



## Strategies for Dealing with Problems from the Perspective of Islam

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### **Abstract**

Strategies for dealing with problems from the perspective of Islam include a set of cognitive and behavioral efforts that make human beings overcome the difficulties of life and solve their problems in the best possible way by relying on the source of divine safety. From the Islamic point of view, problem-solving is the process of effectively confronting challenges without haste or avoidance, which is accompanied by rational optimism. Research findings showed that trust in God, emotion control, recognizing the problem, identifying goals and obstacles, thinking, and consulting is an important part of the process of dealing with problems that affect how people evaluate the problem and its severity and moderates the effects of crises and severe life problems and creates a level of acceptance and trust when faced with a problem.

**Keywords:** *Islam; Problem-Solving; Decision Making; Positive Thinking*

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the present age, the challenges and complexities of life have increased. Despite the vast achievements and astonishing scientific and industrial advances that have been made in most fields and sciences, there is still much ambiguity about how to overcome problems and make decisions about them. Spirituality as a reliable source protects man from confusion and brings a sense of meaning in human beings and causes human beings to have indirect control over events (Shah et al., 2011).

Islam, as the most complete religion, has provided solutions for how human beings face the problems and difficulties of life. From the perspective of Islam, strategies for dealing with life's problems include a set of cognitive and behavioral efforts that enable man to overcome life's problems and solve his problems. This set of activities is derived from the excellent actions of the mind, which is one of the

components of self-management skills. Numerous studies have shown that religious beliefs play an effective role in how people face problems and adopt different strategies to deal with them. In the culture based on the Islamic worldview, man is an independent being and can use the capacities that God has entrusted to him to choose his goals consciously and try to solve individual and social problems.

Religious beliefs make it better for people to choose logical and correct solutions and methods in problematic situations. In other words, the system of values and beliefs determines how a person behaves in complex and difficult situations; How to choose and how to decide. (Pargament, 2002; quoted by Purmola and Purmola, 2016).

Religious orientation is authorizing to the structure of human relations in all dimensions in the light of man's relationship with God. According to Allport, religion is a kind of meaning and meaning finding that is the main motivation of life (Allport, 1976). He believes that developed religion is an organized and integrated system that is obtained from the individual's self-thinking and plays an important motivational role in his life (Mohammadzadeh and Najafi, 2010). Developed religion is self-motivating and does not require other stimuli to move man. It can be said that people with religious orientation find their main motives in religion itself (Allport, 1976).

The psyche reflections affect both the evaluation of events and the ways in which they are dealt with and even how events occur. Religious people with an inner religious orientation often use problem-solving methods. Hence, they show a better compromise in different situations. In fact, being religious can moderate the effects of crises and severe life problems (Sedighi Arfaie, Tamanai far and Abedinabadi, 2012). Religion helps people deal with the negative effects of stressful events and helps them find purpose and meaning, even when some events seem meaningless (Henningsard and Arnau, 2008).

A review of internal and external backgrounds on problem-solving and decision-making shows that although valuable research has been done in this regard, these studies have mainly examined it in general and strategies for dealing with difficulties have not been considered from the perspective of Islam. Therefore, the present study intends to examine the strategies for dealing with difficulties from the perspective of Islam to answer the question that what are the strategies for dealing with difficulties from the perspective of Islam?

### ***Research Background***

Some studies show that teaching problem-solving techniques in a religious context, while increasing psychological organization, reduces subjects' anxiety (Schaffro Gersuch, 1991). Mahboudi et al. (2010) also found in their research that strong religious beliefs cause people to be better able to choose a logical and correct way and method in problematic situations.

In Jafari (2009) research, the relationship between religious orientation and coping styles with stress in students has been investigated. Findings show students with internal religious orientation have used problem-oriented coping methods more than students with an external religious orientation. Also, people with external religious orientation have used emotion-based coping methods more than students with an internal religious orientation.

The research of Barmaki et al. (2015) entitled "The relationship between religious orientation and happiness and problem-solving" showed that internal religious orientation can predict the problem-solving skill. Ball's (2004) study showed that poor coping strategies and inappropriate ways of dealing with problems predict high-risk behaviors.

At the interpersonal level, research has shown that people's ability to solve problems will improve marital adjustment, social adjustment, social adequacy, reducing criminal behavior, positive family relationships, increasing the ability to face individual and social problems, family relationships, and

family well-being, increasing the level of psychological health and promoting social skills (Aligoli Firoozjaei, Ahmadi and Mirdarikundi, 2017).

### ***Facing the Problem Process***

How to deal with problems and make decisions about it is a cognitive-behavioral process. This process provides a variety of potentially effective answers to problem-solving situations, as well as increasing the likelihood of choosing the most effective response from a variety of different solutions. In this process, human beings try to adopt appropriate solutions in the face of problems by establishing a connection between past experiences and problem. The consequences of how to deal with a problem in the real world are largely determined by two major independent processes: problem orientation and problem-solving (De Zorilla and Nezu, 2007). Lack of knowledge of problem coping strategies and the ability of problem-solving skills can lead to uncompromising behaviors in humans. Such people show provoked behaviors as soon as they face problems, and in cases where they fail, they feel frustrated and take isolation to get rid of it. (Faller et al., 2013).

According to the researchers' findings, it is not important for people not to face problems and troubles in life, but it is important how and in what way to act in the face of such situations. Many people are not even able to solve their daily problems and in the face of the smallest problem or choice, they experience anxiety, confusion, and unhappiness. On the other hand, there are other people who solve various problems and face challenging situations not only do not confuse them but also make them reach a level of self-awareness where they can find their weaknesses and eliminate them. The main reason for the success of this group is that they have the ability to use a regular and step-by-step method when facing problems and to solve problems ahead while the people in the first group do not have this ability. In general, dealing with any problem creates a stressful situation that when the person has not solved the problem properly or has not made the right decision, his stress level increases and can eventually lead to unpleasant emotions (Ghanizadeh, 2010).

The skill of dealing with social problems and problems requires the acquisition of special emotional, cognitive, and behavioral abilities. This type of skill plays a crucial role in people's mental health. Learning how to solve problems, especially in social problems, can increase the level of health and improve the quality of life in people and is one of the important factors that enable a person to directly affect and improve their quality of life (Bayani and Bayani, 2010). Social problem solving is a behavioral-cognitive process that helps to solve problems in natural conditions and through which a person can discover or determine adaptive and effective ways of dealing with situations and problems. (Zandavnian Naini, Khorani, and Rahimi, 2015). How we act in the face of problems such as the thought process is completely influenced by the learning process, that is, people learn throughout their lives what they consider to be problems and which ones are easy and simple, and which are difficult and complex to read. As they learn how they can solve the various problems they face (Kababian, 2015).

Problem-solving is cognitive processing to achieve a goal that is not easily achievable and turns the assumed situation into the desired situation while the solver person has no clear method to solve it. This definition includes four basic ideas. First, problem-solving is a cognitive matter, that is, it occurs within the mind or cognitive system of the solver. So its existence can only be deduced indirectly from the behavior of the solver. Second, problem-solving is a process that involves manipulating information in the cognitive system or the mind of the solver (ie, performing cognitive operations on internal symbolic representations). Third, problem-solving is oriented, meaning that the purpose of it is to solve a problem and finally, problem-solving is a personal matter, meaning that has the difficulty of transforming a given state from a problem to the desired state depends on the current knowledge of the problem-solver. A problem exists when there is a presumed situation at the beginning and the solver wants to change the situation in a desirable way (Yousefi, 2016).

### ***Types of Facing Problems***

#### **1) Positive thinking about the problem**

Positive thinking about the problem includes the following:

- A) Assess the problem as a challenge, not a threat
- B) Belief that the problem can be solved (optimism)
- C) Belief in your personal ability to solve problems successfully (self-confidence)
- D) Commit yourself to problem-solving instead of avoiding it
- E) The belief that successful problem solving requires time, effort, and perseverance.

#### **2) Negative view of the problem**

A negative view of the problem is a kind of preventive or malfunctioning emotional cognitive tendency and includes the following:

- A) Looking at the problem as a serious threat to well-being and comfort
- B) Expectation that problems are not solvable (pessimism)
- C) Doubt about your personal ability to solve the problem successfully (low self-confidence)
- D) be frustrated when faced with problems in life (low level of tolerance)

### ***Ways to Deal with Problems***

Logical problem solving is a constructive dimension in which information and facts are carefully and systematically collected. Existing demands and barriers are identified and the goal is determined, then a variety of alternative solutions are proposed and the possible consequences of each are assessed. As the solution is selected and implemented, the results are carefully evaluated. This is why this technique is described as an efficient, comparative, wisely, logical and systematic technique and principles in problem-solving (Schumacher, 2006; quoted by Beyrami, Hashemi and Alizadeh, 2012).

Carelessness-impulsivity is a poor problem-solving model in which a person makes short-sighted, hasty, careless, and hurried efforts. By adopting such a method, a limited number of alternative solutions are considered, and with the first solution that comes to one's mind, one acts quickly. The consequences of that work are not carefully evaluated. The avoidance method is another problem-solving model, in which the person avoids it instead of facing the problem and delays the problem-solving as much as possible or waits until the problem is solved or leave it to others to solve it. (Mokhberi, Dortaj and Darreh Kurdi, 2011).

### ***Ways of Dealing with Problems from the Perspective of Islam***

Adherence to the teachings of Islam gives meaning to life and is a shortcut through which a new strategy can be used to solve problems. In general, Islam encourages man to actively try to solve the problem instead of denying it. In other words, problem-solving strategies in Islam reflect a kind of love and attachment and a secure relationship with God and a spiritual relationship with others. In this type of confrontation, problems are not considered as a kind of bad luck and a means of revenge. Believer man to

the teachings of the Qur'an believes that problems can be solved by relying on God and asking Him and therefore will try to solve the problem. People who believe in religious teachings do not feel miserable and helpless in the face of problems and believe that by trusting in God, a suitable solution can be found for the problems.

It should be noted that trusting in God does not mean that a person is passive and stops trying to solve problems and leaves everything to God, but a trustworthy person with a positive attitude towards the result of his action and a lot of effort to achieve the goal tries to solve problems by relying on the source of divine safety and with complete optimism.

Therefore, adherence to the teachings of Islam can be considered as part of the process of dealing with problems and affect how a person evaluates the threatening factor and its severity. It can also intervene in the problem-solving process and change the definition of the problem to a solvable problem. It can also affect the results and consequences of stressors.

In these situations, human beings can better choose the logical and correct way and method in problematic situations. In fact, people who adhere to the teachings of Islam have religious psyche reflections that these psyche reflections can help them in cognitive processing. The religious psyche reflections affect both the evaluation of people about events and the ways in which they are dealt with and even how events occur. Religious people with an inner religious orientation often use problem-solving methods. Hence, they show a better compromise in different situations.

In fact, adherence to the teachings of Islam can moderate the effect of crises and severe problems of life and create a level of acceptance and trust when faced with a problem that enables a person to see herself under the protection of her Creator by relying on the eternal divine power and relying on the essence of the Supreme Being. This belief leads to increased hope and motivation and a sense of purpose in the face of problems.

When facing problems and before proceeding to problem-solving, it is necessary to control emotions so that a decision can be made more deliberately. In order to control emotions, it is first necessary for a person to know himself and to be aware of the factors that cause emotion in him in different moments so that he can control his emotions in a state of anger, etc., based on his knowledge of himself and avoid making decision-making hastily. If a person reacts quickly to problems and is unable to control his emotions, he may not make the thoughtful decision making. Therefore, a person who adheres to Islamic teachings, instead of becoming emotional, faces the problem in the best way and tries to solve it with reason and contemplation.

The important thing is that before making a decision to solve a problem, one should know the problem and examine all its aspects. "Before you enter a problem, stop until you know the place of its entry and exit, otherwise you will regret it" (Ibn Shuba Harani, 1984, p. 304); "Do not start work until you know it" (Tamimi Amadi, 1989, p. 743); the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) said: "who acts without knowledge, the damage she causes is greater than the correction he makes." (Koloni, 1986, vol. 1, p. 44). Imam Ali (AS) also said to one of his companions: "There is no movement or activity unless you need knowledge in doing it" (Ibn Shu'bah Harani, 1983, p. 171). The Prophet (PBUH) said, "When you decide on something, think about the consequences. If it was good, act quickly, if it was not appropriate, hold on" (Koloni, 1986, vol. 8, p. 150).

It is necessary to think before decision making and final action to solve the problem and use the experiences of others. The Holy Qur'an says in verse 28 of Surah Shura about the consultation: "And those who have responded (positive) to their God and have established prayer, and their work is to consult among themselves and spend out of what we have provided for them". The Prophet of God (PBUH) said: No warm back is more stable than consultation (Mohammadi Reyshahri, 2010, p. 1072) and also said that there is no man to consult with anyone unless he is guided to the right path [to solve his problem] (ibid). Imam Ali (AS) said: "Correct ideas can be obtained by the flight of thought" (Tamimi Amadi, 1989, p.

57) and also says: "Preserving (and applying) past experiences is a kind of foresight" (Tamimi Amadi, 1989, p. 444).

The decision should be made after considering all aspects of the work and decision making should not be delayed. Imam Sadiq (AS) said: Whenever you decide to do a good deed, do not delay doing it (Sheikh Mofid, 1985, p. 226). It is also essential to trust in God in the face of adversity. God says in verse 3 of Surah Talaq, "Whoever trusts in God, God will suffice him." Also, God says in a part of verse 51 of Surah Tawbah, "Believers should rely on God alone" and also the Prophet of God (PBUH) said: Whoever wants to be the strongest people, should rely on God (Mohammadi Ray Shahri, 2008, v. 8; p 355).

In problem-solving, discovering the roots and causes of the problem is important. We must also try to replace long-term solutions with cross-sectional solutions. Utilization of the environment is also important in problem-solving. In the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), this was one of the functions of the mosque or the house of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). In problem-solving, one can seek help from others, both intellectually and physically and economically, because finding a solution does not necessarily mean problem-solving individually. It should also be noted that problem-solving formulas are generally different from problem-solving formulas in certain cases.

Once the solution has been selected and implemented, the solution should be evaluated and analyzed to determine if it has been successful and effective? Sometimes it is necessary to consider other solutions to problem-solving. It should be noted that in Islamic teachings, problem-solving is not only about solving problems in a personal dimension, but also trying to untie the knots of other people's problems. One of the laws of creation that have been mentioned in Islam is the connection of the status of individuals in society with each other. It seems that human problems are interconnected. Therefore, one should not be indifferent to the problems of others and only think of oneself. The Prophet of God (PBUH) states that whoever wants to solve his problems, should solve the human problems that are in trouble (Pasandideh, 2013, p. 418). In Islam, the problems of life are considered a kind of divine test. The Holy Qur'an in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 155, introduces the joys and hardships of life as a divine test.

## **Conclusion**

How to deal with a problem is a cognitive and behavioral process that is guided by the individual and in which he tries to find effective and adaptive solutions to his life problems. From the perspective of Islam, one should have a positive view of problem-solving and examine all aspects of the problem wisely and not emotionally. In problem-solving, discovering the roots and causes is important, and it should be noted that problem-solving formulas are not the same everywhere. For problem-solving, one should use the experiences of others and ask others for help when necessary. The use of spiritual factors in problem-solving, such as trusting in God and praying plays an essential role in the face of problems.

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