



STRENGTHENING THE SPIRIT FROM IBN ARABI'S PERSPECTIVE (ANALYSIS OF THE TAZKIYAH AN-NAFS MODEL)

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the human soul has become a popular subject among Muslim and Western philosophers. In Western thought, it is interpreted that the soul and spirit are one and the same entity. There is no distinction between the two. However, this differs from the perspective of Muslim philosophers, as explained by Ibn Arabi, who posited that the soul and spirit are distinct, with the spirit being the source of human life inseparable from the body. This paper aims to fortify the spirit. The research employs a descriptive and analytical methodology from Ibn Arabi's viewpoint. Using this method, we can draw several conclusions: Firstly, Ibn Arabi's understanding of the soul is that it is the essence of a human being, inseparable from the soul. Secondly, there are three elements to strengthen the spirit: self-reflection (muhasabah), purification of the self (tazkiyyatun nafs), and striving (mujahadah). Thirdly, after undergoing this strengthening process, it culminates in a state of happiness brought about by the fortification of the spirit.

Keywords: *Ruh, Ibn Arabi, Strengthening the ruh, happiness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the soul and spirit in human nature may encourage you to continue your journey to some philosophers. The human body functions as a home for the soul. Like Plato, who spent a lot of time studying philosophy. And Socrates, who pushed himself to understand the mysteries of the world and reality. Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato have debated the concept of soul and spirit. For example, Socrates argued that the soul is the essence of the spirit, and in the hierarchy, the human soul is the soul that is in the highest position. Aristotle argued that the soul is the main substance of humans which includes aspects of their mind and character. (Kusuma 2022) In addition, Plato considered that the soul is between two worlds, namely a world that is always full of virtue and goodness and also a world filled with lust and evil. And in this definition of the

spirit there are similarities with the definition according to Muslim philosophers. As for the discussion of the spirit, it is related to happiness.

The mind and soul are two very important elements for achieving happiness. (Shafiq Ayob, Syahida, and Mohamad Zaini 2021) The characteristics of a healthy soul, which is referred to as Qalbun Salim in the Al-Qur'an literature, include qualities such as repentance (at-taqwa), avoiding desires for material possessions (al-zuhd), providing benefits to others (al-shumi), and depend on Allah's help (al-faqir). To achieve this health, it is necessary to maintain the cleanliness and purity of the body and mental health. When this health is achieved, a person will feel peace in his life. (Anam 2016) with the strategy taught by Islam with Happiness, the spirit will become healthy, and make him spiritually healthy

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the author chose to apply descriptive and analytical methods with a focus on the topic entitled "Ibn Arabi's Strengthening of the Spirit." This method is used to describe and carefully analyze the concept of strengthening the spirit put forward by the famous Islamic philosopher, Ibn Arabi. In this context, the descriptive method is used to describe in detail Ibn Arabi's views on the spirit and its related concepts. Meanwhile, the analytical method is used to analyze and understand the implications and significance of these thoughts in the context of Islamic spirituality and philosophy. The results of the study are expected to provide in-depth insight into Ibn Arabi's understanding of strengthening the spirit and its impacts in a religious and spiritual framework.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The soul is a sacred substance, has a high and life-filled nature, and is fundamentally different from the physical body. The body can be felt with the five senses, However, the mind is united with the body like water united with flowers, remaining insoluble and also not damaged, giving life to the body as long as the body is still able to absorb it. The term "ruh" in Arabic has various meanings, including referring to the soul, life, breath, revelation, instruction, and compassion. In the context where "al-ruh" is understood as an entity that gives life to the body, moves it, provides benefits, and protects it from harm. Al-ruh can be grouped into two parts, the first is the human soul and the second is the hayawani soul. The human soul is described as a subtle substance that has the ability for knowledge and acceptance of knowledge, is owned by humans, and consists of the hayawani soul that can reduce understanding of the nature of the soul itself. Meanwhile, the hayawani soul is defined as a subtle substance that is in the heart space and flows into the body through the blood vessels. (al Jurjani 1988, 115–16)

In Arabic, the word "ruh" has several different meanings. The word (ruh) can refer to the soul, "ريح" (rih) refers to the wind, and "روح" (rawh) means mercy. In al-Munawwir's Dictionary, the term "ruh" is sometimes used to refer to revelation, and sometimes understood as the Law of Allah and His commands. Sometimes, the term "ruh" is also interpreted as the Angels. Apart from that, the term "spirit" can also refer to essence, reality. (Hakamah 2018) In the Al-Qur'an, several verses discuss the concept of spirit, as stated in the following quote: "Then after I perfected its creation, I breathed My spirit

(creation) into it. So bow down to it" (Al-Qur'an: As-Shad Verse 72, n.d.) There is also another verse that explains about the spirit: "They ask you (Muhammad) about the spirit. Say, 'The spirit is the business of my Lord, and you have been given very little knowledge. (Al-Qur'an (Al-Isra Verse 85), n.d.) However, in the Qur'an, the term "soul" is described with the word "nafs". Although the general meaning of "nafs" can be interpreted as 'self', the use of this word in the context of 'soul' is mentioned by Allah SWT in the Qur'an no less than 31 times. (Mustofa 2005, 7) And in terms of terminology, the idea of the ruh in the Qur'an is the Basic Assumption of Life.

As a basic assumption of life, of course the existence of the Spirit is something very fundamental to life itself. Its goodness also determines the goodness of other things, as well as its badness. (Thabathaba'i, Hasan, and Lentera 2010, vol 20:189) According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah, the concept of ruh has the same root word as nafs, namely ra, waw, and ha, but the use of the word "ruh" often means more to "nafs." Nafs has the connotation of giving life, movement, providing benefits, and protecting from harm. The use of the term "ruh" has various meanings, including referring to the soul, the Angel Gabriel, a great angel who, when together with other angels, produces gusts of wind. (Abdul Rahim 2007, 150) There are three factors that cause the difference between the spirit and the soul. The first factor is the difference in substance or essence. The second factor is the difference in the functions or roles they carry out. While the third factor lies in the characteristics of the nature or properties that both have.

The first difference lies in its substantial aspect. There is a difference in the quality of essence between the soul and the spirit. The soul is identified as an entity that can experience fluctuations in its quality, whether it is up or down, good or bad, clean or dirty, and so on. On the other hand, the spirit is described as an entity that always has good and pure properties, with high quality. In fact, the spirit is considered a derivative of the Divine Essence.

The second difference between the soul and the spirit lies in their functional roles. The soul is considered an entity that is responsible for all human actions, while the spirit is not the one that will be responsible for all human actions, but the soul. On the other hand, the spirit is considered an entity that is always of high quality and has superior quality, while lust is considered an entity that has low quality and always drives towards evil. The soul, as an entity that has the capacity to choose between good and evil, has responsibility for the choices it makes.

The third difference lies in its characteristics. The soul has the ability to feel various emotions such as sadness, disappointment, happiness, tranquility, and peace. Meanwhile, the soul has a stable nature in goodness without experiencing fluctuations or changes. The soul is considered the positive center in human nature, in contrast to the negative nature of Satan.

Ibn Sina considers that the soul and the soul (nafs) can be considered synonymous. For him, the soul is the initial stage of perfection, where through the soul, a species (jins) reaches the essence of humanity. The soul (ruh) indicates the beginning of perfection and is the initial characteristic that transforms a body (jins) into a human body that has a true existence. This means that the soul is the first stage of perfection that underlies the body. Thus, the body becomes a condition for the concept of the soul, because the soul can only be called a soul if it actually exists in the body and produces various activities. (Najati Najati 2002, 144)

The soul according to Ibn Arabi

According to Ibn Arabi, the soul is the essence of man which is part of the essence of Allah. The soul was created by Allah before the universe was created and will remain after the universe is destroyed. The soul is the source of human life and is what distinguishes humans from other creatures. The soul is also responsible for human consciousness, thoughts, and feelings.

Ibn Arabi divides the soul into three levels:

In Ibn Arabi's view, the mind and body are the things that differentiate. The soul is a microcosm filled with light and has life, has knowledge, consciousness, and intelligence in the human dimension. Meanwhile, the body represents a dimension that almost completely lacks similar qualities. Thus, the body itself is a tool and goal of darkness and ignorance, carelessness, discomfort, and death. While the soul refers to the astral world, neither light nor dark, neither alive nor dead, neither wise nor stupid, conscious. The soul is always between these two properties, connecting above and below, light and dark. The soul has no high or low levels, is not truly light or dark, and is not related to the spirit or body. It is determined by the conditions in the middle. The spiritual soul: the lowest soul and is the animal soul. The spiritual soul is responsible for the daily needs of humans.

In the next phase, Ibn Arabi uses the term "imagination" to describe the universe at a lower level. In the macro world, which is a mirror image of the micro world of humans, there are two basic worlds of beings, the spiritual world is the abstract world of souls and the concrete world of matter. In the spiritual world, angels are often considered to be made of light in traditional symbolism. In contrast, the physical world is home to living beings such as plants, which are formed from the element of earth. Between these two worlds are various other realities that combine spiritual elements. The spiritual soul, which is a higher level than the spiritual soul, is responsible for the human ability to think, feel, and reason.

In the third stage, imagination encompasses all the broader intermediary realities, namely the entire universe or the compassionate soul. The universe is in the middle between the absolute Presence and the absolute nothingness. On the one hand, it is identified with the Presence, and on the other hand, it is identified with the nothingness. If the eternal entity is recognized, then the universe does not have a true Presence. The entire cosmos and all that is in it is not God or Presence, but the cosmos is a manifestation of God, not God Himself. (Susanto 2014) Ruh qalbi: the highest spirit and is the spiritual soul of man. Ruh qalbi is responsible for connecting man with God.

Ibn Arabi believed that the spirit is the most important of all parts of man. The spirit is what makes man alive and what allows man to relate to God.

Ibn Arabi explains about these spirits in his work:

And in his book it is written "When God created the forms in this world, the universal spirit was formed, In other words, when the universal spirit filled the existence of the forms of the world with its breath of life, then the spirits appeared, in each according to its own characteristics. It is important to note that there is no creature that does not have a soul, however, the ability of this soul to observe or interact with a particular creature may differ from one creature to another." (Muhyiddin 2006a, 15)

The universe, according to Ibn 'Arabi, is a manifestation of God and was created in His being. Both God and the universe reflect aspects of reality, and reflect each other. Each

name or attribute of God reaches manifestation in a smaller reality, as explained by Ibn 'Arabi. The entire universe is an aggregate of the attributes and effects of God's names. The main difference between God and the universe is that God exists by His own nature and does not need the universe, while the universe has no substance of its own and is completely dependent on God. The universe exists within certain limits, primarily as a reflection in a mirror. God, on the other hand, is ever-present, and existence belongs to Him entirely. In other words, existence is He, and He is existence. (Chittick and Syahid 2001, 58–59)

Healthy Soul

A healthy soul in Islam is a soul that is always close to Allah SWT. A healthy soul will feel calm, peaceful, and happy. A healthy soul will also have the ability to think clearly, make the right decisions, and solve problems well. Health comes from the root word "healthy." Health in question includes physical and mental health. Health must be seen as a whole that involves the interaction between physical, mental, and social aspects within the framework of well-being. Health has an importance that is greatly felt by many people. When there is a conflict in the body, which can be interpreted as a conflict with unhealthy lusts or desires, this can result in unhealthy souls and bodies. (Jaelani 2000, 56)

All individuals face various problems in their lives, and every problem always has a solution. The solution to overcome this problem involves having a healthy soul or good mental health. In an effort to shape individuals to have optimal mental health, there are two main aspects that need to be considered. First, is maintaining mental health by keeping away from mental disorders. Second, is maintaining physical health, meaning keeping the body parts healthy by taking care of them, maintaining cleanliness, consuming healthy and halal food, and so on. (Daulay 2018)

The characteristics of a healthy mind include the following: first, no mental disorders. Second, having the ability to adapt and optimize potential to the maximum. In addition, achieving personal happiness and contributing to the happiness of others. When the soul is in a pure, clean, and mentally healthy state, the soul will find it easier to accept, understand, and apply Islamic principles optimally, as the findings in this study show. Allah created humans with a body, soul, and spirit as tools to understand religion. In this context, Islam is used to utilize the potential of the body, Faith is used to utilize the potential of reason, and Ihsan is used to utilize the potential of the spirit. When an individual can achieve harmony between various aspects of himself, such as physical, mental, and spiritual demands, he will feel calm. Humans are the result of a combination of spirit and body, so they have tendencies, namely to do good and to do bad. (Hamzah, Isa, and Janor 2010)

The process that approaches self-strengthening as previously described is a way to achieve positive mental health. Tazkiyah al-nafs is an effort to purify oneself from negative traits such as anger and regret, towards self-improvement and purification, namely achieving a state of calm and contentment, known as nafs mutmainah. This process involves practicing the principles of Islamic law (Sharia). (Azmi 2009, 357)

In the context of understanding the Qur'an, the practice of Tazkiyah al-nafs is a method that includes cleansing, and growth, of the human soul. This method involves developing good morals in individuals and their influence on the survival of humans as a whole. During the journey of this soul development, the main goal is to achieve happiness, which

is defined as human success in giving meaning and dignity to themselves as rational beings, according to the findings in this study. Tazkiyah an-nafs not only aims to increase one's faith and piety, but also to form positive behavior in interactions with fellow humans and the environment. Therefore, through the practice of Tazkiyah al-nafs, humans can achieve the best quality in their physical and spiritual aspects, as revealed in this research.

Based on al-Ghazali's description, the signs of our heart's health and illness are indicated by morals or ethics. If the heart is pious, then the entire body with the five senses which are the outer gates of the nafs that directly face the physical world, will also be healthy. (I. Al-Ghazali, n.d., 26)

According to Ibn Arabi, a healthy soul is a soul that achieves balance between the physical and the soul. A healthy soul will have a body that is free from disease and physical disorders and a soul that is free from disease and mental disorders.

Ibn Arabi believes that a healthy soul is the main requirement for achieving happiness. People who have a healthy soul will be able to live a life full of peace, tranquility, and happiness. They will be able to face the challenges and difficulties of life better. They will also be able to make a more useful contribution to society..

There are various methods for maintaining mental health. One very relevant aspect is living according to Islamic principles. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of maintaining physical and mental health and behaving well towards fellow human beings.

4. CONCLUSION

Humans have two elements in themselves, the first is physical and the second is spiritual and both are closely related. Ibn Arabi stated that the soul is an important element, so according to him, the soul has three levels, namely the soul of the soul: the lowest soul and is the soul of an animal. The soul of the soul is responsible for basic human needs such as daily activities. The soul of the soul: a soul that is higher than the soul of the soul and is the soul of a human. The soul of the soul is responsible for the human ability to think, feel, and reason. The soul of the heart: the highest soul and is the spiritual soul of a human. The soul of the heart is responsible for connecting humans with Allah. According to Ibn Arabi, the soul is the essence of humans which is part of the essence of Allah. And the spirit is divided into three levels, first, the spirit is the smallest order of humans, second, Second, the spirit is a smallest element of a creature that has a body material that is part of the universe that is in the form of a living creature and presents the ability of a living creature. Third is the spirit that has the responsibility to relate to Allah. There are three methods in strengthening the spirit, namely: tazkiyyatun nafs, muhasabah, and mujahadah, these three methods can be an alternative to strengthening the spirit so that the spirit becomes healthy which then makes it happy, because in seeking happiness requires a healthy spirit, with a healthy spirit comes happiness. There are two types of happiness, namely happiness that has a temporary nature and true happiness. Temporary happiness is related to material things, while true happiness involves the soul, spirit, and heart. Therefore, to achieve true happiness, it is necessary to do a way for these elements to achieve happiness, one of which is by strengthening the spirit.

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