

Research paper

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# **Dhikr as an Islamic act of mindfulness**

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## Introduction

Recently, cultural and religious teachings have been involved in psychological studies and analysing psychotherapeutic interventions. For the last few decades many scholars have conducted inquiries that highlight the link between mental health and religious beliefs. Moreover, some religious practices have become tools for the promotion of mental health. Researchers conducted dozens of studies that demonstrate the positive correlation between religious practices and factors of psychological well-being like happiness, positive effects and life satisfaction [16, 17].

Various religious and mystical traditions of the world have spiritual verbal practices designed to help the adherent achieve a special psycho-emotional state. As a rule, one is instructed to say over and over a certain formula (sometimes up to several thousand times) without stopping, and such a repetition can be either in a loud voice, or mentally, silently. The most famous and striking examples of psychotechnics of this kind include mantras in Hinduism and Buddhism, mental prayer of the Eastern Christian mystical tradition (hesychasm), and Islamic dhikr. These practices have come under the close attention of researchers, who have identified their genetic relationships and typological parallels between them in the ways of achieving and the circumstances of experiencing specific mental states caused by such religious practices [29].

The purpose of this research paper is to analyse dhikr as a mindfulness practice for Muslims and its positive psychological effects. It is important to note that in this case we are talking almost exclusively about mindful dhikr or the so-called quiet dhikr (dhikr hafi), performed mainly in solitude, which gives to believer the purpose, peace, the ability to stay in the present, live in the current moment.

## **Chapter 1. Dhikr: concept and content**

Dhikr is a comprehensive concept that includes a wide range of Muslim religious practices associated with the mention of God and his epithets. The term itself comes from Arabic word ذَكَرَ which means “remembering”, “mentioning” or “memory” and refers, therefore, to the act of remembering or mentioning Allah through various forms of worship, such as reciting specific phrases or verses from the Quran, praising Allah's names and attributes, or engaging in meditation and reflection. It's an integral practice in Islam for cultivating spiritual awareness and connection with Allah.

In a near sense, dhikr as the remembrance of Allah is the repetition of sacred sentences or words in the form of short phrases-formulas, repeated in Arabic a certain number of times which has always been an obligation to all Muslims and was the component of a daily worship (in particular, as the continuation of the prayer). The main elements of dhikr are the phrases like tasbih (Subhan Allah - “Glorified/Pure is Allah”), tahmid (Alhamdu lillah - “Praise be to Allah”), takbir (Allahu akbar - “Allah is great”), istighfar (Astaghfirullah - “I ask God’s forgiveness”), and tahlil (La ilaha illallah - “There is no God but Allah”) - the main “key” to the comprehension of the Islamic religion, which plays a pivotal role in ritual practices of various kinds.

Throughout the Muslim world dhikrs have many variants and are divided in the most general form into two types: recollection in the heart or silent dhikr (dhikr kafi) and recollection with the tongue or loud dhikr (dhikr jali). The spoken dhikr (dhikr jali) is often performed collectively and accompanied by running in circles, rhythmic movements and other external manifestations of an ecstatic state of the

psyche. Silent dhikr (dhikr kafi) is performed mostly in solitude. When practicing silent dhikr, the formula is repeated in a whisper at the initial stages, and then silently, in mind.

Dhikr in the Holy Quran is mentioned 292 times in 264 verses and is used in two types of religious contexts: firstly, the obligation of a believer to remember Allah, secondly, holy writings and the Quran, prophets of the past and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a reminder to mankind from Allah [23].

In the first case it applies to remembering God (dhikr Allah), where the Almighty acts as an object to which the focus of psyche and human attention is directed. There are numerous verses in the Quran referring to the necessity of remembrance of God (for example, 20:14, 20:42, 20:124, 23:110, 18:28, 20:124, 18:28, 2:200, 5:91, 13:28, 24:37, 29:45, 39:22, 57:16, 58:19, 62:9, 63:9, 21:42, 38:32, 72:17, 21:36, 43:36 etc.).

Dhikr is defined as an activity of remembering or mentioning Allah to establish spiritual bond between the believer and the Creator and create a sense of closeness to Allah. Therefore, dhikr is a term that mostly describes the interaction between God and man, refers to any form of focusing on God and is an initial principle for everyone who strives towards God [13].

The Quranic basis for dhikr practice is the exhortation "... mention thy Lord, when thou forgettest" (18:24). Other frequently quoted verses which are the direct calls, constantly affirming the need to remember God: "O believers! Always remember Allah often" (33:41), "those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort" (13:28). Another verse contains a promise that the rememberer also will be remembered: "Remember me, then, and I will remember you" (2:152).

In addition to these verses there are quite a number of hadiths supporting the practice of dhikr. For example, the hadith of Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Allah said, “I treat my servant as he wishes I would treat him. I am with him whenever he remembers Me: if he thinks of Me, I think of him; if he mentions Me in his soul, I call him in myself, If he mentions Me in some degree, I will call him better. If he draws near to Me an arm's length away, I approach him at arm's length; and if he draws near to me an arm's length away, I draw nearer with two arms stretched out nearer to him; and if he comes to me walking, I go to him running” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 4832).

The second group of contexts where dhikr is mentioned is dedicated to the Prophets and scriptures that serve as reminders to people from God. First of all, this concerns Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself and the Holy Quran. Allah calls the Quran a dhikr: “And this Qur'an is a dhikr (book) which has blessings which We have sent down” (21: 50), “And We did not give him [i.e., Prophet Muhammad ﷺ] knowledge of poetry, nor is it befitting for him. It is not but a message and a clear Qur'ān” (36:69). In some verses the words “Quran” (Qur'ān) and “reminder” (dhikr) are used interchangeably synonyms, since the Quran is a “reminder for the worlds” (12:104; 68:52; 81:27), however, in a number of cases it is spoken of as containing a reminder (38:1; 21:10).

Other prophets of the past as well as scriptures revealed to them are also spoken of as a “dhikr”. For example, “We did not send messengers before you, O Prophet, except mere men inspired by Us. If you polytheists do not know this already, then ask those who have knowledge of the Scriptures” (16:43), “Whenever any fresh revelation comes to them from their Lord, they listen to it playfully” (21:2), followed by 21:7, 21:24, 21:48, 21:105, 26:5; 37:168, 38:49.

The role of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself as a bearer of reminders from God is specified, for example, in the verse 7:63 - “Do you find it astonishing that a

reminder should come to you from your Lord through one of your own, warning you, so you may beware and perhaps be shown mercy?”.

Thus, we can say that the term dhikr is one of the key ones in describing communication between God and His servants. Moreover, this communication is directed both “up” (from man to God) and “down” (from God to man).

In a number of verses of the Quran the role of dhikr is meant to influence minds and hearts of the believers, to create a certain emotional mood in them, to encourage them to think and feel the words of Revelations. The Holy Quran as a great reminder was intended not only to warn and admonish unbelievers, frightening them with pictures of the future Judgment, not only to instruct believers. Another its important function is the encouragement and consolation of Muslims, especially those experiencing trials and difficulties, “calming the hearts” of believers. And in this case, the remembrance of God plays the most important role: “those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort” (13:28). The stories of prophets and righteous men of the past were also called upon to support believers: “Also remember Ishmael, Elisha, and Zul-Kifl.<sup>1</sup> All are among the best. This is ‘all’ a reminder. And the righteous will certainly have an honourable destination: the Gardens of Eternity, whose gates will be open for them” (38:48–50). Thus, incessant remembrance of God turns out to be one of the factors of peace of mind and emotional stability of community members.

## **Chapter 2. Cross-cultural aspects of dhikr**

As evidenced by the literature on the history of Islam, dhikr became widespread among many Muslim nations and, from the moment of its appearance, reaching various peoples and cultures, it underwent significant changes. As a unique form of worshipping Allah dhikr managed to combine the tools of religious

ritual practice that are common for Muslims around the world and at the same time - features of local ethno-regional traditions.

Being an Islamic religious worship practice which has its direct origins in the Quran, dhikr received a specific role in Muslim spirituality due to the development of Sufism (known in the Arab world as tasawwuf). Islamic scholars draw attention to the fact that historically the first adherents of Sufism appear in Iraq, Iran, Syria, India, Central Asia and Transcaucasia. The early stage of development of Sufism occurs in VIII–X centuries, at this time it, having separated from asceticism, developed into an independent religious, philosophical and moral teaching [3,7,15,19]. Dhikr became widespread along with the emergence and development of Sufi brotherhoods (tarikats) in the 11th century, which gradually became the main socio-political and spiritual power within Islam mostly in Central Asia, and this situation remained until the advent of Soviet power [7].

It should be noted that Sufism does not mean any specific, ideologically unified system of views and positions, doctrines and postulates, but many (to a certain extent isolated) movements, schools, branches and offshoots, represented by a whole range of concepts and the ideas of the mystical Path, which were united only by the final (equally mystical) goal. The methods and means of achieving this goal (psychotechnics, auto-training, physical exercises, etc.) were very diverse. These methods, being the means of obtaining and transmitting psychological experience, were developed and spread through the practice of numerous brotherhoods (orders). Such brotherhoods established themselves in the Islamic world in the 11th–14th centuries, when The Sufi movement took on a truly national character. New fraternities were founded until the twentieth century [3].

Sufism is a special mystical, religious and philosophical worldview within the framework of Islam, whose representatives consider it possible through personal psychological experience to achieve direct spiritual communication (contemplation



or union) of a person with God. The essence of Sufism is the recognition of the only reality - the reality of God, everything else is interpreted only as his manifestation, as his traces, the imprint of his love. Among the adherents of Sufism, the idea of a spiritual school, or Path (tariqa), arose, leading to Truth. Sufism offers a non-rational way of justifying the existence of God, not theological disputes about the essence, but a mystical-religious-philosophical teaching. This teaching is based on the recognition of the possibility of spiritual contemplation and ultimate union with the Supreme through spiritual experience, psychosomatic practice, special exercises, such as dhikr. Sufis call dhikr “the pillar on which the entire mystical Path rests” [7].

In Sufism dhikr as a ritual action associated with the remembrance of God (Allah), implies a certain specified repeated formulas that are abstract in meaning and contain the name of God (Allah) or its attributes. These formulas are usually represented by natural and sacred Arabic language, the language of the Quran and Sunnah. They convey very important Sufi method – constant repetition of the names of God, which helps, according to the Sufis, approaching God and immersing in him. In order to achieve the maximum psychological effect when pronouncing the names of God and for maximum concentration on them, such techniques as multiple repetitions, special techniques of pronouncing formulas were used, in particular intonation and timbre changes in their pronunciation, speed of pronunciation or holding your breath, increasing with each new cycle of dhikr.

During the remembrance of God, the main accent is placed on the degree of involvement and participation of the heart in reciting the formulas of dhikr based on the principle of purity of thought and sincerity during recitation. Al-Ghazali, in his fundamental work “The Revival of Religious Sciences” wrote that mentioning God only with the tongue, without the work of the heart, does not bring any benefit to the believer [5]. The degree of involvement of the heart, or, to put it another

way, state of full concentration of attention together with outpouring of love for the target of concentration is made special mention of in mystical tradition, whereby the large number of repetitions is kept in mind, during which the heart must remain in the given state in order to achieve any results. It is a rather difficult task and the process of transferring dhikr from the tongue to the heart was also considered as a step-by-step process, so dhikr is usually divided into four stages.

According to al-Ghazali, these are the following stages of dhikr. On the first stage (“dhikr of the tongue”) the heart is minimally involved in the mention of God, the formula of dhikr is repeated only by the tongue, that is, recitation is carried out for the sake of recitation. In the second stage, the heart begins to be involved in this process from time to time under the influence of the wilful efforts made by the worshiper – it’s a voluntary recitation with effort. At the third stage the heart is already completely engulfed in dhikr – it is an effortless repetition and the efforts are already necessary in order to escape from it. At the fourth, highest stage of dhikr, the heart is no longer captured by the repetition formula, but by the Almighty Himself [4]. At this last stage spiritual connection with the Divine world is established and we again touch upon the total annihilation of the self-experience, the personality of the Sufi.

The act of “moving” prayer to the area of the heart happens in time with the adept’s breathing. During the performance of quiet dhikr, an ecstatic state is achieved by reading repeated short exclamations while controlling breathing in coordination with certain body movements, balancing and tilts. The essence of this method is to “direct” prayer to individual parts of the body along with breathing.

When a new member joined the Sufi order, the sheikh (head of the community) secretly explained to him the formula and methodology of dhikr which is common in the order. Dhikr could be performed either loudly, or in a quiet voice, as well as mentally. Along with collective dhikrs, there were also individual ones.

These are the general brief characteristics of dhikr, which was formed as a meditative practice of Sufism and became widespread among many peoples of the Muslim world. Gradually, with active spread, dhikr began to lose its obligatory connection with belonging to the Sufi brotherhood and has become among some ethnic groups into folk customs.

Spreading Islam among the population, Sufis encountered ancient, pagan spiritual and magical practices. It will not be an exaggeration to say that it is precisely the special, sensitive and flexible attitude of the Sufis to local cultures that provided to Islam to owe its triumph across a range of global regions [19].

Some ethnic groups transitioned dhikr from spiritual practice into folk tradition with element of entertainment, thus demonstrating an evolution of the cultural baselines. That's why it is necessary to consider dhikr in mandatory connection with cultural and religious environments.

The development of dhikr practices, including the emergence of folk dhikr and other varieties of this cultural phenomenon, clearly demonstrates the main points of contact between Sufism and the archaic culture of the peoples of Muslim world: these are the ideas of the possibility of merging, the unity of human existence and the existence of the Divine, death and immortality, the world of people and the sacred world of spirits. The embodiment of these ideas mystical practitioners see in rituals aimed at producing trance states of consciousness, in particular in the rituals of dhikr. If the dhikr practiced by orthodox Sufi brotherhoods generally corresponds to normative Islam, then some forms of folk dhikr and dhikr of heterodox tariqats are closer to shamanism, although the people who practice such dhikrs themselves identify themselves with Islam, and also consider their rituals in the general context of Islamic culture [19].

### **Chapter 3. Psychophysiology of dhikr**

The idea of remembering Allah inextricably associated with the psycho-emotional aspect of human existence. The main purpose of dhikr is to achieve a special psychological state and to feel the close presence of God (including within yourself) by repeating aloud or in the mind a certain set of words or sound symbols. Essentially the phenomenon of dhikr is based on the interaction of neurophysiologic correlations of the consciousness, subconscious, and speech.

Islamic dhikr in its essence is verbal psychotechnique leading a practitioner to a special peaceful state of mind based on the word of Allah which means: "Remember, only by remembering Allah, the heart becomes peaceful" (13:28). The remembrance of Allah is in the heart of man, which is thus considered as the seat of his spiritual activity.

"And patiently stick with those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking His pleasure. Do not let your eyes look beyond them, desiring the luxuries of this worldly life. And do not obey those whose hearts We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follow only their desires and whose state is total loss" (18:28). This relates the Quranic view of human spiritual life to the broadest a circle of pictures of the world in which human emotions and mental reactions are projected into the area of the heart and chest and are often perceived as a kind of physical substance.

The repetition of the sacred text is perceived as being in two possible places: in the area of the mouth / tongue (i.e., speech organs) and in the heart. While the believer mentally pronounces the name of God, the thought of God presses on the heart and causes a feeling of overflowing in it. This psychophysiological process is defined in Sufism as the ability to connect the heart with the tongue in invoking the name of God, and in fact is called dhikr. By practicing it, the heart of a Muslim becomes a receptacle for the idea of God and is filled with reverence and love for Him.

The remembrance of God should be frequent and intense; so intense that it is experienced at the emotional level and is felt at the bodily level not only in the heart area, but literally with the skin. "Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whom He wills. And one whom Allah leaves astray - for him there is no guide" (39:23).

In favor of the correctness of the interpretation of dhikr practice as a certain physical reality, subjectively experienced by the believer on the body level, evidenced by metaphor of prayer as food: in Islamic tradition dhikr as worship of Allah and His constant remembrance is often compared with the food of the soul and the verses of the Quran become medicine, both for the body and for the soul. "And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss" (17:82). With deep faith in Allah, every verse that we read will be a remedy for us when we are in sadness and anxiety. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has mentioned, whoever reads the last two verses of Surah Al Baqarah at night, then Allah will protect him from various evils, diseases, worries, and anxiety (Sahih al-Bukhari, 5051).

Through the sacred words employed in dhikr, the practice facilitates mental concentration and induces bodily relaxation. The emotional experiences one is immersed in through the practice of dhikr are the pure feelings that rise during the practice from the depths of the human being. The person who remembers experiences a multifaceted range of pleasant experiences which can be described as a "nourishment of the soul", which are so lacking in everyday life, but which the psycho-emotional nature of a person needs a lot.

During practice, breathing gradually becomes more uniform, its rate is reduced by almost half. From a scientific perspective, the repetitive recitation of

dhikr has been found to influence neurotransmitters in the body, increase the stimulation of the vagus nerve and parasympathetic nerve activity, and suppress sympathetic nerve activity, which manifests itself in a reduction in breathing and weakening of muscle tone. This calming effect of dhikr therapy stimulates the hypothalamus, which, in turn, influences the pineal gland to release melatonin, thus facilitating the process of falling asleep [22].

Such stimulation is possible due to the fact that during the practice of dhikr, when the process of inhalation and exhalation occurs, a person restores connection with the deep zones of his awareness, establishes a connection with intuition, with the animal and vegetative parts of his own personality. There is a process of connecting with oneself, which is hardly possible in everyday life due to being in captivity of a rationalistic way of thinking and deductive logic, which leads to fragmentation of the personality, increased dependence on aggressive external dominants, and loss of connection with intuitive consciousness. Because of these mostly unconscious dependencies, a splitting of the personality occurs, a certain seizure of part of it, which subsequently leads to a feeling of constant dissatisfaction, inferiority, and subsequently to constant emotional suffering.

At the moment of such experiences, our personality receives a unique experience of “soul training”, which cannot be obtained in any other way, the effectiveness of which quickly manifests itself in everyday life and has an undeniable beneficial effect on all aspects of a person’s life.

Dhikr to Allah is intended to improve oneself and calm the soul from heavy feelings. Doing it correctly and adequately can cause the heart to be calm and control passion. Someone who always recites dhikr will feel relaxed, comforted, and at peace in his heart and mind and treat heart ailments such as arrogance, envy, arrogance, revenge, hatred, stinginess and so on. Dhikr, therefore, has

enormous benefits including calming the soul, cleaning the impurities of the heart, arrogance, hatred and envy [2].

If a person recites dhikr, he is animating the names and qualities of Allah, who has a superpower from within him, which causes him to have a spiritual quotient so that he feels peaceful, comfortable, and back in balance, where peace of mind makes normal body organs so that they become balanced again.

Numerous studies [2; 13] have investigated the effectiveness of mindfulness-based therapy utilizing meditation techniques rooted in Islamic beliefs, specifically focusing on the practice of dhikr breathing and its influence on spiritual, cognitive and emotional quotients and quality of life in general. Researchers have recently shown the positive effects of mindful dhikr on mental health of an individual. Dhikr as relaxation psychotherapy could lower the level of anxiety, reduce emotional tension, depression, stress and sadness. Cortisol levels decrease in patients who had done dhikr therapy, followed by stress reduction. Calmness due to the practice of dhikr can increase strength and fortitude. The calm that is generated after dhikr will help individuals to manage emotions and promote feelings of compassion and happiness. Reflecting on God's love and mercy can evoke positive feelings such as love, happiness, and serenity. Meanwhile, reflecting on their sins and mistakes can trigger feelings of regret and sadness.

Dhikr psychotherapy consist of the combination of mindfulness approaches with breath-based dhikr meditation which entails maintaining a state of awareness of Allah with each inhalation and exhalation. Accordingly, participants are guided to be mindful and accepting of the rhythmic recitation of dhikr during their inhalation and exhalation. With every breath in, the recitation of dhikr accompanies it, and with every breath out, the faithful remembrance of Allah resonates. Through this practice, participants are encouraged to observe their present experiences without judgment or attachment to specific outcomes.

Dhikr as is supports the development of the relaxation response that shows a regular rhythm and the mind focuses on the creator accompanied by the rhythmic repetition of words that can lead to a relaxed state. The integration of dhikr and breathing enhances relaxation during the transition into sleep. The fundamental principle underlying this practice lies in recognizing that each breath leads to a conscious transcendental awareness of Allah. When individuals consciously focus on their breath, they become attuned to its rhythm, enabling a profound acceptance of their bodily sensations. Embracing everything that unfolds during this process promotes mental and emotional serenity, as well as physical relaxation of the muscles. Conversely, stress arises from resisting and rejecting the present moment. Therefore, embracing the unfolding reality fosters a state of tranquility and may induce drowsiness in individuals [22].

Dhikr can have various consequences, one of which is setting the mind free from fixation on objects, ideas, concepts and daily activities. Repeating dhikr is associated with activities on the left side of the frontal lobe of the brain - where it plays a key role in generating positive emotions – which in turn increases positive emotional states [1].

If emotions can be managed properly, this will have an impact, namely the individual's ability to control cognition and affect. Apart from this, dhikr also helps develop empathy and empathy towards others. When someone reflects on God's love, they can imagine how loving and blessed would feel. This can lead them to understand the need to love and respect fellow humans, an essential aspect of emotional intelligence.

Hereby, problem solving through dhikr psychotherapy is a way of treating the soul both physically and psychologically by involving all elements of the soul and Muslim behavior so that it produces positive values in human life and leads to peace and stability of the soul.



Of no less importance is the fact that in today's stressful world it is important to remember that dhikr is also a form of affordable self-therapy and can be practiced as a highly-effective tool to improve one's wellbeing anytime and anywhere. Bottom line is that dhikr is always available and is not limited to place and time, it is always available and doesn't have any negative side effects. Practice of dhikr can be a shelter in the storms of modern life, here is the mission of Islam to soothe human hearts.

#### **Chapter 4. Dhikr as an act of Mindfulness**

From linguistic and psychological perspectives mindfulness refers to non-judgemental conscious awareness of the present moment experiences within one's subjective consciousness including thoughts, feelings, perceptions and physical sensations. Observation of these stimuli leads to a gradual realization of one's feelings, thoughts and inner drives and helps a person to become less threatened by their thoughts and feelings. And as a result person tends to be less reactive, calmer, purposeful and more peaceful. Thuswise, practice of mindfulness allows space for non-reactive self-observation and alternative responses, promotes the ability to select the focus of attention. These qualities enable individuals to engage in self-regulatory behaviors, to be able consciously choose response to thoughts and emotions rather than to be controlled by them. This aligns with person's broader needs and values [21].

Popular modern psychology mindfulness-based practices and therapy models derived from a spiritual/religious tradition and usually viewed as an interpretation of Buddhist psychology and Western psychology. Most of mindfulness-based approaches though have been secularized: if we read mindfulness treatment manuals or other related written materials we can notice that they tend to decouple the meditative practice from its faith-based origins and spiritual context [27]. Therapeutic psychologists promote non-religious or neutral

mindfulness practices, detached from a specific theological worldview, to appeal to a diverse range of individuals and society as a whole. While these practices can yield health and wellness benefits, they lack a grounding in an ethical worldview. The mind, being a tool, can be used for both good and evil. Unethical individuals may misuse mental clarity gained from mindfulness for deceptive or harmful purposes. It is essential to approach mindfulness critically and align it with Islamic guidance to prevent such abuses.

Meanwhile, upon a closer view, mindfulness practices offer a method which involves spirituality, interconnectedness between individual and the sacred, God and on closer consideration we can come to conclusion that mindfulness-based approaches can be successfully experienced and interpreted by individuals committed to religious traditions of Islam. On the other hand, a review of the Islamic tradition, particularly the Islamic theological and Psychological sources reveals that many aspects of mindfulness-based practices also existed in Islamic tradition were and integral part of Islamic Psychology.

Mindfulness indeed is by all means an integral part of Islamic spirituality, but with a profound difference: Islam prescribes Divine-mindfulness. Within an Islamic context mindfulness also embodied by the virtue of muraqabah, which denotes attentive observation and contemplation [21].

Muraqabah is derived from a root meaning “to watch, observe, regard attentively” closely resembling the concept of mindfulness. It entails a vigilant self-awareness of our relationship with Allah, encompassing the heart, mind, and body and is rooted in the understanding that Allah is always watching us, which leads to greater attentiveness and care in our actions, thoughts, feelings, and inner states.

Muraqabah is a verb that indicates a reciprocal action. When I am in muraqabah, I am in an intimate relationship with Allah. I know – at least

intellectually – that He is near, that He sees me, hears me, and is aware of every aspect of me. Merely struggling to be in muraqabah of Allah is dhikr. In fact, muraqabah is one of the greatest and most beneficial forms of dhikr that will transform one from the inside out [14].

The texts of Islam encourage us time and time again to seek this means of approach to Allah. We are informed that all the angels fill space-time in perpetual dhikr; that the unseen realm of angelic creation surrounds us when we are in dhikr, that all of space-time – nature, animals, birds, trees, mountains – are in dhikr; that dhikr is the cleanser of the heart's tarnish; that the Devil flees from the one in dhikr; that dhikr is the deliverance from Allah's chastisement and draws His bounty; that dhikr removes estrangement; that dhikr draws sustenance and provision; that Allah remembers in His self the one in dhikr. We are taught to always thirst for more dhikr, for we can never have enough of Allah's remembrance. For dhikr to truly be the avenue for our nearness to Allah, it must be plentiful.

Dhikr and muraqabah are the gifts of Allah's love. They are the true and certain avenues for the purification, cleansing and embellishing of the spiritual heart, and they draw it ever nearer to Allah's infinite beauty and majesty. With Divine nearness, the heart lives in never-ending peace, tranquility and joy. This is Allah's promise. This is the essence and reality of Islam. And Allah's promise is true for all times and all places.

Dhikr is a human effort to get closer to Allah by remembering, reflecting His glory, unite hearts and minds only to one, Allah, the Lord of the Universe. Repeating Almighty's name and meditating on His attributes helps a person to get closer to Allah and feel His presence and through this to be connected to the spiritual dimension of their life and develop a deeper understanding of one's goals in life and find a way for living more meaningful and purposeful life.

Although dhikr is often understood as an effort to remember Allah through words, the essence of dhikr is in mindfulness by practicing concentration on the greatness of Allah. So that it affects worshiper's spirituality which is reflected in all aspects of his life. Reflecting on Islamic teachings, moral values, and their purpose in life in a spiritual context gives them a broader view of life and how they can fill their life with meaning. So conceptually, indeed, dhikr is a form of worship in Islam that can deepen a person's spiritual relationship with Allah. Then, when a Muslim explores the meanings of dhikr, it involves deep understanding and reflection on Islamic teachings followed by development of their intellectual quotient.

Dhikr is certainly genuine mindfulness, because it is mindfulness of the Divine, who is the One, the True Reality. It is through the struggle for abundant and plentiful dhikr the heart gradually becomes fully involved in dhikr. And it is then that dhikr becomes our greatest delight, solace and intimacy with the Divine – a joy that will supercede any and all other joys.

In the process of performing dhikr, the individual perceives himself as being in a special sacred space. This similarity could be attributed to a linguistic metaphor that interprets mental states as a certain reality in which a person is located (for example, "I'm in pain" / "I am in love" / "I'm in the room"), a metaphor that is appropriate for both Russian and Arabic language. Prayer/dhikr itself is perceived, or at least described by the believer, as a kind of clearly felt space. This space is implicitly endowed with sacred features and is often compared to paradise. The feeling of safety in this space deserves special mention.

Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "When you pass by the gardens of Paradise, graze as you like." They said, "What are the gardens of Paradise?" The Prophet said, "Circles of remembrance" (Al Tirmizi, 3510). Here dhikr is compared to a garden, and the garden is one of the most common metaphors for paradise in the imagery of Arab-Muslim culture.

In Islamic tradition dhikr, thus, is described as a certain space, and a safe space for a person, a space in which a person feels protected. Accepting a spatial dimension in the minds of practitioners, the continuously recited text is, as it were, “embodied” into physical reality, becoming in their eyes a kind of tangible substance. This substance is perceived as being in the body of the believer, and the latter can direct it to certain parts of the body, primarily to the area of the heart.

On the other hand, the practitioner may feel himself to be within this substance. In this case, dhikr becomes a kind of sacred space. Staying in this space gives a feeling of peace and security, protects a person from both completely earthly and from threats emanating from supernatural beings.

Perhaps it is precisely this ambivalent nature of ideas about the spatial nature of dhikr as a verbal psychotechnics that determines its effectiveness. Since man is the microcosm and the universe is the macrocosm, it is this mirror relationship that allows the practitioner to achieve transformation and draw closer to Allah.

Mindful dhikr as an Islamic practice holds potential as a therapeutic method for Muslims and one of the spiritual approaches that soothes the soul. Previous research has demonstrated its effectiveness in addressing various psychological issues such as anxiety and stress [2; 13]. Practice of dhikr helps develop positive qualities such as patience, gratitude, and humility. When a person remembers the names of Allah and reflects on His teachings, they are encouraged to develop a better character. By stimulating self-introspection dhikr helps one to develop self-evaluation and a deeper understanding of the meaning of life. In the process of dhikr, individuals often reflect on their actions, think about becoming a better person, and seek answers to philosophical questions about human existence.

Dhikr influences intellectual intelligence in various ways. Some people believe that dhikr can help improve concentration and focus of the mind, which can increase a person's ability to learn and understand more complex concepts. Mindful dhikr serves as a tool for examining and altering our conceptual frameworks. When it performed in act of reading the Holy Quran it allows individuals to understand deep and complex texts, broadening their horizons about various aspects of life.

Dhikr also often involves reflection and contemplation, which can trigger critical thinking and a deeper understanding of life's issues. It encompasses a profound mindfulness of our inner world, including our intentions, thoughts, emotions, and hidden aspects. It involves observing our innermost being and being fully aware of our internal states in each moment and every expression. It is crucial to be conscious of our thought patterns and emotional states, guiding our reactions to align with our inner experiences in the most beneficial way.

From Islamic point of view one's quality time and energy is to be spend with the focus on the Divine in one's spiritual journey. "The people of Paradise will have no regrets, except for moments that passed by them in which they did not remember Allah" (Al Tabarani, 182). The sin of forgetting Allah, the indifference to the reality of Allah called ghaflah (غفلة) - Arabic word for "heedlessness", "forgetfulness" or "carelessness". We remember Allah not for His benefit – for He is beyond any needs – but rather for our own dire need for His nearness, love and grace. The quality of our happiness, beauty and joy comes from our nearness to Devine source. And there is no greater approach to Allah's nearness than constant remembrance – dhikr. This is the reason why dhikr is one of the most foundational Islamic teachings, and why it is the heart and soul of all worship and ritual. For this reason, we should strive our utmost to make dhikr our constant, steady state, to remember Allah with every beat of our heart and every breath.

Dhikr has the intention of presenting Allah in our hearts and letting go of negligence. Having developed the ability to concentrate on the heart, a believer can at all times remove all extraneous thoughts from himself and turn entirely to God. Peace of heart and soul can be obtained by dhikr, in addition to increasing faith in Allah. Doing dhikr activities will always remember that, Allah will remember His servants who always do dhikr. The heart of someone who always dhikr will be filled with positive things. All bad influences, including the sense of misgivings which is the entrance of the devil, will disappear with sincere and routine dhikr [2].

## **Conclusion**

Dhikr is a central practice in the life of a Muslim, as it serves as the means of deepening one's faith and connecting with Allah. It is an act of praising and acknowledging the greatness of God through recitations like tasbih, tahlil, tahmid etc. and encompasses various forms of verbal speech, heart stirrings, or limb motions.

Although a significant part of modern publications on dhikr considering this phenomenon as an attribute only of Sufi practice, meanwhile, this practice is based on what is common to all Muslims in understanding dhikr as remembrance of Allah in any form (for example, reading the Holy Quran itself is also a kind of dhikr). And it is important to note that in modern world Sufi movements are carrying more and more obvious national and cultural traits, depending on the regions of distribution, that inevitably leads to the loss of original knowledge of Sufism as a movement initially rooted in Islam.

Thus, in the broadest term dhikr is an activity of remembering Allah with all His greatness in every form of worship and good deeds such as reading tahmid, tasbih, invocation, praying, reading the Quran, doing good and staying away from disobedience. With dhikr, it is hoped that a sense of intimacy with Allah will be established. Its recitation encompasses expressions of gratitude, praise, and

prayers aimed at attaining inner peace, seeking closeness to Allah, salvation, and protection from divine punishment.

The practice of dhikr has a multifaceted impact on intellectual, emotional, and spiritual quotients. Studies have shown that regular dhikr can increase cognitive abilities such as memory, concentration, and creativity while promoting emotional quotient by improving empathy, self-awareness, and mindfulness and decreasing anxiety and depression.

Dhikr as a religious practice has a preliminary and vital role upon mental health of Muslim individuals. Regular dhikr practices might help to cope with frustration, anger, fears, inferiority feelings, despondency, anxiety and isolation and lead to better quality of life, matrimonial stability, sense of life determination and persistence and overall increased feeling of happiness.

Spiritual aspect of dhikr allows individuals to connect with their faith and with a higher power, providing a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. Practicing dhikr can profoundly affect a person's well-being, making it a valuable tool for personal growth and development. But what kind of dhikr is meant to calm the heart, namely - dhikr with full awareness. Mindful dhikr practice is the indicator of better psychological well-being.

Modern human, surrounded by many stressors, may resort to dhikr as a free and reliable strategy to find peace. Dhikr is an effective way to get happiness for anyone without being limited by social status, economic conditions, ethnicity, politics, skin colour, and position. Dhikr can be done anywhere, anytime, and by anyone.



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