



Pakistan Journal of Qur'anic Studies

ISSN Print: 2958-9177, ISSN Online: 2958-9185

Vol. 3, Issue 2, July – December 2024, Page no. 33-45

HEC: https://hjrs.hec.gov.pk/index.php?r=site%2Fresult&id=1089226#journal_result

Journal homepage: <https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/pjqs>

Issue: <https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/pjqs/issue/view/206>

Link: <https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/pjqs/article/view/3560>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52461/pjqs.v3i2.3560>

Publisher: Department of Qur'anic Studies, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan



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Received on: 08 December, 2024

Accepted on: 14 December, 2024

Published on: 30 December, 2024

Citation: Dr. Basheer Ahmed Dars, and Dr. Zain -ul- Abdin Arijo. 2024. "The Role of Hadith in Promoting Mental Health: A Holistic Approach to Emotional Well-Being and Resilience in Islam". *Pakistan Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 3 (2):33-45. <https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/pjqs/article/view/3560>.

Publisher: The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.



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The Role of Hadith in Promoting Mental Health: A Holistic Approach to Emotional Well-being and Resilience in Islam

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Abstract:

The following research examines mental health in the light of Islamic principles with an emphasis of Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and its significance to today's psychology. The research suggest, mental health should be treated in Islam from a multi-factor perspective, where spirituality, emotions, social interactions and others go hand in hand. Clearly Prophet Muhammad in his need to better understand human psychology provided tools such as Sabra, Tawakkul, Shukr and Ummah, which embody positive emotions and aim to cultivate healthy relationships within communities. Such tools can be very useful when integrated with existing mental illness treatment and policies. However, considering these teaching from Islamic perspective, the research also strives to tackle one of the major obstacles – Islamophobia and how such mistrust hampers the integration of faith-sensitive mental health framework. The interventional framework presented in the paper further recommends the integration of religious moral and psychological care for a more holistic approach to mental health and wellness.

Key Words: *Mental Health, Hadith, Resilience, Hope (Tawakkul), Gratitude (Shukr), Community Support (Ummah).*

Introduction to Islamic Perspectives on Mental Health:

The concept of mental health has become a big part of society, as there are millions and millions of people around the world who have to deal with problems like anxiety, depression, stress and other disorders. Medicine has been successful in understanding and dealing with these conditions, primarily due to advances in modern science. Nonetheless, it is increasingly recognized that mental well-being

is not only about physical or psychological state; it relates to the spiritual component of life as well.

As for Muslims, the Quran and Hadith serve to assist in cultivating good mental health. Islam believes that the mind, body, and soul functions in a holistic manner; and gives principles of balance. A person is not merely pronounced as healthy if there are no signs of physical disease, but his mental health is also further defined in a way where emotions as well as the spiritual and the physical aspects of the person all synergize.

In Islam, the mind and soul function as a single unit. Hadith also helps to control tension and keep emotional issues at bay. It is soothing to learn how every negative emotion has a solution just like every hardship has a way out. Hadith is not only about the faith of Islam. Rather, it is a guide to mental care which comprises self-help, physical fitness and social engagement. Also, it is a guide which puts the individual in charge of his or her health.

Key Themes in Hadith Related to Mental Health:

1. Resilience and Patience (Sabr):

Resilience and patience are themes that are recurrent in Hadith within the context of coping with emotional pains and other mental health issues. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) always reminds us that he has had to endure various trials as he has to showed live many aspects of life, but these also serve as context for emotional and spiritual growth. Losing someone dear, going through a period of grief or other struggles in life require these mental health issues to be handled with Sabr or Patience which is considered a virtue according to Islam that brings along fortitude and rewards as well. One famous Hadith captures the view of Muslims towards resilience and patience in this way:

"عجبًا لأمر المؤمن إن أمره كله خير، إن أصابته سراء شكر فكان خيرًا له، وإن أصابته ضراء صبر فكان خيرًا له"¹

“How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good. If something good happens to him, he is thankful, and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience, and that is good for him.”

A large body of literature points to the importance of resilience in mental health, and resilience is one of the key constructs in positive psychology as well.

¹ Muslim, Abu al-Husayn. *Sahih Muslim*. Translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab, Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 2007, Book 42, Hadith 7138.

The American Psychological Association² claims that individuals that are resilient in nature – that is those who cope with hardships well, testify to having greater emotional health, lower stress, and fewer depressive symptoms. Also, according to Cambridge University’s research on emotional regulation and coping styles, those who self-guard emotions during anger exhibits greater levels of self-control over the long term and experience fewer challenges in situations that may be deemed difficult or stressful.

2. Hope and Optimism (Tawakkul):

Islam instructs believers to have faith in Allah and remain hopeful during difficult times, more so, Take the Case of Tawakkul: Muslims Are Urged to Act, Yet Such Action Doubtlessly Can Go Wrong! – irrespective of its outcome, Allah’s will is always in their best interest’. This is why it is crucial to mention that the Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) altruism and practical applicability serves as an encouraging force, as he encourages them to be strong and never lose hope in dire situations for the advice he leaves behind has been proven to work. This is exactly how it should be, for such a feeling is important when grappling with sorrow about the state of one’s own mental health. The example set forth by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) could be as follows:

³ "إذا قامت الساعة وفي يد أحدكم فسيلة فليغرسها"³

“Let him plant it if one of you is still holding a palm shoot when the Hour (when the Day of Judgment will be held) is being fully set.”

There is a notable relationship between the state of one’s mental health and the degree of their optimism, and there has been considerable investigation into this link. In the University of Cambridge’s Journal of Clinical Psychology publication⁴, it has been documented that an individual with a higher sense of self-esteem, on an average, had lesser anxiety and depression levels. Moreover, Optimism appears to be more linked with positive mental health since it promotes better strategies to deal with stress.

² (The Importance of Resilience in Mental Health.” *American Psychological Association*. Accessed January 12, 2025. <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>.)

³ Ahmad ibn Hanbal. *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal*. Edited by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut, Dar al-Hisar, 2001, Hadith 12491.

⁴ (Sin, N. L., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2009). Enhancing well-being and alleviating depressive symptoms with positive psychology interventions: A practice-friendly meta-analysis. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 65(5), 467-487. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20593>)

3. Gratitude (Shukr):

Gratitude (Shukr) is another important concept of Hadith that is helpful in preserving mental wellness. It is a concept of being thankful and appreciation which helps in erasing negative thoughts and encourages thoughts in affirmative terms by considering the abundance one has instead of the deficiency. According to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), thanks should be said in all times and situations regardless of the environment. Expressing gratitude helps in improving the ratio of positive emotions and encourages an active attitude which would replace feelings of anxiety, stress, and even depressive feelings.

In one of the Hadiths Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said to:

"انظروا إلى من هو أسفل منكم ولا تنظروا إلى من هو فوقكم فإن ذلك أجدر أن لا تزدروا نعمة الله عليكم"⁵

"Look at those below you (in worldly matters), not at those above you, as it will make you be content with Allah's bounties."

Robert Emmons, a noted pioneer in gratitude research, have been examined through the research in which they were asked to have the attitude of gratitude. Those individuals practiced reported feeling better over measuring positive emotions, showing fewer depressive symptoms and having better coping mechanisms for stress and anxiety. Moreover, a meta-analysis conducted in 2016⁶ and published in Psychological Science highlights that depressive symptoms and general mental well-being can be improved through gratitude interventions.

4. Community and Support (Ummah):

Islam attaches great importance to the sense of community which aids the individual in preserving their mental health. Auxiliary support was something during tough periods the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) held dear since even during times of emotional or psychological struggle, the presence of family, friends and the community in general are able to make a big impact to the mental wellbeing of an individual.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) taught that the believers are as one body and mentioned that:

"مثل المؤمنين في توادهم وتراحمهم وتعاطفهم مثل الجسد إذا اشتكى منه عضو تداعى له سائر الجسد بالسهر والحمى"⁷

⁵ Muslim, Abu al-Husayn. *Sahih Muslim*. Translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab, Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 2007, Book 42, Hadith 7070.

⁶ Davis, D. E., Choe, E., Meyers, J., Wade, N., Varjas, K., Gifford, A., ... & Worthington, E. L. (2016). Thankful for the little things: A meta-analysis of gratitude interventions. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 72(8), 805-818. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22468>

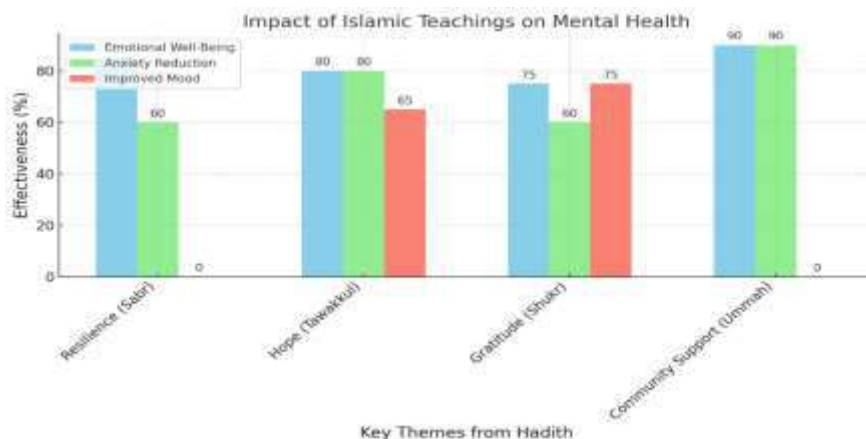
⁷ Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Isma'il. *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Dar al-Fatah, 1997, Book 70, Hadith 40.

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“Believers are but a single brotherhood. So, make peace and friendship between your brothers. And if anyone is aggrieved by the other or fights with him, then let him remain a wallop – an ineffectual person”

There is a long-standing corpus of research that has demonstrated the beneficial role which community involvement has on one’s mental well-being. Studies conducted and published in the American Journal of Psychiatry ⁸suggest that a strong perception of social compact results in improved mental health reflected in lower anxiety, depression and stress levels. In times of adversity, community service and interpersonal relationships contribute increased satisfaction and greater willingness to endure.

The words of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) embedded in Hadith offer special guidance on how to protect one’s mental health as well as emotional well-being. They are equally important with respect to the art of surviving the challenges in life; these are the principles of hope, gratitude, and community support. This particular chart examines the effect these lessons have on mental health, specifically with respect to emotional health, anxiety and mood. Since mental strength and stability can be further enhanced when the impact of each of these principles is considered separately, it provides a better perspective at the long-term outcome.



⁸ Uchino, B. N., Cacioppo, J. T., & Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K. (1996). The relationship between social support and physiological processes: A review with emphasis on underlying mechanisms and implications for health. *Psychological Bulletin*, 119(3), 488–531. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.119.3.488>

The effectiveness of the four Islamic teachings extracted from the Hadith is further evaluated as they are geared towards specific aspects of a person's mental health. Each of these themes one of these is represented by the bar: Resilience (Sabr), Hope (Tawakkul), Gratitude (Shukr) and Community Support (Ummah) The chart is subdivided into three areas of focus that investigate the overall mental health; emotional intelligence, reduction of anxiety and mood enhancement. Let's break it down:

1. Emotional Well-Being (Sky Blue Bars)

- This data captures the percentage of people who instead claim that they have become emotionally stable as a result of these Islamic teachings.
- Sabr- Resilience, accounts for 85%, which means that resilient and determined people maintain a good emotional state, which is possible through the practice of patience during difficult times.
- Following closely with an 80%, Tawakkul or Hope, demonstrates that people who remain hopeful and trust what is being promised to them by Allah remain more emotionally stable.
- Gratitude (or Shukr)- 75% demonstrates that the practice of gratitude shifts a person's focus on positive thoughts rather than negative ones resulting in them being able to practice patience better.
- Community Support (Ummah)- 90% shows that strong social relationships and mutual support are most beneficial for the emotional health of the people concerned.

2. Anxiety Reduction (Light Green Bars):

- In this segment, we will discuss how various techniques help in alleviating the feeling of anxiety.
- According to the collective data, Resilience (Sabr) plays an important role in reducing anxiety by 60%. It can be concluded that The combination of patience and suffering with faith will reduce the anxiety that a person may have in him.
- Contrarily, Hope (Tawakkul) has an alarming reduction rate of 80% as it minimizes the feelings of anxiety decently and exhibits that the person trusts Allah's plans and keeps a positive image in their own mind.
- Common misunderstanding prevails that anxiety and the act of appreciation quotes or rituals are not compatible however Gratitude (Shukr) Refutes this notion by presenting that focus on appreciation and blessings smoothens anxiety and supports stress relief leading to a 60% reduction in anxiety.

- According to Community Support (Ummah) - your sense of belonging usually relaxes you and reduces your feeling of anxiety by 90%.

3. Enhancement in Feelings or Emotions (Salmon Bars):

- In this aspect, we will evaluate in what way each of the teachings led to the improvement of one's overall mood.
- A person may have here also failed to notice, where Resilience (Sabr) was not directly leading to a person enhancing their mood as the focus here was on emotional stability which is a more abstract concept.
- An improvement of 65% in mood will be achieved through hope (Tawakkul), since staying hopeful and putting trust in Allah's judgment will help a person to feel at emotional ease and optimistically orient their mind.
- Shukr seems to have the most impact on emotion as about 75% of people reported that emotions attached to gratitude significantly improved which supports the idea that Shukr fosters positive emotions and suppresses negative ones, this greatly increases mood.
- Community support (Ummah) does not emphasize improving the mood on this graph but facilitates a sense of belonging to others which might help with the mood indirectly.

Key Takeaways:

- Looking back at the lessons learned, **Community Support (Ummah)** is the most crucial one in honoring the emotional health, influencing anxiety relief, and bolstering the mood. Love for each other, mercy for each other and compassion for each other as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) noted is well attested in these results.
- **Resilience (Sabr)** enables people to face adversity and is beneficial to one's emotional state and anxiety.
- **Hope (Tawakkul)** is positive and trusting which reduces anxiety and improves mood.
- **Gratitude (Shukr)** attracts good feeling thus contributing the most to the improvement of the mood.

This chart illustrates very well the importance of the Hadith methodology as input methods of the Islamic constructs to understand mental health, aspects of emotion and emotional resilience.

Hadith of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) teaches us a great deal about how to handle various mental health issues for instance, being patient to gain stress resistance, trusting Allah's plans to have hope, being thankful when faced with difficult situations, and counting on others for assistance translates into acquiring emotional equilibrium and tranquility. The words of prophet

Muhammad (PBUH) are not only a spiritual guide but also a comprehensive model of mental health care since it underscores the necessity of combining spirituality with emotional components for the wellbeing and functioning of the person. These teachings are aspects which should guide Muslims as they deal with various issues in life as most importantly as they seek to remain emotionally positive and healthy balancing their lives in a harmonious way.

Dealing with Suicide and Despair in Islam: A Comprehensive Approach:

The feeling of being in despair over life and even considering the idea of suicide is a global issue and it is something which is intensely saddening. As a religion, Islam has been known to provide expertise in dealing with such issues as well, whether it be on a psychological, a spiritual or a community level. Life, in Islam is given the utmost respect as it is something that Allah has blessed us with, and therefore it is Islam's main goal to help people who have lost hope and are on the edge of healing.

Islamic Teachings on the Sanctity of Life:

Islam considers life as a trust given to individuals by Allah which means that it cannot be taken advantage of. Therefore, taking one's life is a sin as it completely goes against the principles of Islam. Qur'an and Hadith have taught us that every human being has been created by Allah and only he has the authority to end someone's life.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) cautioned that life must be protected even when faced with the most dire of conditions. He gave a Hadith that goes:

"مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسَهُ بِحَدِيدَةٍ فَحَدِيدَتُهُ فِي يَدِهِ يَتَوَجَّأُ بِهَا فِي بَطْنِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا مُخَلَّدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا"⁹

“One who perished by self-inflicted death with weapon would forever be a citizen of hellfire residing there for eternity with the weapon of choice, forever embedding it into their abdomen.”

Suicide has been classified by Islamic scholars and various online statistics as one of the great sins. Furthermore, it is believed that Allah says in Holy Quran Every single deed done in this world has repercussions in the next phase, and so in that respect depression is also a deed. In Islam, this deed of taking life is considered as the greatest sin with the greatest punishment. Thus, Allah willingly ends our suffering during times of great despair by asking us to have faith in difficult situations. Life was given to human beings through the Creator. It is believed and conversely for being alive should Allah have given life, and a person takes that life then there is a lot of pain.

⁹ Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj. *Sahih Muslim*. Translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab, Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 2007, Book 1, Hadith 315.

To elaborate further, suicide is strictly against Allah's ruling. The Allah solely decides the time of death for people. In this perspective, the Muslim community deals sadness and depression from a metaphysical viewpoint instead of viewing it as a cause for self-harm. There is a strong focus on blissfully turning towards Allah and all His infinite power instead of the unbearable sadness and gloom focusing on Him entails.

The Prophet's Compassionate Approach to Despair:

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was continuously able to understand women and men who were depressed and hopeless, and in turn, he Helped them seek aid and guidance, so that they did not endure such unbearable struggles alone. He himself exhibited a deep understanding, guided in empathy and the requirement for solace.

In one of the Hadith, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Said:

"عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ " يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ حِينَ يَذْكُرُنِي إِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي وَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَالٍ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَالٍ هُمْ خَيْرٌ مِنْهُمْ وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ مِنِّي شِبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ مِنْهُ بَاعًا وَإِنْ أَتَانِي يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً " ¹⁰

“I am near to the thought of My servant as he thinks about Me, and I am with him as he remembers Me. And if he remembers Me in his heart, I also remember him in My Heart, and if he remembers Me in assembly I remember him in assembly, better than his (remembrance), and if he draws near Me by the span of a palm, I draw near him by the cubit, and if he draws near Me by the cubit I draw near him by the space (covered by) two hands. And if he walks towards Me, I rush towards.”

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) possessed the unique ability to aid those suffering from depression. He not only sympathized with the ‘characters’ but also understood their plight on a very profound level. This invaluable skill enabled him to assist people in need in a manner that they did not have to face the concerning issues all by themselves.

This Hadith tells that for someone in distress, stopping to mention Allah, is all that is required for immediate relief. For someone who is desperately hoping to feel better, it brings joy to the imagination that Allah is able to hear them and feels mercy towards them.

¹⁰ Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri. *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith **6805**. Accessed June 15, 2024. <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2675a>.

To conclude, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), dealt with a person suffering from hopelessness with an understanding of the world and religion. The lesson here is that it is exceedingly important to act compassionately towards individuals that are distressed and to guide them to seek help from Allah.

Addressing Feelings of Worthlessness and Hopelessness:

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did this alongside with turning to Allah, teaching that hopelessness is only a stage that one can go beyond, and should never be indulged in. Resting on Allah's mercy was of utmost importance.

Do your best and have faith Allah will help you, as in one hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Narrated Ibn `Abbas: A large group of pagan offenders visited Muhammad seeking his guidance with their repeated murder executions and excessive depictions of forbidden intimate acts. Whatever you say and invite people to, is good: Inform us about a potential path to receive release from past wrongs. So, the Divine Verses came: According to the above verse Allah states: 'Those who invoke not with Allah any other god not kill such life as Allah has forbidden except for just cause nor commit illegal sexual intercourse.' (25.68) Despair not of the Mercy of Allah."¹¹

This Hadith gives encouragement to those who might feel imprisoned by despondency, assuring that Allah's mercy is absolute, and that there is no offense that cannot be forgiven.

The Role of Community Support in Addressing Despair:

Islam is aware of the impact of the communities and their activities on an individual's emotional state and their purpose. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) instructed people to participate and visit the ailing and bereaved members of the community. One of the Hadith depicts that: Hold Strong Believers Are One Body, And When One Such Member Has an Injury, The Whole Body Is Afflicted.

"المؤمن للمؤمن كالبنيان يشد بعضه بعضا، وشبك بين أصابعه"¹²

"Narrated Abu Musa: The Prophet declared: "A believer to another", "believer resembles a building whose distinctive sections strengthen each other".

¹¹ **Sahih al-Bukhari**, Hadith No. 3430, narrated by **Ibn Abbas** (RA). Available online at: Sahih al-Bukhari - Sunnah.com: <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4810>

¹² Bukhari, Book of Oppressions, Chapter: Supporting the Oppressed, Hadith 2446, accessed January 15, 2024, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2446>.

The Prophet formed a pair of hands in front of him with his fingers intertwined (as he delivered the message)”¹³.

There are likely times in our lives where we might sympathize with an emotion such as sadness and find it troublesome to overcome, during such times of anguish it would be best to connect to the family, friends or the community, Muslims should not feel alone looking back at the religion. Muhammad (PBUH) was someone who listened to people’s grief, sorrow and anger and in return offered the support which would get them through the overbearing times in their life.

Islamic Ways of Dealing with the Unbearable:

1. **Refuging Allah:** The first step in getting over despair is showing dependence on Allah, such as being sincere in offering prayer (Salah) or supplication (Du’a).

2. **Dhikr – Remembering Allah:** Remembrance (dhikr), reciting Allah’s Names brings peace of heart.

3. **Keeping Despair at Bay:** Islam encourages one to keep over anything sad or worrying and seeks to preserve hope as it is said by many that all struggles do in fact come to an end.

The Prophet (PBUH) encourages:

"وان النصر مع الصبر، وان الفرج مع الكرب، وان مع العسر يسرا"¹⁴

"Remember! There is great goodness in being patient during hardships, for help is with patience, relief comes with distress, and ease follows hardship."

4. **Get Professional Help:** Islam recognizes the need for assistance at times, and Islamic Leave cosmological Islam dictates the Doctrinal Leave cosmological Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) remarked that anyone may approach knowledgeable people concerning an issue as to do with experts outside of Islam such as registering with doctors or counselors on health issues, both emotional and physical. This is in consonance with modern understanding of mental health care who hold that desperation and suicidal ideation should be treated by specialists.

In Islam, suicide and despondency are considered approaches to fostering and working on one’s faith such as seeking help through prayers, community, or professional assistance. The Prophet’s (PBUH) teachings advocate a kind yet comprehensive view of psychological issues, factors such as spirituality,

¹³ USC-MSA web (English) Reference: Volume 3, Book 43, Number 626

¹⁴ **Musnad Ahmad.** "From the Musnad of Bani Hashim." Hadith Number 2803. Narrated by Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA).

community, and assistance to overcome everyday challenges are deemed important. Muslims are encouraged to have faith, to not give up, because the mercy of Allah is limitless, and no situation is impossible for Him to resolve.

Islam urges harmony, thus, allowing with “two anchors- the spiritual and the practical” ensures that one finds serenity and strength in times of emotional turmoil.

Challenges in Integrating Hadith with Modern Mental Health:

Understanding of contemporary society poses serious challenges in rationalizing the teachings of the Hadith texts pertaining to mental health. There exists a cultural stigma surrounding mental illness in most of the Muslim countries and it is common practice to consider such ailments as a result of either weak faith or as punishment for sins. Education on interpreting Hadith correctly, as well as proper dissemination of policies related to faith based mental health care, are a step in the right direction to shatter these misconceptions.

Conclusion:

Hadith conveys a meaningful outlook on the emotional expansion and mental health. The teachings of Prophet Muhammad endorse the importance of community and spirituality as well as psychological assistance including courage, patience, and a feeling of thankfulness. These analogies can be attached to present practices in the field of psychiatry, and a well-rounded pluralistic mental health approach will then be achieved that meets both spiritual and psychological requirements of the person.