

Nurturing the soul with the qur'an: beautiful verses from god as an answer to mental anxiety disorders

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Abstract. Mental anxiety disorder is a prevalent mental health issue among Generation Z. This disorder is often triggered by prolonged stress and toxic environments, characterized by uncontrollable anxiety and excessive overthinking. It is also frequently linked to an individual's depth of spirituality. Therefore, the role of the Qur'an in addressing mental anxiety disorder is significant, as it contains verses that can offer solutions to mental health issues. This study aims to explore how the Qur'an can provide answers to the challenges of mental anxiety disorder faced by Gen Z, the generation born between 1997 and 2012. Using a qualitative descriptive method along with a literature review and interviews with several respondents, this research focuses on finding solutions to the increasingly widespread mental health problems. As is widely understood, every religion offers answers to the questions of its followers, and Islam similarly holds solutions within its holy book, the Qur'an. The author will analyze several relevant verses from the Qur'an to reveal the potential of these sacred texts in addressing anxiety disorders. This study is expected to contribute to the development of Qur'an-based therapy as an alternative treatment for mental anxiety disorders.

Keywords: Mental anxiety disorder, gen Z, Al-quran

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, 301 million people experienced anxiety disorders, including 58 million children and adolescents. Anxiety disorders are characterized by excessive fear and anxiety, along with related behavioral issues. These symptoms are severe enough to cause significant distress or functional impairment. There are several types of anxiety disorders, such as generalized anxiety disorder (marked by excessive anxiety), panic disorder (marked by panic attacks), social anxiety disorder (characterized by excessive fear and anxiety in social interactions), separation anxiety disorder (marked by excessive fear or anxiety when separated from those with whom there is a strong emotional bond), and others (Ugli.E.F.A, 2022).

Islam, as a religion that brings mercy to the entire universe, offers the concept of developing divine values in the hearts of every individual. which can be applied to deal with mental anxiety disorder problems. In the Qur'an there are many verses related to the dynamics of human psychology which theoretically can be the basis for psychotherapy in dealing with anxiety disorders. The Qur'an offers a way to calm the soul that is being hit by anxiety, both through reading and writing taken from its text. Various verses in the Qur'an also contain guidance for facing life's challenges without anxiety (Aisyatin Kamila, 2020).

Many studies have shown that through the practice of reading the Qur'an can be used as part of therapy, the level of depression and the quality of spiritual life of patients can be improved. Interestingly, it turns out that reading the Qur'an during the treatment process can reduce anxiety and depression. This happens because in addition to the calmness obtained from reading the Qur'an repeatedly, a person also gets intellectual stimulation through the verses when reading, memorizing, and reflecting on the meaning and messages contained therein. As a result, they become better able to evaluate situations and understand the meaning contained in the Qur'an (Cita Aprilda Kirana, 2024).

Various studies on mental anxiety disorders have been conducted by several researchers. One of them is a study conducted by Alfonsina Afia Melsasail which explains that anxiety disorders are often associated with a lack of relationship between individuals and God, which then gives rise to a negative view that anxiety sufferers lack faith.(Melsasail, 2023, p. 10)While in this study discusses in depth how the Qur'an answers the challenges of mental anxiety disorder that are widely experienced by the young generation today. Through several verses of the Qur'an that can be a psychological solution for people with mental anxiety disorder, this article presents variousmoral values that can be learned from the verses in the Koran. If previous research explored more

theological aspects of anxiety disorders, this research delves deeper into the psychological aspects and offers a Qur'an-based approach as a solution.

Based on previous research, researchers found that a number of studies have been conducted and are relevant to this topic. Researchers took the opportunity to dig up more information related to this study from several studies mentioned below.

First, Oktamarina (2022), in her research journal discussing anxiety disorders (mental anxiety) in early childhood, this journal reveals mental anxiety disorders, types of anxiety disorders, influencing factors, symptoms of anxiety disorders and how to deal with them. Her journal also explains how Islam views mental health. In Islam, mental health is an important aspect that must be maintained and preserved for the good and welfare of humanity. Therefore, efforts to maintain mental health are considered part of worship.

Furthermore, Khaidar Akbar (2022) revealed about tazkiyatun nafs and its relevance to mental health, in his thesis he explained that Tazkiyatun nafs can help someone achieve good mental health while preventing the entry of despicable traits that have the potential to disrupt mental balance. Humans are required to be aware of and prevent the dangers of mental health disorders that can hinder their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. To avoid these mental health problems, tazkiyatun nafs is one effective way.

Furthermore, the Quran is a medicine that is part of the solution for anyone who faces problems, whether in the form of physical or mental illness. The Quran mentions this with various expressions that have similar meanings. The concept of syifa in the study of the Quran develops not only in the study of psychology, physiology, sociology, but also includes spiritual aspects. This understanding is found in QS Yunus verse 57 which states that the Quran is a complete medicine that functions as a healer or antidote for everyone (Padilah et al., 2024) and of course there are many other verses that have the same values, namely as healing for the soul.

METHOD

This study aims to conduct an in-depth study of the verses in the Qur'an that have values as solutions for individuals who experience anxiety disorders. The approach used is descriptive qualitative with a literature review method. Data were obtained through in-depth analysis of relevant books, journals, and documents. The data collection process was carried out systematically by looking for sources that support the research theme. Data analysis refers to the 2024 AICOIS Manuscript Template.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Anxiety is a condition or feeling of worry accompanied by the belief that something bad will happen. Anxiety is also a combination of various emotions that arise when someone is under pressure or facing inner conflict. Feelings of anxiety can arise due to various factors, such as the threat of danger to oneself, fear of certain objects, guilt due to actions that are contrary to conscience, or lack of affection from parents in childhood. These various factors can trigger feelings of anxiety in someone. (Oktamarin et al., 2022)

Experts describe anxiety as the body's reaction to stress which causes feelings of fear or worry about events in the future or even those that have not yet happened. Anxiety disorder is a psychological condition characterized by muscle tension, hyperactivity, and anxious thoughts and expectations, often triggered by a perceived but uncertain threat. In Islamic psychology, anxiety is understood as the emotion of fear, as explained in the Koran. Islam teaches its followers to maintain a positive mindset. In the Qur'an, the term anxiety or fear is called "khawf", and its derivatives appear 120 times. one of them in Surah al-Baqarah 2:155 explains that every human being will be tested with fear. (Amiroh et al., n.d., pp. 138–139)

WHO reports that 301 million people worldwide experience this mental disorder, including 58 million children and adolescents affected by anxiety disorders. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health indicates that anxiety disorders have ranked as the second most common illness among Indonesians from the 1990s through 2017. The initial symptoms of anxiety disorder experienced by sufferers include nervousness, which causes the heart to race. This makes it difficult for the body and mind to control emotions when facing a certain situation. The fear and worry can lead to panic attacks. Here are common symptoms of anxiety disorder: anxiety that is difficult to control, restlessness and panic, easy fatigue but difficulty sleeping, trouble concentrating, irritability and emotional distress, pain and discomfort inside the body, muscle tension, nausea, dry mouth, tingling hands and feet, sweating, and continuous thinking or ruminating (Kalsum & Fibría, 2023).

The biological perspective explains that social anxiety in a person can be caused by biologically inherited susceptibility to anxiety, as well as a biological tendency to feel very inhibited in social interactions. Physically, individuals who experience anxiety will activate the sympathetic nervous system, which is seen in physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, pounding chest, sweating, tense muscles, trembling hands, or cold palms and feet (Asrori & Hasanat, 2015).

Mental disorders or mental illnesses or anxiety disorders are psychological or behavioral patterns that are generally associated with stress or mental disorders, which are not considered part of normal human development. This disorder is defined as a combination of affective, behavioral, cognitive, or perceptual components, which are related to certain functions in the brain or nervous system that support the social, work, and physical functions of

individuals. Lack of understanding and public awareness of mental illness or disorders often leads to mistreatment of people with mental disorders. For example, in some remote areas in Indonesia, families prefer to shackle family members who suffer from mental illnesses such as schizophrenia rather than take them to the hospital. In addition, people with mental illnesses are often shunned and ridiculed by their surroundings because they are considered troublesome. Many other types of mental illnesses outside of Down syndrome and autism are difficult to detect through physical appearance and are not congenital, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, mania, depression, paranoia, and so on. In society, there are many myths and false beliefs about mental illness, such as the assumption that mental illness is caused by evil spirits, witchcraft, curses, or punishment for sins. This mistaken belief will only harm sufferers and their families because people with mental disorders do not receive fast and appropriate treatment (Choresyo et al., 2015, pp. 381–382).

The Role of Spirituality in Overcoming Mental Anxiety Disorder

The relationship between faith and mental health, especially in dealing with anxiety, has become a topic of interest to many people. Faith plays a role in dealing with anxiety disorders. Belief and surrender to God can be a source of peace, which helps a person to remain calm and optimistic even when faced with uncertainty or life pressures. One way to deal with anxiety is to avoid thinking too much about possible problems in the future. Worrying about things that may not happen is often the main cause of anxiety. Sadness often arises from dissatisfaction with the current situation. By learning to accept and make peace with the existing situation, whether it is a difficulty or a challenge, we can reduce the emotional burden that is felt.

Recent studies have shown that spiritual well-being has a significant impact on mental and physical health. Spirituality can improve a patient's ability to cope with illness and speed up the recovery process. Studies support the hypothesis that spiritual well-being also contributes to improved mental functioning and adaptability. There is a significant correlation between spiritual well-being and other factors such as depression, self-esteem, life satisfaction, temperament, and anxiety. Increased spirituality also helps reduce mortality rates in heart disease patients and lower blood pressure in patients with high blood pressure and helps recover faster from depression. (Mahboubi et al., 2012)

Belief in God is a tremendous power for religious people. This spiritual power helps a person in facing the weight of life's trials and keeps him away from the anxiety that is often experienced by many people in the modern era who tend to be oriented towards material things. William James, an American psychologist, stated that there is no doubt that belief in God is the best therapy for mental anxiety. (A. Lubis, 2016, p. 280)

Spirituality plays an important role in supporting human mental health. Through encouragement to live a healthy lifestyle, providing social support, and improving well-being, spirituality creates a significant positive impact. In depth, spirituality can be understood as the process of maintaining and strengthening interpersonal relationships, both with God, oneself, society, and the environment. This relationship aims to create a sense of happiness and satisfaction in life.

On the other hand, mental health issues such as anxiety and stress can be a major burden for individuals. In this regard, spirituality can serve as a preventive measure against mental health disorders, by offering a more in-depth approach than physical or material solutions. By prioritizing spiritual values, one can find a deeper meaning and purpose in life, which ultimately supports overall mental health. (Hamka & Yusuf, 2023, p. 50)

The concept of spirituality that can function as a prevention of mental health disorders is increasingly relevant in the context of serious illnesses such as cancer patients, as emphasized by Damen et al. Spirituality becomes very important especially when they are facing critical situations. Belief in God or a higher power can help overcome the challenges that arise due to the disease (Damen et al., 2022). Various studies have shown that spiritual needs can improve health in various dimensions and positively affect the quality of life of patients. The World Health Organization (WHO) also recognizes spiritual health as an important part of health, emphasizing that the well-being of the body, mind, social, and soul of patients should be prioritized and promoted. Therefore, spiritual health should be given wider recognition in the medical world and society as a whole. (Yanti et al., 2024, p. 72)

Tazkiyatun Nafs as A Method of Maintaining Mental Health

Allah has explained in the Quran about the treatment of mental illness, one of the verses of the Quran which contains aspects of treatment for mental or spiritual disorders is in Surah Al-Jumu'ah verse 2:

"It is He who sent to the illiterate people a messenger from among themselves, who recited to them His verses, purified them, and taught them the book and wisdom, although previously they were in clear error."
." (QS. Al-Jumu'ah: 2)

One way for humans to get closer to the Creator is through tazkiyatun nafs. There is a view that states that because Allah is Most Holy, to get closer to Him, a person needs to have purity. Therefore, humans with unclean souls will find it difficult to get closer to Him. Purity of the soul will make it easier for someone to achieve mahabbah (love), ma'rifat (knowledge), and qurb (closeness) to Allah SWT. Tazkiyatun nafs can be defined as good actions, both inwardly and outwardly, carried out by humans to avoid bad deeds in order to achieve purity of the soul. The concept of tazkiyatun nafs is related to peace and harmony in social life, which involves good behavior in every aspect, both in the inner and outer dimensions (Akbar, 2022, p. 50).

Purifying the soul or tazkiyatun nafs is very important in human life. The soul influences whether an act is good or bad, because a clean soul will give birth to good behavior, while a dirty soul will produce bad behavior and morals. In addition, the purity of the soul is also closely related to improving a person's mental health. (Mursalin et al., 2023, p. 35) With a clean soul, every thought that arises will tend towards positive things. Even though the destiny we receive seems bad, with a clean soul we will be able to see it from another perspective and accept it sincerely. Because, what we consider bad can contain goodness, while what we consider good, may contain badness in the future. With a clean soul, we will realize that Allah is the one who has full control over everything that befalls us, and we are sure that the destiny He gives is the best. As in the letter al-baqoroh verse 216

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْ تُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

It means:

"Fighting is ordained for you, though it is something you hate. It may be that you hate a thing, though it is good for you; or it may be that you love a thing, though it is bad for you. Allah knows, but you do not know." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 216)

To prevent mental health disorders, tazkiyatun nafs is one of the effective ways. This is because tazkiyatun nafs can help someone maintain good mental health and avoid the entry of bad traits that can cause mental health disorders. Mental health is related to how a person lives his life. When a person has good mental health, it will affect positive changes in behavior, encouraging him to be better and develop. Conversely, mental health disorders can cause negative behavior, which can harm both oneself and others. Happiness arises from the presence of pleasant things, while suffering arises from conflicting feelings. Suffering and happiness are not achievements, but results, consequences, and goals. The happiness and suffering felt by the heart have a much greater impact than that felt by the body. Psychologically, these feelings of happiness and suffering are much more influential than those felt physically. This is because doubt and confusion often arise as heart diseases that are often experienced. The tazkiyatun nafs method is applied to individuals who experience mental health disorders as a way to cure and prevent these disorders, as well as to overcome bad traits that can enter a person. With this readiness, each individual must be able to deepen the application of the tazkiyatun nafs method within themselves, as a form of steadfastness and to protect themselves from despicable traits that can cause mental health disorders. (AKBAR, 2022, pp. 58–59)

Mood Boost Verses

The Qur'an, as a comprehensive source of Islamic teachings, contains various principles that can be applied in various aspects of human life, including mental health. (Nahar & Saefudin, 2024, p. 16) The following verses provide insight into the importance of mental health from an Islamic perspective, and can provide peace if their meaning is considered carefully:

Surah Ar-Rad 13/28

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

Meaning: (Namely) those who believe and whose hearts are at peace with the remembrance of Allah. Remember, that only by remembering Allah will hearts be at peace.

The verse explains that faith encourages a person to always remember Allah through dhikr. Remembering Allah will bring a sense of peace that can eliminate various anxieties, negative thoughts, despair, fear, doubt, and everything related to mental disorders. (Nahar & Saefudin, 2024, p. 6)

Ibn Abbas explained that when believers listen to the Koran, their hearts become peaceful and serene. This verse teaches that when filled with anxiety and worry, believers should remember Allah through various forms of worship, such as reading the Koran, praying, or other forms of worship, to gain peace of mind. Qurtubi interprets the phrase "their hearts feel at ease by remembering Allah" as a sign that the heart becomes calm when mentioning Allah's name. Qatadah and Mujahid argue that this phrase refers to the memory of the Qur'an. (Ulinuha, 2024, p. 144)

Surah Yunus verse 57

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ لَلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

It means:

"O people! Indeed, there has come to you a lesson (the Qur'an) from your Lord, a cure for diseases in the chest, and guidance and mercy for those who believe."

Ibn Asyur, an expert in interpretation from Tunisia, explained that QS. Yunus verse 57 describes the Qur'an as a whole as a medicine that can cure various diseases, both those related to the soul and the body. In his interpretation, the word "Min" in the phrase "Minal Qur'ani" does not refer to a part (li al-tab'idh), but to a type of medicine that includes the entire contents of the Qur'an. Ibn Asyur argued that this verse shows that the Qur'an contains verses that function as a cure for various physical diseases, according to the explanations contained in various hadiths. Here, the word "syifa" in the verse is described as a term that includes two types of healing, namely for mental and physical diseases. (Padilah et al., 2024, p. 2319)

Surah Al Baqarah Verse 153

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

It means :

"O you who believe, ask for help (from Allah) with patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with those who are patient."

This letter emphasizes the virtue of patience as a quality that brings many good things, especially because patience is the key to receiving God's help in facing suffering and calamities. This verse teaches that patience is not just an attitude of endurance, but is a way for every servant to obtain God's grace and help in the midst of various difficulties. In addition to giving warnings about the existence of various tests, Allah also sends down guidance for His servants on how to face these tests. Behind every problem given, Allah always provides an accompanying solution, teaching that the test and its resolution are part of His plan. Allah not only tests, but also guides His servants to pass each trial with invaluable provisions of fortitude and wisdom. Everyone who is patient in facing tests will obtain the wisdom, lessons, and rewards that Allah has promised. With patience, a servant not only finds it easier to face trials, but also gains a deeper understanding of the secrets of life and the greatness of Allah. Patience, therefore, is a step that brings us closer to His love and strengthens the belief that every test given brings great wisdom for anyone who is able to face it with sincerity and trust. (Maulana, 2020, p. 4)

Al-Baqarah Verse 155

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالتَّمَرَاتِ ۖ وَبَشِّرِ

It means

"And indeed We will test you with a little fear, hunger, lack of wealth, life and fruit. And give good news to those who are patient."

This verse reminds us that Allah tests people through various kinds of tests, such as fear, hunger, loss of property, loss of loved ones, and reduced results of business or harvest. All of these tests come as a form of learning and strengthening for the human soul. However, Allah also brings good news for those who are patient in facing each of these tests. Not only does He warn of the tests, Allah also provides guidance on how to face them, teaching that every problem that arises has a solution that has been prepared. In every test, there is wisdom that can only be felt by those who are able to be patient and trust in Allah. For those who try to understand and face the tests with patience, Allah promises wisdom and learning that can strengthen faith and steadfastness. These tests are not just trials, but opportunities for His servants to get closer, understand the meaning of patience, and feel Allah's love and guidance in every aspect of life. (Maulana, 2020, pp. 3–4)

Al-Baqarah Verse 186

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

"And when My servants ask you concerning Me, indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me and believe in Me that they may be rightly guided." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 186)

According to Ibn Kathir's interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 186, Allah is very close to His servants, and His knowledge encompasses everything. He is All-Hearing of His servants' supplications and actions. However, a servant must fulfill the obligatory aspects of worship and other deeds, such as obedience, sincerity, and repentance, while avoiding severing ties of kinship. Furthermore, a servant is forbidden from demanding that their prayer be answered hastily, as explained by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). When someone says, "I have prayed and prayed, but I have never seen my prayer answered," this reflects impatience, which may lead them to feel weary and stop praying altogether. The Prophet also mentioned three individuals whose prayers will not be rejected by Allah: a just leader, a fasting person until they break their fast, and one who is wronged. (Silfani, 2022, p. 46)

QS. Al-Baqarah verse 216

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

"Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 216)

The word 'asa (عَسَى), which means "perhaps" or "it may be," carries a sense of uncertainty from the human perspective. However, from Allah's perspective, nothing is uncertain, as everything is fully known to Him. Therefore, if Allah commands something that a person may dislike, one should cultivate faith and optimism that this obligation holds great goodness. The same applies to Allah's decree; even if something is disliked, it may, in fact, bring immense benefit.

Ibn Katsir explains that this principle applies universally to all matters. Sometimes, a person dislikes something that is actually very good for them, such as jihad in war. Through jihad, Islam is protected from the evil forces that seek to destroy it, and the honor of Muslims, along with the safety of the weak, including women

and children, is preserved from the harm of oppressors or perpetrators of humanitarian crimes. Other commentators also emphasize the universal nature of this principle. Buya Hamka, for example, uses the analogy of bitter medicine. Many people dislike its bitter taste, but it is essential for healing and health. In Tafsir Al Azhar, he writes, "Like a sick person taking bitter medicine; although they dislike it, they must swallow it for their recovery." (Simanjuntak et al., 2024, pp. 782–783)

CONCLUSIONS

Anxiety disorders (mental anxiety disorders) are one of the serious issues experienced by many young people today. This disorder is often triggered by various life pressures, such as family problems (broken home), excessive workload, to social pressure that causes prolonged stress. This anxiety disorder is characterized by excessive anxiety that interferes with a person's daily life and productivity. Although the exact cause of anxiety disorders is not yet fully known, many believe that a person's relationship with God plays an important role in maintaining mental health.

From an Islamic perspective, the Quran touches on various aspects related to anxiety, such as excessive fear, excessive ambition, hatred of others, and various heart diseases that trigger anxiety. The Quran also offers solutions to overcome anxiety through verses that teach peace of mind. By remembering that everything has been arranged by Allah's destiny, increasing dhikr, and surrendering things beyond control to Him, one can achieve inner peace. This approach helps individuals face the various pressures of life with more sincerity and patience, so that they are able to live a better and more meaningful life.

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