

Abdurrauf Al-Singkili's Concept of Dhikr: Exploring the Sufi Psychotherapy Model

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Abstract The prevalence of mental health disorders in contemporary society underscores the need for effective psychotherapeutic approaches. While modern psychotherapy has made significant strides, the potential of Sufistic approaches, particularly in Islamic contexts, remains largely unexplored. This study examines the dhikr (remembrance of God) concept of Abdurrauf al-Singkili, a prominent 17th-century Indonesian Sufi, as a psychotherapeutic model. Through extensive library research, utilizing documentary techniques to analyze Abdurrauf's works and related scholarly materials, this study employs content analysis to elucidate his unique approach to dhikr. The findings reveal that Abdurrauf's dhikr concept offers a comprehensive Sufistic approach to psychotherapy, potentially serving as an alternative or complementary model in addressing current mental health challenges. Abdurrauf's conceptualization of dhikr as a means for spiritual fortification and psychological tranquility demonstrates remarkable parallels with contemporary meditation and relaxation therapy techniques. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on integrative psychotherapy, highlighting the relevance of traditional Sufistic practices in modern mental health interventions.

Abstrak Tingginya gangguan kesehatan mental dalam masyarakat kontemporer menunjukkan pentingnya pendekatan psikoterapi yang efektif. Meskipun psikoterapi modern telah mengalami kemajuan signifikan, potensi pendekatan sufistik, khususnya dalam konteks Islam, masih belum banyak dieksplorasi. Penelitian ini mengkaji konsep dzikir Abdurrauf al-Singkili, seorang sufi Indonesia terkemuka abad ke-17, sebagai model psikoterapi. Melalui kajian pustaka yang ekstensif, menggunakan teknik dokumenter untuk menganalisis karya-karya Abdurrauf dan materi ilmiah terkait, penelitian ini menggunakan analisis konten untuk menjelaskan pendekatannya terhadap dzikir. Temuan studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa konsep dzikir Abdurrauf menawarkan pendekatan sufistik yang komprehensif terhadap psikoterapi, berpotensi berfungsi sebagai model alternatif atau pelengkap dalam menangani tantangan kesehatan mental saat ini. Konseptualisasi Abdurrauf tentang dzikir sebagai sarana penguatan spiritual dan ketenangan psikologis menunjukkan bahwa konsep ini dapat menjadi tawaran alternatif untuk teknik meditasi dan terapi relaksasi kontemporer. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada perkembangan literatur tentang psikoterapi integratif, menyoroti relevansi praktik sufistik tradisional dalam intervensi kesehatan mental modern.

Keywords Abdurrauf al-Singkili; dhikr; mental health; sufi psychotherapy



Introduction

In 2017, the Global Burden of Disease Institute conducted a comprehensive study on mental health disorders worldwide. The results revealed that 792 million people, approximately one in eight individuals, have experienced a mental health disorder.¹ This staggering statistic underscores the urgent need for psychological approaches in contemporary society and highlights the critical demand for effective psychotherapeutic interventions to address the myriad of symptoms associated with mental health conditions.

However, existing psychotherapeutic approaches in psychology face a significant challenge: the integration of spirituality.² Several major schools of psychology have yet to fully incorporate the divine element into their conceptual frameworks.³ This oversight has profound implications for the efficacy of psychotherapeutic interventions administered to patients with mental health disorders. Research has shown that attitudes, feelings, and religious experiences (collectively referred to as spirituality) are indispensable components in maintaining human well-being and psychological health.⁴

The integration of psychology and religion has thus become a crucial area of discussion, offering an alternative perspective in developing more holistic psychotherapeutic methods to understand better and address the multifaceted nature of human psychology.⁵ This interdisciplinary approach is supported by empirical evidence. For instance, research conducted by Mathews and Larson demonstrates the positive role of religion in psychological healing. In their meta-analysis of 212 studies, they found that religious commitment has a significant impact on healthcare outcomes.⁶

The relationship between an individual and their concept of the divine, manifested through adherence to religious teachings, has been shown to greatly influence mental health.⁷ This finding emphasizes the importance of continued research into religion's contribution to societal mental health. Spiritual counseling, which assists clients in developing their religious nature, fostering virtuous behavior, and addressing problems through faith and religious practices, has emerged as a valuable approach in this context.⁸

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders>. Accessed 04/12/2022; and <https://ourworldindata.org/mental-health>. Accessed 04/12/2022

² Mālik Badrī, *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, Revised edition (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2016), 2.

³ The four major psychological schools are Behaviorism, Psychoanalysis, Humanistic, and Transpersonal. Baharuddin, *Paradigma psikologi Islami*. Cet. 2 (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007), 180.

⁴ William James, Eugene Taylor, dan Jeremy Carrette, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Centenary ed (London: Routledge, 2002), 386.

⁵ JS Reber, "Secular psychology: What's the problem?" *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 2006, p. 202, <https://doi.org/10.1177/009164710603400302>.

⁶ 75% of the study showed a positive effect of religion on health, 17% had a mixed or no effect, and 7% showed a negative impact. M.A. Subandi, *Psikologi Agama & Kesehatan Mental* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2019), 119–120.

⁷ Syamsu Yusuf, *Kesehatan Mental Perspektif Psikologis dan Agama* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021), 167.

⁸ Hajir Tajiri, Umi Rohmah, dan Fathin Anjani Hilman, "The Works of A Ma'rifa as A Phenomenon of Spiritual Counseling in Handling Non-Positivistic Psychic Problems," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 22, no. 1 (24 Mei 2022): 191–211, <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v22i1.3899>.

Particularly noteworthy is the potential contribution of religious rituals, especially in Islam, to the development of contemporary psychotherapy. As Najati points out, Islam has, since its inception, encouraged its adherents to maintain not only physical but also mental health.⁹ This holistic approach suggests that therapy patterns based on religious teachings can elevate individuals to higher levels of mental well-being when religious appreciation is practiced correctly.¹⁰

Islam offers a wealth of psychological perspectives that are relevant to psychotherapy.¹¹ Many Islamic scholars, Sufis, and Muslim philosophers have extensively studied human psychology.¹² Integrating Sufi teachings into contemporary psychological frameworks presents an exciting opportunity for the field. Sufi concepts such as *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul), *muhasabah* (self-reflection), and *riyadlah* (spiritual exercise) have the potential to enrich modern psychotherapeutic approaches.¹³ For example, the practice of *muhasabah* can be integrated with cognitive-behavioral therapy techniques to enhance self-awareness and transform negative thought patterns.

In the Islamic scholarly tradition, Sufis, including those from the Nusantara region, have been particularly influential in the realm of spiritual healing and soul purification.¹⁴ Notable Sufi figures from Nusantara who have significantly influenced the style of Sufism in the region include Hamzah Fanzuri, Nurudin ar-Raniri, Shamsuddin as-Sumatrani, Abdurrauf al-Singkili, Yusuf al-Makassari, Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, Abdul Samad al-Falimbani, and Syaikh Nawawi al-Bantani.¹⁵ Their works offer rich insights into patterns and soul-healing methods that could inform modern psychotherapeutic practices.

Among these luminaries, Abdurrauf al-Singkili's work stands out for its unique approach to psychotherapy. His teachings offer a compelling synthesis of ontological and axiological perspectives in the soul-healing process.¹⁶ Al-Singkili's interpretation of the concept of *wahdat al-wujud* provides a distinctive framework for understanding the interplay between the divine, nature, and human psychology.¹⁷ Moreover, his emphasis on *dhikr* (remembrance of God) as a therapeutic tool significantly contributes to Islamic psychotherapy methods.¹⁸ Al-Singkili's approach is particularly noteworthy for

⁹ Muhammad Utsman Najati, *al-Hadis al-Nabawi wa 'Ilm al-Nafs* (Kairo: Dar al-Syuruq, 1989), 365.

¹⁰ Siswanto, "Kesehatan Mental; Konsep, Cakupan, dan Perkembangannya" (Andi Yogyakarta, t.t.), 195.

¹¹ Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Madkhal ila 'Imi al-Nafs al-Islami* (Kairo: Dar al-Syuruq, 1968), 60.

¹² Muhammad Utsman Najati, *Al-Dirasat al-Nafsaniyyah 'inda al-'Ulama al-Muslimin* (Kairo: Dar al-Syuruq, 1993).

¹³ Rasjid Skinner, "Traditions, Paradigms and Basic Concepts in Islamic Psychology," *Journal of Religion and Health* 58, no. 4 (Agustus 2019): 1087–94, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-018-0595-1>.

¹⁴ Ahmad Zuhdi dkk., *Dinamika Islam di Nusantara* (Pekalongan: Nasya Expanding Management, 2022), 171.

¹⁵ Nur Hadi Ihsan, "Sejarah dan Perkembangan Tarekat di Indonesia," *Jurnal Kalimah*, 2012, 305–30; Jajang A Rohmana, "FATWA SHEIKH AHMAD KHATIB AL-MINANGKABAWI (DS 0003 00018): A Jawi Ulama's Response to the Heterodoxy of Sufism," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 23, no. 2 (28 November 2023): 451–78, <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v23i2.5936>.

¹⁶ A Rivauzi, "Landasan Filosofis Pemikiran Tasawuf Abdurrauf Singkel Tentang Allah, Manusia, dan Alam," *Jurnal Theologia*, 2017, 324.

¹⁷ Oman Fathurrahman, *Tanbih al-Mashi; Menyoal Wahdatul Wujud kasus Abdrurrahman Singkel di Aceh Abad 17* (Jakarta: Mizan, 1999).

¹⁸ Sangkot Sirait, "Tasawuf dan Terapi Psikospiritual dalam Kajian Dunia Modern," *Jurnal Kajian Dan Pengembangan*

its cultural relevance to Southeast Asia and its historical significance in the development of Sufi thought in the Malay Archipelago.¹⁹

Furthermore, al-Singkili's writings on *dhikr* are exceptionally detailed and systematic, providing a comprehensive model for practical application in psychotherapy.²⁰ His emphasis on *dhikr*'s psychological and emotional benefits aligns closely with modern understandings of mindfulness and cognitive restructuring in psychotherapy, offering a valuable perspective on integrating spiritual practices with mental health interventions.²¹ These factors make al-Singkili's concept of *dhikr* especially pertinent to our exploration of Islamic psychotherapy in the modern context, offering a bridge between traditional Sufistic practices and contemporary mental health needs.²²

This research utilized a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytic approach that focused on deeply understanding a problem. It then used analysis techniques on one issue on a case-by-case basis. In addition, this type of research was library research. All research data refers to literature related to the research object, namely books, and journals related to the concept of Abdurrauf as-Singkili *dhikr* and its relevance to Sufistic psychotherapy.²³ Apart from that, literature references included the works of contemporary scholars who explain the concept of *dhikr* and Sufistic psychotherapy.

Abdurrauf Al-Singkili's Biography

Abdurrauf's full name is Abdurrauf bin Ali al-Jawi al-Fansuri al-Singkili.²⁴ He was born in a village called Suro in Singkil.²⁵ The exact data regarding the time of his birth has yet to be found. Several historians differed on the year of his birth. Some said that Abdurrauf was born in 1001 H/1593 AD. Another opinion said that he was born in 1024 H/1615 M.²⁶ Abdurrauf went to Arab at his 27. There he studied for about 19 years and then returned to the Archipelago; it was said, that when he turned, he was 46.²⁷ Based on notes in one of his works, '*Umdat al-Muhtajin ilā Suluk Maslak al-Mufridin*,' Abdurrauf described his 19 teachers. He studied branches of Islamic disciplines to them.

Umat 1, no. 1 (2018): 165–70.

¹⁹ Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern "Ulamā" in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Crowns Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2004), 70–75.

²⁰ Sangkot Sirait, "Tasawuf dan Terapi Psikospiritual dalam Kajian Dunia Modern."

²¹ Khairunnas Rajab, "Psikoterapi Sufistik: Tela'ah atas Dimensi Psikologi dan Kesehatan Mental dalam Sufisme," *Jurnal Psikologi Islam* 3, no. 5 (2006): 77–96.

²² M. Afif Anshori, "Dzikir Sebagai Terapi Psikospiritual dalam Kajian Tasawuf," *Jurnal Studi Agama dan Pemikiran Islam* 1, no. 11 (t.t.): 1–18.

²³ Siyoto Sandu dan Muhammad Ali Shodiq, *Dasar Metodologi Penelitian* (Yogyakarta: Lentari Publishing, 2015), 28.

²⁴ Oman Fathurrahman, *Tanbih al-Mashi; Menyoal Wahdatul Wujud kasus Abdrurrahman Singkel di Aceh Abad 17* (Jakarta: Mizan, 1999), 25.

²⁵ Nur Hadi Ihsan, *The Building of Scientific Tradition in History: The Intellectual Achievement of The Great Sufi Master of Aceh Abdurrauf Singkel (1615/20-1693)*, in *Proceedings International Conference on Islamic Universities, Building Scientific Tradition with Asian Universities* (Ponorogo: Institut Studi Islam Darussalam (ISID) Gontor, 2011), p. 218.

²⁶ SH Othman dkk., "Aspek Muamalat Dalam Kitab Mir'at Al-Thullab Karya Shaykh Abdul Rauf Ali Al-Singkili," *Jurnal Ulwan*, 2019, 5.

²⁷ Oman Fathurrahman, *Tanbih al-Mashi; Menyoal Wahdatul Wujud kasus Abdrurrahman Singkel di Aceh Abad 17*, 25.

Abdurrauf learned in several places, scattered along the pilgrimage route, from Doha in the Persian Gulf region, Yemen, Jeddah, to Mecca and Medina. In the final stage of his journey, he studied *tasawwuf* from two prominent Sufi figures in Medina who held important positions in the network of scholars in the Islamic world. The two great scholars of Sufism are Shaykh Shafiuddin Ahmad al-Dajjani al-Qusyasyi (+1583-1660 AD), a great scholar of Mecca, and Shaykh Ibrahim al-Kurani (1616-1689 AD), a great scholar from Medina who was a student of Shaykh al-Qusyasyi.²⁸

After studying in the Arabian Peninsula, Abdurrauf returned to Aceh in 1071 H/1661 AD, or a year after al-Qusyasyi's death. The situation in Aceh then was in chaos caused by a dispute between two radical Sufism thoughts: the concept of *wahdat al-wujud* of Hamza al-Fansuri and the concept of *wahdat al-shuhud* of al-Raniri.

Sufism *wahdat al-wujud* is considered comparable to the teachings of *manunggaling kawulo lan gusti* on the Java island.²⁹ Both of these Sufism thoughts are equally labeled heretical. Therefore, Abdurrauf did not want to be directly involved in the dispute. In the end, Abdurrauf chose to live as an ordinary citizen on the coast of Krueng. At that time, he was known only as an ordinary fisherman. However, as someone with extensive religious knowledge, Abdurrauf continued to conduct Islamic lectures in the area. Through these lectures, the name Abdurrauf became known by the wider community.³⁰

Abdurrauf Al-Singkili's Dhikr Concept

Dhikr is an essential element in a Sufi's spiritual journey towards Allah.³¹ Abdurrauf al-Singkili, a prominent 17th-century Indonesian Sufi scholar, paid great attention to the practice of *dhikr* in his monumental work, *Tanbih al-Masyi*.³² In his work, Abdurrauf is quite extensive in discussing the issue of *dhikr*. Therefore, in this discussion, the author will intensively explore the concept of *dhikr* according to Abdurrauf al-Singkili.

1. Definition and Function of Dhikr

Abdurrauf revealed that *dhikr* is the easiest way to reach *ma'rifatullah*. Likewise, according to him, *dhikr* is among the noblest acts of worship in the sight of Allah.³³ Abdurrauf did not provide a definitional of

²⁸ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII dan XVIII* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), p. 191-193.

²⁹ F Mufid dan AY Al Mufti, "Membentuk Perilaku Beragama Melalui Konsep Wahdah Al Wujud dan Wahdah Ash Syuhud," *Esoterik*, 2019, p. 153.

³⁰ FM Yunus, "TGK. Syiah Kuala Pengembang Tarekat Syattariah Di Nusantara," *Kalam: Jurnal Agama dan Sosial Humaniora*, 2016, p. 168.

³¹ Abdurrahman, *Al-Dzikr 'inda Ibni 'Athailah al-Sakandari wa dauruhi fi al-'Ilaj al-Nafsi; Dirasah washfiyyah Tahliliyyah* (Ponorogo: Unida, 2022), 97; Abdul Qadir Isa, *Hakekat Tasawuf*, trans. oleh Khairul Amru Harahap (Jakarta: Qisthi Press, 2005), p. 86.

³² Abdurrauf al-Singkili, *Tanbih al-Masyi; al-Mansub ila Thariq al-Qusyasyi*, t.t., p. 15.

³³ Abdurrauf al-Singkili, p. 15.

dhikr.³⁴ He only explained the critical position of *dhikr* on the way to Allah. Like other Sufi figures, Abdurrauf wanted to place *dhikr* as a novice's charity, not just an understanding concept.³⁵ Suppose Abdurrauf said that *dhikr* leads to *ma'rifatullah*, while Abu Talib al-Makki explained that a person would get a deep love for the Creator through *dhikr*.³⁶ What was conveyed by Abdurrauf or Abu Talib shows that *dhikr* is a *wasilah* for a novice to get closer to Allah.

According to Abdurrauf, the results of the *dhikr* have at least two roles. First, it makes a person have a noble character like asceticism, emptying the heart from tendencies towards the mortal and strengthening the heart to turn away from other than Allah. This view aligns with al-Qusyairi's teaching that verbal *dhikr* will only be perfect when connected to a heart growing closer to Allah.³⁷ Thus what was conveyed by Abdurrauf shows that *dhikr* should play a role in strengthening the inner purity of a servant.

The Second, *dhikr* returns a person to noble values, such as bringing blessings and feeling content with the simple. According to him, the primary purpose of this *dhikr* is to immerse the heart in the *tawhid* and return a person from the origin of his existence to the origin of his absence "*tarji'u fi wujūdika ila hāli 'adamika*."³⁸ When someone felt this, Abdurrauf said, he had reached the *tawhid*, the final stage (*maqam*).³⁹

2. Lafzh al-Dhikr

Abdurrauf explained the noblest *dhikr* as follows. He said that the noblest *dhikr* is the expression *laa Ilaaha Illa Allah*. Because it is a *tawhid* sentence, this virtue is as stated by the Prophet, as quoted by Abdurrauf, namely, "*afdhal al-du'a du'a yauma 'Arafat wa afdla ma qultu ana wa al-Nabiyyuna min qabli laa Ilaaha Illa Allah wahdahu laa syarika lah* (The best prayer is the prayer of 'Arafat while the best what I said and the previous Prophets is the sentence *Laa Ilaaha Illa Allah*).⁴⁰ Presumably, this *lafadz tahlil* is the noblest recitation, according to Abdurrauf. This opinion aligns with al-Ghazali, who maintained that *lafadz tahlil* has a high position in *dhikr* to Allah. This *tahlil*, recommended by Abdurrauf, significantly impacts the spiritual journey of a *salik*.⁴¹

³⁴ Ibn 'Athailah stated, "Zikir is releasing the soul from negligence and forgetting by presenting the heart regularly with Allah. Some say that *dhikr* is repeatedly remembering by heart and verbally the names of Allah, His attributes, or any other, by which one draws near to God." This understanding of Ibn 'Athailah also connotes more of the function of the *dhikr*. So it would also be appropriate if Abdurrauf said that *dhikr* is the easiest way in *ma'rifatullah*. See, Abdul Qadir Isa, *Hakekat Tasawuf*, 95; Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya 'Ulumiddin* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifat, t.t.), p. 294.

³⁵ In Sufi terms, a *murid* is someone learning with a shaykh with the shaykh's method, which is one hierarchy in Sufism. Look, <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AF/> Accessed, 04/12/2022.

³⁶ Abu Thalib al-Makki, *Qut al-Qulub fi Mu'amalah al-Mahbub* (Kairo: Dar al-Turats, 2001), p. 242.

³⁷ Abu al-Qosim al-Qusyairi, *al-Risalah al-Qusyairiyah* (Kairo: Muassasah Dar al-Sya'bi, 1989), p. 382.

³⁸ Abdurrauf al-Sinkili, *Tanbih al-Masyi; al-Mansub ila Thariq al-Qusyasyi*, p. 17.

³⁹ Abdurrauf al-Sinkili, 18.

⁴⁰ Abdurrauf al-Sinkili, 16.

⁴¹ Some of the hadith presented by Abdurrauf are the narrations in *Ihya 'Ulumiddin* by Imam al-Ghazali. Therefore, the work of Imam al-Ghazali also influenced Abdurrauf's thoughts in writing *Tanbih al-Masyi*. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya 'Ulumiddin*, 297.

According to him, when someone continuously makes *dhikr* by reciting *tahlil*, he will get that *dhikr*'s result. He said:

فمن حفظ على قول لا اله الا الله ظاهرا وداوم على ذكرها وجعل لسانه مستغرقا فيها فتم الله تعالى على قلبه نورا يكشف به عن سرها ويستغرقه انوارها ويشغف قلبه بذكرها وتستلمه ثمراتها فيشهد باطنه من عجائب الملكوت ما لا تستطيع العبارة تحدها وصفاتها ونواتها وتلك نتائجها وثمراتها.

("Whoever guards *Lā Ilāha Ilal-Llah* outwardly and makes it a habit in their *dhikr*, and makes their tongue immersed in this *dhikr*, Allah will perfect light in their heart, reveal its secrets, then that light will fill their heart. Their heart will feel the delicacy in the *dhikr* and feel its result. Furthermore, they will witness in their inner self the wonders of the angelic realm that cannot be expressed in their nature and characteristics. That is the result of *dhikr tahlil*".⁴²

This explanation shows that in Abdurrauf's concept, *dhikr* must reach spiritual delicacy, not just outward practice. This description bears similarities to Ibn Arabi's concept of *tajalli* (divine self-disclosure)⁴³ but Abdurrauf presented it in a more practical and accessible context, perhaps to make it more relevant to the Nusantara audience.

3. Adab al-Dhikr

Abdurrauf al-Singkili emphasized that achieving the full benefits of *dhikr* requires adherence to specific etiquettes (*adab*), which he divided into three stages: pre-*dhikr*, during *dhikr*, and post-*dhikr*. For pre-*dhikr*, he prescribed five essential practices: repentance, bathing, ablution, silence for honesty, and trusting the teacher's guidance derived from prophetic teachings.⁴⁴ The during-*dhikr* stage encompasses twelve *adab*, including choosing a holy place, maintaining proper posture, using perfume, wearing good clothes, selecting a dark environment, closing the eyes, visualizing the teacher, maintaining sincerity, focusing on the phrase "*lā ilāha illa -Llah*", contemplating *dhikr*'s meaning, and emptying the heart of worldly thoughts.⁴⁵ Post-*dhikr adab* involves three practices: maintaining calmness, repeatedly strengthening the heart, and refraining from immediate water consumption. Crucially, Abdurrauf insists that all these practices must be performed under the guidance of a perfect teacher (*shaikh kāmīl*), warning that undertaking this spiritual journey without proper guidance could lead to misguidance.⁴⁶

The comprehensive nature of Abdurrauf's *adab al-dhikr* reflects his extensive spiritual experience and emphasizes the totality with which a *sālik* (seeker) must approach *dhikr* practice.⁴⁷ This detailed approach, covering all aspects from preparation to conclusion, underscores the critical role of *dhikr* in

⁴² Abdurrauf al-Singkili, *Tanbih al-Masyi; al-Mansub ila Thariq al-Qusyasyi*, 16.

⁴³ Johns, A.H., "Daka'ik al-Huruf by 'Abd al-Ra'uf of Singkel," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2, no. 3 (1955): 55–73.

⁴⁴ Abdurrauf al-Singkili, 17.

⁴⁵ Abdurrauf al-Singkili, 17–18.

⁴⁶ Abdurrauf al-Singkili, 18.

⁴⁷ A relatively extensive discussion of this *dhikr* in the book of *Tanbih al-Masyi* is significantly influenced by his teacher al-Qusyasyi. For example, in the book *al-Simth al-Majid*, al-Qushashi begins his discussion with *dhikr* and reviews it quite broadly. See, al-Qusyasyi, *al-Simth al-Majid* (India: Dairah al-Ma'arif, t.t.), 3.

the Sufi tradition as a key station in one's spiritual journey towards *ma'rifatullah* (gnosis of Allah). Abdurrauf's teachings on *adab al-dhikr* demonstrated the influence of his own teacher, al-Qusyasyi, as evidenced in works like *al-Simth al-Majid*, where *dhikr* is given primacy and extensive treatment. This lineage of knowledge highlights the continuity and depth of Sufi teachings on *dhikr*, emphasizing its fundamental importance in achieving spiritual enlightenment and proximity to the Divine.

The Role of *Dhikr* in the Islamic Psychotherapy Model

1. Psychotherapeutic Approaches: Western and Islamic Perspectives

Psychotherapy has several meanings, first as applying special techniques to heal mental illness or daily adjustment difficulties.⁴⁸ Second, psychotherapy is the existence of a relationship between a therapist and a patient, and the therapy is carried out according to the model of treatment carried out by a therapist.⁴⁹ Third, psychotherapy can be defined as a focused treatment that changes as therapy advances.⁵⁰ Fourth, psychotherapy can be interpreted as gradually improving mental illness and requiring habits from the smallest to the bigger things step by step and sequentially between the patient and the therapist.⁵¹ From these definitions, it can be inferred that psychotherapy is a mental treatment technique adapted to a therapist's therapeutic model.

The therapeutic model used by each therapist in the psychotherapy process has a different approach. In the three well-known psychology schools, for example, they use different techniques from each other. Behaviorism⁵², for example, uses the system that human behavior is obtained from learning outcomes. Psychoanalysis⁵³ uses an approach that emphasizes the importance of childhood experiences, especially parenting styles and unconscious motives for behavior.

⁴⁸ J.P Chaplin, *Kamus Lengkap Psikologi*, trans. oleh Kartini Kartono (Depok: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2014), 409.

⁴⁹ Sally Aldridge, *A Short Introduction to Counselling* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2014), 12.

⁵⁰ Serge Frisch, Jean-Marie Gauthier, dan Robert D. Hinshelwood, ed., *Psychoanalysis, and Psychotherapy: The Controversies and the Future* (London: Routledge, 2018), 5.

⁵¹ Abu Yusuf al-Kindi, *Risalah al-Hudud al-Asya wa Rasumuha fi Rasail al-Kindi* (Kairo: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, 1950), 12.

⁵² Behaviorism school was pioneered by Ivan Pavlov, John B. Watson, and B.F Skinner, who assessed human behavior from stimulus-response. Through their Experiments with Dogs, Rats, and Pigeons, they believe that thoughts and feelings do not control human behavior but past and present events in the objective world. Observation of these animals for them is an effort to avoid pseudo-problems, namely problems that cannot be observed. For all these experiments, behaviorists believe that the core of psychology is the study of learning. Thus, for those who determine human behavior is the environment. As a result, they deny the natural potential that humans have. In conclusion, behaviorists are more likely to understand humans as passive humans who depend on their environment and eliminate the possibility of an active and productive soul within humans themselves. Look, Duane P. Schultz dan Sydney Ellen Schultz, *Sejarah Psikologi Modern*, trans. oleh Lita Hardian (Bandung: Nusa Media, 2016); Daniel Philip Todes, *Ivan Pavlov: exploring the animal machine*, Oxford portraits in science (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 71–73; John B Watson, *Psychology: From The Stanpoint of a Behaviorist* (Philadelphia: J.B Lippincott Company, 1919), 24–48; B.F Skinner, *Science And Human Behavior* (Pearson Education, 2005), 11; Djamaludin Ancok dan Fuat Nashori Suroso, *Psikologi islam: solusi Islam atas problem-problem psikologi*, Cet ke-3 (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2000), 66; Baharuddin, *Paradigma psikologi Islami*, 175–176.

⁵³ Psychoanalytic one is developed by Sigmund Freud (1856 -1939), divides the levels of human personality into the Id (Biological), Ego (Psychological), and Superego (Sociological). According to him, human behavior is driven by the most basic and primitive physiological desires of the id. Freud assumed that humans basically live from unknown and uncontrollable forces. The ego will control it until humans finally strive to the highest level, namely the Superego, as a level of human morality influenced by their environment. In the view of Humanistic Psychology, this theory will eventually find it challenging to explain the needs

Meanwhile, Humanistic⁵⁴ emphasizes the importance of self-image and how people's self-image is influenced by how others treat someone.⁵⁵ Regardless of the different aspects, all existing forms of psychotherapy use psychological techniques with the same essential characteristics. All of them use intimate communication between the therapist and the patient. So, in such conditions, the patient is encouraged to discuss his most private worries and experiences.⁵⁶

Of the three schools of psychology, Malik Badri positively evaluated the approach taken by humanistics. The humanistic model subscribes to a much more positive concept of human nature, viewing it as good. Selfish and cruel human acts are seen as pathological behavior caused by the denial and frustration of this essential good nature. Man is not seen as a passive automaton but as an active participant who has the freedom of choice to shape his destiny and that of his fellow men,"⁵⁷ said Badri in *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*.

Malik Badri considered that there are positive values in the humanistic view compared to other schools. So, in this case, according to him, this flow is closest to Islamic values.⁵⁸ In the humanistic flow, there is a therapy most comparable to the pattern of religious treatment, especially in Islam.⁵⁹ This humanistic therapy is called logotherapy which Victor Frankl initiated. In language, logotherapy comes from the Greek word logos which means meaning or soul. According to one definition, logotherapy can be interpreted as reaction formation and defense mechanisms.⁶⁰ In this sense, Frankl shows that the meaning of life becomes the defense and reinforcement of one's meaning in life.

Although logotherapy is a secular psychotherapy,⁶¹ this psychotherapy model can explore life's meanings, similar to extracting substances as in Islam. Where is Islam, also searching for the real meaning of life? Therefore, as stated by Malik Badri, logotherapy is expected to give a high place to the role of religion.⁶² Turning to psychotherapy in Islamic psychology, psychotherapy in Islam places great emphasis on spiritual values. Therefore, Islamic psychotherapy can be understood as treating and

of other human beings. In short, psychoanalysis describes the basic human nature, which is terrible, wild, non-ethical, lustful, and devoted to physical pleasures. Look, Schultz et al., *Sejarah Psikologi Modern*, 510–12; Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and The Id*, trans. oleh Joan Kiviere (London: Leonard & Virginia Woolf, t.t.), 27; Alan Porter dan Dharmawanti, *Psikologi* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2021), 197; Ancok dan Suroso, *Psikologi islam*, 67; Baharuddin, *Paradigma psikologi Islami*, 175.

⁵⁴ Schultz et al., *Sejarah Psikologi Modern*, p. 558; Vicky Smith, Paula Nicolson, dan Patrizia Collard, *Key Concepts in Counselling and Psychotherapy*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2012), 169; Viktor E. Frankl, Andrew Tallon, dan Alexander Batthyany, *The feeling of meaninglessness*, Marquette studies in philosophy, no. 60 (Milwaukee, Wis: Marquette University Press, 2010), 71; Hanna Djumhana Bastaman dan Fuad Nashori, *Integrasi Psikologi Dengan Islam*. (Yogyakarta: : Pustaka Peljar, 1995), 52–53; Ancok dan Suroso, *Psikologi islam*, 69.

⁵⁵ Matt Jarvis, *Teori-Teori Psikologi*, trans. oleh SPA-Teamwork (Bandung: Nusa Media, 2000), 10.

⁵⁶ Chaplin, *Kamus Lengkap Psikologi*, p. 409.

⁵⁷ Badri, *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, 91.

⁵⁸ Badri, 91.

⁵⁹ Badri, 95.

⁶⁰ Viktor Emil Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 73.

⁶¹ Stephen J. Costello, "The Spirit of Logotherapy," *Journal of Religious* 7, no. 3 (t.t.): p. 6.

⁶² Badri, *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, 96.

healing an illness mentally, spiritually, morally, and physically through the guidance of the Qur'an and Hadith.⁶³

This understanding shows that belief or faith in the patient is fundamental and influential in Islamic psychotherapy.⁶⁴ Islamic psychotherapy has the following objectives. First, provide knowledge, treatment, and self-care in totality and perfect for healing diseases and disorders so that individuals are physically and spiritually healthy. Second, improve the quality of faith, Islam, and *ihsan* in everyday life. Third, to lead people to know themselves and God. Fourth, to lead a person to become a pious, clean, holy person and discover the true existence of God. Fifth, helping individuals change their personality and work ethic to explore and develop their potential.⁶⁵

As for carrying out Islamic psychotherapy, the object of Islamic psychotherapy is the human being with the scope of disturbance in several things. First, mental (related to the mind, reason, and memory), including forgetfulness, lazy thinking, difficulty concentrating, and inability to distinguish between lawful and unlawful and right and wrong. Second, spiritual (i.e., related to matters of the spirit, spirit, soul, or other concerns about transcendental issues) such as *shirk*, *nifāq*, and weak faith. Third, morals (mental attitude or character described as thinking, speaking, behaving, etc., as an expression of the soul). Fourth, physical.⁶⁶

2. *Dhikr* as an Islamic Approach to Psychotherapy

Dhikr, in today's contemporary era, can be used as a method of healing the soul. The development and integration between modern psychotherapy and religion in medicine show the urgency of spiritual methods in today's public mental health. Developmental terms such as spiritual therapy, Sufi healing, and holistic therapy have become familiar in psychotherapy discourse. Moreover, WHO in 1984 explained that the spiritual aspect of religion is as important as the physical aspect of a human being. So that in 1993, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) carried out a combination of therapy, including physical, psychological, psychosocial, and spiritual treatment, called holistic medicine. APA, in this case, recommended the integration of spiritual healing with the psychotherapy that existed at that time.⁶⁷

In conclusion, there are similarities in the pattern of therapy between the integration that has been carried out by APA and the *dhikr* that has been described previously. In this matter, Muslim psychologists have made many efforts to integrate psychotherapy patterns in the development of

⁶³ Fuad Nashori dkk., *Psikologi Islam dari Konsep Hingga Pengukuran* (Yogyakarta: Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2016), 159.

⁶⁴ Badri, *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, 71.

⁶⁵ Fuad Nashori dkk., *Psikologi Islam dari Konsep Hingga Pengukuran*, 159.

⁶⁶ Fuad Nashori dkk., 159.

⁶⁷ M. Syukur Amin, *Sufi Healing: Terapi dalam Literatur Tasawuf* (Semarang: Walisongo Press., 2011), 40; Dadang Hawari, *al-Qur'an Ilmu Kedokteran Jiwa dan Kesehatan Jiwa*. (Dhana Bakti Prima Yasa, 2022), 6–16.

modern psychotherapy with designs of *dhikr* therapy in Islam.⁶⁸ Uthman Najati, for example, has shown that patterns of worship such as prayer and *dhikr* have the same intersection with modern psychotherapy patterns. *Dhikr*, for instance, for Najati, has a similar pattern to reciprocal inhibition initiated by Joseph Wolpe. This therapy is also known as 'relaxing therapy,' which aims to deal with the anxiety that exists in a person. Meanwhile, *dhikr*, in this case, according to Najati, will help relieve anxiety from the conflicts experienced by a human being.⁶⁹ Even more than that, *dhikr*, according to him, frees the human psychic burden from anxiety; the spiritual relationship between humans and God will provide a human with new hope and strengthen his soul in dealing with every problem he faces.⁷⁰ Therefore, in this case, *dhikr* becomes a relevant therapeutic pattern regarding the integration between religion and psychotherapy.

The urgency of *dhikr*, as explained by Muslim psychologists, in this case, also has similarities with the two modern therapy models. First is meditation therapy. *Dhikr* is in some ways similar to this therapy. As for the similarities, *dhikr*, and meditation are used as spiritual experiences to reach a higher spiritual state or to approach God. Humans are understood as having religious behavior with a mystical dimension, while God is the center of his life. In this context, *dhikr* becomes auditory meditation involving prayers, namely certain words or sentences considered sacred using *dhikr*. Thus, the best meditation is if it is done according to religious teachings based on revelation. For example, many Muslims use the phrase "لا إله إلا الله" or "أستغفر الله العظيم" to achieve meditative consciousness.⁷¹ This meditation therapy has succeeded in convincing modern Western society that relies on the rationalism philosophy.

This belief is due to many scientific discoveries that have succeeded in revealing the positive effects of this meditation on the body and soul. In his research, Broto shows that one of the physical effects of this meditation is on brain waves that display a lot of alpha waves, namely brain waves that are present in the state of the body so that it puts the body in a relaxed state. Therefore, this therapy can increase the synchronization of brain waves because during meditation, delta waves decrease, and the strength of alpha waves develops in the brain.⁷² Thus, *dhikr* therapy in Islamic teachings has something in common with this meditation therapy. Of course, in this case, it is hoped that it can also positively impact healing one's mental health. Second, *dhikr* may be similar to relaxation therapy.

⁶⁸ Malik Badri, for example, emphasized that a patient's belief in Islam is essential in healing a person's psychic disorder. He even uses some of the *dhikr* in the verses of the Qur'an to make it a therapeutic method to treat his patients' psychological symptoms. Look, Badri, *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, 56.

⁶⁹ Najati revealed that with *dhikr*, one will always feel connected to his God. Thus, someone who always *dhikr* will feel protected by his God. This feeling will make a person always calm and serene. Look, Najati, *al-Hadis al-Nabawi*, 394.

⁷⁰ Muhammad Utsman Najati, *al-Qur'an wa 'Ilm al-Nafs* (Kairo: Dar al-Syuruq, 2001), 312.

⁷¹ M.A. Subandi, *Latihan Meditasi Untuk Psikoterapi*. in *Psikoterapi pendekatan Konvensional dan Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002), 101–102.

⁷² M.A. Subandi, 187–188.

As discussed earlier, *dhikr* aims to provide a strong bond between the servant and Allah in full to present a strong love for Allah; then, *dhikr* will bring new hopes. Likewise, what this therapy produces will generate new hopes for the strength of the soul (relaxation response).⁷³ There is a similarity between relaxation therapy and *dhikr* which Abdurrauf al-Singkili initiated. This relaxation therapy with *dhikr* has many beneficial mental and physical health effects, as has been revealed by many researchers, someone who, during *dhikr* or afterward, will feel relief and calm in his soul.⁷⁴ All of this was obtained because he relied on Allah. Therefore, it is revealed that the meaning of لا إله إلا الله (there is no God but Allah) can withstand tension in the soul. Because the meaning of this *tahlil* contains an acknowledgment of Allah's *rubūbiyyah* nature, a person will finally be relieved to accept all the events he lived in his life.⁷⁵

This belief will make one's soul and mental health stronger and better. Also, based on these two therapy models, namely meditation and relaxation therapy, the authors found the same unity of purpose as Abdurrauf al-Singkili's *dhikr* concept. As discussed, Abdurrauf explained that being immersed in *tauhid* through *dhikr* will help calm one's soul, as in meditation and relaxation therapy. Furthermore, Abdurrauf explained that *dhikr* would positively impact one's behavior. The pleasure of remembering Allah will strengthen one's former origins before he was created into the world. Finally, the various worldly problems one faces will be lightened because, with *dhikr*, one can eliminate all that is perishable in the soul. The *dhikr* technique taught by Abdurrauf, starting from the manners before, during, and after this *dhikr*, has become an applicable model for *dhikr* therapy typical of an Indonesian Sufi.

Conclusions

This research reveals that Abdurrauf al-Singkili's conceptualization of *dhikr* offers significant contributions to modern psychotherapeutic models. His understanding of *dhikr* as a source of inner strength and tranquility shows remarkable parallels with contemporary therapeutic approaches, particularly in the domains of mindfulness and cognitive-behavioral therapy.⁷⁶ The structured formulations of *dhikr* presented by Abdurrauf demonstrate potential for development into a comprehensive therapeutic model, effectively bridging traditional Sufi practices with modern psychological interventions.

As analyzed in this research, Abdurrauf's teachings on *dhikr* provide a valuable resource for developing alternative treatment methods inspired by Nusantara Sufism. The detailed *adab* (etiquettes)

⁷³ M.A. Subandi, 126.

⁷⁴ Najati, *al-Qur'an wa 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 300.

⁷⁵ WN Anggraieni dan S Subandi, "Pengaruh terapi relaksasi zikir untuk menurunkan stres pada penderita hipertensi esensial," *JIP (Jurnal Intervensi Psikologi)*, 2014, 86.

⁷⁶ Harold G. Koenig, "Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications," *ISRN Psychiatry* 2012 (16 Desember 2012): 1–33, <https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/278730>.

of *dhikr* outlined by Abdurrauf, encompassing pre-*dhikr*, during-*dhikr*, and post-*dhikr* practices, offer a holistic approach to mental and spiritual well-being. This comprehensive methodology aligns with modern psychotherapeutic practices that emphasize the importance of preparation, focused engagement, and post-session reflection.⁷⁷

The study finds that Abdurrauf's emphasis on the role of a qualified spiritual guide (*shaikh kāmīl*) in the practice of *dhikr* resonates with the therapeutic alliance concept in modern psychotherapy. This underscores the importance of guided practice in achieving optimal mental health outcomes. Furthermore, Abdurrauf's insistence on the integration of *dhikr* into daily life, rather than as an isolated practice, aligns with contemporary approaches to mental health that emphasize the importance of consistent, habitual practices for long-term well-being.

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⁷⁷ Simon Dein, Christopher C. H. Cook, dan Harold Koenig, "Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health: Current Controversies and Future Directions," *Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease* 200, no. 10 (Oktober 2012): 852–55, <https://doi.org/10.1097/NMD.0b013e31826b6d1e>.

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