


Asmaul Husna-Based Walking Therapy: Autoethnography in the Perspective of Spiritual Psychology

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DATE	ABSTRACT
Accepted:	<i>This research aims to describe and reflect on the experience of self-healing through the practice of walking therapy based on Asmaul Husna. Using an autoethnographic approach, the author narrates the inner journey of being a single mother and epilepsy survivor in the face of chronic life stress. The results of the study show that the practice of walking while reciting Asmaul Husna not only has a positive impact physically, but also opens up the space for spiritual awareness, strengthens psychological resilience, and fosters a transcendental connection with the Divine. The dhikr of Asmaul Husna becomes an inner anchor that helps to unravel stress and deepen the sense of life's meaning. This study recommends the integration of spiritual-local approaches in contemporary psychological interventions, particularly those related to stress recovery and inner well-being.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

Good mental health is an important foundation for an individual's functioning, yet chronic stress and traumatic experiences can disrupt this balance (Brown et al., 2024; Fusar-Poli et al., 2020; O'Reilly, 2020; Salazar de Pablo et al., 2020; Sivris & Leka, 2015). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) stated that stress occurs when individuals perceive that external demands exceed the resources they possess. In modern psychological practice, stress management generally relies on cognitive and behavioral approaches; however, these methods often overlook the spiritual dimension as a meaningful restorative force (Derezotes, 2009; Josephson, 2009; Wilkins, 2008).

For decades, the author has grappled with chronic stress arising from the challenges of living as an epilepsy survivor and single mother. Amid these limitations, there is a need for a healing approach that addresses not only the mind and body, but also the soul. One practice that emerged from this personal quest is walking therapy combined with the *dhikr* of *Asmaul Husna*—a form of spiritual contemplation that has been

practiced regularly for more than a decade. The reflection on this experience forms the basis for this autoethnographic study.

This research seeks to answer the following question: How can the author's personal experience with walking therapy based on *Asmaul Husna* be understood as a form of psychological recovery from the perspective of spiritual psychology?

The aims of this study are to: describe the author's subjective experience of engaging in walking therapy accompanied by *Asmaul Husna*; analyze the meaning and impact of this practice on stress recovery and psychological well-being from a spiritual psychology perspective; and offer an alternative, integrative approach to healing that is grounded in Islamic spiritual values and embodied practice.

Contemplative and spiritual psychology underscore the importance of mindfulness and transcendental relationships as pathways to well-being. Kabat-Zinn (2003) defines mindfulness as full awareness of the present moment, which can enhance cognitive and emotional flexibility. In the context of Islam, *dhikr* and the invocation of the names of Allah (*Asmaul Husna*) are believed to connect humans with the highest source of serenity (Q.S. Ar-Ra'd: 28). Previous studies have shown that spirituality exerts a therapeutic effect on negative emotions and the search for meaning in life (Ryff & Singer, 2008; Dossey, 1993), yet very few investigations have explored individual experiences that integrate spiritual elements and bodily movement as psychological interventions.

This study contributes by exploring an integrative practice—a combination of movement therapy (walking meditation) and the *dhikr* of *Asmaul Husna*—through real experiences structured in autoethnographic narratives. By bridging psychology and spirituality, this research not only enriches the discourse on stress recovery rooted in religious and personal experience but also offers a meaningful alternative for integrative healing.

METHOD

This study uses an autoethnography approach, a qualitative method that combines self-reflection and personal experience as the primary data source to understand cultural and psychological phenomena (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). In this context, the author explores his spiritual-personal experience as a survivor of stress and trauma through the practice of walking therapy that is aligned with the *dhikr* of *Asmaul Husna*.

The author is a participant as well as a researcher in this study. The author's experience as a single mother and epilepsy survivor, as well as his background as a self-healing practitioner and personal coach 'Nafas 1 Min Asmaul Husna', are important elements in understanding the healing process experienced. This position allows for an in-depth exploration of the psychological, spiritual, and reflective dimensions of personal experience.

Data was collected through reflective narrative writing that has been carried out consistently since 2005 in the form of personal journals, diaries, and documentation of daily practices (including time, location, emotional state, and *dhikr* read). The narratives

are reviewed and thematically analyzed to identify patterns of experience, subjective meaning, and psychological transformations that occur.

The analysis was carried out using a narrative-thematic reflection approach, namely by reviewing the diary and analyzing it repeatedly to identify the main themes that emerged related to stress, spirituality, personal resilience, and the meaning of life. Validation was carried out through triangulation of narratives with similar experiences from clients who had undergone the same practice, as well as discussions with peers in the field of spiritual psychology and counseling.

Because the study is autoethnographic and uses the author's personal experiences as the primary data, ethical considerations are focused on narrative authenticity, openness to personal bias, and caution in generalizing individual experiences. All information about other people (if they appear in the narrative) has been redacted or redacted to maintain confidentiality and ethics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The author organizes the autoethnographic experience into three main themes that reflect the psychological and spiritual journey during the face of life's stress, self-healing practices, and the transformation of meaning through the dhikr of Asmaul Husna. These three themes are both chronological and reflective and are analyzed based on personal experience and the conceptual foundation of spiritual psychology.

Touching Your Limits: Stress, Pain, and Helplessness

The author's early experiences as a single mother, epilepsy survivor, and primary breadwinner, create complex psychic stress. At this stage, the body becomes not only a place where physical wounds dwell, but also a marker of deep emotional and spiritual exhaustion. Stress, inadequacy, and existential pressure color the daily narrative.

"I don't walk for sports. I walked so as not to explode! Aaahhh... Just the small steps outside the house kept me breathing."

In this phase, the practice of walking becomes an escape, as well as the beginning of the process of unconscious contemplation. The body that keeps going, moves becomes a metaphor for the soul that seeks direction. The decision not to give in to pain opens up space to find new meaning.

From the point of view of developmental psychology, this crisis experience reflects an important stage in forming resilience, namely the ability to survive and adapt positively in the face of severe stress (Buhs & Rudasill, 2016; Gray et al., 2015; Masten, 2001; Perrin, 2019). For the author, resilience does not come in the form of a quick reaction but grows slowly from the recognition of a sense of helplessness.

"Dear Robbie, I am no longer strong. Weak servants. Slaves surrender. What should I do? Aaahh... Since I admit to being fragile, I began to find power."

At this point, suffering becomes a mirror. The author begins to realize that physical and psychic discomfort opens the door to a deeper spiritual process. This is where the

intuition of the beginning of the emergence of the footsteps to associate the dhikr of Asmaul Husna.

Stepping Together with Asmaul Husna: Practice, Rhythm, and Silence

After going through the phase of crisis and initial awareness, the author began to form a new pattern in walking: reciting Asmaul Husna repeatedly along with the footsteps. Dhikr that was initially only read in the mouth is now integrated with the rhythm of the body, breath, and self-awareness. This practice becomes a simple form of active meditation, which involves the physical, cognitive, and spiritual aspects simultaneously.

"When I say 'Ya Rahman' while walking, there is a real pulse of love. The steps become slow, but deep. I am not looking for God outside; I found Him in me. 'Ya Rahman ... Ya Rahim ... Yes, Malik'"

This experience is in line with the concept in Islamic psychology that calls dhikr not only as verbal worship, but also as an exercise in inner presence (*muraqabah*). Dhikr that is recited consciously and consistently has the effect of calming the nervous system, focusing the mind, and stabilizing emotions (Husen, 2018). In this context, Asmaul Husna functions as a spiritual mantra as well as a healing self-affirmation.

The author realizes that connecting the footsteps with the words of Asmaul Husna creates a new harmony between body and soul. Walking activities are no longer just sports or escapes, but a spiritual space in the midst of the hustle and bustle of life.

"The streets of the housing complex turned into a lonely street between me and God. I walked, calling Him one by one. It's like opening sheet after sheet of light inside me."

This activity has been consistent for many years, until it becomes a self-healing routine. At this point, spiritual practice not only overcomes stress, but also repairs the relationship with the body, accepts past wounds, and builds a new connection with the Almighty.

New Meaning of Healing and Resilience

Over time, the practice of dhikr while walking not only provides a calming effect but also fosters a new awareness of what "healing" is. The author begins to see wounds, life pressures, and illnesses not as enemies to be eliminated, but as part of a spiritual journey to self-wholeness.

"I no longer pray to be healed of my illness. I just want to be whole as a human being. Pain is part of my story, not the end of my life."

This reflection reflects a paradigm shift from a curative model to a transformative healing model in transpersonal psychology. In this approach, healing is seen not solely as the disappearance of disease symptoms, but rather as an integration between wounds, the meaning of life, and a higher spiritual awareness (Wilber, 2000).

Through the dhikr of Asmaul Husna, the author finds a way to dialogue pain, loneliness, and struggle with the language of divine compassion. The names of Allah such

as Ya Shafi (the Most Healing), Ya Latif (the Most Gentle), and Ya Hakim (the Most Wise) become a mirror that fosters acceptance, meaning, and determination.

"When I say 'Ya Shafi', I am not asking for a miracle. I am acknowledging that God has healed me, little by little, step by step that never stops."

At this point, resilience is no longer understood as the strength to endure, but as the ability to embrace the entire experience of life – including injuries and failures – as part of self-meaning. Spiritual practice is the path to the restoration of relationships: with oneself, with God, and with life.

Discussion

These three themes show that spiritual experiences through the dhikr of Asmaul Husna in the form of walking can be a comprehensive method of self-healing. This autoethnography underscores the importance of integration between body awareness, spiritual practice, and self-acceptance in the process of resilience and psychological transformation.

This study aims to explore the practice of Asmaul Husna-based walking therapy as a spiritual and integrative approach to self-healing. Through the autoethnography method, the author reflects on his personal experience as an epilepsy survivor who experiences chronic life stress, as well as how the practice helped him build psychological and spiritual resilience.

The results of the study show that walking activities that are carried out consistently, combined with the dhikr of Asmaul Husna, are not only ordinary physical activities, but turn into contemplative and transcendental mediums. These findings are in line with theories in spiritual psychology that emphasize the importance of religious practice and body awareness as part of the process of recovery and the achievement of psychological well-being.

This practice contains elements of mindfulness, meditation, and meaning making, where individuals focus not only on body movements, but also on spiritual appreciation of the names of Allah (*Asmaul Husna*). In this condition, there is an integration between body, mind, and spirit, as described in Islamic psychology literature and transpersonal approaches. This reinforces the view that the healing process is not only purely medical or psychological, cognitive, but also existential and spiritual.

This discussion also highlights how authentic personal spiritual experiences can have transformational power in the face of crisis. In the context of the author's experience, the crisis as a single mother and epilepsy survivor gives rise to physical and emotional limitations that cannot be solved through logic or conventional medical therapy alone. In this situation, the spiritual experience becomes a healing space that is internal, independent, and continuous.

In addition, it is also important to note that the experiences described are not purely subjective, because there are triangulation data in the form of reflections from clients and reinforcement from relevant spiritual-psychological literature. This makes the

author's personal experience can be positioned as a valid source of alternative knowledge in the realm of spiritual psychology based on Islamic culture and belief.

Thus, the practice of walking therapy based on *Asmaul Husna* can be considered as a simple yet meaningful intervention, which should be applied in both clinical and non-clinical contexts, especially for individuals seeking healing through a spiritual approach that blends with daily activities.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *Asmaul Husna*-based walking therapy offers a holistic self-healing approach that addresses physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, as evidenced by the author's autoethnographic experience. The practice not only alleviates chronic stress but also deepens the inner connection with God, fosters new meaning in life, and enhances psychological resilience, with the *dhikr* of *Asmaul Husna* serving as an anchor of consciousness and spiritual reflection. The integration of bodily movement and spiritual contemplation facilitates a continuous, natural healing process without reliance on external interventions, highlighting that life crises can become opportunities for inner enlightenment and psychospiritual growth when approached with mindfulness and surrender to the Divine. The study emphasizes the need for clinical psychology and counseling to accommodate local spiritual practices with therapeutic potential, such as *dhikr* and religious rituals. For future research, it is suggested to systematically investigate the effectiveness of *Asmaul Husna*-based walking therapy across diverse populations and settings, and to develop structured psychoeducational and clinical programs that integrate this spiritual-embodied approach.

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