

## FRATERNITY IN HUMANITY AND GLOBAL MENTAL HELATH - ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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### SUMMARY

The aim of this paper is to give islamic perspective to the topic mentioned above. Qur'anic verses and Prophet's hadiths will be our source in defining the key words what will further guide us towards the explanation how islam affects, influences and in general contributes to the mental, spiritual, individual and global health. Considering that spiritual health is not only the absence of illness, rather it is soul contention, it is necessary to include observation of the ways for strenthening the faith, what will, consequently, lead to the spiritual well being and, in the end, towards better mental health for the individual and community in general. Since the faith is confirmed through humanity and fraternity, the observation on the faith's influence on more human picture of mankind is inevitable. Almost every individual strives to find the answer on the question what is the purpose of his/hers life. The faith gives answer on this question and the presence of this awareness (purpose of life) strengthens mental health.

**Key words:** *fraternity in faith and humanity - global mental helath - individual mental health - spirituality*

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### FAITH IMPROVES MENTAL HEALTH

If we consider man as a synthesis of body and soul and also as God's vice-regent, it is necessary to observe him through the prism of faith and its sources. It can be freely said that some aspects of mans mentality can only be explained by the sources of faith. In Islam these sources are Qur'an<sup>1</sup> and sunnah<sup>2</sup> God's Prophet. God Almighty has honored man with regency, but along with regency man has responsibilities. He has his rights and duties. Duties are various and towards: himself, family, community, society, neighbor, spouse, animals, environment, God, work, studying, promotion of good, denial of evil, respect for elders, kindness towards youth, etc. Everything mentioned above is aiming towards strengthening the connection between the Creator (God) and creature (Man). The stronger the connection between them is, the better is mental health. Numerous researches in the field of pshychology support this claim, because fulfillment of the tasks God gave him results in man's satisfaction. Consequently every human being that feels happyness and is satisfied is, withou any doubt, more useful for the community and for the society. Qur'an verses bring us teaching about the soul and different levels one may reach. According to Qur'an there are three main types of soul and every man can possess one of those: Mutmeinnah – calm soul, Lewwamah – self reprimand soul and Emmarah – spul prone to evil.

Mutmainnah is the soul possessed by honest believer and for him faith is the most important but at the same time he is not neglecting other duties he has.

Lewwamah soul is a self reprimand soul, that means the one who possesses this kind of soul is doing sometimes good and sometimes bad things. Lack of honesty in belief leads towards self accusation and regret for sins done.

Emmarah is a soul possessed by those who are prone to evil, doing smaller and great sins on daily basis and keep behaving this way throughout their life on the Earth.

Besides terms mentioned above, in order to explain soul we can find in Qur'an two more terms: nafs and ruh. Term nefs is mentioned 145 times in Qur'an and in plural as nufus and enfus 155 times. The oppinions of Islamic scholars on this topic are devided and there are ongoing discussion whether the ruh and the nefs are the same. One part of Islamic scholars claim that these are synonyms while others claim that these are two different terms. Ebu Hamid Al Ghazzali gave interesting observation on one of these terms. In his capital book called Ihya ulumid-din he brings two predominant meanings of the term nefs. The first meaning according to Ghazzali refers to the man's overall capacity to produce anger and passion for something. The second meaning according to Ghazzali is that nefs represents genuine quality which is the sole essence of every human being. Different conditions can affect this quality and thus they can be described differently.

### SOUL/NEFS HAS TO BE RAISED

Not only that soul can be changed and its condition enhanced, but this is considered as one of the individual obligations of every believer if he/she wants to be

<sup>1</sup> Qur'an – God's revelation to the Prophet Muhammed written in the book called Mushaf and delivered authenticaly to the mankind

<sup>2</sup> Sunnah – practice of the Prophet Muhammed, custom, way of life, rule, everything connected to the Prophet Muhammed whether it refers to his sayings, deeds or silent permission

successful in this and in the next life. Allah Almighty said: „Successful indeed is the one who purifies their soul.“ Based on this we can say that whether one's soul is calmed, self-reprimand (regretful) or prone to evil it will affect his/hers behavior in his/hers surrounding.

Well-known Qur'an commentator brings two possibilities of understanding of this verses:

- The success is in purification of the soul through obedience to God's will, and those who leave obedience to God and His guidance will be lost.
- This means that he makes it dull, and he disregards it by neglecting to allow it to receive guidance. He treats it in this manner until he performs acts of disobedience and he abandons obedience of Allah. It also could mean that he is indeed successful whose soul Allah purifies, and he has failed whose soul Allah corrupts. Of course, purification can only be done by man's striving for it and it can be observed as a reward of Allah for continuous obedience. This is like what was reported by Al-'Awfi and 'Ali bin Abi Talhah from Ibn 'Abbas. At-Tabarani recorded that Ibn 'Abbas said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to stop whenever he recited this Ayah: „O Allah! Give my soul its good. You are its Guardian and Master, and the best to purify it.“<sup>3</sup>

This kind of approach for sure makes believer mentally stronger, psychically more stable, more reliable, morally protected and every other aspect more useful.

Faith is the source of motivation for doing good deeds. Qur'an verses give us assurance that there is no faith without good deeds. It is strongly emphasized that we have to believe and to do good deeds. (Amenuu we amilus-salihat)

The research conducted in Great Britain on 14th of February 2017, shown that Qur'an contributes to mental health. National health service of Great Britain has announced that they have started the project based on the Islamic faith's influence and related experience in healing mental illness. BBC has reported that results of this project have shown that there are signs of success in healing mental illness using the method that involves Qur'an. Consequently, as BBC has reported, there can be found relation between distinction from faith and mental illness. BBC has brought comments on the facts from the project that the main method for healing mental illness can be found in following faith postulates and guidelines.<sup>4</sup>

Ibn Kayyim in his book *Zadul-ma'ad* states that in Qur'an can be found the cure for every kind of diseases regardless of their origin mental or physical. By his words Qur'an is the cure for the illness of this and the next world but at the same time everyone is not deserving God's help in healing. If someone wants to be healed by Qur'an he/she has to impose Qur'an over

his/hers illness with strong commitment and faith, honestly and with full confidence. By fulfilling these requirements the illness will have stand no chance. Also he is questioning how is possible that someone can resist the words of the One who created Earth and Universe? How to resist the words that would, if revealed to them, would crush the mountains and shred the Earth to pieces? There is no illness without explanation of its cause or the way of its healing in Qur'an. If someone is not healed by Qur'an, God didn't heal him, and whoever thinks that Qur'an is not enough, all other will be insufficient for him/her.<sup>5</sup> That means that good thoughts on Allah and complete confidence in His help is the precondition for healing success. „Precondition for success is subjects strong belief that the cure will help.“<sup>6</sup>

Believer's perception of God can be seen in the following verses:

*„He is the One Who created me, and He alone guides me. He is the One Who provides me with food and drink. And He alone heals me when I am sick. And He is the One Who will cause me to die, and then bring me back to life. And He is the One Who, I hope, will forgive my flaws! on Judgment Day.“* *“My Lord! Grant me wisdom, and join me with the righteous. Bless me with honourable mention among later generations. Make me one of those awarded the Garden of Bliss.“*<sup>7</sup>

In the other verse it is stated: *„We send down the Quran as a healing and mercy for the believers, but it only increases the wrongdoers in loss.“*<sup>8</sup>

Also it is stated that Qur'an is the guide and the cure: *„Had We revealed it as a non-Arabic Quran, they would have certainly argued, ‘If only its verses were made clear ‘in our language’. What! A non-Arabic revelation for an Arab audience!’ Say, ‘O Prophet, ‘It is a guide and a healing to the believers. As for those who disbelieve, there is deafness in their ears and blindness to it ‘in their hearts’. It is as if they are being called from a faraway place.“*<sup>9</sup>

## INSTEAD OF CONCLUSION

Islam consists of three pieces which are strongly connected and those are: worshipping God (Islam), belief (iman) and charity. The aim of worshipping God is to make man God-feared, to build the system of moral values and to make him/her capable of good manners. This can be achieved only through proper understanding of charity (Ihsan) as it was understood by Prophet Muhammed: „Worship God as if you can see Him, because if you can't see Him, He definitely is able to see

<sup>3</sup> For more see Ibn Kathir – Tafsir

<sup>4</sup> www.islambosna.ba, 14th february 2014

<sup>5</sup> Ibnul-Kayyim, *Zadul-ma'ad*, 4/352

<sup>6</sup> Ibnul-Kayyim, *Zadul-ma'ad*, 4/98

<sup>7</sup> Qur'an, As-Shuara, verses 78-85

<sup>8</sup> Qur'an, Al Isra, verse 82

<sup>9</sup> Qur'an, Al Fussilat, verse 44

you.<sup>10</sup> If we analyze spiritual dimension of everyday prayers (salat), fasting (sawm), annual contribution from our material goods of 2.5% (zakat) and pilgrimage (hajj) we can find and see enormous strength that pushes us towards humanity and fraternity. Believers heart is full of belief in God and therefore it has to be full of love towards others. Every human being is perceived as brother or sister by true believer. In this we can find the connection between true believers regardless of their religion because belief in God and love towards all of his creatures is a strong bond between them. This is emphasized in the beginning of the Charter on human fraternity.<sup>11</sup> Faith guides believer to see in others his/her brother/sister. Through belief in God who created everything and everyone equally from his Mercy – believers are invited to show this human fraternity in order to preserve security of creatures and Universe and to be of help to all people, especially to the poor and weak.<sup>12</sup> In order to strengthen the message from the Charter Meshihat of Islamic Community in Croatia, Muslim World League and Croatian Bishops Conference have jointly organized Conference in Zagreb in February 2020. The Conference was named „Human Fraternity for peace and stability in the World.“ The Conference was under auspices of the President of the State, Prime minister and Parliament Speaker as well as Mayor of City of Zagreb and it gathered the most prominent guests and activists in promoting dialogue, quality and peace in the World. On this Conference Zagreb declaration was adopted in order to give contribution to the fostering of peace and stability in the World. Let this Declaration be our witness of belief in

God and witness of the belief which unifies hearts and raises souls, and this Conference sign of our determination to continue on this road. Fraternity through humanity is a guarantee for the better mental health and better and peaceful future on global level.

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<sup>10</sup> Buhari, Hadith Sahih, nr. 50

<sup>11</sup> Charter on human fraternity was signed by Pope Francis and sheikh dr. Ahmad Tayyib (representing Catholic church and Islamic Community respectively) in Abu Dhabi on 4th of February 2019. This globally accepted document gives the chance for honest dialogue. It is the result of rethinking our positions the modern world and gives diagnosis as well as the cure for the modern illness

<sup>12</sup> Charter on Human fraternity published in Minber official Gazette of Islamic Community in Croatia, October 2019

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