

Islam and the Psychological Health and Peace of Mind

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Abstract: There has been a considerable increase in the Muslim population around the world. As a result, there has been a concomitant increase in the demand for appropriate mental health. Incorporating religion and spirituality in psychotherapy benefits research, illustrating how religious views can influence mental health. Muslims have access to a conduct code of ethics, and societal norms due to Islam, enabling them to handle stressful situations better and develop appropriate coping techniques for dealing with them. The religion of Islam teaches its followers how to coexist peacefully with other people. Seek the life that is to come using the tools that God has given you, but does not ignore your responsibility to fulfill your role in this world. As God has been nice to you, so should you be good to others. Do not make it your goal to sow seeds of evil throughout the land since God despises those who act this way. Because a Muslim feels in extreme touch with the power managing this world (God) and receives maximum support from Him when praying, the prayers themselves might be regarded as a sort of meditation and remembering. This article explores how several tenets of the Islamic faith affect a person's biological, psychological, and social well-being. The primary focus is ensuring Muslim mental health patients receive moral, respectable, and productive treatment.

Keywords: Mind, Health, Islam, Psychological, Peace

Introduction

Religious convictions significantly impact the psychology and are essential to one's physical, mental, and spiritual health. Man has various special abilities, including logic, mental capacity, language, and free choice¹. These set him apart from the other creations and elevated him to the rank of the greatest and most magnificent creature (Ashraf al Makhluqat). Humans are naturally curious beings. In this section, we'll talk about psychology. According to its etymology, the word "psychology" comes from the Greek words "psyche," which means "soul," and "logos," which means "the study of the topic." Consequently, "psychology" refers to the study of the soul. Psychology has a long history that begins with Greek philosophy. Currently, psychology is described as the field of study that focuses on the human mind; this understanding of the mind comes from a rigorous investigation of the facts relating to consciousness and behavior.² Psychology and religion are positively related.³ Religious convictions significantly impact human psychology and are essential to physical, mental, and spiritual health. The human condition, encompassing its social, ethical, and spiritual facets, is at the heart of the Quran's discourse. As a result, man has a unique place in the cosmos.⁴ The understanding of Islam is the foundation of the Islamic viewpoint on psychology. The Arabic term "Salama," which means "peace," is the origin of the name "Islam." It is also derived from the term "slm," which means peace attained by surrendering one's will to Allah. A "Muslim" is someone who does this. Islamic psychology has a long history that is as old as humanity.⁵ Islamic psychology is "a holistic concept of the human being built on the understanding of the soul from the Islamic tradition and emphasizes the heart as the core of the self rather than the mind. Islamic psychology is a burgeoning field today, and the steady increase in publications over the years has given it a distinctive reputation."⁶

Islamic and Human Nature

Islamic psychology has offered a more sophisticated and comprehensive knowledge of human nature and development, albeit still in its infancy. One of the religious viewpoints that recognize it is Islamic psychology. The spiritual realm, which highlights the significance of Islam in people's lives, is the major

¹ Kassymova, G. K., Tokar, O. V., Tashcheva, A. I., Slepukhina, G. V., Gridneva, S. V., Bazhenova, N. G., ... & Arpentieva, M. R. (2019). Impact of stress on creative human resources and psychological counseling in crises. *International journal of education and information technologies*, 13(1), 26-32.

² Vieten, C., Wabbeh, H., Cahn, B. R., MacLean, K., Estrada, M., Mills, P., ... & Delorme, A. (2018). Future directions in meditation research: Recommendations for expanding the field of contemplative science. *PLoS one*, 13(11), e0205740.

³ Boniwell, I., & Tunariu, A. D. (2019). *Positive psychology: Theory, research, and applications*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

⁴ Bhat, A. M. (2016). Human psychology (fitrah) from an Islamic perspective. *International Journal of Nusantara Islam*, 4(2), 61-74.

⁵ Abdullah, M. A. (2017). Islamic studies in higher education in Indonesia: Challenges, impact, and prospects for the world community. *AlJami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 55(2), 391-426.

⁶ Rothman, A. E. D. (2019). *Building Islamic psychology and psychotherapy: a grounded theory study* (Doctoral dissertation, Kingston University).

characteristic of Islamic psychology. It is worth noting that Islamic psychology begins with faith in Allah's presence, people's spirituality, and the teachings and direction of Islamic sources (the Qur'an and Hadith), which offers a thorough and modern explanation of why people think and behave the way they do.

Psychological Health and Religion

Although studies have shown that religion is associated with greater psychological health, we know relatively little about how religious doubt affects mental health (shake). "Religious doubt" is the term for scepticism and uncertainty concerning religious beliefs and practices.⁷ If not correctly handled, the feeling of religious uncertainty can plunge a person into a severe existential crisis. As a result, religious doubt is a process that is closely related to a person's psychological, social, and emotional aspects of their existence. Religious uncertainty has been linked to increased anxiety, distress, and psychological suffering in predominately Christian populations'.⁸ According to these studies, psychopathology is particularly associated with religious doubts resulting from uncertainty about pain and the world's evil. Another line of investigation has revealed a connection between sadness, anxiety, rage, and doubts about "divine battles" (i.e., unfavourable opinions of God or the purpose of existence). One of the few studies on Muslims which found a link between religious and spiritual challenges and anxiety and depression symptoms but not life satisfaction⁹. Doubts about the ultimate purpose of life and negative interpretations of challenging life situations (such as feeling assaulted by paranormal entities or being punished by Allah) were the types of doubts most frequently associated with psychopathology in Muslims (i.e., existential questions).

Prophetic Narrative

According to the prophetic narrative, the companions frequently felt concerned when they doubted and sought the Prophet's direction. As a result, many prophetic narratives confirm that Muslims do feel religious doubt and that this is both common and far from sinful. Once, a companion approached the Prophet and addressed him as "O Messenger of Allah! One of us has extreme ideas that speaking about them would transform him into charcoal. The Prophet responded, "Allahu Akbar!" Hail to Allah! God is praised for reducing the evil of the devil to mere whispers and suggestions. In this story, we can see how the companion's religious question caused him grief, but we can also see how well the Prophet (PBUH) recognized the doubt and gave the companion praise. We are taught to confront our doubts head-on by pleading with Allah for protection against them and guidance on the issues we face.

Another narrative describes several of the Prophet's companions approaching him and pleading, "O Messenger of Allah, occasionally we have these ideas; we loathe having these sentiments; we would never be able to speak of them, and we want them to go away." That is clear trust, the Prophet said. Our compassionate Lord compensates us for the anguish we experience due to those uncertainties since our

⁷ Willis, K. D., Nelson, T., & Moreno, O. (2019). Death anxiety, religious doubt, and depressive symptoms across races in older adults. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(19), 3645.

⁸ O'Brien, B., Shrestha, S., Stanley, M. A., Pargament, K. I., Cummings, J., Kunik, M. E., ... & Amspoker, A. B. (2019). Positive and negative religious coping as predictors of distress among minority older adults. *International journal of geriatric psychiatry*, 34(1), 54-59.

⁹ Litalien, M., Atari, D. O., & Obasi, I. (2021). The influence of religiosity and spirituality on health in Canada: A systematic literature review. *Journal of religion and health*, 1-42.

den is so forgiving that it acknowledges that experiencing religious doubts while not acting wrongly upon them is proof of clear faith (iman). Also, we are told to repeatedly face our doubts by saying I believe in Allah. To remind ourselves that our doubts are a sign of Shayn's persistence and not sinfulness.¹⁰

Mental Health and the Qur'an

Islam employs mind-set frequently, but it does so in many ways, such as through spirituality. Islam recognizes the importance of emotional and intellectual well-being.¹¹ The Qur'an attempts to bring about individuals to a significant quality of life and can be utilized as a guide for those experiencing emotional discomfort. "Allah has not created an illness unless He has simultaneously created a cure for it" (Hadith).

When we are told "no," there is a quick burst of stress-inducing hormones and neurotransmitters, as seen in an fMRI film of the neurological changes that occur in our brains. These substances quickly stop our brains from operating normally, impairing reasoning, logic, language understanding, and communication.¹² We are more prone to dwell on harmful language. Important neural networks that control our memories, emotions, and moods may be harmed. This will cause sleep disturbances, an altered appetite, and an inability to experience happiness¹³. Every time we express this hostility verbally, our brain releases more neurotransmitters, causing anxiety and anger to rise. Cognitive neuroscience shows how destructive thought patterns, including foreign language, can impact one's intellectual health in this way.

Psychological vocabulary in Islam

The psychological vocabulary of the Qur'an identified negative emotions and damaging training as nafs al-ammara, or the commanding self, more than a thousand years before Western psychology was developed. The Qur'an provides instructions on how to get through the internal unrest resulting from the nafs al-ammara and establish the calm self, or nafs al-mutmainna¹⁴. The intellectual study of the mind or the mind from such an Islamic perspective is known as Islamic psychology, sometimes known as the science of the nafs. It includes psychology, neuroscience, the thinking of mind, psychotherapy, and psychoneuro immunology. Translating Arabic words into a single phrase is challenging because of their multifaceted usage, but the phrase nafs lexically relates to our soul, psyche, soul, or spirit. Nafs can

¹⁰ Stone, S. (2013). The empire strikes back: A post transsexual manifesto. In *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 221-235). Routledge.

¹¹ Keshavarzi, H., & Haque, A. (2013). Outlining a psychotherapy model for enhancing Muslim mental health within an Islamic context. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 23(3), 230-249.

¹² Austin, D. S. (2013). Killing them softly: Neuroscience reveals how brain cells die from law school stress and how neural self-hacking can optimize cognitive performance. *Loy. L. Rev.*, 59, 791.

¹³ Price, J. L., & Drevets, W. C. (2012). Neural circuits underlying the pathophysiology of mood disorders. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 16(1), 61-71.

¹⁴ Then, A. (2019). Acceptance and commitment therapy with ecological systems theory: Addressing Muslim mental health issues and well-being. *Journal of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing*, 3(2), 197-219.

also be used as a substitute for Freud's libido to denote ourselves. The Qur'an also uses the word "nafs" to allude to a particular aspect of ourselves that has desires and cravings. Islam's "nafs" idea emphasizes the inner self's rich and nuanced makeup. In the early 1900s, Freud coined the terms "id," "self-importance," and "superego" to characterize similar mental processes.¹⁵

Nafs or Self Concept

The nafs, or self, is said to exist in one of three states according to the Qur'an: nafs al-ammara (instructing self), nafs al-lawwama (accusatory self), and nafs al-mutmainna (quiet self). The Qur'an reveals how these states possess us and command our mentality, telling us what to do. If we have nafs, it indicates we are controlled by our needs and listen to and obey them. The aspect of ourselves that requires material items and sensual desires is described in this stage. When we practice nafs al-lawwama, we become aware of our flaws and, propelled by our hearts, realize the consequences of our deeds and frailties, and strive for excellence.¹⁶ Last but not least, as al-Muthanna denotes peace and satisfaction, there are no unethical desires. This is where the ego is at its most serene and at peace.

The nafs al-ammara starts to take control of our emotions, beliefs, and behaviors when our emotional requirements are not addressed.¹⁷ The Qur'an advises understanding and using relaxation techniques to lessen the impact of the nafs al-ammara. When it has the upper hand, our thinking is warped, causing us to overreact, see everything negatively, and think that nothing can be altered for the better.

We become aware that there is an issue with how we are experiencing and acting when our consciousness, the nafs al-lawwama, is in action. Then, to reach our nafs al-mutmainna, we can learn to resist pessimistic thinking. Alif-Lam-Mim is a method described in the Qur'an for enhancing nafs al-lawwama and fostering a more tranquil state of being. A contemporary idea called mindfulness emphasizes a cognitive state of alertness, attention, and joy. Despite our needs and desires, we may learn to be more attentive to ourselves, our thinking, and our feelings to act thoughtful of ourselves and others.¹⁸

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy

Additionally, it shares many similarities with the central tenet of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT). By encouraging patients to adopt more adaptable behaviors and cognitions, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) analyses the relationship between concepts, emotions, and behaviors and tries to reduce discomfort. The most thoroughly studied and empirically validated psychotherapy approach is CBT.¹⁹ A solid body of research supports clinical recommendations that promote CBT as a therapy for many

¹⁵ Hartono, F., Sukawiti, S., & Nuryadi, H. (2019, July). Idealized abstraction of the concept of humans in Dayak Kanayatn's motto and its importance in dissolving ethnic conflicts in West Borneo. In *1st International Conference on Life, Innovation, Change and Knowledge (CLICK 2018)* (pp. 62-68). Atlantis Press.

¹⁶ Coward, H. (2012). *The perfectibility of human nature in eastern and western thought*. SUNY Press.

¹⁷ Ali, M. (2014). Perspectives on drug addiction in Islamic history and theology. *Religions*, 5(3), 912-928.

¹⁸ Lee, K. C. G., & Tang, J. L. K. (2021). Now, choose A psychospiritual treatment model based on early Buddhist teachings. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*.

¹⁹ Pirhekayaty, T. (2022). Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in Iran. In *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in a Global Context* (pp. 267-284). Springer, Cham.

prevalent mental health illnesses. The ultimate goal of CBT is to empower individuals to help themselves by recognizing their present behavioural and cognitive patterns and giving them the tools to alter these unhelpful ones.²⁰. Or, as the Qur'an advises, to dispel pessimism to promote tranquillity.

These are only a few examples of how the Qur'an emphasizes the significance of mental health. The first thing we as a society should avoid doing is emphasizing unfounded preconceptions and inciting greater hatred around the globe if we are to advance and eradicate the stigma linked with mental health. We should all strive to create a world where people can live without fear by upholding the same values of love and humility.

Recommendations

Muslim mental health has two facets: avoiding and treating psychopathology and encouraging flourishing. A worldview and way of life-based on the Qur'an, the Hadith, and centuries of Islamic tradition are at the heart of each. Additionally, it is by Prophetic advice on obtaining knowledge and medical care for illnesses to draw from the best elements of psychiatry, pharmacology, psychotherapy, and counselling that are consistent with one's faith. Because not all forms of therapy are consistent with Islamic principles, it is crucial to emphasize the components of faith that are. Religious experts and mental health professionals can collaborate to develop Islamic therapies that cater to the requirements of the Muslim community. The restrictions of the atheistic views pervasive in secular psychiatric and psychology curricula must be understood by mainstream practitioners. As a result, professionals might need to consciously consider their prejudices, convictions, and potentially Islamophobic behaviors. Mental health providers should be aware that all forms of therapy are valuation and that Muslim clients' healing is aided by their faith and religiosity. When dealing with Muslim patients for whom Islam serves as a significant source of strength, criticizing or remaining silent about their use of faith can hinder their recovery. In one study, a therapist found that his Muslim client did not significantly improve until counselling included al-h (prayer) and faith. In future studies, we want to expand on this research's findings and look into how relationships affect Muslim mental health. This encompasses how people view Allah, their devotion to Him, and their interactions with family and friends. Despite the limits of this study, we think its findings have positive ramifications for the Ummah, and we pray to Allah to soothe and satisfy Muslims everywhere.

²⁰ Wright, J. H., Brown, G. K., These, M. E., & Basco, M. R. (2017). *Learning cognitive-behavior therapy: An illustrated guide*. American Psychiatric Pub.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Islamic spirituality and religion significantly influence mental clinical procedure. By integrating Islamic principles that support drug adherence and adapting various psychotherapy procedures to Muslim patient role needs, Islamic beliefs and values can benefit the care of Muslims with mental illness. These factors inform special guidelines for working with Muslim mental health clients. Making psychology spiritually relevant is the goal of comprehending and enhancing psychology from an Islamic point of view. Numerous studies have shown that incorporating religious ideas into psychological counseling or psychotherapy positively impacts a person's mental, physical, and psychological health. Several venues have emerged for the advancement of Islamic psychology. It is evident from the explanation above that Islamic psychology is a comprehensive view of the human being that is based on the Islamic tradition's understanding of the soul and emphasizes the heart as the core of the self rather than the mind. Rejecting spirituality would result in a rise in mental, bodily, and psychological problems, including stress, anxiety, depression, etc. Spirituality is a crucial component of the human psyche. We run the risk of developing mental and psychological illnesses on a global scale. Islamic psychology has previously discussed how to deal with and treat these problems in an advanced and comprehensive manner.