



ELEMENT OF SILENT REPETITION OF PRAYERS AND SELF-REFLECTION OR INTROSPECTION APPROACHES IN COPING PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

Symptoms of social problems among adolescents nowadays are increasingly worsening and worrying all parties concerned. This is due to the lack of religious and spiritual appreciation among society. This phenomenon, if not contained, will have a negative impact on the well-being of the community, the family institution and the teenager's character. The objective of this study is to examine the Islamic spiritual approach based on mystical concepts developed by tasawuf scholars. This study also aimed to identify the forms of personality disorders in adolescents living in Baitul Sakinah and the Silent Repetition of Prayers and Self-reflection or Introspection treatment used to overcome the problem at the centre. In addition, the study also aimed to analyze the implications of the Silent Repetition of Prayers, Self-reflection or Introspection approaches used on the trainees in Baitul Sakinah. This was a qualitative study that applied the case study design comprising interviews as well as several other methods such as document analysis and questionnaires. The instruments used were interview protocol and questionnaire. Data from interviews were analyzed using the manual and Nvivo 11 software. The manual method covered the process of

transcription, reduction, coding and data display. Whereas the data from the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively using SPSS 23.0. The results showed that there were 22 types of problematic behaviors exhibited by trainees in Baitul Sakinah. This negative phenomenon requires a solution. The findings also indicated that there are several spiritual treatment approaches used in Baitul Sakinah, such Silent Repetition of Prayers and Self-reflection or Introspection. The implication is that the treatment creates awareness among the trainees and convinces them to abstain from negative elements that cause their problematic behavior.

Key words: Silent Repetition of Prayers, Self-Reflection or Introspection, Adolescents, Problematic Behaviors.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Meanwhile, Khālid °Abd Raḥmān al-°Ik (2005), who was an educator at the Fatwa Damsyiq office, had also adduced a similar view regarding the need for humankind to focus on spiritual aspects, especially pertaining to faith, in order to overcome problematic adolescent behaviour because faith moulds the soul, corrects moral issues and enhances how one cares for another. Ahmad Kilani Mohamed, Mohd. Ismail Mustari and Normala Hashim (2004) also found that strengthening spirituality is an important aspect in helping adolescents to avoid involvement in immoral activities. According to the study, adolescents lacking religious education are considered ignorant and act impulsively because they think whatever they do is correct and nobody can curtail their unfettered behaviour. These arguments were supported by Salasiah (2008) Zaizul etl. al (2017, 2018), who stated that internal or spiritual factors are catalysts in the formation of behaviour, regardless of good or bad behaviour. Thus, if there are some who claim that environmental factors such as peers, family etc. are factors that encourage inappropriate behaviour, then that statement cannot be denied altogether. Hence, one should realise that any intention leading to a behaviour is channelled to the heart and mind before any eventual action occurs. Individuals who use the gifts of Allah s.w.t. mentioned earlier would be able to make the choice of behaving appropriately and individuals who did not gain from these gifts would be inclined to behave inappropriately. Therefore, human problems or inappropriate behaviour that exist today are the consequence of human wants or wishes that follow natural inclinations (*nafsu*). Humankind does not have a choice in overcoming this problem except by guiding the heart and natural inclination (*nafsu*) towards the path blessed by Allah s.w.t and for this purpose, each individual must focus on spiritual aspects more seriously compared to other aspects.

The spiritual aspect here is related to spirituality according to Islam or in tasawuf terms is called *tazkiyah al-nafs*. The sanctity of the heart is very important in life because it acts as a shield for someone who might get involved in inappropriate behaviour and subsequently lead that person to associate with others who practice appropriate behaviour. The aspect of cleansing the heart, if not emphasised, would easily drag someone to the depths of vice and destruction. This could be understood better through the views of ulama such as Sa°id Ḥawwā (1998) and al-°ābūnī (1999), who were of the view that *tazkiyah al-nafs* is a process that discards despicable and disdainful (*takhallī*) behaviour and replaces it with honourable and noble (*tahallī*) behaviour. Ibn Miskawayh (1961), Zaizul etl. al (2018), Ahmad Sunawari Long etl. al.

(2017) stated that a sacred heart would lead to a spiritual state free from negative values that manifest itself in behaviour. The measure of abstinence from negative values is reflected in each behaviour that is liked and loved by the surrounding community as well as accepted by Allah s.w.t. Hence, the spiritual approach is relevant to the contemporary needs of the Islamic community, specifically the adolescents, whose behaviour is worsening and worrying all parties (Mutsalim, etl. al. 2016). This approach highlights the spiritual aspect that educates humankind towards implementing all the commands of Allah s.w.t. and abstaining from what is prohibited. The aspects highlighted in this approach are related to faith (*akidah*), worship (*ibadat*) and morality (*akhlak*), which are the pillars in the life of every Muslim.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study used the qualitative method with a case study design. According to Creswell et al., (in Yin, 1993), Ahmad Sunawari etl al. (2017), the qualitative method is the best method for examining cases in a hands-on and directed manner as well as able to give an accurate picture about the experience and interaction pattern in an informal context, which is usually less examined by the quantitative method. A qualitative study also stresses on the importance of researching in an actual and natural setting. The researcher tries to observe, explain and interpret the setting in its actual condition without trying to manipulate the situation (Othman Lebar 2006). Hence, this study was initiated in a natural manner in order to determine in a more detailed manner the spiritual treatment approach applied in Baitul Sakinah aimed at handling problematic adolescent behaviour. The study adduced *In-depth Interview* questions related to the study directly to the manager, teaching staff of Baitul Sakinah and 65 occupants of Baitul Sakinah to obtain the necessary data. In addition, the case study approach was the most suitable for studying and understanding issues or study patterns presumed sensitive as well as the title of this study, which was related to problematic adolescent behaviour (Deinhart 1983; Yin 1993; Hoesni etl. al. 2012). This research method was chosen because the case study technique indirectly makes the researcher more refine, appreciative and empathetic when understanding the respondent's behaviour. Thus, by applying the case study method, this study can carry out an in-depth research on each respondent's case because probing can then be carried out (Sumaiyah Ahmad 2013), Ahmad Sunawari Long etl.al. (2018). this study used two methods to analyse the interview data, which was the manual method as well as using the Nvivo software. Data from the interview were analysed using the qualitative design that was divided into several processes, such as transcription, reduction, coding and presenting the data. The transcription refers to re-writing of the recorded interview protocol (Othman Lebar 2006). Whereas, the Nvivo software also helped in building theories by showing how codes are formed and are related between one another (Gibson & Brown 2008). Bryman (2008) stated that the use of Nvivo could help the study enhance thinking about the data analysis, manage the codes and discover the relationship between these codes. Moreover, the study could view records on how data are analysed and this helps the researcher to identify informants who can express a quotation.

3. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AND DISCUSSIONS

Discussion about this matter comprises aspects of *mujāhadah al-nafs (al-takhallī)* and *riyāḍah al-nafs (al-tahallī)*, which are applied in the rehabilitation sessions in Baitul Sakinah.

1. Silent Repetition of Prayers (*Berzikir*)

The practice of *zikir* is one of the practices of worship emphasised by Baitul Sakinah by making *zikir* a compulsory practice in the trainees' daily routine. This was mentioned in the interview, according to the following transcript:

“Because these children have actually got involved and influenced so we have asked them to practice wirid and zikir in order for them to get closer to Allah.”

(Transcript reference P1: 480-484)

“Usually the Ustazah would enquire, if for tazkiyah al-nafs it is kore towards cleansing the heart, more towards istighfar and zikir.”

(Transcript reference TP1/AQ: 639-642).

The trainees are given a special verse of zikir that differs from day to day as taught by the Prophet s.a.w. This was mentioned in the interview, according to the following transcript:

“Actually, the zikir is the daily zikir taught by the Prophet s.a.w. For example, we have wirid every day. For example, what is the wirid for Monday, what is the wirid for Tuesday, that was what the Prophet s.a.w. taught. Each day they would follow it. What wirid is for Sunday. O Allah after Asar. After maghrib prayers they will read the ruqyah.”

(Transcript reference P1: 484-490).

According to al-Ghazālī (1994), zikir plays the role of providing strength and calmness of the heart to a subject when facing the challenges in life. This is because zikir to Allah s.w.t. guarantees that Allah s.w.t. would remember HIS subjects who remember HIM. Al-Ghazālī (2000) further mentioned that the attention and remembrance by Allah s.w.t. of HIS subjects could mean that the subjects are in the care and protection of Allah s.w.t., as exhorted by HIM (al-Quran 2: 152):

“So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me”

Increasing the zikir would circumvent a person from easily bowing to natural inclination (*nafsu*) and Satan’s temptation that leads to wrongful and sinful behaviours (‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Isā 2008; al-Muḥāsibī 1990), Mutsalim Khareng etl.al. (2016), Nasir Omar etl. al. (2018). Al-Muḥāsibī (1990), Zaizul etl. al (2018), Rafiza etl al. (2018) also stressed that the practice of zikir could bring a person closer to the commands of Allah s.w.t. and create a sense of sincerity towards Allah s.w.t. A sense of sincerity that blends with a person’s heart would distant him from the temptation of Satan, as admitted by Satan in the al-Quran (al-Quran 15: 39-40):

[Iblis] said, "My Lord, because You have put me in error, I will surely make [disobedience] attractive to them on earth, and I will mislead them all. Except, among them, Your chosen servants."

The advantage of zikir mentioned innumerable times in the hadith of the Prophet s.a.w., among others is that it provides goodness, avoidance of evil and forgiveness of sins (al-Ghazālī 2000), as stated in the hadith as follows:

Narrated by Abū Hurayrah, the Prophet s.a.w. exhorted: “Whoever says (لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له) each day a hundred times, surely for him it would equal the freedom of ten slaves and it is written for him a hundred good deeds, deducted from him a hundred evil deeds and he is protected from Satan until the evening of that day. And no one has carried out a practice, more importantly than what has been carried out, except a person who practices more than that”

The spiritual treatment approach adopted by Baitul Sakinah had assimilated the practice of zikir among trainees. The trainees fill their spare time by increasing the practice of zikir as long as they are going through the rehabilitative process, such as to zikir every time after prayers. The practice of zikir is guided by the zikir taught by the Prophet s.a.w. In relation to that, Baitul Islah had made the practice of worshiping zikir as one of the spiritual practices for overcoming problematic adolescent behaviour.

2. *Self-reflection or Introspection (Muhasabah diri)*

The practice of self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) is assimilated into the moral rehabilitative process in Baitul Islah. This method is aimed at reminding trainees that they should always renew their intentions, form an attachment to Allah s.w.t and implement HIS commands. This is evident from the interview:

“We also always do recalling, self-reflection (muhasabah) id handled by me or Ustaz Roslan in a group. We always recall.” (Transcript reference P1: 335-338).

The self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) was handled by the manager or Ustaz Roslan by looking into the need and situation of the trainees. This means that the time for implementing self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) is flexible and not fixed. Issues emphasised during the process are related to past sins, such as sins towards others, parents and specifically sins toward Allah s.w.t. as well as narrating stories about the afterlife in the grave, about the Prophet s.a.w, His Companions and Islamic warriors. This is evident from the interview, as in the following transcript:

“Whatever we have done, our sins. Ours sins towards others, both our parents especially, our disobedience towards Allah s.w.t. Usually like that. Then, for example, stories about doomsday, the fiery grave, stories about the Companions, the Prophet s.a.w and warriors that we have included. Next, we do not fix the time for reflection (muhasabah). Sometimes the children are not aware that there would be reflection (muhasabah). So, we look into the situation of the children. For example, we have lecturers and at the end of it we have a reflection (muhasabah). This could be done anytime. If there is a need to do it, we do it according to the need. The period depends”

(Transcript Reference P1: 338-353).

The significance of self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) could be understood through the views of al-Muḥāsibī (1990), who stated that self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) is to ponder, observe and stipulate something by differentiating what is despised and what is liked by Allah s.w.t., as exhorted by Allah s.w.t.):

O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow - and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do.

(al-Quran 59-18)

Al-Muḥāsibī (1990) revealed his view about self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) in the scripture *al-Ri'āyah lī Ḥuqūq Allāh*, as follows: The normal way for a person who is learning to train his heart is to always ponder the past that has caused some unease and become ascetic (*zuhud*). Raise questions in oneself about the days that followed from sunrise to sunset and has the body carried out what was commanded by Allah s.w.t or otherwise. Thus, if the body has done as commanded, then observe the parts of the body one-by-one, does it know what has happened from morning until night? Has he watched his words so that his words have not agitated Allah s.w.t and he has not stopped uttering words made compulsory by Allah s.w.t until the day sets. So too with sight, hearing and actions as well as all the parts of his body. If he has found himself whereby he has guided all the parts of his body towards Allah s.w.t, hence, at that time he would despise the wants of his natural inclinations (*nafsu*) and be safe from the temptations of his enemy until he knows that he has been sincere from sunrise to sunset. Be it known that in each day of our lives, we always commit new sins that comprise sins committed by parts of the body and the heart.

In relation to that, the statement by al-Muḥāsibī above states that self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) can be implemented in two circumstances, such as self-reflection of future behaviour and past behaviour. Besides that, Salasiah (2008); Zaizul etl al. (2018) stated that self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) according to al-Ghazālī, looks at the modal, advantages as well as

disadvantages so that the definition is clear about the advantages and disadvantages. The modal according to al-Ghazālī was the modal in religion, which refers to compulsory (*fardu*) matters that are the responsibility of the self and should be implemented. Advantages are matters that are non-obligatory (*sunat*) when implemented, whereas disadvantages are caused by behaviours that are sinful and vice in nature. Self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) is implemented by observing compulsory worship. Thus, if a subject commits good behaviour, then he is blessed. On the contrary, if the subject fails to carry out his obligation, then he should replace it (*qaḍā*). Hence, if the subject has done that but is insufficient, then he has to make it sufficient by non-obligatory (*sunat*) practices. However, if a subject behaves inappropriately, then he should consider the perils at the mercy of Allah s.w.t. in the afterlife. Next, al-Muḥāsibī adduced the benefits accrued to an individual who performs self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) in his daily life. One of the benefits is that this method serves to encounter natural inclinations (*nafsu*) and Satan. The tool for self-reflection is the mind because the mind controls various actions of the soul so much so that it knows the good and bad points of the mind. The mind has to think far ahead so that it realises that natural inclinations (*nafsu*) and lust are enemies that invite evil as well as cause the subject to transgress the teachings of Allah s.w.t. Jaffary Awang etl. al. (2017), (al-Najar 2004b). Besides that, one who performs self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) in this world would be considered by Allah s.w.t. in the afterlife (al-Muḥāsibī 1990) as well as able to create discernment (*al-baṣīrah*), wisdom, intelligence and develop *maʿrifah*. *Maʿrifah* is the policy of truthfulness in all forms of practices (al-Muḥāsibī 2003; Nasir Omar etl al. 2018).

4. CONCLUSION

Hence, the spiritual treatment approach used in Baitul Islah had assimilated the self-reflection or introspection (*muhasabah diri*) practices among trainees throughout their moral rehabilitation process at the centre. The allocated for implementing self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) is flexible and not fixed based on the need and situation of the trainees. Among the issues raised in the process are recognising the sins committed towards Allah s.w.t., parents as well as narrating stories about the Prophet s.a.w, His Companions and Islamic warriors who make good examples. This practice involves the trainees having to evaluate themselves regarding their past problematic behaviour. Therefore, the practice of self-reflection (*muhasabah diri*) is an important part of the spiritual treatment approach in Baitul Sakinah aimed at overcoming the problematic behaviour of adolescents.

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