ĪTHĀR CONCEPT OF IBNU QAYYIM AL-JAWZIYYAH'S THIKING AS AN APPROACH TO AVOIDING PEOPLE-PLEASING BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: *This study aims to analyze the concept of īthār in the thoughts of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah as an approach to avoid people-pleasing behavior. People-pleasing is an individual's tendency to always please others at the expense of personal interests, which can hurt mental health and emotional balance. As an alternative, the concept of īthār, which means prioritizing the interests of others based on sincerity and honesty, offers a healthier solution and is based on Islamic spiritual values. This study uses the theory of Sufism and social psychology to understand the fundamental differences between īthār and people-pleasing. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a literature study of the works of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, especially Madārij al-Sālikīn and Maḥabbatullah. The study results indicate that īthār is not just a social act, but also part of worship that reflects a balance between personal interests and concern for others without causing psychological stress. In contrast to people-pleasing, which tends to be driven by fear of rejection and the need for social validation, īthār is based on seeking Allah's pleasure and the common good. This study concludes that īthār can be an effective approach to avoid the negative impacts of people-pleasing and help someone build healthier social interactions and improve spiritual quality. The recommendation of this study is the need for a broader understanding of the concept of īthār in character education and psychological guidance, so that individuals can develop a balance between caring for others and maintaining their well-being without getting caught up in people-pleasing attitudes.*

Keywords: *Ibnu Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Īthār, People-pleasing.*

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep *īthār* dalam pemikiran Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah sebagai pendekatan untuk menghindari perilaku *people-pleasing. People-pleasing* merupakan kecenderungan individu untuk selalu menyenangkan orang lain dengan mengorbankan kepentingan pribadi yang dapat berdampak negatif terhadap kesehatan mental dan keseimbangan emosional. Sebagai alternatif, konsep *īthār* yang berarti mendahulukan kepentingan orang lain atas dasar keikhlasan dan ketulusan, menawarkan solusi yang lebih sehat dan berlandaskan nilai spiritual Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori tasawuf dan psikologi sosial untuk memahami perbedaan mendasar antara *īthār* dan *people-pleasing.* Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi pustaka terhadap karya-karya Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, terutama *Madārij al-Sālikīn* dan *Maḥabbatullah.* Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *īthār* bukan sekadar tindakan sosial, tetapi juga bagian dari ibadah yang mencerminkan keseimbangan antara kepentingan pribadi dan kepedulian terhadap sesama tanpa menimbulkan tekanan psikologis. Berbeda dengan *people-pleasing*, yang cenderung didorong oleh rasa takut akan penolakan dan kebutuhan akan validasi sosial, *īthār* berlandaskan pada niat mencari rida Allah dan kesejahteraan bersama. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa *īthār* dapat menjadi pendekatan yang efektif untuk menghindari dampak negatif *people-pleasing* dan membantu seseorang membangun interaksi sosial yang lebih sehat serta meningkatkan kualitas spiritual. Rekomendasi dari penelitian ini adalah perlunya pemahaman lebih luas tentang konsep īthār dalam pendidikan karakter dan bimbingan psikologis, sehingga individu dapat mengembangkan keseimbangan antara kepedulian terhadap orang lain dan menjaga kesejahteraan diri tanpa terjebak dalam sikap people-pleasing.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Ibnu Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Īthār, People-pleasing.*

Introduction

The terms " egoist," "egoistic," and "egoism" are often used in scientific discussions as well as in social interactions. In contrast, the terms "altruist," "altruistic," and "altruism" are rarely the subject of study. If traced to its textual sources, moral altruism has a strong foundation in the doctrines of various religions that emphasize the importance of social service. In Islamic teachings, many stories of the Prophet illustrate the struggle to defend humanity until the end of life. The principle is also seen in the early generations of Islam, who in the Qur'an are described as people who put the interests of others first despite difficult circumstances. This attitude is known as *īthār 'ala al-nafs*, which is putting aside personal interests to fight for the welfare of others (Hidayati 2016**,** 59).

In the more modern times, however, the term People-pleasing refers to individuals who try to please others and often apologize first. Difficulty in refusing requests usually arises due to a sense of "not feeling good" and a tendency to prioritize the interests of others over personal interests. This behavior aims to create a good impression, facilitate social acceptance, and meet the expectations of others to gain recognition. Lack of self-confidence, inability to refuse invitations, ease of reluctance, and sacrifice of personal interests characterize this pattern of behavior. People pleasers believe that responsibility lies in the happiness of others. Maximum effort

is made to avoid disappointing anyone, which, unwittingly, hurts mental health regularly. Personal concerns, needs, and happiness are completely sacrificed for the pleasure of others (Zalika and Nisa 2024, 16).

One important concept among the various concepts in sufism is *īthār*. *Īthār* is a caring attitude that puts the interests of others ahead of personal ego. Different from people-pleasing behavior, *īthār* is a positive attitude that will form gratitude and qana'ah in humans. The application of the *īthār* attitude in life will be very useful for purifying the heart. If this attitude can be realized in oneself, it will create harmonious interactions between communities (Saputra, Dalimunthe, and Mulyana 2021, 17).

Unlike people-pleasing driven by the need for external recognition, *īthār* is based on the motivation of sincerity and spiritual closeness to Allah. This concept teaches about putting the interests of others first, not out of fear of rejection, but rather as a form of worship and a sincere expression of love.

Al-Zarkashī explains *īthār,* which is the opposite of *atharah* (selfishness), with *a yu'thira ghayrahu bish-shay'i ma'a ḥājatihi, wa 'aksuhul-ātharah 'an akhīhi bimā huwa yaḥtāju ilayh* (Zarkashī 1982, 210). It is giving precedence to others in a matter, even if he needs it. This attitude is in line with the Prophet's statement regarding the attitude of a believer towards his muslims (Bukhārī 2016, 131). If the Prophet's statement is examined, it will appear that Iman is the basis of a person's behavior pattern towards others.

The complexity of modern problems that are increasingly complicated, coupled with social pressures that are increasingly intensive due to the development of communication technology, makes research on alternative approaches in overcoming people-pleasing very relevant. Exploration of the concept of *īthār i*n the thought of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah is expected to provide new insights into understanding the dynamics of healthy and meaningful social interaction.

From the above, *īthār* not only means putting the interests of others first, but also reflects the spiritual and moral depth that can help one achieve balance in social interactions. This concept inspires us to prioritize sincerity and sincerity in interactions with others, to avoid the pressure to always (perceived) please others, which is potentially detrimental to mental health and personal integrity. With *īthār*, one not only contributes to the well-being of others but also strengthens healthy social bonds and fosters a sense of community.

Through this approach, it is hoped that everyone can develop into a better person while creating a more harmonious society. This can be realized if the stages in applying *īthār* can be applied as a whole, as revealed by Endrika Widdia Putri et al (Putri, Amril, and Aini 2022, 44) on "*Konsep Ithar: Telaah atas Pemikiran Ibnu Qayyim al-Jauziyah,*" first, prioritizing others over oneself; second, prioritizing the pleasure of Allah

over the pleasure of others; third, attributing *īthār* to Allah, not to oneself.

If the stages cannot be implemented in full, this will have an impact on what is called attachment, the need for recognition from the surrounding environment. Such results have been revealed by Sri Ayatina Hayati and Rudi Haryadi (Hayati and Haryadi 2024, 106) entitled "*Korelasi antara People-Pleasing dengan Attachment Pada Siswa SMA Negeri 12 Banjarmasin*". This study analyzes the relationship between people-pleasing attitudes and attachment styles among SMA Negeri 12 Banjarmasin students. The hypothesis test shows a robust and significant correlation of 0.944 between the people-pleasing and attachment variables.

The results of previous research and current research have similarities and differences at the same time. Previous research and current research both examine the concept of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's thoughts and people-pleasing. The difference is that previous research only discussed the concept of *īthār* from Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah and people-pleasing in psychology, while the current research discusses the concept of *īthār* in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's thoughts as an approach to avoiding people-pleasing.

One of the main issues that people face in modern social contexts is the tendency towards people-pleasing, which can hurt mental health and personal integrity. This often arises from a deep need for social acceptance, resulting in decreased self-esteem and emotional exhaustion. On the other hand, there is the concept of *īthār* in the thought of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah that offers a positive alternative. However, the lack of understanding and application of the principle of *īthār* in daily life is a challenge in itself to overcome people-pleasing behavior and build better social relationships.

This research uses a qualitative approach, according to Sugiyono, which is a newly popular method, called the postpositivist method, because it is based on the philosophy of positivism. The qualitative approach is also often called an artistic method because the research process is less patterned (Sugiyono 2022, 7).

The type of research used is library research. The research stages were carried out by collecting library sources, both primary and secondary. Because the point of view used in this research is the concept of *īthār* from Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah's thought, the primary data source used is the books of Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah, namely the *Madārij al-Sālikīn* and *Maḥabbatullah* books, which discuss the concept of *īthār* and various psychological aspects of man. These two books were chosen because of the depth of their analysis of *īthār* and their relevance to human behavior in spiritual and social contexts. Secondary data in this research was taken from books, journals, and internet websites that correspond to the research focus.

The data analysis technique begins with data collection, where the

researcher collects and categorizes Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah's thoughts about *īthār* from various works as a data source. Next, data reduction is carried out, namely the step to summarize and select data into certain concepts, categories, and themes. This reduction process aims to filter relevant information and eliminate unnecessary data, so that the results are more focused and structured. The results of data reduction are then processed into a more complete picture, which can be in the form of a sketch, synopsis, matrix, or other form. This approach is very useful for facilitating the presentation and confirmation of conclusions, as well as helping researchers in compiling coherent and in-depth arguments (Rijali 2018, 91–92).

Īthār and People Pleasing in Difference

Linguistically, *īthār* in Arabic means *tafḍīl*, which means putting other people's interests before personal interests. According to al-Uthaymin, quoted by Farhad Muhammad and Abdul Muhid, *īthār* is the abandonment of ego and one's interests to struggle to realize the welfare of others. In the *al-Munawwir Dictionary*, *tafḍīl* is defined as equalizing the treatment of others as oneself. Al-Shamālī, quoting al-Jurjānī, by Muhid, explains that *īthār* behavior is the culmination of an attitude of putting other people's interests first or prosocial actions (*ukhuwwah*) (Muhammad and Muhid 2022, 333).

Etymologically, altruism is often translated as *īthār.* Both have a similar meaning, namely, putting other people's interests before personal interests. The difference lies in its nature, where altruism is secular, while *īthār* has a religious dimension (Ramadhan 2023, 29).

Īthār is a noble attitude that reflects a person's ability to put the interests of others before personal interests. This attitude is not just an ordinary social action, but a real manifestation of deep concern for others. In practice, *īthār* is seen through sincere attention (great concern) to various groups in need, such as those facing economic difficulties, people who need physical and moral assistance, the fuqara (the poor) and the masakin (people poor), victims of disasters who need recovery, as well as people who experience injustice or oppression (Tanjung 2023, 34).

Īthār is based on a sense of love that grows from the perfection of faith. This is in line with the words of the Prophet Muhammad: *"A person's faith is not perfect until he loves his brother as he loves himself"* (H.R. Al-Bukhari)*.* The *īthār* attitude leads a person to put the interests of others first out of love and care, not because of coercion or personal interests (Helmy 2020, 95).

Īthār has a very noble position before God, so it is worthy of being applied in the family and community. However, it is important to remember that not all actions in life must be based on *īthār. Īthār* that is not permitted has the potential to lead someone to injustice or immorality (Dianah et al.

2020, 257).

People-pleasing, according to Merriam-Webster, quoted by Unda Anggita, is *"people who have an emotional need to please other people, often at the expense of their own needs or desires."* This means that someone tends to prioritize the happiness of others, even if it is to their detriment. Someone often feels uncomfortable rejecting other people's requests, and being afraid of being ignored is the attitude of a people pleaser (Anggita 2022, 4).

People-pleasing is a psychological term that refers to individuals who feel uneasy and always try to please other people, often at the expense of their own needs. As a result, other people tend to underestimate or treat them arbitrarily. This habit can be considered a bad habit, because very few positive benefits result from this behavior (Kusuma 2024, 103). People pleasing is not a disease or a personality trait, but rather an informal nickname used to describe behavior (Kusuma 2023, 192). People-pleasing behavior is very often found in everyday life. However, someone who has this behavior cannot realize it (Hayati and Haryadi 2024, 101)

In a theological approach, *īthār* is very contrary to the concept and psychological understanding of people-pleasing behavior. Surah Al-Ḥashr [59]: 9, elaborates on the *īthār* behavior:

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُو الدَّارَ وَالْإِيْمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُوْرِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّآ اُوْتُوْا وَيُؤْثِرُوْنَ عَلٰى اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ۗ وَمَنْ يُّوْقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهٖ فَاُولٰۤىِٕكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ

"And [also for] those who were settled in the Home [i.e., al-Madīnah] and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find no want in their breasts of what they [i.e., the emigrants] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful."

Quraish Shihab gives an overview of the dynamics related to the revelation of this verse. The social dynamics that occurred when someone visited the Prophet, immediately he asked his wives to make a meal, but they replied, "There is only water." Then he asked the companions. Then he asked his companions. "One of the Ansar replied, 'I', and went straight to his wife and said, 'entertain the guest of the Prophet". His wife said, "Our food supply is only enough for our children." In short, they prepared food for the guest after putting their children to bed, and they presented themselves to the guest as if they were eating. They both spent the night without eating dinner. So, the next day, when he went to the Prophet, he said, "Tonight, Allah is either laughing or amazed at what you two have

done" (Shihab 2010, 546-7).

Al-Sa'dī, in his interpretation, elaborates that this verse is Allah's praise for the generous nature of the anshors, *īthār*. The anchors always put others before themselves, who are also in need and need. When examined from the above description, *īthār* is an attitude or action that alleviates the needs of others. Although *īthār* is a socio-psychological attitude, it has spiritual-theological value (Sa'dī 2002, 851).

The statement of the Prophet recorded by Muslim in his *Saheeh* with number 2699 (Naysābūrī 1998, 1082) can serve as a guideline regarding fostering the spirit of *īthār*:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ نَفَّسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ الدُّنْيَا نَفَّسَ اللهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ يَسَّرَ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ يَسَّرَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ وَمَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ...

"Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: He who alleviates the suffering of a brother out of the sufferings of the world, Allah would alleviate his suffering from the sufferings of the Day of Resurrection, and he who finds relief for one who is hard-pressed, Allah would make things easy for him in the Hereafter, and he who conceals (the faults) of a Muslim, Allah would conceal his faults in the world and the Hereafter. Allah is at the back of a servant so long as the servant is at the back of his brother, and he who treads the path in search of knowledge, Allah would make that path easy, leading to Paradise......."

Īthār is an act that is not only worthy of worship in the sight of Allah, but also provides other positive virtues in the realm of social life. The prophet's statement above underlines that Allah swt. Loves anyone who always does *īthār*, such as lightening the burden, easing the difficulties of others, and even deeper, this concept, based on the words of the Prophet, includes covering the disgrace of others. This understanding is certainly not only obtained from the explanation of the prophet's words above, but also from several other words that lead to the same meaning and understanding.

The words of the prophet narrated by 'Umar ibn Khattab, recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb wa al-Tarhīb li al-Albānī*, hadith number 954 (Albānī 2000, 564), explain a fragment of the dialogue when the Prophet was asked about what the most noble deed is, *ayyu al-a'mal afḍal.* Immediately, the Prophet replied: emphasis on the statement "*bringing happiness to fellow believers, such as feeding them when they are hungry, or giving them clothes to cover their nakedness, and or fulfilling their needs.*" is the importance of social piety. *Īthār* is not looking for personal interests, but is always trying to bring happiness and goodness to others. This is a moral guide on how a believer bermuamalah to others, which will have an impact on the establishment of a harmonious social life. Simply put, *īthār* behavior

creates ukhuwah and love between people, which is another virtue in addition to being worthy of worship and the love of Allah. Hadith 955, still in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb wa al-Tarhīb li al-Albānī*, gives the same emphasis with a slightly different narrative. With a sanad that is *ḥasan*.

Īthār's behavior shows one's level of faith. The higher a person's level of faith**,** the better their behavior towards others. Not only to muslims, but also to non-muslims. Narrated by Aisha r.a., when a group of Jews asked the Prophet Muhammad for permission and said *al-sāmu ʿalayka*. Upon hearing their greeting, Aisha immediately responded in an angry tone. I said *al-sāmu ʿalayka wa laʿanakumullāhu, wa ghaḍiba ʿalaykum***.** Immediately, the Prophet Muhammad rebuked Aisha, saying, "*O Aisha! Allah is kind and lenient and likes that one should be kind and lenient in all matters.*" I said, "*Haven't you heard what they said?*" He said, "*I said (to them and upon you)*" (Qarni 2022, 80)*.* In the dialogue between Prophet Muhammad and his wife, Aisha, as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (hadith no. 6401), the Prophet Muhammad responded with the phrase "and upon you" without adding the word "death." He maintained *īthār* without seeking to investigate the intent behind their words. He did not question the Jews who had spoken to him, nor did he confront them; instead, he chose to leave them be with grace.

From the arguments mentioned above, *īthār* is a social charity-muamalah which contains the value of worship. So *īthār* cannot be done in matters of worship. Zarkashī explains in the second part of *īthār,* that related to worship, that this behavior is prohibited. Such as giving precedence to someone to get a prayer shaf in the front row. By the method agreed upon by the scholars, *lā īthāra fī al-qurbāt* (Zarkashī 1982, 212).

In the study of ushul fiqh, according to Muhammad and Muhid, as a basis for a scholar in determining legal views based on the Qur'an, hadith, and the agreement of scholars, the main rules are arranged to provide limits and guidelines in their application. Among these rules, there are principles related to *īthār* behavior, namely *al-īthār fī 'ibādah mamnu' and al-īthār fī ghayr 'ibādah mustaḥab.* This rule means that prioritizing or prioritizing others in matters of worship is not allowed, while in matters outside of worship, such actions are recommended and considered a commendable act (Muhammad and Muhid 2022, 337).

Īthār Concept of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's Thought

Ibnu Qayyim al-Jawziyyah was born in Damascus, Syria, in 691 AH / 1292 AD and died in 751 AH / 1350 AD in the same place. Ibnu Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's real name is Shamsuddīn Abī ʿAbdillah Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakar. His father, Abi Bakar, was a great scholar and curator of *qayyim* at the al-Jawziyyah madrasa in Damascus. From the position of Abi Bakar, who was Ibnu Qayyim's father, the title Ibnu Qayyim al-Jawziyyah was taken. Since childhood, Ibnu Qayyim al-Jawziyyah grew up in a family

environment rich in scientific traditions, resulting in his development as a person with extensive knowledge. The learning process was carried out through several great scholars, including Alī Shihāb al-Nāblusī al-Kabīr and Ibn Taymiyyah, as well as other scholars (Putri, Amril, and Aini 2022, 37).

Ibnu Qayyim's superiority and specialty are that he is one of the Sufi scholars who is respected and highly regarded. When he died in 751 AH/1350 AD, the intellectual legacy he left behind was worthy of being maintained and developed for the advancement of science and religious, moral values. Ibn Qayyim was a very prolific writer, making a complete inventory of his works a challenge. Some of his works include: *al-Ijtihād wa al-Taqlīd, Uṣūl al-Tafsīr, Aḥkām Ahl al-Dhimmah, al-Amālī al-Makkiyyah, Amthāl al-Qurʾān, al-Iʿjāz, al-Tibyān fī Aqsām al-Qurʾān, al-Jāmiʿ bayna al-Sunan wa al-Āthār, Hady al-Arwāḥ ilā Bilād al-Afrāḥ, Miftāḥ Dār al-Saʿādah wa Manshūr Wilāyat al-ʿIlm wa al-Irādah, Madārij al-Sālikīn fī Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sāʾirīn,* and others (Putri, Amril, and Aini 2022, 37-38).

Īthār Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah's thoughts are conveyed in *Madārij al-Sālikīn fī Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sāʾirīn* (Ladders of Seekers of Truth: Comments on the Degrees of Seekers of God's Path). This book is a commentary on al-Harawi's teachings as a teacher, but it still contains Ibn Qayyim's ideas. Until now, both the works of al-Harawi and Ibn Qayyim have become the main references in Salafi Sufism. Both prove that sufism and salafiyyah views can coexist without significant friction, reflecting the character of Islam as *raḥmatan lil ʿālamīn* (Putri, Amril, and Aini 2022, 38).

Īthār is a concept that emphasizes prioritizing others over ourselves (Putri, Amril, and Aini 2022, 38). *Īthār* is also a positive attitude, provided it is aimed at seeking Allah's pleasure. This behavior is a psychological foundation that reflects honesty of faith, sincerity, and purity of heart. (Chumaira and Norhabibah 2023). It can be concluded that *īthār* is an attitude of prioritizing the interests of others over one's interests, which reflects sincerity of heart, honesty of faith, and purity of self, and is done to achieve the pleasure of Allah.

In the context of Islamic spirituality, especially in the understanding of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *īthār* (prioritizing the interests of others over one's interests) is one of the "stopovers" of the path of servitude intended in *iyyāka naʿbudu wa iyyāka nastaʿīn* (*Only to You we worship and only to You we ask for help*). Ibnu Qayyim al-Jawziyyah elaborates that *iyyāka naʿbudu* implies sincere devotion to Allah, which includes *iḥsān* (doing good) and altruistic attitudes, including *īthār*, which is prioritizing the interests of others with sincere intentions for the sake of Allah (Jauziyah 1998, 307).

Īthār is the opposite of miserliness. A person who has *īthār* is someone who puts the interests of others first, even when it is something that is needed. A miser, on the other hand, is someone who desires something

that he does not have and after obtaining it, is reluctant to give it away or is stingy (Jauziyah 1998, 307).

Īthār, according to Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, can be done in three ways:

1. Glorifying rights. Glorifying rights means giving full attention to the rights that must be fulfilled. Awareness of the magnitude of these rights encourages one to exercise them responsibly and not waste them. In the context of *īthār,* one not only fulfills one's rights but also prioritizes the rights of others. If a person does not fulfill rights as they should, it means that he has not reached the degree of *īthār* (Jauziyah 1998, 311).

2. Hate miserliness. Because when someone hates miserliness, they can prioritize the benefits of others (Jauziyah 1998, 312).

3. Loving noble manners. To the extent that one loves noble character, that is the extent to which one prioritizes the interests of others (Jauziyah 1998, 312).

According to *Manāzil al-Sāʾirīn*, in agreement with Ibnu Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, there are three degrees of *īthār,* namely "First, you give preference to people over yourself in matters that do not disturb your religion, do not help your way, and do not damage your character. Second, prioritizing the pleasure of Allah over the pleasure of others. Third, attributing *īthār* to Allah and not to yourself"(Jauziyah 1998, 311–13).

Prioritizing people's interests is a part of goodness, but it should not interrupt a servant's journey towards Allah. Often, people get caught up in excessive socializing to the point of forgetting dhikr and worship, or are too busy taking care of their group to neglect fulfilling the rights of Allah. In a spiritual journey, man is likened to a traveler who is heading towards the ultimate goal, which is closeness to Allah. If on that journey he stops too long because someone is talking to him, then he risks falling behind the group and even getting lost. Similarly, in life, excessive worldly preoccupation, even in the form of social concern, can hinder a servant's journey if it is not accompanied by an awareness of the ultimate goal (Jauziyah 1998, 311).

Allah did not make obedience and worship something to be given to others by favoring them over oneself (*īthār*). Rather, Allah established obedience as a race in goodness, where everyone is encouraged to strive to be better and faster in worship. Hence, the scholars state that when it comes to worship and getting closer to Allah, it is not advisable to give in for the sake of others (Jauziyah 2017, 225).

The reason behind this is that *īthār* usually occurs in situations where something is limited in quantity. If it is given to someone else, then the giver will lose or not get a sufficient share. However, in worship and obedience, there is no such limitation. No matter how many people worship, all of

them can still be rewarded without anyone feeling deprived (Jauziyah 2017, 225).

If an act of worship does have limitations, for example, due to certain places or conditions, so that not everyone can do it, then the intention and determination of a person are still appreciated by Allah and still get rewarded. In the hadith, the Prophet explained that even if a person cannot immediately carry out a deed, his intention is still recorded. In addition, if a person cannot perform a certain form of obedience, there are still many other acts of worship that can be a substitute, whether equal, higher, or lower in value (Jauziyah 2017, 225).

If a person is unable to perform a good deed for some reason, and replaces it with another deed, Allah still gives the reward for the intention and determination to do the deed that was left behind. The reward of the substitute deed is also given. Thus, two good deeds are obtained at once, and all of this is a gift from Allah given to whomever He wills. Allah is the Greatest and Most Glorious (Jauziyah 2017, 225).

The main purpose of all this is to motivate Allah's servants to get closer to Him, find the best way to achieve His pleasure, and compete for His love. On the other hand, putting others first in matters of worship shows a lack of sincerity in drawing closer to Allah and earning His reward. This is different from worldly needs such as food, drink, and clothing. In worldly matters, if one has something and someone else needs it, then giving it to someone else means sacrificing part of one's possession (Jauziyah 2017, 226).

Therefore, Allah recommends that people who have enough to live on and can be patient give priority to others in worldly affairs, as long as it does not harm religion, does not reduce goodness, does not cause difficulties in getting closer to Allah, and does not cause dependence on humans. This is because giving priority to others in matters of worship causes more harm than good (Jauziyah 2017, 226).

However, in certain situations where prioritizing others can be ensured not to cause harm or extreme suffering, and no other option is available, it is permissible. If there is still something left for oneself, *īthār* is not necessary. However, if one still chooses to practice it, the act is highly virtuous and reflects generosity. Prioritizing others' lives over one's own and fulfilling their needs despite personal necessity demonstrates extraordinary generosity, nobility, and kindness. As a result, great fortune becomes its reward (Jauziyah 2017, 226).

Allah created the human heart with a natural inclination to respect and love those who exhibit noble character while rejecting and opposing injustice. There is no futility in His creation, as everything is governed by balance and divine laws. In the realm of morality, ethical conduct is generally classified into three main categories. The first is *al-īthār*, which refers to prioritizing the needs of others over oneself with sincerity.

This represents the highest level of moral excellence, making a person beloved, respected, and followed by others. The second is *al-Qismah wa al-Taswiyah*, which embodies fairness and balance in interactions, ensuring that neither oneself nor others are excessively prioritized. A just person remains free from oppression and domination, as justice fosters social harmony. The third is *al-istīthār wa al-istibdād*, characterized by selfishness and tyranny, where one prioritizes personal interests without regard for others' rights. A person who acts unjustly is more likely to be rejected and subdued, as people naturally detest injustice (Jauziyah 2017, 227).

From this concept, it can be understood that * īthār* is not only a commendable deed in the sight of Allah but also has a significant social impact. A person who sincerely prioritizes the needs of others will earn love and respect, while those who act unjustly will lose their status and face disgrace. However, balance remains essential, as *īthār*, despite being a highly virtuous trait, must be accompanied by the principle of justice to maintain harmony in society.

Īthār, in a deeper sense, is not only about prioritizing others but also about prioritizing Allah above all else. It represents the highest form of sacrifice and devotion to the Creator, where one's actions are guided by the intention to please Allah, above personal desires or the needs of others. This selflessness reflects true submission to Allah's will and demonstrates an unwavering commitment to His guidance (Jauziyah 2017, 229).

Submission to Allah refers to '*ubūdiyyah*, which is realized through worship or the implementation of Allah's commands in everyday life. This worship is done with the sincere intention of gaining Allah's pleasure, and as a form of self-awareness as a servant (Syarqawi et al. 2022, 605). Prioritizing Allah means putting His pleasure above all things, prioritizing love for Him over love for creatures, and prioritizing fear of Him over fear of others. In the spiritual journey, a true servant will try to fulfill Allah's commands wholeheartedly and sacrifice everything he has for the sake of achieving His pleasure, without feeling any loss (Jauziyah 2017, 229).

Moreover, *īthār* to Allah is an attitude that shows total submission and humility to Him. This includes giving priority to asking and supplicating Him, showing that the servant is in dire need of Him and depends only on Him, not on other creatures. In this case, one prioritizes Allah in all aspects of life, be it in actions, feelings, or thoughts, and makes Allah the main goal in life (Jauziyah 2017, 229).

Love for Allah (*maḥabbatullah*) and others is only realized through *īthār,* which is an attitude of sincere preference for Allah and others. Some of the things that make it easier for a person to achieve success in practicing *īthār* focus on three main points. First, having a gentle, submissive, friendly character, and not violent or cruel. These traits make

it easy for a person to submit to Allah easily and sincerely. Secondly, having a strong faith and firm conviction. A strong faith is the basis of all good deeds, and the result of that faith is an ease in prioritizing Allah and others. Thirdly, having strong and steadfast patience. Patience is the key to persevering in the face of worldly trials and temptations that can block the path to Allah. With these three traits, one can achieve a high standing with Allah and reach spiritual goals more easily (Jauziyah 2017, 230).

In Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's thinking, *īthār* is not only understood as a simple act of prioritizing other people. Ibn Qayyim interprets *īthār* as a complex form of worship and has several dimensions.

a) Spiritual Dimension: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah emphasized that one of the degrees of *īthār* is prioritizing Allah's pleasure and giving credit to Allah and not to oneself (Jauziyah 1998, 312). *Īthār* must be based on sincere intentions towards Allah. Ibnu Qayyim said, "*True īthār is when someone puts Allah's pleasure above the desires of other people.*" In Ibn Qayyim's view, *īthār* is not just an act of generosity, but is a spiritual journey towards higher moral glory and deeper closeness to Allah.

b) Psychological Dimension: *īthār,* as a stopover in devotion to Allah, teaches a servant to prioritize other people as part of self-purification. Genuine devotion often requires letting go of ego and putting others' needs first in kindness. This is in line with the *iyyāka nasta'īn* verse, where a servant realizes that he needs Allah's help in fulfilling the obligations of servitude, including the attitude of *īthār.* Thus, *īthār* is not just a social attitude, but a form of moral elevation that fosters a clean heart in a servant's journey towards closeness to Allah (Jauziyah 1998, 307). Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah understands *īthār* as a process of purifying the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*). By doing *īthār,* a person is training themselves to control their desires and ego (Putri, Amril, and Aini 2022, 39).

c) Social Dimension: *īthār* encourages someone to better understand and feel the conditions of other people. Psychologically, this trains empathy, namely the ability to feel and understand other people's feelings (Rizky, Rini, and Pratitis 2021, 22). In psychology, empathy is essential for healthy interpersonal relationships. *Īthār* is a help to strengthen these abilities, creating stronger social bonds and mutual support. According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *īthār* is the foundation for creating a harmonious society. However, *īthār* must be done wisely and not at the expense of main obligations (Jauziyah 2017, 223).

d) Ethical Dimension: *īthār,* according to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, re-

quires individuals to respect and fulfill the rights of others. This reflects a social ethic that prioritizes the interests and needs of other people. *īthār* encourages a generous attitude and avoids stinginess (Jauziyah 1998, 311–12). This ethic is based on the principle of sharing and giving to others, which is a noble value in society. Ibnu Qayyim al-Jawziyyah emphasized that *īthār* must be in line with sharia principles and rejected the concept of *īthār* that violates the boundaries of Islamic ethics.

Avoiding People Pleasing with the *īthār* Concept of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's Thoughts as an Approach

Based on the analysis of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's thoughts, the research formulates several approaches to avoid people-pleasing behavior through a proper understanding of the concept of *īthār:*

1. *Īthār* as a Manifestation of True *'Ubūdiyyah*

'Ubūdiyyah encompasses all forms of deeds performed to attain rewards, such as prayer (*ṣalāt*), charity (*zakāt*), fasting (*ṣawm*), almsgiving (*infāq*), and reading the Qur'an. Essentially, *'ubūdiyyah* is divided into two main types: *'ubūdiyyah maḥḍah* and *'ubūdiyyah ghayru maḥḍah* (Syarqawi et al. 2022, 605).

'Ubūdiyyah maḥḍah refers to acts of worship with clear commands and prohibitions that cannot be added to or reduced. These acts of worship have definite rules, such as prayer (*ṣalāt*), charity (*zakāt*), fasting (*ṣawm*), pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), and purification from minor and major ritual impurity (*ḥadath*). These acts are performed by the guidelines set by Allah in the Qur'an and Hadith. Next, *'ubūdiyyah ghayru maḥḍah* refers to acts of worship encompassing everyday actions done to seek Allah's pleasure, such as doing good to others, helping, and sharing. Although these actions are not directly related to ritual worship, they still hold the value of worship when performed with a sincere intention to draw closer to Allah (Syarqawi et al. 2022, 606).

According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *īthār* is the attitude of prioritizing the interests of others over one's own, and it represents a form of servitude to Allah. This attitude of *īthār* is a higher form of devotion because it not only involves sacrificing personal interests for the benefit of others but is also carried out with a sincere intention to gain Allah's pleasure.

True *'ubūdiyyah* is not only reflected in ritual acts of worship such as prayer (*ṣalāt*) and charity (*zakāt*), but also in the sincere attitude of doing everything for Allah, including in everyday actions. *Īthār* is a form of *'ubūdiyyah ghayru maḥḍah*, where these deeds are performed outside the mandatory rituals, but still hold the value of worship when done with

the correct intention. In daily life, *īthār* demonstrates sacrifice and the willingness to place others above oneself, aligning with the principle of sincere servitude to Allah. This is why *īthār* can be seen as a manifestation of true *'ubūdiyyah*, as it requires humility, sacrifice, and a sincere intention to attain Allah's pleasure.

In the context of worship, *people-pleasing* holds no spiritual value because such actions are not performed with a sincere intention for Allah. In contrast, *īthār*, when carried out to draw closer to Allah, becomes a deed of worship, even though it may outwardly seem like prioritizing others. This is why *īthār* more accurately reflects true *'ubūdiyyah*, which prioritizes Allah's pleasure above all else, while *people-pleasing* tends to distance a person from the true spiritual goal.

2. *Maḥabbatullah* (Love for Allah) Serves as the Primary Motivation in All Deeds

According to the Sufis, *maḥabbatullah* or love for Allah is a maqam (station or level) that must be passed by those who follow the path of God to achieve Allah's pleasure in worship. *Maḥabbatullah* is not just a feeling of love, but is the peak of all spiritual maqams (Syarboini 2021, 104).

At this level, a servant has prioritized Allah above all things, be it personal or worldly desires. Love for Allah becomes the main motivation in every deed, directing every action and thought to always draw closer to Allah. To achieve this, a servant must go through various previous stations, such as patience, sincerity, and total submission. *Maḥabbatullah* becomes the peak of the spiritual journey, where love for Allah overcomes everything, and Allah's pleasure becomes the main goal in life.

According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, true love is born from unconditional sincerity and does not depend on personal interests. About Allah, this love has two forms of priority. The priority occurs when obedience and sacrifice are made to obtain a reward or good fortune, such as the hope of getting a reward or avoiding punishment. In this form, worship and obedience are not driven by pure love, but by personal interests, which are still the main goal (Jauziyah 2017, 221).

On the contrary, the second priority arises from the drive of sincere love for God, where true happiness lies in obedience without expecting a reward. This kind of love makes God's will more important than one's own will, so that all actions are done not because of wanting compensation, but because of deep love for God. The greatest luck lies not in the benefits obtained, but in being together with Allah through sincere service. This form of love can only be felt by a gentle, noble, and honorable soul, while a hard soul will not be able to understand the meaning of true love for Allah (Jauziyah 2017, 221).

Ibnu Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, as quoted by Abdul Kadir Abu, emphasized that intention has a very close relationship with the deeds of the heart,

making it the basis for determining the validity or invalidity of an act (Abu 2023, 4). Just as the soul gives life to the body, intention gives life to actions, so deeds without the right intention become meaningless. In this context, *maḥabbatullah* (love for Allah) plays a crucial role as the primary motivation that shapes a righteous intention. When *maḥabbatullah* becomes the driving force in the heart, every action is no longer performed with the desire for human praise or worldly benefits, but as an act of submission to Allah. This sincere devotion transforms each deed into a means of drawing closer to the Creator, where the focus shifts entirely to seeking Allah's pleasure. Therefore, *maḥabbatullah* guides the intention to remain within the corridor of sincerity, so that every deed has a spirit that enlivens it and makes it meaningful in the sight of Allah.

Ī*thār*, as a form of servitude to Allah, is closely tied to intention and the condition of the heart. Prioritizing the interests of others is not merely a physical act, but is rooted in the sincerity of the heart in putting others first for the sake of Allah, not due to social pressure or the hope for praise. When the intention behind *īthār* is based on *maḥabbatullah* (love for Allah), the action becomes a deed of worship, rather than a form of people-pleasing that is fragile and reliant on human approval. This sincere devotion transforms the act into a true manifestation of submission, where the focus is solely on Allah's pleasure, not on the validation of others.

Thus, *īthār,* based on *maḥabbatullah*, reflects the depth of the heart that makes love for Allah the main foundation in acting. As emphasized by Ibn Qayyim, the work of the heart is more important than physical work, because the heart is the source of all deeds. *Īthār,* that is born from a heart full of *maḥabbatullah*, not only improves relationships with others, but also strengthens relationships with Allah, making every deed have a spirit that brings it to life and is valuable in the sight of Allah.

3. *Īthār* as the Path to Fanā'

In Sufism, *fanā'* is understood as a sublime moral condition in which a person can release himself from the shackles of lust and all worldly desires. *Fanā'* is not just a loss of ego or sense of self, but also a form of purity of soul that is free from self-interest and selfishness for all the good that is done. Sufis define *fanā'* as the perfect surrender of a servant to the Creator. *Fanā'* is a condition in which a person not only carries out Allah's commands and avoids His prohibitions but also does so with full awareness and without any ulterior motives. From the perspective of Sufism, *fanā'* contains the meaning of a total acknowledgement of the message brought by the Prophet Muhammad saw., which covers all aspects of life, both those related to ritual worship and social interaction. *Fanā'* is not just about avoiding lust but also internalizing all Islamic teachings in every aspect of life (Fathony and Harahap 2023, 52).

A person who has reached *fanā'* will be free from everything that is not God in his heart. There is only Allah within, and every step is guided by the remembrance of Allah. This condition leads a person to live with full sincerity and devotion, only to achieve Allah's pleasure, without any dependence on the world or creatures. In the state of *fanā'*, there is no longer a duality between personal desires and God's will, because all deeds performed are a form of total surrender to Allah. This shows a very high level of closeness between a servant and Allah, where every second of his life is focused only on remembering Allah and trying to get closer to Allah (Fathony and Harahap 2023, 52–53).

Īthār, which is the attitude of prioritizing the interests of others over oneself, is one of the spiritual paths that leads to the attainment of *fanā'*. In the context of people-pleasing, which is often done to gain recognition or approval from others, *īthār* offers a very different approach. People-pleasing refers to actions motivated by the desire to be liked by others, which is often accompanied by a sense of insincerity or selflessness. In contrast, *īthār* does not expect rewards or attention from others because it is based on the intention to prioritize the interests of Allah and others without considering personal gain. *Īthār* as a path to *fanā'* requires one to let go of egoistic tendencies and cultivate a deeper spiritual awareness, where all actions are done to draw closer to Allah, not to fulfill human expectations or desires. Thus, *īthār* helps one to avoid people-pleasing behavior and focus more on sincere devotion to Allah and the welfare of others.

The benefits of *īthār* as an approach to avoid people-pleasing are quite significant in maintaining mental health and social balance. With *īthār*, a person can prioritize the interests of others without neglecting personal needs, because this attitude is based on sincerity and the intention to seek Allah's pleasure. The main benefit of this approach is the creation of a balance between helping others and maintaining one's integrity, so that there is no feeling of coercion or excessive burden when assisting.

The *īthār* approach also helps to strengthen self-confidence, because the good behavior carried out is not aimed at gaining social validation, but rather to achieve deeper inner satisfaction. In addition, *īthār* encourages genuine empathy for others, without losing self-control. This allows individuals to provide support wisely, prioritizing the needs of others within certain limits without sacrificing personal responsibility or well-being. Thus, *īthār* becomes an effective alternative to avoid the negative impacts of people-pleasing, creating a more balanced, meaningful life that is in harmony with spiritual values.

The correct application of the concept of *īthār* not only helps in avoiding people pleasing behavior but also improves spiritual quality and inner well-being. *Īthār* has a high spiritual value, so it requires patience and faith. A person who has achieved *īthār* can not only maintain social

interactions but also increase their closeness to Allah to the spiritual peak. By focusing on Allah and maintaining a balance between helping others and taking care of themselves, a person can achieve deeper inner peace and avoid excessive social pressure.

Conclusion

Īthār is an advanced level in the spiritual and social journey of someone who climbs the ladder of faith. In Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's perspective, *īthār* is not just an act of prioritizing the interests of others but also a form of worship that reflects the depth of faith, sincerity, and servitude to Allah. In contrast to people-pleasing, which is driven by the need for social acceptance and often at the expense of self-esteem, *īthār* is born out of high spiritual awareness. This attitude is a manifestation of the *maqam maḥabbatullah*, which is the main motivation in deeds. *īthār* is also the path to *fanā'*, a spiritual state in which one completely lets go of the ego and surrenders oneself to Allah.

As a solution to the problem of people-pleasing, *īthār* provides a balance between caring for others and maintaining one's integrity. By applying the principles of *īthār* that prioritize others in worldly matters, prioritize the pleasure of Allah, and do not attribute glory to oneself, one can build healthier social relationships, increase piety, and achieve inner peace.

Simply put, *īthār* is the art of putting others first without losing oneself. Helping with sincerity, prioritizing the pleasure of Allah, not praise. Balanced empathizing without sacrificing principles, giving without losing, caring without getting caught up in people-pleasing. Therefore, *īthār* is not only a moral value, but also a spiritual path that helps one achieve the perfection of faith and avoid the negative impacts of excessive social pressure.

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