



Tadabbur al-Quran and its Implications for Mental and Emotional Well-Being under Movement Control Order Conditions

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Abstract

The Movement Control Order (MCO) which began on 18 March 2020 in Malaysia is aimed at curbing the spread of the Covid-19 virus that has affected the world. However, if not managed properly, it will have negative implications on the mental and emotional well-being of the population. Addressing the spiritual aspect or its strength by getting closer to Allah SWT through *tadabbur* Quran activities is one of the means for overcoming these issues. This paper seeks to provide evidence of the importance of *tadabbur* Quran in the life of a Muslim and its implications in ensuring mental and emotional well-being. Among the objectives of this research are to: a) describe the importance of *tadabbur* Quran to Muslims; b) analyze the steps involved in *tadabbur* Quran and its principles; and c) analyze how *tadabbur* Quran activities affect the mental and emotional well-being of the practitioner, especially under movement control order conditions. This study employs a case study approach involving five Usrah QMAP3T Programme participants through text analysis and interview methods. This research seeks to enhance awareness on the need to return to the Quran the manual of Allah SWT who created all beings. The guidance provided by Allah SWT through His revelation and disseminated by the noble Prophet Muhammad SAW should be given attention and priority towards achieving a happy life which is one of the indicators underlying the well-being of the minds and emotions of individuals.

Keywords: *Tadabbur*, Quran, personal well-being, emotions and thoughts.

Abstrak

Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP) yang bermula pada 18 Mac 2020 di Malaysia bertujuan membendung penularan virus Covid-19 yang melanda dunia. Namun, jika tidak diurus dengan baik, ia akan memberi implikasi negatif terhadap kesejahteraan mental dan emosi penduduk. Bagi menangani aspek kerohanian atau pengukuhanannya dengan mendekatkan diri kepada Allah SWT melalui aktiviti *tadabbur* al-Quran merupakan salah satu cara untuk mengatasi masalah tersebut. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk memberikan bukti tentang kepentingan *tadabbur* Quran dalam kehidupan seorang Muslim dan implikasinya dalam memastikan kesejahteraan mental dan emosi. Antara objektif kajian ini ialah: a) menghuraikan kepentingan *tadabbur* al-Quran kepada umat Islam; b) menganalisis langkah-langkah yang terlibat dalam *tadabbur* Quran dan prinsip-prinsipnya; dan c) menganalisis bagaimana aktiviti *tadabbur* al-Quran mempengaruhi kesejahteraan mental dan emosi pengamal, terutamanya semasa perintah kawalan pergerakan. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kajian kes yang melibatkan lima orang peserta Program Usrah QMAP3T melalui kaedah analisis teks dan temu bual. Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kesedaran tentang perlunya kembali kepada al-Qur'an buku panduan dari Allah SWT yang mencipta semua makhluk. Hidayah yang diberikan oleh Allah SWT melalui wahyu dan disebarkan oleh junjungan mulia Nabi Muhammad SAW wajar diberi perhatian dan keutamaan ke arah mencapai kehidupan yang bahagia yang menjadi salah satu petunjuk yang mendasari kesejahteraan minda dan emosi individu.

Kata kunci: *Tadabbur*, Quran, Kesejahteraan Diri, Emosi, Pemikiran

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Introduction

The role of the *qalb* involving feelings and emotions will certainly not deviate from the rationality, logic and thought functions of the mind (Zainorah Kadri, 2015). This is seen in several verses of the Quran where words related to the heart and mind are often mentioned together to show the importance placed on human beings to live life as a caliph on Allah's earth in the journey towards the hereafter. Indirectly, it can be understood that emotions and thoughts can be managed in harmony by making the Quran, the greatest miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (s. a. w.) as guidance and a cure for all mankind. The Qur'an states

"O mankind! There hath come unto you a Reminder from your Lord, and a cure for the diseases of your breasts, and a guidance for safety, and a mercy for the believers."

(The Qur'an, 36:57)

This holy verse explains that the Quran is a form of advice from Allah SWT through His guidance. It is also a cure for all forms of ailments, especially mental illness (doubts about reality) which stems from *qalb maridh* (or a sick heart). If the *qalb* is in a secure and calm state then the mind and emotions will also be stable and at peace. The key in having the condition of a secure heart is to practice *tadabbur* of the holy verses of the Quran. These verses of Allah SWT are able to penetrate the human heart until they reach the soul like water permeating soil until it reaches into the seed (Rohana Zakaria et al., 2018). Furthermore, one of the main biddings for mankind in the Quran is to internalize the implicit meanings behind the holy verses. This is clearly stated in the Quran through surah al-Sad verse 29, surah al-Nisa' verse 82, surah al-Mukminun verse 68 and various other verses on the call of Allah SWT for people to reflect on the meaning of the verses of the Quran. Through these verses, it can be understood that *tadabbur* is important in providing benefits and guidance for humans regardless of race and religion because the Quran was revealed to all mankind. Without *tadabbur*, human beings will find it difficult to understand and even accept the teachings and wisdom that are to be practiced in daily life (Mohd Salleh, 2011). In fact those who

do not perform *tadabbur* are admonished in the Quran.

"So, are they deliberately not trying to understand and think about the contents of the Quran? Or is there a lock on their hearts?"

(The Qur'an, 47: 24)

This verse is not just a chastisement of thinkers who do not try to spread the message of the Quran but also urges everyone to read the Quran with full appreciation and understanding (Al-Syanqithi, 2010). The Quran is like rain which can revive arid lands and even wear away solid rocks (Al-Khalidi, 1994). This parable is a symbol that a heart as hard as a rock can be softened by the Quran which acts like water. Likewise, troubled minds and emotions can be calmed by this miraculous holy book.

Research Problem

The Movement Control Order (MCO) aimed at curbing the spread of the COVID-19 virus is still in force. There is no doubt that the MCO which began on 18 March 2020 is a positive step towards preventing the spread of this epidemic. However, according to Dr. Firdaus Abdul Ghani, secretary of the Malaysian Psychiatric Association (MPA), impacts arising from the MCO can also adversely affect mental and emotional well-being if not handled properly (Astro Awani, 28 March 2020). Apart from that, uncertainty over current issues related to the epidemic as well as the economy also raises concerns on societal and individual psychology. According to Sarada Devi a Psychological Officer at the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) and Azlan Shah Nazrudin, Acting Director of the Family Welfare Division, recent psychological studies on previous pandemics such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)) found that MCOs or quarantine periods has a significant impact on mental issues such as anxiety, fear, frustration, boredom and depression (Harian Metro, 8 April 2020).

According to Dr Firdaus Abdul Ghani, the widespread use of virtual communication also affects the well-being of individuals (Astro Awani, 28 March 2020). The tendency to be exposed to various types of issues and false

information, in addition to spending much time on virtual communication can lead to mental confusion and emotional instability. Senior Lecturer of the Clinical Psychology and Behavioral Health Programme, Center for Healthy Aging and Wellness (H-CARE), Faculty of Health Sciences, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Dr Norhayati Ibrahim noted that it is extremely important for parents and families to always remain vigilant and positive to avoid the negative psychological impacts during the MCO (Berita Harian Online, 26 March 2020). Numerous guidelines and suggestions have been made by various agencies to safeguard the mental and emotional well-being of individuals during the MCO period. Dr Norhayati Ibrahim suggested that religious and spiritual activities should be regularly conducted at home (Berita Harian Online, March 26, 2020). They can be done individually, such as reciting prayers alone, or together, in congregational prayers. The spiritual aspect or spiritual reinforcement have been identified as one of the effective ways in reducing stress.

The aspect of spiritual strengthening as a means for reducing stress is clearly mentioned in the Quran where Allah SWT says: “Is not by remembering Allah SWT, the soul becomes calm” (Surah al-Ra’d: 28) and should be taken into account. In the context of this study, the chosen approach for remembering Allah SWT is through the *tadabbur* Quran. The majority of studies related to *tadabbur* Quran focus more on the concepts, principles and methods (Abdul Muhsin, 2017; Fathor Rosly, 2017; Nurul Husna & Sahlawati, 2018; Nurul Zakirah, 2018). There are also studies on the topic that explore specific contexts such as that of patients (Dini Prapto et al., 2015), the elderly (Daris Tamin, 2016), adolescents (Daris Tamin, 2017, tahfiz students (Maisarah Thuhuda et al., 2018) and learning technology (Ina Lestari, 2019).

There are two studies that specifically examine the internal aspects of *tadabbur* such as stress levels (Ansyah, 2019) and spiritual intelligence (Yuliani et al., 2019); however, they are different from the one conducted in this research. As such, the aim of this research is to: a) elaborate on the concept of *tadabbur* Quran and its importance; b) explore some of the steps and principles of *tadabbur*

Quran as explained by Quranic scholars; and c) discuss the reflections of a group of individuals who consistently participated in *tadabbur* Quran activities together during the MCO period through an interactive online programme i.e., the Usrah QMAP3T Online Program organized by the Beautiful Life Centre Academy of Ummah. The analysis focuses on the implications of the *tadabbur* Quran on the mental and emotional well-being of the participants.

Literature Review

Challenges Faced During the Movement Control Order

During the Movement Control Order (MCO) the norms of family life changed especially for working parents. According to Wan Ya Shin, Research Manager, Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) the demands for work as well as the needs of children attending online classes require much understanding and emotional consideration by parents (<https://www.ideas.org.my/>, 8 April 2020). This will facilitate better coordination in their duties and responsibilities as employees and in assisting teachers. This situation can only come about if parents have positive thoughts and approaches and balanced emotions. According to the secretary of the Malaysian Psychiatric Association (MPA) Dr. Firdaus Abdul Ghani, the MCO meant that many were instructed to work from home (Astro Awani, 28 March 2020). However, balancing work and life at home has been a major challenge due to factors such as:

1. Changes in daily routines or habits; many activities or tasks could not be conducted as before.
2. Adapting to working from home requires a high degree of discipline.
3. Lack of interaction with the outside world.
4. Limited resources to carry out tasks.

Psychologically, individuals are likely to experience negative thought patterns which may affect their emotion states during the MCO period. Negative emotions here refer to adverse thoughts about oneself, dissatisfaction with the future, difficulties in domestic relationships, inability to convey positive thoughts, and feelings of isolation from family members and friends.

Among the feelings experienced during the MCO include:

1. Anxiety and fear of being infected by the virus
2. Frustration and boredom at being confined to the home, changes in daily routines, and the lack of social or physical relationships.

Changes in lifestyles due to the societal limitations caused by the MCO will certainly affect the ability to fully focus (mindfulness) on the job for those working from home. The ability to focus more on positive aspects as a means to achieve greater tranquility is also an effective mind-diverting technique. Various guidelines and suggestions have been made by the authorities to ensure the mental and emotional well-being of individuals during the MCO period. Among the guidelines recommended by Dr Firdaus Abdul Ghani are the following:

1. Allocate a special space at home for work that is comfortable and has no ambient distractions.
2. Ensure a regular daily schedule. Get up early as in normal working days and carry out tasks according to normal working hours.
3. Good self-care. Ensure a healthy and balanced diet, adequate exercise and sleep, and reduce the intake of caffeinated beverages.
4. Get adequate rest. Find time to do fun activities to relax the mind from stress. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, listening to music, and massage and muscle relaxation can help reduce stress and irritability.
5. Limit exposure to gadgets and media including social media. Allocate a specific amount of time each day for the internet or social media.
6. Continue to connect with friends and family through online or social media.
7. Use the available free time to do things that you always wanted to do but could not due to time constraints, such as cooking, baking cakes, gardening, or reading.
8. Use the free time available for career advancement activities such as taking courses/studying online.
9. Ensure that children are also given a regular schedule to make it easier for them to carry out daily activities that include study sessions, playtimes, and relaxation.
10. Provide support and assistance to others in need based on one's ability to do so.

11. Conduct religious and spiritual activities at home either individually, such as reading religious literature, or together such as the congregational prayers.

Tadabbur Quran has been proven to affect the mind and emotions. The process can purify the heart and strengthen obedience to Allah SWT. Such purification can be achieved by constantly understanding, thinking about, and meditating on the verses of Allah SWT in order to have good thoughts and to cleanse the heart. This shows that mental and emotional well-being can be realized through a pure heart and abiding obedience to Allah SWT (Umar Salim, 2008). In fact, as clearly stated in the Quran a tranquil heart can be achieved by remembrance of Allah SWT:

"People who believe, their hearts become peaceful by remembering Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah, the heart becomes peaceful"

(The Qur'an, 14:28).

Research Methodology

This case study uses a qualitative approach while the research methodology employed is text analysis and in-depth online interviews. Publications related to *tadabbur Quran* were analyzed to explain the first research question i.e., the concept of *tadabbur Quran* and its importance and the second research question i.e., to identify the steps and principles of *tadabbur Quran* as explained by Quranic scholars. To answer the third research question, in-depth online interviews were conducted to obtain the self-reflection of participants on the aspect studied. In the context of this study, that aspect is the implications of the *tadabbur Quran* on their mental and emotional well-being. Participation in this programme was voluntary. The selection and number of the study samples were based on the readiness of participants of the Usrah QMAP3T Online Programme. Although the programme usually comprises 20 participants, only five were willing to be involved in this study. The Usrah QMAP3T Online Programme is conducted daily during the MCO period. The data obtained was analyzed descriptively.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

a) Tadabbur Quran and its Importance

The Quran provides understanding to its readers in two stages. The first is *tazakkur* i.e., where the Quran warns, admonishes, and advises (Israr Ahmed, 1992). According to the Qur'an:

"And indeed! We have made the Quran easy as a reminder and a lesson; so, is there anyone who wants to take a reminder and a lesson (from it)?"

(The Qur'an, 54:17)

The second stage involves the *tadabbur* which is to think more deeply about each verse of the Quran, reflect on the lessons learned, and explore the treasures in the ocean of knowledge found in it.

"The Qur'an is a book that We have sent down to you (and your people, O Muhammad SAW), a Book that has many benefits and blessings for them to understand carefully the content of its verses, and that men of understanding may reflect and take heed."

(The Qur'an, 38:29)

The continuous practice of *tazakkur* and *tadabbur* of the Quran has a positive effect on the minds and emotions of its readers. Apart from the virtue of reciting the verses of the Quran, which is 10 rewards for each letter, getting close to the Quran through *tadabbur* is extremely suitable for regular practice, especially during the MCO. The word *tadabbur* is derived from *tadabbara* which means reflecting on the verses of the Quran in order to understand them as well as to grasp their meanings, principles, and intentions (al-Suyuti, 1996). The Quran is a simplified book (*muyassar*) for recitation, memorization, understanding and to *tadabbur* as noted in the surah al-Qamar verse 17 mentioned above.

As such, it is obligatory for each Muslim to practice *tadabbur* of the Quran and try to understand it by reading it slowly and to understand its verses. Indeed, the Quran is a book of guidance for the righteous (Surah al-Baqarah verse 2). As such, how can a person who does not understand it receive guidance from it? If he has difficulties or does not understand the meaning of a verse, he should refer to its interpretation. He

should focus all his attention while reading and open his heart to what is stated in the verses being read, such as the warnings, intimidation, hope, mercy, the conditions undergone by the earlier ummah, and others. Allah SWT says in surah Muhammad verse 24:

"So, are they deliberately not trying to understand and think about the contents of the Quran? Or is there a lock on their hearts (which prevents them from receiving the teachings of the Quran)?"

b) Principles and Steps in Tadabbur Quran

Various principles and measures in the *tadabbur* Quran have been outlined by scholars to facilitate its practice by Muslims in their daily life. Among the main steps or basic concepts involved as mentioned by Abas Asyafah (2014) in his book "The Concept of Tadabbur Al-Quran" are:

- i. Recitation (reading or following) that serves as information that should be known; *tazkiyah* (purification) serves to purify the heart and motivate the desire to want;
- ii. *Ta'lim* (teaching, in-depth study) serves to enhance the capacity to practice knowledge.

In fact, he also added his views on other *tadabbur* measures or methodologies, such as:

- i. Integrative Approach: relating the verses of the Quran to real life to be better guided;
- ii. Thematic Approach: summarizing the main topics and themes such as faith, morality and others to facilitate finding solutions to the problems faced;
- iii. Comparative Approach: comparatively analyzing verses, chapters, time and others to find the differences and similarities to be associated with life;
- iv. Paradigmatic Approach: formulating paradigms or points of view of each theme to create a clearer theory or understanding;
- v. Empirical Approach: practicing theory and understanding in real life.

In his book "Tadabbur Al-Quran" Al-Sunaidi (2002) provides nine items for explaining the principle of *tadabbur*, namely (a) *al-fahm*, (b) *al-fiqh*, (c) *al-bashîrah*, (d) *al-fikr*, (e) *al-tafakkur*, (f) *al-tadzakkur*, (g) *al-ta'ammul*, (h) *al-i'tibar* and (i) *al-istibshar*. Each of these items is closely linked

to the method of *tadabbur* which holds the mind and heart as the primary key. These nine items mean the following:

- a. *Al-Fahm* (الفهم): understanding knowledge;
- b. *Al-Fiqh* (الفقه): deepening knowledge;
- c. *Al-Bashîrah* (البصيرة): wisdom or perfection of knowledge;
- d. *Al-Fikr* (الفكر): the presence of understanding in the heart to generate knowledge;
- e. *Al-Tafakkur* (التفكير): using the mind to create understanding;
- f. *Al-Tadzakkur* (التذكر): a reminder or image of knowledge that is remembered in the heart will bear fruit in practice or be of practical use;
- g. *Al-Ta`ammul* (التأمل): to research or review repeatedly so that it becomes clear and reveals the meaning behind the verse till the heart is reassured;
- h. *Al-I'tibar* (الاعتبار): learn from or take heed of a verse;
- i. *Al-Istibshar* (الاستبصار): the act or subject of research in explaining something or revelation and to clarify it as an argument or proposition.

He also outlined some steps of *tadabbur*, such as:

- i. Bringing to life the meaning of a sentence by relating it to reality;
- ii. Reading the Quran clearly, in harmony, using measured tones, and according to the set rules;
- iii. Reading the Quran in prayer;
- iv. Responding to the verses read as in describing the story related in the Quran;
- v. Being confident and putting life into the verses read as well as their meanings;
- vi. Striving to complete recitation of the Quran within a set period of time;
- vii. Constantly reading the Quran;
- viii. Knowing the style of the Quran such as prohibitions, commands, and so on;
- ix. Studying the Quran.

Furthermore, al-Lahim (2007) in his book “*Mafatih Tadabbur al-Qur’an wa al-Najah fi al-Hayah*” also lists some steps to internalize the meaning of the Quran, such as:

- i. Loving the Quran;
- ii. Remembering the verses of the Quran;
- iii. Listening to Quranic recitations;
- iv. Continuously repeating recitations of the Quran;

v. Intending to recite the Quran within a certain period by making divisions based on its groupings (*hizb*) or parts (*juzu* ');

vi. Developing a connection between Quranic verses and real life through understanding and memorization.

In addition, there are several ethics involved in a *tadabbur* process including internal and external ethics. External ethics relate to selecting a time and place, being in a state of readiness, reciting certain prayers, asking for guidance from Allah SWT, reciting the Quran in harmony (*tartil*) with appropriate rhythm, focusing on the verses being recited, striving to enliven the verses read and maintaining proper conduct in regard to the Quran. On the other hand, internal ethics include feeling the greatness of Allah SWT, purifying the soul, focusing fully on the process of *tadabbur*, avoiding acts that hinder understanding, becoming the object of focus during the *tadabbur* process, focusing on and making the Quran the medium of communication with Allah SWT (Al-Qaradhwai, 1999).

In essence, the religious scholars have outlined various steps and principles to facilitate the proper performance of *tadabbur*.

c) Self-Reflection on the Implications of Tadabbur Quran on Mental and Emotional Well-being

The author discusses an experience of being in a *tadabbur* group. Begun during the month of Ramadhan in 2020, the daily *tadabbur* sessions lasting one-and-a-half-hours from 5 to 6.30 pm are still ongoing. In addition to the surah *tadabbur* sessions, thematic *tadabburs*, *mufradat*, Qmap3T counseling clinics (*Thibbul Qulub*) are also conducted. Participation was voluntary and the sessions were attended by around 20 persons per group.

For the surah *tadabbur* session, five members of each group took turns to discuss particular verses in a selected surah. The other activities in each *tadabbur* session involve presenting the “big picture” of the entire surah, “connecting the dots” related to its themes as well as *tazakkur*, and self-programming with the Quran map.

Next, participants were required to answer five *tazakur* questions. Finally, the author took an example of a *tadabbur* session that had been conducted. The surah selected was *al-Qasas* (the Stories).

i - Who is Allah to me and who am I in the surah?

Participant A explained that Allah SWT is the one who created all mankind. "I, on the other hand," according to participant A, "am a servant who is obliged to worship Allah SWT." Participant A expressed feelings and emotions of tranquility in fulfilling responsibilities required as a servant of the Creator. Clearly, by answering the question of who Allah SWT is to him, participant A psychologically experienced inner peace and tranquility.

ii - What does the Quran mean to me?

Emotionally, participant B felt happy because he believed the Quran was the greatest miracle of Prophet Muhammad SAW who was his guide. Participant A explained that he would be motivated to increase his faith and confidence as long as he adhered to the guidance provided by the Quran. The Quran commands to do good deeds. The Quran was also very meaningful to participant B because it narrates many stories of the Prophet and Messenger that are full of lessons regarding faith.

iii - What is the significance to me of the Prophet and Rasulullah SAW and the believers who were with them?

Participant C answered the next question on the significance of the Prophets and Rasulullah SAW as well as the believers who were with them. Like participants A and B, participant C was in a state of emotional calm. Participant C was grateful for the significance of the Prophets and Rasulullah SAW as well as the believers who were with them, as messengers like Prophet Muhammad SAW would intercede on behalf of mankind on the day of resurrection. In view of the significant impact of the Prophets and Rasulullah on the life of participant C, he was determined to offer all respect and salutations to Prophet Muhammad SAW, as enjoined in surah *al-Ahzab*, verse 56:

Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation.

Feeling emotionally at peace, participant C explained being fortunate and grateful because Rasulullah SAW was sent to provide all forms of good and glad tidings for the believers as well as a warning to the infidels.

Next, according to participant C, the significance of the Prophets and Rasulullah SAW and the believers who were with them is that the latter sincerely sought guidance for his people as mentioned in verse 128 of surah *At-Taubah*. This made participant C have peace of mind both emotionally and psychologically.

iv - Based on this surah, what does the worldly life and the hereafter mean to me?

On the question of what is the meaning of life in this world and the hereafter, participant D took verse 4 of the surah *al-Qasas*, which says:

"Verily, Pharaoh was unjust in the land (Egypt) by transgression, and he made its people into factions. He oppressed a party of them by killing their sons and sparing their daughters. Verily, it is from those who do damage."

The meaning of life in this world and the hereafter based on surah *al-Qasas* according to participant D is that he wants to live life with simplicity. According to participant D, the meaning of life and the hereafter is living in moderation because it creates peace and harmony. All extreme acts such as creating disturbances, oppression, killing, and so on are strongly opposed by Islam because they breed suffering, misery and destruction. Such acts, according to participant D, are an extension of the tyrannical nature of Pharaoh who was intent on doing damage on this earth.

Participant D sought a balanced life because according to him, calm emotions can be achieved when one is able to properly live the life of this world and that of the hereafter. Participant D believed that Islam disapproves of those who only prioritize worldly affairs and forget the hereafter. On the other hand, Islam also does not require mankind to focus only on the affairs of the hereafter so as to forget the life of the world.

v - What is one mission statement that I want to hold fast to from the understanding I gained from answering the above question?

The mission statement held firmly by the next member, participant E, was to always strive for steadfastness in seeking happiness in this world and the hereafter. Participant D believed in holding fast so as not to be a burden to others. That means don't burden and make it difficult for others. In this connection, participant E did not want to be idle, especially in working for a living, to the extent of expecting the kindness of others to meet his daily necessities. From an emotional point of view, participant E wished to always do good as it leads to a feeling of calm, as mentioned in verse 77 of surah *al-Qashash*:

“And seek what God has bestowed on you, the happiness of the Hereafter, and do not forget your share of worldly pleasures, and do good to others, as God has done good to you, and do not do mischief on (earth). Indeed, Allah does not like those who do mischief.”

In general, the *tadabbur* sessions successfully led to the mental and emotional well-being of its group members. Under the MCO, such sessions not only mitigated feelings of stress and isolation they also managed to enhance feelings of calm and serenity both emotionally and psychologically.

Tadabbur Quran and Its Implications for Mental and Emotional Well-Being

The practice of *tadabbur* Quran has been proven to affect the mind and emotions. It helps to purify the heart and even strengthen submission to the will of Allah SWT. Purification of the heart can only be achieved by constantly understanding, thinking and meditating on the verses of Allah in order to have good thoughts and to cleanse the heart. This undoubtedly shows that mental and emotional well-being can be realized through a pure heart and abiding obedience to Allah SWT (Umar Salim, 2008). In fact, the Quran clearly states that a calm heart can be achieved by remembering Allah SWT through surah *al-Ra'd* verse 28, that:

“People who believe their hearts become peaceful by remembering God. Remember only by remembering God, the heart becomes peaceful.”

The preoccupation with work and other daily activities may sometimes make people forget themselves and their obligations to their Creator, Allah SWT, leading to unsettled and confused lifestyles. As such, Allah SWT has taught how to save themselves from such a situation by constant remembrance of Him. *Tadabbur* Quran, which is one of the means of remembering Allah SWT, will definitely give a sense of peace and tranquility to its practitioners (Asmuni, 2018).

Several empirical studies have shown the positive impact that *tadabbur* Quran has on mental and emotional well-being. Among them is a study entitled “Tadabbur Surat Al-Insyirah to Reduce Student Academic Stress” (Ansyah, 2019). The findings of the study reveal that reading surah Al-Insyirah can reduce academic stress and this has become a sort of advice for students as a means to face obstacles and difficulties on campus with a positive attitude and mindset. Another study by Yuliani et al. (2019) entitled “The Influence of Tadabbur al-Quran Habits on the Spiritual Intelligence of Tadabbur Quran Community Members” shows that such practices have a positive influence on the spiritual intelligence of 49% of the study participants.

In fact, a study by Dini A.P. Prapto et al. (2015) titled “Al-Quran Tadabbur Therapy to Reduce Anxiety on the First Delivery” also showed positive results in that the level of anxiety among expectant mothers who received *tadabbur* Quran therapy was lower compared to those who did not. These findings directly support the theory that the Quran can overcome various physical and spiritual afflictions such as anxiety, stress and other psychiatric issues (Hawari, 1997; Najati, 2004; Mulyadi et al., 2012). In addition, they also bear out the theory that therapy based on religion especially Islamic psychotherapy can improve one's mental health (Qadri, 2003; Nashori, 2005; Kuchan, 2007; Breslin & Lewis, 2008; Mardiyono & Songwathana, 2009; Trimulyaningsih, 2009; Shaleh, 2010; Purwoko, 2013; Maimunah & Retnowati, 2011; Mulyadi et al., 2012).

In addition, Abas Asyafah (2014) outlines several yardsticks or indicators to achieve the objectives of *tadabbur* in his book “The Concept of Tadabbur Al-Quran.” Among them are:

- i. uniting the mind and heart through recitations of the Quran;
- ii. affecting emotions;
- iii. devotion; and
- iv. strengthening faith.

These indicators do not preclude the belief that genuine *tadabbur* can generate mental and emotional well-being because its practice unites the heart and mind and enables them to be increasingly guided by Allah SWT's words of love. Abas Asyafah (2014) describes the seven characteristics required to recite the Quran correctly, namely:

- i. unification of heart and mind when reading;
- ii. crying out in fear of Allah SWT;
- iii. increased devotion;
- iv. deepening faith;
- v. joyfulness and enthusiasm;
- vi. peace of mind;
- vii. glorifying Allah SWT by prostrating before Him.

These characteristics show that a person reciting the Quran always has his thoughts and emotions under control due to his faith and deep obedience to Allah SWT.

Conclusion

The Quran is the greatest miracle left by the Prophet Muhammad SAW as a guide for his *ummah* for all time. Anyone reading it with full appreciation will be completely moved even if it is read repeatedly. It shows its miracle in that it offers understanding for the sake of understanding, serenity for the sake of serenity, teaching for the sake of teaching, and inspiration for the sake of inspiration. The Quran provides answers to those who have questions about life. It shows the true path to anyone who is in doubt. At the same time, the call that is often repeated by Allah SWT that each of His holy verses be internalized which represents His guidance and a merciful antidote for developing healthy and wholesome minds and emotions. As such, this is the irrefutable and ideal solution for addressing mental and emotional disturbances in general and particularly during stressful situations such as those presented by the MCO.

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