**Spiritual Awakening of Sufferers of Spiritual Distress through Transpersonal Meditation**

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**Abstract**

Humans have basic spiritual needs to find meaning and purpose in life, to love and be loved, and to get forgiveness (Kozier, 2004). However, not all of these needs can be fulfilled properly, causing spiritual distress, which is a problems for individuals that appear during the effort to fulfill spiritual needs (Hidayat & Alimul, 2009). The aim of this study is to determine the process of spiritual awakening of patients with spiritual distress during the intervention of transpersonal therapy with meditation techniques. This research used qualitative with a case study method involving a female subject aged 30 years experiencing spiritual distress. The data were obtained through deep interviews and recording of meditation reflections. The results showed that the subject received a transpersonal meditation intervention with four stages. The first stage is identifying and accepting past wounds; the second stage is identifying and accepting sub-personalities within oneself; the third stage is identifying the potential in oneself and the highest aspirations in oneself; The fourth stage is to identifying the body's response that arises due to the psychological aspect in oneself. The four stages of meditation help the subject to be able to make peace with past wounds, accept oneself, cultivate self-love, and find self-aspirations so that the subject is more capable of feeling calm and peace within herself. Besides that, the subject can achieve spiritual awakening in the form of an awareness of belief in her God, including the belief that her God is Allah SWT, believing in Islam as her religion, and knowing the existence of her God.

**Keywords**: *spiritual distress, spiritual awakening, meditation, transpersonal*

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**Introduction**

Spirituality is the essence of humans that enters and influences human life, then manifests in thoughts, behavior, and relationships with oneself, others, nature, and God (Guazetta & Dossey, 2000). Similar to the opinion of Reed (1992) that spiritual includes intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal relationships. Lestari (2012) explained that spirituality and faith are the most powerful dimensions of human experience because spiritual beliefs provide the basis for the values ​​held. So, spiritual refers to the inner quality that an individual feels in relation to God, other creatures, and conscience.

The theologians strengthen the opinion that belief in the Oneness of God is human nature. This is based on the word of Allah in the letter Al-A'raf (7) verse 172:

*And (remember), when your Lord brought out the children of Adam from their sulbi and Allah took witness against their souls (saying), "Am I not this your God?" They replied "Yes (You are our Lord), we are witnesses.*

The verse above contains the agreement between humans and God before the spirit is breathed into the body, an agreement for humans to always acknowledge God as *Rabb*. The spirit that is in humans is the spirit of God (*Ruh Ilahi*)and humans are the only creatures in the world whose element of creation there is a divine spirit. Therefore, humans have divine potentials within themselves and are attached to basic traits, as possessed by Allah, such as the nature of Allah as Ar-Rahman, in which humans also have the nature of affection for all creatures (Nashori, 2005).

Bukhart (2011) describes aspects of spirituality as follows: 1) relating to the unknown and uncertainty in life; 2) find a meaning and purpose in life; 3) realize the ability to use the source of strength from oneself; and 4) have a feeling of attachment to oneself and to the Most High. According to Kozier (2004), spiritual needs are the need to find meaning and purpose in life, the need to love and be loved, the need to give and get forgiveness. Therefore, spirituality is a basic human need that is very important to be fulfilled properly in life.

However, not all of these needs can be fulfilled properly, causing spiritual distress, which is a problems for individuals that appear during the effort to fulfill spiritual needs (Hidayat & Alimul, 2009). Spiritual distress is divided into three parts: 1) Spiritual pain, difficulty accepting the loss of loved ones or from severe suffering; 2) Spiritual worry, there is a conflict of belief and value system; and 3) Spiritual loss, the difficulty of finding peace in religious activities (Hidayat & Alimul, 2009). The psychological crisis in the form of spiritual distress in transpersonal psychology is not always a sign of psychopathology and can be part of a healthy awakening. This is known as a spiritual awakening or transpersonal experience. Spiritual awakening is a disturbing experience that results from spiritual emergence (Rowan, 1993). People who are involved in the process of spiritual awakening will tend to develop a new appreciation of all forms of life up to a new understanding of the union of all. The characteristics of spiritual awakening include, humanity; compassion for all life; and prioritizing the entire macrocosm over the interests of individuals, families, parties, social classes, nations, and beliefs (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993). Spiritual awakening or transpersonal experience is one of the concepts studied in transpersonal psychology (Prabowo, 2012).

Transpersonal psychology includes the study of the highest potential of mankind by recognizing, understanding, and realizing spiritual union and transcending states of consciousness(Friedman & Pappas, 2006). Transpersonal psychology examines several concepts, including peak experience, self-transcendence, optimal mental health, spiritual awakening, developmental spectrum and meditation (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993). One of the key activities in transpersonal psychological therapy is meditation techniques (Rowan, 1993). Meditation is the process of giving focused and free attention from the mind with the aim to increasing calm, concentration, calming the mind and increasing spiritual awareness. Some techniques in meditation include focusing attention on the breath along with repeating certain words in a balanced posture and in a calm environment (Barraclough, 2000).

Transpersonal psychology develops meditation as a technique in psychotherapy which has been developed by Hendro Prabowo in his dissertation entitled "*Proses Pemahaman Kesadaran Diri Terapis d alam Meditasi Transpersona*l". The meditation is divided into two major parts: 1) Understanding meditation is meditation with a focus on various stimuli. Understanding meditation consists of self-aware meditation, identification of the child within, identification and identification of the role of affirmation exercises, 2) Concentration meditation is meditation with a focus on a single object. Concentration meditation consists of identifying and releasing feelings and identifying and releasing impulses.

The transpersonal meditation used as an intervention was developed in four stages, namely 1) Mindfulness and Compassion*,* in this case, self-aware meditation; 2) Quantum Approach, in this case, what is being trained is the identification of the child inside oneself, identification and disidentification of roles, releasing feelings and releasing impulses; 3) Integral Approach, in this case includes identification of potentials and obstacles;. (4) Mind-Body Connection, in this case includes body identification and visualization.

Based on the explanation above, it is known that individuals whose spiritual needs are fulfilled properly will experience spiritual distress. One intervention technique that can be given to overcome these problems is transpersonal therapy with meditation techniques. This study’s aim is to determine the process of spiritual awakening of patients with spiritual distress during the intervention of transpersonal therapy with meditation techniques.

**Methods**

This research is qualitative research with a case study method. Very valuable information can be collected, showing details of changes that occur related to the therapeutic process that has been carried out (Kazdin, 2013). The research subject is a 30-year-old woman who is experiencing spiritual distress. Data was collected using in-depth interview techniques and using recording of meditation reflections.

**Findings and Discussion**

Transpersonal therapy helps subjects to find awareness of self-recognition and self-acceptance so that they can reach the spiritual dimension. The stages of transpersonal therapy with meditation techniques are given to the subject as follows; the first stage is Mindfulness and Compassion. At this stage, the subject is able to identify and accept the past wounds that affect the mind, feelings, and body with reactions are in the form of physical sensations so that she often feels pain. The subject is able to heal her past wounds by finding love within herself so that it leads to self-awareness and has a positive impact on the subject, such as, the subject is more able to love and care for herself being so that she is able to behave better towards herself. In addition, the subject's interpersonal relationships with the people around her are more positive and able to encourage the subject to love others.

These results are in accordance with Germer's opinion (Greenlee, 2006) that mindfulnesscan increase awareness of an event. The subject's ability to develop the power of sincere love within herself has led to the acceptance of her life experience as a stage of self-healing (Firman & Gila, 2002). Actions based on love in the form of a sincere and loving acceptance of one's own weaknesses and strengths will bring about the resolution of the inner war that exists within the individual (Rueffler, 1995).

The second stage is the Quantum Approach, which helps the subject to identify and accept her sub-personality as the victim, the neglected, the loner, the anxious, the loser, and the bumper (the person who is often blamed). That sub-personality comes from experiencing past wounds. This finding is in line with the opinion of Rueffler (1995) which describes the process of disidentification*,* that is taking a distance to observing themself, then when individuals become observers for themselves, they will find varied life experiences including happiness, success, sadness, failure, as well as thoughts and feelings that are happening right now. The function of the observer is to recognize each structure of the relationship between the players, the roles that play and the patterns of players that often appear in everyday life. They will manifest themselves to help resolve conflicts and create better relationships between sub-personalities within oneself. Acceptance of past traumatic experiences opens the perception of sub-personality qualities that have been hidden (Rueffler, 1995).

The third stage is the Integral Approach, which helps the subject to identify her potential and the highest aspirations in her life. The aspiration found by the subject is to share happiness and benefit for children and many people. This result is in line with the opinion of Rueffler (1995) that, by visualizing hidden qualities can be strengthened and experienced as something that is in us that will affect and change our lives, relationships, and our environment. The subject is also able to realize the desired aspirations in her life.

The fourth stage is Body-Mind Connection, which helps the subject to identify the long-term psychosomatics experienced by the subject due to the psychological aspect of the traumatic experiences from the past. This finding strengthens the opinion that identification can be in the form of roles, bodies, feelings, and thoughts (Assagioli, 1992). This stage also helps the subject find awareness of the greatness of God towards His creation, one of which is herself. The subject realizes that she is only a small part of the many creations of God, so she feels nothing and nobody compared to the others His creations in the world. Transpersonal meditation helps the subject find awareness of God's love for herself by realizing God's attributes, thus bringing the subject's spiritual awakening to her God. The attributes of God who are present in meditation, among others:

1. Most Compassionate and Most Merciful with appreciation of the subject, that is her Lord still gives breath so that the subject can still meet her loved ones, is given a healthy and normal physique and often gets help from people who are unknown.
2. The Supreme Creator with the appreciation of the subject, which is only God who can make humans with all the organs of the body and their functions. No one can create what is in the heavens and on earth except her Lord.
3. The Greatest and Most Great with appreciation of the subject, that is when listening to the prayer call from the mosque and when listening to the reading of the prayer in Mecca, her heart trembled, where it had never been felt by the subject before.

The subject's ability to realize the attributes of her God with the appearance of images from the macrocosm is a spiritual awakening or a subject's transpersonal experience. This finding corroborates the opinion of Boorstein (1996) that transpersonal experience is an experience of self-identity that passes through the individual or personal, which includes broader aspects of humanity, life, soul, and the cosmos. This last stage is reinforced by reading the following verses of the Al-Quran:

1. QS. Qaf (50) Verse 16: "... we are closer than the jugular vein".
2. QS. Al-Baqarah (2) Verse 115: “...wherever you turn, there is the Face of Allah. Verily, Allah is Extensive (His Mercy) and All-Knowing.”
3. QS. Al-Baqarah (2) Verse 19: "And Allah covers those who disbelieve".
4. QS. Al-Isra (17) Verse 60: "Your Lord encompasses all mankind ...".
5. QS. Al-Fussilat (41) Verse 54: "...Remember that verily He is all-encompassing."
6. QS. An-Nisa (4) Verse 126: "To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth and Allah is All-encompassing all things".
7. QS. Ash-Shuraa (42) Verse 11: "He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. …& He is All-Hearing and Seeing”.
8. QS. Thaha (20) Verse 14: "Indeed I am Allah, there is no God but Me, so worship Me & establish prayer to remember Me".

The physiological response that appears the first time the subject reads these verses is sobbing. The meaning or appreciation found by the subject, which is that her God is Allah SWT, knows the existence of her God, and believes in Islam as her religion. The subject feels that Allah really loves her. The subject also realizes that the journey of life she has experienced is a life lesson for her to become a strong person according to the abilities that have been given. In addition, the subject can feel calm and peaceful within herself. This results are in accordance with Frager's (2014) explanation that the heart is a temple or sacred place that placed by God in every human being that functions to accommodate the divine spark (*cahaya Ilahi).* Carl G. Jung said that spiritual experience is a sign of mental health that can free a person from mental disorders (Daniels, 2005). The overall result of this study is that the practice of meditation provides benefits in helping the subject become aware of the problem (Perez & Holmes, 2000). Meditators during the meditation process can lead to unlimited experiences (Weidinger in Prabowo, 2012).

**Conclusion**

Based on this study, it is known that the process of spiritual awakening in individuals who experience spiritual distress can be given transpersonal therapy intervention with meditation techniques through four stages, the first stage is identifying and accepting past wounds; The second stage is identifying and accepting sub-personalities within oneself; The third stage is identifying the potential in oneself and the highest aspirations in oneself; The fourth stage is to identifying the body's response that arises due to the psychological aspect in oneself. The four stages of meditation help the subject to be able to make peace with past wounds, accept oneself, cultivate self-love, and find self-aspirations so that the subject is more capable of feeling calm and peace within herself. Besides that, the subject can achieve spiritual awakening in the form of an awareness of belief in her God, including the belief that her God is Allah SWT, believing in Islam as her religion, and knowing the existence of her God.

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