



## SUBCONSCIOUS MIND: A PERSPECTIVE FROM AQIDAH, SHARI'A, AND TASAWWUF

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the study:** Subconscious mind training course has become a phenomenon nowadays. The technique is claimed to be effective and it is made a testimonial to attract more individuals to learn this method. This study aims to examine whether the concept of the subconscious mind and its practices comply with Islamic teachings or otherwise.

**Methodology:** The methodology applied is purely qualitative as it involves crossover studies such as *Shari'a*, *aqidah*, *tasawwuf*, Islamic medicine practice, and psychology. The data gained were analysed by using induction and deductive approaches. The comparison method was also used to test the similarities and differences between the subconscious mind and Islamic approaches.

**Main Findings:** Results from this study showed that the subconscious mind concept is not a really accurate approach to personality changes. It can be seen from four points: (1) the turning point of the changes; (2) the mechanism of changes; (3) the factor of changes; and (4) the conditions of changes.

**Applications of this study:** The results of this study will help the authorities to assess and determine the rules relating to the use of the subconscious mind concept and its techniques. This study also will enhance the quality of the service of religious authorities in addressing contemporary issues that require deep research.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** The findings of the study show that the concept of the subconscious mind is not totally complied to the Islamic teachings. Hence, a Muslim should choose a better approach as shown in Islam.

**Keywords:** *Subconscious Mind, Shari'a Compliance, Islamic Medication, Spiritual Intervention.*

### INTRODUCTION

The subconscious mind has become a phenomenon in the society especially for those who are keen to make self-changes as well as to those surrounding them. For parents who are dealing with challenging children or teachers who have to tackle indifferent students or employers who face problematic employees, such approach is said to be effective in educating a child or a student or an employee to obey the intended instructions. In fact, this approach has been explicitly applied in business today. Various testimonies from those who have undergone the said training are shared to show dramatic increase to the sales when they successfully learned the way to control the subconscious mind of the customers. The technique is claimed to be effective and it is made a testimonial to attract more individuals to learn this method.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

According to [Ellenberger \(1970\)](#), the term 'subconscious' was used by Pierre Janet (1859-1947) who claimed that underneath the layers of critical thought, lay a powerful layer known as subconscious mind. Freud was the first who used the term 'subconscious' in 1893. In a book he wrote in 1926, he mentions:

*"If someone talks of subconsciousness, I cannot tell whether he means the term topographically – to indicate something lying in the mind beneath consciousness – or qualitatively – to indicate another consciousness, a subterranean one, as it were. He is probably not clear about any of it. The only trustworthy antithesis is between conscious and unconscious."* ([Freud, 1978](#))

According to Freud, human minds are divided into three different parts which are conscious, subconscious and unconscious mind. An iceberg can serve as a useful metaphor to understand the unconscious mind, its relationship to the conscious mind and how the two parts of our mind can better work together. As an iceberg floats in the water, the huge mass of it remains below the surface. The tip of the iceberg is known as the conscious mind. At this level, it consists of all the mental processes of which we are aware of. The second level of iceberg exists just below the level of consciousness, before the unconscious mind. At this level, a person is not currently aware and do not know what is happening around them unless they are consciously aware of what is happening. The deepest level is where a person is unconscious of what is happening around him. For example, the cause of the changes that occur in our emotions is inaccessible to consciousness. We also do not realize the blood flow in our body and how the nervous system works.

According to [Abdul Fatah \(2008\)](#), the conscious mind is using logic to make a decision or conclusion. When we face with various choices or problems in life, the conscious mind will play the role in making decisions or giving ideas to solve the problems. Meanwhile, the subconscious mind is the level where it contains the memories in which a person is not aware of presently, however, the memories can easily be brought into consciousness through focusing and recalling processes. This subconscious mind lay between the level of consciousness and unconscious mind. With certain exercises, we can find that

any decision made by the conscious mind can be guided and influenced by the information obtained from the subconscious mind.

This subconscious mind approach is not only limited to the way of thinking, but it is also influenced by several synonymous techniques of hypnosis. According to [Ezwan Mokhtar \(2019\)](#), hypnosis is the most effective method to communicate with the subconscious mind. Through hypnosis, it will bring an individual to the alpha state of mind where the mind becomes calm and open to accepting suggestions. At this alpha state too, the mind which is subconscious can also be formatted or reprogrammed.

Nowadays, the subconscious mind-based courses are widely and publicly offered with a variety of names and brandings. However, questions arise when the applied theories and techniques that have been practiced put more emphasize on unleashing the unused self-potential and own strength aside from applying certain techniques such as hypnosis and meditation. This study aims to examine whether the concept of subconscious mind and its practices comply with *Shari'a* or otherwise.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied is purely qualitative as it involves crossover studies such as *Shari'a*, *aqidah*, *tasawwuf*, Islamic medicine practice, and psychology. It focused on library analysis with a historical-descriptive study on the epistemology of the subconscious mind, as well as sociological analysis of its current practices. The data gained were analysed by using induction and deductive approaches. The comparison method was also used to identify the similarities and differences between subconscious mind and Islamic approaches in personality changes. Verses from Quranic verses and Prophet's traditions related to spiritual, mental and physical as well as principles of *Maqasid Shari'a* particularly on in the *Hifz al-Aql* were analysed. The results of these analyses were presented to the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia or JAKIM's *Shari'a* expert panel to obtain their views and recommendations on the issues raised.

## DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

The main objective of this study is to examine whether the concept of the subconscious mind is in line with *Shari'a* or not. The findings of the study show that the concept of subconscious mind is not totally complied to the *Shari'a* teachings from four aspects:

### 1) The Turning Point of Change

The subconscious mind gives full attention to the thinking aspect which is the belief system. By correcting the belief system, it is believed that it will correct the behavior. Hence, one's mind needs to be changed first by converting negative thinking to positive and rational thinking. This approach is more focused on mental training only, without emphasizing the spiritual aspect of the heart. The changes in the mind without being accompanied by the change in the heart would not produce a great impact and is only temporary. Heart is the key that needs to be addressed in the self-change process. Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. once said, narrated by [Imam Bukhari](#):

*There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoiled, the whole body gets spoiled – and that is the heart."*

### 2) The Mechanism of Changes

The training of subconscious mind mainly by using hypnosis greatly emphasized the application of suggestions and imagination. The hypnotic suggestions which are included in the client's memory who is in a hypnotic state are claimed to be understood by the subconscious mind. The client then will act according to the hypnotic suggestions. It is obvious that the subconscious mind practice emphasizes more on the use of suggestions and imagination as a mechanism to change. This instrument is indeed a bit different from what is brought in Islam. Islam provides a better method to change human being which is through the use of Quranic verses and *zikr* through the process of *tadabbur* and *tafakkur*. Allah says in surah Yunus verse 57:

*O mankind! Now there has come to you an exhortation from your Lord, a healing for the ailments of the hearts, and a guidance and mercy for those who believe.*

Allah says in surah al-Isra verse 82:

*And We send down of the Qur'an that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.*

Allah says in surah Al Ra'd verse 28:

*Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."*

The Qur'an and all forms of *zikrullah* are a remedy and cure for healing the soul and heart of mankind. Reading the Quran or listening to his verses gives a good impact on the body, heart, and mind. While the act of repeating a word while thinking (reflecting) like *dzikir*, proved to improve the fitness of the brain and increased its ability ([Ahmad](#)

[Hulusi, 2008](#)). Hence, changing human beings through subconscious mind approach is actually less accurate and less effective as compared to changing human beings through heart approach.

### 3) The Factor of Changes

According to [Muhd. Yusuf \(2010\)](#), when religious excellence began to decline since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, secularists then dominated the society and resolved problems that occurred with their own intellectual capabilities. Religious and spiritual sciences have been set aside in psychological and clinical counseling theories. The early era of knowledge renewal is supported by counseling and psychotherapy figures that make science a theoretical basis. Religious elements have been set aside in counseling theory ([Sapora Sipon, 2010](#)). This approach is continued and embedded in the subconscious approach.

Among the approaches taken in the subconscious mind, training is the belief system which is to believe in the ability of a person as a factor that can change a person. During the subconscious mind training, the coach will expose the techniques in controlling our self and our wills. In the beginning, the coach will use positive and religious elements. Let's say you want to wake up early for the *Fajr* prayer, you would have to do 3 simple steps as follows. First, instruct the subconscious mind by saying repeatedly: "I want to wake up for *Fajr* prayers at 6 am tomorrow" before going to bed. Secondly, you need to imagine the situation. Imagine in your mind that you are awake at 6 o'clock in the morning, then wake up, perform your *wudu'* and pray. Thirdly, you have to imagine your feeling after successfully waking up and performing the *Fajr* prayer. You would surely feel relieved in executing God's command. Once you've mastered this stage, you will be taught with more techniques including choosing and specifying your car park with just a finger snap. At the higher level, the coach will say: "*If we are able to control our will, we will be able to master the will of others.*" Thus the trainer will start to teach you how to control those in your surroundings. For example, to streamline your business, you need to give instructions to your subconscious mind before you start your business: "I want to earn RM 5,000 today". Next, you will imagine the faces of your customers flocking to your store and you will earn a lot of profit at the end of the day.

Once all of these are programmed in your mind, you are required to let the subconscious mind to work. You will also be taught to use the strength of both spiritual and heart to communicate with the souls and hearts of customers to purchase your product. Some coaches teach the techniques of channeling your will to subconscious mind of customers through touches such as handshake, shoulder patches and so on. If those who participated in the training did not have solid fundamentals of faith, they certainly could not relate between Allah's *qudrat* and *iradat* in everything that happens. So they will believe that their self-improvement factor lies in their own abilities and inner strength. While Islam teaches that everything in us and this nature is in the power of the Creator. Allah says in Surah As-Sa'afat verse 96:

*"And Allah created you and that which you do"*

Allah says in surah Yaasin verse 82:

*Whenever He wills a thing, He just commands it "Be" and it is.*

It is clear that the subconscious mind approach put less emphasis on the aspect of the *°Aqidah* especially in relation to *qudrat* and *iradat*. This situation causes one to assume that all changes are due to self-ability. Hence the matter of faith must be greatly emphasized as this approach involves spiritual aspects. Negligence of this will lead to misleading of *°aqidah*.

### 4) The Conditions of Changes

The subconscious mind therapy emphasizes hypnotic conditions as a prerequisite for the mind to accept suggestions to change. These hypnotic suggestions are incorporated into the memory of a hypnotic client through the process of induction and deepening. After it is confirmed that the client is in a deep trance or somnambulism, hypnosis will begin to incorporate the hypnotic suggestions. The process of changing the state of self through hypnosis creates an illusive thought (*waham*). It is not an essential or real thing to happen. The hypnotic condition is an illusion whereas Islam brings a more realistic approach that is *mujahadah*. *Mujahadah* is a prerequisite for one's heart to receive guidance to change. Allah says in Surah Al-Ankabut verse 69:

*And those who strive for Us, We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good.*

The mere application of suggestions without accompanied by *mujahadah* is not the best and effective way to change. In Islam, suggestion and advice are part of the process of *muhasabah* to evaluate errors and mistakes made. When one knows his mistake, he then needs to do *mujahadah*. *Muhasabah* should be accompanied by *mujahadah*. *Muhasabah* without *mujahadah* is not an effective method of change. If you want an effective change, then you need to put efforts and *mujahadah* together.

## CONCLUSION

There are many inaccurate approaches used in subconscious mind training to change people. This inaccuracy is due to the pioneer's misconception on the concept of human creation itself. When Sigmund Freud divided human intellect

into three distinct parts, the conscious mind, the subconscious mind, and the unconscious mind, he actually failed to understand the concept of soul and spirit (*al-ruh*). The metaphor of the floating iceberg in the water was misinterpreted by Freud. The emergence is *‘aqal* of man while the sinking is the secret side of spirit and soul, not the subconscious and unconscious mind. An ordinary man will not be able to dive into the secrets of the soul unless it is inspired by Allah through His Words, or His Messenger or the scholars who are given guidance. This is coinciding with the word of Allah in surah al-Isra verse 85:

*And they ask you, [O Muhammad], about the soul. Say, "The soul is of the affair of my Lord. And mankind has not been given of knowledge except a little."*

The approach of Islamic scholars in this mind study is more symmetrical and covers a wider scope, which is known as *‘ilm al-nafs*. According to [Haque \(2004\)](#), the term *nafs* is used by Islamic scholars to describe the personality of a human being. *Nafs* cover a very wide scope including *qalb* (heart), *ruh* (spirit), *‘aql* (intellect) and *irada* (will). In conclusion, the concept of subconscious mind comes from human theory and thought that only hovers around the minds while Islam comes with a more precise, deep and holistic approach encompassing physical, cognitive and spiritual aspects. Hence, a Muslim should choose a better approach as shown in Islam

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