



Mental Health: A Study of Al-Kindi's Philosophical Thoughts of The Soul

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Abstract:

Mental health for every individual, starting from the family, school, workplace, to the general public has become the main focus at this time. In 2020, when the massive spread of the COVID-19 virus, many people's mental health was disturbed. In the current condition of society, it appears that the mental health of each individual cannot be generalized. Good health enables people to realize their potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and contribute to their communities. Al-Kindi is a philosopher who is very tenacious in carrying out his shari'at. One of the philosophies studied by Al-Kindi is the philosophy of the soul. The purpose of this study is to find out preventive measures that can be taken to avoid mental illness. This research uses a type of qualitative research, based on library research (literary study). The research approach used in this article is a historical approach and a philosophical approach. This study uses a rationalistic approach with comparative analysis techniques, namely comparing one reference with another. The conclusion of this research is when you want a calm soul, you have to use rational (reason). Because desire and love are sensuous will experience destruction and annihilation. Meanwhile, rational love is always eternal and constant and does not experience destruction and loss. That's why, people who want to be happy and prevent themselves from being disturbed by sadness, then he must make his love and desire in the rational world not in the sensory world.

Key Words: *Mental Health, Philosophy of the Soul, Al-Kindi*

Abstrak:

Kesehatan mental bagi tiap individu mulai dari keluarga, sekolah, tempat kerja, hingga masyarakat umum telah menjadi fokus utama saat ini. Pada tahun 2020 saat penyebaran masif virus COVID-19, banyak masyarakat yang kesehatan mentalnya terganggu. Dalam kondisi masyarakat saat ini, nampaknya kesehatan jiwa setiap individu tidak bisa disamaratakan. Kesehatan yang baik memungkinkan orang menyadari potensi mereka, mengatasi tekanan hidup yang normal, bekerja secara produktif dan berkontribusi pada komunitas mereka. Al-Kindi adalah seorang filosof yang sangat ulet dalam menjalankan syari'atnya. Salah satu filsafat yang dipelajari oleh Al-Kindi adalah filsafat jiwa. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui upaya preventif yang dapat dilakukan agar terhindar dari penyakit mental. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian kualitatif, berdasarkan penelitian kepustakaan (literary study). Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan dalam artikel ini adalah pendekatan sejarah dan pendekatan filosofis. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan rasionalistik dengan teknik analisis komparatif yaitu membandingkan satu referensi dengan referensi lainnya. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah ketika ingin jiwa

tenang maka harus menggunakan rasional (nalar). Karena nafsu dan cinta yang sensual akan mengalami kehancuran dan pemusnahan. Sedangkan cinta rasional selalu abadi dan tetap serta tidak mengalami kehancuran dan kehilangan. Itu sebabnya, orang yang ingin bahagia dan mencegah dirinya diganggu oleh kesedihan, maka ia harus mewujudkan cinta dan keinginannya di dunia rasional bukan di dunia indrawi.

Kata Kunci: *Kesehatan Mental, Filsafat Jiwa, Al-Kindi*

INTRODUCTION

Mental health for every individual, starting from the family, school, workplace, to the general public has become the main focus at this time (Hjálmsdóttir et al., 2021; McGorry et al., 2022). In 2020, when the massive spread of the COVID-19 virus, many people's mental health was disturbed. This happened due to continuous social restrictions and difficulties in finding work amid a pandemic (Dubey et al., 2020; Pathan et al., 2023). This period is colored by various factors that can trigger conflict, downfall and psychological struggles to the point where many nations in the world live at a critical point. This has caused the behaviorists to generally term this period the Age of Confusion (Taschereau-Dumouchel et al., 2022).

Humans begin to move to think about themselves when they discover the fact that the ability to balance themselves has been lost, where their relationship with the surrounding environment is no longer a relationship full of love and security, they are moved when they feel the danger of negligence and lack of harmony with the world's environment. material and social environment in which they live. Humans feel a very urgent need to carry out self-evaluation in earnest to understand themselves (Pradana et al., 2020).

In the current condition of society, it appears that the mental health of each individual cannot be generalized. This condition makes the discussion of mental health more urgent which leads to how to empower individuals, families, and communities to be able to find, maintain, and optimize their mental health in dealing with everyday life (Holmes et al., 2020; Shim, 2021). Mental health and disorder problems have quite complex dimensions. Mental health is not only related to medical or psychological problems, but also has a socio-cultural dimension to a spiritual and religious dimension (Nahardani et al., 2019).

According to WHO (2013), good health enables people to realize their potential, overcome the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their communities. Mental health disorders cannot be underestimated because the number of cases currently is still quite alarming. It is estimated that one in four people will suffer from a mental disorder during their lifetime. According to the WHO Asia Pacific region (WHO SEARO) the highest number of cases of depressive disorders is in India (56,675,969 cases or 4.5% of the population), the lowest is in the Maldives (12,739 cases or 3.7% of the population). Meanwhile in Indonesia there were 9,162,886 cases or 3.7% of the population (WHO,2017).

There are three things that serve as indicators of mental health or not, namely faith, knowledge, and good deeds or productive actions. This explains

that a person can maintain his mental health by using and exploiting his energy (intellectual or cognitive, emotional and motivational) as well as possible and bringing to the realization of his humanity (productivity) which does not conflict with the principles or morals regulated in Islam (Radiani, 2019).

Al-Kindi is a philosopher who is very tenacious in carrying out his shari'at. Al-Kindi is also a very famous Muslim scientist. Not a few institutions were founded by Al-Kindi, including a place that serves as a gathering place. This place is often called Bait Al-Hikmah. Al-Kindi taught not a little knowledge, both from religious knowledge to knowledge related to philosophy taught by Al-Kindi (Abdul-Jabbar, 2020; Erlwein, 2023).

Al-Kindi emphasized the significance of the soul's existence as it relates to issues facing humans. He believes that mental health issues affect all people at some point in their lives. Humans differ from one another in their pursuit of the best conditions, as well as in the ways in which they create issues and find answers (Wahyuni, 2022). According to earlier research by (Yusuf, 2007), one of the psychological illnesses (neurosis), specifically sadness (al-huzn), has a cure in Al-Kindi's theory of the soul. According to Al-Kindi, sadness is an illness that can strike anybody, anywhere, at any time. It strikes when a person has a desire and then suffers the loss or failure of that desire. Al-Kindi wrote in his work *Rasa'il al-Kindi al-falsafiyah* that "Humans should not grieve over the loss of what they love, on the contrary, humans must be able to familiarize themselves with noble habits and be willing to face all circumstances so that we are always happy" (Saloom, 2002). The purpose of this study is to find out preventive measures that can be taken to avoid mental illness.

In light of prior study, the author brings up the subject of mental health by examining Al Kindi's philosophical view of the soul as a means of preventing various mental diseases. In order to change behavior and achieve peace of mind, it is anticipated that this article will offer insight into the ideas of the soul.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a type of qualitative research, based on library research (literature study) with a descriptive form of analysis. The method used in this research is content analysis method to analyze the data related to the research. The reference source was taken from the book written by Al-Kindi, namely "*al-Dirasat al-Nafsiyyah 'Inda al'Ulama' al-Muslimin*" which was translated by Gazi Saloom. The first printing was published in 2002 by Pustaka Hidayah, Bandung. The second book entitled "*Rasa'il al-Kindi al-falsafiyah*" by Abu Ridah was published in 1959 by Daru'l-Fikr al-'Arabi, Cairo. The research approach used in this article is a historical approach, namely regarding education, traits, as well as thoughts and ideas from the subject of character formation as well as a philosophical approach to study or understand mental issues as well as possible based on the understanding or methodology used by Al-Kindi. This study uses a rationalistic approach with comparative analysis techniques, namely

comparing one reference with another, so that the things that a character wants to explore are Al-Kindi's ideas, ideas or thoughts, especially regarding his thoughts on the philosophy of the soul.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A Brief History of Al-Kindi and His Works

Al-Kindi's full name is Abu Yusuf Ya'qub bin Ishaq bin Sabbah bin Imran bin Ismail al-Ash'ats bin Qais al-Kindi. He was born around 185 H, coincided in 801 AD, and died in 260 H/873 AD. In the West his name is more popular as al-Kindus. Al-Kindi is a descendant of the Kindah tribe, South Arabia. His father was named Ishaq al-Sabah who had served as governor in Kufah during the reign of caliph Al-Mahdi (775-785 AD), and Harun ar-Rashid (786-804). Because of his mastery in various scientific disciplines, it is not surprising that the son of Harun al-Rashid, the caliph Ma'mun ar-Raysid, hired him as a translator of Aristotle's works into Arabic, so that he was eventually dubbed the "first Muslim philosopher who succeeded in translating the works of Aristotle" (Ali, 2022).

Al-Kindi spent his childhood in Kufa memorizing the Koran, studying Arabic grammar, Arabic literature and arithmetic. Everything he learned at that time was a compulsory curriculum for all the children of his time in the Kufa region. Furthermore, Al-Kindi studied Fiqh and a new scientific study called Kalam. However, Al-Kindi's tendency was towards science and philosophy, especially when Al-Kindi left Kufah and lived in Baghdad. (Basri, 2013). In the capital city of the Bani Abbas government, Al-Kindi devoted his attention to translating and studying philosophy and other rational thoughts that were rife at that time. According to Al-Qifti (1171-1248 AD), Al-Kindi translated many philosophical books, explained complex matters, and summed up his theories in a sophisticated manner. This was possible because Al-Kindi was believed to have mastered both Greek and Syriac, the main languages of philosophical works at that time. Thanks to this ability, Al-Kindi was able to improve the results of other people's translations, for example the translation of Ibn Na'ima Al-Himsi, a Christian translator, of the book *Enneads* by Plotinus (204-270 AD); it was this book of the *Enneads* which among Arab thinkers was later misunderstood as Aristotle's *Theology* (Soleh, 2014).

Al-Kindi was an Islamic philosopher who was very productive in writing books in various branches of knowledge that were known at that time. In the book of *al-Fihrist*, Ibn Nadim has written a list which contains the names of books that have been written by al-Kindi. These books are grouped by Ibn Nadim in 17 Chapters, according to the disciplines he is familiar with, and consist of 241 books. The first group consists of philosophical books consisting of twenty-two books and treatises. While the seventeenth (last) group is books and treatises which are an anthology (*al-Anwa'iyat*) consisting of thirty-three pieces. Some of these books are in bold format and some are only made up of a few sheets of paper. Most of these books have been lost and some are still in manuscript form

and stored in various libraries in Arab and European countries. Only a few books have been published, including by Muhd. A. Hadi Abu Ridah in his book *Rasa'il al-Kindi al-Falsafiyah* which consists of two volumes, including *Fi al-Falsafah al-Ula*, *Fi hudud al-Asy'ya'wa rusumuha*, *Fi al-Fa'il al-Haq al-Awwal al-Tam*, *Fi I-dhah Tanahi jirm al-'Alam*, *Fi Wahdaniyyati 'I-lah wa Tanahi jirm al-'Alam*, *Fi 'illah al-Kaun wa al-Fasad*, *Fi al-Quli fi An-nafs*, and *Fi'n-Nafs* (Ridah, 1959).

Al-Kindi's Philosophy of the Soul

Al-Kindi initiated the discussion of the soul in Islamic philosophy. According to him, the soul is *Jauhar al-Basith*, is divine and spiritual, and is a single, unstructured, short, wide, and shallow nur that springs from God's nur. The soul is significant, ideal, and honorable. Its foundation is derived from the foundation of God. He shares the same bond with Allah as light does with the sun. The soul has its own existence, is spiritual and divine, and is distinct from the body (Newsom et al., 2020; Vitz et al., 2022,). Philosophy, according to Al-Kindi, is the limit of knowing the nature of history, the limit of human capabilities. The goal of philosophy in theory is to know the truth, and in practice is to practice righteousness or virtue (Madani, 2015). In the effort to combine religion and philosophy, Al-Kindi is based on the belief that the holy book of the Qur'an has presented convincing arguments about truth which will never conflict with the doctrines produced by philosophy. However, the process of integrating religion and philosophy is impossible without recognizing the existence of the same working tools of religion and philosophy. For Al-Kindi, the fact that philosophy relies on reason (rationality) is no different from the fact that religious doctrine also requires reason as a tool to understand its teachings. This means, Al-Kindi pays high respect to the gift of reason by maximizing the work of reason in achieving knowledge of the truth (Basri, 2013).

Philosophy is the result of the work of thinking in search of the nature of everything systematically, radically and universally, it discusses "the basics of religion analytically and critically, with the intention of stating the truth of religious teachings or at least explaining that what religion teaches not impossible and not contrary to logic" (Nasution, 1973). The basics of religion referred to here are among others; revelation, sending prophets and apostles, divinity, immortality of life, human relationship with God (free from or bound to God's will), evil, life after death, including spirit or soul and others (Kamaluddin, 2021).

In the Qur'an it has been explained that matters of the spirit (soul) are God's business, you are not given knowledge except a little. This is explained by Allah in the Qur'an surah al-Isra 'verse 85. Asbabun nujul this verse according to Bukhari's history from Ibn Mas'ud, he said, "once upon a time, I was walking with the Messenger of Allah in Medina. Then we passed before several groups of people from the Quraysh, some of them said, "Why don't you ask him something? Then they asked, tell us about the nature of spirit. Rasulullah stood

for a while and raised his head. I know that the middle of the revelation to him. When finished, he also recited this verse".

According to al-Kindi "an-Nafs" (soul) "is not composed (simple, simple) but has important, perfect, and noble meanings. Its substance comes from the substance of God. His relationship with God is the same as that of light with the sun" (Nasution, 1973). The above explanation means that the spirit is different from the jism, but the two are related, because if one of the two (spirit) separates from the jism, the jism no longer functions (dies), and the spirit will return to its origin. Therefore, according to al-Kindi the soul is "the first perfection of natural jism that potentially has life". Or the soul is "the perfection of natural jism which organically accepts life. The difference between the two definitions lies only in the editorial, not in the meaning. That is, the soul is an essential perfection for jism without which, jism does not function at all. Jism will perish if it has left a soul (Kamaluddin, 2021).

Al-Kindi acknowledges the immortality of the soul looking at the statement above which is corroborated by the statement: "O ignorant human! Don't you know that your place in this world is only for a short time, then you will go to the real world, where you will live forever and ever." Thus it can be said that the relationship between the soul and the body is only accidental, and it is an energy that can generate strength for the body to carry out its activities. The soul according to Al-Kindi has three powers, namely the power of lust (al-quwwah al-syahwaniyah), the power of anger (al-quwwah al-gadhabiyah), and the power of thinking (al-quwwah al-'aqliyah). Then the thinking power (reason) is further divided into three, namely potential intellect, intellect that has left the potential to become actual, and intellect that has reached the second level of actuality. Potential reason cannot come out to become actual, if there is no force that moves it from the outside, because of that there is a kind of mind that has a form outside the human spirit, namely reason that is forever in actuality, it is this mind that is forever in actuality that drives potential to become actual (Nasution, 1973).

Definition of Mental Health

Mental health is a linguist from mental Hygiene or Mental Health derived from the words Hygiene and Mental. Etymologically, Hygiene comes from the word Hygea, which is the name of the ancient Greek goddess of health who has the task of taking care of human health problems in the world (Yusuf, 2004). Mental health (mental hygiene) is a science that includes a system of principles, regulations and procedures to enhance spiritual health. A person who is mentally healthy is a person who is spiritually or in his heart always feels calm, safe, secure. According to H.C. Witherington, mental health issues involve knowledge and principles in the fields of psychology, medicine, psychiatry, biology, sociology, and religion. (Jalaluddin, 2015).

The World Health Organization (WHO) provides a definition of mental health, "health is a state of physical mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (Hartono, 2012). The definition of mental health formulated by this world health organization, which later became the formulation of mental health law in Indonesia. Mental health is the ability to adapt to oneself, to other people, and to the society in which one lives. Mental health is not only a healthy soul in a healthy body (*means sana in copere sano*), but also a condition that is closely related to all human existence. It is a personality state characterized by a person's ability to face reality and to function effectively in a dynamic society (Ramayulis, 2002).

Relationship between Islam and Mental Health

According to Hasan Langgulung, mental health can be concluded as a noble character. Therefore, mental health is defined as a state of the soul that makes one feel willing and sincere and at ease when carrying out noble morals. That mental health according to Islam, which is synonymous with worship or self-development of human potential, in the context of serving Allah and His religion to get an-nafs al-muthmainnah (a calm and happy soul) with the perfection of faith in his life (Islam et al., 2022).

According to the Islamic view, mentally healthy people are people whose behavior, thoughts, and feelings reflect the condition of their soul, in accordance with Islamic teachings. This means, a person who is mentally healthy is a person in whom there is integration between his behavior, feelings, thoughts and the spirit of diversity (Qatrunnada et al., 2021; Currier et al., 2023). In medical science known as "psychomatics" (psychiatry). What this term means is to explain that there is a close relationship between the soul and the body. If the soul is in a normal state, such as trouble, worry, anxiety, and so on, then the body also suffers (Ramayulis, 2002; Qianwei et al., 2020).

In accordance with the term, then psychotherapy and autotherapy are used to cure patients who suffer from spiritual disorders (mental). In the healing effort, self-healing methods are used, which in certain cases are usually associated with aspects of each belief. A number of cases which show that there is a relationship between belief factors and mental or mental health seem to have been realized by scientists several centuries ago. Similar facts will also be found in many books that reveal how close the relationship between religion and mental health is. The relationship between psychology and religion in relation to the relationship between religion as a belief and mental health, lies in the attitude of one's surrender to a supreme power (Allah SWT) (Ramayulis, 2002).

Al-Kindi's Thoughts on Mental Health

According to Al-Kindi, the power center of the soul is the brain. This opinion differs from that of Aristotle, who stated that the center of the senses is the heart. A heart that is always close to or synonymous with sadness and

pleasure. Sadness is a psychological disorder (neurosis) that occurs due to the loss of things that are loved and desired. One who makes his love and desire sensual, he will be subject to the disturbances of sorrow and desire. Because desire and love are sensuous will experience destruction and annihilation. Meanwhile, rational love is always eternal and constant and does not experience destruction and loss. That's why, people who want to be happy and prevent themselves from being disturbed by sadness, then he must make his love and desire in the rational world not in the sensory world. As Al-Kindi revealed "If we don't want to lose what we want and what we seek, then we must look to the rational world and discover that our loves, possessions, and desires originate in the rational world" (Ridah, 1959). Thus it can be understood that Al-Kindi said if you want a healthy soul you have to use rational (reason).

Al-Kindi stated, sadness is a psychiatric disorder, so it must be serious about preventing this psychiatric or psychic disorder as we prevent physical disorders. So that the improvement and healing of the soul and sadness disorders is carried out in stages, including being patient in improving ourselves beyond our patience in healing physical disorders, getting used to carrying out praiseworthy habits on trivial things, disciplining these commendable habits on difficult things, then increasing habituation to a greater extent than that, and if it becomes a habit, raise it to a higher level, so that it can accustom to larger things as habit to smaller things (Ehn et al., 2020). Al-Kindi's ideas have preceded modern psychologists who adhere to the principle of learning, namely the principle of studying difficult habits. This principle has been used by modern behavioristic psychiatrists in curing bad habits and in treating anxiety (Langgulung, 1992).

CONCLUSION

Al-Kindi's philosophy of soul provides a solution in the realm of mental health. When you want a calm soul, you have to use rational (reason). Because desire and love are sensuous will experience destruction and annihilation. Meanwhile, rational love is always eternal and constant and does not experience destruction and loss. That's why, people who want to be happy and prevent themselves from being disturbed by sadness, then he must make his love and desire in the rational world not in the sensory world. The relationship between psychology and religion in relation to the relationship between religion as a belief and mental health, lies in the attitude of one's surrender to a supreme power (Allah SWT). Because the information obtained is still limited from Al-Kindi's works, the authors suggest further research on tricks or efforts to prevent mental illness from Al-Kindi's philosophy of soul specifically.

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