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HEALING STRESS THROUGH SURAH AL-FATIHAH: AN ALTERNATIVE

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ABSTRACT

Emotional stress is a problem for every human being. Consequently one's soul is not calm because of stress. The study is aimed to link al-Fatiha as an alternative treatment to stress. This is a qualitative study. Data collected from documents in libraries and interviews. Data are analyzed descriptively and comparatively. This article found reciting al-Fatihah perfectly is able to relax the stress of a person. This is because, al-Fatiha is a dhikr. By doing the dhikr it can reconcile the pressure in the heart.

Keywords: Stress, Therapy, Sura al-Fatiha, Soul, Psychology

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, human life is complex and full of challenges. These challenges cause them to experience emotional stress. Constant and excessive pressure cause disorder in psychological state or physical health.

The of impact emotional problems on individuals need be solved seriously (Koenig, 1985). This is due to constant stress can affect human behaviours, attitudes and psychological conditions, values and abilities (Ramli Hassan, 1990).

Since, stress is related closely to heart, it deserves to purify first step. This is because a heart is like a house of angels or demons. A calm heart strikes when the angels control it and emotional pressure appears when the demons dominate on it (al-Ghazali 1991).

Najati (1993) states the psychological crisis in Western society principally stemming from the absence of religious, poor of spiritual values and lack of understanding the concept of life. Therefore, as a therapy to this misfortune, he suggested that people has to return to the religious values. Fariza (2005) suggests that emotional problem ought to be treated in Islamic

ways. The approach used should be relevant to the situation. An alternative method step that can be practiced is through reciting *al-Fatiha Sura*.

Bestowing on to al-Sa'idi (2009), emotional stress causes troubles inside the soul. Some of emotional stress examples include feelings of hesitation, fear, sadness, hatred, jealousy, anger and shame. Stress is a factor for anxiety, lack of focus in work, sleeping difficulty and lost of appetite. In addition, stress affects productivity of individuals, institutions, workplaces and countries.

From the above reasons, it may be summed up that having faith and religious practice enable firmly to respond to the emotional problem. Therefore, this article will discuss an aspect of religion as a therapy for emotional stress through practicing and reading *al-Fatiha* continually.

2. THE CONCEPT OF STRESS

According to Ibn Manzur (2003), the term is called as *daght* (ضغط). The word is understood as restricted, troubled and busy. For 'Aqil (1985), the word states about a soul or an emotion in deeply troubled and agitated. Consequently, it has altered one's actions with an extraordinary behaviour.

According to al-Imam al-Ghazali (1982), humans have three forms of behavior. Natural behavior, automatic behavior and mental behavior. Humans and animals have similarities in automatic behaviour. However, humans differ from animals in mental behaviour. The difference depends on his heritage and social. Therefore, human beings in mentally behaviour have potential to change. Their emotional pressure as wild as a beast can be tamed by instructing his soul and his mind.

Al-Syarbini (2008) states that someone who does not has a life guidance is easily trapped by emotional problems. Especially when he is facing difficulties. Ibn Maskawiyh (2011) proclaims humans have been set with the *fitrah* or natural disposition in their souls. He enable to do good, evil or natural. Humans with natural disposition may be nurtured to be a good or an evil person. To ensure that human beings have good emotional pressure, they should always be raised with good qualities such as inner virtue, brave, wise and balance.

Those definitions also shared by other scholars. Morst and First (1979) express that stress remains as an emotional disturbance. This emotional affects uncomfortable on the body. Statt (1981) describes stress as a prolonged physical and psychological tension that may disrupt a person's ability to manage a circumstances. For Chaplin (2000), stress is a feeling of depression existed physically and psychologically. VandenBos (2007) affirms stress as an excessive pressure of imagination or reality which leads to an action through all body systems.

Emotion pressure is a feeling of internal reactions to an experience and event because of fear, anger, disappointment, joy and love (Muhammad Uthman Najati, 1993). According Lazarus (1993), emotion refers to the ensemble of noble sentiments side such as love, joy and serenity. It also essembles of negative side like anger, jealousy, fear, complaining, sadness, envy and hatred. Emotional stress is centered on negative emotions.

In the context of Islamic teachings, stress is a pressure happened to a human psyche because of restless, disappointment, sadness and violate to God's command or abiding to the self lustfulness. According to Fariza (2005), Islamic psychologists such as al-Ghazali, al-Razi, Muhammad Uthman Najati, Muhammad 'Izudin Taufik, Samit Atif al-Zin and Hassan Langgulung examine stress infection by linking it to anxiety, disappointment, envy, arrogance, self admiration, insincerity and fear.

In the Quran there are some verses describe factors and descriptions of people who experience personal stress. Among these verses is as Allah the Almighty saying:

﴿إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا ۚ ١٩ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ۚ ٢٠ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا ۚ ٢١ إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ ۚ ٢٢﴾

Translation: Indeed, man was created impatient (and niggardly). When evil befalls him he is despondent. And blessed with good fortune he grows niggardly. Except those devoted to prayer. (al-Ma'arij: 19-22)

Ibn Kathir (1970) describes two forms of human emotion. In the first place, when he is hit by a disaster or misfortune, he becomes displeased, fear and repeatedly complaining. The second one, when he has achieved a significant profit he stays as a very penny-pinching, ungenerous and stubborn. Only a person enable to escape from this terrible emotion. A person who constantly devoted in prayer. He shall not upset with any form of feeling disorder, but only a little.

It is worthy taking into account, stress represents an outrage of feeling, anxiety, fear and disillusionment. This is due to reaction of retaliation against an event. The situation bids a person to correct it significantly so that his emotion is no longer disturbed. The premier origin of stress is caused by not believing in God comprehensively.

3. AL-FATIHA VIRTUES

Al-Fatiha is the first *sura* lies in the Quran. Because of this position, it is known as *al-Fatiha* which means opening. It is allegedly included in the *Makkiyyah sura*. As it was revealed before the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), emigrated to Medina. Apart from *al-Fatiha*, it is in addition also known as *Umm al-Kitab* and *al-Sab' al-Mathani*. The word *Umm al-Kitab* means The Main *Sura*. This is incomparably because the content of *al-Fatiha Sura* comprehends all *suras* in the Quran. Meanwhile, *al-Sab' al-Mathani* means seven used verses that are repeated typically recite when performing prayers (*solat*). Without reading it, *solat* is thought with regret to be invalid (al-Qurtubi, 2010).

Al-Fatiha covers all the meaning of the Quran which includes the principles and branches of religion. It is a *sura* summarized about critical aspects in Islam such as belief in the Oneness God, the jurisprudence, the resurrection, the most beautiful attributes of Allah, devoted to worship, requesting personal assists and prayers, pleading instructions to the true religion, the right path and evading the deviation with the guidance of Allah. (al-Zuhayli, 1418H; Syaikh Yusuf. Interviews on March 13, 2018).

Al-Syawkani (2007) narrates the *al-Fatiha* assuredly having its majesty compared to other *suras*. He satisfactorily explained that this *sura* was never typically revealed in the sacred books before the Quran such as Psalm, Torah or the Gospel. This *sura* is precisely the divine treasury of Allah's Throne and is only granted to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Even the Prophet asserted that it was the best *sura*. He apparently chased his beloved friends to read it accurately.

Al-Fatiha is undoubtedly the main *sura* in the Quran. For a devoted Muslim, *al-Fatiha* is fundamentally influential in his humble life. It is because this *sura* contains essential matters intimately relating to *Usul al-Din* or the foundations of religion and partly *Furu 'al-Din* or the branches of religion. In addition, it gathers all the main Islamic teachings such as *aqida*, worship, *da'wa*, legislation and the specific matter of the hereafter (Sulaiman Ibrahim, 2008).

4. STRESS THERAPY THROUGH AL-FATIHAH

From an Islamic perspective, stress presents a mental problem that needs to be addressed. Naturally, mental problem refers to the word *al-naafs*. It is a noble soul that reliable to

distinguish the nature of man with other creatures of God. Good physical and external conduct undoubtedly require God or religion guidance. Without religion, human soul is unlikely to have in common the tranquility and possible happiness of social life. Therefore, worship and prayer benefit emotional personal life. (al-Ghazali, 1982).

Islam provides sincere prayers as a way out of stress. The word prayer typically includes its meaning as a worship and remembrance. In this prayer, a Muslim repeatedly read *al-Fatihah*. This *sura* is fundamental pillar to prayer. It is, in addition, a cure for those who prays, preventing from being treated badly or harmed. Allah says:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

Translation: Prayer fends away indecency and evil. (al-Ankabut: 45).

Al-Qurtubi (2010) states that prayer is a factor to a person who escape from being stucked in psychiatric problems. This is because, a person who performs the solat will recite Surah al-Fatihah or a Qur'anic verse containing advices and instructions. When he is praying, his heart is humble as he is standing before his curious Lord. This is the pleasant feeling that naturally arises during the prayer and accurate reading *al-Fatiha*.

Herein lies the privilege of Islam. It pays attention to fill the soul and spirit with good manners. The empty soul and spirit of man pushes him to act disproportionately. To ensure that a human being can live a balanced life, he must fill himself in knowing God, knowing himself and knowing his need in order to have a form of authentic relationship with God (Quli, 2006).

Islam also sees people whose souls are depressed, derived from their deviations of the straight path. This condition leads to badness of mind, faith, subject to lust and improper behavior (Riyad, 2003; Mohd Safri Ali et.al, 2013).

A stress human soul should return to his Lord. This is due to remember God, the soul and the heart will be calm. For a Muslim, the stress that strikes his heart can be cured through the recitation of *al-Fatihah*. Since reading this *sura* is a remembrance (*dihkr Allah*). If an individual commits *dhikr* with a humble heart, his soul can be reconciled from stress (Danial Zainal Abidin: 2009).

The study conducted by Purwoko (2012) found al-Fatihah reading therapy, causing the client to feel like having a direct dialogue with God, feeling more peaceful, healthier and able to do all the activities without any hindrance. Norizan Yusof and Muhammad Abd Wahad Nubil (2016) found that the method of therapy Surah al-Fatihah consequently better in reducing stress as compared to using meditation music.

Mohd Zaki Ahmad and Muhd Zulkifli Ismail (2016) and Yusri Jabr (interviews on March 14, 2108) say in *al-Fatihah* there is an element of faith uluhiyyah and rububiyah that encourages readers to rely on God in any dealings, thank God when getting help, seeking help in God specifically and placing a bridge between the creature and the Creator. These are the powers that be in *al-Fatihah*. Definitely, reciting it is a useful therapy for emotional stress.

5. CONCLUSION

Everybody cannot avoid from facing the stress problem. For Muslims, the method chosen to resolve it can not be deviated from Islam. Reading and recitation of *al-Fatiha* is a good method to solve or alleviate the emotional stress. This is because, *al-Fatiha* is a reminder for a Muslim. Reciting and reading *al-Fatiha* with a devout, the soul becomes more positive and the heart can be reconciled from stress. Moreover, the concept of Oneness God contains in this *sura* grows confidence that only Him the Ultimate Saviour.

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