

Role of Islamic Worships in Preventing and Controlling Depression

Dr. Wajahat Khan

Dr. Muhammad Tahir

Lecturer Islamic Studies, University of Kotli AJ&K

wajahat_iui@yahoo.com

Assistant Professor Islamic Studies International Islamic University Islamabad

Abstract

This paper examines the role of Islamic worships in prevention and controlment of depression. Contents analysis method was used in study. The study reveals that Islamic worships have a significant role in controlling the depression. Islamic Worships based on beliefs help people to be patient in times of difficulties, love humanity, help each other's in difficult affairs of their lives and avoid prohibited deeds. Pillars of Islam, seeking forgiveness from Allah Almighty, Azkar, pious deeds, supplications and trusting in Allah Almighty play a vital role in controlling depression.

Introduction

Mental disorders affect a person's behavior, thoughts, emotions, and social life. It becomes difficult for the mentally disturbed person to live a happy, normal, and peaceful life, he cannot fully focus on his work. Depressed people can't sleep comfortably. Psychologists consider depression as a mood disorder; the sufferer feels sad in a state of depression seeing himself incapable of fulfilling the requirements of life, he may have suicidal thoughts and sometimes he may commit suicide, he loses interest in life. His desire for food and sexual is also decreased, he may face obsessive-compulsive disorders, despite of his utmost desire, he cannot get rid of this situation. These symptoms last for at least two weeks. If these symptoms are of severe nature, they may last for several weeks¹.

Depression is an intense sadness in Islamic point of view. Sadness may be associated with praiseworthy deeds as someone wanted to do righteous deeds, if he could not do the righteous deeds for some reasons or delay in performing them, he may be overwhelmed with sadness. As some companions of Holy Prophets asked Him for provisions of mounts so that they could participate in the war, The prophet refused to fulfil their demands. As a result, they were overwhelmed with sorrows and sadness². Sometimes, Sadness may be result of misdeeds. If a Muslim commits a sin, after doing wrong he fears Allah Almighty, this fear may lead him to severe sadness and grief³. Neglecting soul or bodily requirements may lead a person to sadness and depression. As souls rest peace and contentment with reemergence of Allah Almighty, similarly bodily requirements help the person to live comfortable life. When the person negates this fact ignoring the bodily requirements, he may face financial crisis, tension, and anxiety that may result in depression⁴. In Islamic perspectives, people are put into trials and tribulations in accordance with level of their faith⁵. Furthermore, mishaps may befall on persons for the sins they have committed in life⁶.

Islamic Worships

Islamic teachings can play an effective role in prevention and treatment of depression. Islamic faith gives spiritual energy to a person that keeps him away from the fears of life and mental disorders. On the other hand, Islamic worships are an important source of peace, tranquility and contentment for worshipers, these worships give Muslims patience in times of difficulties, and Islamic worships have positive affect on physical and mental health. I will discuss in this article detailed Islamic perspectives of worships regarding prevention and controlment of sadness and

depression. Worships may be of the tongue, heart, limbs, and finance. Important characteristics of Islamic worships are as follows:

Allah Almighty created man made him His Khalifah on earth and made worship as purpose of his creation. Worships are not confined to religious rituals in Islam, but Islamic worships covers all aspects of life. Muhammad Qutb explains the correct concept of Islamic worships “Islam gives broad perspective of worships so that it includes all life. Whatever a person does to please Allah Almighty is worship, whatever he avoids considering to be disobedience of Allah is an act of worship”⁷. Worships are not accepted in Islam unless they are performed for the sake of God only, Islamic worships have divine nature, nobody has an authority to decrease, increase or innovate worships, they directly link a man with his Lord. Due to the practice of worships believers can be discriminated from non-believers. Furthermore, different Islamic worships are imposed upon people in accordance with level of their power and capacities⁸.

Worships are a manifestation of Islamic faith, they are means of thanking God Almighty for His innumerable blessings upon people, they purify souls and enlighten them with the light of God, the blessed and exalted, and expiate the Muslims' sins and enable them to care and help love each other's in different life situations⁹. Islamic worships require avoiding prohibitions such as alcohol, gambling, pork, eating unlawful foods, drugs, and other impurities¹⁰. These restrictions protect the body from diseases. Likewise, the body, soul and mind collectively participate in the acts of worships having a strong effect on cleanliness of body and protection against different types of disease like depression¹¹.

Relation of Prayer with Depression

Prayer is one of the most important types of Islamic worship. Prayer has an effective role in overcoming depression and anxiety. In prayer a person stands before his Lord with humility and submission, separating himself from worldly affairs, seeking mental comfort and spiritual energy which relieves his tension faced by him in life. Prophet of Islam when he faced problem in his life would seek help with prayer as he would say to Bilal: “Stand, O Bilal, and comfort us with the prayer”¹². Considering the relation of prayer with mental health, well known psychologist Dr. Lotfi Sherbini says : Obedience to the teachings of Islam and acts of worship have a positive effect on mental health, scientific studies reveal this fact that ablution reduces the level of anger, prayer and remembrance of Allah keep a person away from anxiety, open the door of repentance for a Muslim and get rid him of despair and depression¹³.

Sins lead to sadness, anxiety, and depression, prayer is a main source of forgiveness of sins and purifying man as Prophet of Islam said to his companions: “if there is a flowing river at the entrance of any body and he takes bathes there daily five times, will you see any sign of dirtiness on his body? Companions of the Prophet replied: “There will not be a drop of dirt on his body. The Prophet (ﷺ) added, “Similarly Allah forgives the sins of believers when they offer five times prayers.”¹⁴.

Islamic Fasting

Fasting is a second pillar of Islam, Fasting trains a believer to control his physical desires and bear patience in life, in addition, Fasting is a strong source of forgiveness of sins. Prophet of Islam said in this regard: “whoever observes fasting during Ramadan with sincere faith and hoping to get Allah's rewards, then all his past sins will be pardoned”¹⁵. Fasting brings peace and tranquility into faster as faster performs righteous deeds like remembrances of Allah Almighty, recitation of the Qur'an and offering Tarawih prayer, these pious acts help the man getting rid of negative thoughts that may cause depression¹⁶. During fasting, a person bears hunger and thirst and better understands the needs of poor people; to meet their basic needs, he spends on them.

Thus, in society, the spirit of cooperation and love flourished. Besides, fasting has medical benefits; when a Muslim bears hunger and fast from dawn to dusk; his stomach gets an opportunity to take rest for sometimes saving him from various types of diseases¹⁷.

Zakat

Zakat is a third pillar of Islam. It is obligatory upon wealthy Muslims to pay specific amounts of their earnings once in year to poor and needy. Zakat purifies the wealth and Zakar giver's soul. Dr. Lotfy Sherbini says about the importance of zakat: It has been proved scientifically that the misers live with fear and anxiety, they are commonly disliked by society because of their non-cooperative attitudes with people. As for the Zakat giver is concerned, he lives a happy life remaining safe from any sort of fear, anxiety, and depression. Zakat satisfied the aspirants' needs; financial assistance may protect them against physical and psychological sicknesses like depression. Realizing the happiness of poor and needy zakat givers also become happy and joyous¹⁸.

Hajj

Hajj is a social worship, in order to perform Hajj, people gather on special days in the holy land for a specific goal, Hajj is consisted of different types of worship, like prayer, supplication, remembrance of day of judgement, self and financial sacrifice, thankfulness of Allah Almighty for being blessed and visiting the Kaaba and circumambulating around it, when the believer travels towards Mecca for performance of Hajj, he first of all looks at the house of God, feels spiritual tranquility and satisfaction forgetting the hardships and sorrows of life. Hajj trains the human soul to obey God's commands and avoid His disobedience, opening the door of hope to the sinner and removing all sins of the person as his mother gave birth to him today. Prophet of Islam indicated this fact by saying: "Whoever performs Hajj and does not commit obscenity or commit any evil therein will go back (free of sin) as on the day his mother gave birth to him"¹⁹.

Supplications in Islam

Supplication is an important type of worship. It is man's conversation with Allah Almighty, Who hears the supplications made by His servants and answers. The Qur'an mentions when the Prophet Ayoub, was afflicted with a harm, so, he prayed to his Lord, God responded to him and relieved him from the difficulty faced by him and favored upon him His blessings. Likewise, God responded the supplications of the Prophet Yunis, while he was in the belly of the whale, God saved him the problems faced by him because of his humble supplication. Similarly, Allah Almighty answers the supplications of believers. Quran points out this fact: "And [mention] the man of the fish, when he went off in anger and thought that We would not decree [anything] upon him. And he called out within the darkness "There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers. So, We responded to him and saved him from the distress. And thus, do We save the believers"²⁰. Imam al-Tabari in explanation of this verse, says: "And thus, do We save the believers" He says, "Just as We saved Yunus from the anguish of being imprisoned in the belly of the whale in the sea when he called upon us, so do we save the believers from their distress when they seek help from Us and called on Us"²¹.

It is also demonstrated from authentic Hadith that prayers and supplications ease tensions and problems; Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (R) narrates that The Messenger of Allah (S) went to the mosque one day and saw there an Ansari man called Abu Umamah. The Prophet(S) said: "O Abu Umamah, it is no prayer time and why do I see you sitting in the mosque?" Abu Umamah said: "tensions and debts overcame me, O Messenger of Allah". He (S) said: "Should not I teach you some words which, if you recite them, Allah (SWT) will ease your worries and pay off your debts?" He said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah. He(S) said: "Say, morning and evening, O Allah, I

seek refuge with You from worry and grief, and I seek refuge with You from incapacity and laziness, and I seek refuge with You from cowardice and miserliness, and I seek refuge with You from being heavily in debt and from being overcome by men". Abu Umamah said I did that, and Allah (SWT) took away my worry and paid off my debt²².

It may happen that supplications remain unacceptable, for example a man is afflicted with hardships and prays to God for its redressal, his supplications remain unaccepted, at that time instead of losing hope he should think logically that God is the owner of the kingdom, having right to accept or reject prayers. Delaying in acceptance of the supplication may be in favor of him. There may be a defect in the person while supplicating to Allah Almighty, as praying to Allah Almighty heedlessly. There may be possibility that whatever the person requests may be harmful to him²³.

Good deeds

Islamic sources prove this fact that piety and righteous deeds provide protection against depression and sadness. Quran says in this context: "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do"²⁴. Imam Abu Zahra is of the opinion that good life includes contentedness and satisfaction in different life situations, thankfulness upon Allah's blessings and patience in trials and tribulations²⁵. Another verse of Quran points out this fact: "and whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out and will provide for him from where he does not expect"²⁶. Famous Islamic Scholar Al-Saadi talks about benefits of Allah's fear based on this verse: Whoever fears God and obeys to Allah's commands for His pleasure in all circumstances, Allah Almighty will reward him in this world and the Hereafter. As a reward He may ease all his worldly hardships²⁷.

In addition to it, pious deeds may be source of acceptance of prayers, Prophet of Islam explained this point while mentioning the story of three persons, who were on journey, rain overcame them, and they took refuge in a cave of a mountain. A heavy rock fell over the mouth of their cave, blocking them inside. They begged Allah Almighty for their good deeds. Allah Almighty accepted their prayers and eased their hardship. Famous Islamic scholar Imam Nawawi says in this context: Allah Almighty may accept the prayers if someone supplicates to Him by his good deeds and it is permissible for a person to do so as those three people called upon Allah Almighty by their deeds, Allah Almighty relieved them of their hardships and Prophet of Islam also mentioned their story in context of praise²⁸.

Dhikr

Remembrance of Allah Almighty is an important source of bringing tranquility to hearts, removing worries, and eliminating negative thinking of minds. Quran indicates this fact: "Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah"²⁹. Allamah Alusi says about the importance of dhikr: When a believer remembers Allah, the Highest, his heart attains tranquility and peace that relieves anxiety, sorrows and so on³⁰. Some Hadiths indicate that if a believer makes habit of doing some Azkar regularly he will be protected against worries sorrows and depression. Few sayings of Holy Prophet in this regard are listed below:

He (S) said: Reciter of verse of the Kursi after every obligatory prayer remains under God's protection till next prayer³¹.

A man came to the Messenger of Allah, (may God's prayers and peace be upon him) and said that he has devoted his time for prayer, how much time of his prayer he should devote to send salat on him? The Prophet told him to send salat on me as he wished. The man asked about a quarter. He (S) told him as he wished, if he could increase the portion of devoted time for salat

it would be better for him. Then the person asked about a half time. He (S) told him to send salat on me as he wished, if he could increase duration, it would be better for him. Then the man told the prophet that he would spend two thirds of his time for this purpose, He (S) repeated the same words, upon listening these words, he told to him (S) that he would devote all time of his prayers to sending salat on the Prophet. He (S) said if the man acted upon on his saying, this act would take him away from his worries and his evil deeds would be pardoned”³².

The Messenger of Allah said to Abdullāh ibn Khubayb to recite Sūrat al-Ikhlās, Sūrat al-Falaq, and Sūrat An-Nās thrice in morning and evening time, and it will be enough for you and will grant you protector against everything”³³. Another hadith in this regard is: “Whoever recites the last two verses of Soorat al-Baqarah at night, they will suffice him”³⁴. The messenger of Islam said: Whoever recites : In the name of Allah, Who with His name nothing can cause harm in the earth nor in the heavens, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing It was mentioned in the hadeeth that someone who saw the owner of the affliction said: Whoever sees an afflicted person then says: ‘All praise is due to Allah who saved me from that which He has afflicted you with, and blessed me greatly over many of those whom He has created he shall not be struck by that affliction”³⁵.

Seeking Forgiveness and repentance

Seeking forgiveness from Allah Almighty and repentance from sins are means of relieving grief and sorrows. Allah Almighty says. “And said, ‘Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver. And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers”³⁶. It is said that four men came to Al-Hassan Al-Basri and complained to him about barrenness, poverty, lack of offspring and the drought of the orchard, so Al-Hassan Al-Basri guided all of them to seek forgiveness in the light of these verses³⁷. Ibn il Qayyim is of the opinion that evil exists because of sins, if person’s sins are removed by repenting to Allah Almighty and seeking forgiveness, his all worries are resolved resultantly³⁸. The prophet elaborated the importance of seeking forgiveness by saying: “If anyone regularly seeks forgiveness (from Allah), Allah will appoint for him a way out of every distress and a relief from every anxiety and will provide sustenance for him from where he expects not”³⁹. But seeking forgiveness and repentance should not be performed robotically by tongue, it must be associated with leaving out a sin that the person has committed, showing regret for the sin, and determining not to repeat it in future.

Reliance on Allah Almighty

Concept of Relying on God makes the man humble and submissive to trials and tribulation. By trusting in Allah Almighty a man believes in divine plans. He relieves from depression, anxiety, and fear by handing over his affairs to Allah Almighty, Quran says in this context: “And whoever relies on God, He is sufficient for them”⁴⁰. In addition to it, relying on Allah Almighty is a means of providing sustenance to believers. Lack of livelihood may lead a person to psychological disorders that may result in extreme sorrows and depression. If a person exerts effort, relying on God to bring him out of poverty, Allah Almighty unlocks the doors of livelihood for him, as stated in the hadith: “Were you to depend upon Allah with true dependence, He would have provided for you like He provides for the bird; early in the morning he leaves hungry, but returns at the end of the day with a full stomach”⁴¹. Famous Islamic scholar Said Nursi opinions about Twakkal: By relying on God man’s difficulties and sorrows are gradually disappeared like a tree that becomes dead after falling off its roots⁴². But trusting in God must be associated with making efforts and utilizing all sources for earning livelihood.

Findings

Depression is intense sadness from the Islamic point of view. Islamically Main causes of depression are Negligence in material or spiritual aspect of life, trials & tribulations, and disobedience to Allah Almighty. Islamic worships have an effective role in controlling depression.

References:

- ¹ Okasha Ahmed, Contemporary Psychiatry (Anglo-Egyptian Library), 407-410.
- ² Al Tubah: 92.
- ³ Al-Bukhari, Al-Jami' Al-Sahih, Hadith: 530.
- ⁴ Qutub Muhammad Maza Yueti Al Islam lil Bashariah (publishers: Dar Al Raiyah Al Islamiyah),11.
- ⁵ Al Baqarah: 155.
- ⁶ Al Shurah: 30.
- ⁷ Qutb, Muhammad Minhaj al Tarbiah fil Islam (14th Edition, 1993), 67.⁷
- ⁸ Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdul Rahman Al Muhamid, Worship, and its effects in the training of the human soul (Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Dawah, and Guidance of the Kingdom), 54-59.
- ⁹ Najati Muhammad Usman, Al-Qur'an and Ilm-Nafs, 315.
- ¹⁰ Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdul Rahman Al Muhamid, Worship, and its effects in the training of the human soul, 175.
- ¹¹ Najati Muhammad Usman, Al-Qur'an and Ilm-Nafs, 139.
- ¹² Abu Dawud, Al-Sunan, Hadith: 4986.
- ¹³ Sherbini, Dr. Lotfy Psychiatry and People's Concerns (publisher, Alexandria Knowledge Establishment, undated), 205-206.
- ¹⁴ Al-Bukhari, Al-Jami' Al-Sahih, Hadith: 528.
- ¹⁵ Al-Bukhari, Al-Jami' Al-Sahih, Hadith: 37
- ¹⁶ Dr. Abdel Mohsen Yousry, The Qur'an removes the worries of the soul (Mayo National Publishing House, Cairo), 52-53.
- ¹⁷ Najati, Muhammad Othman the Qur'an and Psychology, 68.
- ¹⁸ Abu Al-Azam Jamal Madi, Doctor, Qur'an and Mental Health Reflections on Qur'anic Verses Related to Mental Health 65.
- ¹⁹ Al-Bukhari, Al-Jami' Al-Sahih, Hadith:1521.
- ²⁰ Alainbia: 87-88.
- ²¹ Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, Jami` al-Bayan (Beirut: Al-Risala Foundation, 1420 AH), 18: 518
- ²² Abu Dawud, Al-Sunan, Hadith: 1555.
- ²³ Ibn al-Jawzi, Abdul Rahman bin Ali Sayd al-Khatir (Madar al-Watan Publishing, 2016 edition), 190.
- ²⁴ Al Nakhl: 97.
- ²⁵ Abu Zahra Muhammad, Zahrat al-Tafsir (Al-Resala Foundation, Beirut, first edition 1418 AH), 8: 4265.
- ²⁶ Al Talaq: 2-3
- ²⁷ Al-Saadi, Abdul Rahman bin Nasser Taysir Al-Karim Al-Rahman in Tafsir (Publisher: Al-Resala Foundation, Edition: First 1420 AH - 2000 AD), 869.
- ²⁸ Al-Nawawi Yahya bin Sharaf, Explanation of Al-Nawawi on Sahih by Imam Al-Nawawi (Dar Al-Fikr Beirut, Publication Year 1401 AH), 17: 56.
- ²⁹ Ar-Ra'd: 28.
- ³⁰ Alusi Shihab al-Din Mahmoud, Ruh al-Ma'ani (interpretations website <http://www.altafsir.com>), 13: 149.

-
- 31 Al-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam, Al-Kabir (Publishing House: Ibn Taymiyyah Library - Cairo, Edition: Second, undated), Hadith: 2733.
- 32 Al-Tirmidhi, Al-Sunan, 2457.
- 33 Abu Dawud al-Sunan, Hadith: 5082.
- 34 Al-Bukhari, Al-Jami' Al-Sahih, Hadith: 5009.
- 35 Al-Tirmidhi, Al-Sunan, 2457.
- 36 Noah: 10-12.
- 37 Qurtubi, Shams al-Din Tafsir al-Qurtubi (Publisher: Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyah - Cairo, Second Edition, 1384 AH - 1964 AD), 18: 301 and 302.
- 38 Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah Shams al-Din, Tafsir Quran al Karim, (Publisher: Beirut) 58.
- 39 Abu Dawud al-Sunan, Hadith: 1518.
- ⁴⁰ Al Talaq: 3.
- ⁴¹ Ibn Majah Al-Sunan: 4164.
- 42 Badi-al-Zaman Saeed Nursi, Lamaat, 304-305.