Islamic Psychology

_Islamic Psychology_ or _ilm an-nafs_ (science of the soul) is an important introductory textbook drawing on the latest evidence in the sub-disciplines of psychology to provide a balanced and comprehensive view of human nature, behaviour and experience. Its foundation to develop theories about human nature is based upon the writings of the Qur’an, Sunnah, Muslim scholars and contemporary research findings.

Synthesising contemporary empirical psychology and Islamic psychology, this book is holistic in both nature and process and includes the physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions of human behaviour and experience. Through a broad and comprehensive scope, the book addresses three main areas: Context, perspectives and the clinical applications of applied psychology from an Islamic approach.

This book is a core text on Islamic psychology for undergraduate and postgraduate students and those undertaking continuing professional development courses in Islamic psychology, psychotherapy and counselling. Beyond this, it is also a good supporting resource for teachers and lecturers in this field.

**Dr G. Hussein Rassool** is Professor of Islamic Psychology, Consultant and Director for the Riphah Institute of Clinical and Professional Psychology/Centre for Islamic Psychology, Pakistan. He is accountable for the supervision and management of the four psychology departments, and has responsibility for scientific, educational and professional standards, and efficiency. He manages and coordinates the RICPP/Centre for Islamic Psychology programme of research and educational development in Islamic psychology, clinical interventions and service development, and liaises with the Head of the Departments of Psychology to assist in the integration of Islamic psychology and Islamic ethics in educational programmes and development of research initiatives and publication of research.
“Islamic Psychology is a fast-growing discipline. The present book is a pioneering effort to create a bridge between the conventional psychology, which I regard as reductionist, and the Islamic approach which is holistic and deals with the total human being. I strongly recommend it as a text for graduate programmes in Psychology.” – Professor Dr Anis Ahmad, Vice Chancellor, Riphah International University, Pakistan

“This pioneering work encompasses a variety of psychological topics from an Islamic perspective and is an essential text for students as well as practitioners of Islamic psychology. I congratulate the author for a job well done.” – Professor Dr Amber Haque, Professor of Clinical Psychology, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Doha, Qatar

“Prof G. Hussein’s book on Islamic Psychology is a blend of contemporary psychology and Islamic Psychology. The author has distinctively focused on the biological basis of behaviour grounded in Islamic teachings. I presume the mentioning of clinical supervision in this book is a unique contribution, which wasn’t mentioned in the Islamic psychology books previously.” – Professor Dr Muhammad Tahir Khalily, Vice President Academics and Professor of Clinical Psychology, International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan
Islamic Psychology

Human Behaviour and Experience from an Islamic Perspective

G. Hussein Rassool
Abu Hurayrah reported the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as saying: “If anyone pursues a path in search of knowledge, Allah will thereby make easy for him a path to paradise; and he who is made slow by his actions will not be speeded by his genealogy” (Sunan Abi Dawud).
## Contents

[List of illustrations and tables](*_x_*)

*Preface*  
*xv*

*Acknowledgements*  
*xvii*

### PART I  
**Islamic psychology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Islamic psychology: Context, definitions and perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A brief history of Islamic psychology: Origins and heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Perspectives on human nature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PART II  
**Biological and developmental psychology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Biological bases of behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Development and reproductive behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lifespan development: From conception to death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Learning, conditioning and modelling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PART III  
**Social and personality psychology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Social psychology: Social cognition, attitude and prejudice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Personality development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Affective behaviour: Emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Drive behaviour: Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Prosocial behaviour: Altruism and helping behaviours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART IV**

**Cognitive psychology**

| 13 | State of consciousness, sleep and dreaming | 297 |
| 14 | Memory: Nature, types, stages and memorisation | 325 |
| 15 | Reason, wisdom and intelligence | 343 |

**PART V**

**Health psychology**

| 16 | Health psychology: Models and perspectives | 367 |
| 17 | Health psychology model: An Islamic perspective | 393 |
| 18 | Health promotion: An effective tool for global health | 410 |
| 19 | Biological, psychological, social and spiritual aspects of aggression | 440 |
| 20 | Stress, coping strategies and interventions | 461 |

**PART VI**

**General and abnormal psychology**

| 21 | Psychology of addiction | 487 |
| 22 | Mental health, spirituality and possession | 512 |
| 23 | Models and approaches to disability | 535 |
| 24 | The anatomy of Islamic psychotherapy | 560 |
PART VII

Postscript

25  Decolonising psychology and its (dis)contents: Educational development and clinical supervision

26  Challenges and solutions in Islamic psychology

Index
## Illustrations and tables

### Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Stages in the study of psychology</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Conceptual definition of Islamic psychology</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Structure of a neuron</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Division of the nervous system</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>The central nervous system</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Lobes of the brain</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Human embryo (leech form)</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Embryo and gum</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Stages of observational spiritual modelling</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>James–Lange theory</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>The Cannon–Bard theory</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>The Schachter–Singer two-factor theory</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>Maslow’s hierarchy of needs</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>Model of knowledge and action</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>A model of spiritual motivation</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>The Islamic model of motivation</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>Latané and Darley’s decision model of helping</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>Types of memory</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>The three types of sensory memory</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>Types of long-term memory</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>Stages of memory: Encoding storage and retrieval</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>Tri-locals: Internal, external and spiritual loci of control</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>Health belief model</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>Theory of planned behaviour (TPB)</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>Transtheoretical model of change</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>Model of Islamic health psychology based on the Qur’an and Hadith paradigm</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>The Ottawa Charter</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>Islamic Charter for Health Promotion</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>Stress, nervous and endocrine system</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>Three stage-general adaptation syndrome</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>The transactional model of stress</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>Barriers – social model of disability</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>Decolonising psychology</td>
<td>585</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Illustrations and tables  xi

25.2 Models of approaches in curriculum development in Islamic psychology  586
25.3 Rassool’s framework for the Islamisation of knowledge  588
25.4 Berghout’s model of Islamisation  589
25.5 The Tawhid Paradigm for the Islamisation of psychology  590
25.6 Rassool’s vertical and horizontal integration curriculum approach  591
26.1 Role Adequacy, Role Legitimacy and Role Conflict  604

Tables

1.1 Limitations of secular psychology  8
1.2 A summary of the themes of Islamic psychology  17
3.1 Dimension of human nature  56
3.2 Ibn Al-Qayyim’s types of hearts and characteristics  71
3.3 Trials and tribulations: Reactions of the heart  72
3.4 Companions’ four types of heart, characteristics and meaning  72
4.1 The major neurochemical transmitters and their functions  86
4.2 Sympathetic system and the parasympathetic system  94
7.1 Pavlov’s classical conditioning  151
7.2 Comparison of classical and operant conditioning  153
7.3 Stages, process and action in spiritual modelling  161
9.1 Freud’s stages of psychosexual development  197
9.2 The five-factor model of personality  199
9.3 Biological basis of personality theory  201
11.1 Al-Syatibi’s levels of needs  251
13.1 Anatomy of sleep  303
13.2 Stages of sleep  304
13.3 Types of sleep in the Qur’an  307
13.4 Qailullah in Prophetic and other traditions  308
13.5 Some supplications and recitations of the Qur’an before sleeping  311
13.6 Examples of dream interpretation  316
16.1 The key variables of the HBM  377
16.2 Variables on the theory of reasoned action  378
17.1 Differences between health psychology and Islamic health psychology  394
17.2 Role of the Muslim health psychologist  396
18.1 Health promotion approaches and interventions  417
18.2 Application of the principles of harm and hardship for health promotion  424
18.3 Personal hygiene and health promotion  430
18.4 Nutrition and health promotion  430
18.5 General health prevention  431
20.1 Stress and anxieties faced by Muslims  469
20.2 Ways of dealing with stress and anxiety  476
21.1 A summary of models and theories of addiction  495
21.2 Cannabis  496
21.3 Characteristics of psychostimulants (amphetamines and cocaine)  497
21.4 Heroin  498
21.5 Ecstasy/methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA)  499
21.6 Catha edulis-khat (contains cathinone and cathine)  499
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>Hypno-sedatives</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>Volatile substances</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>Synthetic psychoactive substances</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.10</td>
<td>Alcohol: Effects</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>Symptoms of anorexia nervosa</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>Symptoms of bulimia nervosa</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>Summary of the typology, obsessions and compulsions of <em>Waswās al-Qahri</em></td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>A summary of some of the models of Islamic psychotherapy and counselling</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>Modules of BSc. Islamic Psychology</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>Some core contents on the integration of Islamic psychology</td>
<td>594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>Effectiveness model for curriculum development indicators</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Praise be to Allah, we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own souls and from our bad deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides will never be led astray, and whomsoever Allah leaves astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His slave and Messenger (Sunan al-Nasa‘: Kitaab al-Jumu‘ah, Baab kayfiyyah al-khutbah).

- *Fear Allah as He should be feared and die not except in a state of Islam (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allah.* (Ali ‘Imran 3:102)
- *O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person, and from him He created his wife, and from them both He created many men and women, and fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship) Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you.* (Al-Nisā’ 4:1)
- *O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him and speak (always) the truth.* (Al-Aĥzāb 33:70)
- *What comes to you of good is from Allah, but what comes to you of evil, [O man], is from yourself.* (An-Nisā 4:79)
The essence of this book is based on the following notions:

• The foundation of Islam as a religion is based on the Oneness of God.
• The source of knowledge is the Qur’an and Hadith (Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jamā’ah).
• Empirical knowledge from sense perception is also a source of knowledge through the work of classical and contemporary Islamic scholars and research.
• Islam takes a holistic approach to health. Physical, psychological, social, emotional and spiritual health cannot be separated.
• Muslims have a different worldview or perception of illness and health behaviour.
• There is wide consensus amongst Muslim scholars that psychiatric or psychological disorders are legitimate medical conditions that are distinct from illnesses of a supernatural nature.
• Muslims believe that cures come solely from Allah (God) but seeking treatment for psychological and spiritual health does not conflict with seeking help from Allah.

It is a sign of respect that Muslims utter or repeat the words “Peace and Blessing Be Upon Him” after hearing (or writing) the name of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

**Note**

1 The translations of the meanings of the verses of the Qur’an in this book have been taken, with some changes, from Saheeh International, The Qur’an: Arabic Text with corresponding English meanings.
This book on Islamic psychology is a synthesis of empirical psychology and Islamic psychology. The Islamic nature of the human being is whole, comprehensive and complete according to the Qur’an and Sunnah. It is holistic in both nature and process and includes the physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. In essence, Islamic psychology provides a balanced and comprehensive view of human nature, behaviours and experiences. Islam provides a balanced focus between universal principles of human behaviours (with its universal laws and Shar‘iah or Divine laws) and individual differences. The universal laws may include biological, social, psychological and economic dimensions based on empirical research. The Qur’an and Hadith provide guidance and basis to the laws of human nature. These laws can be used as the foundation to develop theories about human nature based upon the writings of Muslim scholars and contemporary research findings.

The concept of this book, reflected in the context and scope, attempts to address three main areas, these being the context, perspectives and applied psychology (clinical applications) from an Islamic approach. The aims of the book are to bring together both contemporary psychology and Islamic psychology, covering theories, application and providing a framework in one volume. It also aims to provide essential knowledge and understanding of the nature and psyche of human behaviour and the subdisciplines of psychology including developmental, social, health, cognitive, biological and abnormal psychology from an Islamic perspective. In addition, the contents of the book take this a step further by addressing existing issues from a more contemporary perspective by unravelling the topic and providing a parallel perspective from Islamic psychology. The book provides both theoretical understanding and clinical applications of the approach, whilst also addressing how to work with a wide range of psychological issues. The contents of the book expand on earlier texts in Islamic psychology and are presented in light of more recent research evidence. The book is, at least in part, a response to the questions posed by researchers, academics and clinicians, concerning the nature and focus of Islamic psychology.

The book is organised into seven parts (Parts I to VII) according to the sub-disciplines of psychology for easier reading, especially for those new to the topic of Islamic psychology. Part I sets the context by examining the concept of psychology, history of Islamic psychology origins and heritage and perspectives on human nature. Part II focuses on biological and developmental psychology, with chapters on the biological basis of behaviour, biological foundation, developmental and reproductive behaviours, lifespan development and learning and conditioning. Part III examines social and personality psychology and includes chapters on social psychology, personality development, emotion, motivation, altruism and helping behaviours. Part IV covers cognitive psychology and includes chapters on consciousness,
sleep and dreams, memory and reason, wisdom and intelligence. Part V is based on the sub-discipline of health psychology including chapters on health psychology and the Islamic model of health psychology. Part VI focuses on general and abnormal psychology with chapters on the psychology of addiction, mental health, spirituality and possession, models and approaches to disability and the anatomy of Islamic counselling and psychotherapy. Part VII is a postscript and deals with decolonising psychology, curriculum development, clinical supervision and challenges and solutions for Islamic psychology.

The features of the book include learning outcomes, summaries of key points and multiple-choice questions based on the contents of each chapter (Chapters 1–24).

The topic of Islamic psychology has received a rapidly growing amount of interest. This book is a core text on Islamic psychology for undergraduate and postgraduate students and those undertaking continuing professional development in Islamic psychology, psychotherapy and counselling. Beyond this, it would be a good supporting resource for teachers and lecturers due to the broad and comprehensive nature of the contents.
Acknowledgements

All praise is due to Allah, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family and his companions.

I would like to thank Eleanor Taylor and other supporting staff at Routledge for their valuable and constructive suggestions during the development of the proposal, and during the process of writing. It is with immense gratitude that I acknowledge the support and help from colleagues at Riphah Institute of Clinical and Professional Psychology/Centre for Islamic Psychology (RICPP/CIP) and faculty members at the Department of Psychology, International Open University, where I developed the undergraduate course in Islamic psychology.

I am thankful to my beloved parents who taught me the value of education. I am forever grateful to Mariam for her unconditional support and encouragement to pursue my interests, and for her tolerance of my periodic quest for seclusion in my home office, during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Lahore, Pakistan, to make this book a reality. I owe my gratitude to my family, including Idrees Khattab Ibn Adam Ali Hussein Ibn Hussein Ibn Hassim Ibn Sahaduth Ibn Rosool Al Mauritiusy, Adam Ali Hussein, Reshad Hasan, Yasmin Soraya, Isra Oya and Asiyah Maryam for their unconditional love and for providing unending inspiration. Thank you, Nabila Akhrif, for taking care of me while in London.

The author and publishers would like to thank Oxford University Press, Evelyne De Leeuw and Asim Abdelmoneim Hussein, (1999) for permission to use Figure 18.1, The Ottawa Charter, “Islamic health promotion and interculturalization,” Health Promotion International, 14(4), 347–353. We would also like to thank the Canadian Cancer Society for the permission to use several figures including Figure 4.1, The structure of a neuron, Figure 4.3, The central nervous system and Figure 4.4, Lobes of the brain, https://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-type/brain-spinal/brain-and-spinal-tumours/the-brain-and-spinal-cord/?region=on (permission 10th June 2020). Thank you to Umair Mudassar, Lecturer, Riphah Institute of Clinical and Professional Psychology, who designed some of the figures in the book.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of my teachers who enabled me, through my own reflective practices, to understand Islam and from their guidance to follow the right path. Finally, whatever benefits and correctness you find within this book are out of the Grace of Allah, Alone, and whatever mistakes you find are mine alone. I pray to Allah to forgive me for any unintentional shortcomings regarding the contents of this book and to make this humble effort helpful and fruitful to any interested parties.

Whatever of good befalls you, it is from Allah; and whatever of ill befalls you, it is from yourself. [An-Nisā’ (The Women) 4:79]
Part I

Islamic psychology
Chapter 1

Islamic psychology
Context, definitions and perspectives

Learning outcomes

• Define psychology from a secular perspective.
• Identify the contributions of the Islamisation of knowledge movement in the development of Islamic psychology.
• Identify the problems and issues associated with the secularisation of psychology.
• Discuss the relationship of the Qur’an and psychology.
• Discuss the concept of Islamic psychology.
• Formulate your own definition of Islamic psychology.
• Discuss the different approaches to Islamic psychology.

Introduction

The past decades have seen a proliferation of literature on the soul-searching for an agreed definition, theoretical or conceptual model of Islamic psychology, and its clinical application. Various definitions and attempts to develop a theoretical model, organisational development and a model of the soul have been met with a degree of success (Kaplick and Skinner, 2017; Al-Karam, 2018a,b; Rothman and Coyle, 2018; Keshavarzi et al., 2020). However, secular contemporary psychology has been promoted on a global scale, and its dominance has remained unchallenged in most academic institutions in the developing world, especially in majority-Muslim countries. Many Muslim psychologists have been educated in mostly Western universities or even in their own countries have remained in a “psycho-secular bubble.” It is apparent in many Muslim majority countries that the indigenous clinical and counselling psychologists have not only been acculturated by the Orientalist approach to psychology but also have internalised values which are alien to both their culture and Islamic traditions. Some of them have turned into the Muslim Freud with all the psychobabble of the Oedipus and Electra complexes and psychosexual development, and have followed blindly their “master’s voice.” This state of affairs resonates with the experiences of Malik Badri during his first lecture on Islamisation in 1963. Badri states that:

The lay audience liked it but my colleagues in the Department of Psychology were not happy with it. They prided themselves as scientists being guided by a neutral value-free scientific method in which there was no room for religious “dogma”. They used to
sarcastically ask me, “Is there a fasiq or evil physics or an un-Islamic chemistry? Then why speak to us about an Islamic psychology? If you do not accept Freudian psychoanalysis, then show us a better way to treat the emotionally disturbed.”

(Khan, 2015, p.161)

The emergence, current conceptualisations and the status of Islamic psychology should be viewed in their broader context, namely, the Islamisation of knowledge (IOK) movement. The Islamisation of knowledge movement gained momentum in the 1970s with the rise of the plight of the Muslim Ummah, the secularisation of the educational system in Muslim majority countries, the global re-awakening of Islamic consciousness and the concern of Muslim scholars towards the adoption of Western-oriented values and life-styles by Muslims. The concept of Islamisation of knowledge was proposed by Al-Attas (1978) who refers it to “The liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition, and then from secular control over his reason and his language” (p.41). Al-Faruqi (1982) characterises “Islamisation of knowledge” as “Recasting knowledge according to Islamic tenets. It includes various activities including removing dichotomy between modern and traditional systems of education and producing university level textbooks” (pp.13, 48). According to Ragab (1999), Islamisation refers to the “Integration of Islamic revealed knowledge and the human sciences.” In this context, Islamisation of knowledge also refers to the “Islamisation of contemporary or present-day knowledge.” Yusuf (2015) argues that Islamisation of knowledge is an attempt to fashion out an Islamic paradigm of knowledge based on the Islamic world view and its unique constitutive concepts and factors. This is because the knowledge as conceived in the West is value laden and has detached itself from Tawhid (unicity and sovereignty of God).

(Dzilo, 2012) maintains that the concept of “Islamisation of knowledge is not monosemous but involves multiple approaches to the various forms of modern-world thought in the context of the Islamic intellectual tradition, including metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and methodological premises regarding the modern issue of knowledge” (p.247). This means the integration of Islamic theology with scientific knowledge and evidence-based practice in diverse disciplines including psychology, sociology, health and medical sciences, economics and finance. This would result in psychological knowledge based on an Islamic worldview. Rassool (2019b; 2020) suggests that for psychology, the process of desecularisation has begun, and efforts are being made to reconstruct psychology based upon an Islamic epistemological paradigm. Perhaps we need to be reminded of a takeaway message from Malik Badri, the Father of contemporary Islamic psychology, that not all of Western psychology needs to be Islamised. Badri (1979) comments

We do not need to Islamise psychophysics or the physiology of sight and hearing and the anatomy of the eye and ear. Nor do we need to Islamise studies about the role of the brain neurotransmitter serotonin in our sleep behaviour and in adjusting our body clock, the role of the hormone noradrenalin in setting our energy level nor the influence of caffeine, alcohol or heroine on the human nervous system. We do not need to develop our
own Islamic statistical psychology or to raise an ethical battle against neutral theories of learning. Such areas, as I said are “no man’s land” between psychology and other exact sciences.

(p.9)

**Contemporary psychology: Definitions**

Psychology is a multifaceted discipline and as a science deals with the study of the nature of behaviour and experience. As a science, psychology attempts to study nature and nurture; our cognitive process; emotional behaviour; normal behaviour and abnormal behaviour; animal behaviour; social and collective behaviour; evolutionary behaviour; biological bases of behaviour; developmental process; organizational behaviour; health behaviours and illnesses; and how can we modify or change our behaviour. These are the objects of psychological investigation through research and the use of the scientific method, which entails observation, experiment, cause and effect, comparison, generalisation and robust analysis of data. The main goals of psychology are to describe, explain, predict and change human behaviours and mental processes.

Psychology, etymologically, means the science of the soul, that is, “psyche” means “breath, spirit, soul” and “logia” means “study of” or “research” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2020).

Psychology is a new scientific discipline, though its origins can be traced back to ancient Greece, 400–500 years BC, and the emphasis was a philosophical one. The intellectual discourse of philosophers including Socrates, Plato and Aristotle focuses on the nature, origin and the destiny of the human soul, free will vs. determinism, nature vs. nurture, attraction, memory and consciousness, etc. The question of nature and environment factors was hotly debated, for example, Plato argued that certain kinds of knowledge are innate or inborn, whereas Aristotle believed that each child is born as an “blank slate” (in Latin, tabula rasa) and that knowledge is primarily acquired through learning and experience. The “tabula rasa” phenomenon was the seed of a school later known as behaviourism or the behaviourist school of psychology.

The label psychologia (or psychology) was first used by Marko Marulić in his book, *Psichiologia de Ratione Animae Humanae* in the late 15th century or early 16th century (Krstic, 1964). In the English language, the earliest known reference to the word psychology was by Steven Blankaart in *The Physical Dictionary* which refers to “Anatomy, which treats the Body, and Psychology, which treats of the Soul,” in 1694 (Colman, 2014). There are several stages in the definition and study of psychology from a historical viewpoint (see Figure 1.1).

- First stage: Psychology was defined as the “study of the soul or spirit.”
- Second stage: It was again defined as the “study of the mind” (Christian Wolff’s *Psychologia Empirica*, 1732).
- Third stage: William James (1890), psychology as the “Study of science of mental life, both of its phenomena and their conditions.” John B. Watson (1913), psychology as the acquisition of information useful to the control of behaviour.
- Fourth stage: Psychology as the study of human behaviour and experiences and the “study of total behaviour” (consciousness and unconsciousness).
The American Psychological Association (2020) defines psychology as “the study of the mind and behaviour. Psychology is a diverse discipline, grounded in science, but with nearly boundless applications in everyday life.” Another definition of psychology is that it is the scientific study of the mind and how it dictates and influences our behaviour, from communication and memory to thought and emotion. It’s about understanding what makes people tick and how this understanding can help us address many of the problems and issues in society today.

(British Psychological Society)

The definitions of psychology from the literature vary from the scientific study of the human behaviour and experience, to the study of the human mind, its functions and behaviour, and the study of consciousness and unconsciousness. However, some psychologists deny the reality of the unconscious, and a significant majority deny the reality of the soul.

**Secularisation of psychology: Whose problem is it anyway?**

Historically, before the separation of science and religion and the emergence of the Western scientific paradigm, the study of the soul held a prominent place in discussions related to psychology. The formal separation of science and religion is the result, in part, of the secularisation of Western contemporary societies. This alienation of religion within the paradigm of “soulless” psychology means that “religious ideas, practice, and organizations lose their influence in the face of scientific and other knowledge” (McLeish, 1995, p.668). The emphasis on the secularisation of modern psychology is based on the premise that religion is based upon faith which cannot be evaluated by objective methods, whereas science is based on empiricism and experimentation in order to establish facts that are verifiable.

According to this philosophy, “the universe is self-sufficient, without supernatural cause or control, and that in all probability the interpretation of the world given by sciences is the only satisfactory explanation of reality” (Honer et al., 2015). Heiman (1998) maintains that “Faith is the acceptance of the truth of a statement without questions or needing proof,” and scientists, “question and ask for proof” (p.7). Reber (2006) asserts that “although secularisation
Islamic psychology has changed the nature and quality of the relationship between psychology and religion it has not undone the relationship altogether. Religion still matters for many people, including psychologists, at some level” (p.194).

What is of interest here is the work of William James (1902/1999) in The Varieties of Religious Experience, because he warned about the separation of religious experience from the academic pursuit of understanding human behaviour. James argued that,

to describe the world with all the various feelings of the individual pinch of destiny, all the various spiritual attitudes, left out from the description—they being as describable as anything else—would be something like offering a printed bill of fare as the equivalent for a solid meal.

(p.543)

He made three cardinal points: There is a variety of feelings, attitudes and experience that are religious in nature and significant to human life; religious experiences are as describable as any other human experience; and any description of human life that excludes religious experience will be incomplete in understanding human behaviour.

The problem with secular psychologists including Muslim psychologists in the “lizard’s hole” (see below) is the failure to include ethical behaviours or ethical intelligence within the paradigm of secular psychology. However, despite their recognition of the inclusion of a “Code of Ethics” for therapy or research involving animals or human participants, they still reject that human ethics and values form part of the dimensions of psychology. A more integrated psychology of the 21st century, rather than being stuck in its colonial and Orientalist past, would have ethics and human values of what is right or wrong, good or evil, “as philosophical and religious issues like ethics, human values, aesthetics, and the nature of life have everything to do with psychology” (Reber, 2006, p.200). In summary, Badri (1979) makes this position clear in relation to the “soullessness of Western psychology” by stating that

There is no mention at all of the other aspects of man. The religious, the spiritual or at least the transcendental … Criteria which fail to include the spiritual side of man can only find anchorage in a society blinded by materialism. In such a society, the behaviour of spiritually motivated practising individuals may brand them as misfits, eccentrics or abnormal.

(p.24)

The main limitations of contemporary secular psychology are presented in Table 1.1.

Despite the claim that psychology is a science, Kuhn (1962) argues as a science emerges and develops, it progresses through four distinct stages: Pre-paradigm, normal science/paradigm, crisis and revolution. Since psychology is in the initial pre-paradigm stage, it is somewhat fragmented and characterised by eclecticism (Kuhn, 1962; Sankey, 2002). That is, the theoretical and conceptual framework and approaches, methodologies and techniques are eclectic and derived from a broad and diverse range of sources. Others believe that psychology has already experienced scientific revolutions. Whether it is pre-paradigm or not should not distract from the fact that the source of psychology is based on philosophical discourse and the study of the human soul.
### Table 1.1 Limitations of secular psychology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Limitations of secular psychology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badri (1979) p.24</td>
<td>“Criteria which fail to include the spiritual side of man can only find anchorage in a society blinded by materialism. In such a society, the behaviour of spiritually motivated practising individuals may brand them as misfits, eccentrics or abnormal.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James (1902/1999)</td>
<td>Any description of human life that excludes religious experience will be incomplete and will fail to provide a full and rich understanding of human life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plato (trans by Jowett, 1982)</td>
<td>“The cure of the part should not be attempted without treatment of the whole. No attempt should be made to cure the body without the soul. Let no one persuade you to cure the head until he has first given you his soul to be cured, for this is the great error of our day, that physicians first separate the soul from the body.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reber (2006) p.200</td>
<td>Exclusion of ethics, human values and the nature of life. What is right or wrong, good or evil?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reber (2006) p.196</td>
<td>“Modern secularism results in an incomplete psychology of human life because it excludes many religious aspects of life that are widespread and important to many people, including many psychologists.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richards and Bergin, (2005) p.37</td>
<td>Scientific naturalism provides an impoverished view of human nature and does not adequately account for the complexities and mysteries of life and of the universe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaraboso (2002) p.49</td>
<td>Humans are viewed as independent of their Creator and Lord.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaraboso (2002) p.49</td>
<td>Theories are based upon human intellect alone, while discounting revelation from the Creator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaraboso (2002) p.49</td>
<td>Knowledge and research focus only on the tangible aspects of humans, while ignoring the spiritual and unseen elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaraboso (2002) p.49</td>
<td>Behaviours are generally seen to be determined solely by drives, reflexes, conditioning and social influences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaraboso (2002) pp.44–45</td>
<td>Dangers of fabricated or secular theories: Leading people to the wrong path for spiritual purification. People are duped into thinking theories that are supported by false but cleverly stated arguments are true and beneficial. The end result is that people can become blind to their misguidedness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utz (2011) p.29</td>
<td>The secular definition of psychology “assumes that we were put in this world and left to our own devices, without any divine intervention.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Qur’an and psychology

- **Indeed, We sent down to you the Book for the people in truth. So, whoever is guided - it is for [the benefit of] his soul; and whoever goes astray only goes astray to its detriment. And you are not a manager over them. (Az-Zumar 39:41)**

The Qur’an is a guidance for the whole of mankind, not just the believers. The message of the Qur’an has reference to individual self-care, relationships, family, marriage, social welfare, embryological and developmental stages, emotional behaviours, prosocial behaviours, spiritual and ethical intelligence, personality, need for learning and knowledge and many
other holistic facets of human behaviours and experiences. In addition, there are proscribed behaviours including suicide, sexual perversions, gambling, alcohol and drug misuse, crime and racial discrimination. Though the Qur’an is not an encyclopaedia of health, it is a spiritual, social, psychological and economic guide in the understanding of human behaviours and experiences. The messages of the Qur’an that Allah has revealed are crystal clear, and these messages are to be implemented as a complete way of life for all mankind. The verses of the Qur’an encourage us to repeatedly “reflect” on its contents, and to understand, think and put into practice its messages and commands. From its teachings, we discover that at the core, we are both physical and spiritual beings who are in need of the purification of the soul and to sustain a connection with our Creator, Allah. The psychological language of the Qur’an depicts all kinds of human behaviours and psychological experiences. Utz (2011) suggested that

Our thoughts, emotions, will and behaviour must focus on attaining the pleasure of Allah. The key to sound mental health and well-being from the Islamic perspective is submission to Allah, the Exalted, the Almighty and His commandments, and to subsequently purifying the soul.

Allah states in the Qur’an (interpretation of the meaning):

- *We have not neglected in the Register a thing.* (Al-An'am 6:38)

In the above verse, Allah mentions that nothing has been neglected in this Register (Qur’an) and that the knowledge about all things is with Allah. According to the Islamic perspective, the primary source of knowledge and authority in Islam is divine knowledge from the Qur’an, and guidance from the Traditions (Sunnah) of Prophet Muhammed (ﷺ). Allah, the Almighty, has the knowledge of everything and knows us better than we know ourselves. Allah says in the Qur’an (interpretation of the meaning):

- *And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darkesses of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record.* (Al-An'am 6:59)
- *And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein.* (Qaf 50:16)

So, Allah knows what is in our heart and soul. According to Ibn Kathir, the above verse (Qaf 50:16) means that “Allah the Exalted affirms His absolute dominance over mankind, being their Creator and the Knower of everything about them. Allah the Exalted has complete knowledge of all thoughts that cross the mind of man, be they good or evil.” It has been suggested that

Revelation is the foundation upon which all knowledge is built; it is perfect and complete. This reflects the Muslims’ firm and unwavering belief in their scripture (the Qur’an) as the final revealed word of Allah, a conviction that is unique to Islam.

(Utz, 2011, p.39)
One of the first verses of the Qur’an notes this fact (interpretation of the meaning):

- This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah. (Al-Baqarah 2:2)

The divine knowledge of the Qur’an is knowledge of an infinite nature. Allah says in the Qur’an (interpretation of the meaning):

- Say, “If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement.” (Al-Kahf 18:109)

This means, according to Ibn Kathir, “Say, O Muhammad, if the water of the sea were ink for a pen to write down the words, wisdom and signs of Allah, the sea would run dry before it all could be written down. (even if We brought like it) means, another sea, then another, and so on, additional seas to be used for writing. The Words of Allah would still never run out.”

Knowledge is also gained from sense perception and rationalism (logical reasoning), and these sources should not be neglected. Giving priority to revelation does not debase science, knowledge from empiricism, intuition and reason. However, scientific evidence would be judged and evaluated according to the criteria of divine revelation. Muslim psychologists should attempt to put Islamic ethical considerations before rationality, and empirical evidence, and these should become secondary to the primary source. Enquiring or probing is permissible in Islam so as to arrive at the truth (Leaman, 2006, p.571). This is reflected in the following verse (interpretation of the meaning):

- And [mention] when Abraham said, “My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead.” [Allah] said, “Have you not believed?” He said, “Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied.” [ Allah ] said, “Take four birds and commit them to yourself. Then [after slaughtering them] put on each hill a portion of them; then call them — they will come [flying] to you in haste. And know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.” (Al-Baqarah 2:260)

From the verse shown above, it has been suggested that it is evident that Allah entertained the query [from Prophet Abraham] (Leaman, 2006, p.572). In fact, mankind has been asked repeatedly in the Qur’an to contemplate and reflect on the working of nature, paying attention to the signs that they can find within themselves or in the universe and find out the truths. The following two verses illustrate the contemplation and reflection of the universe. Allah says in the Qur’an (interpretation of the meaning):

- Say, “Observe what is in the heavens and earth.” But of no avail will be signs or warners to a people who do not believe. (Yunus 10:101)
- We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness? (Fussilat 41:53)

It is important to note that

the Qur’an was revealed “to the heart” of the Prophet Muhammad ( ﷺ) by [Angel] Gabriel (Al-Baqarah 2.97). At (Ash-Shu’ara 26.193–194) we read that it was transmitted
by the faithful spirit (Ruh) “upon your heart”, thus cementing the links between the heart (Qalb) of humanity and the spirit (Ruh) or [Angel] Gabriel. The psychology of the Qur’an takes seriously the idea that we are in between the material and the spiritual.  
(Leaman, 2006, p.441)

Evolution of Islamic psychology: Context

During the 20th century, there was an awakening of the Muslim Ummah regarding the encroaching secular ideologies in education and the social sciences. The evolution or the “Dodo Bird Revival” (coined by Rassool, 2019) of Islamic psychology did not materialise in a vacuum. Several Islamic movements, including the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), scholars, theologians and revivalists had a significant influence on the “Islamisation of knowledge.” One of the fundamental question of the First World Conference on Muslim Education, held in 1977, was whether partial acceptance of the “Western” mode of secular thought in the field of the social sciences is actually possible without a detrimental impact on the Islamic way of life and thinking. The recommendation made for the social sciences was that the disciplines should be reformulated from an Islamic perspective regarding man and society. Further developments arose as Professor Ismail Raji al-Faruqi founded the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in the USA, 1981, with the aim of launching a programme of activities concerned with the integration of the revealed Islamic sciences and secular sciences under the rubric of Islamisation of knowledge. Professor Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas founded the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation with the aim to uphold the vision of the First World Conference on Muslim Education. There are several scholars and polymaths, who had contributed to the spiritual development and Islamic perspective on psychology, who directly or indirectly had a significant influence on the Islamisation of knowledge. These include Aḥmad al-Fārūqī al-Sirhindī, Shāh Walīullāh Dehlawī (also Shah Wali Allah), Allama Muhammad Iqbal, and Maulana Abul A’la Maududi and Sayyed Hossein Nasr. Despite four decades of achievements in the recommendations of the World Conferences on Muslim Education in various projects, “the task of Islamisation of Social Sciences and Social Studies has not proceeded as desired” (Saqeb, 2000, p.64).

It is against this background in the late 1970s that Badri (1979) in The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists cautioned Muslim psychologists of blind copying (psychological Taqleed) of Western, non-Islamic ideas and practices. The book was based on a paper entitled: “Muslim Psychologists in the Lizard’s Hole” read in 1975 at the fourth annual convention of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) of the United States and Canada. The “lizard’s hole” is a Prophetic Hadith. It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

You will most certainly follow the ways of those who came before you, arm’s length by arm’s length, forearm’s length by forearm’s length, hand span by hand span, until even if they entered a hole of a mastigure (lizard) you will enter it too.

They said: “O Messenger of Allah, (do you mean) the Jews and the Christians?” He said: “Who else?” (Ibn Majah).

In the sphere of Islamisation, it has been reported that “Badri was greatly influenced by the writings of Mohammad Qutb, particularly his book titled Islam: ‘The Misunderstood Religion’ and by the writings of Mawdudi [Abul A’la Maududi]” (Khan, 2015, p.160). In the psychological field, he was influenced by both Hans Eysenck, of the Institute of Psychiatry,
Maudsley and Bethlem Hospital, London, and Joseph Wolpe, a South African psychiatrist and one of the most influential figures in behaviour therapy, and Victor Meyer, behaviour therapist at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School. Badri’s (1979) warning was to save Muslim psychologists from being trapped in the “lizard’s hole” that is implicit in other disciplines of human life and thoughts. However, five decades have passed since the cautionary observations from Badri about the blind following of secular psychology and the development of an Islamic paradigm of psychology. Since then, there have been some significant world-wide developments, slowly but surely, in Islamic psychology and psychotherapy. Haque et al. (2016) in a review of literature identified five themes that have emerged over a period of nine years. The five themes emerged are:

1) Unification of western psychological models with Islamic beliefs and practices; 2) Research on historical accounts of Islamic Psychology and its rebirth in the modern era; 3) Development of theoretical models and frameworks within Islamic Psychology; 4) Development of interventions and techniques within Islamic psychology; and 5) Development of assessment tools and scales normed for use with Muslims.

More recently, the literature has been augmented with Islamic Counselling: An Introduction to Theory and Practice (Rassool, 2016); an Islamic theory of human psychology has been developed through empirical research (Rothman and Coyle, 2018); integrating the Islamic faith with modern psychotherapy (Al-Karam ed., 2018a); and the clinical application of Traditional Islamically Integrated Psychotherapy (TIIP) (Keshavarzi et al., 2020). In sum, what is at stake is the percolation of the theoretical or conceptual framework of Islamic psychology, and the application of integrated psychotherapeutic techniques down to the grass-root levels, to become available to practitioners in the field for use in their clinical practice, remains distant. The biggest disappointment after more than five decades of the “evolution of Islamic psychology” is that there is a dearth of educational framework and curriculum development in the integration of Islamic ethics in psychology. Despite the absence of educational philosophy and curriculum approaches in Islamic psychology, this has not deterred some institutions from developing professional continuing courses in Islamic psychology, psychotherapy and counselling.

**Concept of Islamic psychology**

In the literature, the use of the concept of Islamic psychology also denotes Islamic psychotherapy and counselling. Islamic psychology or 'ilm al-Nafs or the science of the Nafs (soul or self) is the philosophical study of the soul from an Islamic perspective. Muslim scholars have used various terms to describe the concept of Islamic psychology and psychotherapy including Tibb al-nufus, Ilaj al-nafs, al-Tibb al-ruhaniy, Tahdhib al-nufus, Tathir al-nufus, Tazkiyat al-nafs, Tasfiyat al-nufus and Mudawat al-nufus, etc. (Sham, 2015). Other scholars labelled Islamic psychology (or purification of the soul or refinement of the soul) in the following ways:

- Miskawayh in ‘Tahdhib al-akhlaq’: Tib al-nufus; Atibba’ al-nufus; or c Ilaj al-nafs in the same book.
• Abu Bakar al-Razi in *al-Tibb al-ruhani: al-Tibb al-ruhani*.
• Ibn Bajjah’s *‘Im al-nafs*: Ibn Bajjah’s *Psychology*.
• Shaykh ibn Ata Allah ‘Sakandari in *‘Taj Al-Arus Al-Hawi Li Tahdhib Al-Nufus’*: *Tahdhib al-nufus*.
• Muhammad c Uthman Najati in *‘Al-Hadith al-Nabawi wa ilm al-Nafs’*: *Ilaj al-nafs*.

In contemporary times, Islamic psychology has been defined according to the author’s orientation to the “Islam and psychology movement” (Kaplick and Skinner, 2017). Some definitions are clearly defined, at times too comprehensively to be operationally used, and others are an amalgam of psychology and Islam. A few definitions can easily be labelled as “old wine in a new bottle.” Al-Karam (2018b) argues that

A review of a number of publications that have the term “Islamic Psychology” [IP] in the title reveals two basic trends: scholars either talk about IP without defining it, as if the reader is supposed to know what the author means by the term or as if it some clearly defined and well-understood concept, or they define it, but provide no discussion of the methodology used to come up with the definition. Both trends are problematic.

(pp.99–100)

Let us examine some definitions of Islamic psychology. Although there is no single standard definition, if one examines the many definitions that have been proposed, there are some similarities between definitions. In some cases, different definitions, suitably interpreted, actually say the same thing but in different words. This is purely a subjective selection.

One comprehensive definition of Islamic psychology is from the International Association of Islamic Psychology (2018).

Psychology, as it is generally practiced, only represents a part of the whole. Often the soul is not taken into account. Islamic psychology is a holistic approach that endeavours to better understand the nature of the self and the soul and the connection of the soul to the Divine. It conceptualizes the human being with a focus on the heart as the centre of the person more so than the mind and is grounded in the teachings of the Qur’an, Prophetic teachings, and the knowledge of the soul from the Islamic tradition. Islamic psychology embraces modern psychology, traditional spirituality, metaphysics and ontology.

The definition from International Association of Islamic Psychology is an explanation of what is lacking with contemporary psychology but provide some elements of Islamic psychology based on al-Ghazâlî’s concept of the soul. The definition incorporates the science of contemporary psychology. Another comprehensive definition is from Al-Karam (2018b).

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.

(pp.101–102)
The above definition is based on “The Multilevel Interdisciplinary Paradigm” and

This structure serves as a template for how to think about complex and multidimensional disciplines, such as Islamic Psychology, that are inherently interdisciplinary. The template then serves as a methodology for defining the discipline because it is the structure of the model itself that provides it.

(Al-Karam, 2018b, p.101)

In doing so Al-Karam incorporates all the psychology disciplines and their application to all Islamic sects, despite cultural and religious differences, under the umbrella of Islamic psychology. Though this is a comprehensive definition by Al-Karam, the main concern is its fuzziness in contents and approach. The definition focuses on a “one-size-fits-all” paradigm and reads more like the principles of Islamic psychology rather than a definition. However, Al-Karam (2020) has provided a refined vision of Islamic psychology. She maintains that “That vision portrays IP [Islamic psychology] as having an inner [batin] dimension and an outer [dhahir] dimension and that we should think about it as an integral part of the psychology mainstream.” More refinement is needed for this to be fully accepted as a valid definition. In the same tone, Kaplick and Skinner (2017) did not define Islamic psychology but “Islam and psychology” (referring to the broader movement that relates Islam to psychology in general), is “the interdisciplinary field that explores human nature in relation to Islamic sources and which uses this knowledge to bring human beings into their best possible state, physically, spiritually, cognitively, and emotionally” (p.199). This is a holistic definition of Islam and psychology involving all the dimensions of human nature using knowledge from Islamic sources. Does this mean that knowledge from other sources will not be entertained?

The next categories are definitions of Islamic psychology focusing on the Qur’an, Sunnah, Shari’ah, etc. For instance, Begum (2016) states that

Islamic psychology (Ilm Ul Nafs) is the study of the “self” (nafs) or the “psyche” from an Islamic perspective with concepts that are not included in Western forms of studying the field i.e. the unseen influences, the impact of destiny, the sway of the Shaytaan [devil] and the inclusion of the soul.

This definition has themes such as the self (Nafs), unseen influences (Ghayb), destiny (Qadar) and control of the devil. This definition is like a mini encyclopaedia of the Qur’an and implicit in the “definition” is that the Nafs is not perceived as the soul. Other authors like Siddiqui and Malek (1996) view Islamic psychology as the application of Shar’iah. They suggest that Islamic psychology is “the study of persons who have complete surrender and submission and obey the laws of God.” It is quite a surprising definition, and it is totally unclear how they arrived at that definition. Perhaps what they mean is that by submission to Allah by obeying His command and laws, people may be able to purify themselves. In a similar tone, Vahab (1996) defines Islamic psychology as “the study of the manifestation of God in nature as reflected in the behavioural patterns of all living and non-living organisms in all walks of their lives using the Islamic paradigms.” Yet again, it is unclear what the author’s intention is in his definition.
Betteridge (2012) views Islamic psychology as relating to all aspects of Islamic teaching from the Holy Qur’an, Hadith and Sunnah which directly mention or relate to aspects of the human psyche, with particular emphasis on maintaining a healthy mental state or causes and treatments of an unhealthy mental state.

Abdul Aziz (2018) views Islamic psychology as the psychology of Self (al-Nafs) and specifically, it is the psychology of spirituality. Islamic psychology stresses the idea of spiritual psychology as being the foundation to the development of human personality. In Islamic psychology, the Self conforms to its fitrah and it is consistent with the teachings of the Qur’an and Hadith (s).

Alizi (2017) defines Islamic psychology as “The scientific study of manifestation of the soul in the form of behaviour and mental process.” Alizi’s definition has the dual components of using scientific methodologies (Qur’anic sciences and scientific method) and also the inclusion of the soul. According to Alizi, the “definition will make Muslim psychologists use soul as the general framework in interpreting psychological data (behaviour and mental processes) instead of the limited approach of biological, psychodynamic, behavioural, humanistic, and cognitive perspectives in psychology.”

One of the classical and operational definitions of psychology is from Utz (2011). She defined Islamic psychology as “the study of the soul; the ensuing behavioural, emotional, and mental processes; and both the seen and unseen aspects that influence these elements” (p.34). For Utz, it is the soul that drives human behaviour, emotions and mental processes. The essence of man is spiritual and metaphysical. According to Utz (2011),

since its [the soul] true nature is spiritual, the soul requires a spiritual connection to its source, the Creator, just as the body requires food and water to survive. In the Islamic conceptualisation of psychology, aspects of both the seen and unseen world may influence humans. Islamic psychology incorporates additional aspects of the unseen world to explain human nature.

However, this definition has been criticised by Muslim secular psychologists on the grounds that it deals with the soul or the unseen aspects that influence behaviours and experiences. The current scientific paradigm with its secular approach fails to recognise this spiritual dimension of life. However, Utz’s definition has been very popular with students of Islamic psychology because of its simplicity, and because it is easy to comprehend and can be related to the real work. It encapsulates what Islamic psychology is and should be without the verbiage that accompanies most definitions in the current literature.

This final definition of Islamic psychology was generated at a workshop on “Islamic Psychology Curriculum Development” at the Riphah Institute of Clinical and Professional Psychology and the Centre for Islamic Psychology, Riphah International University, Pakistan, in February 2020. Small groups of participants were formed, and their task was to come up
with a number of definitions of Islamic psychology. Through the process of elimination, a final definition was selected by the 20 participants. The definition is that

Islamic Psychology is the study of the soul, mental processes and behaviour according to the principles of psychology and Islamic sciences.

(Rassool et al., 2020)

In the conceptualisation of Islamic psychology, aspects of the soul and cognitive, affective and behavioural processes are studied within the evidence-based paradigm (compatible with Islamic beliefs and practices) and Islamic sciences. This definition and its conceptual framework are still under construction. Figure 1.2 depicts the conceptual definition of Islamic psychology.

The above section has demonstrated that definitions of Islamic psychology are not a homogeneous academic entity. In reality, there will be multiple definitions of Islamic psychology based on the school of thought, orientation and worldview of the author(s). If Islamic psychology is considered to be holistic in approach, thus diversity in definitions and approaches will be on the agenda of both academics and clinicians. Table 1.2 presents a summary of the themes of Islamic psychology from the literature.

**Whither psychology?**

There is already a divergence of opinions of what constitutes Islamic psychology, and the same is applicable to Islamic psychotherapy and counselling. A number of schools of thought have emerged in the midst of this knowledge gap. However, before examining the different schools of thought, it is valuable to consider the different kinds of Islamic psychology. Since the 20th century many kinds of “Islamic psychology” have been developed. Ashraf Ali Thanvi (1873–1943), referred to as the “Physician of the Muslims” [Hakim al-ummar], can be regarded as “Hakim-Psychologist.” He used various psychosocial and spiritual interventions in the treatment of psychological and spiritual disorders. There is Muslim psychology, developed in Pakistan in the late 1970s by A. A. Rizvi and the establishment of the Institute of Muslim Psychology. Muslim psychology is also taught as a module in the undergraduate
Table 1.2 A summary of the themes of Islamic psychology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Themes of Islamic psychology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shafii (1985); Skinner (1989); Haeri (1989)</td>
<td>Sufism (Tasawwuf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalil (2014)</td>
<td>Rida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koshiravi and Bagheri (2006)</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siddiqui and Malek (1996)</td>
<td>Complete surrender and submission and obey the laws of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Karam (2018a,b)</td>
<td>Tazkiyat al-nafs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haque (2004); Awaad and Ali (2014, 2015)</td>
<td>Islamic concepts or spiritual therapies: Dhikr, Ruqya etc., psychotherapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York Al-Karam (2018a); Keshavarzi et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Synonymous with the works: Al-Kindi, Al-Razi, Al-Balkhi, Al-Ghazali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utz (2011); Badri (2000)</td>
<td>Islamically integrated psychotherapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonab and Kooshar (2011); Bonab et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Ruh, Qalb, Aql, Nafs, Ihsas, Irada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rassool (2016); Rassool (2020)</td>
<td>Islamically integrated psychotherapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaplick and Skinner (2017); Abu Raiya (2012)</td>
<td>Islam and psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakhtiar (2019)</td>
<td>Quranic psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younos (2017)</td>
<td>Theo-ethics, socio-ethics and psycho-ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual diseases of the heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islamic personality theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychology about Muslim, by Muslims or for Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equate to Western conceptions (such as Freud’s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reliance and attachment to God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Al-Karam (2018b, p.98).

Recently, we have a new psychology on the scene called Quranic Psychology (Bakhtiar, 2019). It is stated in the description of the book that Quranic Psychology has a goal—to prepare us for our return to whence we came—to strengthen or return to our fitrat [Fitra] Allah as the monotheist we were created...
to be through engaging our moral intelligence (MI). We do this, according to Quranic Psychology, by strengthening our Nafs al-mutma‘innah (‘Aql, reason, intellect, spirit) to dominate over our Nafs al-ammarah (affect-behaviour) through our reasoning, adhering to our mind (Sadr) and Nafs al-lawwamah, bringing awareness and consciousness to our Nafs al-mulhamah (Qalb, “heart”) of God-consciousness (Taqwa) and the constant Presence of God in our lives.

What is of great interest and challenging is the identification of a fourth Qur’anic aspect of the soul, the Nafs al-mulhamah (the inspired soul that fluctuates).

During the past four decades, the emergence of the “Islam and psychology” movement (Kaplick and Skinner, 2017) has nudged Muslim psychologists, clinicians and academics to redefine psychology and its clinical applications in order to meet the psychosocial needs of the Muslim Ummah. Within this movement, there was a growth of a diversity of approach in shaping a valid Islamic psychology discipline. Long (2014) suggests that approaches to Islamic psychology “have taken one of two forms: a critical revision of Western psychology—involving the exegesis of relevant passages from the Qur’an—or an elaboration of the classical Islamic legacy. A theocentric-individualistic outlook marks both strands” (p.15). This is similar to the “Filter and Islamic psychology” approaches as illustrated by Kaplick and Skinner (2017). Kaplick and Skinner (2017) identified three broad approaches to the literature:

- Islamic filter approach: Critical review of Western psychology paradigm but operating within the framework of Western psychology. Incorporation of “Indigenous” psychology.
- Comparison approach: Finding a common ground between Western psychological concepts and matching those concepts in Islamic sources.
- Islamic psychology approach: Emphasis on traditional Islamic thought at the foundation of the discipline. The classical Muslim scholars as secondary sources and conceptualising Islamic psychology as being derived from Islamic sources

Seedat (2020) commented that

Both the comparison approach, attempting to demonstrate convergences, and the filter approach, aspiring to incorporate “indigenous” Islamic psychological practices into contemporary psychology, seem to be referenced primarily against Western psychological theory and thought. Whether and how knowledge from subaltern cultures may be transposed to dominant ones is highly contested.

(p.2)

In contrast Rassool (2019b; 2020) has identified three schools of thoughts that have emerged in the “Islam and psychology movement”: The Orientalist approach, Integrationist approach and the “Tawhid Paradigm” approach. The Orientalist group, with minimalist Islamic traditions embedded within their framework, are, instead of decolonising psychology (Seedat, 2020), globalising Islamic psychology. The Integrationist group, with a mixture of orthodox psychology, mixed with Sufi ideologies and practice, use a mixture of Islamic traditions and folk psychology; and the “Tawhid Paradigm” approach is based on the Qur’an and Sunnah embedded with the framework of the theory and practice of secular psychology that are congruent with Islamic beliefs and practices. However all three approaches claim that they are
in line with the traditions of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa’ah* (those who adhere to the Sunnah and who unite upon it, not turning to anything else, whether that be in matters of belief (*’Aqeedah*) or matters of actions which are subject to *shar’i* [*Shari’ah*] rulings) (Islam Q&A, 2001). These indicated approaches are reflected in their conceptual framework and clinical and educational practices.

Long (2014) argues about the attempts to indigenise psychology “from within” or “from without” are problematic. That is, it becomes apparent that attempts to indigenise psychology are between “Scylla and Charybdis.” Long (2014) maintains that “indigenisation from without” is a paradox because “Western psychology is saturated in a secular metatheory that cannot accommodate the Islamic worldview, any attempted revision must remain, in spirit, no different from the original articulation” (p.17). The other alternative, “indigenisation from within,” necessitates an expansion of the work of classical Muslim scholars. Long regards this as problematic as well. He asserts that

> Early Muslim contributions to the field of psycho-spirituality were suitable for the social constellations of the pre-modern Muslim world. In light of the present-day homogenisation of world culture, one may well ask whether Muslim societies consider traditional forms of social organisation to be desirable any longer.

Long (2014) articulates the “indigenisation from within” approach from

> Muslim apologists – many of whom have never received professional training in psychology and have focused consequently on the details of Islamic spirituality to the virtual exclusion of the secular discipline. In these cases, it is not psychology that is being Islamicised but Islamic spirituality that is being advocated.

(p.17)

Whether we are able to develop a unified Islamic theoretical framework from “indigenisation from within” and from “indigenisation from without” remains a challenge. However, in order to have a valid and robust Islamic psychology, it must meet all the criteria to be considered “Islamic.” That means it must adhere to authentic sources and proofs that are employed to understand human nature and behaviour from an Islamic perspective.

**Summary of key points**

- The emergence, current conceptualisations and the status of Islamic psychology should be viewed in their broader context, namely, the Islamisation of knowledge (IOK) movement.
- Islamisation of knowledge is not monosemous but involves multiple approaches to the various forms of modern-world thought in the context of the Islamic intellectual tradition, including metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and methodological premises regarding the modern issue of knowledge.
- Psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour and experience.
- The emphasis on the secularisation of modern psychology is based on the premise that religion is based upon faith which cannot be evaluated by objective methods, whereas science is based on empiricism and experimentation in order to establish facts that are verifiable.
The message of the Qur’an has reference to individual self-care, relationships, family, marriage, social welfare, embryological and developmental stages, emotional behaviours, spiritual and ethical intelligence, personality, need for learning and knowledge and many other holistic facets of human behaviours and experiences.

Several Islamic movements, including the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), scholars, theologians and revivalists, have had significant influence on the “Islamisation of knowledge.”

Badri’s warning was to save Muslim psychologists being trapped in the “lizard’s hole” that is implicit in other disciplines of human life and thoughts.

Islamic psychology is the study of the soul, mental processes and behaviour according to the principles of psychology and Islamic sciences.

Whether we are able to develop a unified Islamic theoretical framework from “indigenisation from within” and from “indigenisation from without” remains a challenge.

Multiple-choice questions

Identify the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

1. Which statement is not correct? Malik Badri, during his first lecture on Islamisation in 1963, stated that:
   A. The lay audience liked the lecture.
   B. His colleagues in the Department of Psychology were not happy with it.
   C. Then why speak to us about an Islamic psychology? If you accept Freudian psychoanalysis, then show us a way to treat the emotionally disturbed.
   D. They prided themselves as scientists being guided by a neutral value-free scientific method in which there was no room for religious “dogma.”
   E. They used to sarcastically ask me, “Is there a fasiq or evil physics or an un-Islamic chemistry?”

2. The emphasis on the secularisation of modern psychology is based on the premise that
   A. Religion is based upon faith which cannot be evaluated by objective methods.
   B. Science is based on empiricism and experimentation in order to establish facts that are verifiable.
   C. Science is based on objectivity and experimentation in order to establish facts that are verifiable.
   D. Religion is based upon faith which can be evaluated by objective methods.
   E. A and B.

3. The emergence, current conceptualisations and the status of Islamic psychology should be viewed in their broader context, namely,
   A. Islam and psychology movement
   B. Islamisation of knowledge movement
   C. Anti-Freudian movement
   D. Indigenous psychology movement
   E. Psychology and Islam movement

4. The concept of Islamisation of knowledge was proposed by
   A. Al- Faruqi
   B. Al-Kindi
   C. Al-Qayyim
5. Psychology, etymologically, means the
A. Science of the soul
B. Scientific study of human behaviour and experience
C. Study of the mind
D. Science of the spirit
E. Science of evolution

6. The second stage of the evolution of the definition of psychology is
A. Psychology was defined as the “study of the soul or spirit.”
B. William James, psychology as the “Study of science of mental life.”
C. The “study of the mind” (Christian Wolff’s “Psychologia empirica”).
D. John B. Watson, psychology as the acquisition of information useful to the control of behaviour.
E. Study of total Behaviour (consciousness and unconsciousness).

7. The scientific study of the mind and how it dictates and influences our behaviour, from communication and memory to thought and emotion. It is about understanding what makes people tick and how this understanding can help us address many of the problems and issues in society today. This definition is from the
A. Islam and psychology movement
B. Association of British Counsellors
C. American Psychological Association
D. British Psychological Society
E. International Association of Islamic Psychology

8. This psychologist warned about the separation of religious experience from the academic pursuit of understanding human behaviour.
A. B. F. Skinner
B. W. James
C. J. B. Watson
D. S. Freud
E. Al-Atas

9. Despite the claim that psychology is a science, Kuhn (1962) argues that, as a science emerges and develops, it progresses through distinct stages. Which one is not a stage?
A. Post-paradigm
B. Pre-paradigm
C. Normal science/paradigm
D. Crisis
E. Revolution

10. “Our thoughts, emotions, will and behaviour must focus on attaining the pleasure of Allah. The key to sound mental health and well-being from the Islamic perspective is submission to Allah, the Exalted, the Almighty and His commandments, and to subsequently purifying the soul.” Who made this statement?
A. Al-Atas
B. Al-Faruqi
C. Utz
D. Al-Karam
E. Badri
11. The verse of the Qur’an “This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah.” is from
   A. Qaf 50:16
   B. Al-Kahf 18:109
   C. Al-An’am, 6:38
   D. Al-Baqarah 2: 2
   E. Al-An’am 6:59

12. This scholar founded the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in the USA.
   A. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas
   B. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi
   C. Sayyed Hossein Nasr
   D. Malik. B. Badri
   E. Shāh Waifiullāh Dehlawī

13. *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists* cautioned Muslim psychologists of blind copying (psychological *Taqleed*) of Western, non-Islamic ideas and practices.
   A. Malik B. Badri
   B. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas
   C. Ismail Raji al-Faruqi
   D. Sayyed Hossein Nasr
   E. Shāh Waifiullāh Dehlawī

14. In the sphere of Islamisation, it has been reported that Badri was greatly influenced by
   the writings of
   A. Mohammad Qutb
   B. Abul A’la Maududi
   C. Sayyed Hossein Nasr
   D. A and C
   E. A, B and C

15. In the sphere of psychology and behaviour therapy, Badri was greatly influenced by
   A. Joseph Wolpe
   B. Hans Eysenck
   C. Victor Meyer
   D. A, B and C
   E. A and C

16. Haque et al. (2016), in a review of literature, identified themes that have emerged over a period of nine years. Which one is not a theme?
   A. Unification of Western psychological models with Islamic beliefs and practices.
   B. Research on historical accounts of Islamic psychology and its rebirth in the modern era.
   C. Development of educational models and frameworks within Islamic psychology.
   D. Development of interventions and techniques within Islamic psychology.
   E. Development of assessment tools and scales normed for use with Muslims.

17. This definition of Islamic psychology “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.” is from
   A. C. Al-Karam
   B. A. Utz
18. The Islam and psychology movement includes:
   A. Islamic psychology
   B. Muslim psychology
   C. Qur’anic psychology
   D. A and C only
   E. All of the above

19. Indigenisation psychology from without is a paradox because
   A. Western psychology is saturated in a secular metatheory that cannot accommodate the Islamic worldview.
   B. It necessitates an expansion of the work of classical Muslim scholars.
   C. Eastern psychology is saturated in a secular metatheory that can accommodate the Islamic worldview.
   D. A and B.
   E. A, B and C.

20. Rassool (2020) has identified schools of thoughts that have emerged in the “Islam and psychology movement.” Which one has not?
   A. Orientalist approach
   B. Qur’anic approach
   C. Integrationist approach
   D. “Tawhid Paradigm” approach
   E. None of the above

Note
1 An idiom deriving from Greek mythology, which has been associated with "to choose the lesser of two evils."
References


References


References


Roudgari, H. (2018). Ibn Sina or Abu Ali Sina (c. 980–1037) is Often Known by His Latin Name of Avicenna (ævɪˈsɛnə). Journal of Iranian Medical Council, 1(2), 0–0.


Ahmad. Musnad Ahmad 10745. Jayyid (very good) according to Al-Suyuti.

References


References


References


Ahmad. Musnad Ahmad, Musnad Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak (Hadith 239), Sho’ab al-Eeman (Hadith 4760), Musnad al-Harith (Hadith 49). Authentic hadith (Sahih).


References


References


References


Ahmad, A. (2020). Psychology: An Islamic Approach. Paper presented by Professor Dr. Anis Ahmad, Professor of Comparative Ethics and Religions, and Vice Chancellor, Riphah International University at the Islamic Psychology Curriculum Development, 10–13 February 2020, RICPP/Centre for Islamic Psychology, Riphah International University, QIE Campus, Lahore, Pakistan.


References


The negative association between religiousness and children’s altruism across the world. Current Biology, 25(22), 2951–2955.


plasticity after compassion and empathy training. Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, 9(6), 


networks associated with directly experienced pain and empathy for pain. Neuroimage, 54(3), 
2492–2502.


References 59


References


Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalâni, Fath al-Bâri, p. 73.


References


References


Bukhari and Muslim (b). Sahih Bukhari, Hadith: 50, 4777 and Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 8.


References


References


References


Shove, E. (2010). Beyond the ABC: Climate change policy and theories of social change.


Ahmad (b). *Musnad Ahmad*, 1/329; see also Sahih al-Jaami’, 693, 4027.

Ahmad (c). *Musnad Ahmad*, 5/152; see also Sahih al-Jaami’, no. 694.


References


University of Twente. (2020). *Communication Theories*. https://www.utwente.nl/uc/f32b97e440101a2d8f00d5e2c5030c0ad13d6ed6e400/Communication%20Theories%20University%20of%20Twente%20-%20UTwente%20-%20The%20Netherlands.pdf (accessed 23 May 2020).


Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (1999). *Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Abuse Treatment*. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US);


References


References


