Developing a Conceptual Framework of Rabbani Motivation Based on Ibn al-Qayyim's Thought in Madārij al-Sālikīn

Ismail Maidin*, Sarip Adul, Syamsul Azizul, Saifulazry Mokhtar

Universiti Malaysia Sabah

***Corresponding Author**

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.1017PSY0067

Received: 30 September 2026; Accepted: 05 October 2026; Published: 22 October 2026

ABSTRACT

Contemporary theories of motivation offer important insights into the initiation, direction, and persistence of human behaviour. Developing a motivational framework explicitly grounded in Tawḥīd and the human relationship with Allah requires engagement with Islamic sources. This study develops a conceptual framework of Rabbani Motivation based on Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's thought in Madārij al-Sālikīn. It employs a qualitative library research design combining document analysis, directed qualitative content analysis, and conceptual interpretation. Eleven purposively selected analytical units are examined in context to clarify the meanings, functions, and interrelationships of Maḥabbah (love), Khawf (fear), and Rajāʾ (hope). The analysis interprets Maḥabbah as a guiding devotional orientation, Khawf as moral regulation, and Rajāʾ as encouragement towards effort. Ibn al-Qayyim's bird analogy supports their complementary relationship: love constitutes the head, while fear and hope constitute the two wings supporting the heart's journey towards Allah. The proposed framework, designated MR-MRK, organises these functions within a shared orientation towards seeking Allah's pleasure. Its contribution lies in linking documented textual evidence with differentiated functional interpretations, preliminary operational definitions, candidate indicators, and explicit propositions for subsequent empirical testing. Comparisons with Self-Determination Theory and Regulatory Focus Theory generate propositions concerning the additional explanatory value of devotional orientation, constructive fear, and effort-accompanied hope. The framework represents a focused conceptual synthesis rather than a comprehensive account of all spiritual stations or an empirically validated model. The proposed relationship between hope and sustained perseverance, contextual variations in emphasis, and the framework's measurement structure remain subjects for further investigation.

Keywords: Rabbani Motivation; conceptual framework; Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah; Madārij al-Sālikīn; Islamic psychology.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is central to understanding why individuals initiate actions, pursue particular goals, and sustain their efforts. Established theories offer important explanations of these processes. Maslow (1943), for example, discusses motivation in relation to human needs, while Self-Determination Theory distinguishes intrinsic motivation from different forms of extrinsic motivation and emphasises the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These perspectives provide valuable insights into human functioning. However, their explanatory frameworks are not explicitly grounded in Tawḥīd or the human relationship with Allah. Developing an account of motivation from this foundation therefore requires engagement with Islamic sources and their distinctive understanding of the purpose and orientation of human action. In this study, Rabbani Motivation refers to a motivational orientation grounded in faith and directed towards devotion to Allah and seeking His pleasure. Its focus extends beyond the immediate reasons for performing an action to the spiritual purpose that gives the action meaning. The concept of Rabb places the relationship with Allah at the centre of this orientation, while ʿubūdiyyah situates human conduct within a broader commitment to worship. This perspective invites examination of the inward dispositions through which devotional purpose informs choices and effort.

Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's Madārij al-Sālikīn bayna Manāzil Iyyāka Naʿbudu wa Iyyāka Nastaʿīn provides the primary source for this inquiry. The inclusion of the declaration from Sūrat al-Fātiḥah in its title reflects the central place of worship and reliance on Allah in its treatment of spiritual wayfaring. In the introduction to the work, Ibn al-Qayyim explains that his discussion of al-Fātiḥah encompasses the stations of those journeying towards Allah. He subsequently relates Iyyāka naʿbudu to Allah's divinity and Iyyāka nastaʿīn to His lordship, and explains worship in relation to what Allah loves and approves (Ibn al-Qayyim, 2010, pp. 14–16). Within this devotional context, Ibn al-Qayyim's discussions of Maḥabbah, Khawf, and Rajāʾ provide the impetus for examining their roles in Rabbani Motivation. His bird analogy presents love as the head and fear and hope as the two wings supporting the heart's journey towards Allah (Ibn al-Qayyim, 2010, p. 366). Read alongside his discussions of love's relationship with priorities and obedience, fear's restraint of prohibited conduct, and hope's association with effort, the analogy raises a motivational question: how do these complementary dispositions direct action, regulate moral choices, and encourage continued engagement? Their relevance to this question warrants a functional analysis that distinguishes the classical textual meanings from contemporary conceptual interpretations.

Building on earlier Islamic motivational scholarship, this study therefore aims to clarify the meanings, functions, and interrelationships of Maḥabbah, Khawf, and Rajāʾ in selected passages of Madārij al-Sālikīn and synthesise them into a conceptual framework of Rabbani Motivation, designated MR-MRK. Its proposed contribution lies in articulating how these dispositions may function together as devotional orientation, moral regulation, and encouragement towards effort. The framework provides a basis for preliminary operational definitions and testable propositions, including the proposed relationship between hope accompanied by effort and sustained perseverance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Motivation, Religious Commitment, and Psychological Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) distinguishes intrinsic motivation from forms of extrinsic motivation that differ in their degree of internalisation. Individuals may undertake an activity because they recognise its importance and integrate it with their wider values, even when the activity is not inherently enjoyable (Ryan & Deci, 2020). This distinction is relevant to religious commitments, which may involve demanding responsibilities experienced as personally meaningful. Ryan et al. (1993) examined religious internalisation, providing a basis for considering how the quality of religious commitment relates to psychological experience. SDT offers a useful perspective on the internalisation of religious values, but the theological meanings of Maḥabbah, Khawf, and Rajāʾ require interpretation within their Islamic textual contexts. Love for Allah cannot automatically be classified as intrinsic motivation, while fear of Allah cannot be reduced to external pressure or introjected regulation. Such classifications would overlook the devotional meanings of these dispositions and their relationship with divine accountability.

Regulatory Focus Theory provides another basis for conceptual comparison. Higgins (1997) distinguishes a promotion focus concerned with aspirations and accomplishments from a prevention focus concerned with responsibilities and security. This distinction invites examination of the differentiated motivational functions of hope and fear. Nevertheless, Rajāʾ and Khawf include meanings associated with divine mercy, accountability, and devotion that extend beyond promotion and prevention focus. These comparisons suggest questions for subsequent investigation: whether devotional orientation explains commitment beyond religious internalisation, whether fear-related moral vigilance is distinguishable from general prevention focus, and whether hope accompanied by effort contributes to perseverance beyond general promotion focus. These questions require operational definitions and empirical testing rather than assumptions of equivalence between Islamic and contemporary psychological constructs.

Rabbani Motivation and God-Oriented Action

The term Rabbani indicates an orientation towards Rabb, the Lord. Qurʾān 3:79 associates becoming Rabbāniyyīn with teaching and studying scripture. In the present study, Rabbani Motivation refers to

motivation grounded in faith in Allah and directed towards seeking His pleasure. The term serves as a working concept for the proposed framework rather than the name of a theory formulated by Ibn al-Qayyim. The model attributed to Yusof Ismail (1991, as cited in Saad, 2014, p. 105) places seeking Allah's pleasure at the highest level of Rabbani motivation, while also considering faith, Islamic education, and human needs. It provides an earlier account of how practical concerns and religious purpose can be situated within a common motivational orientation. It is illustrated in the figure below:

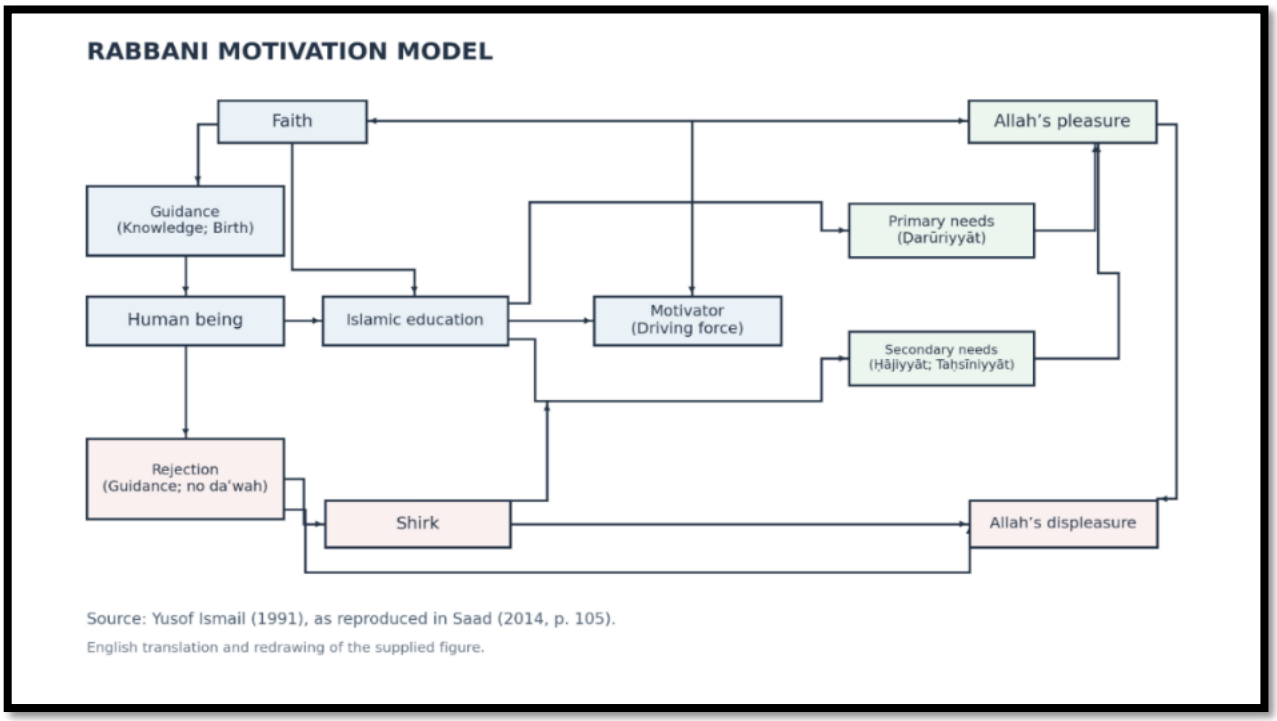


Figure 1. Rabbani Motivation Model

Attribution: Yusof Ismail (1991), as reproduced in Saad (2014, p. 105).

Figure 1 establishes seeking Allah's pleasure as the overarching orientation of Rabbani motivation. Its relevance to the present inquiry lies in this connection between religious purpose and human action. The reproduced figure is treated as a conceptual account; its arrows are not interpreted as empirically established causal relationships.

Abdul Cader (2016) develops a broader model of Islamic work motivation linking tawḥīd, faith, the states of the nafs, action, and rewards and punishment. His account incorporates sincerity, knowledge, patience, reliance on Allah, and piety. It also discusses love of Allah, hope for His reward, and fear of His punishment. This model demonstrates that the integration of theological commitments and motivational processes already has an established place in Islamic motivational scholarship. Empirical work provides a further methodological precedent. Sudarti and Fachrunnisa (2024) developed and examined a measure of achievement motivation from an Islamic perspective. Their study illustrates how religiously informed motivational concepts can be translated into indicators and assessed empirically. Its construct and occupational setting differ from those of MR-MRK, so its findings provide a precedent for measurement development rather than validation of the present framework.

Spiritual Orientation and Ethical Conduct

Wan Khairuldin et al. (2025) propose a framework of academic integrity grounded in the Islamic intellectual tradition. Their analysis connects spiritual responsibility with ethical dispositions, including ikhlāṣ, amānah, ṣidq, ʿadl, and taqwā, and relates these dispositions to scholarly practice. This offers a domain-specific example of how inward commitments can inform outward conduct:

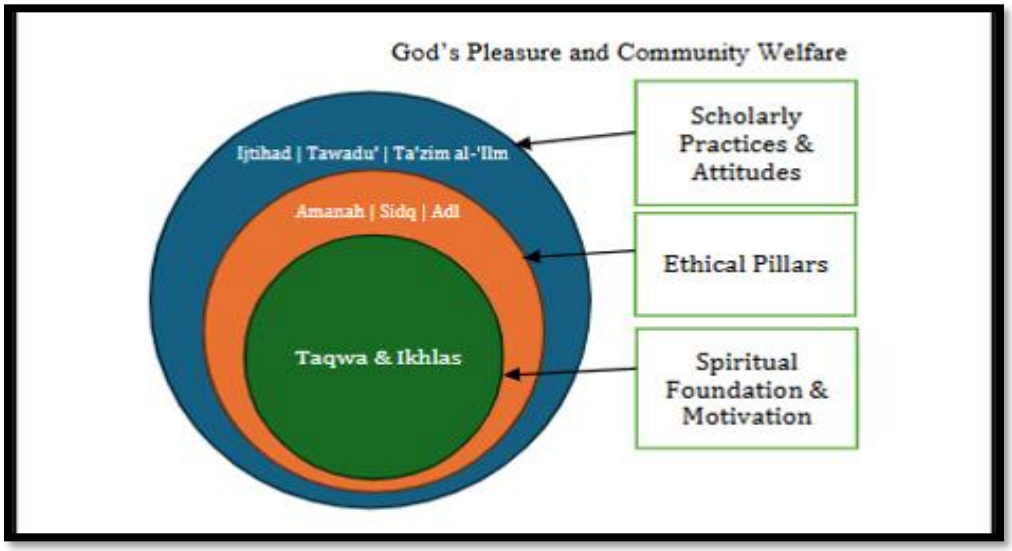


Figure 2. Islamic Model of Academic Integrity

Attribution: Wan Khairuldin et al., (2025: p 496)

Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual connection between spiritual foundations and ethical scholarly conduct. Its relevance to the present study concerns the relationship between inward commitment and practice. Academic integrity remains its principal subject, whereas MR-MRK examines the motivational significance of selected dispositions of the heart. The two frameworks therefore address related concerns at different levels of analysis.

Previous Research on Ibn al-Qayyim

Scholarship on Ibn al-Qayyim provides the intellectual context for examining these dispositions. Anjum (2010) investigates Ibn al-Qayyim's objectives in Madārij al-Sālikīn, providing a relevant point of reference for locating the work within its theological and spiritual setting. This contextual attention is important when interpreting classical discussions for a contemporary motivational framework. Hasibuan and Panjaitan (2020) examine the protection of learning interest and motivation through a library-based analysis of Ad-Dāʾ wa al-Dawāʾ. They emphasise maintaining the condition of the heart alongside faith and piety. Their study directly connects Ibn al-Qayyim's thought with motivation and demonstrates that the motivational relevance of the heart has already received scholarly attention. Its principal focus is the preservation of learning motivation through attention to spiritual and moral conditions.

Arroisi et al. (2021) examine Sufistic psychotherapy through spiritual purification, worship, and the cultivation of spiritual stations. Their discussion includes Maḥabbah, Khawf, and Rajāʾ among these stations and considers the heart's relationship with intention and action. This overlap requires the present study to distinguish its contribution through its analytical focus rather than the selection of the three concepts alone. Hussin (2026) examines Ibn al-Qayyim's conception of the soul and its relevance to contemporary psychology. Her account highlights the primacy of the heart, ethical accountability, and the interdependence of heart, mind, and behaviour. It provides a broader psychological context for the present inquiry, while MR-MRK concentrates on the functional relationships among three selected spiritual dispositions.

Positioning and Conceptual Contribution of MR-MRK

MR-MRK builds on these earlier accounts by providing a focused interpretation of Maḥabbah, Khawf, and Rajāʾ in Madārij al-Sālikīn. Its proposed contribution concerns how the three dispositions can be organised into a connected explanation of motivational orientation, moral regulation, and sustained effort. In relation to Yusof Ismail's account, the framework retains seeking Allah's pleasure as the ultimate orientation and elaborates how that orientation may guide action through complementary dispositions of the heart. In relation to Abdul Cader's model, it narrows the analytical focus from a broad system of Islamic work motivation to

the textual meanings and functional relationships of love, fear, and hope. In relation to existing Ibn al-Qayyim scholarship, it connects selected passages with explicit functional interpretations and a proposed motivational synthesis.

Table 1. Positioning MR-MRK in Relation to Earlier Scholarship

Model or Study	Relevant Focus	Proposed Contribution of MR-MRK
Yusof Ismail (1991, as cited in Saad, 2014, p. 105)	Seeking Allah's pleasure as the highest orientation of Rabbani motivation, alongside faith, Islamic education, and human needs.	Elaborates how this orientation may guide action through complementary dispositions of the heart.
Abdul Cader (2016)	Islamic work motivation linking faith, states of the nafs, action, and rewards and punishment; includes love, hope, and fear.	Provides a focused textual interpretation of the three dispositions and their functional relationships.
Anjum (2010)	Ibn al-Qayyim's objectives in Madārij al-Sālikīn.	Develops a motivational synthesis that requires attention to the work's theological and spiritual context.
Hasibuan and Panjaitan (2020)	Protection of learning interest and motivation through attention to the heart, faith, and piety.	Differentiates the proposed roles of guiding orientation, moral regulation, and sustained effort.
Arroisi et al. (2021)	Spiritual purification, Sufistic psychotherapy, and spiritual stations.	Examines the motivational functions and interrelationships of the selected dispositions.
Hussin (2026)	Ibn al-Qayyim's conception of the soul and its relevance to contemporary psychology.	Offers a specific motivational account centred on Maḥabbah, Khawf, and Rajāʾ.

Source: Authors' comparative synthesis of the cited literature. The distinctions concern analytical focus rather than the complete absence of particular concepts from earlier scholarship.

Table 1 positions MR-MRK as a conceptual elaboration within existing scholarship. The framework interprets Maḥabbah as a guiding devotional orientation, Khawf as moral regulation, and Rajāʾ as encouragement towards effort, with sustained perseverance proposed as a relationship for subsequent investigation. These functional descriptions are contemporary interpretations whose adequacy depends on their textual support. The proposed contribution combines differentiated functions, an account of their complementary relationship, and a documented connection between source passages and conceptual claims.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative library research design, combining document analysis, directed qualitative content analysis, and conceptual interpretation to develop a framework of Rabbani Motivation from Ibn al-Qayyim's Madārij al-Sālikīn. Document analysis provides a methodological basis for examining written materials as qualitative data (Bowen, 2009), while Jabareen's (2009) approach to conceptual framework analysis informs the identification of concepts and examination of their relationships. The inquiry examines selected psychospiritual concepts without collecting field data or involving human participants.

Textual Sources

The primary source is Ibn al-Qayyim's Madārij al-Sālikīn bayna Manāzil Iyyāka Naʿbudu wa Iyyāka Nastaʿīn. The analysis focuses on Maḥabbah, Khawf, and Rajāʾ as acts of the heart, together with passages concerning

their interrelationships and implications for conduct. The textual review uses the scanned first edition published by Muʾassasat al-Risālah Nāshirūn in 1431 AH/2010 CE. Source locations are reported using the printed page numbers visible in the scan. Pagination from other editions is not treated as interchangeable. Relevant classical works and contemporary scholarship provide contextual comparison, while the selected primary passages provide the textual basis for the proposed functional interpretations.

Textual Selection and Documentation

Passages were selected purposively according to four inclusion criteria: they defined or clarified a selected concept, explained its relationship with action, described relationships among the concepts, or identified conditions that qualified an interpretation. A passing reference to a concept was insufficient to establish a motivational function. The subject index was used to locate relevant discussions, followed by direct inspection of the scanned pages and their surrounding arguments. The documented corpus comprises 11 analytical units, identified as S01–S11, from printed pages 363–364, 366–367, 399, 755, and 757. Pages 362, 398, and 756 were consulted for contextual reading and were not counted as additional units.

The selected passages address the complementarity of love, fear, and hope; contextual emphasis among these dispositions; hope accompanied by effort; praiseworthy and blameworthy hope; the restraining function and limits of fear; and the relationship of love with devotional priority, alignment, obedience, sincerity, and following the beloved. They also qualify the interpretation of fear through its relationship with knowledge and identify limitations in defining love. The unit of analysis was a passage expressing a distinct argument or a connected set of statements addressing the same analytical question. Boundaries followed the argument rather than the physical page. Closely connected statements were retained together when separation would remove a relevant qualification. Accordingly, the discussion of praiseworthy fear and its limits on page 364 was treated as one unit, whereas separate numbered statements concerning love on page 757 were treated as distinct units. Repeated citation did not increase the count. The 11-unit count applies to the textual record presented in Tables 2 and 3. It does not imply an exhaustive analysis of Madārij al-Sālikīn. References within these units to repentance, reliance on Allah, and sincerity inform the discussion of related spiritual dispositions, but do not constitute a comprehensive analysis of their respective stations.

Coding and Contextual Interpretation

Directed qualitative content analysis begins with categories informed by existing knowledge and the research question (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Maḥabbah, Khawf, and Rajāʾ provided the initial categories, while relational passages could receive codes associated with more than one category. Descriptive coding preceded functional interpretation. For example, the distinction between hope and wishful thinking was coded as "hope accompanied by effort." Its relevance to sustained action was then considered as an interpretive connection rather than a literal translation of the source.

The coding structure remained open to additional meanings and qualifying evidence, consistent with the combination of deductive and inductive analysis discussed by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). Interpretation considered terminology, surrounding argument, and attribution. Ibn al-Qayyim's explanations were distinguished from statements he reported from earlier authorities and from the authors' contemporary interpretations. Guiding devotional orientation, moral regulation, and perseverance were therefore treated as proposed functional descriptions requiring textual justification.

Table 2. Coding and Interpretive Record of the Selected Textual Corpus

ID	Printed Page(S)	Descriptive Code	Textual Basis	Proposed Interpretation and Qualification
S01	366	Complementarity	Bird analogy: love as the head, fear and hope as the wings.	Supports joint consideration of the three dispositions; does not establish fixed proportions or a measurement structure.

S02	366–367	Contextual emphasis and reported views	Discussion of health, approaching death, balance, and the predominance of love.	Identifies contextual qualifications; reported views require attribution and cannot be generalised to all settings.
S03	399	Hope accompanied by effort	Hope is distinguished from wishful thinking through effort and reliance on Allah.	Supports an action-oriented interpretation of Rajāʾ; long-term perseverance remains a further proposition.
S04	399	Praiseworthy and blameworthy hope	Hope associated with obedience or repentance is distinguished from hope accompanying persistent wrongdoing without action.	Connects hope with conduct; hope is not assumed to be uniformly constructive.
S05	364	Moral restraint and limits of fear	Fear restrains prohibited conduct, while excessive fear risks despair.	Supports interpreting Khawf as moral regulation; does not establish clinical or psychometric thresholds.
S06	757	Devotional priority	Giving precedence to the beloved is discussed as an effect of love.	Supports a guiding-orientation interpretation of Maḥabbah; its motivational application is the authors' synthesis.
S07	757	Alignment with the beloved's will	Alignment with the beloved's will, commands, and what pleases the beloved.	Connects devotional orientation with choices; is not equated with psychological internalisation.
S08	757	Love expressed through obedience	A statement attributed to Sahl ibn ʿAbd Allāh connects love with obedience and avoidance of disobedience.	Supports a relationship between love and conduct; the attribution is retained.
S09	363	Knowledge-related distinction between Khawf and Khashyah	Khashyah is described as more specific than Khawf and as fear accompanied by knowledge.	Clarifies distinctions among related spiritual terms; does not establish an empirical relationship between knowledge and moral restraint.
S10	755	Love nurtured through sincerity and following the beloved	Love is compared to a tree nourished by sincerity and following the beloved, producing fruits and supporting movement towards the beloved.	Relates devotional orientation to sincerity, following, and action; does not independently demonstrate psychological causation or long-term perseverance.
S11	755	Limits of definition and descriptions through effects	Love is discussed through its causes, requirements, signs, fruits, and implications rather than an exhaustive definition.	Supports a selective functional account; does not rule out developing preliminary operational definitions.

Source: Authors' textual analysis of Ibn al-Qayyim's Madārij al-Sālikīn, Muʾassasat al-Risālah Nāshirūn edition, 1431 AH/2010 CE.

Table 2 presents the coding and interpretive record of the selected textual corpus. "S" denotes a selected passage. The identifiers S01–S11 link the 11 analytical units with their Arabic passages and English translations in Table 3. These identifiers were assigned for the present study and do not originate from the source text.

Arabic Transcription and Translation

The selected Arabic passages are reproduced in Table 3 to make the textual basis of the analysis accessible. Their wording was compared with the scanned pages. Additional vocalisation was supplied editorially to assist reading and is distinguished from the wording reproduced from the edition. The English translations were prepared for the present analysis, with attention to contextual meaning and the attribution of statements. The Arabic transcriptions, editorially supplied vocalisation, and English translations were reviewed by three graduates of al-Azhar University with relevant expertise in Arabic and classical Islamic texts. The review assessed correspondence with the source text, accuracy of vocalisation, fidelity to the Arabic meaning, and clarity of English expression. Corrections arising from the review were incorporated into the final versions.

Table 3. Selected Arabic Passages with Editorial Vocalisation and Reviewed English Translations

ID and Printed Page(S)	Arabic passage	Reviewed English Translation
S01- p.366	الْقَلْبُ فِي سَيْرِهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الطَّائِرِ؛ فَالْمَحَبَّةُ رَأْسُهُ، وَالْخَوْفُ وَالرَّجَاءُ جَنَاحَاهُ، فَمَتَى سَلِمَ الرَّأْسُ وَالْجَنَاحَانِ فَالطَّائِرُ جَيِّدُ الطَّيَرَانِ، وَمَتَى قُطِعَ الرَّأْسُ مَاتَ الطَّائِرُ، وَمَتَى فُقِدَ الْجَنَاحَانِ فَهُوَ عُرْضَةٌ لِكُلِّ صَائِدٍ وَكَاسِرٍ.	As the heart journeys towards Allah, Mighty and Majestic, it is like a bird: love is its head, and fear and hope are its two wings. With its head and both wings intact, the bird flies well. If its head is severed, it dies; if it loses both wings, it becomes vulnerable to every hunter and bird of prey.
S02- pp.366–367	وَلَكِنَّ السَّلَفَ اسْتَحَبُّوا أَنْ يُقَوِّيَ فِي الصِّحَّةِ جَنَاحَ الْخَوْفِ عَلَى جَنَاحِ الرَّجَاءِ، وَعِنْدَ الْخُرُوجِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا يُقَوِّي جَنَاحَ الرَّجَاءِ عَلَى جَنَاحِ الْخَوْفِ، هَذِهِ طَرِيقَةُ أَبِي سُلَيْمَانَ وَغَيْرِهِ، قَالَ: وَيَنْبَغِي لِلْقَلْبِ أَنْ يَكُونَ الْغَالِبُ عَلَيْهِ الْخَوْفَ، فَإِنْ كَانَ الْغَالِبُ عَلَيْهِ الرَّجَاءَ فَسَدَ. وَقَالَ غَيْرُهُ: أَكْمَلُ الْأَحْوَالِ: اعْتِدَالُ الرَّجَاءِ وَالْخَوْفِ وَغَلَبَةُ الْحُبِّ، فَالْمَحَبَّةُ هِيَ الْمَرْكَبُ، وَالرَّجَاءُ حَادٍ، وَالْخَوْفُ سَائِقٌ، وَاللَّهُ الْمُوصِلُ بِمَنِّهِ وَكَرَمِهِ.	However, the early scholars preferred giving greater strength to the wing of fear than to the wing of hope while in good health, and strengthening the wing of hope over that of fear as death approached. This was the approach of Abū Sulaymān and others. He said, "Fear should predominate in the heart, for if hope predominates, the heart becomes corrupted." Others said, "The most complete state is one in which hope and fear are balanced and love predominates. Love is the mount, hope is the guide who urges it onward, and fear is the driver. It is Allah who brings one to the destination through His grace and generosity."
S03 -p.399	وَالْفَرْقُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ «التَّمَنِّي» يَكُونُ مَعَ الْكَسَلِ، وَلَا يَسْلُكُ بِصَاحِبِهِ طَرِيقَ الْجِدِّ وَالِاجْتِهَادِ. وَ«الرَّجَاءُ» يَكُونُ مَعَ بَذْلِ الْجُهْدِ وَحُسْنِ التَّوَكُّلِ. فَالْأَوَّلُ: كَحَالِ مَنْ يَتَمَنَّى أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَرْضٌ يَبْذُرُهَا وَيَأْخُذُ زَرْعَهَا. وَالثَّانِي: كَحَالِ مَنْ يَشُقُّ أَرْضَهُ وَيَفْلَحُهَا وَيَبْذُرُهَا وَيَرْجُو طُلُوعَ الزَّرْعِ. وَلِهَذَا أَجْمَعَ الْعَارِفُونَ عَلَى أَنَّ «الرَّجَاءَ» لَا يَصِحُّ إِلَّا مَعَ الْعَمَلِ.	The difference between hope and wishful thinking is that wishful thinking is accompanied by laziness and does not move a person towards earnest endeavour. Hope, by contrast, is accompanied by effort and proper reliance on Allah. The former is like someone who merely wishes to have land to sow and a harvest to reap. The latter is like someone who tills, cultivates, and sows the land, hoping that the crop will grow. For this reason, those with spiritual insight unanimously agree that genuine hope must be accompanied by action.
S04 -p.399	وَالرَّجَاءُ ثَلَاثَةُ أَنْوَاعٍ: نَوْعَانِ مَحْمُودَانِ، وَنَوْعٌ غُرُورٌ مَذْمُومٌ. فَالْأَوَّلَانِ: رَجَاءُ رَجُلٍ عَمِلَ بِطَاعَةِ اللَّهِ عَلَى نُورٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ، فَهُوَ رَاجٍ لِثَوَابِهِ، وَرَجُلٍ أَذْنَبَ ذَنْبًا ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فَهُوَ رَاجٍ لِمَغْفِرَتِهِ. وَالثَّالِثُ: رَجُلٌ مُتَمَادٍ فِي التَّفْرِيطِ وَالْخَطَايَا، يَرْجُو رَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ بِلَا عَمَلٍ، فَهَذَا هُوَ الْغُرُورُ وَالتَّمَنِّي وَالرَّجَاءُ الْكَاذِبُ.	Hope is of three kinds: two are praiseworthy, while the third is a form of blameworthy self-delusion. The first is the hope of someone who acts in obedience to Allah, guided by light from Him, and hopes for His reward. The second is the hope of someone who has committed a sin, then repented to Allah Most High, and hopes for His forgiveness. The third is the hope of someone who persists in negligence and sin, yet expects Allah's mercy without taking action. This is self-delusion, wishful thinking, and false hope.

S05 – **p.364**	وَالْخَوْفُ الْمَحْمُودُ الصَّادِقُ: مَا حَالَ بَيْنَ صَاحِبِهِ وَبَيْنَ مَحَارِمِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، فَإِذَا تَجَاوَزَ ذَلِكَ خِيفَ مِنْهُ الْيَأْسُ وَالْقُنُوطُ. قَالَ أَبُو عُثْمَانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: صِدْقُ الْخَوْفِ هُوَ الْوَرَعُ عَنِ الْآثَامِ ظَاهِرًا وَبَاطِنًا. وَسَمِعْتُ شَيْخَ الْإِسْلَامِ ابْنَ تَيْمِيَّةَ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ يَقُولُ: الْخَوْفُ الْمَحْمُودُ مَا حَجَزَكَ عَنْ مَحَارِمِ اللَّهِ.	Genuine, praiseworthy fear is that which keeps a person from doing what Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has forbidden. If it exceeds this limit, there is a danger that it may lead to hopelessness and despair. Abū ʿUthmān, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Genuine fear consists in scrupulously avoiding sins, both outwardly and inwardly." Ibn al-Qayyim then states, "I heard Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, say, 'Praiseworthy fear is that which restrains you from doing what Allah has forbidden.'"
S06 – **p.757**	الثَّانِي: إِيثَارُ الْمَحْبُوبِ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْمَصْحُوبِ. وَهَذَا حُكْمٌ مِنْ أَحْكَامِ الْمَحَبَّةِ، وَأَثَرٌ مِنْ آثَارِهَا.	Second: giving precedence to the beloved over all other attachments. This is one of love's implications and one of its effects.
S07 – **p.757**	الْخَامِسُ: مُوَاطَأَةُ الْقَلْبِ لِإِرَادَاتِ الْمَحْبُوبِ. وَهَذَا أَيْضًا مِنْ مُوجَبَاتِهَا وَأَحْكَامِهَا، وَ«الْمُوَاطَأَةُ»: الْمُوَافَقَةُ لِإِرَادَاتِ الْمَحْبُوبِ وَأَوَامِرِهِ وَمَرَاضِيهِ.	Fifth: aligning the heart with the will of the beloved. This, too, is one of love's requirements and implications. "Alignment" means being in accord with the beloved's will, commands, and what pleases the beloved.
S08 – **p.757**	التَّاسِعُ: مُعَانَقَةُ الطَّاعَةِ، وَمُبَايَنَةُ الْمُخَالَفَةِ. وَهُوَ لِسَهْلِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، وَهُوَ أَيْضًا حُكْمُ الْمَحَبَّةِ وَمُوجَبُهَا.	Ninth: embracing obedience and distancing oneself from disobedience. This saying is attributed to Sahl ibn ʿAbd Allāh. It, too, expresses an implication and requirement of love.
S09 – **p.363**	وَ«الْخَشْيَةُ» أَخَصُّ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ؛ فَإِنَّ الْخَشْيَةَ لِلْعُلَمَاءِ بِاللَّهِ، قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ﴾، فَهِيَ خَوْفٌ مَقْرُونٌ بِمَعْرِفَةٍ، وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: «إِنِّي أَتْقَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ، وَأَشَدُّكُمْ لَهُ خَشْيَةً».	Khashyah is more specific than fear, for it belongs to those who have knowledge of Allah. Allah Most High says, "Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah" (Qur'an 35:28). It is therefore fear accompanied by knowledge. The Prophet ﷺ said, "I am the most mindful of Allah among you and the most deeply fearful of Him."
S10 – **p.755**	إِذَا غُرِسَتْ شَجَرَةُ الْمَحَبَّةِ فِي الْقَلْبِ، وَسُقِيَتْ بِمَاءِ الْإِخْلَاصِ، وَمُتَابَعَةِ الْحَبِيبِ: أَثْمَرَتْ أَنْوَاعَ الثِّمَارِ، وَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا، أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ فِي قَرَارِ الْقَلْبِ، وَفَرْعُهَا مُتَّصِلٌ بِسِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى. لَا يَزَالُ سَعْيُ الْمُحِبِّ صَاعِدًا إِلَى حَبِيبِهِ، لَا يَحْجُبُهُ دُونَهُ شَيْءٌ ﴿إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ﴾.	When the tree of love is planted in the heart and watered with sincerity and following the beloved, it bears many kinds of fruit and yields its produce at all times by its Lord's permission. Its roots are firmly established in the depths of the heart, and its branches reach the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary. The lover's striving continues to ascend towards the beloved, with nothing standing in its way: "To Him ascends good speech, and righteous action raises it" (Qur'an 35:10).
S11 – **p.755**	لَا تُحَدُّ الْمَحَبَّةُ بِحَدٍّ أَوْضَحَ مِنْهَا، فَالْحُدُودُ لَا تَزِيدُهَا إِلَّا خَفَاءً وَجَفَاءً، فَحَدُّهَا وُجُودُهَا، وَلَا تُوصَفُ الْمَحَبَّةُ بِوَصْفٍ أَظْهَرَ مِنَ الْمَحَبَّةِ. وَإِنَّمَا يَتَكَلَّمُ النَّاسُ فِي أَسْبَابِهَا وَمُوجَبَاتِهَا، وَعَلَامَاتِهَا وَشَوَاهِدِهَا، وَثَمَرَاتِهَا وَأَحْكَامِهَا، فَحُدُودُهُمْ وَرُسُومُهُمْ دَارَتْ عَلَى هَذِهِ السِّتَّةِ، وَتَنَوَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْعِبَارَاتُ، وَكَثُرَتِ الْإِشَارَاتُ، بِحَسَبِ إِدْرَاكِ الشَّخْصِ، وَمَقَامِهِ وَحَالِهِ، وَمَلَكَتِهِ لِلْعِبَارَةِ.	Love cannot be defined by anything clearer than itself; definitions only make it more obscure and remote. Its definition lies in its existence, and no description makes love clearer than love itself. People instead discuss its causes and requirements, its signs and evidence, and its fruits and implications. Their definitions and descriptions revolve around these six aspects. Their expressions vary and their allusions are numerous, according to each person's understanding, spiritual station, state, and ability to express themselves.

Source: Selected passages from the Muʾassasat al-Risālah Nāshirūn edition of Madārij al-Sālikīn, 1431 AH/2010 CE.

Note on S03: The translation clarifies that laziness refers to wishful thinking, as indicated by the passage's contrast with hope accompanied by effort.

Conceptual Synthesis and Analytical Transparency

Conceptual synthesis examined how the coded passages could inform a connected account of motivation oriented towards Allah's pleasure. Following Jabareen (2009), it considered both conceptual distinctions and relationships. The bird analogy supported joint consideration of the three dispositions, while passages addressing their characteristics and implications supplied evidence for the proposed functional interpretations. The interpretive audit trail linked each unit to its source location, Arabic passage, reviewed English translation, descriptive code, interpretation, and qualification. Tables 2 and 3 make these connections accessible. Statements attributed to earlier authorities were retained as part of Ibn al-Qayyim's discussion without being presented as his original formulations. The synthesis interprets Maḥabbah as a guiding devotional orientation, Khawf as moral regulation, and Rajāʾ as encouragement towards effort. The extension from effort to sustained perseverance remains a proposition requiring further investigation. Relationships with sincerity, repentance, and reliance on Allah are discussed within the limits of the selected passages. No comprehensive account of all spiritual stations is claimed. These interpretations inform the preliminary operational definitions, candidate indicators, and testable propositions presented in the findings and discussion. They do not establish fixed proportions, a validated factor structure, or demonstrated psychological effects.

Researcher Reflexivity

The authors acknowledge that their engagement with Islamic scholarship and their intention to develop a Rabbani Motivation framework may influence passage selection and interpretation. Contemporary psychological terminology may also shape their reading of classical concepts. The analysis addresses these influences by distinguishing textual statements from contemporary interpretations, retaining qualifying evidence, and identifying statements attributed to earlier authorities. Agreement among the authors is treated as internal scholarly scrutiny rather than independent validation of the framework.

FINDINGS

Devotional Orientation of the Framework

The selected passages support a conceptual account of motivation directed towards Allah within the study's Tawḥīd-grounded perspective. The bird analogy explicitly situates the heart's journey towards Allah (S01), while the discussion of hope connects action with expectations of divine reward, forgiveness, and mercy (S04). The discussion of fear concerns restraint from what Allah has prohibited (S05). Together, these passages provide a basis for examining motivation through the relationship between inward spiritual dispositions and religiously meaningful conduct. Within this study, Rabbani Motivation refers to a motivational orientation grounded in faith and directed towards devotion to Allah and seeking His pleasure. This is the authors' conceptual formulation rather than a definition quoted directly from Ibn al-Qayyim. Its textual basis is developed through the selected passages concerning love, fear, hope, and their implications for action.

Maḥabbah: A Guiding Devotional Orientation

The analysis interprets Maḥabbah as a guiding devotional orientation through three related features: giving precedence to the beloved, aligning the heart with the beloved's will, and expressing love through obedience. S06 describes giving precedence to the beloved as an effect of love. S07 connects love with the heart's alignment with the beloved's will, commands, and what pleases the beloved. These statements support interpreting love as a disposition that informs priorities and choices. Within MR-MRK, their motivational significance lies in directing intention and conduct towards Allah's pleasure. S08 associates love with embracing obedience and distancing oneself from disobedience. The statement is attributed to Sahl ibn ʿAbd Allāh within Ibn al-Qayyim's discussion and is retained with that attribution. It connects love with conduct, although obedience alone does not establish the presence or intensity of love. S10 broadens this interpretation by comparing love to a tree nurtured through sincerity and following the beloved. The imagery links inward devotion with its cultivation and fruits. It therefore supports considering Maḥabbah in relation to sincerity and action rather than treating it solely as an emotional experience. S11 also places an important limit on

conceptualisation. Ibn al-Qayyim discusses the difficulty of defining love and explains that descriptions commonly concern its causes, requirements, signs, fruits, and implications. Accordingly, the guiding-orientation interpretation adopted here describes selected functional aspects of Maḥabbah. It does not exhaust its spiritual meaning.

Khawf: Moral Regulation with Explicit Limits

The analysis interprets constructive Khawf as moral regulation because the selected discussion explicitly connects praiseworthy fear with restraint from prohibited conduct. S05 describes genuine, praiseworthy fear as that which stands between a person and what Allah has forbidden. The accompanying statements attributed to Abū ʿUthmān and Ibn Taymiyyah reinforce the relationship between fear and avoidance of sin. Within MR-MRK, moral regulation therefore refers to the proposed role of fear in restraining choices that conflict with religious obligations and prohibitions. The same unit qualifies this function. Fear that exceeds its constructive role is presented as risking hopelessness and despair. The framework consequently does not assume that greater fear is always preferable. Its concern is fear associated with morally meaningful restraint, interpreted alongside hope and love. S09 further distinguishes Khashyah from Khawf, describing the former as more specific and accompanied by knowledge. This distinction indicates that related spiritual terms should not be treated as interchangeable. Although it informs the contextual interpretation of fear, it does not establish that increased knowledge produces greater moral restraint as an empirical effect. The designation "moral regulation" is the authors' functional interpretation. It is not a literal translation of Khawf, a clinical description of anxiety, or an established psychological measurement dimension.

Rajāʾ: Hope Accompanied by Effort

The selected passages connect constructive Rajāʾ with effort, obedience, and repentance, distinguishing it from wishful thinking. S03 contrasts hope accompanied by effort and reliance on Allah with wishful thinking associated with laziness. The agricultural comparison makes the distinction concrete: wishing for a harvest differs from cultivating and sowing the land while hoping that crops will grow. The passage thus supports an action-oriented interpretation of hope. S04 distinguishes two praiseworthy forms of hope from a blameworthy form. Hope for reward accompanies obedience, and hope for forgiveness accompanies repentance. By contrast, expecting mercy while persisting in negligence and wrongdoing without action is classified as self-delusion and false hope. These distinctions indicate that the motivational significance of Rajāʾ depends on its relationship with conduct. Within MR-MRK, it is interpreted as encouragement towards effort grounded in expectations of Allah's mercy, forgiveness, and reward. The extension from effort to sustained perseverance is a further conceptual proposition. The selected passages justify linking hope with action, but do not independently demonstrate persistence over time, psychological resilience, or recovery from emotional difficulties.

Complementarity and Contextual Emphasis

S01 provides a textual basis for considering the three dispositions together. In the bird analogy, love constitutes the head, while fear and hope constitute the two wings. The imagery presents their joint importance to the heart's journey towards Allah. The proposed functions of orientation, regulation, and encouragement are developed by reading the analogy alongside the passages addressing the individual dispositions. The analogy alone does not establish these functions, assign numerical proportions, or specify a psychological factor structure. S02 introduces contextual qualifications. Ibn al-Qayyim reports an approach favouring greater emphasis on fear during health and greater emphasis on hope as death approaches. He also reports another view describing the most complete state as a balance of fear and hope with love predominating. These positions are retained as reported views rather than combined into a single universal rule. For MR-MRK, complementarity therefore means that love, fear, and hope are considered together while retaining their differentiated functions. Balance does not require equal intensity or fixed proportions. The selected discussion supports contextual emphasis in the circumstances it identifies; its application to teaching, employment, or other contemporary settings remains a subject for further investigation.

Scope of the Three-Construct Framework and Related Spiritual Stations

The selection of Maḥabbah, Khawf, and Rajāʾ is justified by their explicit joint treatment in S01 and by the differentiated relationships with conduct documented elsewhere in the corpus. They provide a focused basis for examining devotional direction, moral restraint, and encouragement towards effort. Their sufficiency is therefore relative to the framework's analytical purpose. The three constructs organise the functions examined in this study; they are not presented as an exhaustive account of motivation or of all spiritual stations in Madārij al-Sālikīn. The selected passages also show that these dispositions operate in relation to other spiritual qualities. S10 associates the cultivation of love with sincerity and following the beloved. S03 connects hope with effort and reliance on Allah, while S04 connects hope for forgiveness with repentance. These relationships prevent the triad from being interpreted as spiritually isolated or self-sufficient. Within the present synthesis, sincerity qualifies devotional intention, following the beloved connects love with conduct, reliance on Allah accompanies effort, and repentance provides a context for hope in forgiveness. Their placement as related qualities reflect the study's limited analytical scope rather than a claim that they are less important. The corpus does not provide a separate analysis of ṣabr or establish a comprehensive hierarchy among spiritual stations. Claims about their wider relationships require further textual examination.

Preliminary Operational Definitions and Candidate Indicators

To clarify the framework's potential practical use, Table 4 translates the functional interpretations into preliminary operational definitions and candidate indicators. The indicators identify possible domains for future assessment. They are not validated questionnaire items or established scoring criteria.

Table 4. Preliminary Operational Definitions and Candidate Indicators for MR-MRK

Construct	Preliminary operational definition	Candidate indicators	Textual basis	Interpretive boundary
Maḥabbah	The extent to which love for Allah informs a person's devotional priorities, intentions, and choices.	Giving priority to Allah's pleasure when choices conflict; seeking alignment with divine commands; describing love for Allah as a reason for obedience; attending to sincerity in action.	S06–S08, S10–S11	Behaviour alone cannot establish love or sincerity. The definition captures selected functional aspects rather than the entirety of Maḥabbah.
Khawf	The extent to which fear of displeasing Allah or of the consequences of wrongdoing informs restraint from prohibited conduct.	Identifying fear of Allah as a reason for refraining from wrongdoing; considering religious prohibitions before acting; exercising vigilance against sin while remaining open to repentance and mercy.	S05, with contextual qualification from S09	Assessment should distinguish constructive restraint from general anxiety, hopelessness, or despair. No clinical threshold is proposed.
Rajāʾ	The extent to which hope in Allah's mercy, forgiveness, and reward accompanies intended effort, obedience, and repentance.	Expecting divine reward while undertaking obedience; hoping for forgiveness while taking steps towards repentance; pairing hopeful expectations with practical effort; distinguishing hope from expectations unsupported by action.	S03–S04	Hope is not assumed to be uniformly constructive. Its relationship with sustained perseverance requires subsequent investigation.

Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis of the selected passages documented in Tables 2 and 3.

These definitions preserve the divine referent of each construct while identifying aspects that could be examined through interviews, reflective accounts, or future instruments. Assessment should distinguish the spiritual reason for acting from the behaviour being predicted. For example, an indicator of love-based intention should not simply repeat an outcome measure of commitment or obedience. The three conceptual distinctions do not predetermine three empirically separable factors. Their measurement structure, overlap, and relationships with behaviour require investigation.

Propositions Arising from the Textual Synthesis

The findings support preliminary propositions for subsequent empirical examination. These propositions express the authors' interpretation and are not empirical findings of the present study.

Table 5. Preliminary Testable Propositions Derived from MR-MRK

Proposition	Proposed Relationship	Textual Basis	Possible Empirical Examination
P1: Devotional Orientation	Stronger love-based devotional orientation will be associated with greater subsequent commitment to personally endorsed religious duties.	S06–S08, S10	Assess devotional reasons for action separately from later commitment and conduct.
P2: Moral Restraint	Constructive fear of Allah will be associated with greater restraint when individuals encounter opportunities for prohibited conduct.	S05	Examine responses to ethically relevant situations while distinguishing religious fear from general anxiety.
P3: Effort-Accompanied Hope	Hope accompanied by willingness to exert effort will predict greater subsequent follow-through than hopeful expectations unsupported by effort.	S03–S04	Compare initial hopeful expectations and intentions with later action, using measures that do not duplicate the outcome.
P4: Perseverance	Effort-accompanied hope will be associated with continued engagement following setbacks.	S03–S04; extended conceptual interpretation	Use repeated observations to assess persistence over time. This proposition extends beyond the directly documented relationship between hope and action.

Source: Authors' propositions derived from the textual analysis.

The comparison with contemporary motivational theories should examine whether these explicitly devotional constructs offer additional explanatory value beyond established psychological variables. Their similarity to general commitment, restraint, or hopeful expectations does not establish conceptual equivalence. The comparative theoretical rationale is developed in the discussion.

Synthesis of the MR-MRK Framework

The findings bring the selected interpretations together within MR-MRK: Maḥabbah provides a guiding devotional orientation, Khawf contributes moral regulation, and Rajāʾ encourages effort. Their shared orientation is devotion to Allah and seeking His pleasure.

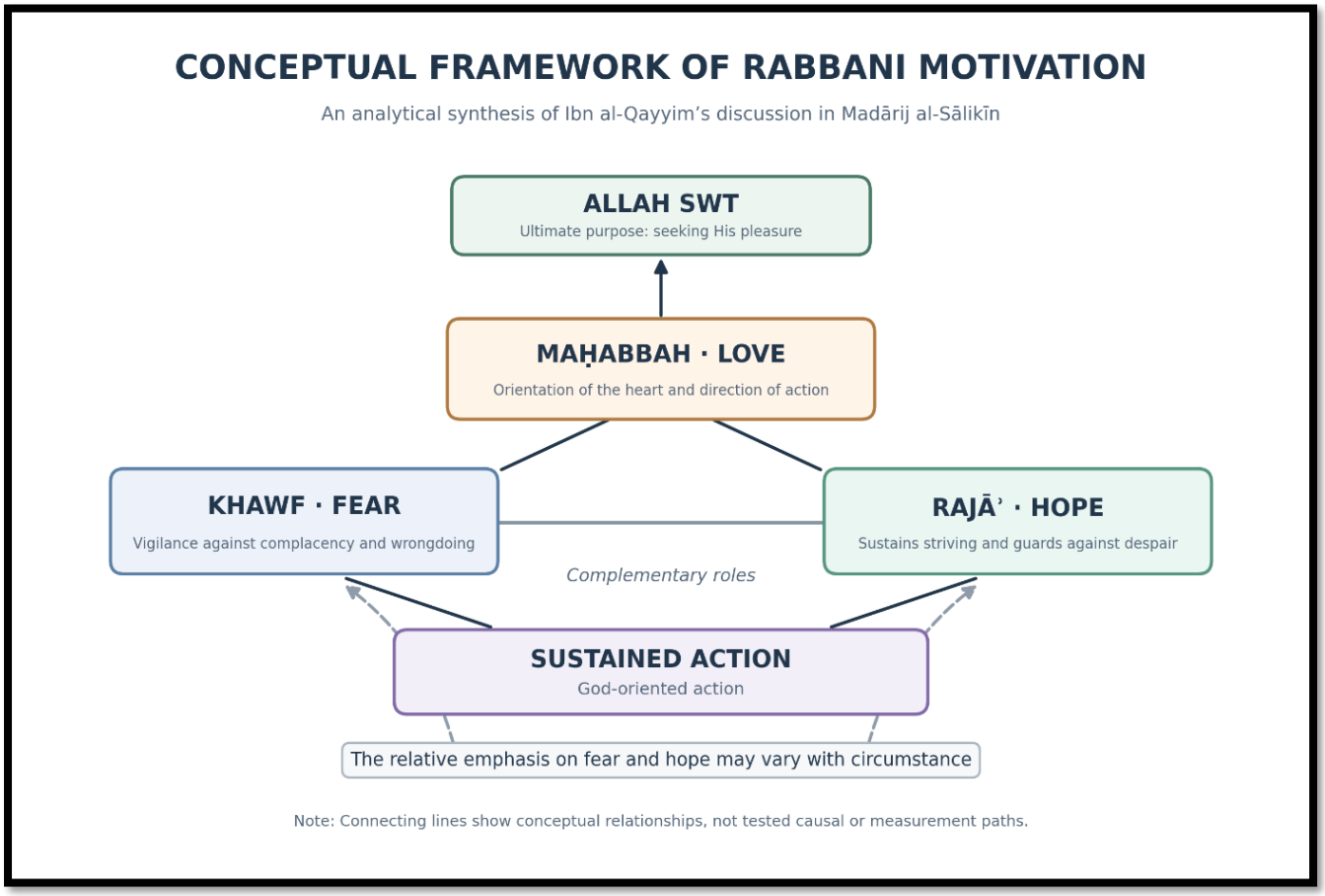


Figure 3. Proposed Conceptual Framework of Rabbani Motivation Based on Ibn al-Qayyim's Thought

Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis of the selected passages in Ibn al-Qayyim's Madārij al-Sālikīn, documented as S01–S11.

Figure 3 represents the proposed functional relationships among the three dispositions. Love informs the direction of intention and choice, fear contributes restraint from prohibited conduct, and hope accompanies effort directed towards divine reward, forgiveness, and mercy. Their complementarity is informed by the bird analogy, while their differentiated functions derive from the respective textual discussions. The figure represents a conceptual organisation rather than a validated causal or measurement model. Its contribution is to connect the selected spiritual concepts with explicit functional interpretations, preliminary operational definitions, and propositions that can guide subsequent research.

DISCUSSION

Contribution to Islamic Motivational Scholarship

The principal contribution of MR-MRK is to connect an explicitly devotional purpose with differentiated reasons for acting. Seeking Allah's pleasure establishes the overarching orientation, while the proposed framework examines how that orientation may become meaningful in choices, restraint, and effort. This distinction moves the inquiry from identifying a religious goal towards clarifying the dispositions through which individuals may pursue it. The account attributed to Yusof Ismail (1991, as cited in Saad, 2014, p. 105) places seeking Allah's pleasure at the highest level of Rabbani motivation. MR-MRK develops a complementary analytical focus by examining the functional relationships among selected acts of the heart. Its contribution concerns the proposed expression of this orientation in conduct rather than a revision of its ultimate purpose. The framework does not establish causal mechanisms through which spiritual dispositions produce behaviour.

Abdul Cader (2016) provides a broader model of Islamic work motivation encompassing theological commitments, faith, the nafs, action, and rewards and punishment. His account already includes love of Allah, desire for divine reward, and fear of punishment. The present study therefore locates its contribution in the focused interpretation and documentation of these concepts rather than their initial integration. Its source-to-claim record makes the proposed relationships available for scrutiny and subsequent operationalisation. Existing Ibn al-Qayyim scholarship also provides important points of comparison. Arroisi et al. (2021), for example, examine spiritual purification and psychotherapy. MR-MRK concentrates on motivational interpretation, providing a bridge between selected textual meanings and questions about action. Therapeutic effectiveness falls outside this contribution.

Relationship with Contemporary Motivational Theories

Self-Determination Theory distinguishes the quality of motivational regulation, including whether action is experienced as autonomous or controlled. Ryan and Deci (2020) also differentiate inherent enjoyment from personally endorsed purposes. MR-MRK addresses the devotional content of those purposes and dispositions. The two perspectives consequently offer different questions that can be examined together: how an action is regulated, and what religious meaning informs it.

This comparison does not justify classifying Maḥabbah automatically as intrinsic motivation. Devotional commitment may concern duties that are difficult or not inherently enjoyable. Likewise, the psychological quality of Khawf cannot be determined from its designation as fear alone; assessment must examine how accountability is understood and experienced.

The comparison extends Proposition P1:

P1a: Love-based devotional orientation will positively predict subsequent commitment to religious duties after accounting for autonomous and controlled motivational regulation.

P1a allows the additional explanatory value of devotional orientation to be tested. Strong overlap with existing motivational measures would also be informative, indicating where conceptual distinctions do or do not translate into empirical differences.

Regulatory Focus Theory provides a second comparison. Higgins (1997) distinguishes promotion focus, concerned with aspirations and accomplishments, from prevention focus, concerned with safety and responsibilities. These concerns offer functional parallels with encouragement and restraint, but they do not encompass the divine referents of Rajāʾ and Khawf.

Two comparative propositions follow:

P2a: Constructive fear of Allah will positively predict restraint from prohibited conduct after accounting for general prevention focus and general anxiety.

P4a: Effort-accompanied hope in Allah will positively predict continued engagement following setbacks after accounting for general promotion focus and baseline engagement.

These extensions specify how the comparison can generate evidence rather than remain descriptive. They permit examination of both distinctive prediction and shared variance. Their testing would require reliable measures and a clear distinction between spiritual reasons for action and subsequent behavioural outcomes.

Contextual Emphasis as a Research Question

The reported discussion of health and approaching death provides a bounded example of contextual emphasis (S02; Ibn al-Qayyim, 2010, pp. 366–367). Its relevance to contemporary motivational inquiry lies in raising questions about situational salience rather than establishing general rules across settings. A particular disposition may become more prominent when a person encounters a specific demand without requiring the

others to diminish. For example, perceived moral risk could increase attention to accountability, while setbacks could make hopeful expectations more salient. These are contemporary extensions of the synthesis and require investigation:

P5: Within individuals, situations involving perceived moral risk will be associated with greater salience of constructive fear, while setbacks will be associated with greater salience of effort-accompanied hope.

Repeated observations would be needed to test P5. Differences between individuals cannot establish changes within a person, and a single measurement would provide limited evidence of the proposed dynamics. Qualitative accounts could first help identify relevant situations and determine whether participants recognise these distinctions.

Interpretation of the Visual Models

The illustrations support different aspects of the argument. Figure 4 communicates the organisation of the bird analogy, whereas Figure 5 presents the framework's conceptual interconnectedness. Neither adds independent evidence beyond the textual analysis.

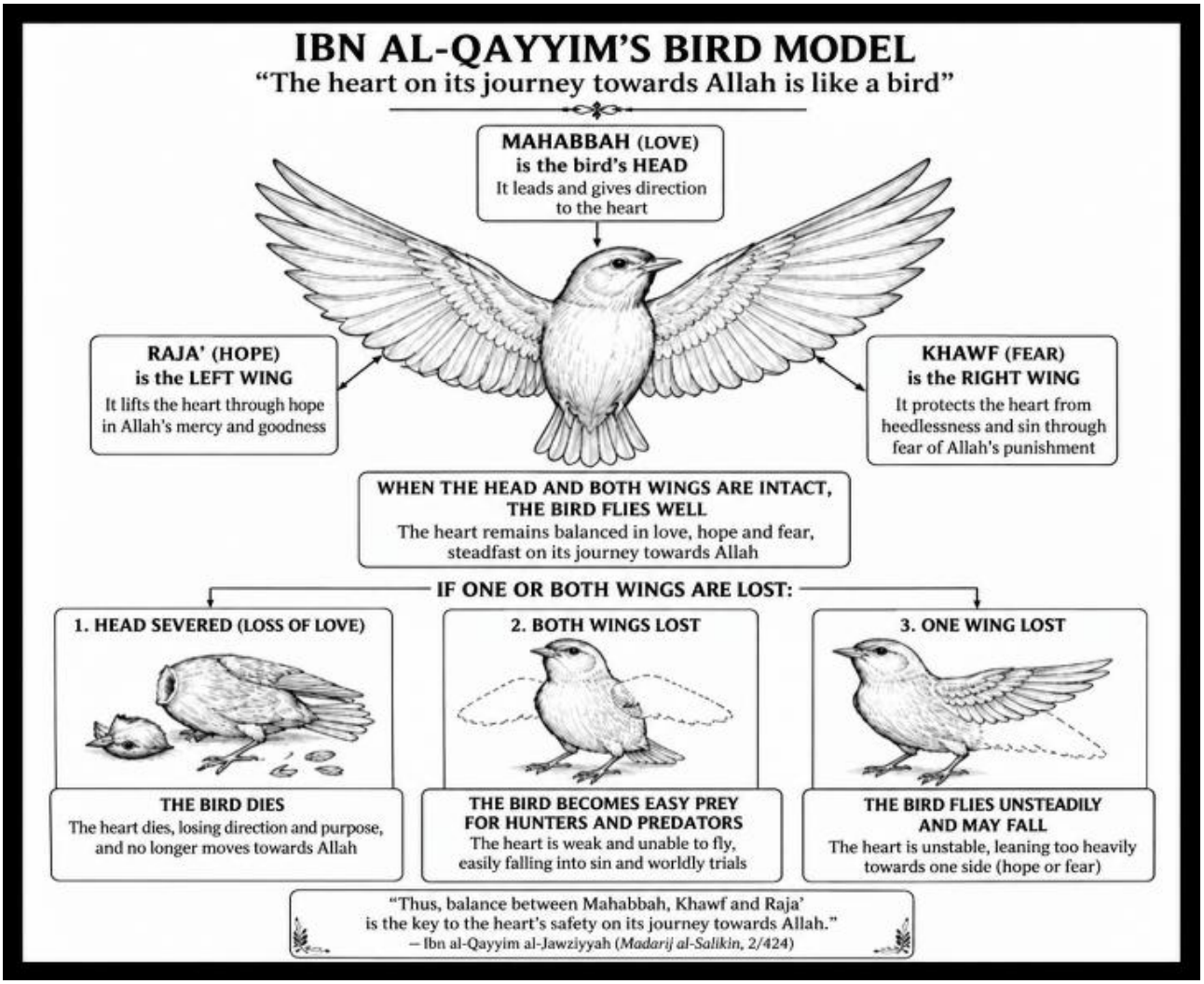


Figure 4. A Visual Interpretation of Ibn al-Qayyim's Bird Analogy: The Complementary Roles of Love, Fear, and Hope

Source: Authors' illustration based on Ibn al-Qayyim's bird analogy in Madārij al-Sālikīn (2010, p. 366).

The head and wings retain the relationships expressed in the source. Assigning fear and hope to particular sides remains an illustrative choice because the passage specifies no right or left position.

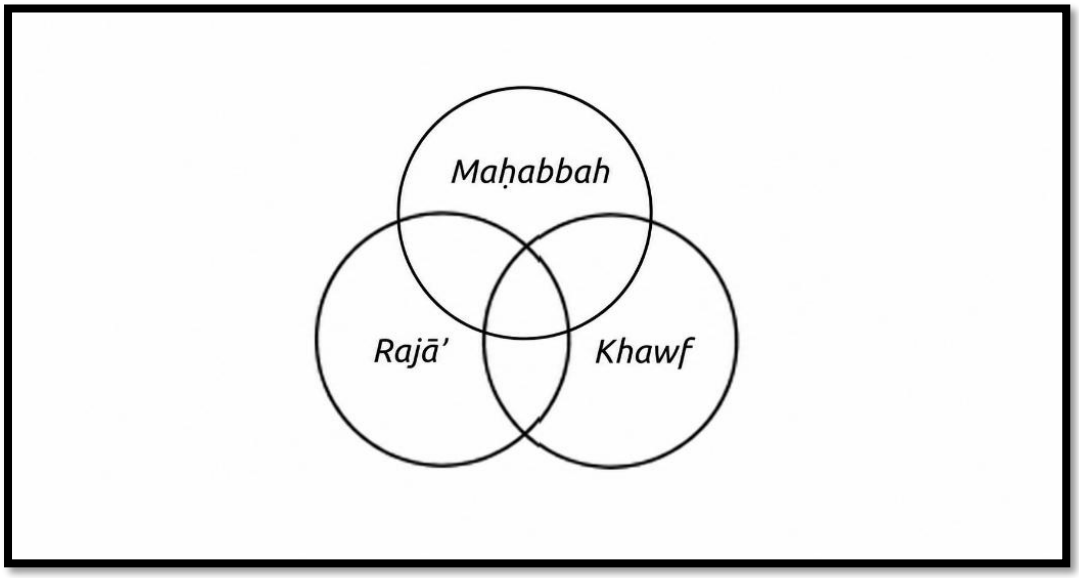


Figure 5. Proposed Conceptual Framework of Rabbani Motivation: Complementarity and Potential Contextual Emphasis

Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis of the selected passages documented as S01–S11.

The overlapping circles represent distinguishable concepts considered within a shared devotional orientation. Their sizes and intersections carry no quantitative meaning. Any reference to contextual emphasis should therefore be read as a research proposition rather than an observed pattern.

Implications for Operationalisation and Application

The candidate indicators in Table 4 offer a starting point for translating the synthesis into researchable constructs. Their development requires attention to whether respondents can distinguish devotional intention, religiously informed restraint, and hope associated with effort. Interviews and cognitive testing could identify ambiguous wording and reveal meanings not adequately represented by the initial definitions. Measurement must also separate predictors from outcomes. An item assessing hope should not merely restate a perseverance item, and an indicator of devotional orientation should not duplicate the behaviour it is intended to explain. Otherwise, apparent relationships may reflect overlapping wording rather than meaningful prediction. Conceptual distinctions do not predetermine a three-factor structure. Exploratory analysis may identify overlap or alternative groupings, while subsequent confirmatory evaluation should compare theoretically defensible specifications. Decisions about the structure should consider item content and response patterns together. Potential applications include reflective discussion of religious reasons for fulfilling responsibilities. Educational or occupational inquiry could explore how individuals interpret commitment, accountability, and effort in demanding situations. Such uses remain exploratory; the present study does not establish an intervention or demonstrate improved performance. Relations with sincerity, repentance, reliance on Allah, and patience also warrant further study. The connections identified in the findings do not justify assigning these qualities formal mediating or moderating roles. Additional textual analysis and empirical evidence would be needed before extending the framework in that direction.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study draws on 11 purposively selected analytical units from one edition of Madārij al-Sālikīn. Its scope supports a focused synthesis rather than an exhaustive account of Ibn al-Qayyim's spiritual thought. Selection, translation, and the use of contemporary functional terminology may shape interpretation. Documentation and reflexivity make these influences visible but cannot remove them. Textual and translation review concerns fidelity to the source; it does not establish psychological validity. No participant data were collected, so measurement structure, predictive relationships, contextual change, and practical effectiveness remain

untested. Future work should proceed from qualitative exploration and refinement of definitions to measurement evaluation and prospective testing. Longitudinal designs would be particularly relevant to perseverance, while repeated assessments could examine situational emphasis. Evidence of weak prediction, substantial overlap, or alternative explanations should guide revision of the operationalised framework. Such evaluation concerns the study's conceptual interpretation and derived measures rather than the validity of the spiritual teachings.

CONCLUSIONS

This study develops MR-MRK as a focused conceptual framework of Rabbani Motivation grounded in Tawḥīd and oriented towards seeking Allah's pleasure. Through the analysis of selected passages from Ibn al-Qayyim's Madārij al-Sālikīn, it interprets Maḥabbah as a guiding devotional orientation, Khawf as moral regulation, and Rajāʾ as encouragement towards effort. Its contribution lies in connecting these complementary functions with documented textual evidence, preliminary operational definitions, candidate indicators, and testable propositions. The framework does not prescribe fixed proportions among the dispositions or predetermine their measurement structure. The proposed extension from effort to sustained perseverance, together with contextual emphasis beyond the circumstances described in the text, requires further investigation. MR-MRK thus provides a foundation for examining devotional motivation through qualitative inquiry, measurement development, and prospective empirical research.

REFERENCES

1. Abdul Cader, A. (2016). Towards an Islamic model of work motivation. Intellectual Discourse, 24(1), 83–109. https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v24i1.750
2. Anjum, O. (2010). Sufism without mysticism? Ibn Qayyim al-Ğawziyyah's objectives in Madāriğ al-Sālikīn. Oriente Moderno, 90(1), 166–188. https://doi.org/10.1163/22138617-09001009
3. Arroisi, J., Amin, M. 'I., & Mukharom, R. A. (2021). Sufistic phsycoteraphy; Telaah metode psikoterapi Ibnu Qayyim al-Jauziyyah. Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman, 21(2), 253–278. https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsk.v21i2.9884
4. Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. Qualitative Research Journal, 9(2), 27–40. https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027
5. Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 5(1), 80–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500107
6. Hasibuan, H. R., & Panjaitan, R. W. (2020). Pemikiran Ibnu Qoyyim tentang proteksi minat dan motivasi belajar dalam kitab Ad-daa' wa Ad-dawaa'. Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education, 1(1), 55–71. https://doi.org/10.53802/fitrah.v1i1.8
7. Higgins, E. T. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. American Psychologist, 52(12), 1280–1300. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.52.12.1280
8. Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. Qualitative Health Research, 15(9), 1277–1288. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687
9. Hussin, R. (2026). Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: Conception of the soul and its relevance to contemporary psychology. IIUM Journal of Human Sciences, 8(1), 162–180. https://doi.org/10.31436/ijohs.v8i1.413
10. Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. (2010). Madārij al-Sālikīn bayna Manāzil Iyyāka Naʿbudu wa Iyyāka Nastaʿīn. Muʾassasat al-Risālah Nāshirūn.
11. Jabareen, Y. (2009). Building a conceptual framework: Philosophy, definitions, and procedure. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 8(4), 49–62. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800406
12. Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. Psychological Review, 50(4), 370–396. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346
13. Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 61, Article 101860. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860

14. Ryan, R. M., Rigby, S., & King, K. (1993). Two types of religious internalization and their relations to religious orientations and mental health. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65(3), 586–596. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.65.3.586
15. Saad, H. S. M. (2014). Integriti dan kepuasan kerja menurut perspektif Islam serta hubungannya dengan prestasi kerja dalam kalangan guru Pendidikan Islam [Doctoral dissertation, Universiti Malaysia Sabah]. UMS Institutional Repository. https://eprints.ums.edu.my/id/eprint/37629/
16. Sudarti, K., & Fachrunnisa, O. (2024). Achievement motivation in Islamic management practices: Developing a scale and validation. International Journal of Economics, Management and Accounting, 32(1), 29–49. https://doi.org/10.31436/ijema.v32i1.997
17. Wan Khairuldin, W. M. K. F., Wan Nor Anas, W. N. I., & Embong, A. H. (2025). Constructing the Muslim scholar's ethos: A framework of academic integrity based on the Islamic intellectual tradition. Al-Shajarah, 30(2), 477–504. https://doi.org/10.31436/shajarah.v30i02.2235