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COGNITIVE HEALTH AND ENHANCEMENT OF SOCIAL LIFE SYNDROME: INVESTIGATING MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOTHERAPY UNDER SHARIAH

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ABSTRACT

Over 60 million Nigerians are suffering from mental illness. The development of mental medicine in Islam has several reviews. Many Islamic figures contributed to treating mental illness long before Western figures discovered it. At the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), there was also a treatment for mental illness based on the Al-Quran. The central role that Shari'ah plays in the lives of adherent Muslims throughout the world calls for more spiritually oriented ways of approaching psychological treatment with this group. This article will discuss several religious activities as psychotherapy. This article aims to determine forms of worship as psychotherapy. In doing this, the doctrinal method is employed which includes analysis of primary and secondary data. It is found five ways of prayer that a Muslim can do as psychological therapy; namely Salat, Dhikr, reading the Quran, fasting, and hajj. In an Islamic intellectual, there is a discipline of Islamic psychotherapy that is an integral part of Islamic Psychotherapy.

Keywords: Mental health, illness, Shariah, and Islamic principles

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the majority of people are suffering from Mental illness to be precise over 60 million Nigerians are suffering from it. Therefore, this issue is called for urgent treatment for victims; both orthodox and spiritual treatment is graciously needed. The issue of mental health is

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very important because someone who does not enjoy mental health is not considered a perfectly healthy person and a healthy community is one whose members will endeavour to promote their mental and physical health and use this health to enhance the standards of their personal and social life. The majority of people living with those suffering from mental illness focus largely on orthodox medicine to tackle the ailment and neglect whether partly or generally the traditional/spiritual therapy for the treatment of this sickness. It is important to state that Shariah has provided Islamic therapy for the treatment of mental illness from the time of Immemorial. Therefore, this article examines the therapeutic ways of dealing with mental health in the light of the Quran and *Sunnah* and also examines how Islamic principles serve as therapy to combat mental illness.

DEFINITION AND MEANING OF MENTAL HEALTH

Generally, mental health refers to a state of cognitive health or emotional well-being or an absence of mental illness and disorder. Mental health can be defined in different ways within a cultural context. It suffices to say that mental health is a common phenomenon and it is a general illness that is rampant in all the countries in the whole world. This made the Australian Health Ministers describe mental health as follows:

"The capacity of individuals and groups to interact with one another and their environment in ways that promote subjective well-being, optimal development and use of mental abilities (cognitive, affective and relational); and to achieve individual and collective goals consistent with justice".¹

The term Mental Health has also been described by The World Health Organization (WHO) to mean:

"A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can make a contribution to his or her community".²

Interestingly, because of the sensitivity of mental illness and its existence that cut across the globe a new definition of 'Mental Health' was proposed from a humanistic worldview by one of the Philosophers and researchers known as Galderisi and it goes thus:

"a dynamic state of internal equilibrium which enables individuals to use their abilities in harmony with universal values of society. Basic cognitive and social skills; ability to recognize, express and modulate one's own emotions, as well as empathize with others; flexibility and ability to cope with adverse life events and function in social roles; and harmonious relationship between body and mind represent important components of mental health which contribute, to varying degrees, to the state of internal equilibrium".³

The issue of health in the history of mankind has attracted the attention of scholars of empirical sciences including both traditional medicine and modern medicine in a way conceivable for human societies. This proposition was made by these scholars to give an appropriate definition of psychological/mental health and the scholar is known as Razi in the following words:

"The individual can free himself from / ridding himself of desires as well as devotion to Allah Almighty with love, obedience, supplication, fear, hope, and trust; the ability to self-discipline and self-respect by offering obligations which Allah has ordained; likewise, the ability to interact with the environment exhibiting a positive and constructive behavior"

² World Health Organization (WHO). 'Promoting mental health: concepts, emerging evidence, practice', (Summary Report) Geneva: World Health Organization. (2004). Retrieved from https://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/promoting_mhh.pdf

³ Galderisi S. Heinz, A Kastrupc, M. Beezhold j. & Sartorius N. 'Towards a definition of Mental Health' World Psychiatry. 14(2), (2015). 231-233.

for himself and society in which he lives, making himself able to face the critical situations and difficulties positively without having any fear or anxiety; hence, he may accept himself and circumstances and compatibility with the society".⁴

Therefore, in the Western context, mental health refers to a balanced state of human's physical, psychological, cognitive, and social aspects to achieve individual and collective goals through justice. While in Islamic culture, mental health is seen as an individual's devotion to the obedience of Allah Almighty and Prophet (peace be upon him), offering obligatory worship, the ability of self-discipline and self-respect, exhibiting good character in society, facing hardships and difficulties of life with patience.⁵

CONCEPTUALIZING MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL SICKNESS/ILLNESS

From ancient times till today, there are three underlying trends for mental disorder, which are: " the organic approach, based on biology and pathophysiology, the psychological which examines and analyzes the intra-psychic processes and conflicts; and the magical or sacred which apprehends insanity through a supernatural and divine scope"⁶ In Islam, the concept of mental health and sickness can be traced back to the Quranic teachings and Prophetic Sunnah, Muslim culture have view mental illness in different ways including: " Allah causes everything including illness; a way of connecting Allah; a test or punishment from Allah; a result of affliction or possession of evil spirit (jinn); the effect of evil eyes and the effects of evil in objects that are transferred to the individual.

⁴ Riaz, S 'Ilm al- Nafs Fi al- Quran al-Karim' Cairo: Mo' ssahlqra. (2004), 87

⁵ Muhammad Tahir & Sami Ullah Zubair 'Exploring Quranic Stance on Mental Health: An Analytical Review.' University of Wah Journal of Social Sciences. 2(2). (2019), 46-71

⁶ Roccatagliata 1986; Alexander & Selenic 1966.

In Islamic tradition, ultimate healing and the cure of mental health issues belong to Allah's supreme authority. The Prophet (peace upon him) clarifies in a tradition." there is no disease that Allah has sent down except that He (Allah) also has sent down treatment.⁷ Therefore, the Quran provides a conceptual framework for healing and cure from all kinds of mental sicknesses, calamities, and disorders. According to the Quran, a cure needs Divine intervention that is asking Allah for a cure and healing for all sickness as stated in the story of prophet Ibrahim (peace upon him) when he said." *And when I am ill, it is He who cures me*"⁸. The Quran itself is a source of healing and mercy to those who believe; to the unjust, it causes nothing but loss after loss"⁹ Likewise, a Prophetic tradition clarifies that sickness means a benediction which expiates the sins: No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, no sadness nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslims, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that.¹⁰ Muslims firmly believe in the concept of ultimate cure and healing from Allah for any harm they suffer in their lives. The Quran highlights " And if Allah touches you with good, then He [Allah] can do anything"¹¹ The above discussion clarifies the Islamic concept of healing from all sicknesses and illnesses, whether mental or physical, which emerges from the notion of cure and healing from Allah.¹²

DEVELOPMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH IN ISLAM.

The development of mental medicine in Islam has several reviews. Many Islamic figures contributed to treating mental illness long before Western figures discovered it. At the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, there was also a treatment for mental illness based on the Al-Quran. One of the famous doctors is Abu Zayd Ahmed ibn Sahl al-Balkhi who hailed from Persia and was the first person that introduced

⁷ Bukhari, 2007, 7/326

⁸ Q26 v 80

⁹ Q17 v 82.

¹⁰ Bukhari, 2000, s/7/307

¹¹ Quran 6 v 17

¹² Sulaiman, A. A & Gabardine, W.O 'Healing in Islam: A Psychological Perspective.' *Ife Psychologies* 21 (3), (2013),47-53

'*Al-Tibb Al-Ruhani*' or the concept of mental health in Islamic medicine. He developed principles of Islamic psychotherapy to cure people with mental disorders, as he wrote in the 9th century entitled the book '*Firdaus al-Hikmah*'. Besides Abu Zayd Ahmed ibn Sahl al-Balkhi, other Muslim thinkers, Al-Farabi, also contributed their thoughts for treatment related to mental illness. Al-Farabi wrote treatises on social psychology and those related to the study of consciousness. Ibn Zuhr (Avenzoar) also accurately revealed diseases related to nerves. He also made vital contributions to modern neuropharmacology.¹³

DETERMINING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH PIETY

In Islam, piety is the state that promotes healthy individuals in a society not only physically but also mentally. The Prophet (peace be upon him) pointed to his chest to inform about the place of piety in the body¹⁴. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) highlighted the importance of the heart in the body by saying: "If the heart becomes good the whole body becomes good, and if the heart gets spoiled the whole body gets spoiled"¹⁵. Furthermore, Allah Almighty looks at hearts and deeds.¹⁶ To be mentally healthy, human beings need to correct their hearts; so that they can accomplish the state of piety through Islamic worship. The principal purpose of human life stems from worshipping Allah Almighty sincerely; whereas the ultimate objective behind all Islamic worship and commandments is the attainment of the state of piety, which promotes positive mental health.

ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES ON MENTAL MEDICINE

The religion of monotheism is the religious instinct of every human being as a creature created by Allah SWT. These principles are

¹³ Khawaja Saad Najam, etl. 'Impact of Islamic Practices on the Mental Health of Muslims.' International Dental & Medical Journal of Advanced Research. 5. (2019), 1-6

¹⁴ Muslim, 2007, 6/432

¹⁵ Bukhari, 2007, 1/ 83

¹⁶ Muslim, 2007, 6/ 432

recognized in Islam. One of the Quranic verses explains it to mean "So be steadfast in faith in all uprightness 'O Prophet' – the natural way of Allah which He has instilled in 'all' people. Let there be no change in this creation of Allah. That is the straightway, but most people do not know".¹⁷ Based on this quote, it is explained that humans created by Allah SWT have instincts or impulses for religion, namely Islam as the religion of monotheism. Therefore, if a human being is not monotheistic, it is due to the influence of the environment because this is unnatural. Believing in one God offers a simple yet profound belief, representing one's private feelings towards one God. The simplicity of this belief helps humans who by nature do experience many problems in their lives. Modern man, as reviewed by Hussain is currently trying to adapt to many problems, of course, requires a simple belief in God Almighty.¹⁸ The depth of belief that God is omniscient and sovereign over all things offers intimacy and dependence between a servant and his Lord. This simple and deep belief is that it creates a "secure attachment" between himself and his God, thus helping humans and his God, thus helping humans to face problems in their lives.¹⁹

One of the mental health therapies is religion. The knowledge of Islam has been explained in the Al-Quran, which explains happiness and serenity. This can be better understood in one of the verses of the holy Quran which says: "*Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer. We will surely give them their reward (in the hereafter) according to the best of what they used to do.*"²⁰ The meaning contained in the quote of the verse is that anyone who does good deeds must be accompanied by faith, and both men and women will get a commensurate reward, depending on the good deeds done. Moreover, as mentioned in Quran it means, "Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah,

¹⁷ Ar-Ruum 30:30

¹⁸ Hussain J'. 'Man, and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man' (A Book Review). Muslim Perspectives. 2(3), (2017), 98

¹⁹ Sabr, Walaa & Adarsh V.' 'Role of Islam in the management of Psychiatric disorders'' Indian Journal of Psychiatry. .55

²⁰ An-Nahul 16:97

Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah, hearts are assured”²¹ In the holy book of the Al-Quran, there are instructions for humankind which is a sedative for the soul of healing for various kinds of heart disease (spiritual) contained in a human being. Many verses of the Holy Quran deal with the treatment of illness. For instance, Allah says: “O mankind; there has come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers.”²² These quotes provide instructions for us to be required to have good relations with Allah SWT and other people and be kind to nature and the environment. To treat the soul and prevent and foster mental conditions that exist in humans, Islam has a crucial role in the life of every human being. Through the appreciation and practice of the teachings of Islam, humans can find peace, prosperity, and happiness.²³

ISLAMIC PSYCHOTHERAPY TO HELP PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT AND HEALING PROCESS

In the Islamic intellectual world, it is known as a discipline of Islamic Psychotherapy. The previous reviews mentioned that patients with mental illness who have a strong acknowledgment of religious and spiritual beliefs likely use the positive appraisal to deal with their obstacles.²⁴ Therefore, Islamic psychotherapy, which is explained in the instructions in the Al-Quran is the science of the process of treating and healing mental illnesses and mental disorders in a person through a psychological intervention based on the Al-Quran and Sunnah.²⁵ The regularity of a methodology is constructed in one way, including (1) *Steinbach*, (2) *Aquinas*, and (3) *istiqro*.²⁶ First, *istinbath* is a reasoning

²¹ Al Hajiri, Azizah .S.’ ‘The Role of Religion and Spirituality in Managing Residual Schizophrenia.’ International Islamic medical journal. 3 (1), (2022), 45-50.

²² Yunus ayat 57

²³ Yucel S’. ‘Prayer and Healing in Islam. New Jersey. (2010), 67

²⁴ Al Hajiri , Azizah .S.’ ‘The Role of Religion and Spirituality in Managing Residual Schizophrenia’. International Islamic medical journal. 3 (1) (2022), 45-50.

²⁵ Sabr, Walaa & Adarsh V.’ ‘Role of Islam in the Management of Psychiatric Disorders’ Indian Journal of Psychiatry. (2013), .55

²⁶ Hussain J. ‘Man and Nature: The spiritual Crisis in Modern Man’ (A Book Review). Muslim Perspectives. 2(3), (2017), 98

process based on theories from the Al-Quran and Sunnah for Psychotherapy, Second, Iqtibas is a process of reasoning through the theory of the results of Ithihad, which experts have confirmed regarding psychotherapy that is different from or following the teachings of the holy book Al-Quran and Sunnah. Third, istiqlal is a reasoning process based on research results and empirical and spiritual experiences related to psychotherapy.²⁷ Based on the three paths described previously, several methods and techniques in Islamic psychotherapy were found to assist the nursing process and the treatment or healing of mental illnesses, namely: (1) Dhikr, (2) Tashawuf-Thoriqot, (3) Fasting (saum), (4) Salat, (5) Repentance bath, (6) Prayer, and finally, Hikmah (which can be distinguished from shamanism/occult practices or kuhanah).²⁸

WORSHIP AS HUMAN PSYCHOTHERAPY

Several forms of worship as recognized by Islam serve as psychotherapy and psychological effects for people suffering from mental illness and they are described as follows:

a. Prayer (Salat) as Human Psychotherapy

Following Muslim teachings, the legal conditions for prayer (Salat) are valid if the Muslim has performed or is in a state of purity. The nature of our ablution is obliged to use holy water and can purify the body like the water we use to clean the body for daily activities, which is flowing, clear and refreshing. If we use water with the properties described physically and psychologically, the attached dirt will also flow (disappear) following the water flow when used for ablution. Water can also be used as therapy with water media called therapeutic media. Rafi'udin and Zainudin (2004) explain that ablution not only has a psychological impact on a person but can also have a physiological impact because it can relieve physical and psychological tension in the

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Khawaja, S. N, R.S. Khan,' 'Impact of Islamic Practices on the Mental Health of Muslims.' International Dental & Medical Journal of Advance Research. (2019), (5). 1-16

body's organs. Because we wash body parts five times a day, it can be added. The word 'salat' etymologically means to pray for something good. Salat has a good impact on a person in healing the feelings of upset and sadness that occur in a human being.²⁹ When salat, we must do it by perfecting ablution, saying the intention sincerely, praying *tuma'ninah* (quiet for a moment), not moving too fast or not in a hurry, and understanding the reading of the Quran. Salaat will be able to have a positive effect on our bodies by praying solemnly; our souls will be calm and make prayer (Salat) therapy for one's soul. With another intention, the soul becomes peaceful and calm when praying as the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. By Salat, a human personality can be arranged, respond to things calmly and directed, and make people not immediately give up in the face of trials.

b. Remembrance of Allah as Means of Therapy

In (QS, Ar-Ra'ad ayat 28), "Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah's hearts are assured". From these quotes, we highly recommend doing dhikr because it will make our hearts calm and peaceful for His faithful servants. Moreover, in the words of the Prophet Muhammad, "It is not a group that sits in remembrance, but angels will surround them. They get an abundance of grace and attain serenity. And Allah will remember them from someone who is accepted by Him" (HR. Muslim and Tirmidzi).

c. Recitation of Al-Quran as Human Psychotherapy

Treatment using the Al-Quran (spiritual medicine), the main office of that treatment, has been opened in several places. This treatment is known as *ruqyah* shariah. In the community, *ruqyah* is considered an alternative treatment or therapy for someone's healing, usually if the disease is caused by an evil spirit or jinn contained in humans. However, this paradigm the Al-Quran as a guide for humankind. Al-Quran is the holy *kalamullah*, which Allah SWT revealed to the Prophet

²⁹ Najati, Muhammad Usman, Ahsin Muhammad 'Al-Quran dan ilmu jiwa' Bandung. (2004), 53

Muhammad SAW as a guide for humans in distinguishing between right (*haq*) and wrong (*bathil*). If someone reads the Al-Quran and each verse, it can lead the soul always to be sincere in charity and *tawadhu* when responding to something by the teachings contained in the Al-Quran.

It is known that reciting the Al-Quran in a low voice induces a feeling of calm, whereas a loud voice increases agitation (Algristian *et al*, 2022). This research was conducted on mice, but it can be understood that by nature humans are also more comfortable listening to the soft chanting of the Al-Quran, not loud and screaming ones. Other studies have also proven that gentle recitation of the Al-Quran can increase an individual's immune response (Muhammad *et al*, 2022).

d. Human Psychotherapy vs Engaging in Fasting

Najati (2004) explained that *saum* (fasting) is an activity that can bring many benefits, including strengthening oneself from all temptations and improving the human soul in terms of controlling lust in humans. Saum is a means to train oneself to control motivation or emotional impulses and to control lust and lust. Unmarried youths are highly recommended by the Prophet Muhammad to carry out fasting to control their lusts and avoid adultery. During fasting, one will also feel the same suffering as those experienced people who are less able to meet their daily needs. Fasting is what can encourage us to help fellow human beings, especially the poor. Najati (2004) stated that this sensitive feeling and attitude could foster the spaciousness of the soul and a sense of peace.

e. Observing Pilgrimage as Human Psychotherapy

The story of the Prophet Ibrahim is the beginning of the Hajj itself. The meaning of the story taken is the sacrifice of the things that are most loved and owned and also the struggle for one goal, namely to get the pleasure of Allah SWT. In addition, someone who performs the Hajj not only prioritizes his struggle but is also accompanied by *tawakkal*, a sacrifice of all graces, and poured out love for Allah SWT. Hajj can also

train in controlling human patience. At the of Hajj, the position of all Muslims is the same and will not be judged by position and rank. That also causes us to do therapy when performing the Hajj, namely therapy for arrogance, conceit, and pride. According to Najati (2004), the atmosphere of the Hajj contains a lot of spiritual values that can increase the spirit to achieve peace because a person performing Hajj asks forgiveness from the Almighty and adds an atmosphere of divine chanting that thunders full. A Muslim who performs the Hajj can make improvements or self-introspection (*muhasabah*) to find identity as a servant. The essence of a Muslim is to devote himself and his life in this world only to Allah SWT. Arifin (2008) explains that sincere devotion can invite an outpouring of grace and pleasure from Allah SWT. As a creature created by Allah, the human soul becomes calm and holy.

CONCLUSION

These five ways of prayer that Muslims can do as psychological therapy namely Salat, Dhzikr, reading the Quran, fasting, and hajj. In an Islamic intellectual, there is a discipline of Islamic psychotherapy; Istimbath, Iqtibas, and Istiqro. Not only that, but several Muslim scholars also put forward the concept of mental health; Abu Zayd Ahmed ibn Sah, al-Balkhi; Al-Farabi who wrote treatises on social psychology and ibn Zuhr who managed to reveal diseases to nerves and also make a substantial contribution to modern neuropharmacology.