



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

HOW TO HANDLE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN ISLAM

Mental health is an important aspect that governs our daily lives and may even affect our acts of worship. With a poor mental health, for example, even our prayers will be affected because we cannot achieve khushoo' which is the essential part of the prayer. Allah explained that in order to be successful, the first criteria is to have khushoo' in the prayer:

المؤمنون أفلح قد
خاشعون صلاتهم في هم الذين

“Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their *Salat* (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.” 23: 1-2

Sadly, with social media, mental health may be more severely affected because there is a need to be liked by netizens. So people are trying different ways to create content pages in order to get the “likes” from netizens. One recent Muslim couple even posted videos of their “healthy” relationship, with the woman in niqab. The netizens were not aware that the wife was frequently abused physically for not doing things right in front of the camera. This affected her mental health and eventually she exposed the abuse and he is now in prison.

Mental health has affected all of us in one way or another:

1. Being diagnosed with a severe illness such as cancer;
2. Death of a loved one;
3. Failure to achieve one's goal, for example exams;
4. Worry about money and debt;
5. Marital problems - infidelity, abuse;
6. Problems at work - discrimination, overwork, loss of employment, etc.

So these mental health develops through certain events that happened in our lives – feeling depressed, overwhelmed, etc.

Other forms of mental health issues may be itself purely on medical diagnosis of mental health disorders:

1. Alzheimer's
2. Schizophrenia
3. Epilepsy
4. Parkinson's
5. Bipolar disorders

They develop on individuals without being triggered by certain events.

For the first group of mental health issues, dealing with different mental health issues must be in accordance to what Islam has taught us. Even though we know that everyone reacts differently to various incidents, but if we stick to what has been informed through Allah and our beloved Prophet Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, inshaAllah it should be overcome.

For the second group of mental health issues which has medical associations, prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam has informed us in a hadith on how the pens are lifted:

Ali ibn Abi Talib reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "The pen is lifted from three people: a sleeping person until he awakens, a child until he becomes an adult, and an insane person until he regains his sanity."

Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhī 1423

Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Al-Albani

To deal with mental health issues, we must understand several basic principles in Islam.

1. Seek knowledge

This must surely be among the top priority which all of us must do in life. Seek proper knowledge from those who knows the Deen and knows how to explain the Deen. Among the important knowledge that we must have first:

- a. Tawheed – know more about Allah
- b. About the the other issues which we will describe below

Knowledge must be sought in a continuous manner, and not when you need it. It is not about when you have time then you attend classes. It is about making time to attend classes. You prioritise certain part of the week to attend classes which will benefit you mentally.

دَرَجَاتِ الْعِلْمِ أَوْتُوا وَالَّذِينَ مِنْكُمْ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ اللَّهُ يَرْفَعُ
خَيْرٌ تَعْمَلُونَ بِمَا وَاللَّهُ ۖ

“...Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge. And Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do.” 58: 11

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “When Allaah wishes good for a person, He makes him understand the religion.” (Agreed upon. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 69)

2. Understand Allah’s Decree

Qadar means that Allah has decreed everything that happens in the universe according to His prior knowledge and the dictates of His wisdom.

Belief in al-Qadar includes four things:

- i. The belief that Allah knows all things, in general and in detail, from eternity to eternity, whether that has to do with His actions or the actions of His slaves.
- ii. The belief that Allah has written that in al-Lawh al-Mahfuz (the Book of Decrees).

Concerning these two matters Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

قُلْ ۖ وَالْأَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ فِي مَا يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعْلَمَ أَلَمْ
يَسِيرُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ إِنَّ ۖ كِتَابٍ فِي ذَٰلِكَ إِنَّ

“Know you not that Allah knows all that is in the heaven and on the earth? Verily, it is (all) in the Book (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz). Verily, that is easy for Allah.” (22:70)

In Sahih Muslim (2653), it is narrated that ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘As (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: “Allah wrote down the decrees of creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth.”

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The first thing that Allah created was the Pen, and He said to it, ‘Write!’ It said, ‘O Lord, what should I write?’ He said: ‘Write down the decrees of all things until the Hour begins.” Narrated by Abu Dawud, 4700; classed as sahih by al-Albani in Sahih Abi Dawud.

- iii. The belief that whatever happens only happens by the will of Allah – whether that has to do with His actions or the actions of created beings.

Allah says concerning His actions:

لَهُمْ كَانَ مَا ۖ وَيَخْتَارُ يَشَاءُ مَا يَخْلُقُ وَرَبُّكَ
الْخَيْرَةُ

“And your Lord creates whatsoever He wills and chooses. no choice have they (in any matter)” (28:68)

يَشَاءُ مَا اللَّهُ وَيَفْعَلُ

“and Allah does what He wills.” (14:27)

يَشَاءُ كَيْفَ الْأَرْحَامِ فِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ الَّذِي هُوَ

“He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He wills.” (3:6)

All events, actions and happenings occur only by the will of Allah. Whatever Allah wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen.

- iv. The belief that all things that happen are created by Allah in their essence, their attributes and their movements.

Allah says:

وَكَيْلٌ شَيْءٍ كُلِّ عَلَى وَهُوَ ۖ شَيْءٍ كُلِّ خَالِقُ اللَّهُ

“Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Wakil (Trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian) over all things.” (39:62)

تَقْدِيرًا فَقَدَّرَهُ شَيْءٍ كُلِّ وَخَلَقَ

“...He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements” (25:2)

3. Allah will test every believer

Allah will test all of us in different ways, but in accordance to how we can cope.

لَا وَهُمْ أَمَّا يَقُولُوا أَن يُتْرَكُوا أَن النَّاسُ أَحْسِبَ
يُفْتَنُونَ

صَدَقُوا الَّذِينَ اللَّهُ فَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ ۖ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَتَنَّا وَلَقَدْ
الكَاذِبِينَ وَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ

“Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: “We believe,” and will not be tested. And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars, (although Allah knows all that before putting them to test).” 29: 2-3

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

If Allah intends good for someone, then he afflicts him with trials.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 5321, Grade: Sahih

Mahmud ibn Labeed reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

If Allah loves a people, then he afflicts them with trials. Whoever is patient has the reward of patience, and whoever is impatient has the fault of impatience.

Source: Musnad Aḥmad 23122, Grade: Sahih

Mus’ad ibn Sa’eed reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

The servant will continue to be tried until he is left walking upon the earth without any sin.

Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhī 2398, Grade: Sahih

Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

If Allah intends good for his servant, then he hastens the punishment for him in this world. If Allah intends evil for his servant, then he withholds punishment for his sins until he appears on the Day of Resurrection.

In another narration, the Prophet said:

Verily, with greater rewards come greater trials. Verily, when Allah loves a people he will test them. Whoever is pleased will be satisfied, and whoever is displeased will have indignation.

Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhī 2396, Grade: *Hasan*

- 4 reactions to Allah's tests:
- To dismiss it and turn against Allah
 - To be patient
 - To be contented with it (Redha)
 - To thank Allah and be grateful for the tests

4. Allah is the Best of Planner

الْمَاكِرِينَ خَيْرٌ وَاللَّهُ ۖ اللَّهُ وَمَكَرَ وَمَكْرُوا

“And they (disbelievers) plotted [to kill ‘Iesa (Jesus)], and Allah planned too. And Allah is the Best of the planners.” 3: 54

أَنْ وَعَسَىٰ ۖ لَكُمْ خَيْرٌ وَهُوَ شَيْئًا تَكْرَهُوا أَنْ وَعَسَىٰ
لَا وَأَنْتُمْ يَعْلَمُ وَاللَّهُ ۖ لَكُمْ شَرٌّ وَهُوَ شَيْئًا تُحِبُّو
تَعْلَمُونَ

“...and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know.” 2: 216

The stories in the Qur'an that Helps us understand:

- Prophet Yusuf (AS)
- Prophet Musa's mother

5. Patience

إِنَّ ۖ وَالصَّلَاةِ بِالصَّبْرِ اسْتَعِينُوا آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا
الصَّابِرِينَ مَعَ اللَّهِ

“O you who believe! Seek help in patience and *As-Salat* (the prayer). Truly! Allah is with *As-Sabirin* (the patient ones, etc.)” 2: 153

Al-Hasan al-Basri (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “Do not resent the calamities that come and the disasters that occur, for perhaps in something that you dislike will be your salvation, and perhaps in something that you prefer will be your doom.”

Al-Fadl ibn Sahl said: “There is a blessing in calamity that the wise man should not ignore, for it erases sins, gives one the opportunity to attain the reward for patience, dispels negligence, reminds one of blessings at the time of health, calls one to repent and encourages one to give charity.

6. Tawakkul

Tawakkul in Allah can loosely be translated as having full hope in Him, or placing your reliance in God. However, we can understand what tawakkul means better when we understand what Allah’s name ‘Al-Wakil’ means.

We are taught to frequently recite the following:

الْوَكِيلُ وَنِعْمَ اللَّهُ حَسْبُنَا

“Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the best of Guardians.” 3: 173

Here Allah is referred to as Al-Wakil, which can be loosely translated as ‘The Guardian’ or ‘The Disposer of Affairs.’

مَخْرَجًا لَهُ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ يَتَّقِي وَمَنْ
 اللَّهُ عَلَى يَتَوَكَّلْ وَمَنْ ۖ يَحْتَسِبُ لَا حَيْثُ مِنْ وَيَرْزُقُهُ
 لِكُلِّ اللَّهُ لَجَعَ قَدْ ۖ أَمْرِهِ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ ۖ حَسْبُهُ فَهُوَ
 قَدْرًا شَيْءٍ

“... And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things.” 65: 2-3

7. Recite the Qur'an

When you recite the Qur'an, it must be with proper understanding and sincerity and you will come across verses that will help you:

- Concerning Allah
- Allah's tests
- Stories of prophets
- Hereafter

8. Remember Allah - through prayers, dhikr, attending classes - "...in the remembrance of Allah do heart find rest" 13: 28

الْقُلُوبُ تَطْمَئِنُّ لِلَّهِ بِذِكْرِ الْآ

"...Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." 13: 28

- Morning and evening dhikr
- Prayers
- Attend classes

9. Istiqomah

It is important to be steadfast on the Deen even in difficult circumstances.

عَلَيْهِمْ تَنْزَلُ اسْتَقَامُوا ثُمَّ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا قَالُوا الَّذِينَ إِنَّ
الَّتِي بِالْجَنَّةِ وَأَبْشِرُوا تَحْزَنُوا وَلَا تَخَافُوا إِلَّا الْمَلَائِكَةَ
تَوْعَدُونَ كُنْتُمْ

"Verily, those who say: "Our Lord is Allah (Alone)," and then they *Istaqamu* , on them the angels will descend (at the time of their death) (saying): "Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!" 41: 30

After all, we have been Warned by Allah to worship Allah until death:

الْيَقِينُ يَأْتِيكَ حَتَّى لَوْبٍ وَاعْبُدْ

"And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (i.e. death)." 15: 99

Only through constant worship of Allah will He Guide us continuously in the straight path.

10. Seek advice from people who understands the Deen

We should always turn to Allaah at times of ease and at times of hardship, and seek the help of Allaah in all his affairs, as Allaah says:

أَمَّن يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَّرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ

“Is not He (better than your gods) Who responds to the distressed one, when he calls Him, and Who removes the evil...” (27:62)

During the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the companions would seek his advice on any and everything. Nothing was considered too small or too embarrassing.

And one thing that was quite common was that when the Prophet (ﷺ) was alive, his companions would go to him directly for advice, especially when it relates to matters of the deen.

They always went straight to the source of knowledge. Even if they had older parents at home, they take their marital questions to the Prophet (ﷺ).

The solutions to resolve various mental health issues must be in line with the Qur’an and authentic hadeeths:

الرَّسُولَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ أَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ آتَاهَا بِمَا
شَاءَ فِي تَنَازُعِهِمْ إِنْ مِنْكُمْ أَمْرٌ وَأُولِي
بِاللَّهِ تُؤْمِنُونَ كُنْتُمْ إِنْ وَالرَّسُولِ اللَّهُ إِلَى فَرُدُّوهُ
تَأْوِيلًا وَأَحْسَنُ خَيْرٌ ذَلِكَ ۖ الْآخِرِ وَالْيَوْمِ

“O you who believe. Obey Allah, and obey His Messenger, and those in command among you. If you dispute any matter, then bring it back to Allah and His Messenger if you believe in Allah and the Day of Judgement.” (4:59)

فِيمَا حَكَمُوا حَتَّى يُؤْمِنُوا لَا وَرَبِّكَ فَلَا
مِمَّا حَرَجًا أَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي يَجِدُوا لَا تَمَّ بَيْنَهُمْ شَجَرَ
تَسْلِيمًا وَيُسَلِّمُوا قَضَيْتَ

“No, by your Lord, they will not become believers until they place you as a judge among themselves, and they find no hardship in their hearts from that which you judged by and submit completely.” (4:65)

11. Good companions

Prophet Muhammad SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam told the story of the blacksmith and the perfume seller.

The example of a good companion (friend) in comparison with a bad one is like that of one who sells musk and the blacksmith. From the first, you would either buy musk or enjoy its good smell, while from the blacksmith you would either get burned or smell a bad scent.

A good friend would know how to assist you if your iman gets low because of mental health issues and advise you on being patient, focus on the acts of worship to seek Allah’s help, what du’a to make, etc.

12. Protect from shaytan

Shaytan loves when your mental health is affected and this affects your acts of worship. At all times you need to completely seek protection with Allah from shaytan.

مِنْ أَبْوَيْكُمْ أَخْرَجَ كَمَا الشَّيْطَانُ يَفْتِنَنَّكُمْ لَا آدَمَ بَنِي يَدَا
 إِنَّهُ ۖ سَوَاتِهِمَا لِيرِيَهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا عَنْهُمَا يَنْزِعُ الْجَنَّةِ
 جَعَلْنَا إِنَّا ۖ رَوْنَهُمْ لَا حَيْثُ مِنْ وَقَبِيلُهُ هُوَ يَرَاكُمْ
 يُؤْمِنُونَ لَا لِلَّذِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيَاطِينِ

“O Children of Adam! Let not *Shaitan* (Satan) deceive you, as he got your parents [Adam and Hawwa (Eve)] out of Paradise, stripping them of their raiments, to show them their private parts. Verily, he and *Qabiluhu* (his soldiers from the jinns or his tribe) see you from where you cannot see them. Verily, We made the *Shayatin* (devils) *Auliya’* (protectors and helpers) for those who believe not.” 7: 27

Allah Warned us about shaytan in many verses of the Qur’an:

وَلَا طَيْبًا حَلَالًا الْأَرْضِ فِي مِمَّا كُلُوا النَّاسُ أَيُّهَا يَدَا
 مُبِينٌ عَدُوٌّ لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ ۖ الشَّيْطَانُ خُطُواتِ تَتَّبِعُوا

مَا اللَّهُ عَلَى تَقُولُوا وَأَنْ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ بِالسَّوِّءِ يَأْمُرُكُمْ إِنَّمَا
تَعْلَمُونَ لَا

“O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth, and follow not the footsteps of *Shaitan* (Satan). Verily, he is to you an open enemy. [*Shaitan* (Satan)] commands you only what is evil and *Fahsha* (sinful), and that you should say against Allah what you know not.” 2: 168-169

So when a region is hit by an earthquake or someone had a massive test, shaytan always puts doubt on Allah’s Mercy and some people may even ask “Where’s Allah?”

So do be careful on our reactions when we face mental health issues.

13. Resolve issues in halal way

If you have been diagnosed with mental health disorder such as epilepsy or bipolar disorder, seek Allah’s Help first, then seek the help of a specialist doctor who will try and resolve your issues with Allah’s Help and Will.

14. Make du’a to Allah

مُسْلِمِينَ وَتَوَفَّنَا صَبْرًا عَلَيْنَا أَفْرِغْ رَبَّنَا

Our Lord! pour out on us patience, and cause us to die as Muslims.” 7: 126

رَشَدًا أَمْرِنَا مِنْ لَنَا وَهَيِّئْ رَحْمَةً لَدُنْكَ مِنْ آتِنَا رَبَّنَا

“Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from Yourself, and facilitate for us our affair in the right way!” 18: 10

الْوَكِيلُ وَنِعْمَ اللَّهُ حَسْبُنَا

“Allah (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us).” 3: 173

فَقِيرٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ إِلَيَّ أَنْزَلْتَ لِمَا إِنِّي رَبِّ

“My Lord! Truly, I am in need of whatever good that You bestow on me!” 28: 24

