فَإِنْ فَنِيَتْ حَسَنَاتُهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُفْضَى مَا عَلَيْهِ أَخَذَ مِنْ خَطَايَاهُمْ فَطَرِحَتْ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ طُرِحَ فِي النَّارِ

From Abu Hurairah ra, Rasulullah SAW said: "Do you know who the bankrupt person is?" The companions answered: "The bankrupt among us is the one who has neither dirhams nor property." He said: "Indeed, the bankrupt person from my Ummah is the one who comes on the Day of Resurrection with the reward of prayer, fasting and zakat, but he once cursed this person, accused that person, ate other people's property, shed other people's blood, and beat other people. Then he will be given part of his good deeds to those he wronged. If his good deeds are finished before all his sins are paid, then their sins will be transferred to him, then he will be thrown into in hell." (HR. Muslim No. 2581).

Sin here can be likened to a person's "bad character," meaning that gossipers have the potential to absorb the negative behavior of those they gossip about. This is due to the brain's inability to distinguish between self-talk and that of others. It's not surprising that many gossipers live lives filled with negative behavior and emotions.

The subjective narratives conveyed by gossipers are not factual and continuous, but rather dynamic and transformative. Humans are dynamic creatures, and over time, they experience changes in their attitudes, behavior, or intelligence. This may be due to environmental factors that encourage change, or internal factors that are undergoing introspection. Therefore, it is not recommended for gossipers to justify that the subject of gossip is necessarily better than the perpetrator.¹⁷ No one knows the fate or future of a person

¹⁷ Syifaullah and Sunandar, "Ghibah Dalam Perspektif Hadits," *Jurnal Riset Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* 2 (2025): 192–204, <https://doi.org/10.61132/karakter.v2i2.564>.

better than someone who feels superior to others. None of us should feel perfect, because in the eyes of God, all humans are equal. There is a verse in the Quran that states that humans are dynamic:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

Meaning: For all of believers to Allah, Do not let some 'men' ridicule others, they may be better than them, nor let 'some' women ridicule other women, they may be better than them. Do not defame one another, nor call each other by offensive nicknames. How evil it is to act rebelliously after having faith! And whoever does not repent, it is they who are the 'true' wrongdoers. (QS Al-Hujurat: 11)

This verse clearly commands Allah SWT to prohibit both men and women from mocking, belittling, or insulting each others even behind their back. In his commentary, Hamka interprets this prohibition as a gentle admonition from Allah for believers to maintain their social dignity. According to him, insulting behavior is inconsistent with faith, as believers tend to focus more on improving their own shortcomings than on finding fault with others. Conversely, focusing on the faults of others actually indicates a person's weak faith.¹⁸

If the Qur'an and Hadith have repeatedly emphasized that backbiting or *gossiping* is a despicable, harmful, sinful, soul-defiling act, and is disliked by Allah SWT and His Messenger, then the act of *backbiting* or *gossiping* is included in the sinful acts. Then, what if this type of backbiting is sinful has a negative impact on the gossipers regarding their psychological dimensions according to the interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith:

- Emotional dimension: Often when the perpetrator is gossiping, negative emotions such as anger, envy, or disappointment will arise. In addition to negative emotions being able to damage self-esteem, it also accelerates emotional exhaustion through the mechanism of emotional contagion, physically,¹⁹ not doing heavy activities but feeling very tired.
- Cognitive Dimension: Gossipers tend to follow emotional impulses rather than rational reasoning, with the spontaneity of their conversations leading to actions without prior thought and consideration. This behaviour is a manifestation of impulsivity and impaired executive function (such as response inhibition/*inhibitory control*) which is related to a person's low ability to regulate thoughts. This has the potential to decrease cognitive function or intellectual intelligence (*Intelligence Quotient*), because they are used to acting without thinking. Such as "*thinking before speaking*" or "*metacognitive awareness*".²⁰

¹⁸ Dara Dilla and Sukiman, "Implikasi Body Shaming Terhadap Kesehatan Mental Remaja," *As-Syar 'i: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling* 7 (2025): 721, <https://doi.org/10.47476/assyari.v7i2.9285>.

¹⁹ Abdelrahman A.A. Abdelghani et al., "Gossip Gone Toxic: The Dual Role of Self-Esteem and Emotional Contagion in Counterproductive Workplace Behavior," *Administrative Sciences* 15, no. 9 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci15090359>.

²⁰ Bradley W. Reynolds et al., "Executive Function, Impulsivity, and Risky Behaviors in Young Adults.," *Neuropsychology* 33, no. 2 (February 2019): 212–21, <https://doi.org/10.1037/neu0000510>.

- Affective Dimension (Cleanliness of Heart and Social Empathy): The previous hadith discussing affective teaches Muslims that empathy can be a moral stronghold from psychology so that someone avoids destructive behavior towards others. Loss of empathy can be related to a condition of *emotional numbness*, where a person feels empty inside, has difficulty feeling emotional bonds, and can experience an identity crisis. Limited empathy can result in personality disorders, such as narcissism or antisocial, where individuals may exhibit manipulative, selfish, and even aggressive behavior, because they do not care about the feelings of others.²¹ From a religious perspective, the loss of a sense of connection with humans who are all creatures of God (*hablumminannas*).
- Spiritual Dimension (Peace of Mind and Purity of Words): If a person loses his spiritual side due to gossiping, he will feel lost, forget his life's purpose, always feel perfect or less than, forget his essence that he is a creature of God who is certainly far from perfect and always close to mistakes. By gossiping, it can pollute the heart, destroying the peace of the soul. spirituality is lost, the heart becomes damaged, and all aspects of personality are disturbed, including behavior, emotions, and social relationships.

From the perspective of the Qur'an, this is the influence of gossip on the psychological dimension mentioned in the Qur'an, as follows:

- An-Nafs: Backbiting (*ghibah*) appeared when a person is controlled by *an-nafs al-ammaraah bis-sū'*, the soul that drives people to bad deeds, envy, and venting their feelings of inferiority by putting others down. Backbiting is not just a verbal sin, but poison for the soul. Psychologically, this indicates that the perpetrator has not made peace with himself so that he Identity crisis.²² It fosters guilt, reduces empathy, triggers stress, and erodes inner peace. In Islam, backbiting hardens the heart and prevents the arrival of Allah's mercy, making the soul dirty, restless, and far from spiritual peace.
- Al-aql: In the study of Sufism and Islamic psychology, if reason controls lust, then humans become calm (*an-nafs al-muṭma'innah*). However, if lust overcomes reason, then humans tend to be negligent, emotional, and easily fall into the behavior of gossiping (*ghibah*).²³ Returning to the cognitive dimension regarding control of one's thoughts, if reason loses to one's ego, it can be concluded that someone experiences executive function disorders (such as response inhibition/*inhibitory control*) which are related to a person's low ability to regulate thoughts. This has the potential to decrease cognitive function or intellectual intelligence (*Intelligence Quotient*), because they are used to acting without without a second thought.
- Al qolb: People who like to spread negative emotions can accumulate negative memories which can cause *emotional* exhaustion.²⁴ Allah SWT says in Surah Al-Muthaffifin verse 14, “Never! In fact, what they do has covered their hearts”. This verse explains that all sinful acts, including backbiting, will cover the heart, constrict the chest, lose the pleasure of worship, and no longer be sensitive to sin.

²¹ Alessandra D'Agostino et al., “The Feeling of Emptiness: A Review of a Complex Subjective Experience,” *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1097/HRP.0000000000000269>.

²² Baumeister, *The Self in Social Psychology* (Psychology Press, 1999).

²³ Nur Laila Faiqotul Himmah, Abdul Muid, Tutut Hardianti, Shofyan Tsauri, “The Position of Reason and Desire in Islam and Their Position in Islamic Education,” *Journal of Islamic Science and Education* 13 (2024): p. 9.

²⁴ Theodore D Kemper and Richard S Lazarus, “Emotion and Adaptation,” *Contemporary Sociology* 21, no. 4 (1992): 522, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2075902>.

- Spirit: When humans realize themselves as creatures created and breathed into by Allah, they will always introspect themselves.²⁵ Backbiting is not only a social and moral sin, but also a poison to the soul. It blocks the spiritual path to God, leaving the soul dark, restless, and devoid of spiritual peace. In Islam, an impure soul cannot experience *the dzauq al-iman (religious devotion to faith)*, while in modern psychology, this habit hinders spiritual growth and true happiness.
- Fitrah: Human nature in Arabic is "الإنسان" derived from "نسي-ينسى" which means to forget and make mistakes. Therefore, fitrah encourages moral awareness, honesty, empathy, and introspection after making mistakes.²⁶ It essentially always directs humans to seek the meaning of life, truth, and relationship with God. If someone focuses on the the faults, shortcomings, mistakes or flaws of others take it out on others by belittling them as if he had never sinned or made the slightest mistake, then indirectly he has forgotten his own nature as a human being. And if someone has forgotten his nature, it can cause psychological disorders, such as narcissism, a sense of superiority over others, a need for excessive admiration (thirst for validation), and a loss of purpose in life.

The research findings presented in the results section indicate a systematic relationship between backbiting behavior and five psychological dimensions from the perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith, namely An-nafs, Al-'aql, Al-qalb, Ar-rūḥ, and Fitrah. This discussion is a conceptual elaboration of these findings, where each dimension is analyzed in more depth to explain how backbiting affects the structure of the human psyche in a gradual and interrelated manner. As a result, the description of the dominance of *an-nafs al-ammārah*, the weakening of the function of al-'aql, the hardening of al-qalb, the disruption of the dimension of the ruh, and the deviation from fitrah are not stand-alone theoretical explanations, but rather interpretations of the results of thematic analysis that have been found previously. In addition, the findings in the table containing the results of the literature review show a correspondence between modern psychological concepts—such as self-regulation, executive function, emotional contagion, and spontaneous trait transference—and the structure of Islamic psychology contained in the Qur'an and Hadith. Therefore, this discussion serves to integrate both perspectives, thus making the correlation between textual data and psychological theory clearer and more systematic. In this way, the research results are not only described but also dialogued with the theoretical framework to strengthen scientific arguments regarding the psychological impact of backbiting on individuals.

²⁵ Achmad Ushuluddin et al., "Understanding Ruh as a Source of Human Intelligence in Islam" *International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 7 (2017): 1–12, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18848/2154-8633/CGP>.

²⁶ Syamsul Rizal, "MELACAK TERMINOLOGI MANUSIA DALAM ALQURAN," *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alquran Dan Tafsir* 2, no. 2 (March 20, 2018): 221, <https://doi.org/10.32505/tibyan.v2i2.391>.

D. Conclusion

Some prohibitions of Allah SWT and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are absolute for the well-being and mental health of His servants. Based on a study of the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic psychological theory, it can be concluded that backbiting is a form of moral and spiritual deviation that negatively impacts an individual's psychological balance. The Qur'an and Hadith emphasize that backbiting is like eating the flesh of one's dead brother, and can erase the rewards of good deeds, as explained in the hadith about *al-muflis*. Psychologically, gossiping also has a subconscious mind effect in the form of *spontaneous trait transference*, which is the brain's tendency to associate negative traits spoken about with the person who gossiped and make the things spoken about become part of themselves. Therefore, guarding one's tongue is not only a moral and social obligation, but also a spiritual and psychological therapy that can maintain spiritual balance, purity of heart, and inner peace. Individuals who are able to refrain from gossiping, it means he succeed managed to control his lust with his common sense, was able to make his soul healthy, and felt satisfied with his approach to divine nature which is the basis of mental health according to the Islamic perspective.

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