



The Quran from The Perspective Of Acceptance And Commitment Therapy

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Ethical Statement: It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to discuss how the verses in the Holy Quran can be related to the flexible hexagon of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. The issues discussed in the six steps of the Act can be considered among the issues emphasized in the Quran to ensure the happiness of people in this world and the hereafter. For believers, religion is the most important element that directs their lives. For this reason, when individuals who aim to continue their worldly life according to religious values encounter a problem or pain and want to get psychological support, both the client and the counselor may hesitate. Seeing the similar aspects of the Quran verses with ACT will make the work of the counselor and the client easier in the psychotherapy process. While applying this therapy to a believing client, the counselor will be able to benefit from the Holy Quran, which is the most important source according to his belief; The client will feel the pleasure that the counselor cares about his religious values. Therefore, the fact that psychological counseling techniques coincide with the messages given by the verses of the Quran will make it easier for Muslim clients to overcome the pain they experience, cope with difficulties, and most importantly, they will be able to go through the counseling process happily because it does not contradict their beliefs. For this reason, in the study, the components of the Act are explained in detail and its relationship with the verses in the Holy Quran is revealed.

Keywords: Religious education, ACT, Quran, Therapy

Kabul ve Kararlılık Terapisi Perspektifinden Kur'an-I Kerim

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İntihal: Bu makale, en az iki hakem tarafından incelendi ve intihal içermediği teyit edildi.

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Etik Beyan: Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.

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ÖZ


Bu çalışmanın amacı Kur'an-ı Kerim'de yer alan ayetlerin Kabul ve Kararlılık Terapisi'nin esnek altıgeni ile nasıl ilişkilendirilebileceğini tartışmaktır. Act'nin altı basamağında ele alınan konular, Kur'an'ı Kerim'de de insanların dünya ve ahiret mutluluğunu sağlamak amacıyla vurgulanan hususlar arasında düşünülebilir. İnanan insanlar açısından din onların hayatlarına yön veren en önemli unsurdur. Bu nedenle dini değerlere göre dünya hayatını sürdürmeyi hedefleyen bireyler bir sıkıntı ya da acı ile karşılaştıklarında ve psikolojik destek almak istediklerinde hem danışan hem danışman tereddüt yaşayabilmektedir. ACT ile Kur'an ayetlerinin benzer yönlerini görmek danışmanın ve danışanın psikoterapi sürecinde işini kolaylaştıracak bir durumdur. Danışman inanan bir danışana bu terapiyi uygularken onun inancına göre en önemli kaynak olan Kur'an'ı Kerim'den yararlanabilecek; danışan ise danışmanın onun dini değerlerini önemsiyor olmasının hazzını duyacaktır. Dolayısıyla psikolojik danışmanlık tekniklerinin Kuran ayetlerinin verdiği mesajlarla örtüşüyor olması, Müslüman danışanların yaşadığı acıyı atlatmasında, zorluklarla mücadele etmesinde daha fazla kolaylık sağlayabilecek ve en önemlisi danışmanlık sürecini inancına ters düşmediği için mutlu bir şekilde geçirme imkânına sahip olabilecektir. Bu nedenle çalışmada Act'in bileşenleri ayrıntılı olarak açıklanarak Kur'an'ı Kerim'de yer alan ayetlerle olan ilişkisi ortaya konmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din Eğitimi, Kabul ve Kararlılık, Kur'an, Terapi.

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Introduction

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a therapy modality within the new-generation (3rd wave) cognitive behavioral therapies, introduced by Steven Hayes in the mid-1980s and carried forward by Kelly Wilson and Kirk Strosahl¹. In other words, ACT is a behavioral therapy and is based on Relation Frame Theory (RFT), the theory of behavioral cognition. Also, ACT places great emphasis on positive psychology, contextual perspective, spirituality, social justice, and multiculturalism, and for this reason, ACT is an important approach to use to deal with biopsychosocial and spiritual issues and increase psychological welfare for various groups, including Muslims². More academically, the roots of ACT began in 1976 when s/he studied with his first doctoral student, Zettle, about the roles of language in life and clinical conditions³. ACT has a strong and comprehensive basis in functional contextualism, Relational Frame Theory (RFT), and psychological flexibility (and rigidity) models. Based on these three underlying parts and especially the psychological flexibility model, the approach has become a therapy associated with both positive and abnormal psychology⁴.

The first piece, functional contextualism, ACT's philosophical worldview, focuses on what is feasible within the scope of functionality. It emphasizes interpreting, predicting, and influencing based on a psychological contextual perspective. RFT, which is the second piece, emphasizes the role of language and cognition in explaining the welfare and agony of humans⁵. RFT has a central role in the ACT because words and language are very effective in people's moods. For this reason, words, language, and cognitions are central to suffering and welfare. For example, based on the RFT perspective, if someone mentions a word (e.g., water, lemon, trauma, accident, peace), the mind focuses on it as if it were, even though it is not currently present/real. The psychological flexibility model is the third and most important component to understanding and appropriately implementing ACT.

Another issue that requires examining ACT based on the perspective of the Qur'an in the present study is the increasing Muslim population in the world. In previous studies, researchers emphasized focusing on Muslim mental health through empirical and theoretical research using the basic principles of Islam⁶. Muslim mental health literature suggests that Islam often shapes the challenges and strengths of Muslims as an overall central theme⁷. Although ACT was examined in many biopsychosocial, spiritual, and contextual senses in various groups, none of the previous studies examined the Holy Qur'an from the Perspective of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. For this reason, the present study is important as it will contribute to the literature in this respect.

¹ Steven C. Hayes et al., "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Model, Processes and Outcomes", *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 44(1) (2006), 1-25.

² Ahmet Tanhan - Vincent T. Francisco, "Muslims and Mental Health Concerns: A Social Ecological Model Perspective", *Journal of Community Psychology* 47(4) (2019), 964-978.

³ Chris Cullen, "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): A third Wave Behaviour Therapy", *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy* 36(6) (2008), 667-673.

⁴ Hayes et al., "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Model, Processes and Outcomes", 1-25; Ahmet Tanhan, *Spiritual Strength: The use of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) with Muslim Clients* (Rochester: University of Rochester, Master Thesis, 2014).

⁵ Hayes et al., "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Model, Processes and Outcomes", 1-25.

⁶ Ahmet Tanhan - Vincent T. Francisco "Muslims and Mental Health Concerns: A Social Ecological Model Perspective. *Journal of Community Psychology* 47(4) (2019), 964-978.

⁷ Ahmed M. Abdel-Khalek, "Islam and Mental Health: A Few Speculations", *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 14(2) (2011), 87-92.

1. Method

The present study is a literature review. The functions of establishing interdisciplinary relationships, uncovering the scope of a field, and providing resources to researchers reinforce the importance of compilation studies in the literature.

Verses in the Holy Qur'an on the subjects discussed in the hexagon of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy were researched according to certain topics such as submission, patience, worship, repentance, forgiveness, and tolerance. Tafsir sources were used to determine whether the verses found in the scope of the study coincided with the steps of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. Not every verse found on the subject was included not to exceed the volume of the study, and certain verses that corresponded to the goals of ACT were discussed in the article and similar aspects were emphasized.

2. Components of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and the Holy Qur'an

The underlying theory of the ACT model toward cognitions is technically precise and its methods are not linear⁸. The purpose of ACT is to increase psychological flexibility with interventions based on "Acceptance", "Cognitive Defusion", "Contact with the present moment", "Self as Context", "Values" and "Committed Action", which constitute the six main themes in ACT's Hexagon⁹ (shown in Figure 1).

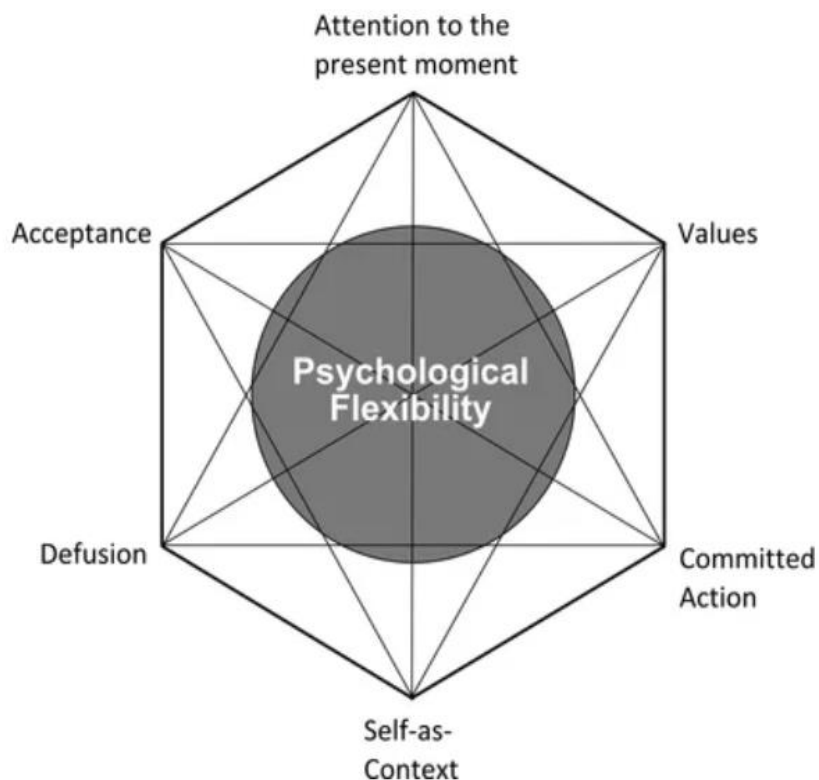


Figure 1. Act's Hexagon

⁸ Russ Harris, *ACT with love: Stop Struggling, Reconcile Differences, and Strengthen Your Relationship with Acceptance and Commitment* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger, 2009).

2.1. Acceptance

Acceptance involves actively embracing the internal experiences that arise in the present as an action and not an attitude or opinion targeting the context in which an internal experience occurs and reducing the effort an individual makes to control or regulate certain internal experiences. We can choose to be accepting or work to regulate our inner experiences. Acceptance differs from tolerance because it is considered a choice and involves a more welcoming stance towards inner experience. Acceptance is applied to internal experiences fostering experiential avoidance, which attempts to reduce or avoid unwanted internal experiences that cause negative impacts on one's functioning⁹. Acceptance involves not only being actively present in anxiety-provoking situations but also treating one's anxiety in a welcoming way.¹⁰

In their book *Life is About Leaving Behind as Much as Moving Forward*, Sungur and Batı (2022) said “Acceptance is an important virtue in human life. However, it does not mean submission or approval. Acceptance is being able to stop seeing what exists as we want it to be and see it as it is. Acceptance is of great importance in determining what to do with the current reality without wasting time. Sometimes there may be nothing to do. Then, all that is left for an individual is to embrace the agony and learn from it...”

Environmental experiences such as distress and the feeling of elements in worldly life are called tests in Islamic literature. When faced with this test, religion recommends patience. The concept of *patience* or *endurance* is the feeling of not losing courage and fortitude under difficult conditions. A patient person continues on his/her way or continues to wait without losing his/her morale, despite long delays and provocations. In other words, acceptance means teaching individuals not to see it as abnormal that negative emotions and thoughts occupy their minds and even affect their bodies, and establish relationships in different, new ways by accepting them as they are (in other words, perceiving them as guests) instead of fighting these emotions and thoughts aiming to help them live with a focus on the present moment¹¹.

Acceptance, which is a step in ACT, is defined in the Holy Qur'an as consent, submission, patience, and praise for people in coping with the events they face in the world. To overcome the problems experienced by individuals, they must first accept that this worldly life will not be completely free from anxiety, stress, and distress. The Qur'an draws attention to the acceptance step of ACT in the verse “When a calamity befalls them, they say, ‘Indeed, we belong to Allah and Him we will surely return’. It is for these that the grace and mercy of their Lord belong, and it is they who have been guided to the right path”¹². This verse indicates that the individual submits to fate, accepts God's judgment and is content with this judgment. The concept of *calamity* is defined as *disaster, accident, trouble*¹³, anything that disturbs an individual's life, property or family¹⁴. When the statements in the verse are examined carefully, it is emphasized that there may be all kinds of situations that will make an individual sad and suffer during the worldly life and that beyond all these, the worldly life will end one day and the necessity of accepting the existence of death is also emphasized.

⁹ Steven C. Hayes, “Experiential Avoidance and Behavioral Disorders: A Functional Dimensional Approach to Diagnosis and Treatment”, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 64(6) (1996), 1152-1168.

¹⁰ Michael P. Twohig, “Introduction: The Basics of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy”, *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice* 19(4) (2012), 499-507.

¹¹ Georg H. Eirfert - John P. Forsyth, *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Anxiety Disorders* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications: 2005).

¹² al-Bakara, 2/156.

¹³ Mehmed Maksudoğlu, “Sabır”, *Arapça-Türkçe Öğretici Sözlük*, (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Vakfı Yayınları, 1995), 470.

¹⁴ Vehbe Zuhayli, *Tefsirü'l-Münir*, çev. Hamdi Arslan et al. (İstanbul: Bilimevi Basın Yayıncılık, 2005), 1/329.

In the verse, the expression *returning to Allah* does not mean a word spoken only verbally, it refers to returning to Allah by the heart¹⁵. For this reason, in the general message of the verse, it is expected that the person will see what the purpose of creation is, that s/s/he will return to the Lord at the end of this worldly life, that s/s/he must always remember God's blessings, and that the blessings that remain with him/her are many times greater than the blessings taken from him/her. When an individual thinks about these, all the difficulties faced in life become easier and s/s/he accepts them¹⁶. An individual who says these when faced with a disaster knows that the situation experienced is within the power of Allah that He will dispose of His servants as He wishes, and that nothing will be lost in the presence of Allah on the Day of Judgment. This belief stems from the acceptance that they are servants of Allah and that they will return to Allah after death¹⁷. Also, people who accept what they are going through and are patient are given special mercy by Allah, the Almighty. These people find the effect of this unique mercy in the coolness of their hearts and the peace of their souls when they face a calamity. Non-believers become jealous of the mercy offered to believers when they face trouble because when an unbeliever faces a disaster, the world becomes too small for him/her. After all, s/s/he cannot accept what s/s/he has experienced¹⁸.

When the lives of the prophets, who are shown as role models for believers in the Holy Qur'an, are evaluated, it will be seen that Allah, the Almighty sent down many verses about how they could accept the troubles they experienced and cope with them. "*We will certainly test you with some fear and hunger and loss of wealth, lives and crops. Give good news to those who are patient*"¹⁹, Allah the Almighty emphasized that people will face some pain while they are alive and if they accept that these pains will happen to them and are patient, good news awaits them. This verse was revealed after the Prophet and the Muslims, who were attacked by the polytheists in their homeland of Mecca, escaped from these attacks by migrating to Medina, but they also faced some financial problems such as hunger in Medina. However, the purpose of the verse and the message it gives are absolute and general. Allah tested the Muslims of that period with some pain, and He will test people whenever He wishes until the end of the world's life. But people who rely on God and who are not crushed by the pain and problems they face will be the winners both in this world and afterlife as a result of their submission to God²⁰. For this reason, the good news given in the verse is a great compliment to the believers who accept that life will have all kinds of troubles, like the Prophet and the believers, who endured their experiences with patience and fortitude, and who always maintained their faith in Allah with patience, submission, submission, and optimism²¹. In the Holy Qur'an, another issue that can serve as an example of the acceptance step of ACT is the verses regarding the acceptance of an individual's death. Accepting the existence of death, not being afraid of it, and knowing that all the troubles in the world will end with death offer support to people to endure the pain and the difficulties they face. It is reminded to the man with the verse "*It is He who kills you during the night, knows*

¹⁵ Ebu'l aL'â Mevdudi, *Tefhimu'l Kuran*, çev. Muhammed han Kayanî vd. (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995), 1/129.

¹⁶ Ebussuûd Efendi, *Ebussuûd Tefsiri*, çev. Ali Akın (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 2006), 7/3083.

¹⁷ İbn Kesir, *Hadislerle Kur'an Kerim Tefsiri*, çev. Bekir Karlıağa - Bedrettin Çetiner (İstanbul: Çağrı yayınları, 1988), 3/634.

¹⁸ Zuhayli, *Tefsirü'l-Münir*, 1/331.

¹⁹ al-Bakara 2/155.

²⁰ Hayrettin Karaman et al., *Kur'an Yolu Türkçe Meâl ve Tefsir* (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2012), 1/241.

²¹ Karaman et al., *Kur'an Yolu Türkçe Meâl ve Tefsir*, 1/242.

what you do during the day, and then brings you back to life (every) morning, so that the appointed term may be fulfilled. Then to Him is your return. In the end, He will inform you of what you have done”²² that there is death at the end of worldly life, an individual must accept the existence of death whether s/s/he wants it or not, and that what s/s/he experiences in the world after death has a counterpart in the afterlife. In a way, Allah the Almighty kills people during the night in sleep and brings them back to life during the day, even though He knows what they will do. In this way, the appointed time for every human being is completed, and no one can postpone the time determined for him/her by Allah even in the blink of an eye.²³ This enables people to accept the existence of death and what they have experienced. “Allah causes people to die when their time of death comes and makes those who do not die as if they had died in their sleep. He keeps those whom He has decreed to die, and He releases others (to life) for a certain period. Surely there are lessons in this for those who think carefully”²⁴ is another verse showing that accepting the existence of death has much wisdom for people.

2.2. Cognitive Defusion

Cognitive defusion can be considered as reducing the true meaning of internal experiences so that thoughts are taken as mere thoughts, emotions are mere feelings, and bodily sensations are mere bodily sensations. There are many techniques developed for cognitive defusion²⁵. For example, a negative thought can be viewed calmly, repeated out loud until only its sound remains, or treated as an externally observed event by giving it a form, size, color, speed, or shape. People can thank their minds for such an interesting thought, label the thought process (“I have the thought that I am not good”), or examine the thoughts, feelings, and memories that occurred while experiencing it. Defusion is an acceptance strategy and means accepting annoying thoughts rather than avoiding them or eliminating them. In other words, it means stopping struggling with thoughts and feelings²⁶.

Harris explained defusion as follows. “The purpose of defusion is to allow you to fully focus on life rather than getting lost in thoughts or being pushed around by thoughts. When we detach from unhelpful thoughts, we often find that they disappear quickly or distressing emotions diminish quickly. However, these are extras and are not our main concern. For this reason, of course, if this happens, enjoy it, but do not expect these.”²⁷

Based on Harris’ statements, it is possible to argue that the concept of submission, which is mentioned in the Holy Quran, together with the concept of patience, enables us to accept thoughts that do not benefit us and hurt and wear us out. Derived from the root *wakl* meaning entrusting in Allah in the dictionary, Tawakkul means “taking someone's work upon oneself, giving assurance to someone, entrusting one's work to someone, and trusting them”. The essence of submission is that an individual surrenders himself to God's will in every situation s/s/he faces and consents to everything that comes from Him.²⁸

²² al-En'âm 6/60.

²³ Ebussuûd Efendi, *Ebussuûd Tefsiri*, 5/1951.

²⁴ al-Zümer 39/42.

²⁵ Steven C. Hayes – Kirk D. Strosahl, *A Practical Guide To Acceptance And Commitment Therapy* (Newyork: Springer, 2004).

²⁶ Russ Harris, *Mutluluk Tuzağı*, çev. M.Hakan Türkçapar - K. Fatih Yavuz (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2022).

²⁷ Harris, *Mutluluk Tuzağı*, 57.

²⁸ Mustafa Çağrı, “Tevekkül”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2012), 41/1.

It is seen in the Holy Qur'an that no matter how bad the events faced by individuals are, people who put their submission in Allah without focusing on the problem are praised. Muslims who were persecuted for their faith during the time of the Prophet migrated to Abyssinia and then to Medina, upon the permission of the Prophet. Muslims in Mecca, who were subjected to many economic and political pressures and troubles, were patient with a full commitment and relied on Allah. The following verses were revealed in the Qur'an about them "We will place those who emigrate in the way of Allah after being oppressed, in a good place in this world, and the reward of the afterlife is greater, if only they knew! Because they were patient and put their submission in their Lord"²⁹. The expressions in this verse are not limited to the first Muslims in Mecca, they also include all believers who faced the events they experienced with unshakable faith, complete submission, and patience like them.³⁰ For this reason, when an individual faces a negative situation, s/s/he asks, "Why does this always happen to me?" Do I have bad luck? Life will become more meaningful for him/her when s/s/he withdraws from thoughts such as these and allows the events experienced to guide him/her rather than manage him/her. In this process, the concepts of patience and submission, which are frequently emphasized in the Holy Qur'an, shed light on the individual.

Another example of the cognitive defusion step of acceptance and commitment therapy in the Holy Qur'an is the verses describing the situation of an individual who falls into despair by sinning. When an individual commits a sin knowingly or unknowingly, s/s/he falls into despair because s/s/he worries that God will no longer love him/her or be pleased with him/her, and s/s/he may internally see himself/herself as a "sinner" and think that God will not forgive him/her. However, if an individual who commits a sin and does things that Allah does not like, regrets what s/s/he did, believing that Allah will forgive him/her, Allah Almighty will say, "O My servants who have transgressed the limits in sins to their detriment! Do not despair of Allah's mercy. Allah will forgive all sins (if He wills), indeed, He is very forgiving, very merciful"³¹. Because God's mercy and forgiveness are wide enough to never allow the individual to fall into despair³². The hope in this verse, which is said to be the most hopeful in the Qur'an, is not to encourage people to sin, but to direct even the most sinful people to repent and turn to Allah as soon as possible³³. There is no one and no sin that Allah will not forgive after an individual turns to Allah with repentance in time and in line with the conditions³⁴. For this reason, when an individual commits a negative act that harms himself/herself or others, s/s/he must separate his/her mind from thoughts such as "How did I do this, how can I continue my life from now on?" and as emphasized in the verse "Whoever commits evil or wrongs himself/herself and then asks for forgiveness, s/s/he will find Allah very forgiving and merciful"³⁵ and must live his/her remaining life after repenting.

²⁹ al-Nahl 16/41-42.

³⁰ Karaman et al., *Kur'an Yolu Tefsiri*, 3/399-400.

³¹ al-Zümer 39/53.

³² Karaman et al., *Kur'an Yolu Tefsiri*, 4/627.

³³ Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, sad. İsmail Karaçam et al. (İstanbul: Zehraveyn: 1992), 6/501.

³⁴ Zeki Duman, *Beyânu'l Hak* (Ankara: Fecr Yayınları, 2006), 2/170.

³⁵ al-Nisa 4/110.

2.3. Contact with the Present Moment

The purpose of being in the moment is to enable individuals to experience the world more directly so that their behaviors are more flexible and their actions are more consistent with their values³⁶. Being in the moment is when people experience their inner experiences and the events around them as if they were happening right now, rather than focusing on past or future events. In general, it means accepting internal and external events flexibly, fluidly, and voluntarily as they are, without any evaluation or judgment. Being in the moment with one's internal and external environment helps one experience the world as it is. Being in the moment requires at least three skills (focusing attention on the present, experiencing clearly and fully what is happening at the moment, and observing these events without any judgment). Flexible contact with the moment is of great importance in rumination about the past or worrying about the future because the person is not in touch with the events happening now in both cases, but is interested in the events that have happened or might have happened before. An individual who cannot be aware of the moment because of rumination or anxiety about the future can be taught to recognize flexible contact with the present moment and refocus their attention on their current internal experiences and events around them³⁷.

Being here now allows us to take a step back and see problems from a broader perspective. Individuals who have this skill live in the moment and can adapt to changing conditions very quickly. In other words, by stepping back, they can see even the painful events in life within the big picture. However, individuals who lack this skill tend to ruminate about the past, worry about the future, or do both. Being present makes such individuals anxious and restless. They are lost in their own life stories and events³⁸. As Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi (ö. 672/1273) said, "Do not look at the past and be sad, nor look to the future and be anxious. Live the moment you are in, because you exist in that moment."

The best example of the presence step of ACT therapy can be seen in the Surah Yusuf of the Qur'an. In this surah, in which the events that Prophet Yusuf experienced as a result of his brothers' jealousy are described in detail, Prophet Yakub is seen to be successful at the moment in the face of what s/he experienced. As narrated in the surah, Yakub's other sons, jealous of their father's love for Yusuf, threw him into a well and then came to their father and told him that a wolf had eaten Yusuf. To convince Yakub of this event, his sons smeared a fake blood mark on Yusuf's shirt and showed it to him. According to one narration, Yakub, upon seeing his son's bloody shirt, expressed his sadness by saying "By Allah, I have never seen such a docile wolf before. It ate my son but did not tear his shirt"³⁹. Prophet Yakub said, "No! Your soul has led you to do evil, so I must be patient. But it is only Allah who can be relied upon against what you tell us"⁴⁰. It is seen in these verses

³⁶ Hayes et al., "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Model, Processes and Outcomes", 1-25.

³⁷ Michael P. Twohig, "Introduction: The Basics of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy", *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice* 19(4) (2012), 499-507.

³⁸ Kirk Strosahl et al., *Radikal Değişimler İçin Kısa Müdahaleler*, çev. K. Fatih Yavuz-Merve Terzioğlu (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2022).

³⁹ Ebussuûd Efendi, *Ebussuûd Tefsiri*, çev. Ali Akın (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 2006), 7/3083.

⁴⁰ al-Yusuf 12/18.

that Prophet Yakub did not believe the lie his sons told him and in the face of the great sadness, s/he chose to contact the present moment, did not ask his sons about the past, did not judge them for what they did, and expressed that Allah was his helper to endure the lie they told him⁴¹. In the verse, the expression “*Sabrı Cemil* (praised patience)” that Prophet Yakub sought refuge in to endure what s/he experienced means patience shown without complaining to people in any way⁴², and this patience is only possible by being able to stay in the moment.

In the following verses of the Surah Yusuf, Yusuf is taken out of the well, bought by an Egyptian, thrown into prison when s/he became a young man, and when s/he was released from prison, s/he was made the head of the Treasury Department of the country where s/he lived, and when his brothers came to buy grain from the country where s/he lived, s/he met them. Yusuf recognized his brothers and asked them to bring their absent brothers to him to give them provisions. Then Yusuf played a trick on them and took his brother hostage⁴³. When Yakub’s sons told them all this, Yakub did not believe them, and another son was added to Joseph’s pain of separation. What happened next is described in the following verses of the Quran as follows:

“Their father said: ‘No, your souls have deceived you in this matter. I must be patient. Perhaps Allah will bring them all to me. Surely, He is the Knowing, the Wise. And s/he turned away from them and said, ‘O Joseph’s Fire! Enough! Enough!’ And his eyes became white with grief. He was swallowing and gulping. They said, “You are still talking about Joseph. By Allah, you will waste away and be destroyed. Interesting! He said, “I complain of my grief only to Allah, and I know from Allah what you do not know. O my sons, seek Joseph and his brother and do not despair of the mercy of Allah. For none despair of the mercy of Allah except the disbelievers”⁴⁴.

What Yakub said about the pain of separation from his child for the second time showed that s/he preferred to remain in the moment in the face of what was happening, just like the words s/he said when s/he lost Yusuf. Although Yakub was sad about what was happening and angry with his children, he did not say or do anything that would not please them. For this reason, s/he remained silent about the pain he faced without complaining to anyone, including those who caused him that pain⁴⁵, he sought refuge in Allah and begged Him because of his sadness and grief⁴⁶ and he did not lose his faith that Allah would have mercy on him and give him joy from an unexpected source⁴⁷. He also thought that there was great wisdom regarding all these troubles he faced⁴⁸. For this reason, when Yakub was separated from his second son, he did not confront his other children about what happened to Joseph, he did not believe what they told him but avoided a judgmental attitude about their past, and he focused only on the moment he was living in, taking refuge in God, which is an important example of the “being in the moment” stage of ACT therapy.

⁴¹ Muhammed Ali es- Sâbûnî, *Safvetü't-Tefâsîr*, çev. Sadrettin Gümüş ve Nedim Yılmaz (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2003), 3/143.

⁴² Said Havva, *el-Esâs fi't-Tefsîr*, çev. M. Beşîr Eryarsoy (İstanbul: Şamil Yayınevi, 1989), 3/143.

⁴³ al-Yusuf 12/19-82.

⁴⁴ al-Yusuf 12/83-87.

⁴⁵ Havva, *el-Esâs fi't-Tefsîr*, 7/230.

⁴⁶ Havva, *el-Esâs fi't-Tefsîr*, 7/231.

⁴⁷ Sâbûnî, *Safvetü't-Tefâsîr*, 3/184.

⁴⁸ Ebussuûd Efendi, *Ebussuûd Tefsiri*, 7/3177.

In the continuation of the story of Joseph, when Yakub's sons returned to Egypt to take their brothers who were taken hostage, they expressed their regret with the following words when they realized that Joseph was their brother⁴⁹. "They said, 'By God, God has made you superior to us. We were indeed sinners.' Joseph said, 'There is no blame on you today. May God forgive you. He is the most merciful of the merciful'⁵⁰. Yusuf's statement "There is no blame on you today" regarding his brothers' regrets is a very good example of his preference for remaining in the moment. The fact that s/he emphasized "today" without feeling angry towards his brothers, despite being separated from his family and homeland, having to live with people s/he did not know, and even being imprisoned, meant that s/he would not scold them in any way at that moment⁵¹ and that there would be no reproach or complaint towards them at that moment when they were to account for what they did. Yusuf's statement conveys the message, "Do not think of my words as a reproach or accusation, and do not think that something bad will happen to us in the future. Do not worry, nothing will happen to you"⁵². Here, it is seen that Yusuf evaluates the pain in the big picture, distances himself from feelings such as anxiety, stress, anger, and resentment for the future, and prefers to live the happiness of the moment.

2.4. Self as Context

This concept is the core of ACT and RFT⁵³ and is also increasingly important in linguistic functions such as empathy, theory of mind, and sense of self⁵⁴. The contextual self is supported in the ACT with mindfulness exercises, metaphors, and experiential processes⁵⁵. The conceptualized self is the "you" constructed based on self-evaluations and classifications. It is what we believe we are. The clinical problem is that people will try to protect, hold on to, or preserve this conceptualization of self even if it causes ineffective action. For example, if an individual labels themselves as "depressed," they may engage in behaviors that continue to define themselves as depressed, based on a core belief that they need to be protected. In ACT, they attempt to develop a sense of self as context by experiencing "I/here/now" without defining internal-external events, and by providing awareness or perspective-taking. Similar to other ACT processes, there is flexibility here. The contextual self is considered to be facilitated in mindfulness exercises by cognitive defusion applied in the six ACT processes.

In his book, *Learning ACT Made Easy*, Harris (2022) explained the contextual self as follows. "The contextual self is the part of you that observes everything. Metaphorically, it is a) a safe space in which you can be open to difficult thoughts and feelings and make room, and b) a perspective or vantage point from which to step back and observe thoughts and feelings. We reach this

⁴⁹ al-Yusuf 12/90.

⁵⁰ al-Yusuf 12/91-92.

⁵¹ Havva, *el-Esâs fi't-Tefsîr*, 7/233; Celeleddin El-Mahallî- Celeleddin Es-Suyûtî, *Tefsîrü'l-Celâleyn*, çev. Ali Rıza Kaşeli (İstanbul: Sağlam Yayınları, 2015), 2/197.

⁵² Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, 5/88.

⁵³ Steven C. Hayes, "Making Sense of Spirituality", *Behaviorism* 12 (1984), 99-110.

⁵⁴ Louise Mchug et al., "Knowing Me, Knowing You: Deictic Complexity in Falsebelief Understanding", *The Psychological Record* 57 (2007), 533-542.

⁵⁵ Hayes et al., "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Model, Processes and Outcomes", 1-25.

psychological space by actively observing what we see, or in other words, by deliberately bringing awareness to our awareness. Here, the aim is to increase defusion (especially defusion from the conceptualized self) and enhance acceptance by reaching a stable and secure perspective from which difficult internal experiences are observed. Another target here is to experience a stable sense of self amid constant change. In other words, it can be considered an observation point that allows us to shift our attention from problem-solving to the problem-solving process⁵⁶.

The contextual self-step of acceptance and commitment therapy, which aims to see the individual's thoughts about themselves as separate from their actions, is seen in the verses of the Qur'an that deal with the individual's responsibility to do an action and to realize it. When the verse "Whether you reveal what is in your hearts or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it"⁵⁷ was revealed, according to the narration of Ibn Abbas, one of the companions, Abu Bakr, Omar, and some people went to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah! We have been charged with deeds beyond our strength. Indeed, one of us may think of what s/he does not want to be in his heart..." Then, Almighty Allah revealed the verse "Allah does not impose on any soul more than it can"⁵⁸. The Prophet then said, "Allah Almighty has forgiven my ummah for what they said to themselves, as long as they did not do it or say it"⁵⁹. It is understood from this narration that different thoughts pass through the mind of an individual and these thoughts can sometimes have negative characteristics. Despite this, there is a part of an individual that observes him/herself and this part allows the person to separate from the things that pass through his/her mind. When we look at the hadith of the Prophet, we see that the negative thoughts or actions that pass through an individual's mind are not the responsibility. Many thoughts that do not comply with moral and religious values may pass through an individual's mind, but in general, an individual's thoughts can be divided into two; some of these are in his/her heart, and one resolves to realize them, but s/he/she cannot get rid of some of them even though s/he/she does not like them. An individual is responsible for the first type of thoughts, but s/he/she is not responsible for the second type of thoughts⁶⁰. Similarly, according to ACT, when people believe and accept the thoughts passing from their minds as the ultimate truths reflecting who they are, they might fall into depression or the hands of self-blaming and self-shame, which may stop them from leading a life based on their values and decrease their psychological flexibility. On the other hand, when people notice that whatever they do or think, there is an encompassing part of theirs that observes everything and becomes aware of everything, they can understand that their self is bigger than their thoughts and actions, which gives them the idea that their specific thoughts and actions do not reflect who they are, which may increase their psychological flexibility, help forgive themselves and continue their life by holding onto their values.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Strosahl et al., *Radikal Değişimler İçin Kısa Müdahaleler*.

⁵⁷ al-Bakara 2/284.

⁵⁸ al-Bakara 2/286.

⁵⁹ Fahrudin Er-Râzî, *Tefsîr-î Kebir Mefâtîhu'l Gayb*, çev. Suat Yıldırım et al. (Ankara: Akçağ yayınları, 1989), 6/73-74.

⁶⁰ Râzî, *Tefsîr-î Kebir Mefâtîhu'l Gayb*, 6/74.

⁶¹ Russ Harris, *Act'i Kolay Öğrenmek*, çev. Fatma Betül Esen-K. Fatih Yavuz (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2022).

2.5. Values

Values are chosen qualities of purposeful actions that can never be achieved as an object but can be embodied moment by moment. In ACT, acceptance, cognitive defusion, flexible contact with the moment, etc. are not the targets because the six basic ACT processes prepare the ground for a vital, values-consistent life⁶². Values are the elements of life that we value that motivate us to engage in certain activities in ACT. While most people share some common values, values are chosen individually. Values are often compared to goals. For example, marriage is an attainable target, although the value of being a loving and gentle husband may be embodied as an aspect of ongoing action. Values can provide guidance, meaning, and purpose for our actions. In this way, helping individuals clarify their values can help increase the likelihood that they will approach stimuli that initially provoke avoidance, and the relevant reinforcers that have little effect can become more powerful. For example, for an individual diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, approaching an anxiety-provoking stimulus (and allowing the anxiety to be there without defending it) to attend an event at their child's school (if this is a key parenting value) will increase the reinforcing value of the anxiety⁶³.

In his book "The Happiness Trap", Harris (2022) defines values as follows. "They are the deepest desires in our hearts, how we want to be and how we want to relate to the world around us. They are guiding principles to guide and motivate us as we go about our lives. When we live our lives in line with values, we face a sense of vitality and joy within us, and feel also that life can be enhanced, full and meaningful even when bad things happen." In other words, it is very important to use values to survive when faced with difficulties in life.

In the Qur'an, it is seen that many things are promised so that an individual can endure the events they will experience in the world. Among the things promised, the one that is frequently emphasized is Paradise. However, there is a very important value in the Qur'an that enables believers to cope with all the difficulties they face accurately. "Allah has promised the believer men and the believer women gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them forever, and beautiful dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence. And the approval of Allah is greater than all of them, and that is the great happiness"⁶⁴. As stated in this verse, this value is to gain Allah's approval.

The expression at the end of the verse shows that the happiness provided by spiritual pleasures is much superior to the happiness provided by material means. Because something used as a means to an end cannot be more valuable and important than it. If gaining Allah's approval were a means to attain the blessings of paradise, then it would mean that these blessings are more important than gaining Allah's approval. However, it is emphasized in the verse that those who fully submit to Allah's will shall attain very beautiful blessings with His grace and that more important than all these blessings, they will gain His approval, and that the greatest success an individual can achieve is to attain His approval⁶⁵. In all the troubles an individual faces, when tested by losing his wealth, relatives, and loved ones, if s/s/he endures all these pains by relying on Allah, knowing that s/s/he will eventually gain Allah's approval will be effective in alleviating the pain s/s/he experiences.

⁶² Hayes et al., "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Model, Processes and Outcomes", 1-25.

⁶³ Twohig, "Introduction: The Basics of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy", 499-507.

⁶⁴ al-Tevbe 9/72.

⁶⁵ Karaman et al., *Kur'an Yolu Tefsiri*, 3/33-34.

The greatest blessing an individual can attain is not limited to gaining Allah's approval alone in the Holy Qur'an, but the importance of the servant being pleased with Allah is also emphasized. "You, the one who has attained the peace of faith! Return to your Lord, well-pleased to Him and He well-pleased from you. So join My true servants and enter My Paradise!"⁶⁶. In these verses, the fact that the verse begins by directly addressing the individual, without using an expression such as "He will be called in the hereafter," is a warm and elegant style and a very beautiful compliment from Allah towards His servants. Even this style is like a scent full of good news for the believer, spreading to this world, of the happiness of the hereafter. In the verse, the "nafs-i mutmainnah" translated as "the person who has attained the peace of faith" describes the believer who has perfected his soul by living a worldly life as Allah desires. The conflicts within an individual who has attained the peace of faith by reaching the level of "nafs-i mutmainnah" have calmed down, his/her troubles have ended, s/s/he has become at peace with both Allah and other people, and s/s/he has become happy because of all these. The greatest happiness an individual can face is to please his Lord as a result of serving Him completely, to be rewarded by Him, and to be pleased with Him. The last blessing that this love and contentment brings to an individual is seen as Paradise, as the thing that is "superior to all blessings" is to gain the consent of Allah⁶⁷.

In the above verses, the emphasis on gaining His approval as the greatest happiness an individual can reach is in line with the value level of ACT therapy. When an individual determines the highest value s/s/he will reach as God's approval in every pain and trouble s/s/he faces, s/s/he will not allow the pain s/s/he experiences to consume him/her and since s/s/he has set this value as his/her target, s/s/he will be free from all material troubles and will reach peace. Also, this peace s/s/he has will not be short-lived but eternal.

An individual must remember that the greatest happiness s/s/he can attain is Allah's approval, not only when s/he faces pain and trouble, but also when s/he enjoys different blessings in this world. "Know that the life of this world is a game, a diversion, a show-off, boasting among yourselves, and a competition in wealth and children. It is like a rain that makes farmers envy it, then withers, and then turns yellow, and then becomes chaff. In the Hereafter, there is either severe punishment or Allah's forgiveness and pleasure. The life of this world is nothing but a deceptive enjoyment"⁶⁸. The verse expresses that while in this world, an individual has blessings that many people envy, such as being rich and having children, and even boasts about these blessings to others. When the verse is examined in general, it is expressed that it is necessary to accept the existence of death, that all blessings in this world are temporary, and for this reason, the most important value that an individual must possess is to gain Allah's approval. For this reason, the issues emphasized in this verse meet both the acceptance and value stages of ACT therapy.

2.6. Commitment in Value-Focused Behaviors

In his book Learning ACT Easily, Harris's (2022) answer to the question of what is committed action is as follows. "Committed action means effective actions guided and motivated by values, which includes physical action (overt behavior) and psychological action (implicit behavior). Committed action refers to flexible action. In other words, it also means easily adapting to the difficulties of the situation and continuing the behavior or changing the behavior when necessary. In other words, it is to do what is

⁶⁶ al-Fecr 89/27-30.

⁶⁷ Karaman et al., Kur'an Yolu Tefsiri, 5/621-622.

⁶⁸ al-Hadid 57/20.

necessary to live in harmony with your values. Here, the purpose is to translate values into ongoing, developing, effective, dynamic overt and implicit patterns.

According to Strosahl et al. (2022), individuals who can take actions in line with their personal beliefs and values are in connection with their values in important areas of life such as work life, private life, leisure time, and spiritual development, and all their behaviors reflect these. When faced with difficult conditions of life (which can also be called “tests”), they exhibit active and patient solution-oriented behaviors in line with their values. They also see the ups and downs of life as opportunities for growth and development within the scope of their values. However, people who lack skills in this field have not been able to determine a direction for themselves in life and feel lost. When faced with the difficulties of life, they either remain passive and withdraw or tend to exhibit impulsive, self-destructive behaviors such as substance use, aggression, or escape avoidance. As a result, they fail to resolve problems and for this reason, the difficulties of life are seen as more unmanageable.

The verses in the Quran addressing how an individual must behave in difficult times reflect the commitment step of ACT therapy in value-focused behaviors. The values that will guide an individual's behavior when they are angry, lose their wealth or loved ones, are wronged, or do harm to themselves or others are clearly emphasized in many verses in the Quran. Individuals who have these values, firstly, can achieve psychological well-being and be suitable role models for others in this regard, regardless of what they experience.

In the verses of the Quran that involve the characteristics of pious people, the values that a believer must possess are explained. “*Compete to the forgiveness of your Lord and to enter Paradise, which is as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious. They (i.e., the pious) spend in the way of Allah in prosperity and hardship, and they suppress their anger and forgive people. Allah loves those who do good. When they do something ugly or do evil to themselves, they remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins. And who can forgive sins except Allah? They do not persist in what they do knowingly*”⁶⁹. According to these verses, wealth does not make pious people selfish, and poverty does not make a person forget to spend in the way of Allah. Knowing very well the good aspects and weaknesses of the human being He created, Almighty Allah does not exclude a believer who sins the ranks of believers when he regrets what he has done and repents, and does not separate him from the pious who will enter Paradise. One of the striking values in this verse is overcoming anger and forgiving people. The word “*qayz*” translated as anger in the verse means “the excitement a person feels towards something unpleasant”. The sense of piety in a person enables him/her to overcome his/her anger in the face of events and forgive people. The word “*kazim (plural kazimîn)*” in the verse means “one who overcomes his/her anger, does not take revenge on those he harms even though s/he has the power, and is patient”⁷⁰. When these verses are considered in general, we see that the most fundamental value that a believer must have to gain happiness in this world and the hereafter and to attain Allah’s consent is *taqwa*.

The values mentioned in the verse above, such as overcoming anger, being patient with what people do, and forgiving mistakes, are also emphasized in other verses of the Quran. It is possible to see very beautiful examples of this subject in the Surah Yusuf, which we have discussed under the heading of “Contact with the Moment”. Jacob was a prophet who experienced great pain and sorrow because of his separation from Joseph. To understand the pain Jacob experienced because

⁶⁹ al-Âl-i İmrân 3/133-135.

⁷⁰ Karaman et al., *Kur'an Yolu Tefsiri*, 1/671-674.

of what happened to him, the Prophet asked Gabriel, “How much was Jacob’s separation from Joseph?” Gabriel replied, “The separation of seventy mothers who have lost their children.” Then he asked, “Then how much is his reward?” He replied, “The reward of a hundred martyrs. Because he did not think badly of Allah for even a moment”⁷¹. This narration shows how Jacob managed to be patient. According to another narration, Jacob’s eyebrows would go down to his eyes because of his sadness for his son, and he would raise them with the help of a cloth. When he was asked why he was in this state, Jacob replied, “A long time and a lot of sadness.” For this reason, Allah Almighty said to him, “Oh Jacob! Are you complaining to me?” He said, “Oh my Lord! I made a mistake, forgive me!”⁷². These statements of Jacob show that he was ashamed to even describe the pain he was experiencing to others and how much he avoided rebelling against Allah. Trying to overcome the great pain he experienced by relying entirely on Allah, Jacob aimed to gain Allah’s consent as his worth and was able to be patient with what his sons did, did not harbor feelings of grudge and hatred towards them, did not harm them by getting angry even though he knew they were lying, and told his grievance only to Allah.

There are also verses on this subject in surahs other than Surah Yusuf that show the ability to forgive people’s faults as an important value. The verses revealed after the “Ifq Incident” show that Allah finds it very valuable for people to forgive each other as a value. The incident known as the “Ifq Incident” in sources is the slander against the Prophet’s wife Aisha of adultery⁷³. The main name of those who made the slander was Abdullah B. Ubey and a few other people caused this ugly slander to spread. One of these names was a person named Mistah, the son of the aunt of Aisha’s father Abu Bakr. When it was confirmed by the verses revealed that the ugly things said about Aisha were slander, Abu Bakr swore that he would no longer help this ungrateful relative whom he constantly helped. Then, the verse “*Let not those of you who are charitable and rich swear that they will not give anything to relatives or the needy or to those who migrate in the way of Allah. Let them forgive and overlook. Do you not wish that Allah would forgive you? Allah is Forgiving, Merciful*”⁷⁴ was revealed. When this verse was revealed, Abu Bakr said, “By Allah, I desire that Allah forgive me, I prefer that to everything else” and broke his oath and decided to continue helping. Because, in Islamic morality, there is a rule of “treating evil with good”. If a person’s nature and basic human qualities are not corrupted, the way to turn him away from evil, reform him, and include him back in a virtuous community is to forgive him⁷⁵. This event emphasizes that even if a person is very right in the events he experiences with others and is very hurt and injured, he should see forgiving him as a value to both heal his wound and to ensure that the other party regrets the evil he did. Moreover, when a person treats the person who did him harm according to this value, he will gain a much greater value, namely, Allah will forgive him.

⁷¹ Ebü'l-Fazl Celâlüddîn Abdurrahmân b. Ebî Bekr b. Muhammed el-Hudayrî es-Süyûtî, *ed-Dürrü'l-Mensur fi't-tefsîr bi'l-me'sûr: Hadislerle Kur'ân-ı Kerîm Tefsiri*, çev.Zekeriya Yıldız et al. (İstanbul:Ocak Yayıncılık, 2013), 4/570.

⁷² Ebussuûd Efendi, *Ebussuûd Tefsiri*, 7/3083.

⁷³ Mustafa Fayda, “İfk Hadisesi,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Tdv Yayınları, 2000), 21/507-509.

⁷⁴ al-Nur 24/22.

⁷⁵ Karaman et al., *Kur'an Yolu Tefsiri*, 4/63.

It hurts more when the one who harms and causes pain is especially a family member. However, in such a situation, the Almighty Allah revealed the following verses: *"Oh you who believe! Among your spouses and children are enemies to you, so beware of them. But if you pardon and are tolerant and forgiving, then surely Allah is Forgiving and merciful. Your wealth and your children are only a test for you, and with Allah is the great reward"*⁷⁶. According to the message in this verse, even people who are connected with the strongest bonds of love, such as spouses, parents, and children, may not always have the same unity of purpose. Knowingly or unknowingly, believers may suffer harm from these relatives that will damage their happiness in the hereafter. All the material and spiritual opportunities that a person has and the love and sense of attachment felt for these opportunities are a test for him/her. And the real happiness that is worth striving to achieve is with Allah⁷⁷. To achieve this happiness, not pointing out people's mistakes, not bragging, covering up their shortcomings, and forgiving them will ensure that a person's sins are forgiven by Allah⁷⁸. Allah treats him the way a person treats his loved ones⁷⁹. For this reason, if a believer chooses to gain Allah's consent and be honored with His forgiveness as a value when he has problems with his closest ones, he must first be able to forgive others.

It is not always possible for believers to adopt the consideration of Allah's consent as a value in the face of events they face, and sometimes this is hard on the soul. Allah Almighty addresses his servants with the following verses regarding how to behave in such a situation. *"Oh you who believe! Seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient"*⁸⁰. Allah supports and protects those who turn to Him, rely on Him, are patient and pray and implore Him, never abandons them, and always helps them⁸¹.

According to the verse given above, Allah wants His servants to seek His help through patience and prayer when they are in trouble. When we consider why patience and prayer are emphasized in this verse, patience is a product of the determination, strong determination, and willpower that a person shows to achieve any goal, and devotion. For this reason, patience is a person's attitude towards himself/herself. Prayer, on the other hand, is a state in which a person turns to Allah with his/her tongue, heart, and body, in other words, with his/her whole being. For this reason, prayer is also a believer's attitude towards Allah. A person who strengthens himself/herself with patience and establishes unity with Allah through prayer has provided the psychological conditions for success⁸². Also, prayer, which is one of the two most valuable elements that a person can ask for help from Allah to be able to endure the bad events he experiences, gives satisfaction and peace to the person who performs it, as it is an act of worship that prevents a person from all kinds of evil⁸³.

Another verse in the Quran commands patience and prayer against the events that a person faces. The verse, *"Seek help from Allah through patience and prayer. These are indeed hardships except for those who submit to Allah with humility"*⁸⁴ emphasizes the importance of these two acts of worship so that a person does not get lost in the events and pain s/he experiences when s/he encounters difficulties and troubles. Because the

⁷⁶ al-Teğabün64/14-15.

⁷⁷ Karaman et al., *Kur'an Yolu Tefsiri*, 5/376.

⁷⁸ Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, 8/96.

⁷⁹ Zuhaylî, *Tefsirü'l-Münir*, 14/500.

⁸⁰ al-Bakara 2/153.

⁸¹ Zeki Duman, *Beyânu'l Hak*, (Ankara: Fecr Yayınları, 2006), 3/55.

⁸² Karaman et al., *Kur'an Yolu Tefsiri*, 1/240.

⁸³ Havva, *el-Esâs fi't-Tefsîr*, 1/369.

⁸⁴ al-Bakara 2/45.

patience required to endure pain, to resist it, and to overcome it is the key to every success. Impatient people are always in trouble and do not have the endurance for worldly events. Also, they are people who want everything, are disturbed by everything, always have their eyes on others without appreciating the blessings they have, and are ruined when they see a small lack because they cannot bear it. For this reason, if people who are in a tight spot or face trouble connect their hearts to Allah and believe that this will pass with His permission and wait for Allah's help with a clean heart and mature faith, the result will be salvation for them. For this reason, a person should accustom their soul to patience and make patience a habit. This habit is not to leave pain, but to get rid of it⁸⁵ because patience is not showing helplessness and surrendering to troubles in the face of difficulties, on the contrary, it is showing the will to overcome difficulties by trusting in Allah's grace⁸⁶. All these verses in the Quran that recommend patience and prayer show that if a person chooses to be pious and gain Allah's consent as the most important value in life in the face of the events he experiences, patience and prayer come first among the actions he needs to take to reach this value. This reflects ACT's commitment step in value-oriented behaviors very well.

In summary, a satisfying life does not mean that difficult life events (also called "tests") and emotions will disappear, it means that our way of relating to the difficulties and difficult emotions of this life will change. Because worldly life contains feelings of love, joy, and gratitude along with feelings of fear and sadness. Humans naturally can adapt to all these situations. In Arabic, the word "human" comes from the word "ins-nesy", meaning "insiyān", which also means "to forget". It is connected to the infinitive "uns". It is used as *uns-unsiyet*, meaning to get used to and adapt. What is expected from humans is to be able to stay in the moment and not get lost in their own story (awareness), to accept distressing inner experiences without judgment (being open), and to be able to separate from them (separation), and to establish a connection with the values they have chosen and take action in line with them (commitment-orientation in value-focused behaviors).

3. Discussion And Conclusion

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a method developed from cognitive behavioral therapy. ACT is interested in making room for pain and improving the quality of life by helping people move towards values chosen for a meaningful life⁸⁷ (Tanhan, 2018). The aim of this method, in which pain is seen as a part of life, is to increase psychological flexibility in people. In this therapy, which opposes ignoring or ignoring pain, it is essential to recognize pain and accept it and show how pain can be lived with its existence. ACT is seen as an approach suitable for religious sensitivities due to its contextual structure and its foundation in processes such as acceptance, compassion, and awareness⁸⁸. Functional contextualism and Islam, which are the philosophical foundations of ACT, share many intersections conceptually and practically. In other words, the similarities between ACT and Islam seem to be much greater than the differences⁸⁹.

⁸⁵ Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, 1/289.

⁸⁶ Karaman et al., *Kur'an Yolu Tefsiri*, 1/117-118.

⁸⁷ Ahmet Tanhan, "Beginning Counselor Supervision In Counseling And Challenges And Supports They Experience: Based On Developmental Models", *Adıyaman Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi* 8/1 (2018), 49-71.

⁸⁸ Zuhul Ağılkaya Şahin, "Din Ve Psikoloji Arasındaki Uçurum Gerçekten Ne Kadar Derin? Psikoterapilerdeki Dini İzler", *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi* 22(3) (2018), 1607-1632.

⁸⁹ Ferhat Yavuz, "ACT and Islam. ACT for Clergy and Pastoral Counselors: Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy to Bridge Psychological and Spiritual Care", ed. Jason A. Nieuwsmaet al. (New Harbinger Publications: 2016), 140.

The acceptance dimension of ACT is expressed as watching our inner experiences without judgment and accepting these experiences. Acceptance is mostly an active process and is based on allowing inner thoughts and feelings to occur instead of changing or ignoring them, and accepting what is as it is. This aspect of ACT overlaps quite a bit with some concepts frequently mentioned in the Quran. Patience, gratitude, trust in God, and consent come first among these concepts. The Quran, which emphasizes that a person will be tested with various difficulties in worldly life, first asks the individual to accept the existence of these difficulties that await him, and then offers him the key to how he can combat these difficulties. For a person who accepts the existence of death and the afterlife, patience, gratitude, acceptance of what is, and trust in God will guide them in the pain they will experience. At this point, the acceptance step of ACT therapy emphasizes these concepts of the Holy Quran. The stories told in the Quran about the lives of the prophets constitute a model for believers in terms of how the acceptance step is realized in practice.

Another step of ACT, cognitive defusion, is the process of separating oneself from the internal thoughts that the person is currently united with. In this step, a certain distance is tried to be put between the thought and the individual. In this way, the individual can monitor his thoughts from the outside and the possibility of being exposed to the inhibiting effects of thoughts decreases. When an individual separates himself/herself from thoughts that do not benefit him/her, s/he can quickly distance himself from the emotions that disturb him/her. In the Quran, individuals who adopt the concepts of patience and trust in God against the events they experience and who do not allow negative thoughts to take them captive and allow them to guide them are both praised and emphasized that a very good life awaits them in the afterlife. Similarly, it is not tolerated for individuals who tend to behaviors that do not please God to focus on the sin they have committed and to fall into despair, and it is stated that individuals who regret what they have done will be cleansed with the concept of repentance. Such verses are quite compatible with the cognitive separation stage of ACT and guide how to approach pain or any negative event.

Another step of ACT is contact with the moment, which also refers to establishing a purposeful, accepting contact with the moment. It refers to the flow of thoughts, emotions, body sensations, and behaviors in the moment through the individual. The verses in the Quran (especially those describing the pain experienced by Jacob and Joseph) show that both prophets managed to stay in the moment by choosing to forgive their loved ones instead of feelings such as grudge, anger, and hatred. The prophets' success in this first contributed to their struggle with pain and protected them from behaviors that would harm themselves and others. Also, being able to stay in the moment made the individuals who caused the prophets pain regret their actions, allowing both parties to direct their lives without focusing on the past. Such verses, which are the same as the flexible contact with the moment step of ACT, serve as examples of how people who experience many pains in worldly life should behave.

Another important step of ACT is the contextual self, which expresses that we have a self-awareness that remains unchanged even if environmental conditions change. Contextual self-perception gives the individual a sense of wholeness and continuity and deals with seeing the person's thoughts about himself/herself independently of his/her behaviors. The opposite of this, the conceptual self, expresses that the individual adheres to certain definitions for himself/herself. We all have narratives and stories about what kind of person we are. We often believe in the reality of these and do not question them. We guide ourselves according to these stories and limit our

behavioral repertoire according to these narratives. For example, if we tell ourselves that we are a shy person, we do not participate in social activities. In this case, we limit our behavioral storage. There are statements in the Quran and the Hadiths of the Prophet that the negative thoughts or behaviors that pass through a person's mind will not make him/her responsible unless the person expresses them or turns them into action. Such statements in the verses and hadiths reveal that a person separates himself/herself from the negative thoughts that pass through his/her mind thanks to a part of him/her that observes him/herself and that the individual should see his/her thoughts about himself/herself separately from his/her actions. This is expressed in ACT with the concept of “contextual self”.

As another step of ACT, values are elements that are important enough to mobilize the individual in his/her life and motivate him/her to perform certain actions. An individual may act in line with goals that are not compatible with his/her values in his/her life, and this situation may present him/her with an unsatisfactory life. However, in value-oriented behaviors, the individual's behaviors are determined based on his/her values and the person is more satisfied with the results he/she achieves. In the Quran, many values are mentioned that believers can hold on to endure the troubles they experience. Particularly, the verses describing heaven and the blessings in heaven can be given as examples of this. However, in the Quran, it is emphasized that gaining the consent of Allah is a value more beautiful and greater than all material blessings and that the servant is pleased with his/her creator as Allah is pleased with the servant he created. For a person who can possess such a value, all the troubles and pains in the world do not destroy him but rather give him a new life and become a guide that directs all his actions throughout his life.

After individuals' values are defined, the things they need to do to live following these values that make their life richer and fuller constitute the commitment step of ACT in value-focused actions, which is important for a person to live a meaningful life. Having a goal in life that they have determined according to their values requires them to take action for these goals and this prevents the person from getting lost in the pain they experience. Many verses mention the behaviors that can be used to gain Allah's approval, which is emphasized as the highest value in the Quran. To reach this value, believers are asked to perform various actions such as being grateful, being patient, trusting in God, praying, avoiding actions that harm others, especially family members, relatives, and neighbors, knowing how to forgive, being just, helping people in need, repenting when they commit sins, and being sincere and continuous in their worship. The reason for wanting these behaviors is to ensure that the person reaches the ultimate goal (earning God's approval) without giving up in the face of difficulties by aiming to live a quality, healthy, and full life. This is the same as ACT's commitment step in value-oriented actions.

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