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Reconstruction of the Concept of Emotional Boundaries in Surah Maryam 19:41–47: An Analysis of Ijtima'i Exegesis and Bowen's Family Systems Theory

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Abstract:

This study analyzes the reconstruction of the concept of *emotional boundary* in Surah Maryam (19:41–47) through the al-adab al-ijtimā'i interpretive approach and Murray Bowen's *Family Systems Theory* (BFST). It is motivated by the growing phenomenon of family estrangement, emotional cutoffs, and no-contact practices in modern families, driven by value conflicts and emotional distress. The study aims to examine the construction of *emotional boundaries* in Surah Maryam (19:41–47), reconstruct the Qur'anic concept of relational boundaries, and relate it to BFST within contemporary family dynamics. This research is a library study using tafsir ijtimā'i and contextual approaches. Primary data are drawn from Tafsir Al-Mishbah by M. Quraish Shihab, supported by classical commentaries such as Jami' al-Bayan, Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an, and Tafsir Ibn Kathir. The analysis involves textual examination of verses, comparative exegesis, identification of relational values, and conceptual dialogue with BFST. The findings show that Surah Maryam (19:41–47) constructs *emotional boundaries* through empathetic communication, emotional regulation, and a firm commitment to faith. Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) maintains respect while establishing boundaries when faith is threatened. The study formulates *Peaceful No Contact* as an ethical and spiritual model of Qur'anic family relations.

Keywords: Emotional boundary, Surah Maryam 19:41–47, Tafsir al-Adab al-Ijtima'i, Bowen Family Systems Theory, Ibrahim narrative.

INTRODUCTION

The family is the most fundamental social and spiritual institution in the formation of human identity, morality, and personality structure. From an Islamic perspective, the

family is understood not only as a biological relationship but also as a space for value education based on love and mercy, and for the responsibility to maintain the continuity of faith. The Qur'an emphasizes this function in QS. At-Taḥrīm [66]:6, which places the family as the primary object of spiritual development and moral protection.¹ However, in modern society, family relationships face increasingly complex pressures due to changing social values, individualism, and identity conflicts, often leading to emotional disconnection. This phenomenon is known in contemporary family psychology literature as family estrangement or emotional cutoff² This is the conscious cessation of communication between family members to maintain psychological stability and self-identity. Research published in the Journal of Family Psychology shows that value conflict, relational trauma, and emotional power imbalance are major predictors of family dissolution. Rin Reczek's study³ shows that alienation in the relationship between parents and adult children can be understood as a failure to manage emotional boundaries within the family. This condition indicates an emotional boundary crisis in the modern family structure, which is no longer a stable norm or a psychologically healthy state.

The concept of emotional boundaries in family psychology refers to an individual's ability to set healthy boundaries in interpersonal relationships in order to maintain self-identity, emotional stability, and psychological functioning without losing the ability to build closeness with others. Henry Cloud and John Townsend⁴ defines personal boundaries as boundaries that help individuals determine their emotional, mental, and behavioral responsibilities, so they are not easily controlled or harmed by dysfunctional relationships. In the family context, boundaries function to maintain a balance between emotional closeness and self-autonomy, ensuring relationships remain healthy and not manipulative or toxic. Meanwhile, Salvador Minuchin⁵ Structural Family Therapy theory explains that family boundaries are unwritten rules that regulate the level of emotional closeness and distance between family members. According to him, healthy families have clear boundaries, namely relationships that still allow emotional attachment without eliminating individual identity and function. Conversely, overly vague boundaries (diffuse boundaries) can lead to excessive emotional attachment (enmeshment). At the same time, boundaries that are too rigid (rigid boundaries) have the potential to create emotional alienation (disengagement). Thus, the concept of emotional boundaries in family psychology emphasizes the importance of balancing emotional connection and self-protection to maintain healthy family relationships.

In the United States, the phenomenon of emotional boundaries is increasingly becoming a concern in modern family relationships, particularly through the practice of no contact or severing ties with family. The case of Amy in Anna Russell,⁶ which questions family values, shows that emotional boundaries are understood as an individual's effort to maintain their identity and psychological stability when family relationships are deemed

¹ Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: LPMQ, 2019)

² Andreea Nica, "From Family Estrangement to Empowered Exits: New Emotional Developments," *Frontiers in Sociology* 10, no. September (2025): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2025.1663618>.

³ Rin Reczek, Lawrence Stacey, and Mieke Beth Thomeer, "Parent-Adult Child Estrangement in the United States by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Sexuality.," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 85, no. 2 (April 2023): 494–517, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12898>.

⁴ Henry Cloud and John Sims Townsend, *Boundaries: When to Say Yes* (Strand Publishing, 1996).

⁵ Salvador Minuchin, *Families and Family Therapy* (Routledge, 2018).

⁶<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/annals-of-inquiry/why-so-many-people-are-going-no-contact-with-their-parents>

unhealthy. Similarly, Jeanette Tran⁷ explains that the practice of no contact arises as a response to family relationships that are considered toxic or dysfunctional, particularly due to emotional abuse, rejection of LGBT identity, and political and religious differences. These findings are reinforced by Lucy Blake's survey,⁸ which showed that around 45% of respondents agreed with the practice of no contact in families. Blake also found that the reasons parents cut off contact with their children are essentially the same as the reasons children distance themselves from their parents, such as family conflict, destructive behavior, drug abuse, and differences in personal and religious values. Thus, the phenomenon of no contact suggests that failing to build healthy emotional boundaries can lead to emotional cutoff in modern families.

This phenomenon has conceptual relevance to the narrative of the Qur'an, especially Surah Maryam [19]:41–47, which describes the relationship between Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his father, Azar. This verse not only conveys monotheistic teaching but also captures the emotional dynamics between filial affection and fundamental differences in belief. Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) used a very gentle communication pattern, repeating the greeting "yā abatī" as a form of empathy and respect, even though he faced strong rejection.⁹ al Thabari¹⁰ It is explained that this pattern reflects the ethics of prophetic communication that combines emotional tenderness and rational argumentation in family relationships. Meanwhile, Al-Qurthubi,¹¹ emphasizes that the separation of relations that occurs is not a form of hatred, but rather an ethical boundary, after all efforts at dialogue have been exhausted. In Tafsir Ibn Kathir¹², The actions of the Prophet Ibrahim are understood as a form of religious boundary regulation, namely the safeguarding of faith when family relationships have the potential to undermine its principles, as M. Quraish Shihab argues¹³ emphasizes the balance between respect for parents and the steadfastness of monotheism as the normative boundary for family relations. Thus, QS. Maryam [19]:41–47 can be reconstructed as the concept of Qur'anic emotional boundaries, namely the ability to set ethical relationship boundaries without eliminating empathy, manners, and spiritual values.

Previous studies on QS. Maryam [19]:41–47 generally focused on aspects of monotheism education, such as the research by Yogi Hasbi Sidiq¹⁴, Juwita Puspita Sari¹⁵ on *birr al-wālidayn*. The research of Masrul Efendi Umar Harahap¹⁶ Daniel Kurniawan,

⁷ Jeanette Tran, *Toxic Families: The trend of "no contact" estrangement shows that blood is not thicker than water*, <https://www.milwaukeeindependent.com/>, Jun 30, 2025

⁸ Lucy Blake, "Hidden Voices: Family Estrangement in Adulthood," 2015. Lucy Blake, dosen senior Psikologi di University of the West England, Bristol, Bekerja sama dengan Becca Bland, *Kepala Eksekutif Stand Alone Bristol* badan amal Inggris Stand Alone dan Profesor Susan Golombok *Direktur Pusat Penelitian Keluarga*, di University of Cambridge,

⁹ QS. Maryam [19]:42–45

¹⁰ Abi Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarir al Thabari, "Jami' Al Bayan 'An Takwili Ayi Al Qur'an. Jilid 7," 2010. Jami' al-Bayan, [https://archive.org/details/tafseer-altabari_darul-hadith/Thabari Jilid 7 hal 759-764](https://archive.org/details/tafseer-altabari_darul-hadith/Thabari%20Jilid%207%20hal%20759-764)

¹¹ Abu Abdillah Muhammad Bin Ahmad Bin Abu Bakar Al-Qurthubi, "13_73663.Pdf," 2006. [https://archive.org/details/TafsirQurtubiTurki Qurthubi jilid 13 hal 467-451](https://archive.org/details/TafsirQurtubiTurki/Qurthubi%20Jilid%2013%20hal%20467-451)

¹² Ibn Kathir, [https://archive.org/details/tafsir-ibn-kathir Ibn Katsir jild 5 hal 234-236](https://archive.org/details/tafsir-ibn-kathir/Ibn%20Katsir%20Jilid%205%20hal%20234-236)

¹³ M Shihab Quraish, 2021. <https://archive.org/download/etaoin/Tafsir%20Al-Mishbah%20Jilid%208%20Dr.%20M.%20Quraish%20Shihab.pdf> vol 8 196-202

¹⁴ Yogi Hasbi Sidiq, "Konsep Tauhidullah Sebagai Substansi Pendidikan Islam," *Al-Urwatul Wutsqo: Jurnal Ilmu Keislaman Dan Pendidikan* 2, no. 2 (2021): 21–31.

¹⁵ Juwita Puspita Sari, Alimron Alimron, and Sukirman Sukirman, "Konsep Birrul Walidain Dan Implikasinya Dalam Membentuk Karakter Peserta Didik (Telaah Surat Maryam Ayat 41-48 Menurut Tafsir Al-Misbah)," *Jurnal PAI Raden Fatah* 2, no. 1 (2020): 87–102.

¹⁶ Harahap Masrul, Efendi, Umar, "Metode Pemberdayaan Berbasis Dakwah," *JURNAL AT-TAGHYIR; Jurnal Dakwah Dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa* 3, no. 1 (2020): 149–70.

Dessya Natascha¹⁷ Harijanto¹⁸ Anna Ramadhani Putri Nasution¹⁹ Fakhurrozi²⁰ and Hilmi²¹ focused on the method of preaching of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and the relationship between children and parents. These studies have not specifically constructed this verse as a model of emotional boundaries in modern family relations. On the other hand, in family psychology, Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST)²² explains that the family is an interconnected emotional system, in which individuals must differentiate themselves, namely maintain identity and self-principles amid emotional family pressure. This concept is also reinforced by Blanca Dolz-del-Castellar,²³ who states that family functions are related to self-differentiation and anxiety traits. Research in Contemporary Family Therapy also confirms that emotional cutoff often appears as a coping strategy for unhealthy family relationships, even though it risks creating long-term alienation.²⁴ These concepts intersect with the attitude of the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) in setting relationship boundaries without compromising communication ethics. However, there are significant epistemological differences: BFST starts from a secular, therapeutic psychology of family systems, while the Qur'an grounds relationship boundaries in monotheism. This gap indicates the need for conceptual reconstruction to bridge Qur'anic interpretation with modern family psychology theory to understand the phenomenon of no contact better.

Based on this, this study formulates three main questions: namely, how does the interpretation of QS. Maryam [19]: 41–47 in Tafsir Al-Mishbah form the concept of emotional boundaries in the relationship between Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and Azar; how do the *ijtimā'i* and contextual interpretation approaches reconstruct the concept of emotional relationship boundaries in the context of modern families; and how is the conceptual relationship between emotional boundaries in QS. Maryam [19]: 41–47 and the concept of differentiation of self in Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST) in understanding the phenomena of family conflict and no contact in the contemporary era.

This research is a library research with *ijtimā'i* and contextual interpretation approaches to analyze the reconstruction of the concept of emotional boundaries in QS. Maryam [19]: 41–47. The *ijtimā'i* interpretation approach is used to examine the verse's social dimension in the context of modern family relations. In contrast, the contextual interpretation is used to connect the Qur'an's message to contemporary phenomena such as family estrangement, emotional cutoff, and no-contact relationships. The primary data for this research is Tafsir Al-Mishbah by M. Quraish Shihab, because it has an *adabī-ijtimā'i* style and a moderate-contextual approach, both of which are relevant to the dynamics of family communication, value conflicts, and emotional relationship boundaries in modern society. To strengthen the analysis, this study also uses supporting interpretations, such as

¹⁷Lusy Asa Akhrani and Yoyon Supriyono, "Konflik Intrapersonal Dalam Memeluk Agama Pada Remaja Dengan Orang Tua Yang Berbeda Agama," *Retrieved from Shorturl. at/RuMR2*, n.d.

¹⁸Daniel Kurniawan Harijanto and Wulan Purnama Sari, "Komunikasi Interpersonal Anak Dan Orangtua Yang Berbeda Agama," *Koneksi* 4, no. 1 (2020): 147–54.

¹⁹ Anna Ramadhani Putri Nasution and Sri Budi Lestari, "Manajemen Konflik Anak Orang Tua Dalam Relasi Romantis Berbeda Agama," *Interaksi Online* 8, no. 3 (2020): 10–20.

²⁰ Fakhurrozi Fakhurrozi et al., "Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Dialogue between Prophet Ibrahim and His Father: Speech Acts and Speaker Variation in the Qur'an," *Journal of Language Education, Linguistics, and Culture* 5, no. 1 (2025): 61–71.

²¹ Hilmi Hilmi et al., "Character Education in the Qur'an: An Analysis of the Story of Prophet Ibrahim and His Family," *Al-Kayyis: Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 2 (2024): 77–86.

²² Murray Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice* (Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 1993).

²³ Blanca Dolz-Del-Castellar and Jesus Oliver, "Relationship between Family Functioning, Differentiation of Self and Anxiety in Spanish Young Adults," *PLoS ONE* 16, no. 3 March (2021): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0246875>.

²⁴ Peter Titelman, *Emotional Cutoff: Bowen Family Systems Theory Perspectives* (Routledge, 2014).

Jami' al-Bayan, Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an, and Tafsir Ibn Kathir, to examine the continuity and differences between classical and contemporary interpretations of the relationship between Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and Azar. Secondary data are obtained from international journals in the field of family psychology, such as the Journal of Family Psychology, Family Relations, the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, and Contemporary Family Therapy, which discuss Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST), differentiation of self, and emotional cutoff.

Data collection was conducted through documentation studies, while data analysis used descriptive-analytical and comparative-interdisciplinary methods. The analysis stages were carried out through several steps: first, text analysis of QS. Maryam [19]: 41–47 to identify the structure of dialogue, communication patterns, and relational meaning in the verse; second, comparison of classical and contemporary interpretations to see the development of interpretations of the relationship between Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his father; third, identification of relational values such as empathy, assertive communication, respect for parents, and setting relationship boundaries; fourth, conceptual dialogue with Murray Bowen through the concept of differentiation of self, family projection process, and emotional cutoff; and fifth, formulation of the concept of Qur'anic emotional boundaries as a model of ethical, spiritual, and psychological family relations. In this context, the research does not fully adopt the concept of emotional cutoff as in BFST, but rather reconstructs it ethically and spiritually through Qur'anic principles that emphasize affection, respect, and the maintenance of faith in family relationships.

DISCUSSION

QS. Maryam [19]:41–47 in the Perspective of Tafsir al-Adab al-Ijtima'i

The phenomenon of family estrangement, or no contact, in modern families has become an increasingly discussed issue in studies of family psychology and mental health. Family relationships, previously viewed as the most intimate and permanent, are now changing due to value conflicts, dysfunctional communication patterns, emotional abuse, and differences in beliefs and ideologies.²⁵ Lucy Blake's research²⁶ shows that family estrangement is no longer a marginal phenomenon but has become an increasingly prevalent experience in modern societies, particularly in Western countries. In this context, individuals choose to distance themselves emotionally and physically from family members as a protective mechanism against persistent psychological stress. This phenomenon is known as no contact, a decision to limit or even stop communication with family members in order to maintain emotional stability and mental health.²⁷

In Islam, family relationships are of paramount importance because they are built on the foundation of love (rahmah), moral responsibility, and kinship. However, the Qur'an also shows that family relationships are not always harmonious. The Qur'an contains many verses that exemplify the relationship between children and parents, and vice versa. The Qur'an has the power to bring about positive change, leading to happiness in this world and the hereafter. Furthermore, the Qur'an also serves as a guide to the path

²⁵ Karl Pillemer, *Fault Lines: Fractured Families and How to Mend Them* (Penguin, 2022).

²⁶ Lucy Blake, "Parents and Children Who Are Estranged in Adulthood: A Review and Discussion of the Literature," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 9, no. 4 (2017): 521–36, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12216>.

²⁷ Kristina M. Scharp and Elizabeth Dorrance Hall, "Family Marginalization, Alienation, and Estrangement: Questioning the Nonvoluntary Status of Family Relationships," *Annals of the International Communication Association* 41, no. 1 (2017): 28–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2017.1285680>.

that pleases Allah. One of the stories that most clearly illustrates family conflict is found in Surah Maryam [19]: 41–47, namely the dialogue between the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his father, Azar. This verse explains how the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) invited his father to abandon idol worship with a polite, rational, and empathetic approach. However, the invitation was strongly rejected, leading to threats of expulsion and violence. In the context of interpreting *al-adab al-ijtimāʿī*, this verse is understood not only as a story of the preaching of monotheism but also as a social guideline for managing family conflict, maintaining ethical communication, and setting relationship boundaries when threats to faith and emotional health arise.

Tafsir *al-adab al-ijtimāʿī* is a style of interpretation that emphasizes the social dimension of the Qur'an and its relevance to the problems of community life.²⁸ This style of interpretation developed strongly in the modern era through figures such as Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridha, who tried to make the Qur'an a solution to the social problems of the people. In this perspective, QS. Maryam [19]: 41–47 is understood as a verse that embodies the values of family communication, emotional control, relational empathy, and the ethics of conflict resolution. Therefore, this study not only reads the verse textually but also relates it to the phenomenon of emotional boundaries and family estrangement in the modern era.

Al-Thabari²⁹ explains that the repetition of the word *yā abātī* in verses 42–45 shows that the call is a form of respect and gentleness on the part of a child toward his father, despite being strongly rejected. Meanwhile, Al-Qurthubi,³⁰ emphasizes that this verse shows the importance of preaching with wisdom and persuasive communication before taking a distance attitude. As for the Tafsir Ibn Kathir³¹ it explains that Prophet Ibrahim a.s. continued to maintain etiquette towards his father even though he was in a state of threat and rejection. In Tafsir Al-Mishbah M. Quraish Shihab.³² explains that the repetition of the expression *yā abātī* in QS. Maryam [19]: 42–45 reflects the gentle, loving, and respectful attitude of Prophet Ibrahim a.s. towards his father. Despite differences in beliefs that gave rise to religious conflicts, the Prophet Abraham continued to convey his message with polite and non-offensive speech. This shows that family communication must remain grounded in good manners, empathy, and respect for parents, even in situations of fundamental differences. On the other hand, these verses also show a balance between the obligation to be devoted to parents and the steadfastness in upholding the principle of monotheism. M. Quraish Shihab emphasized that Islam commands children to continue to do good to their parents, but does not justify obedience in matters that contradict the teachings of faith. Thus, QS. Maryam [19]: 41–47 presents a picture of family relationships that balances affection, respect, and religious commitment.

From a social perspective, this verse demonstrates that family conflicts cannot always be resolved through emotional closeness alone. Under certain circumstances, relationships that continually exert emotional pressure and threaten faith can encourage individuals to establish emotional boundaries. However, the Qur'an teaches that these

²⁸ Muhammad Husayn Al-Dhahabi, *Al-Tafsir Wa Al-Mufasssirun* (Dar al-Fikr, 1976). Lihat juga Dewi Purwaningrum Dewi and Hafid nur Muhammad, "Corak Adabi Ijtima'i Dalam Kajian Tafsir Indonesia," *Al-Muhafidz: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 2, no. 1 (2022): 193–205.

²⁹ al Thabari, "Jami' Al Bayan 'An Takwili Ayi Al Qur'an. Jilid 7." Jami' al-Bayan, https://archive.org/details/tafseer-altabari_darul-hadith_Thabari_jilid_7_hal_759-764

³⁰ Al-Qurthuby, "13_73663.Pdf." https://archive.org/details/TafsirQurtubiTurki_Qurthubi_jilid_13_hal_467-451

³¹ Ibn Kathir, https://archive.org/details/tafsir-ibn-kathir_Ibn_Katsir_jild_5_hal_234-236

³² M Shihab Quraish, 2021. <https://archive.org/download/etaoin/Tafsir%20Al-Mishbah%20Jilid%2008%20-Dr.%20M.%20Quraish%20Shihab.pdf> vol 8 196-202

boundaries must still be built on the principles of compassion, respect, and self-control. This is evident in the attitude of the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him), who consistently ended the dialogue with a peaceful greeting: "Peace be upon you." This verse demonstrates that maintaining relational distance is not synonymous with hatred or hostility, but can be a form of ethical and spiritual self-protection.

The interpretation above by M. Quraish Shihab provides important evidence that Surah Maryam [19]: 41–47 contains a pattern of family relationships that is not only emotional but also normative and principled. The dialogue between the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his father clearly establishes a boundary between filial affection and rejection of beliefs that contradict monotheism, making it an early form of emotional boundary in family relations. Within the framework of Bowen Family Systems Theory, this situation aligns with the concept of differentiation of self, namely the ability of individuals to maintain emotional closeness with their families without losing the integrity of their values and beliefs. Thus, QS. Maryam [19]: 41–47 can be reconstructed as a text that teaches a balance between emotional attachment and healthy psychological boundaries, which, from the perspective of *ijtima'i* interpretation, shows that the Qur'an offers a model of family relations that is adaptive, empathetic, but still principled.

Emotional Boundary in QS. Maryam [19]:41–47

The concept of emotional boundaries in family psychology refers to an individual's ability to set healthy boundaries in interpersonal relationships to maintain self-identity, emotional stability, and mental health when faced with stressful or toxic relationships.³³ In the family context, these relationship boundaries are not intended to sever affection, but rather to maintain a balance between emotional closeness and self-protection.

QS. Maryam [19]:41–47 represents this concept through the dialogue between Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and his father. Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) did not immediately distance himself, but first established rational and persuasive communication. He explained the powerlessness of idols with an argumentative approach: "Why do you worship something that does not hear, does not see, and cannot help you in the least?" (QS. Maryam [19]:42). From a contextual interpretation perspective, this verse shows that family conflicts should be resolved through healthy communication before limiting relationships.

The dialogue that occurs is carried out with assertive and empathetic communication.³⁴ The repetition of the call *yā abātī* ("O my father") in verses 42–45 shows the gentleness, patience, and affection of a child towards his parents despite differences in faith. This call reflects a persuasive effort carried out in full, without aggression or insults. Thus, QS. Maryam [19]: 41–47 not only conveys a message of preaching monotheism but also family communication ethics that place empathy and respect as the basis for conflict resolution. Kristina Scharp findings³⁵ show that individuals who experience family alienation have generally gone through a long communication process before choosing to

³³ Indivisible Property Lines, "Boundaries – The Book What Are 'Personal Boundaries'?", 1992. Lihat juga <https://archive.org>, Boundaries

³⁴ Asertif adalah kemampuan individu untuk mengungkapkan pendapatnya dengan sikap jujur dan terbuka sambil memerhatikan emosi, pikiran, dan hak orang lain Megan M Lambertz-Berndt and Michael G Blight, "You Don't Have to Like Me, But You Have to Respect Me' The Impacts of Assertiveness, Cooperativeness, and Group Satisfaction in Collaborative Assignments," *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (2016): 180–99.

³⁵ Kristina M. Scharp, Elizabeth Dorrance Hall, Family Marginalization, Alienation, and Estrangement: Questioning the Nonvoluntary Status of Family Relationships, *Communication Yearbook*, Volume 41, Issue 1, March 2017, Pages 28–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2017.1285680>

distance themselves from their families. This is relevant to the attitude of the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him), who continued to prioritize dialogue before taking relational distance. Therefore, taking distance in QS. Maryam [19]:41–47 is not an impulsive act, but rather a conscious step to maintain the principles of belief and emotional stability.

In verse 45, Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) expresses his concern for his father's safety: "O my father, I fear that a punishment from the Most Gracious will befall you..." This statement demonstrates relational empathy because it is delivered in a loving tone rather than one of insult or anger. In modern family psychology, empathy is seen as crucial for maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships because it enables individuals to understand others' emotional states without losing their own identity or principles. However, when the threat arises in verse 46, Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) begins to set boundaries in the relationship. Azar's threat to stone and expel him indicates a shift in the relationship from dialogue to symbolic and emotional violence. Nevertheless, Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) responds peacefully by saying: "Peace be upon you. I will ask forgiveness for you from my Lord." (QS. Maryam [19]:47). This response shows that the relationship boundaries in the Qur'an are built on the principle of positive boundaries, namely maintaining distance without hatred and hostility. Therefore, this study formulates this concept as No Contact, namely taking relational distance to maintain spiritual and emotional health without eliminating affection and prayers for the family.

In Murray Bowen's perspective,³⁶ Bowen explains that family relationships are driven by two primary needs: emotional closeness (togetherness) and autonomy (individuality). An imbalance between the two can give rise to anxiety and dysfunctional relationship patterns. Therefore, BFST emphasizes the importance of an individual's ability to maintain self-identity amidst emotional family pressure. This concept is relevant to QS. Maryam [19]:41–47, where the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) maintained the principle of monotheism without losing empathy and respect for his father.

BFST analysis in QS. Maryam [19]:41–47

1. Differentiation of Self

The main concept in Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST) is differentiation of self, namely the ability of individuals to maintain their identity and principles amidst emotional pressure from their families.³⁷ Individuals with high levels of self-differentiation can think rationally without being consumed by the family's collective emotions. In QS. Maryam [19]:41–45, Prophet Ibrahim (as) demonstrates mature self-differentiation. He remains steadfast in his monotheism despite facing emotional pressure and rejection from his father. In BFST, individuals with low self-differentiation tend to comply with family pressure to maintain relational closeness.³⁸ However, Prophet Ibrahim (as) maintained his beliefs while maintaining polite communication. This demonstrates a balance between steadfastness of principle and relational empathy. Titelman's research states that self-differentiation allows a person to remain emotionally connected without losing their personal identity.³⁹ This concept is clearly visible in the way the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) dialogued with his father.

2. Triangulation

³⁶ Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*.

³⁷ Murray Bowen, "Family Therapy in Clinical Practice. New York: Jason Aronson" (Inc, 1978).

³⁸ Michael E Kerr and Murray Bowen, *Family Evaluation* (WW Norton & Company, 1988).

³⁹ Titelman, *Emotional Cutoff: Bowen Family Systems Theory Perspectives*.

The concept of triangulation explains the tendency to involve a third party when family conflict occurs.⁴⁰ In many modern families, conflicts between parents and children often involve other family members, thus increasing emotional tension. However, Surah Maryam [19]:41–47 shows that the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) chose to engage in direct dialogue with his father without involving any other parties. This attitude demonstrates emotional maturity and the ability to resolve conflicts personally.

From a social perspective, this approach is important because family conflicts involving many parties often worsen relationships and widen emotional wounds. The Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) set an example that conflict resolution must begin with direct, honest, and empathetic communication.

3. Family Projection Process

BFST explains that parents often project their anxieties, values, and beliefs onto their children.⁴¹ In this story, Azar projects the family's polytheistic belief system onto Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). The strong rejection of Prophet Ibrahim's preaching indicates a fear of losing the family's value system, passed down through generations. Research by Jenkins dkk ⁴² shows that families tend to retain old patterns of belief and behavior to maintain the stability of the family system. This is seen in Azar's attitude of maintaining the tradition of idol worship and rejecting the changes brought by Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). However, Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) managed to break out of this projection pattern through spiritual awareness and moral courage.

4. Multigenerational Transmission Process

This concept explains that patterns of relationships, beliefs, and behavior are passed down across generations.⁴³ In Surah Maryam [19]:41–47, Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) broke the transmission of polytheistic beliefs. He established a new system of monotheism, which was then passed down to the next generation through the Prophets Ismail (peace be upon him) and Isaac (peace be upon him).

From the BFST perspective, changes in family systems often begin with a single individual who exhibits high levels of self-differentiation.⁴⁴ Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) serves as an example of how changes in family values can begin through an individual's spiritual awareness. This demonstrates that family relationships do not always have to follow old patterns if those patterns conflict with the values of truth.

5. Emotional Cutoff

The concept of emotional cutoff in BFST refers to maintaining emotional distance to reduce relational anxiety.⁴⁵ In modern families, emotional cutoff often takes the form of the silent treatment, cutting off communication, or total avoidance of certain family members. However, in Surah Maryam [19]:47, the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) demonstrates a different form of emotional cutoff. He distances himself after a threat arises, yet ends the dialogue with a peace statement and a prayer.

The fundamental difference between modern emotional cutoff and the Qur'anic concept lies in the spiritual dimension and relational ethics. In BFST, distancing is more

⁴⁰ Kerr and Bowen, *Family Evaluation*.

⁴¹ Kerr and Bowen.

⁴² Sin-ying Lin, Jessica L Schleider, and Nicholas R Eaton, "There Is No Funding to Report for the Present Work.," n.d., 1–35.

⁴³ Kerr and Bowen, *Family Evaluation*.

⁴⁴ Jenny Brown, "Bowen Family Systems Theory and Practice: Illustration and Critique," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy* 20, no. 2 (1999): 94–103, <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1467-8438.1999.tb00363.x>.

⁴⁵ Brown.

oriented toward reducing emotional anxiety.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, in Surah Maryam [19]:41–47, distancing is done to maintain faith and the principle of monotheism without losing affection for family. Therefore, this study calls it No Contact.

The Relevance of QS. Maryam [19]:41–47 to the Modern No Contact Phenomenon

The modern no-contact phenomenon is often understood as a form of self-protection against toxic relationships that damage mental health.⁴⁷ Aglias' research shows that individuals who distance themselves from their families generally experience prolonged emotional stress, psychological manipulation, or verbal abuse.⁴⁸ In this context, QS. Maryam [19]:41–47 is relevant because it provides a model for resolving family conflicts that maintains the ethics of communication and affection.

Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) demonstrated that relational distance can be achieved without hatred and resentment. This attitude is relevant to the needs of modern society, which faces family conflict due to differences in values, beliefs, and lifestyles. However, the Quran sets a limit: self-protection should not override respect for parents and human values.

The concept of No Contact Peace discovered in this study has several key characteristics: first, self-control; second, prosocial empathy; third, assertive communication; and fourth, positive boundaries. These four principles demonstrate that maintaining emotional and spiritual health can be done without cutting off love and prayer for family.

Thus, QS. Maryam [19]:41–47 offers an integrative approach between Islamic spirituality and modern family psychology. This verse shows that family conflicts must be resolved through polite communication, empathy, and rational argumentation. However, when the relationship becomes a threat to faith and emotional health, distancing can be an ethical and spiritual choice, provided it is grounded in compassion and peace.

The results of this study indicate that QS. Maryam [19]: 41–47 not only contains the story of Prophet Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) preaching to his father, but also presents a Qur'anic paradigm on managing family conflict ethically, empathetically, and spiritually. From the perspective of *al-adab al-ijtimāʿī*, these verses present social values in the form of assertive communication, respect for parents, emotional control, and setting relationship boundaries (emotional boundaries) when the relationship poses a threat to faith and emotional health. These findings show that the Qur'an does not deny the reality of family conflict, but rather provides a moral framework for managing it proportionally. On the other hand, integration with Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST) shows that concepts such as differentiation of self, family projection process, and emotional cutoff have points of convergence with Qur'anic values, especially in maintaining a balance between family affection and the firmness of spiritual principles. However, this study also found a fundamental difference: BFST⁴⁹ is oriented towards the stability of the family's emotional system, while the Qur'an places monotheism and spiritual safety as the main orientation of relations. This study formulates the concept of ethical emotional distancing, which in this context is called "No Contact ". Thus, this study reconstructs the concept of emotional cutoff into No Contact, namely, the conscious taking of relational distance to

⁴⁶Bowen, "Family Therapy in Clinical Practice. New York: Jason Aronson."

⁴⁷Pillemer, *Fault Lines: Fractured Families and How to Mend Them*.

⁴⁸Ingrid Arnet Connidis, "Family Estrangement: A Matter of Perspective," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 9, no. 4 (2017): 572–79, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12220>.

⁴⁹Edwin H Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (Guilford Press, 2011).

maintain spiritual and emotional health without losing manners, empathy, and prayer towards the family.

In the context of modern society, this concept is highly relevant, as family relationships today face challenges arising from changing values, individualism, psychological stress, and the complexity of digital communication. Lucy Blake⁵⁰ research shows that family estrangement often arises from prolonged, unresolved emotional conflict. At the same time, Kristina Scharp emphasizes that the decision to go no contact is generally the result of long-term communication failures. The findings of this research indicate that the Qur'an offers a more ethical model for resolving family conflict than the modern cut-off pattern, which often leads to total hostility.

Lucy Blake⁵¹ shows that family estrangement often arises after prolonged, unresolved emotional conflict. At the same time, Kristina Scharp emphasizes that the decision to no contact is generally the result of a long-term failed communication process. The findings of this study make a new contribution: the Qur'an offers a more ethical alternative to the modern cut-off pattern, which often ends in total hostility. Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) maintained respect for his father through the expression of *salāmun 'alaik* and prayers for goodness, even though he chose to distance himself physically and ideologically. This shows that self-protection does not have to be realized through hatred or the absolute destruction of relationships. In the context of contemporary family psychology, these findings can serve as a basis for developing an Islamic family counseling approach that emphasizes positive boundaries, relational empathy, and spiritual communication in addressing toxic family conflicts.

In Surah Maryam [19]:41–47, Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) maintained his respect for his father through the expression "peace be upon him" and a prayer for his father's well-being, despite choosing to maintain physical and ideological distance. This attitude demonstrates that self-protection does not have to be manifested through hatred or the destruction of relationships. Therefore, these findings can serve as a foundation for the development of Islamic family counseling that emphasizes positive boundaries, relational empathy, and spiritual communication in addressing contemporary family conflict.

Furthermore, this research opens a new direction for the development of studies of thematic-contextual interpretation based on integrated knowledge. To date, studies of Surah Maryam have focused on thematic-contextual interpretation studies. Maryam [19]:41–47 focuses more on aspects of monotheistic *da'wah*, moral education, and *birr al-wālidayn*, while the dimensions of relational psychology and family emotional health have not been widely studied in an interdisciplinary context. Therefore, integrating Qur'anic interpretation with modern family psychology theory is important for addressing increasingly complex contemporary social problems. This study shows that the *tafsir al-adab al-ijtimā'ī* approach does not stop at explaining the morals of verses; it must also present social solutions to real phenomena in society, including increasing family conflict, toxic relationships, and mental health crises. In the future, the concept of No Contact Peace can be further developed in studies of Islamic counseling, family education, *da'wah* psychology, and mental health research grounded in Islamic spirituality. In addition, further research can examine other verses on family relations, such as QS. Luqman [31]:14–15, QS. Al-Mumtahanah [60]:4, or QS. At-Taubah [9]:114 to build a more comprehensive Qur'anic conceptual framework regarding the boundaries of relationships, affection, and self-

⁵⁰ Blake, "Parents and Children Who Are Estranged in Adulthood: A Review and Discussion of the Literature."

⁵¹ Blake.

protection in the family. Thus, this research confirms that the Qur'an remains relevant as a source of social ethics and spiritual psychology in dealing with modern family dynamics, while also offering a paradigm of family relations that balances love, faith, and emotional health.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Surah Maryam [19]:41–47 teaches how to maintain emotional boundaries within the family through gentle communication, firm resolve, and the ability to control one's emotions. Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) serves as an example of how to distance oneself from family, not out of hatred, but to protect one's faith and inner peace, while still showing love. Unlike Bowen's theory, which views emotional cutoff as a means of reducing anxiety, the Qur'an teaches "No Contact"—that is, consciously and ethically creating distance without hostility.

The main contribution of this study is to demonstrate the relevance of the Qur'an in addressing modern family issues such as toxic relationships and family alienation. The concept of "No Contact" can serve as a foundation for Islamic counseling, character education, and spirituality-based mental health approaches. Further research is recommended to examine other verses regarding the boundaries of family relationships and to test this concept in the lives of contemporary Muslim families.

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