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Call for Papers

Editorial

This issue of *The Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice* addresses the need for cross-cultural competency – a concept fully encapsulated within the Qur'anic term *ta'āruf*. This concept speaks to the practice of getting to know one another and even ourselves better through self-reflection and mutual interaction. The importance of *ta'āruf* is perfectly clear in the US, perhaps the world's most diverse country, where people of widely different and sometimes incompatible cultural and religious belief systems, worldviews and traditions, find themselves living side by side and working together in all sorts of personal and professional spheres with the other. As such, mutual understanding is necessary to ensure our society's ability to function smoothly.

The first article, Zainab Alwani's "*Kafāla*: The Quranic-Prophetic Model of Orphan Care," explores how Americans of all religions, or of no religion, can use the traditional Islamic foster care system (*kafāla*) to benefit orphaned or abandoned children. This is especially important for those children who happen to be Muslim, for there are not enough Muslim foster families to take all of them in.

Through a linguistic and thematic analysis of *kafāla* in the Quran, including the prophetic narratives, legal and social recommendations, and the Qur'an's humane portrayal of the orphans, Alwani illustrates the Islamic imperative to collectively support and take care of them. She further illustrates this imperative by exploring the way Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) implemented these concepts among his fellow Meccans. However, Alwani argues that Muslims needs to reacquaint themselves with the Islamic tradition's provisions of orphan *kafāla*, among the most important of which is that such children can never become the "children" of biologically unrelated adults. As Islam requires people to recognize the truth in all cases, such a false relationship would deprive these children of their dignity and honor and, in a sense, render them the property of biologically unrelated adults who seek to gain some benefit from them. Thus, as distinct from the American adoption system, their ties with their biological family and extended family members cannot be severed. In fact, *kafāla* stipulates specific roles for each family member so that a fostered child will grow up healthy in all aspects of its life – especially in terms of his/her spirituality.

In sum, this article argues that the goals of *kafāla* are to raise healthy, happy, and well-adjusted children who can succeed in society and benefit others. In doing so, she illustrates the parallel objectives of orphan sponsorship in Islamic law and American law, which is to secure the interests of all such children, irrespective of their religion.

Alwani ends with specific policy and community recommendations, encouraging more American Muslim families to become qualified foster families. She encourages Muslims to raise orphans communally, fully welcome them into the

community, and provide needed services (e.g., transportation, tutoring in academic and life skills, and socialization), thereby making things easier for everyone involved. She urges social workers, lawyers, and other qualified individuals and organizations to acquire an accurate understanding of both foster care systems so that these children can reap the benefits.

The second article, "Directive vs. Non-directive Clinical Approaches: Liberation Psychology and Muslim Mental Health," is by Sarah Mohr, Sabeen Shaiq, and Denise Ziya Berte. The authors contend that Liberation psychology (LP) emphasizes social justice as a key component of mental health.

This paper questions the use of directive approaches on the grounds that they can potentially re-create a model of hierarchy and dominance that is connected to Muslims' mental health challenges, particularly those of Muslim sub-populations. The authors suggest and discuss several LP-based alternatives, especially the use of group therapy as a more appropriate and culturally responsive model, from both directive and non-directive clinical orientations.

In her "Standing in the Chaos: Cross-cultural Competency in Curriculum Materials," Tamara Gray emphasizes that the what, how, and who of instruction is critical to developing a successful curriculum. She points out how mainstream learning materials and teachers can negatively impact the minority-identity students' educational achievement.

The author recounts how Muslim teaching and learning were rooted in inclusion and culturally competent interactions. Dialectic *tawḥīd*, as described by complexity theory and standpoint curriculum theory, come together to help us identify historical practices that can counteract the lack of cultural competence in curriculum today. Using Jean Anyon's steps to change and considering Nana Asma'u's creative measures, it is time to both revamp Islamic studies material and to contribute to mainstream classrooms. Muslims need to ensure that the learning environment is rooted in *tawḥīd* and inclusion, as opposed to one that continues to "otherize" our very selves.

Rania Awaad, Aneeqa Abid, and Soraya Fereydooni's "The Power of Prejudice: Cross Cultural Competency and Muslim Populations" discuss the case of Renda (pseudonym), a 45-year-old Palestinian-American Muslim patient born in the US. A married woman with four children, she wears hijab, strives to "represent Islam in a good light," and seeks to change the perceptions she believes many Americans have of Muslims. She is currently dealing with poor mental health (i.e., symptoms of irritability, difficulty in sleeping, depression, and children-related stress [i.e., acting out in school and religious-based bullying]) and the negative impact of Islamophobia.

All of these discrimination-based stressors, interrelated with prejudice, bias, racism, and xenophobia, significantly impact Renda's mental and physical health. The authors then explain the psychology of outgroup hate by analyzing the litera-

ture produced on the interrelated topics of stereotypes, discrimination, prejudice, and xenophobia, and conclude with tools available for cross-cultural competency in a clinical setting. A key way to respond to this hate is to support victims within the clinical setting by urging clinicians to acquire the skills needed to enable culturally sensitive care and support for patients like Renda.

The final article's abstract, Imam John Ederer's "The Role of the Imam in Leading American Mosques," opens with a rather disturbing statement: "Across the country, American mosques are struggling with dwindling attendance and/or stagnancy." This negative reality, especially as regards women and youth. reflects a serious problem: The mosque's leadership and congregation's mutual alienation.

The author states that the imam's job is to actively inspire, motivate, and mobilize his congregation to implement their faith. But to achieve this goal, he first must go through a holistic educational training regimen and be able to relate to his congregation and the surrounding community's diversity. At the same time, the mosque' leadership and its members must integrate with its neighbors by living among them – not assimilating into them – in an active, positive way while maintaining their unique identity.

He urges Muslim Americans to revive the Prophet's example of community leadership and relate it to the American context by overcoming specific failings: a lack of governing principles, the politics of control by personalities, little focus on social integration, and a scarcity of properly trained and empowered imams.

This issue also contains one book review and four reflection articles related to the topics addressed in this issue.

Please read the "Call for Papers" and spread it among your colleagues and students.

Zainab Alwani
Editor, *The Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice*

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Kafāla: The Qurʾanic-Prophetic Model of Orphan Care

Zainab Alwani*

Abstract:

The article, Zainab Alwani's "*Kafāla*: The Quranic-Prophetic Model of Orphan Care," explores how Americans of all religions, or of no religion, can use the traditional Islamic foster care system (*kafāla*) to benefit orphaned or abandoned children. This is especially important for those children who happen to be Muslim, for there are not enough Muslim foster families to take all of them in.

Through a linguistic and thematic analysis of *kafāla* in the Quran, including the prophetic narratives, legal and social recommendations, and the Qur'an's humane portrayal of the orphans, Alwani illustrates the Islamic imperative to collectively support and take care of them. She further illustrates this imperative by exploring the way Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) implemented these concepts among his fellow Meccans. However, Alwani argues that Muslims needs to reacquaint themselves with the Islamic tradition's provisions of orphan *kafāla*, among the most important of which is that such children can never become the "children" of biologically unrelated adults. As Islam requires people to recognize the truth in all cases, such a false relationship would deprive these children of their dignity and honor and, in a sense, render them the property of biologically unrelated adults who seek to gain some benefit from them. Thus, as distinct from the American adoption system, their ties with their biological family and extended family members cannot be severed. In fact, *kafāla* stipulates specific roles for each family member so that a fostered child will grow up healthy in all aspects of its life – especially in terms of his/her spirituality.

In sum, this article argues that the goals of *kafāla* are to raise healthy, happy, and well-adjusted children who can succeed in society and benefit others. In doing so, she illustrates the parallel objectives of orphan sponsorship in Islamic law and American law, which is to secure the interests of all such children, irrespective of their religion.

Alwani ends with specific policy and community recommendations, encouraging more American Muslim families to become qualified foster families. She encourages Muslims to raise orphans communally, fully welcome them into the community, and provide needed services (e.g., transportation, tutoring in academic and life skills, and socialization), thereby making things easier for everyone

involved. She urges social workers, lawyers, and other qualified individuals and organizations to acquire an accurate understanding of both foster care systems so that these children can reap the benefits.

Keywords: Orphan, *yatīm*, orphan care, *kafāla,* foster care, guardianship

Introduction

This article seeks to outline a Qurʾanic-Prophetic model for orphan care by presenting and analyzing some of the Qurʾanic and Prophetic concepts related to this critical topic of *kafāla*.

By attempting to understand the Qurʾan on its own terms and tracing its words' derivation(s), this essay proposes a Qurʾanic framework of orphan care, one that is strictly centered on *kafāla* and was exemplified by Prophet Muhammad throughout his life. Based on the Quranic framework of orphan care and the Prophetic example, which prioritize protecting the orphan's interest, I argue that the responsibility of *kafāla* for orphaned and abandoned children falls on each and every one of us. This essay concludes with specific recommendations that Muslim communities can take on the community-level to fulfill our collective responsibility and alleviate the grievances of orphans.

This article applies the methodology of *al-waḥda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān* (The Qurʾan's Structural Unity),[1] to analyze and discuss Islam's approach to orphan care. The holistic method reads the Qurʾan as a unified text through its linguistic, structural, and conceptual elements. In other words, the divine text, when read in its entirety, represents an integrated whole. In addition, this approach highlights how the meaning of a specific term changes, but never to the extent that its original meaning is violated. Tracing how the relevant terms are derived from their root leads to constructing the Islamic framework for orphan care.

As the Qurʾan refers to itself as *al-Muṣaddiq* (the confirmer or verifier of truth) and *Muhaymin* (overseer, protector, guardian, witness, and determiner of

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[1] For more details of the classical and contemporary debates concerning the method's genealogy, see Zainab Alwani, "*Al-waḥda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qur'ān*: A Methodology for Understanding the Qur'an in the Modern Day," *Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice*, 1:1 (2018): 7-27.

the truth), it, therefore, judges us by the truth.[2] Consequently, we should seek its judgment when making a decision[3]: "And We have revealed to you, [O Prophet], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it" (5:48). Therefore, applying a *Muṣaddiq-Muhaymin* methodology allows us to trace a term or a concept's use, how it developed or changed over time, and how these changes impacted its implementation in a given society's sociocultural, legal, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical spheres.

For this discussion, the terms analyzed are, in order of appearance: *insān* (human being), *khalīfa* (representative on Earth), *yatīm* (orphan), *al-waḥda al-binā'-iyya li-l-Qur'ān* (The Qur'an's Structural Unity), *'umrān* (cultivating our planet's balance, peace, justice, and sustainability), *tazkiya* (holistic purification), *taqwā* (Allah-consciousness), *'ibāda* (worship), *iṣlāḥ* (improve, reform, and rectify), *fasad* (corruption, mischief, ruin, and spoil), *tughyān* (to go beyond the *ḥudūd* [limits set by Allah]), *ibtilā* (test), *karam* (dignity, honor), *karāma* (honor), *ta'āruf* (getting to know one another), *'urf* (local custom), *ma'rūf* (doing what is right, just, and fair), *'amr bi al-ma'rūf wa nahiy 'an al-munkar* (enjoining the right/ honorable and forbidding the wrong/dishonorable), *laqīṭ* (abandoned child), *kāfil* (legal guarantor), *tabanni* (adoption), *da'īy* (to be claimed as sons), *āwā* (a holistic description of an ideal shelter with a mission to improve a displaced person or orphan's life), *nasab* (original lineage), and *farḍ kifāya* (communal responsibility).

Reading the Qur'an as a "unity" ensures that the divine text will remain relevant, for this approach enables scholars to continue developing its ability to provide answers to difficult contemporary questions and challenges.

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[2] Given this reality, we should begin our search for answers and solutions to contemporary complex issues by reading the Qur'an holistically to understand and evaluate our concepts, customs, and systems in its light. The Qur'an only mentions *Muhaymin*: Allah uses it both for Himself (59:23) and the Qur'an (5:48). This term comes from the root *hā-mīm-nūn*, which points to three main meanings: to oversee, protect, and guard; to witness; and to determine the truth. This root appears twice in the Qur'an in one derived form. Linguistically, the root also means to extend a wing, like a hen protecting her chicks, and is related to Allah's names *ar-Raqīb* (The Watcher), *al-Ḥafīẓ* (The One who protects and guards), and *Ash-Shahīd* (The Witness). *Al-Muhaymin* is the One who observes, controls, looks after, completely covers us, and judges us by the truth. https://understandquran.com/and-the-answer-is-al-muhaymin/.

[3] See 'A'isha Abd al-Rahman bint al-Shati'*, al-Tafsīr al-bayānī li-l-Qur'ān al-karīm* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1971 & 1981) and Issa J. Boullata, "Modern Qur'ān Exegesis: A Study of Bint al-Shati's method," *The Muslim World* 64 (1974): 103.

Insān

In the Qurʾan, Allah repeatedly explains that He has created every *insān* (human being) with dignity and clearly defines our purpose: to serve as His *khalīfa* (representative on Earth), a trust that requires the upholding of every human being's dignity. By default, a *yatīm* (orphan) is an *insān*. All human beings are personally responsible for maintaining an orphan's dignity, a fact that becomes clear by applying the holistic method of *al-waḥda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qurʾān* (The Qurʾan's Structural Unity).[4] Reading and analyzing the Qurʾan in its entirety, thereby acknowledging its complete structural and linguistic unity, enables scholars to observe a specific term's movement throughout the text and how its meaning changes according to the context in which it is used, without its original meaning ever being violated. This conceptualizes the Qurʾan as perfect in all its *suwar* (chapters; sing. *sūra*), *ayāt* (verses; sing. *āyah*), words, letters, and parts – one unit. As human beings, we tend to forget and float away from what Allah tells us and thus end up creating misconceptions. To prevent this, we have to understand the Qurʾan on its own terms so that we can derive comprehensive and applicable meanings.

To understand *kafāla*, we must first understand the *yatīm* as an *insān*. This term first appeared in *Sūrat al-Fajr*, considered by most commentators to be an early Makkan *sūra* and most likely the tenth one to be revealed.[5] These early revelations tended to establish Islam's foundational teachings.

Reading and analyzing this *sūra* in light of the Qurʾan's structural unity indicates that the human's mission on Earth is its central theme. *Nasiya*, the verbal derivative of the word *insān*, means to forget, in the sense that humanity tends to forget its origin (20:115; 76:1-2) and Creator, as well as how to form and then maintain this relationship. *Insān* is also derived from *uns* (to have affection, be friendly, familiar, intimate, or sociable).[6] We often develop affection and familiarity for things other than Allah, like wealth and various worldly things (3:14), which make us forget our purpose in life.

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[4] For more details of the classical and contemporary debates concerning this method's genealogy, see Alwani, "*Al-waḥda al-binā'iyya li-l-Qurʾān*."

[5] Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, *Tafsīr mafātīḥ al-ghāyb* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1981); Abu al-Fida Isma'il ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm* (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-Kutub al-Thaqafiya, 1996); Muhammad al-Tahir ibn ʿAshur, *Al-Taḥrīr wa-l-Tanwīr* (Tunis: al-Dar al-Tunisiya li-l-Nashr, 1984).

[6] Muḥammad ibn Mukarram ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dar al-Sadr, 1410 AH). Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿArūs* (Beirut: Lebanese American University, LAU Stacks Quarto PJ6620 .M852, 1966). Online dictionary: http://www.baheth.info/index. jsp. https://lau.summon.serialssolutions.com/?#!/search?ho=t&fvf=ContentType,Book%20%2F%20 eBook,f&l=en&q=lisan%20al-arab.

Allah's description of the human being's role is *khilāfa* – serving as Allah's trustee on Earth: "Remember when your Lord said to the angels, I am placing a trustee (*khalīfa*) on Earth" (2:30). Just as Allah made each human being His *khalīfa*, He provided each of them with the knowledge needed to fulfill this role (2:31). First, the Qurʾan informs us that each human being is born with an innate consciousness of Allah due to humanity's promise to worship Him alone (*tawḥīd*) (7:172).[7] Second, Allah wants us to do this voluntarily: "We did indeed offer the Trust to the heavens, Earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid of it. Yet humans accepted it; indeed he is unjust to himself and ignorant of the consequences" (33:72). Most scholars have referred to this as the "Covenant between human beings and Allah." Third, accepting this trust made humanity responsible for the heaviest challenge in existence: freely choosing to worship Allah. The freedom to choose whether or not to do so stands at the center of the Qurʾanic description of the human being. Allah created each human being in a special way and gave each one unique gifts and abilities, a soul and a conscience, knowledge, and free will: "He began the creation of humanity from clay, and made his progeny from a quintessence of fluid" (32:7-8). He then established kinship:

> O humanity! Be conscious of your *Rabb*, who created you from a single soul, and from it created [of like nature] its mate, and from the two has spread a multitude of men and women; And remain conscious of Allah, through Whom you demand your mutual [rights] from one another, and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you). Verily, Allah is ever Watchful over you! (4:1)

Thus, human beings have a fundamental attachment to Earth (20:55). With this, the Creator, the One Who owns all knowledge and wisdom, entrusted them with cultivating and maintaining what the Qurʾan calls *ʿumrān* (11:61) – our planet's balance, peace, tranquility, fairness, justice, and sustainability.

In short, humanity's agreement to take care of Earth and its inhabitants made all of its members accountable for treating both of them properly: "By the soul and how He formed it, then inspired it to understand what was right and wrong for it. Truly he/she succeeds that purifies it, and he/she fails that corrupts it!" (91:7-10). The foremost quality of mind and character that flows from this commitment is a state of constant vigilance or awareness of the presence of Allah, the All-

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[7] "And (remember) when your Lord brought forth offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves. He said, "Am I not your Lord?" They replied, "We bear witness that You are." This He did, lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We had no knowledge of that.'"

Knowing. *Tazkiya* (holistic purification) is the vital process of building one's *taqwā* (Allah-consciousness), because it represents a human being's most important credential and qualification. Without *tazkiya*, a human being can no longer function as Allah's representative on Earth or cultivate it, although Earth was created to be cultivated.

Tawḥīd, *tazkiya*, and *'umrān* are three of the Qurʾan's higher aims, and the true meaning of *'ibāda* (worship) can only be realized/fulfilled when they are fully integrated.[8] Allah entrusted us with *'umrān* so that we could inhabit, cultivate, build, repair, and take care of Earth and all of its inhabitants. A commitment to loving and cherishing Earth and everything in this universe is considered *iṣlāḥ* (improvement, reform, and rectification).

On the other hand, being cruel to Allah's creations violates *'umrān*, creates *fasad* (corruption, mischief, ruin, and spoil), and makes things go bad and become rotten (see 2:11, 12, 27, 30, 60, 205, 222, 251; 13:25; 21:22).[9] In this case, *'ibāda* acquires a broader meaning: Every step and movement on Earth either improves or corrupts: "Hence, do not spread corruption on Earth after it has been so well ordered. And call unto Him with fear and longing: Allah's mercy is ever near unto the doers of good" (7:56) and "Stand firm and straight on a right course as you have been commanded, [you] and those who have turned back with you [to Allah], and do not transgress. Indeed, He is Seeing of what you do" (11:112).

Sūrat al-Fajr presents three nations that used the wealth, power, and knowledge He had bestowed upon them to become arrogant and oppress others. Such tyrannical behavior caused them to be obliterated.

> Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with 'Ād – [with] Iram, who had lofty pillars, the likes of whom had never been created in the land? And [with] Thamud, who carved out the rocks in the valley? And [with] Pharaoh, owner of the stakes? [It was they] who transgressed all bounds (*taghaw*) of equity all over their lands, and brought about great corruption therein. So your Lord let loose on them the whip of torment. Surely your Lord is ever on the watch. (89:6-14)

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[8] Zainab Alwani, "*Maqasid Qur'aniyya*: A Methodology on Evaluating Modern Challenges and *Fiqh al-Aqalliyyat*," *The Muslim World* 104 (2014): 465-87.

[9] For example, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) provides a very clear example of corruption on Earth (*fasad fī al-arḍ*): "A woman was tortured and was put in Hell because of a cat which she had kept locked [up] till it died of hunger." The Messenger of Allah further said, "Allah said (to her), 'You neither fed it nor gave it water when you locked it up, nor did you set it free to eat the insects of the Earth'" *Saḥīḥ Bukhārī* 3318, book 59, hadith no. 124; vol. 4, book 54, hadith 535.

Taghaw, a term derived from *tughyān*, means to go beyond the *ḥudūd* (boundaries set by Allah) and rebel against the limits set by Allah (20:81; 55:8; 91:11; 5:64, 68; 18:80; 23:75). How can we establish *'umrān* and keep Earth a safe place for all while respecting Allah's boundaries? This *sūra* identifies some common misconceptions that affect human actions and behavior which, as a result, lead to such transgression, oppression, and corruption.

Allah's punishment and wrath must not be confused with *ibtilā* (test), the concept that Allah made this life a trial for all people, whether they are wealthy or poverty-stricken, healthy or sick, powerful or powerless, and so on. Such trials are designed to reveal if human beings are grateful during times of blessings and patient during times of hardship. We will be judged in both this life and the hereafter on how we responded to them. This further test is not designed to reveal who is good, but to make human beings face challenges so that they may grow and reach their potential. Allah says: "And all this befell you so that Allah might test what is in your minds. And in order to purify what was in your hearts. For Allah is aware of your inner thoughts" (3:154). Human beings are inclined to think that wealth and status are marks of true worth or signs of one's standing with Allah, forgetting that Allah gives provision to whomever He wills (13:26, 17:30, 28:82, 29:62, 30:37, 34:36, 39:52, 42:12). This fundamental issue is further explained in *Sūrat az-Zukhruf* (43:32).

In all cases, human beings' experiences and reactions to their situation(s) are defined by their relationship with the Creator and their striving to please Him alone. The implication here is that they repeatedly forget the difference between the things of this world and those of the next. Some people refer to *ibtilā* as hardship and difficulties; however, the truth of the matter is that wealth, comfortable living, and good health are also tests to reveal if we can share them and remember who gave them to us: "We have caused earthly things to seem attractive so that We can see who will excel in good deeds" (18:7) and "It is He who created death and life to put you in trial as to which of you is most virtuous in your deeds. He is Mighty and All-forgiving" (67:2).

In the case of *yatāmā* (orphans), their *ibtilā* is losing their caring and loving parents. But the test for everyone around them, from family to neighbors and community, is to provide the best care possible for them. *Sūrat al-Fajr* states that people incorrectly think that prestige ends their troubles and confers honor upon them. Thus, when their *rizq* (livelihood) is restricted or vanishes, they think that their Creator has humiliated them.

This concept implies that regardless of a person's financial situation, every *insān* (human being) has been created in intense struggle. The term *insān* is used to imply that humanity as a whole and that all people individually are created in this toil and struggle: "Verily We created human into toil and struggle" (90:4) and "Your Lord is not ever unjust to [His] servants" (41:46). Out of His infinite mer-

cy, our Merciful Lord has helped us fulfill our responsibility properly by equipping us with both internal and external guidance, such as self-reflection, the scriptures, and the prophets – all sent according to His own wisdom and knowledge. Allah also informed us that He loves to forgive us and be there for us (2:186). His infinite mercy and justice dignify us with *karāma* (honor).

Karāma: A Cosmic Honor

The term *karam* (dignity, honor) embraces all admirable qualities, and the related term *karīm* means forbearing, generous, kind, gentle, patient, self-possessed, noble, and pure. The term *akrama* is mentioned three times in *Surat al-Fajr* (twice in 89:15 and once in 89:17) in the active verb form. Allah also describes himself as *al-akram* (The Most Generous) in *sūra* 96, the initial five verses of which are held to comprise the first revelation sent down to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). *Karāma,* a term derived from the same root as generosity, refers to the concept of human dignity, for it is the understanding that each human being has a special value due solely to his/her humanity: "Indeed, We honored the progeny of Adam, bore them across land and sea, provided them with good things for their sustenance, and favored them far above many of Our creation" (17:70).

This "cosmic honor" has nothing to do with our class, race, gender, religion, abilities, or any other factor other than being human. Allah created Adam and honored him by ordering the angels to bow to him and then gave him a high rank by making him His *khalīfa*. This honor ignited the jealousy of Satan (Iblis) and caused him to proclaim: "Do You see this one whom You have honored above me? If You delay me until the Day of Resurrection, I will surely destroy his descendants, except for a few" (17:62). "Allah said, 'This is the path which leads straight to Me; Surely, you shall have no power over My true servants, except those misguided ones who choose to follow you" (15:1-42). Allah keeps reminding humanity of its status and that He created each person in the best form (95:4, 82:5-7).

Allah's infinite justice and mercy do not connect *karāma* with one's physical or social status, but with one's choices, actions, and deeds (3:195, 4:124, 16:97, 40:40). The Qurʾan clearly explains that our mission is to establish an effective stewardship while acknowledging that all people are created equal in terms of worth and value regardless of their race, gender, wealth, class, lineage, or lack of a father, and affirming that only one's *taqwā* (Allah-consciousness) determines one's superiority over another person in His sight (49:13).

Human dignity must be recognized and preserved in all aspects of human relationships. For example, the Qurʾan prohibits any verbalizations, actions, and even gestures that injure a person's dignity: "Believers, let not some men among you ridicule others: it may be that the latter are better than the former: nor should some women laugh at others: it may be that the latter are better than the former:

do not defame or be sarcastic to each other, or call each other by offensive nick-names" (49:11-12). Avoiding such behavior not only protects and shows respect for others, but also is for everyone's own good, for these characteristics enable everyone to thrive in the midst of compassion and peace.[10] *Sūrat al-Balad* emphasizes the Qurʾanic framework's principles in terms of building a compassionate community and nation. The resulting model city's foundational structure would be based on the clear message and accurate understanding of humanity's mission as Allah's *khalīfa*.

Today, we must ask which actions, behaviors, and practices humiliate the *insān* and bury their dignity, along with how can we help restore the orphans and other marginalized people's dignity so they can perform their duty as Allah's dignified *khalīfa*. The Qurʾan constantly invites people to be mindful and aware of their words and actions due to their short- and long-impact on those around them. Moreover, such behavior will lead to the creation of customs, traditions, and even laws that future generations will mistakenly follow (2:110, 170; 3:30; 3:195; 4:123; 5:104; 7:173; 10:78; 11:62, 87; 26:74).

As our world becomes more and more diverse and interconnected, humanity must strive to implement the Qurʾanic concept *taʿāruf*, namely, getting to know one another so humans can get to know themselves through the other. In other words, a widespread detrimental attitude within a community may become known only by interacting with others, as this often leads to self-reflection. The first Muslim community exemplified the historical integration of *ʿurf* (local custom) by acting in accord with the Qurʾanic concept of *maʿrūf* (doing what is right, just, and fair).

The concept *ʿamr bi al-maʿrūf wa nahiy ʿan al-munkar* (enjoining what is right and honorable, and forbidding what is wrong and dishonorable) seeks to replace oppression with justice at all social levels (3:104, 110, 114; 7:157; 9:71, 112; 22:41; 31:15, 17). This integration analyzes how the law allows "the common good" and cultural norms to play a role in deriving legal rulings consistent with the Qurʾan's higher values of *tawḥīd*, *tazkiya*, and *ʿumrān* in applying the Sharia's objectives.[11]

Today, millions of children are abandoned and deprived of life's basic necessities. *Sūrat al-Fajr* describes any cruel and inhumane society by the words *lā yukrimūn* (not honoring [the orphan]), *walā yahadhūn* (not feeding [the poor]), *yaʾkulūn* (devouring [the orphan's inheritance], and *yuḥibbūn* ([immense] loving [of wealth]). This *sūra* also informs us that orphans and the poor are not only our responsibility, but also our primary investment in the one of the most important

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[10] Both *Sūrat an-Nūr* and *Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt* present holistic practical strategies for building a compassionate community that can preserve all of its members' human dignity.

[11] Alwani, "*Maqasid Qur'aniyya*."

things that matters: taking care of the dignity of all orphans, along with that of the poor and marginalized people. Otherwise, greed, selfishness, and enslavement to one's wealth will cause them to lose their human essence. *Yatīm* is an honorable title that Allah gave to minor children who have lost their father, and we must a raise a generation that restores and upholds the honor and dignity in that title.

Yatīm (Orphan)

Yatīm (orphan) linguistically means "unique in its value or quality." Al-Rāghib al-Asfhānī defined it as the individual, isolated and alone: *Durra yatīma* means the pearl that is precious and has no equal.[12] It also refers to everything that is dear to his/her counterpart, one who excels in his/her kind, and outperforms his/her peers.[13] A minor who has no father is called *yatīm*; a minor who has no mother is called *munqaṭʿi* (someone who has been cut off).

The term *yatīm* appears in the Qurʾan twenty-three times. It is first found in *Sūrat al-Fajr*, where it deconstructs the wrong views of orphans and introduces the correct perspective: that *yatīm* is an honorable title, that this person is an *insān* by default and thus possesses *mukaram* (respected and horned), has been given cosmic dignity, and is a *khalīfa* and thus entrusted with all of the relevant responsibilities. *Sūrat al-Ḍuḥā* introduces Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a *yatīm* whose father Abdulla died before his birth; his mother Amina died six years later. Although he appeared to have been "abandoned" by his parents, his relatives constantly provided him with shelter, care, protection, and guidance in addition to preserving his dignity. As we read in the Qurʾan: "Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter?" (93:6).

The Prophet's (peace be upon him) life experience dispels any misconception about orphans being anything but honorable. In the case of female orphans, the Qurʾan also presents the *yatīm*'s honorable status when discussing Maryam. Her life demonstrates a model for being raised as a female orphan, knowing Zakariya took *kafāla* of Maryam (3:37). Maryam herself is a role model for a righteous and trusted human being. As *Sūrat Āl-ʿImrān* states: "And when the angels said: 'O Maryam, Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you over the women of all the worlds.'" The lives of these two honored individuals exemplify how Allah honors and takes care of both male and female orphans.

The Qurʾan introduces the *yatīm* as an *insān*, a dignified child who should be raised as a believer so that he/she will voluntarily submit to the Creator, commit to a lifetime of striving in Allah's way to enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong, and to fulfill the purpose of his/her being Allah's *khalīfa*. Therefore,

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[12] Al-Rāghib al-Asfahānī, *Al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*, ed. Muhammad Seyd Kaylani (Beirut: Dar al-Maʿarifa, n.d), 550.

[13] Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿArūs.*

providing orphans with sustenance, education, upbringing, and emotional/mental support is a moral and legal responsibility, not to mention a great and rewarding task. The main challenge is to bring them up in such a manner that the dignity of their "self" is not injured. The Qurʾan forbids treating orphans harshly and oppressively and urges kindness and justice toward them (2:83, 220; 4:2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 127; 6:152; 17:34; 33:4, 5; 89:17; 93:9; 107:2).

Allah repeatedly emphasizes the word *yatīm* to instill the importance of that honorable title. All Muslims are obliged to physically and financially care for, support, and defend them; preserve their *karāma*; and be kind to them. As much as orphans need sympathy and tenderness, they also need guidance and discipline. The Qurʾan urges compassion toward them and warns their caretakers not to oppress or treat them harshly (91:9, 107:2). *Surat al-Nisā'* gives special attention to female orphans, emphasizing that they must be given their full rights and properties (4:2-3, 127).

Orphan care is a complicated and sensitive topic. While it is tempting to believe that everyone with good intentions and a sincere heart can raise such children, in fact one can easily do more harm than good. This is why Allah established a careful set of guiding principles to direct how their caretakers and society as a whole are to treat them. Every member of the caretaker family, especially the father and the mother, has an obligation and a role to fulfill in this regard.

To uphold these guiding principles, we must first identify and understand these specific roles and responsibilities. *Sūrat al-Kahf* relates the story of two orphaned brothers whose righteous father left behind a buried treasure for them (18:82). Clearly, a father's responsibility to his children is to be both a righteous role model and a financial supporter. In the case of divorce, the Qurʾan stipulates that fathers are legally obliged to provide for their children so that mothers, who are obliged to nurture and take care of them, will not have to worry about bearing the associated financial burden. It is important to emphasize that even if the mother decides she cannot nurse, the father's obligation's remains (2:233).

When a Child's Father Dies
According to the Islamic family model, this financial responsibility immediately transfers to the father's extended family upon his death, while raising and nurturing the *yatīm* moves to the mother's family. This does not mean that the father has no role in raising, nurturing, educating, and disciplining his child (12:4-18, 31:12-10), but rather that in the case of emergency, implementing such a practical strategy has two crucial benefits: (1) it maintains family stability and ensures the orphan's continued wellbeing and (2) provides clarity and transparency as to who is accountable for what.

Despite dividing the parents' responsibilities, this model is flexible enough to make any necessary changes due to death, illness, divorce, or similar issues. What

is important here is the family's purpose: to ensure a safe, stable, and peaceful environment for all of its members. Therefore, some contemporary jurists define *yatīm* as any child who has lost his/her father through death to include those who have been abandoned by their fathers.

The *laqīṭ* (abandoned child) is a vulnerable member of society, especially in these troubled times. The orphan's vulnerability is not as great, since he/she, according to the Arabic and Islamic definitions, still has his/her mother. If both parents are deceased, the orphan is more like the abandoned child. According to the *Kuwaiti Encyclopedia of Islamic Jurisprudence* (*al-mawsū'a al-fiqhiya al-kuwaytiya*), other categories are included under *yatīm* to protect the abandoned child's dignity as well.[14]

Legally, a *laqīṭ* is a child whose family has abandoned him/her out of fear of poverty or the accusation of *zinā* (adultery), or an infant left somewhere with no information about his/her parents' identity.[15] Such unfortunate incidents are a sign of deteriorating moral values and, if ignored, will eventually destroy a society's moral fabric. Saving such a child's life is an act of great merit, for "One who saves a life, it is as if he/she saved the lives of all people" (5:32). Everyone must be held responsible for this – the parents, family, authorities, and society as a whole. Similarly, caring for an abandoned child has always been both a moral and legal imperative in the Islamic tradition.

The Qurʾan presents a framework for protecting the dignity of the *yatīm* and the *laqīṭ*: (1) "Everyone must bear the consequence of what he does, and no bearer of a burden can bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord you will return, and He will inform you of what you used to dispute about" (6:164); (2) Prophets Musa and Yusuf were abandoned as young children. Allah told Musa's mother to place her newborn son in a basket and float it down a stream to escape Pharaoh's order to execute each first-born son of the Children of Israel (20:36-39). Ironically, Pharaoh's wife rescued him and raised him as if he were one of Pharaoh's sons. Yusuf's jealous brothers dropped him into a well, from which he was rescued by passersby and sold into slavery; (3) It introduced the concept of brotherhood: "If you do not know their fathers, regard them as your brothers in faith and

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[14] The Permanent Committee for Academic Research and Fatwa, headed by the Saudi scholar Ibn Baz, fatwa no. 20711, dated 12/24/1419 AH: "Those of unknown parentage come under the ruling of an orphan because they lose their parents; however, they are more in need of care than those with a known lineage because there is no knowledge of a relative to whom they resort to when necessary."

[15] Wizarah al-Awqaf wa al-Shu'un al-Islamiyah, *Al-Mawsu'a al-Fiqhiya* (Kuwait: Matabiʿ Dar al-Safwah, 1995), 35/295. For more details about juristic perspective, see M. S. Sujimon, "The treatment of foundling (*al-laqīṭ*) according to the Ḥanafīs), *Islamic Law and Society* 9, no. 3 (2002): 358-85.

mawālīkum (allies and/or friends; 33:5) and a milk-based relationship to help support those who are orphaned or abandoned while being nursed. This special relationship creates prohibitions as well as rights and responsibilities. "Forbidden unto you [for marriage] are your mothers … your foster-mothers (who breastfed you), and your foster sisters" (with whom you shared breastmilk) (4:23).

And finally, (4) The *āyah* "Therefore, do not oppress (*taqhar*) the orphan" (93:9) attempts to turn the caretakers' attention to the more enjoyable everlasting success of the hereafter by making this type of good treatment a sign of genuine faith. *Sūrat al-Māʿūn* asks: "Have you seen the one who denies the final Judgment? That is the one who repulses the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor" (107:1-3). The term *taqhar* is based on *qahr* and, as al-Asfhānī cites in his *Mufradāt*, means "prevalence with contempt."[16] In the context of an orphan, it implies a strong warning for humanity not to oppress, overpower, or subjugate others. The Qur'an used *Qahār* in reference to a person only once – about Pharaoh (7:127).

The surest way to earn Allah's wrath, *al-Qahhār,* is to oppress others. This shows that in relation to orphans, even though feeding and donating are considered highly commendable actions, it is more important to respect them, be kind, help them spiritually, and satisfy their emotional needs. In fact, a prophetic hadith states that upholding a *yatīm*'s *karāma* is best accomplished by following the guidelines of *kafāla* as described in the Qurʾan and exemplified by Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) life.

Kafāla

The Qurʾan, which verifies and protects the meaning(s) of its terms, mentions *kafāla* in relation to orphan care in 3:37, 44; 28:11-12; and 20:39-40 within the contexts of being liable for, giving or serving, sponsoring, making certain that something will happen, vouching for, assuring, and being a security or a suretyship.[17] The Qurʾan uses *kafal* in a broad concept, and its derivatives include all of the above-mentioned meanings (3:37, 44; 4:85; 20:40; 21:85; 28:12; 38:23; 57:28). *Kafāla* seeks to remove one's burden and place him/her under the protection of the one who has assumed this responsibility. Therefore, it means making oneself responsible for preserving someone else's dignity by removing his/her burden(s).

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[16] Al-Rāghib al-Asfahānī, *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān,* 414.

[17] A surety is defined as "a person who is primarily liable for the payment of another's debt or the performance of another's obligation." "Although a surety is similar to an insurer, one important difference is that a surety often receives no compensation for assuming liability." Brian A. Garner (editor in chief), *Black's Law Dictionary* (Deluxe Eighth Edition) (St. Paul, MN: West Group, 1999), 1482.

As a result, this concept can be extended to create a broader meaning of *takāful*, defined as communal mutual support and care, as well as joint responsibility and solidarity, in society. It starts with kinship ties among familial networks and goes beyond this to establish mutual social support and responsibility.[18] A *kāfil* is viewed as a legal guarantor when he/she is the breadwinner, provider, protector, and legal guardian of another person. The guarantee may be financial (e.g., cosigning a credit transaction) or physical (e.g., providing safety and shelter from potential harm).

Introducing the story of Maryam as a model for *kafāla*, the Qurʾan uses it to explain two essential elements of orphan care: (1) Identify the goal; "So her Sustainer (*Rabb*) graciously accepted her with good acceptance and caused her to grow in a good manner and put her in the care of (*kaffalahā)* Zakariya (3:37) and (2) Devise a clear process and conditions to identify the best caregiver, especially when more than one person is making himself/herself available. This procedure can be adjusted as long as it serves the child's best interest: "[O Prophet] That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you. And you were not present with them when they threw their pens to draw lots, to know who the guardian of Maryam should be; nor were you present with them when they disputed" (3:44). This story reveals that the proposed caregivers must meet the relevant criteria. The story shows that Maryam's maternal aunt and her husband Zakariya were chosen because there was no maternal grandmother.

There must be a comprehensive description of how the *kāfil* treats, nurtures, trains, and raises the orphan: "Every time Zakariya entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision. He said, 'O Maryam, from where is this [coming] to you?' She said, 'It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills without account'" (3:37). His question exemplifies how the *kāfil* nurtures and disciplines the orphans: "Keep a close check on orphans till they attain the age of marriage" (4:6). The story further reveals the significance of continually evaluating the child's progress and how he/she turns out. "The angels said, 'Maryam, Allah has selected you and purified you. He has selected you over [all] the women of your time. O Maryam! Remain truly devout to your Sustainer, and prostrate yourself in worship, and bow down with those who bow down [before Him]" (3:42-43).

This concept also appears twice in the story of Musa, where it is defined as the most perfect type of care possible. In *Sūrah Ṭaha*, Musa's sister recommends to Pharaoh's wife that Musa's mother care for and nurse him: "And I bestowed upon you love from Me that you would be brought up under My eye. [And We favored

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[18] Jamila Bargach, *Orphans of Islam* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2002), 29.

you] when your sister walked along and said, 'Shall I guide you to one who *yak-fulah* (will take care of him)?' Thus We returned you to your mother, so that her eyes might be cooled and that she might not grieve…" (20:39-40). In *Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ*, Musa's mother asked Musa's sister to

> "Go, and follow him." So she watched him from a distance, like a stranger, without anyone noticing her. We had already made him refuse all wet nurses. So his sister said to them, "Shall I tell you of a family who (*yakfulnah*) will bring him up for you and take good care of him?" Thus We restored him to his mother so that she might be comforted…" (28:11-12)

Allah emphasizes in these stories that He is the One who takes care of these children and makes the best arrangements for their care so that they will grow in good manners. He also did this for the orphaned Muhammad (peace be upon him) (93:9) and the two orphans in *Sūrat al-Kahf* (by protecting their wealth) [18:81]). All of these verses indicate that Allah helps people who take care of orphans.

Allah stresses that any relationship must be established based on a true connection set by the Creator, as opposed to a man-made (and therefore false) one, for the latter relationship will deconstruct the essence of humanity. An example is the pre-Islamic custom known as *ẓihār*: "Those who separate themselves from their wives by pronouncing, 'To me you are like my mother's back,' must concede that they are not their mothers; none are their mothers except those who gave birth to them – surely they utter an evil word and a lie. Allah is pardoning and Most-forgiving" (58:2). Both of these man-made relationships are false, for the mother is the mother, the daughter is the daughter, the wife is the wife, and so on. We cannot claim that our wife is our mother, or that our niece is our daughter, because Allah has clearly defined everyone's role. There is divine wisdom in the blood relationships He has assigned to us.

As *al-Muṣaddiq*, the Qurʾan is the confirmer or verifier of truth, and as *Muhaymin* it is the overseer, protector, guardian, witness, determiner of the truth, and judges us by the truth: "And We have revealed to you, [O Prophet], the Book in truth (*muṣaddiq*), confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion (*muhaymin*) over it" (5:48). This methodology teaches us that Allah's authority (*sulṭān*) both confirms and protects the Qurʾan concepts: "Would you dispute with me about mere names, which you and your fathers have invented, and for which Allah has revealed no authority? Wait then if you will: I am waiting alongside you" (7:71) and

> All those you worship instead of Him are mere names you and your forefathers have invented, names for which Allah has sent down no authority:

all power belongs to Allah alone, and He orders you to worship none but Him: this is the true faith, though most people do not realize it. (12:40)

Reading the Qurʾan in its entirety (*al-waḥda al-binā'iya*) reveals that when it endorses a word, that word becomes a concept through which the Qurʾan clarifies its meaning, applies through specific examples, and then protects its meaning by moral principles and legal rulings. Applying this method helps and guides us to verify, assess, and distinguish between true and false concepts, practices, and even man-made customs.

Therefore, we have to consider how the Qurʾan uses the word. Given that the Qur'an attests to its words' definition(s) and determines their specific meaning(s), all of its terms or concepts must be defined in the light of the text's unity and divine language, as well as read conceptually, in order to trace the derivation of its words. This is a crucial element of building our model of orphan care. For example, *tabanni* (adoption) and *daʿiy* (to be claimed as sons), are defined as follows:

1. The Qurʾan never uses *tabanni*; rather, it describes this situation as *natakhdhu' walada* (to claim him as our son). For example: "And the one from Egypt who bought him (Yusuf) said to his wife, 'Make his residence comfortable. Perhaps he will profit and benefit us, or we will claim him as a son'" (12:21) and "The wife of Pharaoh said, '[He will be] a comfort of the eye for me and for you. Do not kill him; perhaps he may benefit us, or we may claim him as a son.' And they perceived not" (28:9). Both verses emphasize that the goal was not the child's welfare or benefit, but to benefit those who wanted to claim him.

    Reading the Qurʾan in its entirety shows that this exact *āyah* is primarily mentioned in a specific context: "They say: 'Allah has taken a son.' Exalted is He; He is the Self-Sufficient One; everything in the heavens and on Earth belongs to Him. Do you have any evidence for this claim? Would you ascribe to Allah something which you do not know? Say, 'Those who invent falsehoods about Allah will never prosper' (10:68-69) and "Say: 'Praise to Allah, who has not taken a son and has had no partner in [His] dominion and has no [need of a] protector out of weakness; and glorify Him with [great] glorification'" (17:111; also see 2:116; 18:4; 19:35, 88, 91-92; 21:26; 23:91; 72:3).
2. *Daʿīy:* (pl. *adʿiyā'kum)*: "And He has not made your wives whom you declare unlawful your mothers. And he has not made your claimed/adopted sons (*adʿiyā'kum)* your [true] sons. That is [merely] your saying by your

mouths. But Allah says the truth, and He guides to the [right] path" (33:4). Allah then defines the system of (*maḥārim*)[19]:

> Prohibited to you [for marriage] are ... your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father's sisters, your mother's sisters, your brother's daughters, your sister's daughters, your [milk] mothers who nursed you, your sisters through nursing, your wives' mothers, and your step-daughters under your guardianship [born] of your wives unto whom you have gone in. But if you have not gone in unto them, there is no sin upon you. And [also prohibited are] the wives of your sons who are from your [own] loins, and that you take [in marriage] two sisters simultaneously, except for what has already occurred. Indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful. (4:23)

Then the Qurʾan explains *daʿīy* in the social context:

> And once when Zayd had come to the end of his union with her (Zaynab bint Jahsh), We married you (Muhammad) to her in order that the believers find no uneasiness regarding marrying the ex-wives of their claimed sons (*adʿiyāʾhum*) when the latter have come to the end of their union with them. (Q 33:37)

In this way, the Qurʾan closed the door against all such false claims or misunderstandings. According to one hadith, the Prophet also forbade people from claiming to be the children of unrelated men: "Whoever makes claims to one who is not his father while knowing that he is not his father will be barred from entering Paradise."[20] In other words, every individual's rightful identity must be preserved because developing an identity is an essential component of a personality.[21]

The Qurʾan, as mentioned above, is both the *Muṣaddiq* (confirmer or verifier of truth) and *Muhaymin* (guardian and determiner of the truth) and judges us by the truth (5:48). Orphan care is an example of a divine concept that is often misinterpreted, despite Allah's clear definition of it, and *kafāla* shows how to both un-

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[19] Also see 24:31, 61; 25:54, 33:55.

[20] Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Damascus and Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 2002), 1676, hadith no. 6766.

[21] Shabnam Ishaque, "Islamic Principles on Adoption," 22 *Int'l J.L., Pol'y & Fam.*, 393, 401-06 (2008) (The child may take mother's name if born out of wedlock).

derstand and put it and its associated concepts into perspective. It thus challenges our way of thinking in order to reveal the root of our sociocultural problems and then guides us to correct them by dealing with the issue holistically.

The historical record contains many examples of the marginalized and the weak being otherized and politicized for worldly gains. For instance, references to child adoption have been found in ancient Greek, Babylonian, Roman, Japanese, Chinese, and Egyptians law codes; however, the overall goal was often driven only by the desire to secure a male heir.[22] While adoptive families are created through law and custom, and not through biology or blood,[23] *kafāla* is quintessentially about taking care of children as opposed to forming a new family.[24]

As Islam requires people to recognize the truth in all cases, such a false relationship would deprive these children of their dignity and honor and, in a sense, render them the property of biologically unrelated adults who seek to gain some benefit from them. Thus, as distinct from the American adoption system, their ties with their biological family and extended family members cannot be severed. In fact, *kafāla* stipulates specific roles for each family member so that a fostered child will grow up healthy in all aspects of its life – especially in terms of his/her spirituality.

The Qurʾan reveals that such children are not only our responsibility, but also our primary investment in the only thing that matters: the afterlife. Therefore, in terms of orphan care, the Qurʾan uses *kafāla* to define who these children are and reveal the best arrangement for taking care of them; illustrates how to practice it by the stories of Maryam, Musa, and Prophet Muhammad; and then sets rules to hold people accountable when this concept is neither understood nor implemented correctly (See 2:83, 220; 4:2-3, 6, 8-9; 6:152; 12:23-29; 17:34; 33:4, 5; 89:17; 93:9; 107:2).

It is important to emphasize Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) teaches us how to implement the Qurʾanic teaching by using *kafāla* to refer to orphan care

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[22] Burton Z. Sokoloff, "Antecedents of American Adoption," *The Future of Children* 3, no. 1 (1993): 17-25. Leo Huard, "The Law of Adoption," *Vand. L. Rev.* 9, 743, 743-45 (1956) (Pointing out that the primary purpose of these ancient adoptions was to secure familial continuity rather than serve the welfare of the adoptee). https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/vanlr9&div=50&id=&page=. Also see Barbara B. Woodhouse, "Waiting for Loving: The Child's Fundamental Right to Adoption," *Capital University Law Review*, 34, 2 (Winter 2005): 310-12. (Explaining that the Roman practic of adoption was seen as, most importantly, a way to "[maintain] a continuous family line" and create an heir for childless males).

[23] Joan H. Hollinger and Naomi Cahn, "Forming Families by Law: Adoption in America Today," *Human Rights* 36, no. 3 (2009): 16-19. Accessed October 31, 2020. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25762010 and https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/huri36&div=37&id=&page=.

[24] Raffia Arshad, *Islamic Family Law* (London: Sweet & Maxwell/Thomson Reuters 2010), 170.

as well. He used *kāfil* (caretaker), instead of replacing it with other words and stated: "I and the one who cares for an orphan will be together in Paradise like this," and he held his two fingers together to illustrate (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, hadith no. 5659).

Kafāla in Practice

The *kāfil* of orphans or abandoned children largely assumes responsibility for their physical, spiritual, and emotional/mental care, as well as the management of their finances. While the *kāfil* can be a relative or a non-relative of the orphan's biological parents, according to Islamic law such children can never be deprived of the biological rights that all children have upon their biological parents, like linage, inheritance, naming, and other associative rights. Regardless of why the parents surrendered their child to a *kāfil*, *kafāla* preserves the child's relationship with them and never terminates the parents' legal rights.[25]

How Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) lived reveals how *kafāla* is practiced within the Islamic context. After all, He was protected by Allah, as *Sūrat al-Ḍuḥā* emphasizes: "Did Allah not find you an orphan and give you shelter and care?" (93:6). According to the social norms of his time, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born an orphan, since he did not have a living father. Upon his birth, and according to custom, his widowed mother Amina gave him to Halima, a woman who belonged to the nearby nomadic Banu Saʿd clan, to serve as his wet nurse and caretaker. His biological mother never lost her parental rights during the intervening five years.

When Amina died one year after reassuming physical custody of her son, Muhammad's grandfather ʿAbd al-Muttalib became his caretaker. Upon his death two years later, Muhammad was passed on to his paternal uncle Abu Talib.[26] Neither man was regarded as his biological father, and Muhammad continued to be acknowledged as his father Abdulla's son and a member of his father's Banu Hashim clan. Although born an orphan and then passed from his mother to Halima, his grandfather, and his uncle, everyone took good care of him, for they were genuinely compassionate and loving caregivers. This solid support network helped Muhammad (peace be upon him) develop emotional stability during his tough childhood, increased his self-resilience, and enabled him to embrace change and view challenges as opportunities to fulfill his responsibilities. As a result, he grew into an extraordinary and highly respected man: "And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds" (21:107).

The Qurʾan presents a framework for changing a well-established but mistaken social custom and thereby challenges the status quo. The Prophet (peace be

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[25] Ibid., 169-71.

[26] ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Hisham, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiya* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Maʿarif, 2004), 84-94.

upon him) was born into an Arabian society characterized by corrupt norms. The Qurʾanic-Prophetic approach to cultural change is based on affirming existing customs (*ʿurf*) that are good and abolishing those that are harmful (*ʿamr bi al-maʿrūf wa nahiy ʿan al-munkar*) (3:104, 110, 114; 7:157; 9:71, 112; 22:41; 31:15, 17). For example, the Qurʾan criticizes and later abolished the pre-Islamic Arab practice of killing female infants and young girls due to such man-made notions of honor and poverty (16:58-59, 81:26, 6:151, 17:31). Its innovative strategy is as follows: Identify the harmful custom that needs to be changed, explain how it negatively impacts people, offer the best concept to replace it, and then reveal how this change will benefit everyone.

Orphan care begins with preserving these children's lives and dignity. For instance, the pre-Islamic period's norm was to raise abandoned, kidnapped, or captured children as adopted sons or daughters. Moreover, a kinship group would commonly disown its original members and replace them with strangers. Islam came to eliminate or at least minimize harm and establish a new social order based on a solid foundation of biological and blood ties. Since the prevailing norm of *tabanni* (adoption) meant considering the child of an unrelated "man" and/or unknown biological parents as one's biological child, Islam replaced it with the concept of *kafāla* while preserving the biological relationship. For example, upon his marriage to Khadija, Prophet Muhammad adopted and then freed Zayd ibn Haritha, her slave, and began calling him Zayd ibn Muhammad.[27] This was prior to this custom's prohibition (33:5). There was no way to end this wrong, but prevalent, custom other than through divine intervention. Even though Zayd was known as "the beloved of Allah's Messenger," Allah ordered the Prophet to abolish this man-made relationship by marrying Zaynab bint Jahsh, his former "son" Zayd's ex-wife – an action that his society regarded as "unethical" and "shameful." The Qurʾan denounced this customary practice (33:37) and then emphasized its abolition: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men. He is, rather, Allah's Messenger and the seal of the prophets" (33:40).

Consequently, the adoption systems found in the West, which are to a certain extent similar to those of pre-Islamic Arabia and thus redefine the family, are considered, under Islamic law, legally invalid and unlawful.[28] The solid foundation established by the Qurʾan clearly defines and preserves each family member's roles and obligations. In his *The Family Structure in Islam*, Muslim sociologist Hammudah ʿAbd al ʿAti explored the Islamic definition of family and revealed its comprehensibility, transparency, and simplicity. According to him, the family is a human social group whose members are bound together by blood ties and/or the

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[27] See ʿAbd al ʿAti's analysis on 25-27.
[28] See Hollinger and Cahn. "Forming Families by Law."

marital relationship. As such, its members are bound together by mutual expectations of rights and obligations prescribed by religion, enforced by law, and observed by the group's members. Among these expectations are certain mutual commitments pertaining to identity and provision, inheritance and counsel, affection for the young and security for the aged, and the maximization of effort to ensure the family's continuity.[29]

It is a great responsibility to raise and bring up a dignified child who, as he/she grows up, will submit to the Creator and strive to fulfill his/her purpose: being Allah's *khalīfa*. The Qurʾan considers the family vital to humanity's continued wellbeing. Furthermore, the extended family can provide tremendous benefits for all members when it exists in conjunction with the other basic characteristics of Qurʾanic teachings. The Qurʾan details the relationships, as well as each individual's responsibilities and rights, based on blood and marital ties: "It is He who has created human beings from water and He has granted them the ties of blood as well as marriage. Your *Rabb* is all powerful" (25:54).

In addition to the family's nuclear members – the mother, father, and their children – the Qurʾanic family model also includes the grandparents, uncles, aunts, and their offspring. The Qur'an both prescribes and strengthens such solidarity by making repeated references to the rights of kin (e.g., 17:23-26, 4:7-9, 8:41, 24:22) and the importance of treating them with kindness (e.g., 2:83, 16:90). Although raising a child is the parents' responsibility, the extended family's support is crucial to nurturing and nourishing a child until the goal is attained. If its members are already practicing *kafāla*, caring for a relative, orphan, or abandoned child becomes very easy. The extended family as a whole provides psychological and social diversity in terms of companionship for children as well as for adults – beneficial learning and socialization experiences for the former and the necessary sense of security and usefulness for the latter – thereby solving the generation gap.[30] Since there is less dependence upon one-to-one relationships, fewer emotional demands are made on each member.

In addition, any disagreement or clash between adults, children, or persons of different generations does not reach the same damaging proportions it may in a nuclear family, for alternative family members are always on hand to ease the pain and provide therapeutic counselling and companionship. According to this

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[29] Hammudah 'Abd al 'Ati, *The Family Structure in Islam* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1977), chapters 1-4.

[30] Lamya al Faruqi, "Women, Muslim Society and Islam" (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1994), 40-43. Also see Zainab Alwani, "Muslim Women and Global Challenges: Seeking Change through a Qurʾānic Textual Approach and the Prophetic Model,) *Institute of Objective Studies* (New Delhi: Genuine Publications and Media Pvt, 2012).

ideal model, each orphaned or abandoned child would have a network or a support system. As a result, if a child were to become an orphan, some family members would immediately step in and claim the role.

However, our contemporary reality does not reflect this model in all of its aspects, and Muslim communities worldwide are confronting numerous challenges, among them dysfunctional family systems. Implementing this family structure is especially critical, for our goal is to raise a *yatīm* as a human being who is continuously self-aware, practices *tazkiya*, is Allah-conscious, maintains good relations, and respects the surrounding social and physical environments. Ideally, children should grow up to uphold *'umrān* and see nature as Allah's signs, and an ideal family should raise them to envision themselves as travelers moving toward their real destination, the hereafter, and thus working to spread good, eliminate evil, and make proper judgments in all aspects of life.

Tracing *Āwā* in the Qurʾan
In terms of sheltering orphans and abandoned children, the Qurʾanic-Prophetic model is holistic: "Your *Rabb* has not at all abandoned you, nor is he displeased with you. Did Allah not find you an orphan and give you shelter and care (*fa āwā*)?" (93:3, 6). Reading the Qurʾan holistically and tracing the meaning of *āwā* reveals a comprehensive model (2:220). This term means to provide a safe refuge – a home, shelter, asylum, or sanctuary – from danger. In the context of *Sūrat al-Ḍuḥā*, *āwā* provides a holistic description of an ideal shelter with a mission to improve a displaced person or orphan's life. The Qurʾanic-Prophetic model not only provides a physical shelter from danger and the elements, but also a safe base that offers a sense of peace, identity, and dignity.

Sūrat al-Kahf mentions *āwā* three times to teach us how to create such a holistic model. In short, it relates the story of the Companions of the Cave, who prayed for mercy from the *Rabb al-ʿālamīn* (the Lord of the worlds); asked for sound judgment concerning their affairs; and voiced their belief and hope that Allah would grant them guidance, knowledge, provision, patience, and security from their enemy: "When the youth took refuge (*āwā)* in the cave, they said: '*Rabbanā* (Our Sustainer), grant us mercy from Your presence and make us incline to sound judgment with the right guidance in our affair'" (18:10).

Verse 18:16 reveals how they discussed the matter, showed their trust and strong belief in Allah, and how they made a plan to deal with their situation: "And when you have withdrawn from them and all that they worship other than Allah, take refuge in the cave. *Rabbukum* (Your Sustainer) will spread out for you of His mercy, and make you incline to ease in your affairs." This particular story teaches us how Allah loves and takes care of those who believe in Him.

> We shall tell you their story as it really was. They were young men who believed in their Lord, and on whom We increased them in guidance. We strengthened their hearts, when they rose up and declared, "Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the Earth. Never shall we call upon any deity other than Him: for that would be an outrageous thing to do." (18:13-14)

This story emphasizes how Allah does not abandon His servants, as mentioned in 93:3. Allah details how He made the Sun move and maneuvered it gently in the cave to keep them healthy and safe, as if putting the universe at their service.

> And [had you been present], you would see the Sun when it rose, inclining away from their cave on the right, and when it set, passing away from them on the left, while they were [laying] within an open space thereof. That was from the signs of Allah. He whom Allah guides is the [rightly] guided, but he whom He leaves astray – never will you find for him a protecting guide … We turned them over [during their long sleep to keep them comfortable]. (18:17-18)

On the other hand, the Qurʾan draws our attention to an important point: Those who seek refuge sometimes focus only on the structure's physical aspect and ignore the surrounding spiritual, emotional, and sociocultural characteristics. The Qurʾan manifests this inaccurate view through Prophet Nuh's son: "He said, 'I will take refuge on a mountain to protect me from the water.' [Noah] said, 'Today there is no protection for anyone from Allah's command except for those on whom He gives mercy!' And the waves came between them, and he was among those who were drowned" (11:43). This story shows that youth, as well as all of humanity, can choose to change their reality.

We both seek and are obliged to provide refuge. Tracing *āwā*'s movement in the Qurʾan, we find that people naturally seek help first from their close kinfolk: "And when they entered upon Yusuf, he gave lodging to his own brother to stay with him; he said, 'Indeed, I am your brother, so do not despair over whatever they had done'" (12:69). This presents Yusuf as a role model in terms of taking care of his brother and giving him solace and *āwā* in the true sense of both terms: helping one another, spreading kindness, and creating a sense of belonging and trust in the community. Kindness and caring are contagious because they inspire others, influence people's behavior, and are key to creating a more trusting community.

Sūrat al-Anfāl mentions the verb *āwā* three times in the context of sheltering people communally by sharing the first generation's story and experience: "And remember when you were few and oppressed in the land, fearing that people might abduct you, but He sheltered you, supported you with His victory, and pro-

vided you with good things – that you might be grateful" (8:26). The Muslims of Madina, who became known as the Ansar after the Prophet's arrival, shared all of their possessions with the Makkan refugees. This sincere relationship reflected *taqwā*'s true meaning and how Muslims must be constantly aware of Allah's presence, especially of His bounties and blessings.

Cultural Change Toward Orphans in Seventh-Century Arabia
The Qurʾan and Sunna created a cultural change by honoring those Ansar (Helpers of Madina) who took care of orphans. After the Battle of Uhud, the community faced a crisis: How should they take care of the large number of orphans and widows? *Sūrat al-Nisāʾ*, revealed after this battle and at a time when the refugees had been in Medina for about four years, deals with various issues concerning women, orphans, and the family. In fact, Allah addresses the Ansar as if the orphans and the needy are already living in their homes. Some of the key points are as follows:

- Raise them and educate them to take care of their own financial affairs until they are mature enough to take care of it themselves, as reflected in Qur'an 4:6.[31]
- When disadvantaged individuals and orphans are present while discussing which part of the deceased's inheritance each family member is entitled to receive, include both of these groups in the distribution of the inheritance and speak to them kindly, as stated in Quran 4:8. This practice, unfortunately is a forgotten *sunna.* [32]
- Allah urges the guardians to be mindful of Him in terms of how they treat the orphans in their care by asking them how they would feel if their own children were to become orphans and helpless. Taking advantage of the orphan's property is like "swallowing fire" (4:9-10).
- The Qurʾan gives special attention to female orphans, emphasizing that they must be given their full rights, properties, and money and not be kept from marriage so that their caregiver can keep their money, as reflected in Qur'an 4:2-3, 127.

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[31] Although the Qur'an permits poor caretakers to consume part of an orphan's wealth, certain scholars now maintain that the caretaker is required to restore it once he/she is more financially stable. Some jurists disagree on the grounds that whatever he takes is his wage for assuming his role; others hold that he can only take enough to fulfill his needs. Other jurists argue that the caretaker must return whatever he has taken when he becomes financially self-sufficient. Muhammad 'Ali al-Sabuni, *Mukhtaṣir Ibn Kathīr* (Beirut: Dar al-Qur'an al-Karim, 1981), 1/359.

[32] See the hadith narrated by Ibn 'Abbas, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 2759, book 55, hadith 22; vol. 4, book 51, hadith 21.

The measure of justice, compassion, strength, and overall success of a Muslim family and community is reflected in how well they treat women, widows, orphans, and the poor – vulnerable groups that Allah has honored and protected. Such individuals are often viewed as weak, but Allah uses them as a way to identify a just and compassionate community. *Sūrat al-Nūr* details how Muslims should act and behave at home as well as model the best practice to create a peaceful environment. In fact this description, which is vital for protecting orphans and all family members, especially the most venerable, is so detailed that it is like Allah entered our houses and told us what to do in different scenarios. *Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt* both explains how to deal with emotional and verbal abuse and models the best way to avoid abuse or oppression: "don't make fun" (49:11) and "don't spy or be suspicious and don't backbite" (49:12).

The following *aḥādīth* represent how Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) created the culture of *kafāla* and the importance of opening our homes to orphans. These few examples – and there are many others – show us that the first Muslim generation did not practice *kafāla* by sending money to sponsor a child.

One clear example of this is the following hadith: "Abu Hurayra narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'The best house among the Muslims is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated well. And the worst house among the Muslims is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated badly'" (*Sunan Ibn Mājah* 3679, book 33, hadith 23; vol. 5, book 33, hadith 3679).

Abu Hurayra reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The person who strives on behalf of the widows and poor is like those who strive in the way of Allah and like those who fast in the day and pray at night" (*Al-Adab al-Mufrad* 131, book 7, hadith 3).

Umm Salama said: "The Messenger of Allah enjoined charity upon us. Zainab, the wife of Abdullah said: 'Will it be accepted as charity on my part if I give charity to my husband who is poor, and to the children of a brother of mine who are orphans, spending such and such on them, and in all circumstances?' He said: 'Yes.'" (*Sunan Ibn Mājah* 1835, vol. 3, book 8, hadith 1835).

The concept of brethren means that all of the believers around him/her should be like a compassionate father, mother, brother, and sister to any child who has no father or whose father has died. In other words, no one should be left alone and helpless. All children should be raised in a way that neither injures the dignity of their "self" nor deprives them of the good care, sustenance, education, and upbringing needed to succeed in life. The Qurʾan repeatedly defines and emphasizes the importance of brotherhood (and sisterhood), but most clearly in relation to orphans, in 49:10, 2:220, 33:5, and 59:10.

Along with this clear directive, jurists developed the doctrines of *kafāla* (longterm foster care) to meet the needs of those children who have no proper care or biological family that can care for them. The Qur'anic directives concerning guard-

ianship and fosterage are also based on Islam's fundamental principles of generosity, charity, and responsibility for the needy and protecting the vulnerable.

According to the Qur'an and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life example, *kafāla* is defined as assuming responsibility for orphaned or abandoned children according to Allah's commands: Keeping their best interest in mind and maintaining their relationship with their biological parents and family members, no matter how dysfunctional or unidentifiable they may be.[33] The child has a right to know his/her biological parents and extended family members, and the biological family has the right to maintain contact with the caregiver family members. Every child must be informed of his/her *nasab* (original lineage), if for no other reason than to ensure that he/she does not inadvertently marry a blood relative (e.g., sister or uncle) later in life. Also, there is a certain pride in knowing one's lineage, especially if greatness and/or nobility are associated with one's ancestors.

Maintaining that children know their biological parents and family members holds families accountable for their role, makes it harder for them to remain dysfunctional, and makes the community responsible for helping them behave more responsibly. Taking all of that away by forbidding the parties involved from getting to know each other does not help people adhere to their familial and societal responsibilities.

Conclusion
Researching, reflecting, and analyzing specific Qurʾanic verses and practices of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) allows a model for contemporary families and communities to emerge and be fully inclusive of orphaned and abandoned children. First of all, we should take the initiative to educate the community about this model, for Islam considers taking care of orphans an act of piety and a *farḍ kifāya* (communal responsibility). Thus, the entire community must prioritize the welfare of every orphan and abandoned child. We must encourage American Muslims to play an active role in the foster care system, including serving as legal guardians when appropriate. Unfortunately, many Muslim families who live in the West, specifically the United States, are very reluctant to do so when it comes to non-related children, primarily because they do not fully understand American family law. This lack of knowledge has led many Muslims to think that there is no alternative to Western-style adoption. Once we better understand the process of becoming a foster parent, it comes down to our willingness to open our homes and our hearts to care and provide for one or more children. We can no longer turn a blind eye when there are hundreds of thousands of children in the United

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[33] See Elizabeth Samuels, "The Idea of Adoption: An Inquiry into the History of Adult Adoptee Access to Birth Records," *Rutgers Law Review*, Vol. 53, 373-84 (2001).

States in foster care, including Muslim children, who are in need of a safe and loving home for a myriad of reasons not through any fault of their own.

The responsibility of *kafāla* for orphaned and abandoned children falls on each and every one of us. Although not every community member can commit to being a foster parent, each one can contribute in a meaningful way. Islam teaches us to think of ourselves more as a collective unit than as separate individuals. Prophet Muhammad said that his *umma* is like a body, for when one part is hurt the whole body is in pain.[34] Together, we can have a direct and positive impact on the lives of those children who need it the most. Let us commit to these steps. In chronological order, they are as follows:

First, the local community and/or mosque should organize a committee from among its social service department, the imam's office, and other relevant groups who can work with the local social service organizations and court systems. Once established, this committee should help identify and match Muslim foster homes with Muslim foster children and then ensure that the children's religious rights, considerations, and understanding are respected after they are placed.

Second, become a licensed foster parent if you are qualified and able to do so. Third, contribute money to organizations that support orphans and abandoned children and their guardian/foster parents. Such contributions should not be confused with *kafāla*, a holistic concept that transcends financial support. While this is an important and needed part of *kafāla*, doing so does not make one a child's *kāfil* (guardian parent). Fourth, having community members serve as a support network for the foster parents (*kāfil*s) – an "extended family," so to speak – would be very helpful. The members of the community can help meet some of the children's needs, such as tutoring them in an academic area or life skill, socializing them with other children, providing a meal for the foster family, and taking care of them for a day to give the foster parents some respite. It is important to realize that being a *kāfil* requires a lot of time, energy, and care and will require rearranging the family's daily life. The community support can allow more families that ability to take on the responsibility of being foster parents.

The legal community must also be involved, for lawyers and child welfare social workers are essential to incorporating *kafāla* in the United States. As this article shows, this concept can benefit American society in many ways. Enabling the current system to make more use of *kafāla*-type guardianship arrangements will

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[34] Narrated An-Nuʿman bin Bashir: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "You see the believers as regards their being merciful among themselves and showing love among themselves and being kind, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it." *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 6011, book 78, hadith 42; vol. 8, book 73, hadith 40.

take time. However, one can argue that it represents a feasible and effective way to provide a safe, stable, and supportive home environment for those children who cannot reunify with their parents. As Muslims become more involved with the foster care system, lawyers and social workers will be in a better position to advocate for this concept's inclusion in the child welfare system.

As more Muslim individuals and organizations acquire the authentically Qurʾanic-Prophetic understanding of *kafāla* and *kāfil*, and as more Muslims open their homes and become *kāfil*s, we will grow and develop as a community. In essence, we will return to the practices of the Prophet's time and imitate the first Muslims by stepping up to take care of each other in times of need, sickness, poverty, and vulnerability.

Directive vs. Non-directive Clinical Approaches: Liberation Psychology and Muslim Mental Health

Sarah Mohr, Sabeen Shaiq, and Denise Ziya Berte[*]

Abstract

Liberation psychology (LP) is a psychological framework that emphasizes social justice as a key component of mental health, defined in LP as the ability of human beings to co-exist, live in harmony, and thrive in community. Muslim mental health as a clinical focus continues to develop, and most writing emphasizes the importance of cultural sensitivity in providing effective care for Muslims, which the literature often relates to the collectivistic nature of Muslim-majority societies. The literature, in turn, often uses collectivistic tendencies and research to support 1-on-1 directive approaches.

This paper questions the use of such directive approaches as potentially re-creating a model of hierarchy and dominance that is connected to Muslims' mental health challenges, particularly those of Muslim sub-populations. The authors suggest and discuss several LP-based alternatives, especially the use of group therapy as a more appropriate and culturally responsive model, from both directive and non-directive clinical orientations.

> We propose a scientific process committed to the historical reality of the people based on their own problems and aspirations.
>
> – Ignacio Martín-Baró, SJ, 1994

Keywords: Liberation psychology, LP, psychology, mental health, wellness

In psychology, traditional Western European approaches dating back to Freud (1989), Skinner (1974), and other important thinkers have emphasized a scientific approach that prioritized enabling individuals to function successfully in the status quo of Western societies and labeling them as diseased or disordered if they could not (Duran, 2006; Harrist & Richardson, 2014; Pupavac, 2002). Even when they

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acknowledged their own thinking to be culture-bound (Skinner, 1974), the numerous metaphysical and a priori assumptions embedded in their approaches supported the goal of helping individuals function in a social order that European and North American psychologists traditionally theorized as inevitable and unchangeable (Gillespie, 1987; House, 1999; Marcuse, 1966). However, its non-addressing of sexism, heterosexism, racism, colonialism, and Orientalism, as well as the accompanying unquestioned acceptance of the white, male, heterosexual, Christian normative subject, has been highly problematic for a wide range of thinkers (Bazian, 2018; Duran & Duran, 1995; Fanon, 2004; Martín-Baró, 1994, Moane, 2011; Said, 1979; X, 1990).

This critique has included community psychology, postcolonial psychology, and liberation psychology (LP), among others (Duran & Duran, 1995; Martín-Baró, 1994; Moane, 1999; Watkins & Shulman, 2008). LP and psychologists concerned with connecting psychology to larger issues than individual wellness have theorized that the discipline's aims and intentions must include social and environmental justice (Gifford & Stern, 2011; Riemer & Reich, 2011), which is to be realized through individual and community liberation and transformation (Burton, 2015; Mohr, 2019; Watkins & Shulman, 2008). Thus, LP's goal is societal transformation, not just thriving individuals but establishing a world in which all people can thrive.

So then, is mental health a primary or a secondary question in society? If it is a question of individual functioning, then the greater demands of social organization are more primary. In other words, first life itself and then the quality of life (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 108). However, mental health can also be seen as a primary function of a society that rejects this individualistic model as partial and superstructural (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 109). If our conception of human beings emphasizes social relationships and people as historical beings, then mental health is something else (Kagitçibaşi,1995). Additionally, if people are historical beings, then the self is socially and discursively produced and understanding it requires an analysis of the historically contingent arrangements of power through which the normative subject is produced (Mahmood, 2005, p. 33). As Martín-Baró says,

> If the uniqueness of human beings consists less in their being endowed with life (that is in their organic existence) and more in the kind of life they construct historically, then mental health ceases to be a secondary problem and becomes a fundamental one. It is not a matter of the individual's satisfactory functioning; rather it is a matter of the basic character of human relations, for that is what defines the possibilities for humanization that open up for the members of each society and group. To put it more plainly, mental health is a dimension of the relations between persons and groups more than an individual state, even though this dimension may take root differently in the body of the individuals involved in these relations,

thereby producing a diversity of manifestations (symptoms) and states (syndromes). (p. 109)

As a logical consequence of a vision for societal transformation, many thinkers have negatively critiqued pedagogical (Freire, 2000; Spivak & Barlow, 2004), sociological (Bringel & Maldonado, 2016; Fals-Borda, 1985), and therapeutic and clinical approaches that focus on individual diagnosis and functioning while re-creating oppressive patterns of dominance, submission, and enforced hierarchy (Duran & Duran, 1995; Jun, 2018a; Martín-Baró, 1994; Moane, 1999; Watkins & Shulman, 2008). There is an urgent need for individual- and community-based interventions that recognize how marginalization and trauma impact the larger population and the inherent strength of communities to heal themselves when given the opportunity and support (Schultz et al., 2016) to do so. Additionally, psychology needs to begin addressing the negative environmental impact of social models that encourage dominance and oppression in society (Stanley et al., 2017).

LP emphasizes a more environmental and systems approach, one that begins to conceptualize these issues as a part of an overall psychological framework. Its approach is highly relevant to Muslim communities and individuals, due to their historical struggles with Orientalism, colonialism, and Islamophobia from without and with cross-cultural struggles with patriarchy, racism, homophobia, and classism from within (Mohr, 2019). Muslims are increasingly speaking out about the need for environmental awareness to play a prominent role in their community's life. Incorporating an awareness of environmental justice in a Muslim mental health model naturally fits this global call (Alkaff et al., 2016).

The prevailing collectivism of Muslim-majority culture makes Muslim mental health naturally attuned to an approach that recognizes the importance of the greater social unit as a primary part of individual wellness. Using LP as its theoretical framework, this paper will question the popular wisdom that cultural competence indicates that clinicians working in Muslim mental health should prioritize 1-on-1 directive approaches due to collectivistic tendencies of Muslim-majority cultures. Additionally, community-based interventions from both directive and non-directive perspectives will be discussed as potentially better solutions to incorporate these tendencies into treatment approaches for Muslims, particularly for Muslim populations affiliated with sub-cultures that are outside traditional or mainstream Islamic norms.

Liberation Theology: The Background of LP

Most practitioners trace LP's origin to liberation theology, a Catholic movement based on the belief that the role of God and faith communities is to emphasize liberation from social, political, and economic oppression, as well as the transformational power of inclusive grass-roots spirituality and community-based organization (Brown, 1993). Its spiritual understanding is built on the individuals and

communities' interpretation and conceptualization of the scriptures as a result of group reflection. Worship is not limited to adoration, but involves action designed to create spiritual virtue in the community's life, namely, confronting oppression and injustice as well as providing life-sustaining resources for all of its members with an emphasis on empowering the most marginalized.

There is some debate about liberation theology's exact origin. Most religious scholars consider it a direct result of responses to Vatican II (1962-1965) by Catholic bishops in Latin America and the work of priests in the 1960s who began envisioning the church's work as engagement with the poor (Gutiérrez, 2004; Montero, 2007). This work was theorized as an alternative to the church's unquestioning support of the upper classes and the economic status quo in response to the horrific conditions facing the indigenous populations of Central and South America, as well as the historical tradition of the Roman Catholic Church as the bestower of divine right on the monarchy of Spain (Gutiérrez, 2004). This demand for shifting the theological perspective, along with emphasizing accessible language and praxis, was articulated by Latin American theologians at the Episcopal Councils held in Medellin (Colombia) and Puebla (Mexico) (Montero, 2007). The work of thinkers such as Gustavo Gutiérrez and Leonardo Boff was in direct response to concepts that are explicitly present in Vatican II documents, such as *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* (Gutiérrez, 2004).

A primary focus of liberation theology was the preferential option for the poor [hereinafter the preferential option], or the soteriological action of the church grounding itself in real-life engagement with the poverty, oppression, and suffering of Latin America's masses and the systems that created and maintained their poverty (Gutiérrez, 2004). This preferential option also involved an eschatological vision of transforming history in the here and now, as opposed to the traditional passive and patient waiting for the Messiah to descend from the sky to bring God's will to Earth (Gutiérrez, 2004). The role of sin and evil were expanded to include systems of oppression and injustice on a societal level and not based solely in individual transgressions to be confessed and forgiven (Gutiérrez, 2004).

Additionally, its theology prioritized orthopraxis over orthodoxy and conceptualized the church's work as dynamic engagement with its parishioners, most of whom were victims of oppression and marginalization (Gutiérrez, 2004). In short, it was a theology of change, a revolutionary vision of a transformed, renewed world created by, for, and with the community of believers and a caring and involved God.

Another historical perspective is that liberation theologies arose simultaneously around the world in response to the *weltanschuung* of the 1960s (Rieger, 2017). This theory proposes that these diverse models, including feminist (Ruether, 1972), black (Cone, 2010), Muslim (Dabashi, 2008; Demichelis, 2014; Esack, 1997), deaf (Lewis, 2017), and other liberation theologies were all responses to

the rising consciousness of the 1960s in threads that represent a kind of convergent evolution (Rieger, 2017). While this is certainly possible, South and Central American liberation theology was clearly the predecessor of most of the movements and that all liberation theologies drew on the work of Latin American theologians at some point in their development. The emphasis on social justice, a God who cares about the poor, and the importance of praxis over theory as the essence of piety are universal in all liberation theologies.

The Influence of Ignacio Martín-Baró in Defining LP
This above historical context is relevant to LP's development, specifically because LP developed simultaneously in a variety of geographic localities and communities despite the current trend to give the main credit for the movement to Ignacio Martín-Baró, a Jesuit priest heavily influenced by liberation theology. Thinkers such as Geraldine Moane (1999, 2006, 2010) in Ireland were working with a LP framework prior to the dissemination of his work and trace their roots directly to feminist liberation theologians such as Mary Daly and other radical feminists. Moane (1999) also based her work on post-colonial thinkers such as Franz Fanon (2004), who discussed many of the ideas found in Martín-Baró's work from an independent intellectual tradition primarily disconnected from him. Post-colonial thinkers such as Eduardo Duran (Duran & Duran, 1995) and others who later engaged with his thought were working from the same starting critiques as Martín-Baró in their writings on psychology, but not necessarily from those written by Martín-Baró himself.

With all that acknowledged, Martín-Baró is now credited by most with developing the concept of LP. He drew heavily on Latin American liberation theology because he lived there, was a Jesuit priest, and wrote about its direct influence on his work (Martín-Baró, 1994; Torres-Rivera et al., 2014). Martín-Baró was also influenced by liberation theology's immanent Christology, eschatology, and soteriology, all of which were based on a God of life and justice, in that he conceptualized serving the poor (the preferential option) and the immediate radical transformation of society (orthopraxis over orthodoxy) as primary goals of both religion and psychology (Gaztambide, 2014; Martín-Baró, 1994; Torres-Rivera et al., 2014). All of these tenets are present and clearly discussed in Dr. Farid Esack's *Quran, Liberation, and Pluralism* (1997), in which he discusses liberation theology from an Islamic perspective. He talks about the Quranic commands of justice and the prohibition of *ẓulm* as reflections of an involved and concerned God, the importance of orthopraxis as jihad and struggle being a primary mandate of Islam, and how this is all actualized by engaging with the poor and the Other (Esack, 1997).

To put it simply, Martín-Baró (1994) believed that both the existence of a just world and a new vision of a new human being in a new society required a new praxis and a new epistemology:

> What is needed is the revision, from the bottom-up, of our most basic assumptions in psychological thought…This done, truth will not have to be a simple reflection of data, but can become a task at hand: not an account of what *has been done*, but of what *needs to be done*. (p. 23)

His words turned out to be prophetic, for he fell victim to the very military oppression and imperialism he had fought so hard to dismantle. He was tragically assassinated in 1989 at El Salvador's Jesuit University, where he taught.

A specific set of premises about psychology's goals and methodology are common to LP thinkers. One of the primary critiques is of individualism, which emphasizes the individual and his/her having an ontological existence separate from that of the community. This critique is grounded in the transhistorical and ahistorical subject of Western European psychology (Dykstra, 2014; Martín-Baró,1994) and the universalizing language and framework of its psychological theories. Martín-Baró (1994) critiqued this universalizing tendency with the famous words:

> The prevailing scientism leads us to consider human nature as universal, and to believe therefore, that there are no fundamental differences between, say a student at MIT and a Nicaraguan campesino, between John Smith from Peoria, and Leonor Gonzales from Cuisnhuat, El Salvador. (p. 23)

The supposed universal concept of the self is the result of a view of the human person that presupposes a metaphysics that is specific to the Western European and North American worldview and ontology of the human person (Rothman & Coyle, 2018; Martín-Baró, 1994).

LP also critiques positivism and scientism (Martín-Baró, 1994). Positivism is the scientific standard that states that facts that are untestable and unmeasurable in concrete terms, such as soul and spirit, are neither real nor relevant – an assumption that increased within psychology due to many practitioners' attempt to advance their own thinking and the field in general as a science (Martín-Baró, 1994; Watkins & Shulman, 2008).

Scientism is the attempt to make the study of the person scientific and erase the inclusion of subjective bias. Again, it is derived from materialistic ontological assumptions about the self, an epistemology that reinforces the idea of an ahistorical, transhistorical self, as mentioned above (Martín-Baró, 1994; Watkins & Shulman, 2008). In fact, it is based on a specific epistemic grounded in the metaphysics of the scientific revolution, materialism, and Newtonian physics (Skinner, 1971). This perspective, which includes a focus on the universality of human development, emotion, and reactivity (including modern Behaviorism),

dismisses the unique characteristics and perspectives formed by the diverse experiences of each individual, as well as the structural and functional determinants of marginalized or oppressed peoples' common and collective realities (Borda, 1979).

From an LP perspective, therefore, the preferential option is a commitment to a functional psychology that demands justice for those individuals and communities whose experience is silenced and deprioritized by the traditional assumptions of theology, psychology, and Western European ontologies of the self (Martín-Baró, 1994; Moane, 1999). In response to psychology assuming that societal realities are the necessary results of the universal, biological, and instinctual tendencies of individual human beings (Marcuse, 1966), LP's environmental approach recognizes the impact of systems of power and hierarchy and assumes that individual well-being cannot be achieved in a vacuum. In terms of women, the poor, and colonized people, LP proposes that the Western European psychology's fundamental conceptualization of the self needs to be critiqued and reworked from indigenous perspectives that honor voices that are not Western European, Christian, heterosexual, rich, male, gender normative, or in other ways reflective of privilege and hegemonic discourses (Duran, Firehammer, & Gonzalez, 2008; Martín-Baró, 1994; Moane, 1999).

In response to scientism and positivism, LP questions the idea that psychology can exclude categories of spirit and soul and still remain accurate and relevant. This reconceptualization of the self, which is central to LP, in the context of societal forces is postulated as a praxis of societal transformation based on the interests of the poor, marginalized, and oppressed in terms of achieving justice in the world and moves traditional Western psychology's assumptions away from an orientation based on maintaining the current status quo (Dykstra, 2014; Dykstra & Moane, 2017).

Martín-Baró eloquently critiqued the prevailing notions about how to define mental health and mental illness. When he critiqued individualism, he spoke of how the ideas that conflict and war were assumed to be inevitable presupposed the concepts of us and them, as well as an objectified Other that reinforced all the basic problems facing humanity. In his time, Latin America was at war everywhere you looked. He discussed the idea that the assumptions driving war and conflict were in fact a societal mental illness; proposed that mental health be redefined to include a vision of collective health, one in which co-existence was not only possible but also the basis of a vision for a new society; and argued for a new epistemology and new praxis that reflected these ideas (Montero, 2011).

Conscientization, Paolo Freire, and LP

One thinker who influenced liberation theology and LP was Paolo Freire, whose approach represented for Martín-Baró a possible framework for this new episte-

mology and praxis. Freire (2000) was an educator who critiqued those pedagogical approaches that reinforced oppressive societal systems and constructed an alienated consciousness through education. He proposed that instead of a banking method, according to which teachers deposit information in students and then withdraw it at test time, education should involve a dialogue focused on conscientization or consciousness raising. This idea of fostering the development of consciousness is akin to Islamic models, including that of the Prophet (PBUH) as *murabbī*, a teacher who nurtured his community's development of understanding and insight (Alwani, 2019).

In terms of Martín-Baró's work, Freire's approach was applicable to the therapeutic process, because the therapy of an expert treating a sick individual was replaced by an engagement with individuals that connected their suffering to the larger social picture surrounding them (Tate et al., 2013). Of course dialogue has historically been a central part of psychological treatment, but the concepts that Freire opened up can be applied to the clinician-client relationship so that it becomes more empowering and respectful. For Martín-Baró (1994),

> the horizon of conscientization assumes an important change in the profession's way of conducting its work. It does not entail giving up the technical role the psychologist now performs, but it does involve scrapping theoretical assumptions about adaptation and intervention made from a position of power. (p. 44)

LP goes from theoretical imaginings to practical impact when it manifests in the tangible engagement with the mental wellness of individuals and communities. Connecting such wellness to a theoretical reflection on social justice, environmental justice, and the ontology of the self has to be combined with practical engagement so that it can become a praxis of transformation. This praxis has been focused in a variety of settings, including liberation arts (Simms, 2019), participatory action research (O'Neill, 2018; Payne & Bryant, 2018), and the ongoing work of individuals and community organizations and groups to apply liberatory models and approaches to creating and supporting wellness and challenging privilege and power.

Basically, if we define mental illness as the societal frame of reference that constructs a frame for all human endeavor and relationship based on war and conflict, then individual functioning is a level of intervention that does not address the true mental illness. Mental health needs to be co-created and envisioned collectively so that the actual problems with how people process reality, the basic filters, are re-evaluated and restructured to make possible the true health of a society that is not destroying just individuals, but also families, communities, and the environment. Martín-Baró used Freire's approach of conscientization as a model to envision how psychologists could actualize mental health by challenging the societal mental illnesses that drive war and injustice. He proposed that conscious-

ness raising ought to be central and stated that psychologists need to be creative and innovative in the models they utilize to create solutions and a better world. Freire's approach to education was a natural fit for Martín-Baró and others who have theorized about LP, because the psychologist's role then emphasizes empowerment and consciousness raising toward a more just society, as opposed to conformity with the current status quo.

Transforming psychology into LP involves changing the logic of the Other as an external entity in conflict with the normative subject and demands that the question of being in community be taken seriously for any real liberation to occur (Sands, 2018). These questions look different and more urgent when posed from the position of the colonized Other fighting for liberation because it is a situation of significantly more urgency. Therefore, they have been widely considered and theorized about in the global South, particularly in Africa (Seedat, 1997; Seedat & Lazarus, 2011; Sands, 2018) and Latin America (Montero, 2007), where Freire wrote and worked.

For example, the community psychology program at Palestine's Birzeit University, where dialogue was used to raise awareness of the structural roots of mental health problems, employed the model of using conscientization as a method of community intervention (Makkawi, 2015). Drawing on Freire's model, as well as South American and South African psychological theories, the program was conceptualized as follows:

> The quest for a critical community psychology program in occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip was derived from the assumption that the individual's psychological well-being is to a large extent an outcome of ongoing occupation, oppression, repression, and exploitation. The program therefore aimed to train students to examine how the ongoing occupation, military violence, the creation of the colonialist separation wall, checkpoints, economic embargo, poverty, imprisonment and torture, assassination and killing, school closures, and the systematic destruction of Palestinian community's infrastructure produced a psychosocial dynamic and contextual background affecting Palestinian people's mental health. The program wanted to understand the social determinants of delinquency, child labor, aggression, domestic violence, school violence, substance abuse, and high-risk behaviors. The program, emphasizing critical conscientization, aimed to skill graduates to work with groups and communities within this oppressive colonialist context, and is by and in itself a process of psychological liberation and mental health promotion. (Makkawi, 2015)

The question, then, is what are some of the possibilities for new approaches and new methodologies based on an epistemology for psychology that equates harmony and co-existence on a societal level with mental health? How can LP inform Muslim mental health specifically in creating space for Muslims to exist peaceful-

ly, happily, and sustainably? What would mental health treatment look like for them if interpersonal harmony and co-existence with other Muslims, non-Muslims, and the environment were core principles of mental health?

Muslim Mental Health and Cultural Humility

Due to its emphasis on how society impacts the individual, questioning of embedded Western European assumptions, and focus on social and environmental justice, LP is uniquely suited to be considered within the realm of Muslim mental health and Islamic psychology. Additionally, its emphasis on empowerment through conscientization is well suited to Muslims in many contexts, as they have been silenced and marginalized often as a result of colonialism and Islamophobia. Additionally, LP's primary role of constructing a negative critique of ahistorical and positivist models of the self aligns well with many people working in both realms (Haque et al., 2016; Rothman & Coyle, 2018).

Many thinkers have discussed the need to create an indigenous ontology of the self, one that reflects an Islamic worldview for a truly Islamic psychology to evolve (Badri, 1979). The concept of the Islamization of Knowledge calls into question the acceptance of Western Europe's Enlightenment-era metaphysics, scientific materialism, and/or post-modernism and recognizes that the basic premise of its ahistoricism is problematic (Al-Faruqi, 1986). Muslim mental health and Islamic psychology as they exist in 2020, reflected by the current literature (at least in English) and people working in the field, acknowledge many of the same basic critiques highlighted by LP, as well as adopt many of the latter's solutions. Additionally, as mentioned above, emphasizing the group due to the collectivistic nature of Muslim-majority cultures makes a psychological approach that prioritizes human relationships and societal wellness a natural fit.

There has been a well-documented increase in the utilization of and need for mental health among Muslims living in the West ever since 9/11, culminating with the presidency of Donald Trump. His enactment of the Muslim Ban, along with the Republican right's mainstreaming of Islamophobia in the United States and by conservatives in Europe, has led to more mental health problems, as well as increased research on mental health among Muslims (Moffic et al., 2019).

One result has been more research on religion and spirituality as protective factors for mental well-being in women (Mohr, 2017), Muslim college students (Tanhan & Strack, 2020), the elderly (Hafeez & Rafique, 2013), and many other Muslim sub-groups (Koenig & Shohaib, 2012). Islamophobia's impact is greater when individuals feel that their mental health problems are sources of stigma, a perception that is increased due to the absence of indigenous cultural values and the imposition of dominant cultural models in the context of mental health care (Laird, 2017). A review of the literature's discussions on environmentally triggered mental health needs reveals an overwhelming call for culturally sensitive

approaches to best meet the needs of affected Muslims (Abu-Raiya, 2012; Laird, 2017; Moffic et al., 2019; Padela et al., 2012; Rothman & Coyle, 2018; York Al-Karam, 2018). This is often framed in terms of cultural competency, based on the concept that clinicians who have a better understanding of Islam and Muslim-majority communities and countries will be better equipped to understand and provide appropriate therapeutic services (Hodge & Nadir, 2008; Koenig & Shohaib, 2014). While it is true on one level that this could help clinicians avoid major errors and misconceptions, it is a problematic solution due to the pitfalls of cultural competency, as defined and practiced currently in psychology (Rothman, 2018).

In their groundbreaking work on cultural humility as an alternative to cultural competence, Tervalon and Garcia (1998) analyze the potential mistakes that clinicians can make when they gain some information and deem themselves culturally competent. In their famous example, an African American nurse refused pain medication to a Latino patient because she had been taught that Latinos overexpress their pain. They describe the situation thus:

> To be avoided, however, is the false sense of security in one's training evidenced by the following actual case from our experience: An African American nurse is caring for a middle-aged Latina woman several hours after the patient had undergone surgery. A Latino physician on a consult service approached the bedside and, noting the moaning patient, commented to the nurse that the patient appeared to be in a great deal of postoperative pain. The nurse summarily dismissed his perception, informing him that she took a course in nursing school in cross-cultural medicine and knew that Hispanic patients overexpress the pain they are feeling. The Latino physician had a difficult time influencing the perspective of this nurse, who focused on her self-proclaimed cultural expertise. (pp. 118-119)

In any given situation, when clinicians focus on their self-perceived cultural expertise, commonly as an outsider but also as an insider, there is a danger of assuming that one has a specific insight, based on the client's culture, that in actuality is totally inaccurate (Rothman, 2018). After all, there are as many worldviews, family cultures, and intercultural differences as there are people.

This idea that the efficacy of some current cultural competency training may be imperfect does not mean that the common wisdom of advising non-Muslim mental health professionals working with Muslims to educate themselves about Islam is wrong (Ahmed & Amer, 2012). Rather, increasing one's awareness of Islam can help a practitioner in this regard, as long as the limits of such generalized information is contextualized with the awareness that treating the world's nearly 2 billion Muslims as a stereotyped entity may be ineffective and problematic (Al-Krenawi et al., 2009; Mohr, 2017; Rothman, 2018). At a minimum, non-

Muslim clinicians and professionals should acknowledge and place the larger sociopolitical culture of Islamophobia in its proper context and understand how it, both consciously and unconsciously, affects and biases their relationship with Muslim clients (Ahmed & Amer, 2012).

Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998) propose that self-reflection and life-long learning are the essential elements of cultural humility. They state that life-long learning about cultures is an essential component of a mental health providers' continuing education, which needs to be balanced with ongoing self-reflection and self-exploration so they can be flexible and humble enough *to say that they do not know when they truly do not know* (p. 119). Self-reflection includes not only the provider's professional knowledge about the other culture, but also a keen awareness of one's own underlying cultural beliefs, biases, and assumptions. Biases may result in erroneous judgments and misconceptualizations that will interfere with his or her efficacy as well as render the essential tasks of creating trust and rapport impossible.

Directive Approaches, Cultural Humility, and Collectivistic Culture
One of the biases based on the popular wisdom and the culturally competent approach to Muslim mental health is related to directive approaches. In reference to Muslim mental health and Islamic psychology there is popular wisdom, no doubt based in knowledge of specific cultural traditions, that Muslim-majority cultures are generally far more collectivistic than Western European cultures (Kesharvarzi & Haque, 2013; Kesharavzi & Khan, 2018). Collective societies evaluate a particular act or course of action at the family or community level, meaning that its value and success or failure is determined by its impact on the community's greater good. This emphasis, as well as surveys of Muslims engaged in mental health care, have suggested that directive approaches in mental health are methodologically congruent with the collectivist tendency in many Muslim-majority communities.

Studies have also reflected that many Muslims state that they are more comfortable with directive approaches (Kesharvarzi & Haque, 2013: Mir et al., 2015). However, even within this popular wisdom the literature acknowledges that depending on directive interventions must be tempered with awareness of the therapeutic process' importance of self-exploration and self-awareness (Kesharvarzi & Haque, 2013).

Directive approaches describe a set of theories and methodologies in psychological intervention that were traditionally based on a medical model according to which human development and behavior is assumed to be universal, unchanged by environment, and best managed by an external expert who is hierarchically above the client. While such approaches are wide in scope and include Psychodynamic, Behavioral and Medical models, according to the critiques of

many de-colonial and LP theorists (Moane, 1997) their core beliefs are generally similar in that they tend to emphasize the provider's agency in treating the clients and patients' problems and pathologies.

Directive approaches have major problems, among them a tendency for clinicians and medical health providers to use a directive or paternalistic style with older and less educated clients (Smith et al., 2017), whether or not it is a fair and accurate choice in intervention. Less educated clients may assume that they prefer a directive approach simply because they have not been given the chance to participate and co-create their own healing process. As the logical expansion of a Muslim society's collectivistic nature remains undeveloped, it would make sense to propose that the identified target of change in such societies or groups who have suffered a trauma or oppressive system together should be the community, as opposed to the individual. This would involve a focus on long-ignored community-based interventions, which have been found to have positive multi-level outcomes (O'Niell, 2018; Smith et al., 2017).

Additionally, these collectivist tendencies may be expressed differently across the extremely diverse global Muslim community. Assuming that specific cultures lie on a spectrum between individualistic and collectivistic does not mean that all the individuals within a given population rigidly follow these prescribed social norms. In such marginalized communities as the differently abled, women, youth, and LGBTQ+ (a group increasingly accepted by mainstream Muslims at least in the United States) (Aslan & Minhaj, 2015; Bayyah et al., 2016; Mahomed & Esack, 2017), the tendency to feel loyal to multiple in-group affiliations may create a higher tendency to use the therapeutic context for self-exploration, for the ability to conform to norms may be challenged (Triandis, 1989).

Individual Muslims may be more or less oriented toward collectivistic values, given certain sub-group affiliations, despite their collectivist cultural tendencies. This may create conflicts with directive approaches. In terms of LP, these approaches run the risk of reinforcing power structures that prevent the development of true mental health by denying marginalized groups the ability to be in charge of meaning-making and agency in the therapeutic context (Oliver, 2004). If the goal of mental health is to enable the individual to function successfully within the societal status quo, then perhaps the directive approach would be perfect. But if the goal is humanizing relationships and developing models of co-existence for all people, then this thought needs to be explored further.

There is an obvious danger of culturally competent mental health professionals assuming that directive approaches will resonate with Muslims without considering either their individual needs or how psychology should evolve in collective communities, many members of which have had no previous experience with its individualistic perspectives and goal of personal well-being outside the context of a societal unit (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Directive approaches

also might reinforce hierarchy and models of dominance and submission (Moane, 1997), as well as place the definition of disease and wellness inside an individual but outside the scope of the community's discourse.

Although there are possibilities for directive approaches, a real danger is that they could recreate the dynamics of oppression in the clinical environment in a way that mirrors and supports various power differentials, including gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, identity, and so on (Jun 2018b; York Al-Karam, 2018). These approaches are increasingly dangerous for marginalized, silenced, or socially erased people, such as women (Sarkar, 2001) and LGBTQ+ individuals (Reading & Rubin, 2011), due to the danger of clients feeling blamed or mistrustful of authority (Reading & Rubin, 2011). However, potentially group-based directive models might be able to incorporate some of group therapy's effective components, such as group cohesiveness (Marmarosh et al., 2005; Yalom & Lleszcz, 2005), more easily with Muslims due to their collective cultural tendencies.

These definitions and narratives can be limiting and close down possibilities, including that of client-led directive approaches. Directive approaches could potentially still allow space for the client to be an expert on his/her own life and use his/her intellect and life experiences while receiving directive guidance. Community-based interventions in the American Muslim context have often come from imams at the *mimbar*, trusted expert speakers at conferences, community gatherings, barbershops, kitchens, front porches, *halaqa*s, and *iftar*s. In addition, significant work has been undertaken to raise the awareness and skills of Muslim faith leaders around issues of mental health, as well as a growing awareness of the imam's importance as the first-line responder to the community's mental health needs (Abbasi, 2016). Potentially, this could be leveraged by groups being co-led by mental health professionals and religious leaders. Information can be disseminated in a directive approach to the collective while still leaving room for the individual.

In Islam, the community (*umma*) is considered one body. Researchers have suggested that less individualistic models aimed at the community are needed in places like Palestine (Makkawi, 2015; Shawahin & Çiftçi, 2012). When one part of the *umma* hurts, all of its other parts hurt as well. This model of interconnectedness could enable talking about illness and ills through the lens of collective responsibility without shame and stigma for those struggling with mental illness, addiction, or trauma. Community connectedness has been an effective treatment for trauma through group work a Latino and American Indian/Alaska Native communities (Schultz et al., 2016), and has tremendous potential as an intervention for Muslim communities.

If directive approaches are suited to the collectivistic nature of Muslim-majority communities, developing and implementing models focused on group healing on the community level, collective healing, and wellness should be em-

phasized. Group approaches have proven effective for female survivors of sexual abuse, and group models have been reported to reduce the experience of stigma, isolation, and shame in this population (Sayın et al., 2013). Group approaches have also proven effective for female survivors of incest due to reduced isolation and shame (Margotta & Asner, 1999). Interpersonal learning as a result of group therapy has effectively enhanced self-esteem for women recovering from eating disorders (Gallagher et al., 2014).

Group approaches have been shown to help LGBTQ+ asylum seekers with trauma, stigma, shame, and low self-esteem (Reading & Rubin, 2011), as well as to be effective for Muslim women recovering from sexual trauma in Turkey (Welkin et al., 2015). Stigma is a consistent challenge due to Islamophobia (Kunst, 2012; Samari, 2016), and mental health challenges make this more pronounced (Laird, 2017). Thus, using a group approach that reduces stigma by group dynamics makes a tremendous amount of sense.

Part of what could potentially make group approaches the most effective approach to a Muslim community would be for the group's facilitator to identify as part of the group (Mir et al., 2015: Walpole et al., 2013). Client-counselor matching has not been conclusively shown to improve outcomes in all cases (Walpole et al., 2013); however, some research does suggest that it is has a positive effect on group therapy (Fiorentine & Hillhouse, 1999; SAMSHA, 2005; SAMSHA, 2014). Especially with recent immigrants, research indicates that cultural matching is particularly important (SAMSHA, 2005). In addition, a co-facilitator who identifies more closely with the group's members can provide support to the more clinically trained facilitator if the primary facilitator does not understand the specific population's problems and strengths and can serve as a role model to assist the clinician (SAMSHA, 2005). Group safety and trust is further enhanced when there is a common understanding or shared experience (Rotgers et al., 2006). Research has shown that when a facilitator who vulnerably shares helps model a deeper level of healing in a group setting and can contribute to the development of identification, universalism, and the instillation of hope (Yalom & Lleszcz, 2005).

The idea that group models should be the focus for Muslims harmonizes with an LP approach because even in a directive group therapy model, dialogue and the consciousness raising model share power and emphasize agency within society. What if the directive model were implemented in a model that facilitated healing through dialogical engagement with mental health and wellness? This modality would honor both the community and the individual process, including making Muslim community spaces like mosques more welcoming (Bagby, 2017). The idea that a qualified community member could facilitate conversation through group dialogue and consciousness raising would be an LP approach rooted in Muslim community models and culture. This could be combined with the best

practices approaches for group interventions and those factors found to enhance the efficacy of group psycho-therapy (Yalom & Lleszcz, 2005), as well as culturally sensitive models that incorporate religiously relevant models and information, similar to other spiritually modified interventions based on the protective effects of spiritually integrated approaches (York Al-Karam, 2018; Zidan et al., 2017).

Non-directive Approaches and LP
The concepts of conscientization and consciousness raising in LP focus further on using the therapeutic process to dismantle oppression when applied in a non-directive model. Non-directive psychological theories and methodologies are frequently described as client-based, for these interventions are assumed to be strength-based, client-led, and based on the unique interplay between the individual and his/her environment. None of this has to always be pitted against the family of origin and culture. Taking into account the effects of colonization, racism, and other forms of oppression is important, for doing so enables providers to acknowledge them in the shaping of families and intergenerational trauma.

Unquestioned assumptions about hierarchy can have a negative effect on therapeutic outcomes, and self-reflection is an important part of the clinician's role in treating populations effectively from a multi-cultural perspective that takes the importance of cultural humility seriously (Jun, 2018a). When viewing the change process through the lens of LP, the mental health professional's role shifts away from that of an expert on etiology and healing to that of a process expert (Torres-Rivera et al., 2013).

The concept of liberation theology relates to this approach. Assuming that God is a god of mercy and justice, that the oppressed and marginalized are a priority of religious action and life, and that our actions in this world toward justice and against *ẓulm* are religious mandates is central to a Muslim mental health approach. Helping these people attain self-actualization is a priority and a religious duty (Esack, 1997), as well as a duty for Muslim mental health clinicians. Obviously, the elision of liberal progressive agendas within Muslim mental health approaches can potentially reflect an epistemic of post-modern relativism, due to its fundamentalist locating of freedom in unlimited individual choice that is, in turn, deeply rooted in the exact logic of power relations that LP questions, namely, the unquestioned normative frame of reference of the Western European epistemological tradition (Mahmood, 2005).

However, non-directive approaches potentially represent an opening to ways of understanding agency based on the exploration inherent in conscientization. Such approaches acknowledge, at the level of process, that reworking these power relations requires questioning the ability of any particular psychologist's training to prepare the mental groundwork for creative change that operates outside the presupposed ontologies of Western European psychology. The concept

that help can actually be doled out like supplies from a food pantry needs to be overcome. As Freire (2000) states,

> False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the rejects of life, to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands, whether of individuals or entire people's, need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work, and working, transform the world. (p. 45)

What this liberation would be in actuality remains to be created, for at this point in time we cannot say what it would look like, how it would function, or how these transformed and humanized relations would be actualized.

Freire (2000) described the key elements of conscientization, and they are eminently applicable to a model of group intervention for mental health. His ideas of using generative themes could be a starting place for discussion groups. Additionally, how he juxtaposes the four-part processes of oppression versus liberation relates to developing conscientization-based mental health models. He describes oppression as being based on conquest, divide and rule, manipulation, and cultural invasion, whereas dialogical action is based on cooperation, unity, organization, and cultural synthesis. These differing frameworks also could form the basis of models of therapeutic interaction and for formulating group approaches that utilize a non-directive and liberatory dialogical model.

Conclusion: Complementary not Contradictory, Harmony not Conflict
This paper sought to contribute to exploring the directive/non-directive dichotomy in Muslim mental health, particularly in reference to LP's implications for the conversation, and specifically conscientization. One cannot take dogmatic stances on the issues, for one must remain open to the nuances and variations of the ideas being discussed, as well the wide range of possibilities as to how different approaches might incorporate both reflection and engagement in a praxis of psychology that supports social justice and individual and community wellness.

All of these ideas, as well as the greater realities of global philosophical thought, exist on a spectrum and represent variations in perspective that, while often portrayed as being in opposition, are in fact possible to harmonize and integrate. It is not a question of liberation psychology versus behaviorism, Islamic psychology versus Western European psychology, and ultimately Islam versus the West. There is a long history of Muslim scholars believing that European law and living according to the Sharia were compatible (Frykholm, 2015) and that Islamic psychology and Western psychology in many ways often harmonize and can inform each other. Islam, and thus Islamic psychology, is naturally a component of globalization and not necessarily in conflict with secularism as such (Yom, 2002).

While it does not immediately solve every conflict for Muslim mental health practitioners, many are theorizing an alternative frame of reference beyond

the oppositional-conflict model of Islam versus post-modernity as an inevitable reality of our time. The medical model's failure to address the spirit is one of the critiques of LP, the critique of scientism and positivism. Another view, that of mysticism, is a holistic and harmonious view that sees the materialist reality as a layer within a greater reality of Being. As Wilber (1998) states in his *The Marriage of Sense and Soul*, all the layers of mind and elements are reflections of the Great Nest of Being, which he contends has three levels: the gross level (matter and body), the subtle level (mind and soul), and the causal level (spirit) (p. 10). He freely criticizes the global North's scientific materialism that has reduced the finer and subtler levels of consciousness to the gross layer of matter.

This critique has been widely accepted and addressed by including spirituality in psychology in a nearly endless variety of iterations, including making assessments of the bio-psycho-social-spiritual and of course the American Psychological Association's (APA) Institution of Department 36 in 1976. Martín-Baró (1994) described this as the conflict between rat psychology and psychology with a soul.

Basically, now in 2020 some are proposing a new version of the same long-term problem within the medical establishment. The concept that the Islamic worldview conflicts with psychological ethics is a misunderstanding of reality in the sense that the APA's ethics were originally grounded in gross levels of matter and do not conflict with the subtler and finer layers of Being. There is a deep harmony between the universal ethical principles found in the APA's code of ethics and Islam. Martín-Baró (1994) discusses the problem of false dilemmas and talks about how juxtaposing worldviews often leads to dismissing possibilities and options instead of expanding understanding and insight.

Treating Muslims who disagree with traditional Islamic norms relates to including an Islamic perspective in LP and, specifically in this paper, to doing mental health work with cross-cultural awareness. Martín-Baró (1994) discussed how conflict becomes natural in society in reference to the polarizing effects of war, war as a prevailing culture and the displacement of groups towards opposite extremes. (p. 112). He states:

> ...polarization exacerbates differing social interests and in the end, implicates the whole scope of existence...Thus, the basis for daily interaction disappears. No frame of reference can be taken for granted as valid for everyone; values no longer have any collective validity, and even the possibility of appealing to common sense is lost, because the assumptions of coexistence themselves are being put on trial. (p. 113)

The idea that Muslim mental health professionals cannot work responsibly with LGBTQ+ clients and follow the APA code of ethics, or with feminists or other Muslim sub-populations who follow less traditional norms, is based on an idea that Islam and secularism are necessarily in conflict (Elzamzamy & Keshavarzi,

2019). In the therapeutic setting, instead of rejecting the ethics of the APA or the National Association of Social Workers, simply remaining clear about the implications of mental health work for Muslims in terms of the afterlife, in reference to the lifespan as understood by Islam, would refocus this debate more constructively (Rothman, 2018).

In terms of ethical approaches that prioritize the community's health, thinking in terms of conflict, war, and opposition is problematic for many reasons, one being the frame of reference that sees war as the basic truth of human experience. There is another option. Finding ways to foster collective mental health makes tremendous sense as a Muslim mental health directive, given the beautiful emphasis that traditional Muslim-majority societies have placed on the group. As Martín-Baró (1994) said,

> …we must work hard to find theoretical models and methods of intervention that allow us, as a community and as individuals, to break with the culture of our vitiated social relations and put other, more humanizing, relationships in their place. (p. 120)

He goes on to say:

> If the foundation for people's mental health lies in the existence of humanizing relationships, of collective ties within which and through which the personal humanity of each individual is acknowledged and in which no one's reality is denied, then the building of a new society, or at least a better and more just society, is not only an economic and political problem; it is also essentially a mental health problem. (p. 120)

The chapter's concluding words are, "The challenge is to construct a new person in a new society" (p. 121). Franz Fanon concludes his *Wretched of the Earth* with a similar call:

> But what we want is to walk in the company of man, every man, night and day, for all times...The Third World must start over a new history of man which takes account of not only the occasional prodigious theses maintained by Europe but also its crimes, the most heinous of which have been committed at the very heart of man, the pathological dismembering of his functions and the erosion of his unity, and in the context of community, the fracture, the stratification, and the bloody tensions fed by class and finally on the immense scale of humanity, the racial hatred, slavery, exploitation, and above all the bloodless genocide whereby one and a half billion men have been written off...if we want humanity to take one step forward, if we want to take it to another level than the one where Europe has placed it, we must innovate, we must be pioneers. For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must make a new start, develop a new way of thinking, and endeavor to create a new man. (pp. 238-239)

For psychologists, this means being willing to question conventional methods and theories. To go a step further, this means that clinicians must engage in self-reflection. If the prevailing mindset is one that views conflict as a natural and necessary state seeps, as it inevitably will, into all of a society's core belief systems, and if clinicians do not notice or question its influence, clinical approaches will be unable to move individuals and society beyond it. Thus, as Fanon says, "Fighting for the freedom of one's people is not the only necessity. As long as the fight goes on you must re-enlighten not only the people but also, and above all, yourself on the full measure of man" (p. 219).

There are many ways that research and practice can develop new models for how this can happen. Focus groups based on participatory action research that discuss empowerment and what people think mental health would even look like are a possibility. Community think tanks could bring together community members to discuss what a new society with a sustainable future would look like and how mental health clinicians can help bring it into reality. Of course, this research suggests as well that Muslims' mental health would benefit from group therapeutic approaches and that the multiple options for what this could look like need to be explored.

Martín-Baró asked what happens when psychology starts from the experience of the masses, of the multitude. The task implies both respecting people's autonomy of thinking and action, as well as challenging them to reveal their humanity as the ultimate act of self-liberation (Rahman, 2004). Research needs to continue developing models for bringing these visions to the academic and professional worlds of psychology from the roots of society, models that really elevate the entire work of psychology – all the way from providing band-aid solutions to unsolvable dilemmas to a key that opens doors to new ways of being and a new society. The ongoing self-reflection and commitment to learning arising from an attitude of humility, harmony, and co-existence will no doubt be crucial to finding new options (Rahman, 2008; Jun, 2018a). The commitment to being pioneers of new ways of thinking, not thinking in terms of conflict but working toward solutions that allow Muslims to live their religion in a spirit of unity with each other and the Other, means realizing that individual wellness requires a commitment to social justice and working for a praxis of to make this a reality for all.

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Standing in the Chaos: Cross-cultural Competency in Curriculum Materials

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Abstract

Many factors influence the success of an educational program. The curriculum, represented in the what, how, and who of instruction, is a critical component of such an achievement. When learning materials and teachers represent a "mainstream" point of view, the educational achievement of minority-identity students can be affected negatively (Horton & Freire, 1990). For students of non-majority communities (whether ethnic, linguistic, religious, tribal, or any other distinguishing identities), the cross-cultural competency of educators has become an important indicator of success for the educational institution that seeks to serve all of its students (Wolff & Booth, 2017).

Keywords: Cross-cultural competency, curriculum, textbooks, *tawhid*, Nana Asma'u

Muslim Students and Mainstream Curriculum

Muslim students are especially vulnerable to a lack of cultural competency in educational institutions. Mainstream curriculum typically ignores indigenous knowledge (Prakash & Estava, 2008) and worldviews (Au, 2012). Globally, when Muslim-majority countries import mainstream curricula from organizations and geographic locations where they are not the majority audience (and when private Muslim schools in Muslim-minority countries use the same), students are at risk of internalizing stereotypes and Islamophobia even as they learn in an inclusive environment. I have worked as a consultant to some of these institutions, and while Muslim nation-states may order books that are censored because of some content (political and sometimes moral), the materials still remain void of cultural competency in terms of their relationship to Muslim audiences.

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The "Trojan Horse" of Learning Materials

Barend Viaardingerbroek (2015) has criticized education as a human right as a social engineering project disguised as a universal necessity. He does not deny the global need for learning, but rather likens the movement and the labeling of education as a "human right" to a Trojan Horse. In this vein, Prakash and Esteva (2008) point out that "This 'evolution' has transmogrified peoples and cultures so profoundly that previous virtues are now reduced to vices, and traditional vices have been elevated to virtues" (p. 22). This was indeed my assessment while serving as a consultant and editor of numerous curricular materials during the years 2008–2014.

In 2014, for example, the Ministry of Education of a Middle Eastern country required that their English-language books be edited for cultural sensitivity and competency. The Western-based publishing company complied by adding Arab and Muslim names and faces to the textbooks. The new exercises seemed to be diversified on the surface, because they now included Arab and Muslim men and women. Nevertheless, the text's exercises still contained orientalist and Islamophobic stereotypes and tropes. For example, when teaching about time, the students could choose answers to match the clock face, wherein answer "a" was a Muslim-Arab woman who slept until 1:00 pm, while answer "b" was a white European man who got up bright and early at 7:00 am – a clear example of embedding old orientalist and negative claims about non-Western people of color.

On another occasion, I was involved with an organization hired to help write the educational standards for an Arab-majority Muslim country. I was surprised to find that the person hired to set the standards for Arabic language learning *did not speak a single word* of Arabic. Upon inquiry, I was told that speaking Arabic was not important and that her experience in setting standards for English was sufficient. To assert that linguistic variance makes absolutely no difference in educational standard setting is a very shocking claim of cultural superiority. The project went forward, and nothing of nuance regarding the Arabic language was written into the nationwide learning standards.

Muslim students are taught what others think of them under the guise of normalized curriculum materials and are almost never exposed to what they think of themselves. They are told that they are oppressed, that sexism is rampant, and that terrorism and violence are natural to their very selves. Under these circumstances, they are at risk of poor academic achievement and internalized Islamophobia (Au, 2012). In Minneapolis public schools, for example, the novel *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2010/2015) is commonly taught at the middle school level. The back cover touts it as "…a graphic geopolitical brief that's also a girl-power parable," but the girl power is rooted in Western and White understandings of power. In order to contribute to the family, she must dress as a boy and become the "breadwinner."

The book specifically describes traditional female Afghani dress (the burqa) as inconvenient and uncomfortable. She asks her father, "How do women in

burqas manage to walk along the streets?" to which her father replies, "They fall down a lot" (Ellis, 2010/2015, p. 23). Similar messages are found in English literature canon books such as *Frankenstein* (Imady, 2015), *Jane Eyre*, and *Anne of Green Gables*. The Trojan Horse of education has pulled Muslim students around the world inside of it and taught them about themselves from the perspective of the colonialist peoples who had been their oppressors.

The question of cultural relevance in curriculum thus becomes a crisis of identity, one that Muslim educators are uniquely qualified to address.

The Muslim Foundations of Cultural Competency

Muslim attitudes toward an "other" were addressed in the first days of the developing Muslim society. Revelation occurred in a highly individualistic society made up of warring tribes, nomadic cultures, some agricultural areas, and a trading culture that brought in goods from surrounding lands and peoples. When the long years of war subsided and Madina became the center of the new Islamic leadership, numerous tribes and peoples came to learn about the new religion that the Quraysh had embraced (al-Zayid, 2018, vol. 1).

In the early days, while the Prophet (s) was still in Makka, he is recorded to have interacted with many diverse peoples. Makka was visited by tribes from all over the Arabian Peninsula, and the Prophet interacted with all of them for educational purposes. Sensitive to each one's cultural context, he performed miracles for the Bani Amir b. Sa'sa'a, who were known to dabble in sorcery (al-Zayid, 2018, p. 271); understood political ties with the Banī Shayban, who had an agreement with Persia (p. 272); and sought out the Banī Muharib's eldest man, who was 120 years old according to early sources (p. 272). In each of these stories, we see the Prophet make a conscious effort to understand the peoples he was approaching for dialogue and teaching. We see no erasure of their cultural context, but rather an awareness of it and the ability to interact with it.

Later, when war abated in the ninth year after hijra, the Prophet (s) met people of many different backgrounds and cultural needs. He taught them and demonstrated cultural competence even though, by this point, he was in the position of the cultural majority and the dominating political power. When the Bani Tamīm arrived in Madina, they offended the Companions by shouting to the Prophet (s), "Come out to us, Muhammad!" (al-Zayid, 2018, vol. 2, p. 338) and then held him (s) back from the prayer to speak about their issues. The Prophet teaches us about cultural competence – his response is neither denigrating nor cold, but rather engaging and accepting. After praying, he sat in the masjid and the tribe's poet spoke. The Prophet then called his poets to respond, and both groups engaged in a poetry competition. This method – a poetry slam in modern terms – was useful in this case because this tribe valued poets, poetry, and the skill of reciting it.

For the people of Murra, however, the Prophet did not engage in a rhetorical showdown. Instead, he inquired about their land, the persistent drought, and their needs. He then prayed for them, gave them gifts of money, and showed them compassion – all while teaching them what they had come to learn (pp. 403, 404).

The Hamdān, a tribe hailing from Yemen, received a letter from Prophet Muhammad (s). A people of appearance, they wore their fancy tailored and embroidered clothes while visiting him. And he complimented them on their goodness, saying, "How wonderful are the people of Hamdan, how quickly do they achieve victory, and how patient they are with hard work, and from them are the pillars of Islam" (pp. 405, 406).

If cultural competency is the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures, then we see this clearly in the above examples. But was this part of his personality or part of the religion he taught?

Tawḥīd and Cultural Competence

The foundational attitude of inclusion is found in the theological roots of *tawḥīd*. In her *Wholeness and Holiness in Education: An Islamic Perspective*, Zahra al Zeena (2001) describes applying this Islamic concept to teaching and learning in the following terms, "The Islamic paradigm as a holistic, integrated paradigm is divine, spiritual, religious, eternal, constant, absolute and ideal. On the other hand, it is human, material, rational, temporary, mutable, and relative. These two opposites are intimately interwoven by *tawḥīd*" (p. xxvii). She calls this the "dialectics of *tawḥīd*" and shows throughout her book how it can be applied to knowledge production and teaching/learning.

We see the Prophet's practice in terms of understanding, communicating, and interacting with others as a demonstration of this *tawḥīd* because he (s) interacts with the messy human realities of those he meets from his (s) place of spiritual and religious grounding. He sees them clearly and reaches them at their own level, but with a *tawḥīdī* understanding and approach that opens the door for education. Cultural competence, when pursued under the banner of *tawḥīd*, can interact with the secular and the sacred as well as bring gentleness and respect to that interaction.

Introducing this concept into teaching and learning – and the cultural competency necessary for both activities – implies reducing fragmentation and including the sacred and the secular. Curriculum materials that normalize xenophobia should not exist in a *tawḥīd*-based system.

Dissipative Structures, Complexity Theory, and Solving the Problem of Cultural Incompetence

Ilya Prigogine won a Nobel Prize in 1977 for his description of dissipative structures. In simple terms, he discovered that there were physical and chemical

systems far removed from equilibrium but nonetheless apparently demonstrated order within what was originally defined as chaos and seemed to be self-organizing (Capra, 2002). This was a breakthrough in modern science, because it seemed to flatten space and time.

In the realm of social thinking, dissipative structures, including education, help us understand seeming chaos as a self-organizing problem (Capra, 2002). For example, as stakeholders criticize modern educational systems regarding cultural competency, one may ask if these systems, developed to raise a citizenry for the industrial era, can address the educational needs of today.

According to chaos theory, transformation will only occur insofar as the original "DNA," or project structure, remains intact. Hence, the question of cultural competency becomes critical. As stakeholders add energy to the structure, which in this case is a mainstream educational system, the system will begin to transform itself to accommodate that transformation, whether the stakeholders are prepared or not. If dialectic *tawḥīd* were to contribute to cultural competency in education, the energy applied to the dissipative structure (the educational system) would form itself into a more culturally competent structure. In fact, the systems would begin to undergo exactly the same process regardless of the stakeholders' readiness or lack thereof (Capra, 2002).

Chaos (or complexity) theory includes autopoiesis, the understanding that living systems can create and renew themselves and that this process is both the norm and the catalyst for diversity and uniqueness (Capra, 2002). Further, instead of seeing life as represented in one single cell, it sees life as a network of connected pieces. In other words, we understand it as an interwoven whole –*tawḥīd*, or the unity of living things. Unity, as readily demonstrated by connected things and autopoiesis of biological matter, helps us understand the connectedness of all the pieces of social life, and especially as manifested in educational systems. The concept of a dissipative structure moves our focus away from a quest for stability and forces us to see that open systems maintain themselves with energy and change. Instability is not something "foreign," but rather the natural norm of existence (Capra, 2002).

This thinking is in line with Al Zeera's definition of dialectical *tawḥīd* and contributes much to the idea of cultural competence in education. Recognizing education as a dissipative structure comprising autopoietic factors enables us to embrace change rooted in tradition (as biological change remains rooted in DNA) and to uplift those values of the communities that are part and parcel of the education that is no longer happening *to* them, but rather *with* them.

The Curricular Standpoint Theory

Building on the dialectics of *tawḥīd*, especially as described while using complexity theory, curricular standpoint theory reminds us to recognize the world-

view of the student audience. So, while we expect transformation, we recognize that change must come from a familiar point.

Curricular standpoint theory points out that "…the issues of peoples and communities that are either regularly pushed to the margins of school knowledge, actively misconstrued within the curriculum or left out of the curriculum completely" (Au, 2012, p. 67) are important for learning. As such, Muslim students and other non-majority identities face greater challenges than mainstream populations do when interacting with their curricular materials. This theory helps us focus on what and how Muslim students are learning. The materials from which they are learning must not erase, misstate, or belittle Muslim culture and ontology. "Because being and knowing are dynamically intertwined within the dialectical relationship between consciousness and our environment...the content of the curriculum should relate to students' contexts, experiences, identities and material realities if it is to be effective" (Au, 2012, p. 67).

Nana Asma'u's Pedagogy as an Example of both
Tawḥīd and Standpoint Theory

Twelve hundred years after the Prophet's death and Islam had spread with his (s) example of openness and inclusion in teaching, the West African female scholar Nana Asma'u (1793–1864) developed a system of education that was inclusive of linguistic, geographic, and ethnic differences. Her self-designed intricate system of education, which addressed students of varying linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, featured a large teaching staff that she trained, as well as her own written curriculum. She was responsible for educating women over a thousand-mile region (Mack & Boyd, 2000).

Concerning herself with their religious knowledge, language, leadership skills, and character, she wrote, "The women students and their children are well-known for their good works" (Boyd & Mack, 1997, p. 105). We see in her work evidence that social structures will self-organize along the lines of the energy applied to their transformation, the dialectic of *tawḥīd*, and the positive effects of a curriculum that "sees" who it is teaching (standpoint theory). Her work remains an excellent example of how we might create a method of inclusion and cultural competence for students across the globe today.

Who was Nana Asma'u?

Nana Asma'u's life was sandwiched between the French Revolution, which concluded in the year of her birth, and the American Civil War, which ended the year of her death. She lived during the Sokoto Caliphate, which spanned the area near Lake Chad in the east and Middle Niger in the west. Sokoto succumbed to colonial rule only in 1903.

Asma'u was born in 1793, married in 1807, and had her first child in 1813. She wrote her first known long work of prose poetry six years later. In 1817 she lost her father, Usman dan Fodio, whom she admired and held up as a spiritual example for others for the rest of her life. Her father was lovingly called *Shehu*, a rendition of the Arabic term "Sheikh," in reference to his great scholarship and spiritual acumen. Her beloved brother and colleague died in 1837, and her husband, who was her confidant and dear friend, passed away in 1849 (Boyd, 1989).

The *Shehu* ensured that both his daughters and sons were educated. All of them attended classes in the mornings and late afternoons. They learned to read and memorized the Quran's verses in between household chores and worship. Asma'u and her twin brother Hassan were the *Shehu*'s twenty-second and twenty-third children, and yet they were raised with gentle fatherly attention and advice (Boyd, 1989). It is said that Asma'u inherited her father's *karāma*, or personal miraculous blessings.

By the time she was married at fifteen, she had already garnered her spiritual respect to such a degree that her father came to her when his general (Bello, her older brother and later inheritor of the caliphate) was locked in a battle. He said to his daughter, "You see how Bello is struggling at Alkalawa" (Boyd, 1989). at which Asma'u took up a burning branch and, pointing it in the direction of the battle, said, "Burn Alkalawa" (Boyd, 1989). She was later told that Bello had won the battle because the battlefield had burned. This story became part of Sokoto's oral history and contributed to Asma'u's honor among them.

Source material

Nana Asma'u was unknown outside of Africa for over a century. But in 1984, after years of research into her life, Jean Boyd and Beverly Mack organized, translated, and published all of her known works. At that time computers were cumbersome and software clunky, so they experienced great difficulty organizing the works in their various languages and the English translations (Mack, 1998). It is, therefore, rather difficult to wade through.

They numbered the translations of each piece, but not the originals. The original writings are separated by language, and the African languages have been taken out of their original Arabic script and put into Latin script because that is how they are written today. The Arabic works are placed on pages left to right, making it difficult to remember which way to turn the page. This is especially confusing because the pages are not numbered. Each Arabic page is a photograph of the original, however, and as such includes a traditional clue at the bottom indicating the word that begins the next page. At least one page is misplaced, however, and that adds to the confusion. It is, nonetheless, an amazing collection.

The body of work had been stored in a goatskin bag in the home of Waziri Junaidu, one of Nana Asma'u's descendants. The poems were dated, which helped

her biographers piece together the events of her life. Boyd extended her research beyond the manuscripts by traveling to villages to meet and talk with elderly female descendants of Nana Asma'u's students and teachers. Other books followed, all of which attempted to write her biography and the story of her transformative effect on her society. Here, I use Boyd and Mack's original research and their translations of Asma'u's work to showcase her ability to create culturally relevant curriculum materials and train culturally relevant and competent instructors.

Curriculum

The curriculum was a series of educational poems composed in the learners' spoken language. These poems were meant to teach the beginner basic religious knowledge, give the intermediate learner more advanced knowledge, and prepare the advanced learner to move on to more advanced learning using the poems as her base.

Nana Asma'u wrote these poems with an eye to her target audience's oral culture. They would be memorized before they would be read and read before they would be written, as the students progressed (Mack & Boyd, 2000). One example of this curriculum is her poem "The Quran," a thirty-verse poem that teaches the name of each of the Quran's 114 chapters as well as their order. This beginning primer was the first step to the ultimate goal of memorizing the entire book. The following is a short excerpt:

I pray to God the Glorious
Through the honor, al-Hamdu and the Sura Baqara
And Aali Imrana and Nisa'u and Ma'idatu

Al-An'ami, al-'Arafi and al-Anfali and Bara' (Boyd & Mack, 1997, pp. 38-43).[1]

The poem continues, weaving the chapters' names into sentences, thereby facilitating their memorization. This is an interesting and culturally relevant method of language and content instruction. The poem itself is written in Fuflfide but contains many Arabic terms – given the content – which enables the student to approach language learning from the comfort of familiar phrases and vocabulary.

In another poem, Asma'u teaches the entire *sīra*, the Prophet's (s) biography, in 316 two-line stanzas. Written in Fulfide, it taught both his life and contemporaneous political issues, such as her own role as well as the Sokoto Caliphate's importance, and encouraged national loyalty. It begins with an emotional love song spoken to God about Muhammad, after which the voice changes and

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[1] Spelling changed from the transliteration of Mack and Boyd to reflect more accurate Arabic phonetic sounds.

the poet begins speaking to her learners about history. Finally, at the end, Nana Asma'u ties the long history lesson to modern people and issues. She begins the poem:

> We thank God for the radiance of the Prophet
> The foremost of all creation, Ahmada. (p. 309)
>
> …
>
> O God, receive my song, may it please
> You, and be acceptable to Muhammada
> The constant repetition of Muhammada constitutes no flaw
> Because this song is about repeating the name Muhammada. (p. 310)
>
> …

Then in the next section she says:

> Hasten countrymen and hear about
> The noble character and place of honour (*sic*) of Muhammada
> You will find out about his companions and hear about
> The deed they performed during the time of Muhammada. (p. 310)
>
> …

At the very end she concludes – after more than 300 verses:

> I ally myself to him as my father did
> And Sheikh AbdulQadir, Ahmada
> And Shaikh Dasuqi, through them may I see the face of Muhammada
> It is their help we seek in this world and the grave
> And also in the Next World, so that we may see Ahmada. (p. 345)
>
> …

The poem continues, but the point has been made. Nana Asma'u summarized 63 years of history – including battles, births, conversions, and family details – into a 316-stanza poem that respected and included the learning audience.

In another more theologically focused poem, she addressed death and the afterlife. Recognizing her students' animist origins, she spoke directly to their needs and described hell as worse than hornets, blackflies, and other local pests.

> The components of the Fire are themselves fiery, worse than the blackness,
> Worse than hornets or blackfly, they are huge and bite
> And there are others like the tsetse fly and gnats and earth fleas whose bite is painful
> Plus, black ants and red termites which have a fierce bite. (p. 357)

Her imagery is taken directly from her students' lives, for these insects are not mentioned in metaphors of hellfire directed at Arab desert dwellers. By using them as a metaphor for the "bite" of the fire, she is acknowledging and using her students' real-life experiences in the content and presentation of her teaching material.

All of the above poems, or "textbooks" as they were used by Nana Asma'u and her appointed teachers, demonstrate dialectic *tawḥīd* as described by Al

Zeera and curriculum standpoint theory. They worked as energy applied to thousands of women, and the resulting reorganization of their educational lives could still be seen in the late twentieth century (Harvard Divinity School). The *sīra* poem, which teaches history and spiritual love for the Prophet (s), is both material and spiritual, addresses the students' needs, and includes important modern issues relevant to their lived lives. The poem about death and the afterlife is especially indicative of standpoint theory, in terms of its vocabulary (the mention of local pests), imagery (remembering her audience's animist origins), and culture – and in the very fact that it is an oral textbook. However, it is also dialectically *tawḥīdī*.

Nana Asma'u demonstrated the push and pull of this life and the next, including religious teaching along with day-to-day instruction, by saying,

> Your grievous sins have all been recorded, and even the less important ones
> Everything you have done is remembered, even what you have said
> Everything about you will be seen by you in the grave.
> You will meet up with everything you did in the past. It is accumulated and awaits you.
> (Boyd & Mack, 1997, p. 348).

This is straightforward teaching about death and the afterlife. But in the same poem, she also says,

> He brings people into the world, gives them wealth,
> Makes them prosperous and content, makes them used to it,
> He makes them happy for a time, then he uproots them.
> They are taken from the place they know
> To a place they know not, very distant, whether they wish to go or not. (p. 347)

While this could be construed to imply heaven and hell, it is more likely a reference to the historical exodus forced upon the Sokoto Caliphate's people and possibly a reference to the thousands of converts whose lives had changed drastically during the same period. In other words, she was able to include the tension between real and tangible modern life and the less tangible (but no less real) teachings about the afterlife. The push and pull of dialectic *tawḥīd* is obvious, the standpoint and personal trials of her students are appreciated, and the very writing of the curriculum is the energy needed to bring order to the chaos that was the lack of religious education among her students.

Teachers

Curriculum does not teach itself, and Nana Asma'u demonstrates her natural skill at cultural competency in her choosing and preparation of teachers.

Each team of personally recruited teachers included one advanced learner past the years of child rearing (over 40) and one advanced learner still in her pre-

marriage age (under 14). Together they would sit with Nana Asma'u, learn the curriculum for that season, and then trek to their assigned village, where they would stay and teach the women. Sometimes they would return to Nana Asma'u with questions and thorny problems, and sometimes they would bring a woman with her own questions (Mack & Boyd, 2000).

Before the tribes' mass conversion, visiting medicine women had garnered the villagers' respect with their spells and animist practices. These women wore large hats to signal their status. Asma'u, taking note of this, crowned her teachers with their own hat, one wrapped with a red cloth in a ceremonious manner (Mack & Boyd). She upheld the tradition of dress, acknowledging a cultural norm while adapting it to fit the teachers she was sending to the villages. She also created lists of prayers and verses that could be recited as *ruqya*, spiritual dispelling of disease and evil via exorcism, to both acknowledge and fulfill this local need.

When Jean Boyd went into rural Africa in 1981, she met Hauwa, a descendant of one teacher, who vividly described the days of the *jan-taro* (Nana Asma'u's teaching system) and her own role as a *jaji* (leader). She could recite every student of Nana Asma'u, including her first, thereby signifying the impact of these teachers on their students (Boyd, 1989).

Counteracting Cultural Incompetency

How can we reach into our history and bring forth concrete models or paradigms rooted in *tawḥīd* and standpoint theory to counteract the lack of cultural competency in educational systems around the world?

Anyon (2014) calls upon educators to "Turn anger and despair into a commitment to struggle for justice" (p. 173). Her recommendations, set atop a foundation of dialectical *tawḥīd* and curriculum standpoint theory and combined with the Prophet's example and Nana Asma'u's practical example, can be laid out in very practical steps, as presented below.

1. Help students appreciate their own value, intelligence, and potential: Curriculum needs to be analyzed for messages of subjugation and stereotypes and redone so that every learner can believe in "their own value, intelligence and potential as political factors" (p. 172). Nana Asma'u deeply respected her students and wrote beautiful poems about them that made their lives public knowledge. Her clear descriptions of these women's value, intelligence, and virtue bolstered succeeding generations and encouraged them to fulfill their own potential.

Today's Muslim students need to feel appreciated in the pages of the textbooks and literature that they are studying. It is not enough to just remove negative stereotypes; rather, they must be replaced with real-life examples that remind students of their own personal value.

2. Push back against the "stereotype threat" (p. 172): As we work to create culturally relevant and competent curriculum materials and think of ways to train in-

structors, we should be aware that Muslim stakeholders may not fully engage because of previously learned stereotypes about themselves. Anyon points out that stereotyped instruction not only predicts failure as a self-fulfilling prophecy, but can also "mitigate against a perceived need to change the system" (p. 172).

Nana Asma'u's model of pairs of women sets a model of teamwork and partnership across generations and cultures from which today's Muslim can learn. The role that Muslim educators, chaplains, and leaders can play in curriculum development is only limited by our own willingness to engage creatively and contribute generously to the work of curriculum development and teacher training.

3. Create a counter-narrative: We need to provide literature with positive representations of normative Muslim characters and create learning materials that represent Muslims from the standpoint of Muslims (as opposed to the standpoint of mainstream curriculum authors). Educators need to help our students write a new story about themselves. Muslim students need to be engaged in relearning about themselves from themselves and rejecting the learning that comes from the dominant culture about Muslims.

This new story, one of empowerment and strength, then creates a feeling of positive entitlement. A counter-narrative is the energy required to do the work of dialectic *tawḥīd*. The push and pull of narrative allow the dissipative structure of education to reform itself for inclusion, and Muslims can be both the recipients of cultural competency and the instigators of such cross-cultural competency for other communities.

4. Urge a stance of entitlement (p. 172): Muslim stakeholders need to develop a sense of entitlement. We have a right to live without Islamophobia, within and outside our own communities, and without sexism, racism, and xenophobia. This feeling energizes the available curriculum and causes a dissipative fissure that bursts into new and exciting opportunities for learning.

The term "entitlement" is not generally a positive term, but Anyon uses it to indicate the human right to respect. Curriculum standpoint theory forces others to respect the recipients of instructional materials because it attempts to stand together in the space of their viewpoint before creating the materials in the first place. *Tawḥīd* embraces those viewpoints as part of the secular human world that stands as an important part of the sacred-secular interaction of teaching and learning. The sense of entitlement to learn and be educated, while allowing for cultural competency and respect, allows stakeholders to see the Trojan Horse of globalized "mainstream" curriculum and begin to create options and alternatives that include themselves in the who, what, and how of education.

Conclusions

The earliest days of Muslim teaching and learning were rooted in inclusion and culturally competent interactions. Dialectic *tawḥīd*, as described by complexi-

ty theory and standpoint curriculum theory, come together to help us identify historical practices that can counteract the lack of cultural competence in curriculum today. Using Anyon's steps to change, and considering Nana Asma'u's creative measures, it is time to both revamp Islamic studies material and to contribute to mainstream classrooms. We need to ensure that the fractal, or new pattern, caused by the energy thrust into the learning environment is one rooted in *tawḥīd* and inclusion, as opposed to one that continues to "otherize" our very selves.

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The Power of Prejudice: Cross-cultural Competency and Muslim Populations

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Introduction

> Oh people! We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Verily the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the Most God-fearing of you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (49:13)

This oft-cited Quranic verse encapsulates the Islamic worldview on the raison d'être of different groups of people and ethnicities, thereby highlighting the importance of cross-cultural communication and Islam's role in transcending these differences. The same worldview can be adopted in psychiatric practice to provide culturally competent patient-centered care. This paper introduces a clinical vignette of a Muslim patient with poor mental health and her experiences living in the US as a religious minority. The vignette frames the following discussion in the context of rising hate in the country and brings to light the consequences of Islamophobia on the mental health of American Muslim populations. The psychology of outgroup hate is explained by analyzing the literature produced on the interrelated topics of stereotypes, discrimination, prejudice, and xenophobia, and concludes with tools available for cross-cultural competency in a clinical setting.

Keywords: Islamophobia, psychology, mental health, discrimination, racism, stereotypes, prejudice

Case Study

Renda (pseudonym) is a 45-year-old Palestinian-American married woman with four children. Renda was born and raised in the US, as were all of her children. She has been experiencing symptoms of irritability, difficulty in sleeping, and de-

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pression. She reports that much of her stress is related to her children. Her 10-year-old son has been misbehaving in school and displays what she described as "mood swings" and "temper tantrums." As an involved, religiously observant Muslim parent who wears hijab, she wants to "represent Islam in a good light" to fellow parents at her son's school. She worries about her children being discriminated against by teachers and other students due to their religion, ethnicity, and perceived immigrant status. Her 14-year-old son has experienced an instance of bullying at school during which he was called a "terrorist" by another student.

Islamophobia and Mental Health
Today, hate in the United States is undeniably on the rise. The current president won an election after making many hateful and belittling comments about women, Muslims, those with disabilities, and people of color. During that election cycle, nine African Americans were shot down in a church after welcoming the shooter to a Bible study in Charleston, South Carolina. Anti-Semitic messages and symbols were sprayed onto the wall of an elementary school in Colorado. In New Zealand, 51 worshippers were murdered while attending the Friday congregational prayer – the two terrorists claimed to be inspired by President Trump, whom they praised and dubbed "a symbol of renewed white identity." These are just a few examples of the many xenophobic hate crimes that have occurred globally. In light of these recent acts, people have protested in large numbers nationwide. This section will focus on Islamophobia's effect on the mental health of American Muslim populations and the need for an appropriate response within the clinical setting.

With the recent rise of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiments, American Muslim communities have experienced ongoing stressors that have detrimental effects on their mental health.[1] A survey of 1,050 Muslims in the United States found that 42% of participants under the age of 30 reported that within the past year they had been verbally taunted, treated with suspicion, physically threatened or attacked, or targeted by police because they were Muslim.[2] While many of these stressors are caused by overt forms of discrimination, research shows that Muslims endured subtler or ambiguous forms of discrimination at higher levels, such as being stared at or ignored.

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[1] Sara Ali and Rania Awaad, "Islamophobia and Public Mental Health: Lessons Learned from Community Engagement Projects," *Islamophobia and Psychiatry* (2018): 375–90. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-00512-2_31.
[2] Tom Rosentiel, "Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream," Pew Research Center (December 30, 2019). https://www.pewresearch.org/2007/05/22/muslim-americans-middle-class-and-mostly-mainstream/.

These discrimination-based stressors will undoubtedly have severe consequences on the mental health of many of the affected individuals. This challenge is further aggravated by multiple barriers to seeking help, including mental health stigma, lack of culturally and religiously sensitive mental health services, and fear of discrimination by mental health providers.[3] Findings also showed that discrimination against Muslims was associated with poor healthcare-seeking behavior. Women who reported wearing religious attire also reported more discrimination in health care settings, and one study found that religious clothing influences the care that Muslim patients receive.[4]

The current Islamophobic environment, especially in Western countries, further increases anxiety. One study, which examined data collected from 72 American Muslims between 2003-2006, sought to investigate the impact of stigma on Muslim responses to 9/11. The study found that heightened perceptions of stigma against Muslims and Arabs predicted negative emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses such as individuals feelings threatened, believing that they must prove to others they are American, and changing their daily routine out of fear of violence or discrimination.[5] Furthermore, in a study on discrimination, identity, and anxiety symptoms, 87% of the American Muslims sampled reported experiencing some kind of religious-based discrimination within the past year. Such discrimination predicted higher levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms.[6] These findings demonstrate that Muslims are aware of the Islamophobic nature of their environment and that many live in anticipation of being subjected to poor treatment or discrimination.

Coping with stigma is important for managing the stress and anxiety that comes with experiencing stigma. One study explored stigma management strategies by collecting ethnographic data from Muslim youth and adults at a mosque in a major American city. The study found that although Muslims are not constantly suffering from stigma's negative effects, they are often in situations of potential or anticipated stigma and thus must learn potential responses to it. This study highlights important aspects of Muslim experiences and responses to belonging to a stigmatized group. For example, it found that significant time and effort are spent in managing stigma, including hypothetical, anticipated, and present situations. Additionally, it also found that leaders often encourage young Muslims to

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[3] Ali and Awaad, "Islamophobia and Public Mental Health."

[4] Goleen Samari, Héctor E. Alcalá, and Mienah Zulfacar Sharif, "Islamophobia, Health, and Public Health: A Systematic Literature Review," *American Journal of Public Health* 108, no. 6 (2018). https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2018.304402.

[5] Saera R. Khan, "Post 9/11: The Impact of Stigma for Muslim Americans," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 20, no. 4 (2014): 580–82. https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000063.

[6] H. Steven Moffic, John R. Peteet, Ahmed Zakaria Hankir, and Rania Awaad. *Islamophobia and Psychiatry: Recognition, Prevention, and Treatment*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2019.

remain passive when responding to stigmatizing situations, often based on religious and cultural teachings, to promote peace and harmony.[7]

Islamophobia is a serious and rising issue that has widespread effects on interpersonal relationships and on the community level. One study found that fear of stigma and stereotyping results in social marginalization that deprives Muslims of social engagement's health-promoting effects. Anticipating harassment in the public arena negatively affects how they engage with other people, thereby making the development of community life rather challenging. Additionally, Islamophobic incidents perpetuate a sense of insecurity within the larger Muslim community and could result in trauma by proxy. This was clear after the 2019 Christchurch mass shooting, which resulted in widespread fear, anger, and anxiety in Muslim communities worldwide.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, an American legal and civil rights advocacy organization, published a list of several steps for an individual to take in response to hate crimes. These steps include being proactive in addressing biases, teaching acceptance, and supporting victims in times of vulnerability. Clinicians are often at the forefront of supporting victims of hate when they are most vulnerable. Thus, it is crucial, now more than ever, to increase cultural competency in clinical settings so that when patients or clients come in with a history of identity-based discrimination, clinicians can be culturally sensitive and literate about the issues their patients face.

Racism, Xenophobia, and Islamophobia
In his last sermon, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) addressed his followers, who had come from various tribal societies. He spoke out against the racism and bias that had plagued pre-Islamic society and still existed at the end of his prophethood:

> O People! Indeed your Lord is but one Lord, and indeed your father is but one (Adam). An Arab is no better than a non-Arab, and non-Arab is no better than an Arab; and no dark-skinned person is better than a light-skinned person, nor is a light-skinned person better than a dark-skinned person, except in piety. The most favored in the sight of Allah among you are the most righteous.

The issue of racism was a significant problem in sixth-century Arabia and remains a significant issue today. Tragedies such as the 2015 Chapel Hill and the 2019 Christchurch shootings have shaken Muslim communities worldwide. These incidents have forced Muslim minorities living in Western countries to face the realities of racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia. This section will take a closer

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[7] John O'Brien, "Spoiled Group Identities and Backstage Work," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (April 2011): 291–309. https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272511415389.

look at the concepts and phenomena associated with Islamophobia: implicit bias, stereotyping, prejudice, racism, and xenophobia. These concepts, although distinct, all play a role in Islamophobia. Here, the associations among concepts, along with definitions and examples, will be discussed.

Stereotypes are the beliefs people hold about different groups of people, which may or may not be accurate.[8] Understanding the stereotypes and perceptions of groups is extremely important for comprehending the social world. Many social psychologists, including the prominent 20th-century psychologist Solomon Asch, have argued that understanding how the individual and group influence one another is key to understanding social behavior.[9] Furthermore, stereotypes are dangerous because of the tendency people have to continue believing in them despite evidence suggesting their falsehood, thereby making them even more important to address.

Stereotypes facilitate an understanding of the social world, helping people understand and form explanations about others. Stereotyping occurs by mentally categorizing others and detecting similarities and differences among people. When meeting a stranger, stereotypes serve as a type of heuristic used to form quick impressions and save both time and energy. While convenient, using the known stereotypes of a group to judge an individual ignores the diversity and complexity of that individual. Known stereotypes are shared beliefs that stem from a common "cultural pool of knowledge" and thus produce similar views. Just as members of a group conform to typical group behavior, they also conform to those group ideas and views that make stereotypes a normative belief.[10]

While stereotypes are merely ideas, prejudice is the actual feeling and attitude directed toward different groups of people. Prejudice is rooted in stereotypes and defined as "an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization."[11] Strictly speaking, it may be either positive or negative. However, in common usage it refers to feelings of animosity toward the members of a particular racial, ethnic, religious, gender, or age group. One must also be cognizant of the fact that prejudice is an attitude and not a behavior. It is a "prejudgment" based on assumptions rather than on actual experiences.

Several theories discuss the possible reasons for prejudice. This section will discuss two: the process of socialization and the principle of relative deprivation.

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[8] Charles M. Judd and Bernadette Park, "Definition and Assessment of Accuracy in Social Stereotypes," *Psychological Review* 100, no. 1 (1993): 109–28. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x.100.1.109.

[9] Craig McGarty, Russell Spears, and Vincent Y. Yzerbyt, *Stereotypes as Explanations: The Formation of Meaningful Beliefs about Social Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002).

[10] Ibid.

[11] Chris G. Sibley and Danny Osborne, "Prejudice." *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Political Behavior* (2017). https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483391144.n292.

The process of socialization describes prejudice as a learned behavior, for its proponents contend that adults, who are responsible for socializing their children, also pass on their prejudices.[12] Children, in turn, comply with these social norms as a part of social conformity. Prejudices that become social norms increase their foothold in society. The second theory, the principle of relative deprivation, emphasizes prejudice's role in scapegoating. This idea demonstrates that individuals have a tendency to blame others when they find themselves in poor conditions. Typically, the groups that are blamed or used as scapegoats are minorities and women.[13] This behavior is explained by the "ultimate attribution error," which describes the tendency of individuals to perceive the same actions carried out by in-group members more positively than the actions carried out by out-group members.[14] The "realistic conflict theory" further notes that this behavior is exacerbated by deprivation, competition, and economic distress.[15]

Prejudice may often lead to discrimination, a behavior rather than simply an attitude. Discrimination, which entails different treatment of individuals based on group identity (including race, age, gender, religion, or disability), commonly happens in the form of physical harm and the forceful exclusion of certain groups from society. A clear historical example in the United States is the horrific treatment of Native Americans, who were forced out of their homes and nearly driven to extinction. Discrimination can be a significant source of stress for individuals, a reality that negatively impacts their health. Several studies demonstrate a link between perceived discrimination and clinical levels of mental illness. It can also result in physical symptoms associated with anxiety and stress. For instance, one study found a relationship between perceived discrimination and higher levels of systolic blood pressure levels.[16] In addition to negative health implications, perceived discrimination can affect self-control, increasing the likelihood of engaging in such unhealthy behaviors as smoking, drinking alcohol, suffering from sub-

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[12] José-Miguel Rodríguez-García and Ulrich Wagner, "Learning to Be Prejudiced: A Test of Unidirectional and Bidirectional Models of Parent–Offspring Socialization," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 33, no. 6 (2009): 516–23. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2009.08.001.

[13] Thomas Pettigrew, Ulrich Wagner, and Oliver Christ, "Relative Deprivation and Intergroup Prejudice," *Journal of Social Issues* (June 2008). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2008.00567.x.

[14] Thomas F. Pettigrew, "The Ultimate Attribution Error: Extending Allport's Cognitive Analysis of Prejudice," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 5, no. 4 (1979): 461–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/014616727900500407.

[15] Gordon W. Allport, Kenneth Clark, and Thomas Pettigrew. *The Nature of Prejudice* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

[16] Elizabeth A. Pascoe and Laura Smart Richman, "Perceived Discrimination and Health: A Meta-Analytic Review," *Psychological Bulletin* 135, no. 4 (September 2009): 531–54. https:/doi.org/10.1037/a0016059.

stance abuse, practicing unsafe sex, and neglecting cancer screening and diabetes management.[17]

Importantly, prejudice may exist toward a particular group, and yet discrimination will not follow. Despite holding such negative attitudes, an individual may still treat members of this group respectfully and equally. One must understand that, especially for institutions and organizations, unintentional discrimination may result from discriminatory practices and policies.[18]

Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination all play a role in the larger issue of xenophobia, commonly defined as a form of prejudice that entails fear and hatred of strangers, immigrants, and foreigners. Xenophobia is based on the belief that being native to a certain country is more important to national identity than sharing the nation's ideals and values. Recent definitions emphasize the role of ethnocentrism, the belief that one's ethnic or racial group is superior to others; nationalism, the belief that one's nation is superior; and "high social dominance orientation," the belief that inherent social hierarchies exist.[19]

There are several theories about the factors that lead to and aggravate xenophobia. The realistic conflict theory suggests that feelings of xenophobia increase when in-group members begin to view out-group members as competitors for limited resources. The integrated theory of prejudice goes beyond economic threat, suggesting that four types of threats lead to prejudice and ultimately xenophobia: realistic threat (competition), symbolic threat (differences in values and beliefs), intergroup anxiety (difficult interactions with a person from an unfamiliar culture), and negative stereotypes.[20] Many other theories expand on these definitions; however, in summary, the key point is that xenophobia is rooted in real fears.

Similar to xenophobia, racism, another form of oppression, is the socially constructed belief that certain groups of people who share similar physical, cultural, ancestral, linguistic, religious, or social characteristics are inferior or superior to others. This idea is used to justify the unequal and unfair treatment of different groups of people. The common denominator in racism and xenophobia is the conscious distinction and tension between us (the "in group") and them (the "out group"). With the "we feeling" and subsequent solidarity in one's group as the standard, that group can judge other groups by their own groups' standards and values, thereby producing a view that one's own group is superior to others.

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Benjamin P. Bowser, "Racism: Origin and Theory," *Journal of Black Studies* 48, no. 6 (July 2017): 572–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934717702135.

[19] Oksana Yakushko, "Xenophobia." *The Counseling Psychologist* 37, no. 1 (December 2008): 36–66. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000008316034.

[20] Ibid.

Despite these commonalities, racism and xenophobia are also distinct. Racism is generally associated with visible markers of difference, such as skin color, whereas xenophobia targets foreigners, regardless of race. Islamophobia is considered a form of xenophobia. Furthermore, racism is rooted in presumed race superiority, whereas xenophobia is rooted in the presumed superiority of one's country or nation. They further differ because they are caused by different social hardships. Racism, especially in the US, was historically influenced by sociocultural factors, including slavery, segregation, and colonization. Xenophobia, on the other hand, typically increases during times of economic and political instability or a significant influx of migrants and refugees. Nonetheless, both racism and xenophobia are responsible for the extreme violence and blatant human rights violations seen in many parts of the world.[21]

Creating Cross-cultural Competency

The previous sections have stressed the need for cross-cultural competency in clinical settings, given the recent rise in hate crimes toward minority religious, racial, and ethnic groups nationwide, especially toward American Muslims. This section will provide an in-depth review of definitions, theoretical frameworks, and examples of topics related to culture, implicit bias, and cultural competency. This will be followed by useful tools to increase cultural competency and decrease implicit bias in clinical settings.

Culture is generally defined as "the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize an institution or organization."[22] Many frameworks have been used to explain culture. The best known is Edward Hall's iceberg model,[23] which separates culture into external (top of the iceberg) and internal (bottom of the iceberg) aspects and explains how people tend to internalize each of them. The first one encompasses a culture's superficial components, including clothes, food, music, language, and art, whereas the second one depicts those parts of the culture that impact unconscious thoughts and behaviors. For instance, gender roles, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and attitudes toward one's family are included in this category. We consciously choose to have certain attitudes toward a culture's external aspects, whereas our attitudes toward a culture's internal aspects are often involuntary thoughts and associations.

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[21] Martin N. Marger, *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2019).

[22] "Culture." In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. Merriam-Webster, 2020.

[23] Edward Twitchell Hall, *Beyond Culture* (New York: Doubleday/Anchorbooks, 1976).

Implicit bias causes unintentional actions on unconsciously held prejudices.[24] A useful tool for measuring these associations is the online Implicit Association Tests (IAT) tests, which measure how quickly a person makes associations between different stereotypes. In other words, these tests measure a person's implicit bias. The IAT tests peoples' attitudes on a multitude of issues, including race, disability, religion, sexuality, and skin color.[25] People may believe they are not racist and therefore treat white and black people equally, but IATs may show otherwise. For example, IAT results show that white individuals tend to perceive the same expressions on black faces as angrier than on white faces.[26] A 2012 study demonstrated the role implicit bias plays in how pediatricians treat patients in a healthcare setting. The results showed that pediatricians with pro-white implicit biases were less likely to prescribe painkillers to black patients than to white patients.[27]

The question of whether or not implicit bias tests predict the likelihood of discriminatory behavior has been widely discussed and debated. Researchers of implicit bias discourage the use of IAT tests to determine individual behavior, suggesting that it should be used to predict average group behavior instead. The IAT is better at predicting outcomes across counties and cities and showing a correlation between low implicit bias and lower racial disparities in police shootings, for example.[28] Thus, although IAT provides some insight into individuals' implicit bias and prejudice, it should not be used to take actions against an individual; rather, it should be used to tackle an organization's culture.

With the development of implicit bias tests, various efforts across organizations and companies have emerged to proactively combat implicit bias.[29] The medical sector has been at the forefront of these implicit bias trainings, sparked by the Hippocratic oath taken by all physicians to "first do no harm." This oath ultimately translates into the core medical ethos of appropriate bedside manners with all patients, no matter how different they may be from the physician treating them. One such example is the "Bias and Sociocultural Awareness in Clinical Set-

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[24] Michael Brownstein, "Implicit Bias," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Stanford University, July 31, 2019). https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/implicit-bias/.

[25] Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2005).

[26] "Understanding Implicit Bias," Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity (The Ohio State University, 2015). http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/.

[27] Elizabeth N. Chapman, Anna Kaatz, and Molly Carnes, "Physicians and Implicit Bias: How Doctors May Unwittingly Perpetuate Health Care Disparities," *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 28, no. 11 (November 2013): 1504–10. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-013-2441-1.

[28] Keith Payne, "How to Think about 'Implicit Bias,'" *Scientific American* (March 27, 2018). https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-think-about-implicit-bias/.

[29] Shamika Dalton and Michele Villagran, "Minimizing and Addressing Implicit Bias in the Workplace: Be Proactive, Part One," *College & Research Libraries News* 79, no. 9 (April 2018): 478. https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.79.9.478.

tings" manual developed by the Stanford University School of Medicine for their medical students and residents. This manual includes several online scenarios to expose them to different cross-cultural situations that help inform them of their potential conscious and unconscious biases. After reviewing them, the students convene in small discussion groups to discuss how to overcome these potential barriers in cross-cultural interactions.[30]

The goals of Stanford Medicine's training manual used in the course, as well as other similar manuals, is to improve an individual's ability to work respectfully with people across different cultures and, as such, raise their cultural competency.[31] On a micro-level, this ultimately means training individuals to think, feel, and behave in ways that respect diversity. On a large-scale level, this means incorporating knowledge about cultural norms into policies and practices.[32]

In order to reach full cross-cultural competency and reduce one's implicit biases, one must understand the step-by-step process involved in achieving mastery. The first step to combating implicit bias is to evaluate one's "status" in cultural competency. In order to accomplish this task, in 1989 Terry Cross developed the Cultural Competency Continuum framework.[33] This continuum describes cultural competency's different stages, which range from the lowest level of cross-cultural interactions, "cultural destructiveness," to the highest level, "cultural proficiency." Its different stages, along with their definitions and related attitudes, are described below:

1. Cultural Destructiveness: This group has the lowest level of cross-cultural interactions. Individuals at this stage hold biases toward certain cultures, viewing them as inferior to their own. This attitude is often accompanied by *intentional* desires and efforts to suppress minority voices and rights.

2. Cultural Incapacity: While this group lacks the skills and knowledge to deal with diverse populations, they do not have an active desire to suppress individuals from minority groups.

3. Cultural Blindness: This group assumes that the same interaction is appropriate toward majority and minority people. Furthermore, they have not acknowledged their own biases.

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[30] Fernando Mendoza and Lars Osterberg, *Bias and Sociocultural Awareness in Clinical Settings* (Cedar Interactive, 2018).

[31] J. H. Hanley, "Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg," *Reaching Today's Youth*: *The Community Circle of Caring Journal* 3, no. 2 (1999): 9-12.

[32] King Davis, "Exploring the Intersection Between Cultural Competency and Managed Behavioral Health Care: Implications for State and County Mental Health Agencies." *NASMHPD Publications* (December 1997).

[33] Terry L. Cross, Marva P. Benjamin, and Mareasa R. Isaacs, *Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care* (Washington, D.C.: CASSP Technical Assistance Center, Georgetown University Child Development Center, 1989).

4. Cultural Pre-Competence: This group of individuals have recognized their biases, acknowledged them as problematic, and have taken action to correct them. However, they are satisfied with minimal progress. In other words, individuals at this stage are more concerned about being absolved of cultural incompetence than about taking committed steps to create a welcoming environment for people of different backgrounds.

5. Cultural Competence: At this stage, individuals have made a commitment to improving the experiences of diverse populations and taken steps toward sustained structural and systematic improvement.

6. Cultural Proficiency: At this stage, respect for diversity is part of an organization's central goal. This is demonstrated by its leadership's ideals and active role in advocating for better cross-cultural interactions.[34]

To progress along the cultural competency continuum, an individual/organization must constantly reevaluate its status, seek feedback, adapt, and invest in new training.[35]

Efforts to improve cultural competency can be further supplemented with Pedersen's Developmental Model, a four-step process that provides a framework for targeting one's attitudes and implicit biases toward different cultural groups. The first step, awareness, is acknowledging the biases that one holds.[36] This requires introspection and cognizance of one's own thought processes and attitudes.[37] The second step, knowledge, is attaining factual information about the diversity across and within cultures. The third step, skills, is integrating this knowledge into practice. The fourth and final step, attitude, is adopting the mindset that diversity and change are both crucial and positive.[38]

Other tools, specifically in the mental health field, exist to help professionals achieve cultural proficiency. An example is the DSM-5 Outline for Cultural Formulation, an interview guideline that helps clinicians gather culturally relevant information from patients.[39] The interview model includes gathering information about their cultural identity and understanding distress, mental illness, the psychosocial environment, functioning factors, and attitudes toward a patient-physician relationship in their cultural context. Other tools and trainings have been devel-

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[34] Hanley, "Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg."

[35] Davis, "Cultural Competence."

[36] Cunningham, Leigh, "Multicultural Awareness Issues for Academic Advisors," *Academic Advising Today* (November 2012).

[37] Kimberly Tanner and Deborah Allen, "Cultural Competence in the College Biology Classroom," *CBE—Life Sciences Education* 6, no. 4 (2007): 251–58. https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.07-09-0086.

[38] Cunningham, "Multicultural Awareness Issues."

[39] "Cultural Formulation," MMHRC (Multicultural Mental Health Resource Center, April 2, 2019). http://www.multiculturalmentalhealth.ca/en/clinical-tools/cultural-formulation/.

oped that particularly focus on Muslim populations. This includes chapters in the book *Islamophobia and Psychiatry* such as "Psychiatric Cultural Formulation in the Islamophobic Context," "Clinical Assessment," "Tools for the Culturally Competent Treatment of Muslim Patients," and "Community Resilience."[40]

As with implicit bias, similar tests have been developed to asses cultural competency skills. The Cultural Quotient (CQ) measures cultural intelligence, defined as a person's ability to respond appropriately in various cultural contexts. This includes measuring his/her understanding of different cultures, ability to problem solve and adapt to various broadly defined cultural settings, understanding of how cultural contexts affect cognition, and the similarities and differences among cultures.[41] As the world becomes increasingly globalized, interactions with people from different backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, and languages have become commonplace. As a result, cultural intelligence is a critical skill to have today. This calls for the development of more and improved education modules to help individuals, specifically clinicians, progress through the cultural competency continuum and constantly strive toward cultural proficiency.

Conclusion

Returning to the clinical vignette that introduced this paper, the patient Renda clearly has experiences that are deeply influenced by her religious and cultural background. Living as a religious minority in the US, Renda is well aware that many Americans perceive her negatively. Her family has been directly impacted by hate—her son has experienced religious-based bullying at his school. This further increases her stress as she strives to "represent Islam in a good light" and change the perceptions she believes many Americans have of Muslims.

All of these discrimination-based stressors, interrelated with prejudice, bias, racism, and xenophobia, significantly impact both her mental and physical health. As this paper has discussed, a key means to respond to this hate is by supporting victims within the clinical setting. This means an extra emphasis on clinicians acquiring the skills needed to enable culturally sensitive care and support for patients like Renda, who experience Islamophobic discrimination.

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[40] Moffic, Peteet, Hankir, and Awaad, *Islamophobia and Psychiatry*.

[41] Elaine Mosakowski and P. Christopher Earley, "Cultural Intelligence," *Harvard Business Review* (October 2004).

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The Role of the Imam in Leading American Mosques

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Abstract

Across the country, American mosques are struggling with dwindling attendance and/or stagnancy. The causes generally come back to four interconnected points: a lack of governing principles, the politics of control by personalities, little focus on social integration, and a scarcity of properly trained and empowered imams. The imam, the community's leading inspirational motivating force, is governed by scripture and both supported as well as held accountable by a community rooted in scriptural values. These values are a broad realm of massive differences subject to an array of cultures that can be a cause for division.

Given this reality, Muslims must establish a mission, vision, and core value system for a clear cohesive divinely guided community. This system must prioritize the community's relevant needs with a strong focus on the big picture of Islam as it relates to the broader society. The administrative management of mosques should support their imam to lead them accordingly.

Keywords: Imam, mosque, culture, custom, citizenship

Introduction

The historic concept of the mosque's role in society has strayed from its prophetic roots throughout the Muslim world, where they generally exist as no more than a place to pray *ṣalāt al-jumʿa* (the congregational Friday prayer) for most men and maybe some women. The five daily prayers are attended by a much smaller group of men and almost no women or youth. In some mosques, there are some small reflections or lessons given after prayer.

While in some aspects our modern reality requires a different approach, we have still strayed from the spirit of the sacred model that the Prophet established in Madina. An imam must lead the way in developing faith as an active component of the congregation. The idea of a mosque being a multifaceted home away

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from home rooted in its leadership's developing and mobilizing the believers is now practically extinct.

In this paper we analyze the unique opportunity in America to revive the Prophet's example of leading a community of believers and seek to understand this role as it relates to the American context. Carefully assessing and learning how to overcome the struggles of establishing this model is crucial for this endeavor's success. We discuss two sociological surveys that utilize data acquired by researching and surveying the landscape of mosque culture and argue that leadership is key to formulating a priority-based system.

The basis for a healthy model is rooted in a well-crafted mission, vision, and core value system that can hold both the imam and the congregation accountable. Muslims can learn from the successful models of other faith communities in this country. In short, the American Muslim community can flourish only if its members realize, promote, and prioritize the mosque's role.

Diagnosing the Problem

While traveling across this country for the last ten years, I have seen a growing decline in mosque attendance, especially among women and younger people born and raised here. This phenomenon gave birth to the "unmosqued" movement. Some of its members made a documentary featuring disenfranchised Muslims and prominent imams who share their concerns about this growing phenomenon. This term refers to the nationwide problem of mosques declining in stable attendance and vitality. As a result, third spaces, defined as a social theory according to which a group feels that they must create a new space as a result of unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation (Bhabah 2004), have been popping up nationwide. This growing crisis can be solved by mosque boards and imams assessing their communities' culture, goals, and priorities.

The Hartford Institute for Religion and Research from laid out this phenomenon in a large-scale mosque studies report conducted in 2011. This report found various factors that are hindering the success of most American mosques, among them the following:

- Massive understaffing. Only 44% of imams have full-time paid salaries. More than half of all mosques have no full-time paid staff, 19% have no imam at all, and only 5% have at least two full-time paid staff. Many churches point to a ratio of 1:100 for full-time paid staff to weekly attendees (Schaller, 1980).
- A lack of relevance. It noted that 85% of full-time paid imams are immigrants with relatively no experience in the US and that 30% of imams deliver the Friday sermon in languages other than English. Imams almost exclusively study Islamic studies and jurisprudence, and thus 96% of their degrees were obtained overseas.

- A lack of representative diversity. Only 18% of the attendees of the Friday sermon are women, only 59% of mosques have women serving on the board, and 63% of them score between "poor" and "fair" as women-friendly spaces. Outside of the significant W.D. Muhammad African American community, almost all mosques have a separate room or partition for women. Mosques with gender-segregated space have lower numbers of outreach activities, community service projects, and sociopolitical activism. Two-thirds of mosques do not consider youth groups and programs as being among their top priorities. Unfortunately, only 6% of Friday sermons are attended by school children.

These concerns led to a thorough scientific analysis and conclusion from the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU; www.ispu.org). Joining forces with the unmosqued team and Hartford Institute researches, they combined data and published "Reimagining Muslim Spaces," a multi-layered report available on their website. Its main findings led to the following suggestions, which mirror the concerns addressed in the previously cited data from the Hartford report. These suggestions are supported by a diverse body of American imams, scholars of Islam and Muslim social scientists.

- The key element of a healthy thriving mosque model is to be welcoming and inclusive. Some people fear that such a statement promotes liberal mosques. And yet there is no indication that they are suggesting normalizing or accommodating people who promote non-confirmative beliefs and practices. Rather, the report is calling upon the mosque to be a place in which each person, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, is appreciated and may grow in his or her knowledge and practice of Islam.

    This replaces a culture of judgment based on immediate expectations of a certain level of knowledge and practice of Islam. Such a new culture requires a mature understanding of the Prophet's biography as it relates to the Quran's messaging from Makka to Madina. Such communal maturity leads to a proper understanding and application of Islamic priorities.

- Next, a mosque can excel in governance only when it has adequate staffing with competitive means. This governing body must be transparent and inclusive.

- Lastly, the mosque should be a hub for hope, a place where Muslims can look forward to their own growth as believers. This spiritual community naturally serves the broader society.

The report also crunches the data as it relates to the sociology of the American Muslim community. I highly encourage everyone to read the entire report, which touches upon a few issues that are of considerable significance. I will expound upon these below.

My experience is that two underlying factors account for this mosque stagnancy and decline in our community. First, the current judgmental or nitpicking attitude basically amounts to a lack of wisdom in understanding Islam's priorities or respect for Muslims' differences of opinion. Some examples of this are enforcing dress codes, gender mixing, and food issues. This will be addressed in the core values at the end of this paper.

Second, recreating and standardizing immigrant cultures and languages as defining features of the mosque experience. These nationwide phenomena across many mosques are major forces behind the appearance of third spaces and the lack of interest from women and the generation raised here.

The Qualified Imam
Prophet Muhammad was the greatest leader in world history. As a non-Muslim historian put it, he was the most influential man in history (Hart 1992). Adding revelation to the Prophet's impeccable character gave him the knowledge base needed to effectively convey divine guidance to his people and beyond.

In my first role as an imam in 2009, I vividly remember sitting with a group of community members during a family night intended to welcome the new imam. A board member leaned toward me just as we started to eat and asked, "If the Prophet were here with us now, would he sit at a table and eat with a spoon?" I replied "Yes, of course," and explained that he sat on the floor and ate with his hand simply because that was his society's norm and was not a specific revelation. Many Muslims focus heavily on the outward or cultural aspect of the Prophet's reality, which can lead to a superficial symbolic affiliation rather than the spiritual attention we all need so much.

I explained to him that the Prophet is the best example to be followed (33:21). Some scholars believe the verse refers to everything about him, whereas others, given the verse's context, contend that is focusing on the spiritual side that comes from the heart and is empowered through revelation. The verse's end proclaims that he is an example "for whoever hopes to have God's contentment in the afterlife." We appreciate the fact that the Prophet was an Arab, but as believers we are to take him as our spiritual example in how to embody Islam. In fact, the Quran emphasizes this point by instructing the Prophet to "tell them I am only a man like you all, except I have received revelation…" (18:110).

Let's first highlight the key character traits of the man God chose for the ultimate role of leadership, for prioritizing them will enable us to carry this message and communicate it to the world successfully. When the Quraysh were rebuilding the Ka'bah almost fifteen years before the revelation began, they quarreled over who should reinsert the Black Stone in its place. They finally decided that whoever would enter next would be tasked with the decision. Muhammad entered, and they sighed, stating, "This is the most trustworthy [man] among us,

and we are pleased with his judgment" (Ṭabarānī, *Muʿjam al-Awsaṭ*, volume 3, hadith no. 50).

After receiving his first revelation in the Hira cave, the Prophet was deeply confused and thought that something had afflicted him. His wife Khadija consoled him, saying, "God would never allow anything to afflict you. You keep good ties of kinship, you are an honest man, you care for the weak, you go out of your way for those in need, you are most hospitable to your guests, and you support truth and justice" (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, hadith no. 231). When he announced his prophethood to his extended family – members of the Hashim clan of the Quraysh tribe – asking if they would believe what he would tell them, they replied, "We have never known you to tell a lie!" (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, hadith no. 4770).

Honesty, trust, and integrity are the three distinct traits of successful leadership (Bennet 1993). A quick googling of it reveals countless modern self-help gurus who swear by them. After the Prophet assumed the young community's leadership, he used these essential traits to maintain the ideal dynamic between a leader and his followers. God summed up the secret of his success as, "It was by God's mercy that you are gentle with them. Had you been rigid or harsh hearted they would have surely abandoned you. So pardon them, seek forgiveness for them and consult with them in decision making. Once you make a decision then put your trust in God…" (3:159).

In other words, the ideal imam must be gentle and forgiving, but firm in resolve when making decisions after consulting his community. These vital qualities complement the fundamentals of honesty, trust, and integrity in establishing the foundations of successful leadership.

Therefore, any prospective imam should have gone through a program of spiritual and character mentorship and training led by an experienced imam. Contacting previous mentors who can attest to his character development should be a basic first element in the interview process. Last but not least, the board must seek an ethics review from board members and/or co-workers from the applicant's previous posting.

Broadening our Horizons

Improving character is, in fact, the bedrock and goal of Islamic theology, as the Prophet said, "I was only sent to perfect a model of noble character" (*Majmaʿ*, vol. 8, hadith no. 191). At the same time, it must be based on and guided by sound knowledge. Obviously an imam also needs to be educated in the Islamic sciences, which were revealed and meticulously preserved to protect human welfare as a whole, to successfully fulfill his duty as a religious leader.

American Muslims are obliged to support our local seminaries so that they can become high-quality institutions in terms of staff and facilities, as well as to provide scholarships and stipends to low-income students who feel called to formally

study Islam. Only a local seminary can establish a curriculum that properly addresses the mindset and needs of scholars and imams, who the community tasks with forming an ideal platform and priorities for its mosques. Each imam should go through a tailored "ordainment" process to learn the essential proper tools that he will need to lead his future congregation.

The notion of professional development was a hallmark of Islamic civilization's golden age, traditionally dated from the eighth to the fourteenth centuries. After all, Europe's modern idea of studying the seven liberal arts before specialization was taken from the Caliphate of Andalusia in the early tenth century (Lyons 2009). As a result of many Quranic passages coupled with the Prophet's emphasis on knowledge and intellectualism, early Muslims valued the systems of science and governance they learned from other civilizations (ibid). The Abbasid caliphate established the Bayt al-Hikma (House of Wisdom) to institutionalize the translation of other civilizations' scientific texts for the benefit of Muslims and to challenge them to transcend their predecessors' achievements (Morgan 2008). Muslims should invest in studying, re-creating, and improving upon successful church models across the US, for we can learn a great deal from their many struggles, trials, and errors.

Many of our fellow Christian and Jewish communities require their clergy to be trained in sciences outside of their respective religion's history and theology, having recognized that being a community leader requires more than "religious" knowledge. Before taking on a lead imam role, the applicant should go through complementary training in specific subjects within psychology, sociology, non-profit management, and American history.

A trained imam should be viewed not as an employee of the board who must always follow their lead, but respected as a visionary leader attending to and consulting with the relevant boards and committees. After all, he spearheads all of the mosque's spiritually guided work in terms of strategy and initial development. Moreover, he is responsible for inspiring and encouraging others to step up and lead the work. The successful mosque model undoubtedly starts with a qualified, well-trained, and fully empowered imam. If a pious young man wants to dedicate himself to such a role while raising his family, then his salary must be equal to that of an average middle-class family living in the same area of the city.

In addition to an official imam, historically a male-only role, the mosque needs to encourage the development and establishment of official female scholarship and leadership positions, for their perspective adds a vital dimension to the Muslim community's growth, development, and representation. Islamic jurisprudence does not prohibit women from teaching mixed gatherings, and women teaching was a well-established quality, as the lives of our "mothers," among them Khadija, 'A'isha, Zainab, and Umm Salama, prove. In much of the pre-modern Muslim world, traditional female scholars were teaching the Islamic sci-

ences to mixed gatherings in mosques as late as the thirteenth century (Nadwi 2013). We are seeing more female scholarship in mosques nowadays and, considering the American context, should promote this as standard mosque culture.

The American Context and the Role of Custom in Islam

As previously noted, Muhammad was an Arab as well as God's messenger. Studying his biography and Islamic jurisprudence reveals that some of what he taught and prioritized, such as laws related to marriage, war engagement, economic policies, and other fields were unquestionably influenced by his being a man of his time and environment (Sallabi 2005). This point cannot be overstated, for ignoring it has led to a host of problems in formulating a religious identity in America, such as an aversion to or fear of American culture, misogyny, a lack of critical thinking, not being politically or civically engaged, and so on. There is no question that culture and religion are interconnected realities. In order to thrive, native Muslim scholars should help them navigate a healthy balance and integration of culture, and religion and mosques should promote this balance.

Culture is the sum of a given society's collective beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that may or may not be properly rooted in religion, whereas religion is the revealed teachings that underlay a life of faith. Ideally, religion both regulates and integrates with culture. In much of the world, culture controls a Muslim's religious identity to such an extent that many of them do not know why they believe or how to practice Islam. Much of an observant Muslim's religious life is regulated by a mainstream understanding; however, there are many instances of exaggerations, such as the heavy emphasis on black magic and the "evil eye" to explain problems of physical or mental health, cynophobia (the fear of dogs), or that women are a *fitna* (a spiritual trial) for men.

Other fabrications are believed to be rooted in religion, such as the idea that unmarried women and men must not intermingle with each other, that men are generally superior to women, or that one must make ablution after being touched by a dog. Without the concept of needing to review and authenticate our faith and practice through scripture, we perpetuate ignorance.

As Muslims migrate to the US, they often inadvertently create a multi-level identity crisis in their children. First, there is the natural inclination to teach their children their own culture and heritage, which is perfectly fine and healthy. However, many see their original homeland as a Muslim country, whereas their new homeland is a non-Muslim country. This can lead to varying degrees of ethnocentrism, in which Muslims attempt to raise their children as though they were from the "old country."

In many cases there is a direct or indirect negative attitude around being American or "like the Americans." This approach conflicts with the Prophet's approach in polytheistic Arabia, which was definitely the more immoral of the two.

He simply communicated verses that rebuked his fellow Makkans' immoral elements rather than blaming them on Arabia or being Arab.

Actually, claiming to be Arab or even from Quraysh was common throughout his life. Some Makkan polytheists fought on the Muslims' side at the Battle of Hunayn. In the heat of that battle, he said, "I am the Prophet, no lie, and I am a child of Abdul-Muttalib" (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, hadith no. 4315). In addition to emphasizing his prophethood, he was also stressing his cultural place within his society as well as his connection to the people, who regarded the polytheistic Abdul-Muttalib as a cultural icon.

Moroccan, Brazilian, Nigerian, Egyptian, Indian, Russian, Turkish, and Indonesian Muslims are all equally Muslim with significantly different cultural traditions. Similarly, there should be a thriving American Muslim community that is seen as native to this land. Islam's success in any society is directly related to how well its scripture regulates and integrates with the local culture. Islam calls for a natural balance between culture and religion. Mosques should be nurturing a thriving American Muslim community dynamic. Forming mosques with another land's specific ethnic culture only reinforces the idea that Islam is both a foreign religion and related to a specific culture, when it is, in fact, a universal truth for everyone (34:28, 7:158). Mosque leadership should be instrumental in unifying Muslims, despite their rich diversity, and guiding them to best way of relating to American mainstream society.

All classical schools of Islamic jurisprudential thought recognize the fact that local culture and customs play an influential role in both deciding and prioritizing Islamic law. In general, the accepted explanation of this is "The general accepted attitudes, language, and practices of the majority of a society or a group among them which do not directly contradict clear authentic scripture are authoritative in Islamic law" (Khallaf 1942). The main evidence for this assertion is the oft-mentioned scriptural word *maʿrūf*, "something known to be good or acceptable." This is from both scripture as well as the local culture. I say "local" because while a minority immigrant group is free to follow its own culture, it should not be used as a standard for American Muslim legal realities, especially for those born and raised in the United States.

Each of the four Sunni schools of thought emphasize the need to both understand and treat the local culture as authoritative when interpreting and prioritizing religion, as long as it does not contradict its established teachings (Zuhaily 1986). The Hanafis say, "What is established by local custom is equal to what is established by scripture" (al-Sarkhasi, *Kitāb al-Mabsūṭ*). The Malikis say, "Acting upon local custom is a principle of juristic tradition of Imam Malik" (al-Qarafi, *Al-Furūq*). The Shafi'is say "The local custom is authoritative in Islamic law" (al-Ghazali, *Al-Mustaṣfā*). The Hanbalis say, "What is not specifically outlined in the divine law is decided by the local custom" (al-Mardawi, *Al-Taḥrīr*).

The Prophetic Attitude on Citizenship
Messengers were sent from within communities because they must know the target audience's language and culture to relate to them, "It was a profound blessing that God sent to the believers a messenger **from among themselves**..." (3:164). Many exegetes refer to this ability as the "wisdom" mentioned in, "Call to the path of your Lord **with wisdom**…" (16:125).

These problems are further exacerbated and perpetuated by the commonly expressed concept that "American" is synonymous with "non-Muslim" or "immorality" in general, as in my "American friends" or, even worse, "Don't be like the Americans." A Muslim should not be a separatist or treat their non-Muslim neighbors and fellow citizens as "the other." Each prophet was sent to his own people, who, for the most part, rejected him. And yet God still describes their relationship as that of a collective "kinship or "family," if you will: "We sent to the people of 'Ad **their brother** Hud saying to them, 'O **My people**, worship God alone as you have no deity beside Him…" (7:65). Even our beloved Prophet had the same idea, "The Messenger called out, 'O my Lord, truly **my people** have turned away from this Quran'" (25:30).

The Prophet and his earliest Companions were Arabs from Makka, mostly from the Quraysh. The town's polytheists both rejected and actively abused members of this small monotheistic minority. Considering our situation here, where we are generally welcomed and encouraged to follow and promote our religion, we should have no problem teaching our children that they are American Muslims.

However, there is a question over whether we should describe ourselves as "American Muslims" or "Muslim Americans." It could be just polemics, but I feel that as Muslims, we look at ourselves first as souls created by God in heaven and then as living in a body created from earth. Therefore I prefer "American Muslim," just as I prefer "Egyptian Muslim." So the proper noun, which mainly describes who and what we are, is "Muslim," and one way we are known by description (i.e., adjective) of worldly affiliation is "American" or any other nationality/culture.

It is natural for someone to love their homeland and feel connected to its people. That being said, a Muslim cannot be a nationalist or carry any sort of ethnocentric attitudes and behaviors. The Arabs used to say, "Support your fellow tribesman, whether the oppressor or the oppressed" (*Fatḥ al-Bārī*). They meant it literally, and yet one day the Prophet said the exact same phrase to his Companions. This now seemed rather strange to them, and so they asked him about it in a different way, "We understand supporting the oppressed, but how could we support the oppressor? He replied, 'Stop them from oppressing people'" (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, hadith no. 6952).

Notice how they naturally did not accept the oppression, even if it was the Prophet's literal suggestion or if their fellow Muslim or tribesman was the oppressor. As Muslims, we should be patriotic citizens of the country in which we hap-

pen to live and strive to promote all that is good and beneficial while speaking out against and working to remove all forms of oppression and corruption.

American Muslims must not cut themselves off from the rest of society. In fact, Muslims should integrate into any society and learn from them, as this is the actual purpose of cultural diversity, "O humanity, We have created you all from male and female and made you into different tribes and nations so that you may **get to know** one another…" (49:13).

Every society, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, has its good and bad qualities and elements. Prophet Muhammad advised the believers on how they should deal with that, "The believer that intermingles with society and is patient with their harms is better than the one who does not intermingle with people and thus is not patient with them" (*Adab al-Mufrad*, hadith no. 300). This patience is manifested in knowing, following, and promoting your faith's values in order to alleviate the harms and corruption of your society. We are called to promote wholesomeness, justice, and benevolence while remaining true to our faith.

The Language Barrier
Language is the primary basis of any culture. Islam itself is not a culture, but rather a religion meant for all peoples. As mentioned above, Islam is meant to integrate with and regulate culture, not vice versa. Thus it should be presented and appreciated as something natural to anyone, regardless of what language they speak, "We only sent messengers to talk in the language of the people to whom they were sent so that they could properly communicate the message to them…" (14:4). Given that language is the most important tool in communication, God never sent any people a prophet from a foreign community. In other words, a native person speaking in the native tongue is the ideal way for the message to be properly communicated and received.

There is a widespread international culture among non-Arab Muslims, in which they use Arabic words while speaking their own languages. This idea has its roots in the growth of the early caliphate, which institutionalized Arabic as the government's official language. Conveniently, it is also the language of our sacred scriptures. With the influx of non-Arab converts, the caliphate prioritized the teaching of the scriptural and administrative governmental language. Many lands, such as present-day Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and North Africa, were inhabited by non-Arabs before the Prophet's teachings reached them. Their widespread adoption of Arabic was a significant achievement of Islamic civilization, as well as a great blessing to those land's Muslims.

On the other hand, close to 80% of Muslim lands, among them present-day mid/southwest Africa, Turkey, the Indian Subcontinent, Indonesia, and Malaysia, did not fully adopt Arabic. As a result, their Muslims naturally regret that. Combining the internal political dynamic among different faiths and doing what they

could to adopt the scriptural language led to the Arabization of non-Arab languages. That made sense then and still does, for that is a culture that all Muslims know and are comfortable with. On the other hand, according to the previously quoted Quranic verses, it does not necessarily make sense to institute this same policy for American Muslims.

One of the main issues for many Muslims is the "name of God" debate, which also exists among Jews and Christians. I would like to highlight a couple of facts, since this issue can easily be an entire research field in itself. Many Muslims point out that Arabs from the Christian and Jewish communities refer to God as "Allah" as a reason to use it in English. The fact is that they do not do this because they believe that "Allah" is God's proper name, but rather because they realize that it represents similar words found in their Hebrew and Aramaic scriptures referring to God. Interestingly they still describe Allah in Arabic as the father, son and Holy Spirit (Rabb al-Majd 1923).

Others spread the mistaken claim that "Allah" shares the same etymology and phonetics in both Hebrew and Aramaic and was used by the Israelite prophets. My personal conviction is based on the intersection of Quranic teaching with anthropology, "Certainly, We have sent messengers to all nations saying worship God and avoid evil transgression…" (16:36). Thus I do not think God has a single phonetically singular "proper name." Rather, He revealed Himself to all peoples by the many descriptions – all of which are equally holy – He wanted us to know.

In fact, there is a word for the Creator/Supreme Being in every language spoken by the children of Adam [and Eve], and they are all quite different in their etymologies and phonetics. Therefore, Muslims are tasked with properly defining that word in their specific cultural context, for the Quran teaches us to tell the People of the Book, "… we believe in what was revealed to us and you, and our God and yours is one and the same…" (29:46).

Classical-era Arabic linguists and anthropologists debated the origin of the word "Allah." Many follow prominent scholars such as Sibawayh, as mentioned by Ibn Manthur in his great nine-volume encyclopedia *Lisān al-ʿArab* (*The Tongue of the Arabs*). Their explanation is that the Arabs decided to combine the definitive article *al* (the) and the word *ilāh* (something worshipped or deified) and dropped the *hamza* or the "i" at the beginning of the second word to make the pronunciation easier, thereby creating "Allah," meaning "the worshipped entity" or "the deity."

The Quran is replete with references to the Christians and Jews' special designation as "People of the Book." God even uses this title to call upon them, because they still possess and follow the revelations that God revealed to the Israelite prophets. Thus, we have a special relationship with them as fellow claimants to the Abrahamic covenant. Any Muslim who reads the Bible will find a huge overlap of similar to almost word-for-word passages. American Muslims live in a so-

ciety whose general populace has names for our prophets and theological concepts. According to the verse "we only sent messengers speaking to their people in their native language" (14:4), our task is not to Arabize American culture, but rather to utilize English to familiarize our fellow citizens with God's final message to humanity, as revealed to Prophet Muhammad.

Some imams have followed this logic to an extent, often by speaking in Arabized English only when preaching to Muslims and then adjusting to an all-English vernacular when talking to non-Muslims about Islam. While it is important to reference scripture in its original language and to teach classical Arabic at the mosque, I suggest that mosque leadership should do its best to develop a general native-language discourse to engage in general communication and provide spiritual instruction. This is in keeping with the prophetic model. In addition to amplifying the reception and proper dissemination of Islam, it will also alleviate the confusion and unnecessary struggle that the current model creates for young people raised here, converts, and non-Muslims attending the mosque.

Mission, Vision, and a Core Value-based Mosque

The success of any institution is relative to the effectiveness of its governance and the quality of the work it produces. Both of these require three fundamental driving forces: clarity of mission/purpose, guiding inspiration, and mutual consultation. In its capacity as a book of guidance for a strong faith community, the Quran stresses these underlying themes repeatedly.

A lack of clear, specific inspirational direction opens the door for a host of potential problems such an as ethnicity-focused community, personal power plays, a lack of direction or accountability, and similar issues. At the Muslim Community Center of Charlotte (MCC), we researched and consulted with scholars, community leaders, and social scientists to form a mission, vision, and core value-based system to inspire and guide our work. These concepts, which are standard in strategic management, represent the fundamental points for any institution trying to achieve its goals. As such, it can be used to hold people accountable and thereby avert the problems associated with a personal-based dominance of an institution. These concepts are that the institution's authority is superior to that of any individual, board, employee, and committee.

Our mission statement is a four-step gradual relational process: *Devotion to God, Striving for Excellence, Nurturing American Muslims,* and *Engaging in the Service of Society.*

Our fundamental and primary purpose, establishing and promoting sincere pious worship of God, leads us on a path that always sees room for improving our knowledge, faith, and character. God is calling us toward a work ethic and functional presentation of Islam that represents the highest standards of excellence. As we all work individually on the first two elements, we are all invested in Islam

becoming a vibrant, thriving faith community, one well integrated into mainstream American society. All three of these elements lead to and help us fulfill our ultimate callings of altruism and benevolence.

Our vision is a standard designed to enable us to materialize our values through our mission: *A Charlotte Community Built on Virtue and Cooperation.*

The Muslim community should be a beacon for morality in any society. People will naturally realize Islam's beauty and value if we internally work to understand and practice it correctly. Our goal is for our city to appreciate us as an integral morally uplifting element so that we can find ways to work together in supporting, improving, and reforming it.

A mission statement, which is often broad and far-reaching, requires a specific value system to guide it. MCC's five-point value system is outlined below.

Welcoming. For us to succeed, we must cultivate a comfortable environment for all attendees. Everyone is at a unique place on the spiritual path, and folks need room to digest faith and grow at their own pace. Their mosque must be a caring warm-spirited space, for providing encouragement and an easy-going attitude are hallmarks of the prophetic model.

Scriptural. Guided by the Quran and the Prophet's authenticated teachings, we must intellectualize our faith through a direct understanding of scripture and scholarly interpretation.

Relevant. We respect the rich, vast legacy of Islamic scholarship. After all, our Prophet referred to scholars as "the inheritors of the prophets." (*Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, hadith no. 3641). As has always been the norm in the Muslim world, we take from and present the interpretations and priorities of local scholars raised in the United States to guide our understanding and practice of Islam.

Benevolent. Our attitude and programming should be centered on spending our time, skills, and wealth on caring for each other, as well as for our neighbors, the poor, the weak, the oppressed, and the environment. Our interpersonal relationships should be rooted in and expressed with compassion, gentleness, and love.

Diverse. The mosque should emphasize building genuine relationships across our differences. We are a spiritual family with a lot to learn from each other. In order for generations to grow and thrive in this country, mosques must uplift and empower the participation and leadership of the entire community, especially that of women and youth.

All programs in our mosque are governed by and emphasize the mission statement of working toward the vision statement. The core value system guides the organization's system of work. This mission, vision, and core value-based system is a patented method of protecting the reason for which the organization was established, according to the agreed-upon philosophy from which it arose. This removes most conflicts and structural problems.

The two most harmful inhibiting factors to mosque growth and stability are leaders who crave power and the congregants' free-for-all ideological and cultural battles. These problems are either prevented or mitigated in an institution governed and guided by this very system.

Conclusion

The American Muslim community is at a crossroads, especially when it comes to faith and community. As many of the first generation's children are now adults, there has been a visible decline in mosque attendance, especially among the two foundational elements of future generations: women and youth. Ideology and identity can either be a one-two punch or a double whammy for any society. Unfortunately, most mosques do not have fully trained imams. But even if they do, they are missing the other staff needed to establish a successful, dynamic, and thriving community.

The imam is the leader of the greater mosque community. His job is to actively inspire, motivate, and mobilize his congregation to implement their faith. In order to achieve this goal, he must go through a holistic educational training regimen and be able to relate to the diversity found within his congregation and within the surrounding non-Muslim community. To ensure long-term success, the mosque and its leadership must integrate with the surrounding society so that it can be appreciated and revered as an indigenous faith community. Many Muslims confuse integration with assimilation. If one assimilates into a different group, then s/he becomes just like them, whereas integration means to live among people while maintaining one's unique identity.

In order to avoid ethnic or religious group politics as well as the domination of powerful personalities, an American mosque should set a mission, vision, and core value-based system to permanently govern the entire institution. Such a system must incorporate the realities of scriptural priority as they relate to individual and collective spirituality, empower women and youth, accept the agreed-upon role of local custom, successfully manage an integrated congregation, and work toward the universal betterment of society at-large. Recent data regarding mosque attendance and activity demonstrate that these specific avenues, represented within their respective religious models, are necessary for a religious institution or congregation to succeed and thrive. Moreover, these values illustrate an original prophetic guide to what a cohesive and resilient Muslim community should look like, regardless of the reality of Western standards and society.

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Book Review

Sophie Gilliat-Ray, Mansur Ali, and Stephen Pattison. *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy thoroughly analyzes this topic as it relates to the contiguous countries of England and Wales. The text is sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) "Religion and Society Programme," both of which fund research and studies concerning the arts, humanities, and socioeconomic issues.

The almost 200-page text is encyclopedic due to the wide breadth and depth of its coverage, which is based upon scholarly research. The book is directed toward a scholastic or an administrative audience. The sound organization of its topics, as well as its extensive documentation, makes it a must for most libraries.

I have only three minor quibbles with the book: (1) The hardcover text was first published in 2013, republished in 2016, and is now available from $49.61 to $162.03; (2) One needs to be prepared to undertake some research to get past the surface meanings and British spellings of some of the words and titles; and (3) Your geopolitical knowledge of the British Isles, the United Kingdom, Great Britain, England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales must be up to date.

The book has eight chapters: "Chaplaincy and British Muslims," "Pastoral Care in Islam," "Chaplaincy People," "Chaplaincy Practice," "Chaplaincy Politics," "The Impact of Chaplaincy," "Muslim Chaplaincy in the United States of America," and "Chaplaincy, Religious Diversity, and Public Life."

The first chapter, which also serves the book's introduction, summarizes the other chapters. According to the authors, the rest of the chapter maps the "drivers for the development of Muslim chaplaincy in England and Wales since the 1970's." The other chapters fulfill the stated objectives and summaries commendably, despite the presence of some abstruse or anomalous passages. Much of the book demands that the reader be well versed in Islamic terminology, although at times even that may be insufficient because the authors may explain Muslim behavior and culture from a parochial perspective. One example is their statement about fasting, wherein tobacco is mentioned as an intoxicant: "Fasting is the third pillar of Islam, requiring Muslims to abstain from food, drink, sexual intercourse and intoxicants of any kind (for example smoking tobacco); ..."

The authors write that "the first pillar divides into seven sub-divisions, all of them related to faith in the unseen realm (*ghayb*)" might be better understood by Muslims and non-Muslims alike with more explanation. I could not find this "seven sub-divisions" phrase substantiated anywhere in the book. Perhaps it is related to what is commonly called "the seven conditions of *tawḥīd*" or the seven

conditions pertaining to "there is no deity" or "no one is worthy of worship but Allah (see Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḥakamī, *Maʿārij al-Qabūl*).

Likewise, the explanation of Muslim behaviors in the sections entitled "Rites of Passage: Birth and Death" and "The Role of the Family in Islam" may relate to certain Muslim localities only, rather than having a general application, as the authors state. An example related to this anomaly is when the text explains certain facets of Islamic life and ideology that may be specific to a certain legal view or socio-ethnic group or society, rather than the general Islamic population. Nonetheless, the book *in toto* presents a balanced mention of Islamic praxis.

Among the most important terms are "chaplaincy," "Muslim chaplaincy," and "pastoral care." A chaplain is defined as "an individual who provides religious and spiritual care within an organisational setting." In layperson terms, then, "chaplain" is a job title, since an "organisational setting" is the only requisite in addition to providing these types of care. "Religious and spiritual care," which the text makes synonymous with "pastoral care," has two parameters: the organization's rules and the Muslim chaplain's understanding and application of Islam. Thus, since "there is no formal institutionalised tradition of pastoral care in Islam," the book's presentation of these terms and their histories represents a landmark achievement, along with it being "based on the first major empirical study of Muslim chaplaincy."

Chapter 1 provides a one-paragraph summary of the other chapters "so that readers can identify those parts of the book that will be of most interest to them ... [The reader will get] a rich description of the personnel, practice and politics of contemporary Muslim involvement in chaplaincy in England and Wales, based on extensive qualitative research on religious leadership and pastoral care in Islam."

After these brief descriptions, the authors present "The Growth and Development of Muslim Chaplaincy" in Britain as being a rather haphazard undertaking from the 1970s to 1990s, a time when "Muslims involved in prison or hospital visiting were often termed in Britain as 'visiting ministers.'"

The evolution toward becoming "Muslim chaplains" started in 1991, when the Patient's Charter mandated respect for and the enabling of meeting all patients' religious and spiritual needs, regardless of their faith tradition. In 1999 the Prison Service Chaplaincy Headquarters, the equivalent of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons, established the position of "Muslim Advisor." In 2003 the Prison Service replaced the title Muslim "visiting minister" with "Muslim Chaplain." Around this time, there were more British-born English-speakers from British Islamic seminaries, particularly from the Deobandi school.

In 2003 The Markfield Institute of Higher Education, which specializes in Islamic subjects, established the "Certificate in Muslim Chaplaincy," a diploma that is accredited by the British Accreditation Council. In 2007, as a result of the collaborative efforts of England's Department of Health, the Muslim Spiritual Care

Provision in the National Health Service (NHS), a project run by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in partnership with the Department of Health, completed a three-day intensive training course for aspiring Muslim healthcare chaplains.

A little bit of extratextual research showed that the aforementioned information represents far more than meets the eye. One of Great Britain's Office for National Statistics websites reads:

> Muslim Spiritual Care Provision in the NHS [National Health Service] is a project run by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in partnership with the Department of Health. It is working towards achieving an adequate supply of chaplains in the Muslim faith community. 2001 Census data on Muslim population was used by the Muslim Spiritual Care Provision in the NHS *to secure funding for employment of imams paid for by the Departments of Health's central funding of chaplaincy services* [reviewer's emphasis].
> This work is ongoing and the project is working to increase the number of Muslim chaplains available to the NHS by creating awareness about the need, together with running training courses and maintaining a database of all aspiring chaplains. It also aims to provide chaplaincy coverage in all geographical areas where the Muslim community is represented in significant numbers.[†]

The rest of the chapter is devoted to specifics about the research project upon which the book is based, namely, the Muslim Chaplaincy Research Project. It also details the methodology, including single paragraphs on the demographics of the major areas of Muslim chaplaincy employment: prisons, hospitals, and educational institutions.

The stated purpose of Chapter 7, "Muslim Chaplaincy in the United States of America," is to discuss and compare chaplaincy there in order to better view its development and practice in the United Kingdom. This chapter self-admittedly draws upon extensive online research from websites like the Pew Research Center to describe the makeup of the American Muslim population and to review both the excellent resources and descriptions of Muslim chaplaincy groups, as well as their training and accreditation. Interviews conducted at the Islamic Society of North and America's (ISNA) annual convention in Chicago in 2011 formed the chapter's second major source of information.

[†]https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusbenefits/howothersusecensusdata/thirdsectorandcommunitygroups/casestudymuslimcouncilofbritainandmuslimspiritualcareprovisioninthenhs

A major feature of the chapter is clinical pastoral education (CPE) and the importance of Muslim chaplains in the United States being credentialed with CPE along with being trained as an *'ālim* (scholar) in the traditional Islamic sciences.

The discussion focuses on hospital chaplaincy and, tangentially, health care exigencies for chaplains in higher education, the military, and prisons. The major takeaway is that the benefits for chaplains in these areas make such training imperative: "there is a need to develop *al-Fiqh al-Waqi* (contextual fiqh), or *al-Fiqh al-Aam wal Khas* (particular fiqh, as opposed to general understanding of fiqh)...[every] chaplain [has] to understand three important realities in their pastoral practice, these being: i) the dominant culture, ii) the sub-culture, iii) individual need."

Muslim chaplaincy within the American prison system comprises a major portion of this relatively new field. Information concerning how the office of prison chaplaincy grew due to inmate litigation would have made an important contribution to the book. Although the authors did expand upon Dr. James Jones' D. Min. thesis, "Islamic Prison Ministry," held to be "the first reflective piece of writing about Muslim prison chaplaincy," they did not elucidate upon their own observation that "Muslim chaplaincy has a history in the US [that] begins with the early experiences of NOI ministers and volunteers in the 1930's...."

Indeed, the watershed decision of *Cooper v. Pate* (1964) expanded and redefined prison chaplaincy in general and Muslim chaplaincy in particular by noting that Thomas X. Cooper, a member of the Nation of Islam (NOI) was being punished for his religious views [Justice Rehnquist (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cruz_v._Beto)].

Cruz, a Buddhist, won *Cruz v. Beto* (1972), a case based on religious freedom. However, he offered his legal help to Muslims only after they rioted against being punished – forced labor in cotton fields six days a week – because Cruz had helped them present their legal claim that the prison's authorities were violating their civil rights (http://www. writwritermovie.com/downloads/ww.press.kit.pdf).

The cases of *Pierce v. LaVallee* and *Sostre v. LaVallee*, [wherein] "federal judges ruled that the men had rights to practice their religion. Sostre and two other Nation of Islam [prisoners] sued the warden, claiming they had been denied the right to buy the Quran and practice their religion and had been put in solitary confinement as punishment" (https://wamu.org/story/17/04/17/how-one-inmate-changed-the-prison-system-from-the-inside/) preceded that of *Cruz v. Beto*. These three cases and others directly affected and shaped prison chaplaincy.

An analysis of these and similar court cases would have enhanced an already excellent text and added a stronger incentive for the American reader. And Allah knows best.

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Islam, Individual Freedom, and the Pandemic: Reflections of a Muslim American Woman Living in the Middle East

Khabirah Yahya[*]

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, and among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
>
> – The Declaration of Independence, 1776

The Fourth of July holiday has just passed, which makes me think about the idea of individual freedom and how it means different things in the US than it does in the Middle East, where I currently reside. In the first few months of 2020, not only was the world exposed to the horrors of the current COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic slowdown, but also to the bizarre reaction of much of the US to this contagion. As coronavirus diagnoses and deaths began to increase within the country during late February and into early March, a clear and very volatile divide in terms of how Americans responded to the pandemic also started to become apparent. On one side, some began to alert all of their friends on social media to the menace and call for lockdowns and quarantines in the interest of the communal public health. Many others, however, were vehemently against such measures and even stated that the coronavirus was a complete "hoax" and a "scam" being perpetrated by the left and Democrats to ensure the president's defeat in November. Some even went so far as to claim that Bill Gates had hatched this "scheme" in a bid for global domination.

The US government's initial response to the threat was neither immediate nor robust. Consequently, the infection spread rapidly. Not surprisingly, when domestic coronavirus cases began to increase exponentially in early March, numerous cities and states implemented and enforced lockdowns and quarantines. While many Americans were grateful for these governmental measures, the reaction of others was nothing less than astounding. Significant numbers of Americans began asserting that their constitutional rights as citizens were being infringed upon and started demanding the economy's immediate reopening.

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At this point, I started reflecting on the meaning of freedom in America. Within a couple of weeks, the situation grew stranger when masses of people, many of them armed and waving the Confederate flag, descended upon state capitols, demanding that their governor reopen the state at once in the name of freedom. Is this what the famous philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) meant when he said that every human being has the right to individual freedom? According to him, the government has a responsibility to protect an individual's life, liberty, and property because they are all basic human rights. However, in order for that to work, people have to give up some individual freedom in order to serve the common good.

Frequently, the documents that these protesters referred to were the US Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, upon which they based their claim that the state-imposed lockdowns directly violated their fundamental liberties. They often acknowledged the virus' dangers and reality, but asserted that they had the right to choose whether to risk infection or not. It is clear from my reading of online US newspapers and watching American streaming news footage of many of these protests that these people truly believed in what they were saying and were aghast that their civil liberties were being "trampled upon" in the interest of public health.

As a resident of first one and then another Arab Middle Eastern country for more than a decade, all of this was very strange to me. I saw a very different reaction from both Arab governments and their people. As soon as COVID-19 cases began to appear, governments immediately shut down schools, imposed curfews, mandated the wearing of gloves and masks in public, suspended activities at all houses of worship, and imposed strict fines on anyone who refused to abide by these conditions (Staff, 2020). I will never forget the first time I heard the distress *adhān* echoing throughout my neighborhood's streets in response to the spread of COVID-19. Instead of the usual "come to prayer," I heard "pray in your homes." While feeling sad about the mosques' closing, I also felt relief and a sense of safety because I knew that the government was taking precautions to keep all of us safe. In the Arab Middle East, I have never heard anyone bring up the fact that they thought these measures were "tyrannical," "fascist," or "authoritarian," for they well understood that these were necessary measures and sacrifices taken for the overall public good and well-being.

To be sure, generally speaking, the governments of most Arab countries daily place many repressive anti-democratic restrictions on their citizens, and therefore the latter have no inherent expectation of "constitutionally mandated" liberties. Nevertheless, contrasting these two situations provides much food for thought about differing global notions of "liberty." For instance, Islamic teachings on dealing with infectious diseases and afflictions played a major role in how the Muslim-majority Middle Eastern countries responded. We, as Muslims, had al-

ready been taught through verified Prophetic reports that we should neither enter nor exit geographical areas in which plagues existed so as to contain their spread, and to stay at home instead of going to the places of worship to prevent an infection's spread.

According to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* hadith 5396 (1997), Sa'd reported: "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, 'If you hear of a plague in a land, then do not go into it. If it happens in land where you are, then do not go out of it.'" Not only are we instructed to contain the contagion, but we are given glad tidings of a reward from Allah if we patiently quarantine ourselves and remain hopeful. According to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* hadith 5402 (1997), A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that she asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) about the plague. He told her that it was a torment that Allah would send upon whom He willed. Allah then made it a mercy for the believers so that anyone in an afflicted area who stays therein, patiently hoping for His reward and believing that nothing will befall him except what Allah has foreordained for him, will receive a reward similar to that of a martyr. All of these instructions parallel the modern-day concepts of isolation and quarantine.

In the US, all of the protests against COVID-19 precautions, as well as their backing by several federal government leaders, clearly affected many governors and mayors. Even though it was quite clear that by the beginning of April 2020 the pandemic was not slowing down, many of them simply allowed the stay-in-place orders to expire (Wilson, 2020), disregarding the continued warnings of many public health experts that the coronavirus was still present and posed a looming, major existential threat. Nevertheless, large numbers of Americans, thrilled with their freedom, began having parties, going to packed restaurants and bars, and crowding beaches and parks. As a result, the country saw a record-breaking uptick in new infections and deaths during July 2020 (as I am writing this reflection). Furthermore, there will most likely be another major wave of infections and deaths that may equal or even exceed the first one.

Even though removing the stay-in-place orders was clearly a mistake, most state governmental officials are stating that it is now impossible to "put the genie back in the bottle," as it were, and are refusing to impose any further such orders. Even more appallingly, many of them are calling for public schools to fully reopen in the fall and simply act as though it is "business as usual." This action will almost certainly place millions of children, their family members, and their teachers at risk.

As a resident of the Arab Middle East, watching all of this unfold has led me to seriously wonder if the concept of "liberty" that many Americans embrace is seriously misplaced and a danger to the public welfare. After all, if obtaining "liberty" means having the freedom to make other people sick, to make one's own self ill, and to seriously infect one's family members, how can that truly be called

"freedom"? While the strict conditions in the region may seem to be anathema to many Americans, the fact remains that Arab countries have, like the UAE, a lower coronavirus-related infection and death rate than does the US. As such, many Arab Middle Easterners have been granted "liberty" from an awful illness, long-term negative health effects, and death. Upon reflection, as most Muslim-majority societies clearly have a far more collectivistic mindset, we tend to think of "freedom" in terms of "freedom for all," meaning that the larger community's well-being takes necessary precedence over the individual's self-centered wants and needs.

I concede the existence of many other factors underlying the collective anger toward the lockdowns and quarantines from certain factions of Americans. The fact that the US is highly individualistic also means that there are not enough social or governmental "safety nets" in place to help people who lose their livelihoods due to these quarantines. Therefore, much of this anger may have simply been due to fear that the greater public health might interfere with their personal survival needs. Nevertheless, the last few months have caused me to reflect a great deal upon the idea of freedom and the differences between the United States and Arab Middle Eastern societies. Indeed, while the US constantly brags on the world stage that its citizens have a far higher amount of "individual freedoms" than do other global citizens, it frankly seems to me that this "individual freedom" can sometimes be very dangerous for the public welfare.

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Islamic Psychology: Expanding Beyond the Clinic

Carrie York Al-Karam[*]

Introduction

As a modern field of inquiry, Islamic psychology (IP) has been emerging since roughly the 1970s. However, it has only noticeably accelerated into a recognizable "thing" over the past six or seven years, although what we today call psychology is by no means new to the Islamic intellectual tradition. In its modern expression, IP has been defined and conceptualized in a variety of ways, but is primarily a domain that seeks to develop theoretical and applied frameworks of psychology rooted in Islam. The field is still relatively small, both in terms of individuals involved as well as foci of scholarship. Many of us are psychologists or related mental health professionals (psychiatrists, counselors etc.), and much of the work focuses on clinical and mental health aspects such as models of the self/soul and spiritually integrated psychotherapy.

Given that the primary scope and readership of the *Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice* is not related to psychology, the purpose of this article, therefore, is to present IP to a new audience and to examine ways to grow the field, which includes expanding scholarship "beyond the clinic" as well as inviting colleagues in other domains, such as religious/Islamic studies, philosophy, history, chaplaincy, the arts, and beyond to contribute. Also, to bring the discussion within the purview of cross-cultural competency, a brief discussion of IP within an American context will be given, as well as recommendations for ways forward. This field review will be from the perspective of a Muslim psychologist actively involved in IP's development.

What is Islamic Psychology? Its Emergence and Current Conceptualizations

IP has emerged in many scholarly contexts (for a description of some of this landscape, see Introduction in York Al-Karam, 2018a). Of particular relevance to our discussion here is the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) movement, which has been primarily about how Muslims can contribute to the knowledge economy

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from within their own worldview. Without digressing into a discussion of this movement specifically, as it relates to the field of psychology, most would agree that it was Malik Badri (b. 1932), a Sudanese psychologist now nearly 90 years old, who began to call for its Islamization as early as the 1960s.

In his landmark publication *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists* (1979), as well as his later publications (for example, see *The Islamization of Psychology: Its Why, Its What, Its How, and Its Who,* 2009), he highlighted a number of issues related to this process. According to him, Islamization was only needed in the areas of psychology "influenced by Western secularism and its ungodly worldview and its deviant conceptions about the nature of man" (p. 10). The domain of what many now refer to as Islamic psychology includes scholarship in areas of psychology that Badri said needed to be Islamized, some of which are highlighted below; however, it also includes other types of inquiry. Without repeating too much of what has been written previously (York Al-Karam, 2018a; 2018b), consider the following:

- Some scholarship focuses on the "nature of man" (ontology). This work explores concepts such as *fitra*, *qalb*, *nafs*, *rūḥ*, and *'aql*, to name a few. Important publications in the psychological literature in this area include Mohammed (1995, 2009), Haque and Mohamed (2009), Haque and Keshavarzi (2013), Keshavarzi and Khan (2018), Keshavarzi, Khan, Ali, and Awaad (2020), Rothman (2018), and Rothman and Coyle (2018, 2020).
- Some scholarship is on spiritually integrated psychotherapy, an approach that integrates Islamic teachings, principles, philosophies, and/or interventions with Western therapeutic approaches (York Al-Karam, 2018a, p. 3). Examples of Islamically integrated psychotherapy include the use of Quranic stories in family therapy (Malik, 2018), an Islamic model of the self in counseling (Rothman, 2018; Rothman & Coyle, 2018, 2020; Keshavarzi and Khan, 2018), or using Prophet Mohammed as a psychospiritual exemplar in cognitive therapy (Lodi, 2018). There are also a number of noteworthy books on this topic by Rassool (2016), Khalily (2018), York Al-Karam (2018a), and, most recently, Keshavarzi, Khan, Ali, and Awaad (2020).
- Some think the work of early Muslim scholars such al-Kindi, al-Razi, al-Balkhi, al-Ghazali, and others is IP, as they wrote about topics that today are considered "psychology." See Haque (2004), Awaad and Ali (2014, 2015), and Awaad, Elsayed, Ali, and Abid (2020) for more on this.
- Some suggest that IP is essentially *taṣawwuf* or *tazkiyat al-nafs*, arguing that these are Islam's version of psychology/psychotherapy (York Al-Karam, 2018a, 2018b).

- Some suggest that IP is about spiritual diseases of the heart like anger, hatred, or arrogance – that they are Islam's version of "psychopathology" (York Al-Karam, 2018a, 2018b).
- Some think IP is psychology *about* Muslims, *by* Muslims, and/or *for* Muslims.
- Some think it is an "Islam and Psychology" domain that mainly compares/contrasts or filters various psychology ideas through an Islamic lens (Kaplick & Skinner, 2017; Abu Raiya, 2012).
- Some use other names such as Quranic psychology, Islamic moral psychology (for example, see Bakhtiar, 2019), or Islam-based psychology (Fatemi, 2020). Related to this, some work that could be considered IP might call itself something else completely and be positioned in other scholarly contexts.
- Some confuse it with the field of Muslim mental health, which explores the mental health needs of Muslims (York Al-Karam, 2018a; 2018b).

In addition to these specific types of scholarship or conceptual understandings, some theoretical work has also been done on the field. For example, York Al-Karam (2018b) proposed the Tawheedic Paradigm as a conceptual model to both define and unite the field. This paradigm generates the following definition: IP is an "interdisciplinary science where psychology subdisciplines and/or related disciplines engage scientifically about a particular topic and at a particular level with various Islamic sects, sources, sciences, and/or schools of thought using a variety of methodological tools" (p. 101).

The model highlights that neither psychology nor Islam are one thing; rather, they are broad umbrella terms that encompass many sub-"things." And it is those sub-"things" that engage with each other to produce bits of knowledge that advance the field. This definition naturally points to and accommodates the great diversity of Islam/Muslims, and therefore shows how diverse IP can be. Other work includes exploring collaborative research methods (Alias & Noor, 2009; Kaplick, Chaudhary, Hasan, Yusuf, & Keshavarzi, 2019) or other matters related to the field (Sahin, 2013; Long, 2019).

Expanding IP
Although much good work has been done, much of it has been clinical. Clinical psychology is perhaps the largest and most popular of psychology's subfields, as it focuses on psychopathology and treatment. Despite its great relevance and importance to us all, psychology has many other areas.

For example, social psychology is about understanding human behavior in groups and includes topics like prejudice, altruism, social conformity, obedience, aggression, and groupthink. Industrial/Organizational psychology explores job

performance, employee characteristics, recruitment processes, training needs, employee motivation, and job satisfaction. Positive psychology explores human flourishing and includes topics like virtues and character strengths. Educational psychology explores teaching, instructional design, and curriculum development. School psychology deals with children in schools, the learning process, and classroom and school environments.

Although a few publications on some of psychology's other areas do exist (for example, see Chalebi, 2001; Ali & Keshavarzi, 2016, 2017. For forensic psychology and for a few other non-clinical areas, see chapters in Noor, 2009), these fields are still mostly unexplored.

Moreover, all of psychology's subfields are built upon units of knowledge, including learning, memory, perception, motivation, emotion, intelligence, and human development. Psychologists then apply this knowledge to understanding a whole host of other topics like parenting, stress, abuse, trauma, human rights, disability, ethics, shyness, adoption, and violence – the list is endless! So the questions then become what Islam has to say about these topics and how that is in conversation with what modern psychology says about them.

We also need IP scholarship in the area of *tazkiya*/*taṣawwuf*. Staple topics for theologians, this area includes topics like spiritual diseases of the heart such as anger and jealousy, behavioral "disorders" like lying or gossip, spiritual practices like *murāqaba* and *muḥāsaba*, or developing virtues like patience, gratitude, and overall good character.

Other ways the field could grow are in areas that are indeed "psychology" but are often not necessarily thought of as such. For example, urban and architectural design, poetry, music, and art. In other words, what do Islam and Muslim thought have to say about these and how is that in conversation with psychological perspectives of the day on them?

In addition to expanding scholarship, growing the field also requires the involvement of more people. In terms of psychologists, we need more Muslim psychologists in general, regardless of their scholarly interests. But we also need more of them in IP. Perhaps even more importantly, we need scholars from religious/Islamic studies, philosophy, history, and beyond to contribute. Surely, they are already working on many of the topics with which IP is concerned. The problem is that we do not talk to each other, largely because the Western academy makes a demarcation between sciences like psychology and the humanities like religious studies or philosophy, despite the fact that all of these domains are inherently interdisciplinary. This demarcation is foreign to the Islamic intellectual tradition. Thus, as part of growing the IP field, we must bridge this scholarly divide.

I would also argue that we need to think about how the science of IP might have relevance to other applied domains like pastoral care and chaplaincy, especially given the burgeoning field of Islamic chaplaincy within the North American

context over the past years and since the establishment of programs at institutions like Bayan Claremont and Hartford Seminary as well as organizations like the Association of Muslim Chaplains.

Islamic Psychology in a non-Muslim Context

In addition to examining how IP can grow, at least two questions need to be addressed. First, what relevance does IP have vis-à-vis mainstream psychology and, second, what relevance does IP have to non-Muslims?

In order to answer the first question, one must understand psychology today. Although the discipline promotes itself as being a (secular) science, having eschewed itself from its earlier religious and philosophical roots, in reality this is not entirely true because there are pockets within the field that explore beyond "science." For example, the American Psychological Association (APA), the largest professional psychology association in the world with some 120,000 members, has divisions, books, and journals that focus on these areas.

In Division 36, the Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, psychologists study things like virtue and character development (Schnitker), constructs like humility and grace (Hill), religious struggles (Exline), spiritual development (King), and the robust area of spiritually integrated psychotherapy (Pargament, 2007; Richards & Bergin, 2001, 2003; Plante, 2009; York Al-Karam, 2018; Rothman, 2018, 2020; Keshavarzi & Khan, 2018, 2020). The largest study to date on this topic, *Bringing Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapies into the Healthcare Mainstream: A Big-Data Project* (Bridges, 2020) was supported with a $3.5 million dollar grant from the John Templeton Foundation and had over 30,000 responses from clients and 23,000 responses from clinicians (Bridges, 2020). Moreover, one of APA's peer-reviewed journals, *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, recently published a paper on IP that presents an Islamic theoretical orientation to psychotherapy based on an explicitly Islamic notion of ontology (Rothman, 2020). One can also consider work on religious psychologies (for example, see Sisemore & Knapp, 2020).

Without digressing too much (one could write a whole book on this topic!), the point is this: Despite many remaining challenges, psychology in the 21st century has very much been about "diversity and inclusion." We would therefore be remiss to ignore this, as well as the large volume of scholarship that has pushed the boundaries of psychology, whether it be in the areas of religion, philosophy, or even related to the decolonization of psychology, some of which can be seen in the development of Native American, Latino, Asian, Black, and other racial, ethnic, or minority psychologies (for example, see Division 45 – the Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity, and Race. For philosophy, see Division 24 – the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology).

That is not to say that anti-religion sentiments in psychology have disappeared, because they have not. There are many psychology departments and psychologists who are staunchly secular and even anti-religion. There are also psychologists who are oblivious to the areas of psychology scholarship that push its boundaries into the realms of religion, philosophy, and the like, even though it has become a rather robust area by now. This will always be the case, because secularists/atheists will always exist and one cannot always know everything about one's field, especially when it is as vast as psychology.

However, Muslims need to understand the nuance of this landscape not only as potential psychology consumers, but also because it helps one understand IP's position within psychology today – that it is not some niche field, but rather part and parcel of the broader mainstream. It is also worth mentioning that IP should not be a domain that is exclusive to Muslim scholars, even though many of us will be Muslim.

In terms of IP's relevance to non-Muslims, we must first acknowledge that according to Islamic teachings, God sent Islam to everyone. Thus, we should think about IP in that way as well. Relatedly, literature has explored Islamic therapies on non-Muslims, with some positive results (for example, see York Al-Karam, 2015). In short, each IP scholar must ask the question as to what potential relevance his or her work might have to anyone – what its "generalizability" might be. That said, not everything is generalizable. All things have limitations – just like secular psychology – and there is nothing wrong with that. But we still need to ask the question, and there most likely will always be some kernel of benefit even for those for whom it might be less relevant.

Moving Forward

This brief article has presented a few suggestions as to how to expand IP "beyond the clinic," as well as how this field might fit within an American context. In terms of moving forward, a number of other things can also be done.

First, people already working in higher education (especially professors) can ask how their departments could contribute to the IP field. For example, does their department have faculty interested in IP? If not, what could they do to change that? Do they have students who are interested in IP topics? Does the department have the capacity to offer a talk, symposium, conference, or course on IP? And if it does, could it be co-hosted or cross-listed with other departments, thereby being an opportunity to collaborate with departments that do not usually talk to each other?

Relatedly, Muslim educational institutions in the United States like Zaytuna College, Bayan Claremont, the American Islamic College, as well as seminaries like the Islamic Seminary of America or other institutions that focus on the Islamic sciences and spirituality, could ask what interests and capacities

they have. Classical Muslim scholars like al-Balkhi and others who wrote on topics that we today call psychology were first and foremost theologians, and certainly theologians are experts on many of IP's topics. Perhaps those who are first trained as theologians could consider going into psychology as a profession.

Second, those interested in the field can take advantage of existing infrastructure. For example, the Alkaram Institute, the only academic institution in the US dedicated to IP and whose vision is to become the first Muslim graduate school of psychology in the US, has a research fellowship that was designed to expand IP scholarship by providing support to MA and PhD students in universities anywhere in the world doing their theses or dissertations on IP, but whose departments do not have faculty with the requisite expertise. The initiative also supports (non-student) professionals who would like to develop an area of IP scholarship but need support in doing so. Related to this, completed scholarship can then be presented at conferences sponsored by the International Association of Islamic Psychology (IAIP) and published in its *Journal of Islamic Psychology* (which will release its first volume in the near future).

Third, the APA and the American Academy of Religion (AAR) could start talking to each other. The APA has divisions that explore religion, and the AAR has program units that explore psychology – our subjects and topics of inquiry are not mutually exclusive! It is not entirely clear how this might happen, but it would certainly be historic and also quite provocative if it did. Could Muslims, via the field of IP, facilitate a change in this regard?

There are many challenges to developing a "new" field of inquiry. As it relates specifically to IP and within an American context, some of these challenges are the academy's disjointed nature, Islamic perspectives being in the minority, and also a general lack of knowledge about the field's existence and goals.

That said, I believe we are in a *zeitgeist* of diversity and inclusion. Given this, it is a good time to be a Muslim in the United States and in psychology. People are calling for Muslim voices, and Muslims are speaking up and contributing. What is most needed now are individuals from all fields of inquiry who are creative, confident, and authentic in who they are and what they have to offer to come together and collectively advance Islamic psychology's noble mission, which is "to benefit society and improve lives" – for everyone, everywhere.

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Being Muslim in a Global Pandemic: Reflections of a Former Niqabi

Baheejah Aaliyah Fareed[*]

On December 31, 2019, Chinese health officials informed the World Health Organization (WHO) about a collection of 41 patients with a peculiar form of pneumonia. Before this phenomenon, it was common to see Chinese traveling worldwide while wearing a face mask. So when the US reported its first case of the novel coronavirus in late January 2020, seeing some American residents wearing a face mask was not an obvious clue as to how profoundly COVID-19 would affect the way we live our daily lives in the "indestructible" and "free" United States of America. Nor was this epoch an indication of how a virus could help people empathize with each other no matter their cultural background or spiritual faith practice.

Considering the current state of the world with our new masked "uniform," it is interesting to see how so many people who had frowned upon the niqab (which some Muslim women choose to wear to prevent spreading "the virus" of female objectification) now feel the need to wear a mask to prevent the spread of a microscopic parasite known as a virus. Many Muslim women also wear it as an expression of freedom. In my case it was a form of feminism, for it forced people to deal with my mind and modesty in lieu of my body and sexuality.

Although I no longer feel the need to wear the niqab to be respected for my mind and morality, I can still empathize with women who choose that way of life. For eleven years I felt it was best to cover my face in public to keep my spirituality alive. To me, losing spirituality in society is akin to death. Such niqabis who are concerned about morality dying in a given society are seen as extremist, oppressed, and hot (from the sun). Consequently, there is a double standard when it comes to face covering, especially in Paris and similar places. Internationally, Paris is promoted as a place of freedom and a defender of a woman's right to be uncovered, but not to be covered. In that city, covering one's face is discouraged if the goal is to maintain a healthy spirit and encouraged only to keep one's body healthy.

About a decade ago I was on a flight from Saudi Arabia to the US and had an eight-hour layover in Paris. Naturally I wanted to see the sights of a place that is

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marketed worldwide as the "Mecca" of bucket list destinations, the place where all the "feel goods" are exemplified (food, freedom, art, and fashion). I was confused by the actions of the niqabi women on the plane – they had removed their veils when we landed. I would soon come to learn the influence of discrimination and isolation. When I attempted to leave the airport to explore the city, the airport official told me, "No pass." I stood my ground and demanded that a female attendant "pass" me by viewing my face when I lifted my veil.

This was supposed to be a place for women's rights and liberty, but obviously not for religious freedom. It is still curious to me how France has banned covering the face (for religious freedom), and yet now has face covering requirements, albeit I no longer choose or feel the need to wear a niqab. Previously, the French laughed at and ridiculed niqabi women (some still do), but now many of them are experiencing the emotions associated with the need to cover their faces in public in ways that are very similar to those of Muslim women. Yes it is hot, uncomfortable, not fashion forward; however, its wearing is now necessary to save lives. While the coronavirus has given many people the chance to empathize with how some Muslims feel, it has undoubtedly challenged our ability to practice our faith. For instance, we see that stopping on the road to use a public restroom to perform ablution and then observe our devotional prayers is presently a thing of the past. Mosques are empty, and the inconceivable –cancelling the hajj season for most of the world's Muslims – has actually happened.

The whole world is indubitably feeling the pain of restrictions being placed on our ways of life. We all have something incontestably in common: living with heightened safety precautions, including covering our faces in public, being obsessed with hand sanitizer/foaming soap, social distancing, and a concern for the future of life as we knew it. As a Muslim woman striving to be seen and respected as a human being, I cannot help but feel gratitude and hope that maybe my Lord is using the novel coronavirus to bring the right people together in order to share a much-needed collaborative effort to advocate on behalf of all humanity.

Race Talk: Jameela, Justice, Jihad

James (Jimmy) Jones[*]

As a "Black" man in America …The terror is real … The pain is palpable … The trauma is deep …

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was killed while in the custody of Minneapolis police officers. The video of his demise under the knee of a 20-year police veteran who was also a "field training officer" went viral and resurfaced this country's deadly history of racial violence at the hands of sworn "peace" officers. The 8 minutes and 46 seconds that the officer kneeled on Floyd's neck literally rocked the world with multi-cultural and multi-national protests for weeks. Some of them remain ongoing.

Sadly, there were no such protests or outrage when Jameela Yasmeen Arshad died on January 10, 2005, while in the custody of Kenner's (LA) police. Her story is as all-American as it can get. An immigrant who had come to the US after high school, she eventually attained a pre-med degree from Lehman College, City University of New York. After graduating from the George Washington School of Medicine, she ultimately became a successful, well-respected medical doctor whose specialties included neurology, internal medicine, emergency medicine, and pain management. On the evening of January 10, 2005, she did what any good Muslim or conscientious medical doctor would do – she stopped to assist a child who had been hit by a vehicle. What happened immediately afterward is a matter of dispute (without Dr. Arshad being alive to give her version).

However, what is clear from a reading of official court transcripts is that none of the police on the scene believed that this middle-aged "Black" woman could possibly be a doctor. Since she could not produce her credentials right away, the situation escalated to such a point that an officer used a "leg sweep" to bring her face down on the ground, sat on her while he handcuffed her, and ended with her dying in the back of a police vehicle. Despite the terror, pain, and trauma caused by countless situations like the two above, our understandable outrage should not cause us to lose our morals and our minds.

> O ye who believe, stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair-dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you serve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just! That is next to piety; and fear Allah, for Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do. (5:8)

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The Quran and life-example of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are clear – Islam's moral code forbids us to be unjust even if others are unjust to us. Consequently, we cede Islam's moral high ground when we participate in racist name-calling or angry acts of violence against persons or property simply because we are mad. A riot is a riot, no matter who precipitates it or participates in it. No amount of verbal word play by college professors or media pundits can obscure this fact.

Five years after the riots following the police custody killing of Freddie Gray, my hometown of Baltimore has yet to recover. Hundreds of structures in the "Black" community are still fire-damaged, and we have a primarily black-on-black murder rate of about 300 people per year. Additionally, when we look at the history of racial riots in this country, the deadliest ones that resulted in the loss of life were clearly those done by "Whites" against "Blacks." For example, the infamous Tulsa (OK) race riot of 1921 destroyed more than 35 square blocks of what was known at that time as Black Wall Street, left approximately 800 wounded, and left more than 30 members of the "Black" community dead.

"The best thing that we can learn to do is to think for ourselves."

– Malcolm X

This oft-quoted phrase attributed to Malcolm X reminds us that should not let our righteous anger at police-involved shootings cloud our intellect. For instance, we defy logic when we:

1. Claim that "Black-on-Black" violence should not be a part of the discussion of police-involved shootings. One of the main reasons that inner-city neighborhoods (like the one in which I live) are policed like a war zone is because of the easy access to guns (thanks to the NRA and others). These issues are clearly related.

2. Label ourselves "Black" Muslims, as if the term describes an essentially homogenous group. Any cursory examination of who we are reveals a community that is much more diverse than it was 60 years ago (see Chapter 1 of Eugene Robinson's *Disintegration: The Splintering of Black America* for an insightful discussion of this based on facts – census data – rather than angry feelings and simplistic rhetoric). We should not primarily define ourselves based on our collective victimization.

3. Act as if there is more than one race – the human race. The fact that all human beings have common ancestors is something that the Quran (see 4:1) and even staunch atheistic Darwinists like the biologist Richard Dawkins agree upon!

If we are to be witnesses for all humanity (2:143) and play a decisive role in leading the nation and the world out of this and other current crises, we must regain our Islamic morals and intellect.

So, when it comes to racism and other oppressions, the most important jihad for those of us who reside in the United States of America is not a physical fight. Rather, it is the more intense *jihād al-nafs* – that is, the struggle against those individual weak internal inclinations that call us to "fight fire with fire." We cannot be students of the meanest part of ourselves, and thus we should struggle daily to emulate our beloved Prophet (PBUH), who was sent as a mercy to all of creation.

Call for Papers

Domestic Violence and the American Muslim Community Response

The *Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice* is an annual double-blind peer-reviewed online academic and interdisciplinary journal published by the Islamic Seminary Foundation / The Islamic Seminary of America and hosted on Indiana University's electronic journal portal. Scholars, students, and researchers are invited to submit articles that combine intellectual rigor with community engagement to provide a platform for exchanging their latest findings. The timeline for peer review and publication is in the range of 5-6 months.

One of the *Journal*'s key aims is to foster dialogue among academics, researchers, community leaders, and students regarding the Islamic faith and how it is practiced in America. To this end, successful proposals will reflect theoretical and methodological sophistication and engagement with existing scholarship, while also being accessible to non-specialists.

This volume will synthesize and advance both theoretical and empirical research about domestic violence awareness and responses within education, sociology, political science, healthcare, psychology, social service, the arts, and similar disciplines. Conference proceedings and book reviews (limited to the present year and immediately prior year) are also welcomed.

Themes to be addressed:
- **Theoretical papers:** How do we examine and analyze American Muslim contributions to the field in terms of developing methodologies, frameworks, and interventions to approach domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and related issues?
- **Historical studies:** How do we read and examine those historical events, organizations, and persons who have affected the community's responses to domestic violence for survivors, allies, and institutions?
- **American Islamic praxis:** How do we examine the new domestic violence-related practices, traditions, and cultures developing within our community?
- **Case studies, qualitative interviews, and oral histories of key people or organizations:** How do we examine and evaluate the conduct of our community's religious leadership – scholars, imams, and chaplains – with respect to internal and external challenges?

Possible Topics
Papers should focus on domestic violence's relation to key issues facing Muslims, such as the areas listed below. We are also open to other topics that fit within the volume's primary theme.

• Healthy familial relations from an Islamic perspective • Domestic violence's impact on familial relations and/or in the workplace • Domestic violence's responses and intersection with other movements • Domestic violence and the role of allies (e.g., imams, interfaith, other activists) • Domestic violence with regard to Muslim advocacy, social responsibility, gender and sexuality, psychology and mental health, the law, human rights, politics, and the impact of COVID-19, and giving voice to the community's racial and cultural diversity.

The Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice **Invites:**
• Social sciences and humanities-based research papers reflecting on all aspects related to Islamic faith and its practice in America.
• Abstracts of dissertations, thesis, and research findings related to the American Muslim community: 700-1,000 words.
• Shorter reflection pieces by activists, imams, and chaplains: 2,000-3,000 words.

Guidelines for Authors
• Standard research papers: 7,000-10,000 words in length, or longer if approved by the editor.
• Be in MS Word format, be original and unpublished research, double-spaced and single-sided, and conform to the Chicago Style.
• Contain a title, a 250-word abstract, 3-5 keywords, the text, references, and tables, figures, and appendices.
• Present all sources as in-text citations and provide page numbers for direct quotes. Footnotes are allowed only for explanatory purposes. Use the proper formatting guidelines: Chicago style for social sciences, humanities, and similar topics; APA style for psychology, nursing, communication, and similar topics.

Submission
• Send a brief note of intent noting the type, scope, and focus of your submission by December 30, 2020. You will receive a note of acceptance / non- acceptance by the end of January 2021.
• Send the completed paper by June 15, 2021, as an attachment, along with a 250-word abstract and a short academic biography.
• Decision Date: January, 2021.
• Submission Deadline: June 15, 2021.
• Publication Date: October 2021.
• Submissions are accepted via e-mail: journal@islamicseminary.org

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