

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Western Renaissance brought about a scientific paradigm that emphasized reason and devalued transcendental aspects. Rationality became the cornerstone of liberal thought, as it was more compatible with knowledge-based thinking. This period saw the rise of secular, materialistic and empirical worldviews, which is increasingly marginalized religion. By relegating religion to the private sphere, modern human experienced a void in spiritual values that should be central to human existence.¹ At that time, secular, materialistic and empiricistic understandings were increasingly unfriendly to the existence of religions. By marginalizing religion from the public sphere to the private sphere, modern humans experienced a gap in spiritual values that should be the essence and existence of humans themselves. The separation of religious elements from life, focusing the purpose of life on materialism and worshiping reason as a justification tool for all truths made modern humans lose their authenticity.² This separation became the true essence, rather than the goal, of secularization. It alienated humans from their spiritual lives and the metaphysical aspects

¹ Tiar Anwar Bachtiar, 'Leonard Binder, Charles Kurzman and the Term Liberal Islam.. (Jakarta: INSISTS, 2021), p: 25. Collection of essays in the book entitled Rational Without Being Liberal: Answering the Challenges of Liberalizing Islamic Thought

² Ahmad Khoirul Fata & Siti Mahmudah Noorhayati, *Sekulerisme dan Tantangan Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer*. Madania Journal: December 2016. p: 954

that govern reason and language, essentially leading to a loss of self-understanding grounded in religion and religious ideologies.³

Modern civilization, originating in the West in the 17th century, marked the beginning of the triumph of rationalism and empiricism over religious dogmatism.⁴ Humans, liberated from religious constraints, experienced spiritual emptiness, a loss of meaning and purpose in life, and a sense of alienation.⁵ Coupled with an increasingly automated and sophisticated lifestyle, modern humans have become careless and oblivious to the distortion of their spiritual dimension.⁶ This has led to a multi-faceted crisis, as modern humans have lost touch with their transcendental aspects. The erosion of the spiritual dimension of modern humans has given rise to a new challenge: the spirituality crisis.

The spiritual crisis has driven humans to compete with one another to find the essence of happiness they yearn for. Recently, philosophy has emerged as a popular discourse, offering potential solutions to the spiritual crisis. Originating in Ancient Greece, philosophy taught its followers to cultivate a calm and peaceful soul, free from negative emotions, a state known as "ataraxia".⁷

³ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*. RZS-CASIS: Malaysia, 2021. pp. 31-35

⁴ Mohammad Arkoun, *Islamic Reason and Modern Reason: Various Challenges and New Paths* (Jakarta: INIS, 1994), page: 4

⁵ Komaruddin Hidayat, *Paramadina Sufism Study Guide in Chapter "The Meaning of Sufism for the Modern World"* (Jakarta: Paramadina), pp; 212-216 and Alienation means a state of feeling alienated or isolated and withdrawal or self-exile from a group or society. KBBI V.1 1

⁶ Distortion (KBBI v.1 1) means the reversal of a fact, rule, and deviation.

⁷ Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, *Meditation in Book 1 : Debts and Lessons* : Sextus. (The Modern Library: New York)

Departing from the misfortune that befell Zeno⁸ while sailing across the Mediterranean Sea, a shipwreck caused he had endured the misfortune of a shipwreck that robbed him of his possessions and stranded him in Athens, Zeno was forced to confront reality and embrace his new circumstances.⁹ This experience aligns with the challenges faced by modern humans who struggle to control their emotions. The inability to manage emotions effectively can hinder happiness, as it prevents individuals from understanding others, empathizing, and behaving kindly. By developing strong emotional control, humans can navigate life's challenges with greater ease and cultivate positive relationship.¹⁰

Additionally, Stoicism offers several concepts, including STAR (Stop, Think and Access, Respond), amor fati (love of fate), and the dichotomy of control, which can help address emotional irregularities and poor coping mechanisms. These concepts, rooted in Stoicism's origins, were designed to guide individuals in responding to the worst-case scenarios. By emphasizing the power of reason, Stoicism provides a framework for responding to unexpected events. This rational approach aligns with the increasing interest in Stoic philosophy within Muslim society, as it offers a practical and intellectual approach to life's challenges.¹¹

⁸ Zeno was one of the materialists who became a student of Parmenides who managed to systematically surpass Socrates in Plato's dialectic entitled Parmenides. He was a Phoenician who was born in Citium, Cyprus, in the last half of the 4th century BC.

⁹ Henry Manampiring, *Filosofi Teras*. PT. Kompas Media Nusantara: Jakarta, February 2021. page: 20

¹⁰ Ayu Maya Sari, ' *Konsep Stoisisme Untuk Mengatasi Krisis spiritual Dalam Perspektif Psikologi Islam* ': Chapter IV', pp. 29–46.

¹¹ Henry Manampiring, *Filosofi Teras*. PT. Kompas Media Nusantara: Jakarta, February 2021. page: 32

The irony lies in the fact that the problems stemming from the Western paradigm are being addressed by solutions originating from that same paradigm. How can a spiritual crisis, born of Western civilization's emphasis on rationality and denial of the spiritual, be cured by its own intellectual offspring? It's undeniable that Islamic worldview views happiness as inextricably linked to spiritual fulfillment.

B. THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the background explained above, the problem formulation in this writing will be: How is Stoicism dealing with the spiritual crisis of modern humans according to Islam ?.

C. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the explanation of the problem formulation above, in this study the researcher has the following objectives:

- a. To understand the concept of Stoicism and its application in addressing the spiritual crisis of modern humans
- b. To understand Malik Badri's perspective as Islamic thinker for Western psychology
- c. To criticize Stoicism main teaching

D. THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

1. Theoretical Implications

- a. In contribute to a deeper understanding of Malik Badri's perspective on the limitations of Stoicism in addressing the spiritual crisis, and to serve as a valuable resource for

future scholarly inquiry into the intersection of philosophy and spirituality.

- b. To provide novel insights that can enhance the effectiveness of guidance and counseling interventions.

2. Practical Implications

- a. This research seeks to explore the Islamization of science, with a particular focus on the field of psychology. By examining the work of Malik Badri, this study aims to demonstrate how Islamic principles can be integrated into psychological theory and practice.
- b. This research seeks to offer practical insights that can help individuals achieve true happiness by integrating spiritual and psychological well-being.

E. LITERATURE REVIEW

While numerous Indonesian and foreign scholars have extensively explored the issue of spiritual crisis in books, academic papers, and theses, the intersection of this crisis with Islamic thought remains largely unexplored. Most discussions on the topic tend to focus on its origins in Ancient Greece.

To facilitate the completion of this research, the will rely on various sources related to the study's topic. The following works provide the theoretical foundation for this research:

1. *Konsep Stoisisme Untuk Mengatasi Krisis Spiritual dalam Perspektif Psikologi dan Islam*, a thesis written by Ayu Maya Sari, Department of Islamic Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication Sciences, UIN Raden Fatah University Palembang, 2021. This scientific paper explains that the concept of Stoicism is in line with psychology and is appropriate for overcoming spiritual crises. In addition, there is a discussion related to the concept of Stoicism that is in line with the Islamic perspective. Thus in this research the researcher will give the opinions or criticisms of Muslim psychology for the main teaching of Stoicism.
2. *Sikap Asketis dalam Filsafat Stoisisme dan Tasawuf (Studi Komparatif Apatheia dan Zuhud)*, thesis written by Amin Ja'far Shadiq, Department of Aqidah and Islamic Philosophy, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2019. This scientific work explains the comparison of ascetic concepts in Stoicism and Sufism or Zuhud which will obtain a conclusion that there are similarities and differences between the two. In the study of the scientific work, it has not been stated how the concepts of Stoicism and Sufism become solutions to handling spiritual crises. Thus, the researcher wants to interpret how Stoic philosophy handles the spiritual crisis that exists in modern humans today.

3. *Nilai Kebijaksanaan Filosofi Stoisisme dalam Pengendalian Stress* a journal published by the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences UMC by Adi Iwan Hermawan. He wrote that the object of his research was mild stress (Daily Hassles and Personal Stressor) that occurs in modern humans. He wrote about the function of the wisdom value contained in the philosophy of Stoicism in dealing with stress. However, he did not write about the harmony with the teachings of Islamic psychology. With this, the researcher intends to expand the knowledge that handling stress or spiritual crises can be controlled with Al-Qur'an therapy based on the thoughts of Utsman Najati.
4. *Asketisme dalam Islam : Perspektif Psikologi Agama*, a journal published in 2015 by Syaiful Hamali. He wrote about asceticism based on Islamic psychology in the form of zuhud. Which is one of the concepts in the science of Tasawwuf. Overall, asceticism or zuhud is able to become a controller of the spirituality of humanity today considering that humans consist of two substances, spiritual and physical. Thus, the researcher will add insight related to handling emotions in other ways that still come from the Qur'an.

F. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employs a psychology approach to examine Stoic philosophy, a product of Western thought. As noted earlier, many Muslim communities have embraced Stoicism without critical analysis. As responsible Muslims, we must avoid uncritically accepting popular trends. Therefore, this research presents the insights of Muslim psychologists who offer a critical perspective on Western psychology.

Malik Badri seeks to address the neglect of the spiritual dimension in Western psychology and argues that in the idea and practice of contemplation (*tafakkur*) we have a powerful tool, linking the mind with heart and soul. Through contemplation particularly in the reflection of God, we can reach deep into the psyche to bring solace and healing to psychological disorders afflicting human, which are better thought of as a 'sickness of soul'. Badri profiles many elements of contemplation, including its historical demise, make up in Eastern traditions and event a nascent return to these philosophical aspect in modern psychology. However it is in Islamic tradition that contemplation become *tafakkur*. That is it transmutes into so much more, a path to self-knowledge that becomes a quest for healing through an inner vision of God as the object of our search and devotion, then healing through the silencing of negativity and a focus on the conseptual understanding of, and our place in, the wider universe.

Given the worldwide raise in rates of psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, fear, and suicide to name a few, with trends predicting worse to come, it is abundantly clear there is far more study urgently needed in order to understand human nature. In the case of

those with psychological disorders, more effective support and therapies need to be developed to heal the afflicted. In that case, *tafakkur* although it would be premature to argue that it is discipline, certainly has an important and valid place. For it is every bit an intellectual as it is a philosophical spiritual exercise. And in terms of the latter for Badri it is a guide to God as much as it is a guide to healing.¹²

The word “contemplation” is Badri’s chosen translation of the Arabic *tafakkur*. He explains that the words “contemplation” is “frequently used as synonyms in English dictionaries”. While the practice of contemplation in Eastern religions tends to entail the abandonment of conscious thinking in order to facilitate “altered states of consciousness”, *tafakkur* is “a cognitive spiritual activity in which the rational mind, emotion and spirit are combined.” As such, although this form of “meditative contemplation” involves “deep thinking and reflection” it is “necessarily spiritual in nature”. Contemplation of the universe is an unrestricted spiritual activity.

Contemplation is a spiritual practice in which all cognitive and spiritual faculties are activated in pursuit of the true cognizance of the Almighty. Contemplation (*Tafakkur*), which is the central theme of this book, also does not have a precise English translation. The two words that are closest to it in meaning, namely ‘meditation’ and ‘contemplation’, do not give the term *tafakkur* its true Islamic religious dimension. As the reader will see throughout this study, *tafakkur*, like contemplation and meditation, involves deep thinking and reflection,

¹² Malik Badri, *Contemplation an Islamic Psychospiritual Study*, (London Washington : 2018), p : 3

but the aim of this meditative contemplation is necessarily spiritual in nature. It is a refined form of worshipping God by appreciating His creation in His vast universe.

In Islamic contemplation, altered states of consciousness are not an end in themselves, for the goal is a deeper insightful knowledge of God as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Meanwhile the real revolution in psychology will come when it regains its 'soul' and liberates itself from the constricted scientific and medical models for erecting an image of modern human. But, even the revolution of cognitive psychology, which attempted to free the discipline from its constricted approach, still limits itself to this trio of psychological, biological and socio-cultural components of human behavior and mental processes. It has also ignored the spiritual component, despite increasing modern scientific evidence regarding its importance. Even without the spiritual faith factor and despite the advance of knowledge, the study of these internal mental processes will always be a highly complex field where stimuli and their responses, causes and their effects interact in a manner which defies any sophisticated method of observation or measurement.¹³

When modern human in deep spiritual contemplation, they are drawing from the spiritual universal heart, which influences the physical heart, that communicates with their brain and influences the cognitive activities. Through contemplation, Muslims can refine their own internal 'reward and punishment' psychospiritual strategies in their spiritual

¹³ Malik Badri, *Contemplation an Islamic Psychospiritual Study*, (London Washington : 2018), p : 25

development. They do not need a worldly reward or an electric shock to change their unwanted habits and replace them with more worthy ones. By devoting their internal cognitive and spiritual aspirations to the contemplation of God's majesty and perfection in contrast to their laxity and unworthy behavior, they will certainly develop the sentiment of love of God and the refined feelings of contentment, happiness and tranquillity.¹⁴

Modern human are neglecting the spiritual aspect from the essence of themselves so they follow and even obey the understanding or concept that comes from Western paradigm. The Stoicism put aside the spiritual aspect from modern human that given from the God. Hence, as explained earlier, contemplation that leads one to an understanding of the majesty of Allah, glory unto Him, is an activity of reason. But it is the heart that culminates this activity in a perfect result. Since the heart is the noblest part of the body, it is only natural for its deeds to stand in greater worth than those carried out by other parts. The heart, after all, is the precinct of Divine Sight.

G. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The components that will be discussed include the writing approach, data and data types, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques and the systematics of writing a thesis.

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative in nature. This approach involves the exploration and interpretation of meaning within specific social or human contexts. By using qualitative

¹⁴ Osman Nuri Topbas, *Contemplation in Islam*, (Turkey : Sozler, 2005), p: 35

methods, the researcher aims to collect and analyze data to gain a deeper understanding of the subject .¹⁵

1. Types of research

This research employs a qualitative research methodology, focusing on in-depth understanding of the research problem. The primary method used is library research, which involves gathering information from various sources such as books, journals, and relevant articles.

2. Data source

The data presented in this study are document data that systematically explain facts from an existing phenomenon. The data in this study come from two sources, namely primary and secondary sources.

a. Primary Data

This research will draw upon various sources, including classic Stoic texts such as Epictetus' "Discourses and Enchiridion," as well as contemporary works like John Turner's "The Power of Stoicism" and Ryan Holiday's "Ego is the Enemy." Additionally, the works of Muslim psychologist Malik Badri, such as "Dilemma Psikolog Muslim" and "Contemplation," will be consulted to provide an Islamic perspective on the topic.

¹⁵ Sugiyono, *Metode Penulisan Kuantitatif*. Bandung: Alfabeta, 2018. p: 1

b. Secondary Data

- 1) Books, journals and information discussing the spiritual crisis, modern man, Stoicism, Malik Badri and William James.
- 2) Interviews and video studies discussing the spiritual crisis, modern man, Stoicism and Malik Badri.

3. Method of collecting data

The primary data collection technique employed in this research is the documentation method. This involves gathering information from various sources such as books, journals, articles, and online resources.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is organizing data into several categories, breaking it down into several units, synthesizing it, arranging it into which model to choose and finding out and the process of compiling existing data. In this literature study, the researcher uses the following data analysis techniques:

- a) The descriptive method is to provide a clear and orderly description of the text or manuscript as the object of writing. The descriptive method is an effort to discuss ideas and concepts so as to achieve the goal of understanding. This method will be used to explain the concept of Stoicism in controlling spiritual crises. In the first two chapters and even all

chapters, the researcher will use this method so that the discussion can be appropriate and systematic.

- b) Critical Analysis Method is an effort or process of analysis to provide an explanation of a text (social reality) that will be studied to obtain what is intended. In addition, critical analysis is also a way to understand reality, events or incidents, situations behind the meaning. Critical in KBBI is defined as sharp in analysis and not easily convinced. The researcher will use this method in analyzing Stoicism which is historically a product of Western thought and how Muslim society should behave towards this ideology.

H. SYSTEMATIC DISCUSSION

In order to obtain accurate results from this study, there are four chapters of discussion in it. Among them are as follows:

CHAPTER I: This chapter will explain the background of the problem, problem formulation, aims and benefits of writing, previous studies, theoretical framework, writing methodology and systematic discussion.

CHAPTER II: In this chapter, the researcher will explain the concept of Stoicism philosophy including the history of its emergence and the leaders of this school of thought. In addition, the researcher will also thoroughly examine Muslim psychologists who sharply and critically criticize Western psychology that is non-spiritual.

CHAPTER III: For this chapter, the researcher intends to explain the main teachings of Stoicism from the perspective of Stoicism. In which will also be written criticism of the main teachings of Stoicism from psychologists and Muslim thinkers.

CHAPTER IV: The last chapter contains conclusions and suggestions related to the problems discussed. With the hope that this writing can be a reference for further writing and become something that is beneficial to the wider community.

