

Anxiety Disorder Through the Quranic Paradigm

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Abstract: *This article aims to provide an insightful examination of strategies for addressing anxiety disorder based on interpretations of the Qur'an. In Indonesia, the prevalence of anxiety is alarmingly high, with 9,162,886 reported cases of depression in the past two years alone. Given the Qur'an's revered status as a guidance book, exploring its teachings on anxiety is essential to address this pressing issue. Employing a qualitative research approach focused on a literature review, this study draws from various sources, including scholarly books and articles. The research outcomes highlight several theoretical frameworks derived from the Qur'an for tackling anxiety, such as (1) mindfulness—a meditative therapy aimed at clearing the mind of negative experiences and redirecting focus toward positivity; (2) cognitive therapy—recalibrating one's mindset toward optimistic perspectives, and (3) fostering resilient attitudes by steadfastly confronting adversities.*

Keyword: *Anxiety Disorder; al-Qur'an; Exegesis*

Abstrak: Artikel ini bertujuan untuk memberikan uraian tentang cara mengatasi anxiety disorder atau gangguan kecemasan perspektif al-Qur'an lebih spesifik melalui sudut pandang karya-karya seputar tafsir al-Quran. Di Indonesia persentase anxiety cukup tinggi dengan data adanya kasus sebanyak 9.162.886 orang menderita depresi dalam 2 tahun terakhir. Adanya al-Qur'an yang dianggap sebagai Kitab Petunjuk, perlu digali tentang konsep anxiety di dalamnya, sebagai upaya untuk menyelesaikan masalah tersebut. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan. Sumber data berasal dari beragam literatur buku dan artikel ilmiah yang sesuai dengan topik penelitian. Riset menemukan beberapa cara untuk mengatasi anxiety melalui konsepsi teoritis yang berasal dari Al-Qur'an meliputi, (1) mindfulness yaitu bentuk terapi meditasi terhadap seseorang untuk menjernihkan pikiran dari pengalaman yang kurang baik untuk kembali fokus pada hal yang baik-baik, (2) terapi kognitif yaitu merubah mindset seseorang dengan hal-hal yang bersifat positif, dan (3) melatih sikap afektif yaitu dengan bersikap tegas dalam menghadapi segala persoalan.

Kata kunci; *Gangguan Kecemasan; Al-Qurán; Tafsir*

INTRODUCTION

Discussion related to anxiety disorders is particularly compelling to study, given that this mental health issue has consistently been a global concern.¹ According to data on depression levels between countries in 2023, reported by the World Population Review, Ukraine ranks first with a prevalence of 6.3 percent, equating to 2,800,587 cases. The United States is in second place with 17,491,047 cases or 5.9 percent of the population, followed by Estonia with 75,667 cases. In Indonesia, there were 9,162,886 cases of depression, leading to a suicide rate of 3.4 percent per 100,000 people, often initiated by anxiety and depression disorders.² A BPS-Statistics Indonesia survey from February 16-25, 2022, categorized the conditions by age group. For those aged 31 to 45, 15.8 percent were easily angered, 8.6 percent were terrified, and 15.4 percent often felt anxious. In the 46-60 age group, 9.8 percent were easily angered, 6.1 percent were terrified, and 12.7 percent often felt anxious. Among those aged 60 years and over, 10.4 percent were easily angered, 7.7 percent were terrified, and 13.2

¹ Sabrina Agrivita Saragih, "Terapi Kognitif Perilaku Dalam Pengobatan Gangguan Kecemasan," *Literacy Notes* 1, no. 2 (2023), <https://liternote.com/index.php/ln/article/view/23>.

² "DEPRESSION | Simple Living Global," accessed June 5, 2024, <https://simplelivingglobal.com/depression/>.

percent often felt anxious.³ The official website of the Psychiatric Association (PDSKJI) states that during the COVID-19 pandemic, 64.3 percent of 1,522 respondents experienced symptoms of anxiety or depression. The survey indicates a decrease in health problems related to mental health after the pandemic, although the prevalence of mental health issues remains high.⁴

In navigating the changing conditions of life, individuals often face inner dilemmas that arise from personal factors or external circumstances, leading to various negative emotions such as anxiety, worry, disappointment, sadness, and confusion. These emotional struggles are primary contributors to depression and mental disorders. They can affect brain function, causing individuals to blame themselves or their circumstances, which do not align with their desires. This state can lead to questioning one's faith and doubting divine existence, resulting in a mental and spiritual crisis.⁵ Anxiety is a mental condition characterized by internal conflict and emotional turmoil due to anticipated but uncertain events.⁶ It often manifests as a fear of events that have not occurred and may never happen. A fundamental cause of anxiety is the inability to fully embrace the concept of tawakal (trust in God's plan) and to place hope solely in Allah. Adults are the primary sufferers of anxiety disorders, although the advancement and development of a country depend on the quality of its human resources. Addressing these social problems requires a spiritual approach, and Islam offers various solutions to its followers' issues. In Islam, anxiety can be seen as *suuzan* (harboring negative thoughts / thinking incredibly suspicious) towards others and

³ Badan Pusat Statistik, "Perilaku Masyarakat Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Hasil Survei Perilaku Masyarakat Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19 Periode, 2022*, 16–25.

⁴ Nurul Afni Octaviani, Mina Yumei Santi, and Yuliasti Eka Purnamaningrum, "Tingkat Kecemasan Ibu Dan Pemberian ASI Eksklusif Pada Masa Pandemi COVID-19," *Window of Health: Jurnal Kesehatan*, 2022, 685–96.

⁵ Saputra Riki, *Masa Depan Agama (Gagasan Perennial Huston Smith)* (Padang: UMSB Press, 2022), 3.

⁶ Filippo Aureli, "Post-Conflict Anxiety in Nonhuman Primates: The Mediating Role of Emotion in Conflict Resolution," *Aggressive Behavior* 23, no. 5 (1997): 315–28, [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1098-2337\(1997\)23:5<315::AID-AB2>3.0.CO;2-H](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1098-2337(1997)23:5<315::AID-AB2>3.0.CO;2-H).

God. Therefore, Islam teaches the importance of maintaining positive thoughts, which fosters good qualities and spiritual well-being.⁷

The Qur'an, representing God's absolute will and wisdom, encompasses comprehensive teachings and refinements of earlier scriptures. It is the main guideline of the Islamic faith known as rahmatan lil alamin.⁸ Being the ultimate scripture valid until the Day of Judgment, its teachings are deemed eternally relevant as a source of guidance for humanity and the primary reference for the Islamic faith.⁹ However, its universal nature means that not all verses detail specific human life issues. This requires a contextual interpretation of the Qur'an, as everyone needs help understanding its textual meanings.¹⁰ Consequently, various approaches to interpreting the Qur'an have emerged. Globalization, with its myriad challenges to modern human life, burdens contemporary civilization. Muslims must address and resolve these problems, making it essential to actualize the Qur'an to answer evolving issues. The advancement of science and technology and societal demands influence the perspectives of Qur'anic scholars.¹¹ This ensures that the study and interpretation of the Qur'an remain relevant as a solution for the global Muslim community's problems. Modern interpretation exemplifies the efforts of expert scholars to render Qur'anic verses applicable to contemporary contexts.¹² This is achieved by interpretation experts who analyze the Qur'an using modern sciences in their interpretations. This practice may serve as a way to bridge the gap between the Qur'an and modern science, helping

⁷ Ahmad Nabil Md Rosli, Shalisah Sharip, and Nur Sakinah Thomas, "Scrupulosity and Islam: A Perspective," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 23, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 255–77, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2019.1700476>.

⁸ Aziz Miftahus Surur et al., "KH. Faqih Maskumambang's Thought Regarding the Prohibition of the Use of Kentongan as a Marker of Prayer Time: A Prophetic Hadith Perspective," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 34, no. 2 (2023): 153–66.

⁹ Aziz Miftahus Surur and Aris Anwaril Muttaqin, "Qur'anic Strategy Realizing Couple Harmony in Surah Al-Ahzab Verse 28," *Al-Karim: International Journal of Quranic and Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2023): 1–12.

¹⁰ Lukmanul Hakim et al., "Qur'anic Interpretation Method And Its Impact On Contemporary Interpretation," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 26, no. 2 (2018): 142–53, <http://dx.doi.org/10.24014/jush.v26i2.4577>.

¹¹ Amel Laalouna and Omar Hidoussi, "Interpretation Of The Holy Quran In The Light Of Modernity," *El-Ihyaa Journal*, 19, no. 23 (2019), <http://dspace.univ-batna.dz/handle/123456789/5201>.

¹² Didik Andriawan, "Interpretation of the Quran in Contemporary Indonesia: A Study on M. Quraish Shihab and His Work 'Tafsir Al-Mishbāh,'" *Akif* 52, no. 1 (2022): 1–19.

contemporary society grasp the correlation between Qur'anic knowledge and scientific advancements that can benefit humanity.¹³

Several verses in the Qur'an address anxiety and methods to overcome it, necessitating interpretations from various tafsir works for comprehensive understanding. Examining these verses more closely and thoroughly is anticipated to offer valuable insights concerning the issue of anxiety from the viewpoint of the Qur'an. There are similarities to previous studies and differences regarding the research subject. Previous studies discussing related themes include: "Dampak overthinking dan pencegahannya menurut Muhammad Quraish Shihab: Studi Surah al-Hujurat ayat 12" / "The impact of overthinking and its prevention according to Muhammad Quraish Shihab: Study of Surah al-Hujurat verse 12" by Tika Setia Utami et al. This research explains the impact of overthinking, such as the emergence of fear and worry caused by worrying about past events and doubting future outcomes. Handling this based on the interpretation of Surah al-Hujurat verse 12 in the *Tafsir Mishbah*, these attitudes can be prevented through tawakal, ridha, husnuzan, and patience with the problems faced.¹⁴ The article titled "Murattal Al-Quran Therapy to Reduce Anxiety among Operating Patients" by Lilis Lismayanti et al. explores the impact of murratal al-Qur'an therapy on decreasing anxiety levels in surgical patients.¹⁵ Articles with comparable research but focusing on different subjects are: "Effects of Recitation of Holy Quran on Anxiety of Women before Cesarean Section: A Randomize Clinical Trial" by AjorPaz and N. Ranjbar¹⁶, "Effect of Quran Recitation on the Level of Anxiety in

¹³ Taufik Alamin et al., "Reception of the Integration of Islam and Science: A Case Study at Islamic Institute of Kediri," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 35, no. 1 (2024): 57–78.

¹⁴ Tika Setia Utami, Safria Andy, and Muhammad Akbar Rosyidi Datmi, "Dampak Overthinking Dan Pencegahannya Menurut Muhammad Quraish Shihab Studi Surah Al-Hujurat Ayat 12," *Al-Wasathiyah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (2023): 14–27.

¹⁵ Lilis Lismayanti et al., "Murattal Al-Quran Therapy to Reduce Anxiety among Operating Patients," *Genius Journal* 2, no. 1 (2021): 9–15.

¹⁶ N. Mir Bagher AjorPaz and N. Ranjbar, "Effects of Recitation of Holy Quran on Anxiety of Women before Cesarean Section: A Randomize Clinical Trial.," *Qom University of Medical Sciences Journal* 4, no. 1 (2010), <https://www.cabdirect.org/cabdirect/abstract/20103106868>.

Athletics by Mottaghi, R. Esmaili, and Z. Rohani¹⁷, and “Effect of Recitation of Quran on the Anxiety of Patients with Myocardial Infarction” by Zahra Najafi et al.¹⁸ Of all the existing studies, there has been a lack of comprehensive research on anxiety in the Qur’an. This study complements previous research by delving into this aspect. It seeks to enhance understanding of the causes of anxiety and mental disorders in the Qur’anic paradigm through interpretations not previously explored. The article also aims to identify the characteristics, signs, and remedies for anxiety, addressing global issues evident in the Qur’an but requiring more transparent and accessible explanations for all audiences.

METHOD

The research methodology employed in this scientific paper is library research, focusing on literature related to mental health within the Quranic paradigm to address the problem using library resources. The approach utilized is qualitative. The primary source is the Qur’an, along with interpretations of its verses. Secondary sources include various data and articles related to mental health. The writing method is descriptive and analytical. Data collection involves gathering verses related to mental health from the Qur’an and relevant tafsir books.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Anxiety Disorder

Experts define anxiety as the body’s response to stress, resulting in feelings of fear or worry about future events or even those that have not occurred.¹⁹ Anxiety disorder is a psychological condition marked by motor tension, hyperactivity, and anxious thoughts and expectations, often stemming from a perceived but uncertain threat. Additionally, anxiety can be seen as an ego

¹⁷ M. E. Mottaghi, R. Esmaili, and Z. Rohani, “Effect of Quran Recitation on the Level of Anxiety in Athletics,” *Quarterly of Quran & Medicine* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1–4.

¹⁸ Zahra Najafi et al., “Effect of Recitation of Quran on the Anxiety of Patients with Myocardial Infarction,” *Evidence Based Care* 4, no. 1 (2014): 7–16.

¹⁹ adminprodi, “Pengertian Anxiety dan Kenali Gejalanya - Psikologi,” December 12, 2022, <https://psikologi.esaunggul.ac.id/pengertian-anxiety-dan-kenali-gejalanya/>.

system reaction to situations deemed dangerous, enabling individuals to prepare adaptive responses.²⁰ According to Islamic psychology, referring to the Qur'an, anxiety is interpreted as an emotion of fear. Islam teaches its followers to maintain a positive mindset, as positive thinking helps to eliminate negative traits, such as suspicion. Suspicion arises from excessive doubt and can be a significant factor causing anxiety.²¹ In the Qur'an, anxiety or fear is referred to as "khawf," and its derivatives appear 120 times. Surah al-Baqarah 2/155, explains that all humans will be tested with fear. Humans are composed of two elements: physical and psychic. The human psyche, or soul, is central to overall well-being, and any psychological disturbance can lead to physical disorders. Therefore, individuals with mental disturbances require treatment, such as psychotherapy. In Islam, psychotherapy involves planning to resolve issues, putting problems into perspective, and seeking forgiveness and guidance from Allah.²²

Anxiety defined as a mental disorder characterized by excessive worry and fear. If not promptly addressed, it can worsen over time, diminishing the quality of relationships with loved ones and disrupting daily activities. Several factors contribute to the onset of anxiety, including genetic predisposition, biological factors (such as chemical imbalances in the brain), environmental influences, and stress. According to psychology, this disorder can be prevented by adopting a healthy lifestyle. Key strategies include maintaining a balanced diet, getting sufficient sleep, staying physically active, meditating, avoiding smoking and excessive caffeine, participating in counseling sessions, and engaging in social activities. Persistent and severe anxiety disorders can have detrimental

²⁰ Aditya Dedy Nugraha, "Memahami Kecemasan: Perspektif Psikologi Islam," *IJIP: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Psychology* 2, no. 1 (2020): 1–22.

²¹ Nadian Angelique Putri, "Hubungan Antara Kecemasan Terhadap Husnudzon Mahasiswi (The Relationship Between Anxiety In Students' positive Mind)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi Dan Kesehatan Masyarakat* 1, no. 2 (2023): 36–42.

²² Samsidar Samsidar, "Doa Sebagai Metode Pengobatan Psikoterapi Islam," *Al-Din: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Sosial Keagamaan* 6, no. 2 (2020), <https://www.jurnal.iain-bone.ac.id/index.php/aldin/article/view/1132>.

effects on health, including disruptions to the central nervous system, increased risk of cardiovascular disease, digestive issues, weakened immune function, and respiratory problems.²³

In the Qur'an, the term for anxiety is closely related to the word "khawf", which is defined as the feeling that arises when one anticipates something terrible happening or fears losing something valuable. Ibn Manzur described khawf as a mental whisper resulting from suspicion about the potential emergence of something undesirable or the loss of something cherished. Ragib Asfahani explained that khawf is the fear of something suspected or known for sure or fear due to the perceived weakness of the person who is afraid, even if what is feared is trivial.²⁴ The term khawf can be applied to both worldly and hereafter matters. Before the Qur'an's revelation, khawf meant a fear that caused uneasiness or unhappiness. During the Qur'anic revelation, this meaning evolved. In the Meccan period, khawf retained its original sense of fear, causing unease or unhappiness. However, in the Medinan period, khawf increasingly referred to the fear of Allah's punishment for disobeying His commands.²⁵

According to Gazali, khawf consists of three levels, including the following: (1) low level, like the tenderness of feelings possessed by women when listening to the verses that Allah reads. (2) high level, very strong khawf that exceeds reasonableness and leads to loss of control of reason and even death. This khawf is considered reprehensible as it hinders humans from doing good deeds. (3) medium level, a commendable level of khawf between low and high levels.²⁶

Khawf, or fear, is generally categorized into positive and negative. Positive khawf, such as piety and awe (khasya), is considered beneficial and

²³ Fadillah Fadillah and Sanghati Sanghati, "Anxiety Levels of Breast Cancer Patients Undergoing Chemotherapy During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Jurnal Ilmiah Kesehatan Sandi Husada* 12, no. 1 (2023): 136–42.

²⁴ Al-Raghib Al-Ashfahany, *Mu 'Jam Mufradat Li Alfadz al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2004), 531.

²⁵ Nur Umi Luthfiana and Nur Huda, "Analisis Makna Khauf Dalam Al-Quran: Pendekatan Semantik Toshihiko Izutsu," *AL ITQAN: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an* 3, no. 2 (2017): 95–118.

²⁶ M. Quraish Shihab, *Ensiklopedia Al-Quran: Kajian Kosakata* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2007), 3/824.

obligatory for every believer. Conversely, negative khawf is associated with mental illness and can impede an individual's development and progress, as it is deemed detrimental to the soul and personality. This negative form of fear is depicted in Qur'an al-Ahzab 33/19, which recounts the Ahzab war, where Muslims faced numerical defeat and found themselves surrounded. This illustrates fear stemming from uncertainty or doubt in an individual's mind. To alleviate symptoms of anxiety, Quraish Shihab offers a solution for restless, doubtful, and fearful hearts to find peace: a remembrance of Allah. Continuous remembrance (dhikr) of Allah ensures a heart that remains tranquil.²⁷

The Quranic Perspective on Anxiety

In Arabic, the word anxiety, expressing fear, worry, and restlessness, is conveyed through the terms khawf, rayb, and khasya. However, in the Qur'an, the terms rayb and khasya are primarily used to depict anxiety and doubt in the human heart. For instance, in Surah at-Tawbah /45: (إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ) (وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَبِّهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ) “only those who do not have faith in God and the Last Day ask your permission to stay at home: they have doubt in their hearts and so they waver.” In *Tafsir al-Manar*, the phrase (وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ) is interpreted as describing doubts in matters of religion, leading to a lack of peace of mind and a diminishing sense of obedience originating from within oneself. True faith, as depicted, is characterized by certainty coupled with a form of obedience and surrender. The interpretation of this verse suggests that individuals experiencing anxiety, fear, or worry in worldly matters may indicate a low level of faith within them. Conversely, those with strong faith would not experience such emotions, as they believe that everything unfolds according to Allah's decree, which is ultimately beneficial for them.

²⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an Tentang Zikir Dan Doa* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati Group, 2006), 122.

Next, the following verse is found in the same letter but in a different chapter, specifically in the letter al-Tawbah 9/110: (لَا يَزَالُ بُنْيَانُهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيبَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ) (إِلَّا أَنْ تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ) “The building which they built will never cease to be a cause of hypocrisy and doubt in their hearts, unless their hearts are cut to pieces. (i.e. till they die). And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.” Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Ridha mentioned that “rayb” is synonymous with “shak”, describing it as unsettling to the soul, leading to negative assumptions, resulting in a heart filled with doubt and confusion.²⁸

Another term, “khasyah”, is also used to refer to anxiety or worry, as an example in Surah al-Maidah 4/9: (وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكَوْا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعْفًا خَافُوا عَلَيْكُمْ) (فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا) “Let those (disposing of an estate) have the same fear in their minds as they would have for their own if they had left a helpless family behind: Let them fear Allah, and speak words of appropriate (comfort).” The interpretation of the word “khasyah” in *al-Manar*, which is synonymous with “khawf,” is akin to Raghīb Asfihani’s explanation in the book *Mu’jam Mufradat Alfaz al-Qur’an*. Raghīb Asfihani elucidates that “khasyah” signifies a fear accompanied by reverence. These terms often denote the fear arising from the awareness of something feared. This verse underscores the prohibition of mistreating and being unjust to children who are deemed vulnerable in terms of well-being, instilling a sense of fear of Allah. Surah Al-Isra’ 17/31 elaborates on this concept: (وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ حَسْبَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْئًا كَبِيرًا) “Kill not your children for fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily, the killing of them is a great sin.” Ibn Kathir mentioned that Allah commands parents to show affection to their children. This verse addresses the practice of ignorant individuals who used to kill daughters out of fear of financial burden and poverty. Fakhrudin Razi elaborates on this verse, connecting it to the previous one that highlights that Allah sustains whomever He wills. Therefore, killing a child due to financial concerns reflects a lack of trust in Allah. The verse aims to condemn the ignorant Arabs who sacrificed their daughters because they

²⁸ Abduh Muhammad and Ridha Rashid, *Tafsir Al-Manâr* (Bairût: al-Haihah al-Misriyah al-Ammah lil Kitab, 1990), 11/30.

were perceived as less capable of earning. The term (أولادكم) is inclusive of both sons and daughters, emphasizing the duty of parents to show love to their children.²⁹ Sustenance is under the control of Allah, indicating that each child has their ordained path of sustenance, facilitated through the parents' provision.

Way to Manage Anxiety

a. Mindfulness

The primary method to combat anxiety is through mindfulness techniques. Mindfulness involves being aware of one's ability to stay focused and control oneself during an event or experience.³⁰ It aims to enhance focus, attentiveness, and acceptance of the situation, reducing self-blame, blame towards others, and blame towards God. There are five aspects to applying mindfulness when facing unpleasant experiences: (1) observing, which involves observing the situation one is in. (2) describing, which involves the ability to describe every event experienced. (3) acting with awareness involves being conscious of the consequences of one's actions. (4) non-judging of inner experience involves refraining from self-blame even in times of failure. (5) non-reactivity to inner experience involves avoiding actions that may negatively affect oneself or others due to failure.³¹ Mindfulness can be practiced through meditation to clear the mind of unpleasant experiences. This practice helps manage thoughts by redirecting them towards more meaningful and valuable things. Some view mindfulness as a spiritual journey toward self-awareness and closeness to God. It

²⁹ Abu al-Fida' Imaduddin Ismail b. Umar Ibn Kasir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim* (Riyad: Dar Tayyiba, 1999), 5/66.

³⁰ Alethea Desrosiers et al., "Mindfulness And Emotion Regulation In Depression And Anxiety: Common And Distinct Mechanisms Of Action: Research Article: Mindfulness and Emotion Regulation," *Depression and Anxiety* 30, no. 7 (July 2013): 654–61, <https://doi.org/10.1002/da.22124>; Randy J. Semple, Elizabeth FG Reid, and Lisa Miller, "Treating Anxiety with Mindfulness: An Open Trial of Mindfulness Training for Anxious Children," *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy* 19, no. 4 (2005): 379–92.

³¹ Luca Iani et al., "Associations Between Mindfulness and Emotion Regulation: The Key Role of Describing and Nonreactivity," *Mindfulness* 10, no. 2 (February 2019): 366–75, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-018-0981-5>.

enables individuals to be creative, innovative, at peace with themselves, and free from self-blame.³²

Mindfulness in Islamic teachings pertains to qualities such as sincerity, contentment, contemplation, and gratitude towards Allah. Embracing this mindset enables individuals to appreciate the blessings bestowed by Allah and cultivate a broad perspective in dealing with diverse circumstances. These attributes are closely linked to managing anxiety or anxiety disorders arising from specific situations. Practicing mindfulness by Islamic teachings involves engaging in activities like prayer, remembrance of God, reciting the Qur'an, and solitude. During prayer, individuals are encouraged to immerse themselves in each recitation, focusing solely on the act to achieve a sense of tranquility afterward. Similarly, when engaging in dhikr and reading the Qur'an, one should delve into the meanings to comprehend Allah's attributes' power, magnificence, and grandeur, leading to a sense of clarity and peace in the heart and mind.

Some verses in Surah Ar-Rad 13/28 convey the essence of mindfulness: (الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ) “Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction.” Ibn Abbas explained that when believers hear the Qur'an, their hearts will be calmed and find peace. This verse teaches believers that in times of anxiety and worry, they should remember Allah through various acts like reading the Qur'an, praying, or other forms of worship to bring tranquility to their hearts.³³ Qurtubi interprets the phrase “their hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah” as indicating their hearts are soothed by mentioning Allah. Qatadah and Mujahid suggest that it refers to recalling the Qur'an. On the other hand, Ibn Abbas views remembering Allah as swearing by His name or reflecting on His blessings, justice, and decisions.³⁴ Essentially, reflecting on the abundant blessings bestowed by Allah, without

³² Bhikkhu Bodhi, “The Transformations of Mindfulness,” *Handbook of Mindfulness*, 2016, 3–14.

³³ (tafsir al manar)

³⁴ Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami 'Li Ahkam al-Qur'an* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah, 1384), 9/315.

comparing them to others, can lead to a sense of contentment and prosperity, alleviating anxiety and worry.

The mindfulness attitude can also be inferred from Surah al-Baqarah 2/152: (فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونَ) “Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith.” Regarding the ayat, Razi explains that Allah has commanded two things: dhikr using the tongue, heart, or body parts. Dhikr with the tongue includes reciting tahmid, tasbih, and reading the Qur’an. At the same time, dhikr with the heart involves contemplating the attributes and names of Allah, addressing suspicions that contradict the evidence, and understanding Allah's law, decisions, commands, prohibitions, and promises to facilitate living in accordance with Islamic law. Alongside dhikr, Allah also advises us always to show gratitude for every gift and destiny we encounter.³⁵ The verse above serves as a reminder to constantly recall Allah’s great attributes, such as being the most merciful, compassionate, wealthy, and wise. This practice helps in alleviating worries and anxieties about worldly life. After reflecting on His attributes, Allah instructs us to express gratitude continually. The leading causes of human anxiety often stem from uncertainties about what they will possess, as well as tendencies towards stinginess and dissatisfaction with Allah’s gifts.

b. Cognitive Therapy

Cognitive therapy is a form of psychotherapy that aims to alter an individual’s mindset. For instance, smoking has long been seen as a way to relieve stress. This approach can bring awareness that this mindset is incorrect and needs to be changed. Along with changing mindsets, this therapy teaches new ways to cope with stress, such as regular exercise, journaling, and breathing exercises. It can be applied to help individuals find solutions to their problems, addressing issues like anxiety, depression, phobias, panic disorders, sleep disorders, and

³⁵ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Ḥusayn Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Maḥāṣin Al-Ghayb*, 3rd ed. (Bayrūt: Dar Ihya al-Turas al-Arabi, 1420), 4/123.

alcohol abuse.³⁶ A key aspect of cognitive therapy is recognizing that thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, and actions influence each other. Negative thoughts can make minor problems feel overwhelming, and this therapy can help process and address these negative feelings and thoughts. The steps in cognitive therapy include: (1) Identifying the problem, where patients are encouraged to recognize and accept their issues, with the therapist's help in finding the root cause. (2) Focusing on finding solutions, helping individuals gradually face and overcome their problems. (3) Improving mindsets daily by identifying the relationships between problems and their consequences to change mindsets and responses to problems, ultimately fostering a more positive outlook and focus on present issues. (4) Engaging in positive habits. Once the individual acknowledges, embraces, simplifies, and comprehends the issue holistically, the subsequent task is to discard previous coping mechanisms. Cognitive therapy, focusing on thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, can be employed.³⁷

Although the Qur'an does not explicitly discuss cognitive therapy, its verses contain principles and understandings that align with cognitive therapy, such as Surat al-Alaq 96/1-5: (أَفْرَأَ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ) (الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ) “Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful,-He Who taught (the use of) the pen,-Taught man that which he knew not.” This verse highlights the significance of broadening knowledge and strengthening positive affirmations to shape our thoughts and actions. Cognitive therapy for anxiety promotes replacing negative thoughts with positive self-talk and affirmations.³⁸

³⁶ Michael W. Otto and Christen Deveney, “Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and the Treatment of Panic Disorder: Efficacy and Strategies,” *J Clin Psychiatry* 66, no. Suppl 4 (2005): 28–32.

³⁷ Dr Matthew Whalley Kaur Dr Hardeep, “What Is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)?,” Psychology Tools, accessed June 7, 2024, <https://www.psychologytools.com/self-help/what-is-cbt/>.

³⁸ David E. Conroy and Jonathan N. Metzler, “Patterns of Self-Talk Associated with Different Forms of Competitive Anxiety,” *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 26, no. 1 (2004): 69–89.

The verse Hud 11/6 is one of many verses that discuss the cognitive aspects of therapy: (وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلُّ فِي) (كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ) “There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance dependeth on Allah: He knoweth the time and place of its definite abode and its temporary deposit: All is in a clear Record.” Regarding the verse, Razi explains that it is mentioned in the previous verse that Allah knows what they hide and what they show. It then continues by demonstrating that the sustenance of every animal comes from Allah. If Allah is not omniscient, these crucial matters will not be fulfilled. This verse clarifies that even imperfect animals like humans have their sustenance guaranteed by Allah. Humans, described as حيوان ناطق (animals that have reason), receive what is destined for them in this world according to their measure. Therefore, there is no need to worry about what has already been guaranteed and written in the lauhul mahfudz. In the realm of cognitive therapy, this verse aims to shift the mindset of anxious individuals regarding wealth, instilling the belief that Allah has already secured it despite each person’s unique circumstances.

The content of Surah an-Nahl 16/97 is closely related to the concept of cognitive therapy: (مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنَّىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ) (بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ) “Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.” The interpretation by Fakhruddin Razi suggests that those who acknowledge Allah as the most gracious and merciful will find contentment in His decrees, recognizing them as beneficial. Conversely, those who do not will experience sadness and distress. Anxiety pertains to anticipated adverse outcomes, reflecting a lack of faith in Allah’s wisdom and power. When feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, or

discontent arise, it signifies a lack of belief in Allah's ultimate knowledge and care for His servants.³⁹

Changing mindset, an important aspect of cognitive therapy, is also emphasized in Surah al-Kahfi verses 60-82: (وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّىٰ أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ) (الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا) “Moses said to his servant, ‘I will not rest until I reach the place where the two seas meet, even if it takes me years!’.” The verse reveals that when the Bani Israel asked Moses about the most pious man on earth, he initially claimed to be the most pious. However, Allah corrected him by revealing that there was a servant even more pious and knowledgeable than him, Khidir. Moses then humbly requested to meet and learn from Khidir. During their journey, Khidir taught Moses important lessons through three events, but Moses became impatient at one point. Despite this, Khidir had instructed Moses not to question him until he explained his actions. Khidir emphasized that Allah's will guide his actions. This story of Moses and Khidir teaches valuable lessons about manners, patience, trust in Allah's will, and the importance of changing one's mindset to reduce anxiety by listening to advice from others.

c. Assertive Therapy

The general definition of assertive is an attitude that demonstrates self-confidence and the ability to express oneself clearly, firmly, and directly without attacking or harming others.⁴⁰ Individuals with an assertive attitude can assert their opinions and rights without causing harm to others. However, an assertive attitude is often mistaken for an aggressive attitude by others despite the clear distinction between the two. Many individuals with social anxiety disorder tend to exhibit a passive nature or communication style out of fear that being assertive may be perceived as selfish, pushy, or aggressive. Aggressive communication involves imposing our desires on others while disregarding their needs or rights to assert dominance or achieve victory. In contrast, passive communication is characterized by avoiding conflict or eye contact during interactions and

³⁹ Rāzī, *Maḥāṭib Al-Ghayb*, 26/226.

⁴⁰ Ecaterina Postolatii, “Assertiveness: Theoretical Approaches and Benefits of Assertive Behavior,” *Journal of Innovation in Psychology, Education and Didactics* 21, no. 1 (2017): 83–96.

prioritizing the other party's wishes over one's own by refraining from expressing personal desires.⁴¹

For someone with anxiety, situations involving others that they perceive as having a negative impact must be avoided, as they can exacerbate their condition. Assertive therapy is crucial for individuals with anxiety disorders. Several factors, including gender, self-esteem, culture, education level, and specific environmental situations, influence the development of assertive behavior.⁴² These factors are variables that connect assertive therapy to anxiety reduction, with each individual having unique assertive development factors. Assertive therapy is particularly effective in helping individuals move away from passive (non-assertive) attitudes. Its foundation lies in aiding individuals to handle conflicts effectively when their desires clash with those of others. A lack of assertive behavior can lead to stress, anxiety, and personality disorders. As a behavioral therapy technique, assertive therapy facilitates learning social behaviors and the elimination of maladaptive ones. According to behavioral theory, a passive personality is seen as a deficiency in social interaction skills. Cognitive therapy also plays a crucial role in teaching rational thinking, which helps develop assertive attitudes.⁴³

The best way to begin practicing assertiveness is to step out of your comfort zone and conduct personal behavioral experiments. The initial step involves building the life you want and deserve. Reducing anxiety starts with changes in cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. Individuals can recognize

⁴¹ Anna C. Bocar, "Aggressive, Passive, and Assertive: Which Communication Style Is Commonly Used by College Students?," *Available at SSRN 2956807*, 2017, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2956807.

⁴² Mary Jane Collier, "Culture and Gender: Effects on Assertive Behavior and Communication Competence," *Annals of the International Communication Association* 9, no. 1 (January 1986): 576-92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.1986.11678625>.

⁴³ Solomon Tiegerman and Howard Kassinove, "Effects of Assertive Training and Cognitive Components of Rational Therapy on Assertive Behaviors and Interpersonal Anxiety," *Psychological Reports* 40, no. 2 (April 1977): 535-542E, <https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1977.40.2.535>.

and replace irrational beliefs about negative interpretations of their experiences through cognitive changes. From an Islamic perspective, assertiveness aligns with the amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, where Allah encourages firmness in advocating for reasonable and opposing wrongs. Allah commands speaking the truth and standing firm in our beliefs about right and wrong.⁴⁴

Among the verses that command us to be steadfast is Surah at-Tawbah 9/123 (يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ) “O’ you who have Faith! Fight those of the infidels who are near to you, and let them find severity in you, and know that Allah is with the pious ones.” In this verse, Allah commands His servants to be firm and uncompromising in fighting the infidels, using their strength until the infidels submit. Ibn Kathir’s interpretation explains that the term (غِلْظَةً) refers to harshness towards enemies and gentleness towards believers. The term (واغلظ - غلظة - فاستغلظ) has various meanings, including being tough, strong, firm, persistent, rough, and sturdy. A person with a harsh nature should direct it only towards enemies.⁴⁵ Therefore, someone with anxiety can begin to develop an assertive attitude gradually, starting within their immediate environment.

CONCLUSION

Several tafsir books shed light on anxiety, highlighting a verse that predates Islam, where society grappled with the affliction of anxiety regarding sustenance, resorting to the heinous act of infanticide. A subsequent revelation prohibited such atrocities and assured sustenance under Allah’s care. However, anxiety today extends beyond material concerns, infiltrating realms like career, relationships, and aging. Psychological strategies like mindfulness and Islamic principles such as qanaah (contentment), gratitude, and contemplation offer avenues to combat anxiety. Cognitive therapy and assertiveness training also feature in this quest. Implementing Quranic verses related to these methods yields positive outcomes, especially in alleviating anxiety and associated mental disorders. This study offers

⁴⁴ Siti Zainab, “Urgensi Perilaku Asertif Bagi Da’i Dalam Penyampaian Pesan Dakwah” (PhD Thesis, UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, 2018), <https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/id/eprint/4726/>.

⁴⁵ Ibn Kasir, *Tafsir Al-Qur’an al-‘Azim*, 4/208.

practical insights into individual anxiety management alongside significant theoretical implications. It underscores the interpretative potential of Quranic verses in fostering contentment, mindfulness, and assertiveness as means to address anxiety and mental health challenges. Individuals can embark on a journey towards inner peace and tranquility by integrating three psychological theories and diverse Quranic interpretations.

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