Effect of religiosity on mental and spiritual health

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ABSTRACT

In evaluating the role of religion, its sustainable effects on spiritual health and treating many diseases among teenagers and adults is stressed. This issue has so main place in sacred books that in Quran it says calmness and spiritual health is based on remembering God (Raad, 41-42). Monotheistic zekr is one of the basic discussions in religious psychology. There have recently been new methods in psychology to achieve spiritual calmness. One of them is Transcendental Meditation in which we use Mantra: itmeans repetition of meaningless words which increase the rate of concentration and calmness. Tendency towards monotheistic zekr is considered as one of the most important issues in spiritual characteristic of human being, especially in adulthood. It is called 'Spring of Life' by Prophet Mohammad. This paper aims to assess spiritual aspect of personality and its role on psychological health of person.
Keywords: Spiritual health, Religion, Psychology, Islam, Growth

INTRODUCTION

Role of religion and its place is related to spiritual and psychological health and also its treatment have been studied many years ago. In the way that during human being's life, religious issues and medicines have had overlapping in curing and relieving the problems and increasing the human beings reproduction [4]. There have been much more stress on efficiency of these issues in adulthood.

In other hand, psychological and spiritual health experts have recently had main interest in studying the positive effects of religion on psychological health and preparing them for different roles, because during the history in psychological treatments and especially the spiritual health, non religious methods were common and there had not been serious attention to religion as a health factor [2]. Therefore, some thinkers with compulsive and fair view believed that religion has been internalized and they can have positive influential effect on psycho of people [10,5,25]. He offered this theory that human being has 8 steps in social- psychological growth. Each of these steps is based on success in the previous one. His first hypothesis is that the most psychological and growth problems happens the adulthood which is the fifth phase of the growth. This phase of identity stands against role confusion which is called identity crisis. Experiences of this phase can directly affect the next phases in the life. During this phase of growth, looking for occupation, values and religious believes starts. Who am I? Where am I going? What will happen to me? These are questions which show these experiences.

In this situation and with this background, what should we do? This is the main question of study which leads to reformation of the present situation and changes it to much more humanistic or divine one which is the main color in the world [12].

Whatever we become closer to recent years, especially after 1970s and also early 21st century, this century is called "Return to Spirituality" or "Century of Religion" or "Century of Religious Interdisciplinary", because the contemporary human being has come to this conclusion that we cannot have a healthy life and guarantee the spiritual - psychological calmness only through science and technology. Having a health and enjoyable life is just possible when science, power, kindness, friendship, Religion and spiritual calmness stands together and growth and develop together. It means that human being must add his knowledge and

information, learn how to use the information to solve the life problems and have a welfare life, learn how not to ignore the humanity and consider his benefit in society. In this situation we can discuss on religion, morality, and necessity of it during the life. Human being can have a desirable and healthy life only when he becomes familiar with three aspects of behavior: Cognitive aspect, psycho and emotional aspect, emotional and spiritual aspect which grow all together. Hence, majority of psychologists, especially growth and development psychologists, have tried to study the ethnical, religion aspects (internal calmness based on religion) and have richen their studies [3].

Finally, based on his commitment to religion and rituals, Marci calls people with low activity and commitment as "Confused Identity Status" and people with high commitmentand people with high level of commitment and activity as people who have solved the Identity Confusion and have successful identity. In this area, people like [7,12]. Marcia and Waterman, Matteson, Archer and Orlofsky (1993) and Waterman (1988) who expanded the last studies. We can also name people like Adams and his colleagues (Shea, Fith) [12,8,24,7].

Definitions of religious believes

Based on a cluster of definitions, religion is defined a collection of believes and individual feelings in which we can find elements of final truth, eternal benefit, absolute existence, the best value.

Bar Dali: Religion is mainly an attempt to find the absolute truth in our existence [7].

James Maritve: Religion is belief to God who is present forever. That is belief to God's willingness and mind which dominated the world and it has some ethnical relations with human being.

Royal: Religion is Perception of relationship between the human soul and the human soul which is none defined one and dominated the human being. Human being wishes him the next blessing [12].

Carl Doubler: he offers this definition in 1981 as follows:

A unified system of believes and practices that are related to a transcendent reality and empirically superior. It unifies all believers and followers in order to form a moral society [8]. According to authors of religious believes and rationality, religion is collection of believes, actions and feelings (individual and collective ones) which are centered on final truth [7].

John Ness states these definitions:

- Religion is a system of God for which is established for its owners and includes the priorities and minorities.

- Religion is God's law and contract which calls all wise people to accept what is in Prophet's hands.

- In these two definitions we have:
  Religion is: oral confess, belief in reward and punishment in the world and practice the principles and commands [9].

In this definition Although the relationship with God is not included, but apparently it has been assumed on the basis of the belief in reward and punishment, some believe that religion in simpler terms, is the nature of such experiences, thoughts, feelings and actions of a person by which human being tries to live with what they consider it as sacred and divinity [10].

According to Robertson, religion is a set of beliefs and symbols (values rooted directly from them) which is related to differences between empirical reality and transcendental experience. Empirical works in terms of implications and meaning have less importance accordance to non empirical matters [8].

Some have defined religion as follows: religion is a belief in something absolute, and the absolute thing that is necessary to investigate other words. In other words, it is called immersion in sea secrets [11].

Each of these definitions emphasize on relationship between man and God and above empirical issues. Religion has actually spread so that the theorist has different opinions. Some say that the belief in the fundamental goodness of man is one religion and some say that religion is an ideology like communism, because it has the highest value for people who believe that. According to this sense, religion of each person is considered as the highest value in person's life .

Functionalistic Definition

Some of thinkers stress on particular and social functions related to religion and define a functionalistic definition. This group has defined religion through anthrop logistic studies in religious societies, studying the behaviors and expected functions from religious principles.

Individual Functions

According to different individual functions of religion, we can expect different definitions from religion:

1. Worldly and hereafter bliss
2. Alienation

Feuerbach Bach has focused on this point and says:

Religion is a form of alienation, thus expanding human cognition and return to origin determinately excludes the religion [12].

3. Organizing one's life based on religious experience: (The Encyclopedia of Religion (Ibid, p. 93)

4. Answering the existence puzzles

Some people believe that religion is the source of knowledge helping us in understanding dull affairs which are not understandable through the other ways.

According to Max Weber, religion is:

Any collection of assumptions to strong and coherent answers to the questions in human existence such as birth, illness or death creates meaning to the world and life [13].

Spencer says:

Religion is a Means to explain the mystery of religion and religious phenomena based on psychological states, intellectual slips and social development [14].

According to Max Muller: Religion is an attempt to understand what is not an understandable and appreciation of what is unacceptable [15].

Albert Roueie knows that religion resolves human needs and helps to understand the mystery of existence and harmonious influential in the world [10].

According to G. Milton Yyngr, religion is a belief and practical system that is blessing by which a team of people can solve problems of human life and get ultimate outcome [8]. He calls this performance equal with a variety of responses to questions about the death of a man, pain, suffering, and final sense.

5. Energy giving and motivator in life and existence.

Clifford Geertz's definition of religion writes:

Religion is a system of symbols and believes which causes powerful, deep and lasting the motivation and preparation of human health, the development of the notions and concepts of order and general deals on the concepts and notions such as the emergence of the truth which are based on fact [8].

Social function

Some thinkers have defined religion in terms of its social function. In following part, we point to some examples:

1. Generating a group bond. According to Durkheim:

Religion is a system of beliefs and customs in relation to rituals which bond people to each other as social groups [13]. In this definition, bond between social groups as one of the functions of religion is emphasized. The belief to sacred affaires that is unifying:

Religion is a system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred objects. That is, objects that have been isolated and sanctioned - the beliefs and actions of all believers in a unique ethnical community called "temple".

Juan Paul Wilhelm's definition of religion emphasizes on social bonding as attractive and charismatic force. In the way that he wrote:

Religion consists of a regular symbolic communication based on charismatic and attractive regulations and beliefs which makes a bond and continuum [8].

2. Cross-cultural influences as result of beliefs to superhuman affairs.

According to Spiro Milford, religion is:

- Effects and impacts of institutional and cultural interaction with a series of superhuman affaires supposed and accepted by Muslims [8].

Social functioning of religion is mainly studied by psychologists and the individual function of religion is presented by sociologists [16].

Definitions of Islamic theologians

Some have tried to offer general definitions including all religions. In this collection, religion is sometimes defined as practical law:

Religion is a divine law that has been enacted to provide owners a sense of good pleasure to achieve with their own willing [17].

The above definition is not comprehensive because it is limited to practical precepts and principles of rational. Practical rules and orders are changeable but the existence of God and the resurrection don not have such capabilities. Contemporaries like AllamehTabatabaei, Ayatollah JavadiAmoli, Ayatollah Mesbah, and Ayatollah Sobhani have presented a number of definitions that are very close and similar to each other.

AllamehTabatabaei in his definition of religion says: The general believes (truth of man and the world) and the appropriate regulations used in the way of life is called Islam [21]. He puts special emphasis elsewhere on practice producing science and states that: religion is a practical system based on the belief that to human and existence. Belief, in this case, does not mean a theoretical science to a human being and existence, because theoretical science does not necessarily require any practice. Rather, the purpose of

belief is obligatory adherence to theoretical science (Ibid, vol 15, p 8). In this definition, believe based on action is called religion. In other definition, he calls religion as social traditions and way of life: 'religion is nothing except life ways necessary for human being to use them and get the happiness' (Ibid, vol 16).

According to Allameh, tradition and procedure is a collection of rules necessary for human being to identify a way of life. In other definition of religion he says: 'It is a special way of life that is compatible with the perfection of human being in the world and the life hereafter provided God. 'Sharia laws must be followed by a much needed way to illuminate life' [21].

Religion means believing a creator of the world and mankind and commands in accordance with these opinions. Then people who do not absolutely believe a creator and think that world is a random phenomena or merely the natural and material interaction, they are "none religion people". Based on this, religions can be divided into two forms: truth, wrong. Truth religion is a custom consisting from real and exact believes. It suggests and advices behaviors which are valid and can trust them [20]. Like Allameh Tabatabaei, He also defines religion as desired behavior way of knowing God: 'Religion is God - accepted way of behaviors by human being. If a man believes in personal and social values in acceptance way of believing the God, he is considered as religious one' [20].

Apparently he means a collection of rules which show the life style. In the way that in his definition of religion, he says: Rituals in accordance with real believe that have been recommended and emphasized and their validity is guaranteed [20]. Two recent definitions are certain and include all religions [16]. Ayatollah JavadiAmoli defines religion as follows: 'It is a school of faith, morals, laws and administrative regulations have been formed and aim to guide people to happiness. Religion in this sense has two types: human and divine religion' [23]. On the whole, religion is comprehensive knowledge of the evolution which has four aspects: modification of thought and belief, the supreme principle of morality, human development, good relations with community members, remove any unfair discrimination [19].

Human identity in Theories of growth

Growth theories presented by James Faller and others, human identity has risen in overall mood of human identity. Faller has raised his theory after Piaget, Kohlberg and Erikson. Faller believes that faith and believes show how to move in the direction of life. Religious belief and growth gives meaning to our life, Communication and relationship with others and make them purposeful .

According to most scientists, when humans are born until, become mature and enter society, they accept social responsibilities and pass some phases. Some scientists divide years (5-0) to phases which do not need satisfaction of the needs. Especially the early years of life are very sensitive and lack of love, trust, security is essential in oral stage. Adler points to the growth and development period from birth to adulthood and Jung points to stages from birth to 40 years old [24], but Islam has considered the growth and all aspects of human existence in all ages, even after death.

Today, because of the forces of environment which are trying to work his way back in the happiness of man, again the hypothesis of the child and helpless child is considered. As Imam Ali states: we must give child an opportunity to the process the wisdom talent through thinking. If the child is confused in his successes, he will have psychological complex [25].

Researches show that despite today's surprisingly advanced technology, human being has not been successful in getting psychological calmness as the basic elements of health from the perspective of the World Health Organization (WHO). However, along with scientific advancement, there has been increasing number of mental and psychological problems. The most of these problems are hopelessness, despair, suicide, addiction and other mental illnesses which unfortunately appear in younger age and among teens.

Mental Health in Religion

Religion and especially Islam religion has concerned the maximization of human access to much more security, mental and psychological health. Studying the subsystems of this religion shows two realities in mental health: 1. minimum rights and obligations 2. maximum efficiency and God Blessing including mental health.After describing the basic rights and rules, Islam has completed and reinforced it with in all social areas, the kindness, friendship and empathy. Studies and surveys show that the most important way to reach psychological calmness is continuous education and training of objectives and focus on "self". This goal is done in three fields:

A: establishment of cognitive value

B: fixing value behavior

C: believe and practice [26].

There are many verses in Quran that indicate cognitive and behavioral mental health and their basic role in health: 'Anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day and act righteous deeds, there will be no fear for them' (*Maedeh*, 96). In this verse, the word 'I' shows the role of individual training - The sentence 'believe to God and the doom day' shows a cognitive approach.

- The sentence 'Do good works' indicates a behavioral approach the sentence 'Do not fear for them' represents safety and mental health

Role and place of *zekr* in Quran

Adherence to sacred names in Islam and the other schools are explicitly emphasized which effects on mood and mental health. Wulff (1991) refers to the technique of zekr and its roots in the Arabic language which means remembering or recalling. It is also considered as a spiritual practice is by which a person gets closer to God. It is divided to two types: individual (single) or one. Wulff believes the focus and continuity gradually increases the psychological effect of zekr [27].

Allameh Tabatabaei (1981) who has both cognitive and epistemic growth defines two kinds of *zekr*:

1. oral zekr
2. zekr in heart
3. He believes that In fact there is only one kind of *zekr*. Allameh believes that the oral *zekr* is called *zekr* because it roots in heart .

A case study

In a study, the researchers tried to assess the students' tendency towards monotheistic *zekr* and its effect on their psychological health. The measurement tool was questionnaire and its validity was measured through formal validity. There were 129 psychology students in university of Tabriz (47 males and 82 females) who were 18-36. Some findings will be offered in the following part:

Table 1: the most commons of zekr by students

Frequency	Time	
62	after prey	1
40	facing problems and difficulties	2
12	most of the times	3
11	Mornings	4
5	Nights	5
3	being alone	6
3	Midnights	7
2	Sleeping	8

Table 2: the most comon places of zekr among the students

Frequency	Place	
50	different places	1
43	Mosque	2
19	Home	3
11	In solitude	4
8	commuting time	5
3	while praying	6
3	deviating places	7

Table 2 shows the most frequently mentioned places among the students. This table shows the respective locations because students prefer to say zekr: different places, Mosque, House, and Solitude.

table6: the most common zekr among the students

Frequency	*Zekr*	
50	*Salavat*	1
30	*Hazrat Zahra ZEKRS*	2
27	*YA Allah, Ya Rabb, besmelllah*	3
23	*famous verses of Quran*	4
20	*Laelahellalah*	5
20	*Alhamdollellah*	6
15	*Forgivness*	7
15	*Sobhan Allah*	8
14	*allah Akbar*	9
13	*thanks God*	10
13	*Other names of God*	11
12	*AyatalKorsi*	12
12	*tasbihatArbaee*	13
10	*different parays*	14
8	*There is no power but from God*	15
7	*Faraj pray*	16

6	zyaratAshoura Pray	17
4	tavassol pray	18
4	Yaali	19
3	Komeyl pray	20
3	ElahiALaff	21
3	YaHoosssein	22
2	Ya Imam Reza	23
2	YaAbolfazl	24
2	Tavakkolalallah	25
2	Authorize warrants to God	26
1	Thanks prostration	27
1	Akheratzekrs	28
1	poetic zekrs	29
3	The others	30
	Total	

Table 6 shows 30 common *zekr* among the students. Findings of this study show that if we consider mind and tongue as sources of psychological problems, *zekr* cannot lead to control speaking (*oral zekr*) and finally leads to heart *zekr*. That is, in higher levels it can control the mind. There are also some similarities among the males and females in monotheistic *zekr* for getting calm. It shows the acceptable situation of contemporary generation in tendency towards religious rituals.

Worship and Pray

One of the ways that humans can help to prevent the development of mental disorders is praying and worship. Psychological comfort in remembering the Lord is recommended not only for the mind, but actually doing it is the best practice for the development and mental health. The worship strengthens the relationship between God and human being, transplant human characters morally and finally prevents the mental illness.

Remembrance of God is Preventive and therapeutic. Ghazali says the prayer become free from all the fears and depressions. When a person starts to remember God, his heart is comes to this conclusion that solving all psychological and social problems is easy, we can over come the temptations and remove all wrong imaginations .
[28].

Jung writes, "I believe and I am fully convinced that religious beliefs and practices extraordinary effect at least in terms of mental health. He says that if a person has problem, I deliberately advise him to follow this way. According to Erikson, in seeking the cultural identity as part of the national identity, the teenagers try to find their social, family, philosophical and religious desires [29]. They really try to participate in social and religious activities. In the book "Ethics in Education", Davie has stated strongly that without participation in life school, no object is moral [2].

Influential factors in psychological health in Islam

Human being like animals is affected by natural and material forces and gravity such as eating, sleeping, sex and relaxation which pushes him forward material and natural affairs. However, there are some forces in the centers of gravity and elasticity which directs human being towards affaires out of natural locus. Spiritual principles that are accepted till now by to today's academic knowledge are moral goodness, beauty and worshiping. If man focus on spiritual aspects, he will have mental health. But the main issues rose in the Holy Quran and the teachings of the divine and absolute effects on mental health are:

1. The meaning of life and activity
2. Interpretation of living consequences
3. man's lonely talking
4. *zekr*
5. Appearance and Essence
6. Life activities
7. Solving the problem of death

In some verses of Quran, life goals are considered as "movements" and "changes". It means that all things are changing towards God. If we can find meaning of our life, we will have the strength to fight with. However, living without fruitful meaning will collapse as soon as possible. If man considers the world as experience and experiment scene, he will never expect to have a steady life. Therefore, according to Islam, life is a purposeful stream. It is possible for human being to face many problems during life in the way that he must be ready for fighting with them.

- In psychology school, it is used "having" for profit and "losing" for losses. In Quran this principle is changed: it says if you lose something, do not be worried and you earned something again do not

be happy, because this situation is changeable. The real value of human beings is not limited to shavings, but devotion, tranquility, a sense of meaning and spiritual life of any event.

- In divine teachings, our own conversations are interpreded as *zekr*. It opens a window to security and open mind. When we do have more life pressure and cannot stand them, through making a strong relationship with God, we can calm ourselves.
- From Islamic point of view, the everyday life of human being is offensive and people are advised to activity. They are asked to be more active than before and achieve knowledge and science.
- Some schools calls death as painful end of everything for human life. Divine teachings convey the spirit of the world is limited to the point of death and eternal infinite world. If you have a better life in this world, you will have a good life in next world. Therefore, any fear from death disappears after rational interpretation. So in Quran, there are some advices and trainings to maintain emotional balance and mental health.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned before, religious beliefs and values are considered as a part of each person in this world. The inevitable effects of these believe and values on mental health of people are stressed in several studies. This article is only an introduction to the effect of religion on health and spirit. Then we conclude that:

1. Religious values have close relationship with mental health. When religious effects have more deep effect on people, people can behave rationally in normal and abnormal situations.

2. Results of this study indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between religious affairs and mental health.

3. Studies on university students show that tendency towards religious believes and pray have had positive effects on students and there were high rate among both males and females.

4. Worship and pray are considered as one solution in solving mental and physical problems, because there is direct relationship between spirit and body of human being. When the human spirit is much happier and calm, the body will be stronger and more resistant to the action.

5. According to some scholars and researchers such as Ghazali, zekr removes all the fears and sadness influential in human activity and productivity. In contrast, ignorance from God is one of the main factors which lead to physical and mental illness.

6. Based on Jung, religious believes and rituals are the most important factors in physical and mental health and enriching and giving meaning to these beliefs, health, body and spirit.

7. Finally, in terms of Mental Health, there are narrations and stories about traditions which have a great place in religions, especially Islam. It seems necessary to study them based on their subjects and issues.

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