Milestone

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Treating Anxiety Disorders (Al-Halu'): An Application of Al-Makki Psychotherapy Model (MPM)

The research project entitled “Treating Anxiety Disorder (Al-Halu’): An Application of Al-Makki Psychotherapy Model (MPM)” is led by Associate Professor Dr. Che Zarrina Sa’ari in collaboration with University of Technology Malaysia, University of Science Malaysia, Open University Malaysia, Northern University of Malaysia and Islamic Science University of Malaysia.

Anxiety disorders (al-halu), especially in the Western perspective have been extensively studied. However, very little study was carried out on treating this disorder from Islamic point of view. The aim of this study is to highlight the concepts and methods of Islamic psychotherapy intervention in treating anxiety disorder. From the Islamic perspectives, man was created as servant of God and the Caliph on the earth, who has specific tasks to be carried out throughout his life through his relationship (habl) with God, fellow beings and other creatures. If the relationship is not formed towards the fulfilment of God’s commandments as conveyed by His Messenger, Muhammad (PBUH), then the human soul will experience disorder (soul disease). The symptoms of mental or emotional instability will become greater when man are exposed to pressures and challenges of life, especially those who are lacked religious education and practices. In dealing with this unsound soul, the team explores the thought of spiritual therapy, maqamat established by a well-known Sufi Muslim psychologist, Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 996). The Al-Makki Psychotherapy Model (MPM) contains three phases of rehabilitation, (i) acceptance and submission to Allah; (ii) training and mental discipline; (iii) strengthening of the soul, the retention and enhancement of recovery.

The reliability of the MPM can be obtained through validation and confirmation by the experts in the field of Sufism, Islamic counselling and Islamic psychology as well as from the results of the empirical study involving the process of intervention and rehabilitation on subjects who are suffering from mild and moderate anxiety disorders (al-halu’) whom show significant decrease in the levels of anxiety disorders (al-halu’) (between pre- and post-intervention and rehabilitation).

Although many therapies are available to treat anxiety such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and anxiety medications, but there are still plenty of space for other alternative treatment. The MPM which is established based on the discipline of Sufism, emphasizes on the element of soul purification as alternative therapy for the treatment of anxiety disorders (al-halu’).

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