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# The Concept of Zikrullah in Surah Ar Ra'd Verse 28 as an Approach to the Psychological Crisis of Generation Z

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**Abstract**

The mental health crisis among Indonesia's Generation Z, particularly depression and anxiety, has become an urgent issue requiring cross-disciplinary solutions. This study aims to analyze the exegesis of *QS. Ar-Ra'd* verse 28 and its conceptual relevance and contribution to addressing depression and the mental health crisis among Indonesia's Generation Z. This qualitative library research employs thematic *(maudhu'i)* and analytical *(tahlili)* exegetical methods, examining the interpretations of Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurthubi, Ath-Thabari, and M. Quraish Shihab, compared with Islamic and modern psychological theories. The findings show that all four exegetes agree that dhikrullah (remembrance of Allah) is the primary means of achieving *tuma'ninah* (tranquility of heart), though with differing emphases. The thought of Al-Ghazali, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, and Ibn Taymiyyah forms a complementary framework for spiritual therapy, spanning identification of heart diseases, treatment through dhikr and Sufi practice, and relapse prevention through strengthened faith. Empirically, dhikr has been shown to work through psychological mechanisms (redirecting focus away from rumination and anxiety) and physiological mechanisms (reducing stress hormones and stabilizing the autonomic nervous system), making it relevant as a spiritual coping strategy for Generation Z. This study affirms that the Qur'an, particularly *QS. Ar-Ra'd* verse 28, can serve as both a theological and practical foundation for addressing the mental health crisis among young Indonesian Muslims.

## INTRODUCTION

Entering the third decade of the 21st century, mental health has become a critical public health issue in Indonesia, particularly among the youth. The Indonesia National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (I-NAMHS) revealed that one in three adolescents aged 10–17 experienced mental health problems in the past twelve months. Furthermore, roughly 2.45 million adolescents were diagnosed with clinical mental disorders, with major depression and anxiety being the most prevalent issues.(Wahdi, Wilopo, dan Erskine 2023)

Generation Z is uniquely vulnerable to these psychological pressures. Growing up amidst massive digitalization, constant social media exposure, and post-pandemic socio-economic uncertainties has created a highly complex landscape for their psychological well-being. Studies indicate a high prevalence of anxiety and mild-to-moderate depression in this demographic, which is often exacerbated by the social stigma that still hinders many young people from seeking professional clinical help.(Matilda, Wulandari, dan Darmanto 2025)

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In addressing this complex crisis, Islamic spiritual approaches have emerged as a relevant method of treatment, both as an independent therapy and as a complement to conventional medicine. Within the Islamic tradition, the Quran is not merely a normative guide but also a source of healing (*syifa'*) for inner ailments. Contemporary Islamic psychotherapy demonstrates that Quran-based practices, such as *dzikir* (remembrance of God), prayer, and reciting holy verses, effectively alleviate stress, anxiety, and depression.(Labib dkk. 2025)

A central Quranic reference for achieving inner peace is Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 28, which states that hearts find tranquility through the remembrance of Allah. (Nawawi 2021) Thematic exegesis (*tafsir maudhu'i*) and classical scholars like Ibn Kathir emphasize that this tranquility is not a temporary emotional state. Rather, it is a stable and continuous inner peace rooted in a deep spiritual connection with God, entirely independent of material or external worldly factors.(Ariza dkk. 2026)

Despite these findings, a significant research gap remains between theological studies and modern psychology. Exegesis of Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 28 is typically limited to normative theological explanations of inner peace, without contextualizing it within the specific mental health crisis of today's youth.(Safitri dkk. 2026) Conversely, psychological studies on Gen Z in Indonesia predominantly rely on Western clinical frameworks, rarely utilizing deep Quranic exegesis as a primary analytical tool.

This research aims to bridge that gap by analyzing the interpretation of Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 28 and examining its conceptual contribution to addressing depression and mental health crises among Generation Z in Indonesia. By combining classical and contemporary *tafsir* with current psychological data, this study seeks to provide a contextual thematic exegesis and offer practical insights into the Quran's potential as a highly relevant psychological therapy in the digital age.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the meaning of Surah Ar Ra'd verse 28 and its relevance to handling depression and mental health crises in Generation Z through the study of exegesis and scientific literature. Library research allows the researcher to obtain data from various written sources relevant to the research focus.(Rehanaisha, Sutoyo, dan Muslikah 2025)

The data sources in this study are divided into two categories, namely primary data and secondary data. The primary data includes the Quran, specifically Surah Ar Ra'd verse 28, along with classical and contemporary exegesis books, such as Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Al Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab, and Tafsir Al Munir by Wahbah Az Zuhaili. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from scientific journals regarding Islamic psychology, spiritually based therapy, mindfulness, mental health, as well as reports and publications discussing the mental health condition of Generation Z in Indonesia.(Harahap 2021)

Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation by reviewing, identifying, and classifying various literature related to the research theme. All data is then analyzed using the thematic exegesis method by focusing the discussion on the theme of inner peace in Surah Ar Ra'd verse 28. To strengthen the meaning of the verse, this research also utilizes a structural analytical approach to the content of the verse based on the interpretations of the exegetes.(Maimun dan Manshur 2026)

Furthermore, the data is analyzed using a descriptive and comparative analysis. This is done by describing the concept of inner peace according to the Quran, and then comparing it with the theory of Islamic psychology, spiritually based therapy, and the concept of mindfulness in modern psychology. Through this analysis, the researcher hopes to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the relevance of dhikr as a form of Islamic spiritual therapy in helping to overcome depression and mental health crises in Generation Z.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Interpretation of Surah Ar Ra'd verse 28 According to Scholars

الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَتَطْمَىِٕنُّ قُلُوْبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ ۗاَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ تَطْمَىِٕنُّ الْقُلُوْبُ

It means “Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.” (Surah Ar Ra'd verse 28)

This verse explains that faith has a close relationship with inner peace. The heart of a believer will achieve tranquility when constantly remembering Allah and making Him the place of reliance in every situation. Exegetes provide various explanations regarding this verse, but all point to the conclusion that dhikr is the primary means to achieve inner peace.

Interpretation of Ibn Kathir According to Ibn Kathir, the tranquility of the heart mentioned in this verse is the fruit of strong faith in Allah. Believers experience peace because they know Allah, believe in His promises, and trust in all His decrees. Dhikr in this context encompasses various forms of worship, such as reading the Quran, praying, and remembering Allah through words and actions. Through dhikr, a human heart that was initially restless will gain stronger peace and certainty in Allah.(Muhammad 2025)

Interpretation of Al Qurthubi Al Qurthubi explains that the meaning of dhikrullah is not limited to specific dhikr recitations but includes all forms of worship that connect humans with their Lord. According to him, the tranquility of the heart intended in this verse is the disappearance of fear, confusion, and doubt that can disrupt a person's mental stability. When a servant realizes that all affairs are under the power of Allah, they will obtain a sense of security and peace in their life.(Muhammad 2025)

Interpretation of Ath Thabari Ath Thabari interprets that the hearts of believers become peaceful because they accept and affirm the guidance of Allah delivered through revelation. Faith in the truth of the Quran makes their hearts free from doubt and confusion. In his view, dhikr can also be understood as the deep comprehension of divine revelation that guides humans toward certainty and firmness of heart.(L dan Mahmud 2025)

Interpretation of Quraish Shihab Quraish Shihab explains that inner peace is a fundamental need of every human being. In facing various life problems, humans are often overwhelmed by anxiety and uncertainty. Therefore, remembering Allah becomes an effective means to obtain inner peace. According to him, dhikr is not only spoken words but also a continuous awareness of the presence of Allah in life. This awareness will give birth to optimism, a sense of security, and psychological balance within a person. (Firdaus t.t.)

Based on the description above, it can be understood that all exegetes agree on the important role of dhikr in creating peace of mind. Nevertheless, each provides a different emphasis. Ibn Kathir highlights the connection between dhikr and the strength of faith. Al Qurthubi emphasizes the function of dhikr in eliminating anxiety and doubt. Ath Thabari views peace of mind as the result of belief in divine revelation. Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab focuses on the psychological aspect and the relevance of dhikr in modern human life. These differences in emphasis show the broad meaning of the verse and enrich the understanding of the importance of dhikr as the foundation of inner peace.

Terminologically, dhikrullah means remembering Allah through the heart, tongue, and actions. Dhikr is not only manifested in specific recitations but also through obedience to the commands of Allah, contemplation of His greatness, and the practice of Quranic teachings in daily life. (Sa’adah 2024) Meanwhile, tuma'ninah refers to a soul condition that is calm, steady, and not easily shaken by various circumstances. In the context of Surah Ar Ra'd verse 28, tuma'ninah indicates a peace born from certainty in Allah and trust in all His provisions. (RUSDI 2025) Thus, the tranquility intended in this verse does not mean being free from various life tests, but rather the ability to face those tests with a heart that remains calm and full of faith. (Adnan dan Sartika 2025)

**The Thoughts of Great Scholars as the Foundation of Mental Therapy**

Imam Al Ghazali views that the main source of human problems does not only originate from physical or environmental conditions but also from diseases of the heart *(amradh al qulub).* In his monumental work Ihya Ulum al Din, Al Ghazali explains that the heart *(qalb)* is the center of human personality.(Rahmawati 2022, 10) If the heart is filled with diseases such as excessive love of the world, envy *(hasad),* arrogance *(kibr),* showing off *(riya),* excessive fear, and distance from Allah, then this condition will affect a person's thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Conversely, a pure heart will give birth to inner peace and good morals.(Rahmawati 2022, 56)

The concept of amradh al qulub is highly relevant to the current condition of Generation Z. Although the term depression in modern psychology is not exactly the same as diseases of the heart according to Al Ghazali, both share common ground. Many adolescents and college students experience academic pressure, anxiety about the future, identity crises, loneliness, and social media pressure that cause prolonged stress and even depression. In Al Ghazali's perspective, this pressure can become heavier if the heart loses its spiritual orientation, making it easy for someone to feel empty, hopeless, and lose the meaning of life.(Imdad dan Fadlullah 2025)

According to Al Ghazali, the most fundamental therapy is not just eliminating psychological symptoms but also healing the heart. This healing process is known as tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul), which is the effort to cleanse the heart from despicable traits and adorn it with praiseworthy traits. The purification of the soul is carried out through repentance, increasing dhikr, reading the Quran, maintaining prayer with devotion, muhasabah (introspection), and habituating good morals. According to Al Ghazali, when the heart gets closer to Allah, the soul will gain peace so that a person is more capable of facing life pressures without easily falling into despair.(Mutholingah dan Zain 2021)

It should be understood that Al Ghazali does not consider depression solely as a spiritual problem. However, he emphasizes that mental health is strongly influenced by the condition of the heart. Therefore, the spiritual approach becomes an important complement alongside psychological and medical help when needed. This view is also in line with various contemporary studies showing that spiritual practices such as dhikr, muhasabah, and tazkiyatun nafs can increase mental resilience, reduce anxiety, and help individuals find the meaning of life.(Pratama dan Ghozi 2025, 3)

According to Ibn Qayyim al Jawziyya, dhikr is one of the most effective therapies for healing the soul. In his view, the human heart is like a body that requires nourishment. If the body needs food and drink to stay healthy, then the heart needs dhikr to stay alive, calm, and strong in facing various life tests. When a person is far from dhikr, their heart will become weak, restless, easily anxious, and even lose inner peace.(Syukur,m.a 2007, 91)

Ibn Qayyim explains that the main source of inner peace is closeness to Allah. Therefore, dhikr is not just saying the words Subhanallah, Alhamdulillah, or Allahu Akbar, but also presenting the awareness that Allah is always with His servants. This awareness makes a person feel they are not alone when facing problems, thereby reducing fear, anxiety, and despair. In the book Al Wabil ash Shayyib, Ibn Qayyim mentions that dhikr has many benefits for mental health. Among them are eliminating sadness, reducing anxiety, calming the heart, strengthening faith, giving hope, and helping someone face life trials more patiently. According to him, a heart that always remembers Allah will more easily accept destiny and will not be easily controlled by negative emotions. (Puspitasari 2022, 161)

If related to the condition of Generation Z, Ibn Qayyim's thoughts are very relevant. Today, many teenagers and students experience academic pressure, anxiety about the future, social comparison on social media, and identity crises. These conditions often trigger stress and depression. In Ibn Qayyim's perspective, dhikr can be a mental healing mechanism carried out gradually and continuously.(Paturahman 2019)

The healing mechanism can be explained as follows:

1. Calming the mind, Dhikr helps shift the focus from negative thoughts to remembering Allah so that the mind becomes calmer.
2. Strengthening the heart, A person who frequently performs dhikr has the conviction that every difficulty definitely has a way out because Allah always provides help.
3. Reducing anxiety, By relying on Allah, the fear of the future or failure will decrease.
4. Building optimism. Dhikr reminds us that the mercy of Allah is greater than the problems being faced, so that a person does not easily give up hope.
5. Maintaining spiritual health, Dhikr performed routinely builds mental resilience (spiritual resilience), making a person more prepared to face life pressures.

This concept aligns with the word of Allah in the Quran Surah Ar Ra'd verse 28: “Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.” The verse serves as the foundation that peace of mind is obtained through dhikr. In the context of Islamic psychology, dhikr is not only a worship but also a means of emotion regulation, spiritual strengthening, and mental health recovery.

Meanwhile, in the tradition of classical Islamic thought, Ibn Taimiyyah is known as one of the scholars who consistently places faith *(aqidah)* and monotheism *(tawhid)* as the main foundation for the wholeness of the human soul. For Ibn Taimiyyah, faith is not merely intellectual justification *(at tashdiq)* of the existence of Allah, but rather a conviction that must be manifested in the unified connection of the heart, tongue, and actions.(Sari dan Suratman 2025) This understanding makes faith something alive and active, not merely passive knowledge, so that its strength directly influences a person's psychological stability in facing life pressures.

The concept of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul) developed by Ibn Taimiyyah explains that cleansing the soul from traits and behaviors that deviate from human nature *(fitrah)* cannot be separated from the strengthening of tawhid and solid faith.(Sari dan Suratman 2025) In this view, the human soul consists of two interconnected elements, namely the physical body (al jasad) and the soul *(al nafs)*, where the soul acts as a manager that regulates all human behavior based on the potential fitrah bestowed by Allah since the beginning of creation.(Fauziyah, Azaria, dan Khainuddin 2024) When the foundation of tawhid in this soul is solid, a person has a stable inner framework even when faced with emotional turmoil or external pressures.

The relevance of this thought to contemporary mental health lies in the idea that the psychological stability of a Muslim heavily depends on the strength of their belief foundation. A study on Islamic aqidah and mental health affirms that a person's psychological well being is strongly influenced by the strength of the aqidah foundation planted in the heart, which is then manifested in outward actions in the form of morality. Without strong aqidah, worship practices such as prayer or dhikr will only become routines without the spiritual power capable of calming the soul.(Saputra 2019) This view aligns with Ibn Taimiyyah's emphasis that authentic faith must unite in inner awareness, rather than just mere ritual formality.

In this framework of thinking, faith functions as an active psychological defense mechanism against various forms of life pressures, including anxiety and despair. Faith in qadha and qadar, one of the pillars of faith emphasized in the tradition of thought like Ibn Taimiyyah, provides a framework of acceptance that many things in life are beyond human control. This allows individuals to shift their focus to efforts (ikhtiar) that are within their control while surrendering the final result to Allah.(Najamudin dkk. 2026) This kind of belief directly reduces the restlessness that arises due to uncertainty, while simultaneously instilling a sense of inner security that does not depend on fluctuating external conditions.

Thus, the strengthening of faith in the perspective of Ibn Taimiyyah can be understood as a mental health fortress in two complementary dimensions. First, as a source of inner stability that makes a person not easily swayed by momentary emotional turmoil. Second, as a framework of meaning that provides direction and purpose in life amidst the uncertainty of the

times. When faith is strongly planted in the soul, a person has a solid inner foothold to face psychological crises without losing hope or their direction in life.(Najamudin dkk. 2026)

**The Quran as a Mental Therapy Solution for Generation Z in Indonesia**

Dhikr, as the activity of remembering Allah through the repetition of specific phrases, has been widely studied not only from a normative theological aspect but also from its psychological and physiological mechanisms in relieving stress and anxiety. Psychologically, dhikr functions as a relaxation technique that helps individuals shift the focus of their mind from the source of anxiety to the awareness of the presence of Allah, thereby breaking the pattern of rumination or recurring negative thoughts. The consistent process of repeating dhikr phrases provides a sense of psychological control for individuals experiencing anxiety, while simultaneously creating space for the mind to rest from continuous mental pressure.(Mawaddah, Lestari, dan Harmaini 2024)

From a physiological perspective, several literature reviews show that the practice of dhikr is associated with a decrease in the activity of the sympathetic nervous system, the system responsible for the body response to stress, also known as the fight or flight response. This decrease in sympathetic nervous system activity is associated with a slower heart rate, decreased blood pressure, and improved sleep quality, which overall contribute to the reduction of anxiety.(Mawaddah, Lestari, dan Harmaini 2024) This mechanism explains why dhikr, like other repetition based relaxation techniques, can stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, producing a calming effect that opposes the body condition during acute stress.

Besides affecting the autonomic nervous system, the practice of dhikr is also linked to an increase in the production of endorphins, known as the happiness hormone. This increased endorphin production provides a feeling of relaxation and well being, which functions to reduce body tension while improving overall comfort.(Mawaddah, Lestari, dan Harmaini 2024) This indicates that the effect of dhikr on stress reduction is not singular, but involves multiple biological pathways simultaneously, ranging from the regulation of the autonomic nervous system to changes in the hormonal profile that support a relaxed state.

Other studies affirm that the superiority of dhikr compared to secular relaxation techniques such as general meditation lies in its spiritual relevance for Muslim individuals, where the process of remembering Allah provides a deeper sense of connection and meaning compared to spiritually neutral relaxation techniques.(Mawaddah, Lestari, dan Harmaini 2024) This spiritual dimension is important because anxiety is not only psychophysiological, but is also often rooted in a crisis of meaning and a sense of existential alienation, which dhikr bridges by strengthening the sense of the presence and protection of Allah in the individual life.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that most research on the mechanism of dhikr in reducing stress is still dominated by case studies and literature reviews with relatively limited sample sizes. Therefore, generalizing the findings to various age groups or clinical conditions, including the Generation Z population who face specific psychological pressures related to digital life, still requires further empirical studies with stronger methodological designs.(Mawaddah, Lestari, dan Harmaini 2024) Even so, the convergence of findings from various studies regarding the relaxation effect, autonomic nervous system regulation, and the increase in well being hormones due to the practice of dhikr provides a strong enough foundation to understand why the recommendation of dhikr in Surah Ar Ra'd verse 28 has scientifically explainable relevance. It also affirms its position as a spiritual coping resource that can be integrated into efforts to handle the anxiety of today youth.

Neuroscience research shows that brain activity when experiencing anxiety has different characteristics from brain activity when performing dhikr of istighfar. These differences can be observed through brain wave frequency patterns recorded using an electroencephalogram (EEG). In this study, brain wave data was analyzed using the machine learning method, which is a system that allows computers to predict and classify data based on specific algorithms. One of the methods used is K Nearest Neighbor (KNN), which is known to have a high level of accuracy in the classification process. The research results show that brain wave analysis can

objectively distinguish between conditions of anxiety and dhikr. All of this provides scientific evidence that dhikr does not only impact the spiritual aspect but also influences neurological activities related to calmness and emotional control.

Through these studies, it is proven that dhikr plays an important role in improving a person psychological well being. In spiritual practice, dhikr helps individuals achieve inner peace while reducing stress levels. The results of various studies show that dhikr therapy can improve well being through strengthening self acceptance, forming more positive social relationships, and clarifying life goals. By performing dhikr, a person will feel closeness to Allah which impacts increasing self confidence and an optimistic attitude. Furthermore, dhikr also plays a role in controlling emotions and improving adaptability, thereby overall providing a positive impact on mental health.(Anastasya dkk. 2024, hlm.65)

One of the first practical implementations for Generation Z is taking time every day to perform dhikr and show gratitude to Allah. This habit can help calm the mind, strengthen identity, and direct focus to life values that are more meaningful than mere recognition on social media. If done consistently, dhikr can become a means to reduce stress and anxiety and form a more emotionally and spiritually balanced personality.

Second, reading and contemplating the Quran is one way Generation Z can maintain mental and spiritual health. Through understanding the meaning of Quranic verses, a person can obtain inner peace, strengthen faith, and increase resilience in facing various life pressures. In addition, reading the Quran regularly can help reduce stress and anxiety, thereby contributing to the creation of better psychological well being.(Jannah dkk. 2025, hlm.801)

Third, Generation Z can utilize digital technology positively by accessing and disseminating Islamic content through various digital platforms. Aside from increasing religious understanding through Quran applications and online learning media, using technology wisely can also help prevent the spread of false information and encourage the formation of a healthier digital environment. Thus, digital technology can become a means to strengthen spiritual values, increase religious literacy, and support the mental health of Generation Z.

Lastly, joining positive religious communities can help Generation Z strengthen their understanding of religion, gain emotional support, and build a better identity. Besides being a means of spiritual development, religious communities can also increase the sense of togetherness, strengthen mental health, and help Generation Z face various life challenges more positively.(Rahmatulloh dkk. 2025, hlm.356-357)

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that QS. Ar-Ra'd verse 28 affirms *dhikrullah* (remembrance of Allah) as the primary means of attaining *tuma'ninah* (tranquility of the heart), as agreed upon by Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurthubi, Ath-Thabari, and M. Quraish Shihab, albeit with different emphases on the aspects of faith, worship, acceptance of revelation, and psychological relevance. The thoughts of Al-Ghazali, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, and Ibn Taymiyyah complement one another in forming a holistic framework for mental therapy. This encompasses the identification of diseases of the heart, treatment through *dhikr* and structured spiritual purification, as well as relapse prevention through the strengthening of faith. Empirically, *dhikr* operates through psychological and physiological mechanisms that support the reduction of stress and anxiety, making it highly relevant as a spiritual coping strategy for Generation Z in navigating digital, academic, and social pressures. Thus, the Quran is proven to be relevant not only as a normative guide but also as a fundamental source of mental therapy that can be effectively bridged with modern psychological approaches.

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