

The Noble Quran As A Coping Mechanism With Stress: A Descriptive Study

Dr. Nazia Zaman¹, Dr. Naila Maqsood², Dr. Fakhara Aziz³

¹Lecturer, Department of Islamic studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi

²Assistant Professor, Department of Basic Sciences & Humanities, University of Engineering & Technology Taxila

³Associate Professor, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to provide, based on the verses of the noble Quran, a way of reducing stress and establishing mental tranquility. The paper initially explores Islam's perspective on stress and then discusses the ways that Islam addresses stress management. Tafsir is used to discuss Quranic strategies in detail because it is the primary source of knowledge in Islam. The study is analytical and descriptive in character and uses a qualitative approach for data collection. The use of content analysis has been made. The historical methodology has also been employed. The study concludes that the noble Quran being a stress deterrent is the best refuge for the pious and one of the best methods for coping with stress after tragedies and disasters. A person's spiritual growth is somewhat guaranteed if he has faith in religion and spirituality, which might bring him peace of mind. To better understand how religion serves as a natural resource during difficult times, more research is required.

Key words: Stress, Quran, Management, Strategies.

Introduction

Since the 1960s, using religious convictions to treat mental problems in the field of psychology has grown in popularity. According to studies, religion plays a significant role in understanding human nature and is closely related to both physical and mental health. Good physical health is a direct result of mental tranquility, and Islam's central theme and core message is peace. Muslims have a system of deeds, moral principles, and social ethics that they can use to create adaptable and flexible stress management techniques to deal with difficult life events because Islam serves as their ultimate source of guidance in all spheres of life. According to Islam, good health is a God's blessing and a natural gift that should be protected.

The Prophet (PBUH) said, "There are two blessings that many people are deceived into losing: health and free time."¹

It is understood and believed that Allah puts people to the test, especially steadfast believers, by inflicting hardships such as physical or mental illnesses or other tragedies on them. This is done to ascertain whether the person will remain steadfast, rely on Allah in these circumstances, and whether they will see this depressed situation as an opportunity to turn back to the straight path and make amends. the Qur'an,

"Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil) but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. Who say when afflicted with calamity: To Allah we belong and to Him is

our return. They are those on whom (descend) blessings from their Lord and Mercy and they are the ones that receive guidance.”²

If Allah created all diseases, He must have also created remedies for them in nature, according to the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad. (PBUH), The Prophet (PBUH) said, “There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment.”³

In the context of Islamic teachings, stress is a pressure exerted on a human psyche because of restlessness, disappointment, and sadness due to the violation of the commandments of Allah or following the self-lust. Islamic scholars like Imām Ghazzālī, Al-Rāzī, Muḥammad ‘Uthmān Najāti, Muḥammad ‘Izudin Taufik, Samit Atif al-zin and Ḥasan Langgulong “linked stress to anxiety, disappointment, envy, arrogance, self-admiration, insincerity and fear.

Quranic Teachings/Strategies to Cope with Stress

The Qur'an established and defended that a person can preserve excellent psychological and mental health and feel joyful and at peace by exercising in certain virtues and activities.

I. Faith in Allah

Allah is the only one who possesses the power to both help and harm us, as well as to monitor and regulate every circumstance, provide for our needs, determine life and death, and maintain all of our personal affairs. Therefore, putting their faith and confidence in Allah might help believers feel less stressed and anxious about life's circumstances. Humans are commanded to rely upon Allah in the Qur'an.

“And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine. And if anyone puts his trust

in Allah, sufficient is (Allah) For him. For Allah will surely accomplish His purpose: Verily for all things Allah has appointed a due proportion.”⁴

Al Nisa verse no. 19 and Taha verse no. 15 states that man should have faith in Allah's justice. Similarly Yusuf verse no 64 explains the faith in Allah's mercy.

Knowing that no one else except Allah is in charge of everything is a blessing for Muslims! Only our own responses are under our control.

“And if Allah should touch you with adversity, there is no remover of it except Him; and if He intends for you good, then there is no repeller of His bounty. He causes it to reach whom He wills of His servants. And He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”⁵ [[Qur'an – 10:107](#)]

Prayer/supplication for the time of distress

Another effective method for overcoming distress and anxiety is prayer. It resembles a spiritual connection to Allah. In humble prayer, Allah hears the supplications and bestows His blessings on His followers. Prayer always makes room for mercy and forgiveness. Allah's mercy encompasses everything. Muslims should supplicate to Allah frequently in order to obtain His mercy and pardon.⁶

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“Or, Who listens to the distressed when it calls On Him, and Who relieves Its suffering, and makes you (Mankind) inheritors of the earth ? (Can there be another) god besides Allah? Little it is That ye heed.”⁷

According to certain mufasssirs, being disturbed refers to someone who prays to Allah with their hands up in supplication and has their requests graciously responded by Allah.

“And ye have no good thing but is from Allah: and moreover, when ye are touched by distress, Unto Him ye cry with groans.”⁸

remembering Allah and a vocation of piety

Zikr has been shown to influence the improvement of personality and increase motivation, focus, and positive thoughts. Zikr is also able to increase cortisol⁹ levels and improve the personality by producing good behavior.¹⁰

But whoever turns away attention from Allah and keeps this world in mind then for them Allah says

“But whosoever turns away from My remembrance verily for him is a life narrowed down , and We shall raise him up blind on the Day Of Judgment.”¹¹

Tadabbur i Qurān stated in explanation of this verse that anyone who do not remember Allah then his life will become rigid which means that life will become empty of pleasure and contentment. Happiness and satisfaction of heart and mind is only gain through remembering Allah. Absence of calmness from life of person is because of hollowness in person and is only filled by developing firm faith in Allah through His remembrance and keeping Him in the mind. That’s why nothing cannot make believer satisfied except belief in Allah .If he is lacking remembrance of Allah then he will be constantly in a situation of uncertainty, agitation, mental distress, irritation, and internal anxiety.¹²

“Who say when afflicted with calamity :‘To Allah we belong and to Him is our return’.”¹³

Similarly Quran states the subject in Rad, 28, 29; Al-Baqarah, 152, 156, 112, 28, 38; Al-Imaran, 139, 173, 174 Qaf, 33; Talaq, 3; Tubah, 52, 26, 40; Taqabon, 11; Ahqaf, 13; Haj, 31,78; Hadid, 22; Mojadeleh, 10; Ahzab, 37.

Grab onto Hope

“Be aware that Allah desires to strengthen you or to pardon your faults and advance your rank, depending on the difficulties that come your way and cause you worry. Allah does not charge a soul except its capacity...”¹⁴

Remember the hope of khair is what keeps us all moving forward when everything starts to fall apart within and without. Whatever we imagine Allah to be, He is! So, set your hopes high knowing that He will make them all come true! A strong willpower weapon is the conviction of one's beliefs.

The Holy Quran Say, “O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”¹⁵

Seeking help through patience and prayer

A persistent person sees challenges as a transitory phase since they are aware of the constant change in the world. Since of this, believers exercise patience and offer prayers when things are difficult. They are also quite conscious that Allah will bring about ease after difficulties because they know that victory always follows tolerating difficult circumstances.¹⁶As Allah mentions in the Qurān ,

“O ye who believe! seek help with patience and prayer: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere.”¹⁷

In essence, person should in whatever stressful situation he faces take help from patience and performing prayers.¹⁸

Recitation of Holy Qurān

Body, intellect, and the inner self are all calmed after reading the Qur'an. Reducing tension,

worry, and anxiety is the result of this calming impact.¹⁹ As in Qurān,

“We send down (stage by stage) in the Qurān that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe, to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss.”²⁰

“Had We sent this Qurān (in a language) other than Arabic, they would have said: “Why are not its verses explained in detail? What (a Book) not in Arabic and (a Messenger (PBUH)) an Arab?” Say: “It is a guide and a healing to those who believe.”²¹

Reading the Qur'an and the Qur'an itself are both described as treatments in the Holy book. For Muslims, the Qur'an serves as mercy, blessing, and medicine. It has been discovered that listening to Qur'anic recitation produces more alpha brain waves than listening to music. A relaxed state is linked to alpha waves.²²

The righteous deeds

Behaving with human beings through kindness and giving and sharing resources with needy people, all this is done only to please Allah and is very much demanded in Islām.²³ As in Qurān , “Those who believe and those who follow the Jewish (Scriptures) and the Christians and the Sabians and who believe in Allah and the last day and work righteousness shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.”²⁴

When believers do good deeds , belief on Allah and last day then they are protected from any grief and non-satisfaction. Mind and heart of believer remain free from fear and anxiety because believer knew that these hardships and anxieties are test from Allah for him and so they endure them with patience and gratitude²⁵

Doing good deeds will encourage people who are suffering from stress to feed themselves with good involvements through the words and actions that would help others, and can in turn lead to healthy feelings, which can develop a serene state of mind and positive thoughts. Therefore, people could use this principle to help themselves and each other to overcome stressful events in their lives.²⁶

Charity is the way of happiness

The volunteer charity and due zakāt cleanse a Muslim from miserliness and produce a feeling of love, care for others and a source of giving thanks and gratitude to Allah for His blessings. By giving charity, Muslims cultivate within them the pleasure of giving only for gaining the pleasure of Allah which in turns get Muslims nearer to Allah . This brings happiness into life. ²⁷

“Those who spend their substance in the cause of Allah and follow not up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury for them their reward is with their Lord; on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.”²⁸

In another verse Allah says

“Those who believe and do deeds of righteousness and establish regular prayers and regular charity will have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.”²⁹

In Meaning of Qurān, it is stated that people who spend their wealth in way of Allah either in the form of charity or zakāt then they will attain true success. They will also get peace of mind in this life and will be blessed with all types of joys in the next life.³⁰

Express Gratitude

Islām advises Muslims to show gratitude for what they had in their life. Being thankful to what you have is a method for managing stress. Showing gratitude to Allah for what He has given to us makes the individual feel happy and it makes the individual free from the stress.³¹

“And remember! your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): “If ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you ; But if ye show ingratitude, Truly My punishment is terrible indeed.”³²

In Tafsīr Mazhari, it is stated that Allah will increase the reward of people if they thank Allah in the form of obeying Him. It is evident from the warning in the verse that it is compulsory to thank Allah when blessing from Him are increased, going against it is impossible and not thanking Allah symbolizes a catastrophe from Allah. It is upon Him that either He wishes to give punishment, or He wishes to forgive.³³

In times of distress, if one sees that the distress is small in comparison to blessings then this will lead one to be thankful, even in a state of poverty, sickness, or other kinds of despair and this may help relieve the worries and distress that he or she is experiencing.³⁴

To avoid extremism maintains the balance

By adopting an extreme act in interpersonal behavior, in lifestyle, in other habits will make individuals feel overburden and this is when stress come which deteriorate the stability and disturb the state of mind of a person. In this relation, stress is considered as extreme behavior whereby individuals will either act aggressively or cut themselves from any communication.³⁵ So Islām emphasize practice of balance as illustrated in Qurān,

“Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not Niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes).”³⁶

In Meaning of Qurān, it is stated in explanation of this verse that the way taught by Islām is golden mean between the two extremes.³⁷

Secret of success lies in the ability to keep a just balance between the extremes. This means that the conduct in all aspects of life whether in the family, in the society or in a workplace, one should always bear in mind the objective is only to achieve a just balance.³⁸

To control the actions by themselves

Allah provided choices for a person to improve the condition and circumstances. Allah put responsibility on human being to control their actions. If a person is in anxiety or stress, then one should try to come out and control the situation.

³⁹As Allah says in Qurān,

“...Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls) ...”⁴⁰

In Study Qurān, it is stated that Allah will not change positive or negative circumstances of people until they themselves bring about changes in their actions and lives.⁴¹

So, if anyone is in stressful situation, make a strategy, think about its solution, Allah will absolutely show the path to come out from this situation.⁴²

Fasting purifies mind and body

Fasting creates a feeling of inner peace and tranquility of mind. This is due to the practice of good deeds and abstinence from bad deeds and thoughts and preparing oneself to be a good person. It provides as a means to improve our awareness of Allah and gives strength and

patience. Besides abstaining from food and drinks, fasting involves the development of positive feelings.⁴³ As in Qurān Allah says,

“...and it is better for you that ye fast if ye only knew.”⁴⁴

In Tafsīr Ibn i Kathīr, it is stated in the explanation of this verse that fasting purifies the mind and cleanse from the evil.⁴⁵ In Qurān Ḥakeem Ki Sciency Tafsir, it is stated that now a days from the new scientific discoveries, fasting is proved to be useful for cure of cancer, mental diseases and heart diseases.⁴⁶

Further many studies were conducted to check the effects of fasting on mental disorders like anxiety, stress and depression. In a study, it was observed that fasting provides both physiological and psychological benefits. The person who does fasting will be peaceful, his blood glucose, blood pressure decreases, and memory improves. It was reported that depression and stress levels were significantly decreased followed by fasting in month of Ramaḍān.⁴⁷

Cleanliness releases stress

Psychological research suggested that the state of bodily purity is associated with a relief from mental burdens.⁴⁸ Also in Islām it is commanded to practice cleanliness,

“.. For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.”⁴⁹

In Qurān Ḥakeem Ki Sciency Tafsir, it is stated that cleaning oneself and surrounding environment have many health benefits, and this leads to nearness to Allah and helps in gaining love of Allah.⁵⁰

Meditation

The word meditation stems from meditatum, a Latin term that means ‘to ponder.’⁵¹ In meditation, person watches over one’s soul and acquires knowledge about it and its relationship with the creator by being thoughtful of his or her inner feelings and outer surroundings and relation between them. During meditation, person observe inner self, outer self and hidden states of being.⁵² In the perspective of Islām meditation is reflected in the process of tafakkur that incorporates faculties of tadabbur. Tafakkur literally means to think on a subject deeply, systematically, and in great detail. Tadabbur implies deep pondering, remembrance of Allah and thoughts of Allah.⁵³ In meditation, patient suffering from stress or anxiety is advised to imagine in depth the Oneness of Allah who create and sustain all the creations.⁵⁴ In Islām actions through which meditation is performed involves performing prayers, remembrance of Allah, supplication to Allah, observing delicate sounds of the universe, manifestations of the attributes of Allah, reflection on life after death, purpose of life, nothingness, and non-material universe.⁵⁵

In many Qurānic verses practice of meditation is encouraged that is illustrated as follows,

“Men who celebrate the praises of Allah standing sitting and lying down on their sides and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth (with the thought): “Our Lord! not for naught hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the fire.”⁵⁶

In another verse Allah says

“And it is He Who spread out The earth, and set thereon Mountains standing firm, And (flowing) rivers : and fruit Of every kind He made In pairs,

two and two : He draweth the Night as a veil over the Day. Behold, verily In these things there are Signs For those who consider !.”⁵⁷

Another verse shows the importance of meditation:

“Do they not reflect In their own minds ? Not but for just ends And for a term appointed, Did Allah create the heavens And the earth and all Between them yet are there Truly many among men Who deny the meeting With their Lord (At the Resurrection) !.”⁵⁸

In Tafsīr Mazhari, it is stated that if people meditated and deeply concentrated in their self, in their minds then they would know and uttered that Allah has created earths and skies and things between them in truth, means that they are created with some purpose and with their specified lifetimes.⁵⁹

“It is Allah that takes The souls (of men) at death ; And those that die not (He takes) during their sleep : Those on whom He Has passed the decree Of death, He keeps back (from returning to life), But the rest He sends (To their bodies) For a term appointed. Verily in this are Signs for those who reflect.”⁶⁰

In Tadabbur i Qurān, it is stated that people who deeply meditate and think that how souls are connected to bodies and how is their relation, then how on death souls are cutoff from bodies and how they are stopped, or they are put back and how souls survive after bodies eliminate. People who meditate on these processes, they knew that the one Who is working or controlling these processes then He has also the power of bringing them back to life on the day of judgement and that is Allah only.⁶¹

In all of these verses, practice of meditation is encouraged by Allah for believers in the form of deep indulgence in nature made by Allah around human being, self-analysis, in the provisions

made in nature by Allah for the benefit of human being and life and death.

Meditation is widely practiced as an Islāmic contemplative exercise like the practice of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). In his youth he kept himself away from drinking wine, eating meat slaughtered on stone altars, attending idolatrous festivals and such evil practices. He remained in silence for long time which helped in his habit of practicing meditation and deep investigation into the truth. When Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was nearly forty, he frequently went to a cave named Ḥirā’, in the Mount Nūr to pass long time for meditating and thinking over all aspects of creation around him. He used to devote most of his time and Ramaḍān in particular, in worship and meditating in the universe around him.⁶²

Another example of practice of meditation is by Prophet Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام). When he was young before prophethood he used to contemplate and meditate in the nature finding Allah. As in Qurān it is illustrated as,

“So also, did We show Abraham the power and the laws of the heavens and the earth that he might (with understanding) have belief.”⁶³

In Tafsīr Ibn i Kathīr, it is stated that, when Prophet Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) contemplated about the creation of the heaven and earth, Allah showed him the proofs of His oneness over His creation.⁶⁴

Another example is of Ḥaḍrat Maryam (عليه السلام) that she practiced meditation in the form of remembering and worshipping Allah whole day in a specific room in mosque. As in Qurān it is illustrated as,

“Right graciously did her Lord accept her: He made her grow in purity and beauty; to the care of Zakariyā’ was she assigned. Every time that he entered (her) chamber to see her he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: “O Mary!

whence (comes) this to you?" She said: "From Allah: for Allah provides sustenance to whom He pleases without measure".⁶⁵

In *Tadabbur i Qurān*, it is stated that Ḥādrat Maryam (عليه السلام) was given by Ḥādrat Zakariyā' (عليه السلام) a special room called Mihrāb in mosque where she spend whole day in meditation by worshipping and remembering Allah.⁶⁶

In medical science specially in the field of psychology meditation has been incorporated into stress reduction therapy.⁶⁷ The results of meditation in stress reduction were proved very positive. Through meditation person can reach deep into the psyche to bring healing to psychological disorders troubling mankind such as stress, anxiety, depression or distress.⁶⁸ When the patient suffered with stress is treated with meditation under medical supervision, he gets peace and calmness. In addition, the negative mentality is also weakened by it and the flow of thoughts becomes uniform. Through meditation, person gets new energy. Observations have shown that following psychological benefits are achieved by practicing meditation including less irritability, end of depression, worries, hypertension, relaxed sleep and reduction in stress. It also helps reduce the flow of negative thoughts, which in turn lower the mental confusion.⁶⁹

Conclusion

Hence this research proved and concluded that Islām gives guidance and provides solutions and strategies for management of stress, anxiety, depression and such mental illnesses from Quran including belief in Allah, remembrance of Allah (zikr) and vocation of piety, developing patience, performing prayers, recitation of Qurān, offering supplications, doing good deeds, giving

charity, thanking Allah, maintaining balance and avoiding extremism, continuously struggle to improve oneself, observing fast, keeping oneself and surroundings clean and practicing meditation that is tafakkur and tadabbur. It is a need of the hour for the world in general and Pakistanis in particular to adopt the stress management strategies given by the Holy Quran.

As a result, the findings of this descriptive study can serve as a paradigm for future studies on stress both internally and externally because they are comprehensive and unique. The practicality of the study can enable health and mental experts to offer coping mechanisms and appropriate care for the reduction and management of stress utilising the religious teachings/strategies of stress management. The unique characteristic of this study in comparison to other comparable initiatives is that it offers a novel paradigm based on Islamic resources with a practical application for stress management.

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