



## Religious experience and development of ethical values (A life of Muhammad ﷺ and psychology)

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This paper explores the intersection of religious experience and the development of ethical values, specifically through the lens of the life of Muhammad ﷺ and psychological perspectives. Religious experience, as articulated by scholars like John Hick and Chad Meister, is a universal and transformative phenomenon. The study delves into the neuro-scientific perspectives on religious experiences, examining their potential neurophysiological underpinnings. The religious personality in Islam, as discussed by Dr. Aisha Sitwat and Ms. Rabia Dasti, encompasses both ritualistic worship and ethical behavior inspired by Islamic teachings. Western perspectives on ethical development and the fundamental principles of Islamic ethics are also explored. The study highlights the integration of religious and ethical dimensions in Islam, emphasizing the comprehensive nature of Islamic spirituality and its implications for cognitive and behavioral practices.



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**Key words:** Religious experience, ethical values, Muhammad ﷺ, neuroscience, Islamic ethics, religious personality, cognitive behavior therapy, Five Pillars of Islam.

### **Introduction:**

Religious experiences, as illustrated by the life of Muhammad ﷺ, play a crucial role in the development of ethical values. These experiences, deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, provide a framework for personal and social conduct that emphasizes righteousness, worship, and ethical behavior. The intersection of religion and psychology highlights the transformative power of religious experiences in shaping moral values.

The Western perspective on ethical development, explored by scholars like Baier and Batson, emphasizes the influence of social context and individualism. In contrast, Islamic teachings, as translated by Dr. Abdur-Rahman Abdul-Kareem Al-Sheha, stress submission to God's will and the importance of ethical conduct as a pathway to peace and success. John Hick stated that:

*“human religious experience is not purely an imaginative projection (though this is certainly an element within it) but is also a response to a transcendent reality.”<sup>1</sup>*

This view is echoed by Chad Meister, who identifies three general features common to religious experiences: universality, diversity, and importance.

**1 Universality:** religious experience is a universal phenomenon. Studies and surveys demonstrate that a significant proportion of the human population, past and recent, including within highly secularized societies, have had religious experiences.

**2 Diversity:** there is a wide diversity of religious experiences, and each experience is in some sense unique to the individual who has it. While there are similarities among the religious experiences of adherents of the various religious traditions, there are also differences, and this adds to the richness and variety of the experiences across the religious spectrum.

**3 Importance:** religious experience is important in unique and momentous ways, often resulting in a transformed or reoriented life, a re-evaluation of the way one thinks or lives, or even a change of world views.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Igrave Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and 175 Fifth Avenue, New York.

<sup>2</sup> Introducing philosophy of religion / Chad Meister Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

John Hick (1922–), one of the most influential philosophers of religion of recent times, describes his own religious conversion experience.

### Definitions of Ethics

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1978) defines ethics as relating to morals and the treating of moral questions. Ethics also indicates a philosophical reflection on moral beliefs and practices. Ethics is an essential requirement for a sound and healthy society. It is due to its positive individual, organizational, and social consequences that ethics has always provoked scholars, instructors, and organization managers to try to maintain and improve it.<sup>3</sup>

### Meanings of word” Islam”

The word “Salam” means “Peace” and is derived from the same Arabic three-letter root SLM as the word Islam. “Salam” is one of the Attributes of Allah, blessed be His Names and Attributes and Exalted His Majesty, as the Qur’an states:

*(Allah is He, there is no other god except Him; the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, and the Supreme: Glory is to Allah! High is He above the partners they attribute to Him.)(59:23).*<sup>4</sup>

The religion of Islam is the acceptance of and obedience to the teachings of God Which He revealed to His last prophet, Muhammad ﷺ.

Dr.Abdur-Rahman Abdul-Kareem Al-Sheha translated that:

*The word Islam means submission to Allah the Almighty, the Creator and Lord of all creation, with the entire soul and body, by obedience to what He commanded and prohibited in His Revealed Law, by compliance and willful yielding of one’s will to His Will and Judgments, and by acceptance of all that Allah has predestined for man on earth. Allah is the Most Beneficent and Merciful who knows all man’s rightful needs, who enjoins all that is good and warns against*

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<sup>3</sup> New approach to teaching of ethics in accounting

"introducing Islamic ethics into accounting education" Mahdi MahdaviKhroua\*, Mohsen Khotanlou  
*a Young Researchers Club, Hamedan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Hamedan, Iran bDepartment of Accounting, Faculty of Economic and Social Science, Bu-Ali Sina University, Hamedan, I. R. Iran* Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

<sup>4</sup> ISLAM IS THE RELIGION OF PEACE By: Dr.Abdur-Rahman Abdul-Kareem Al-Sheha Translated and Adapted into English with additions by Abu Salman Deya-ud-Deen Eberle

*all that is evil. Thus His Revealed Law is perfectly suited to the universal needs, rights and responsibilities of man.*

### **Cognitive Behavior Therapy in light of Holy Quran**

Dr. Aziz Ahmed Qadri discussed about Qur'anic concept about behavior. He expressed that Quran actually maintained the true behavior of as Muslim. In the following of Sunnah we can get teachings of Holy prophet(SAW).It is a complete psychotherapy.<sup>5</sup>

### **Five pillars of Islam**

The Five Pillars of Islam are the framework of a Muslim's life. They are the testimony of faith, prayer, giving zakat (support of the needy), fasting during the month of Ramadan, and the pilgrimage to Makkah once in a lifetime for those who are able.

**1-The Testimony of Faith:** The testimony of faith is saying with conviction,

*“La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadur rasoolu Allah.”*

**2-Prayer:** Muslims perform five prayers a day.

**3-Giving Zakat (Support of the Needy):** The original meaning of the word zakat is both 'purification' and 'growth.' Giving zakat means 'giving a specified percentage on certain properties to certain classes of needy people.'

4-Fasting: in the month of Ramadan

5-Hajj: pilgrimage in the month of zillhajjah.<sup>6</sup>

### **A neuroscientific understanding of religious experience**

Recent advances in neuroscience have given rise to the view that religious experience may be the result of purely neurophysiological causes and thus are ultimately delusory. John Hick delineates five examples derived from recent research which cover the gamut of religious experience types.

Prof. Guttorm Fløistad stated about Islam and Christianity that

*“Christianity and Islam are both textually-based religions. They are religions of the written and spoken word, of sermons and prayers, all directed towards the individual”<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Aziz Ahmed Quadri, The Holy Quran & Psychotherapy, Psychiatrist Director, Mental Health Center, Nashik Road, Aurangabad-431002

<sup>6</sup> Dr Aisha Sitwat and Ms. Rabia Dasti Development of a Multidimensional Measure of Islamic Spirituality (MMS) Journal of Muslim Mental Health ISSN1556–4908 Volume 8, Issue 2, 2014

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.10381607.0008.204>, p-5

### **Religious personality**

Dr Aisha Sitwat and Ms. Rabia Dasti discussed Religious Personality represents a true Aqedah(belief) about GOD and prophet hood. A religious personality knows about creatures, God consciousness, love of God.<sup>8</sup>

### **Psychological perspective of development**

Baier, K.<sup>9</sup> Batson, C. D.<sup>10</sup> Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. M.<sup>11</sup> Bickhard, M. H.<sup>12</sup> Blasi, A.<sup>13</sup> Brabeck, M. discussed about following topics as experimental social psychology, Individualism and commitment in American life, Children's development within social context the negative side effects of philosophy's influence on psychology.

Branden, N.<sup>14</sup> Breggin, P.<sup>15</sup> Bronfenbrenner, U.<sup>16</sup> Brown, L. M., & Tappan, M. B.<sup>17</sup> Campbell, R. L.<sup>18</sup> Christopher, J. C.<sup>19</sup> Cua, A. S.<sup>20</sup> Damon, W.<sup>21</sup> Den Uyl, D. J.<sup>22</sup> mentioned following topics

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<sup>7</sup> *Editor* Prof. Guttorm Fløistad, University of Oslo Institute for the History of Ideas Svenstoveien 5 Norway/ edited by Guttorm Fløistad ISBN 978-90-481-3526-4 e-ISBN 978-90-481-3527-1 DOI 10.1007/978-90-481-3527-1 Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York, Library of Congress Control Number: 2009934311 Printed on acid-free paper, Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media ([www.springer.com](http://www.springer.com)) 0781 Oslo 3

<sup>8</sup> Dr Aisha Sitwat and Ms. Rabia Dasti, Development of a Multidimensional, Measure of Islamic Spirituality (MMS) Journal of Muslim Mental Health, ISSN1556-4908, Volume 8, Issue 2, 2014  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.10381607.0008.204>, p-3-4

<sup>9</sup> Baier, K. (1958). The moral point of view. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

<sup>10</sup> Batson, C. D. (1987). Prosocial motivation: Is it ever truly altruistic? In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 20, pp. 65-122). New York: Academic Press.

<sup>11</sup> Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. M. (1985). *Habits of the heart: Individualism and commitment in American life*. New York: Harper & Row.

<sup>12</sup> Bickhard, M. H. (1992). Scaffolding and self-scaffolding: Central aspects of development. In L. T. Winegar & J. Valsiner (Eds.), *Children's development within social context*, vol. 2: Research and methodology (pp. 33-52). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

<sup>13</sup> Blasi, A. (1990). How should psychologists define morality? or, the negative side effects of philosophy's influence on psychology. In T. E. Wren (Ed.), *The moral domain: Essays in the ongoing discussion between philosophy and the social sciences* (pp. 38-70). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

<sup>14</sup> Branden, N. (1969). *The psychology of self-esteem*. Los Angeles: Nash.

<sup>15</sup> Breggin, P. (1980). *The psychology of freedom*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus.

<sup>16</sup> Bronfenbrenner, U. (1970). *Two worlds of childhood*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

<sup>17</sup> Brown, L. M., & Tappan, M. B. (1991). Commentary [on Puka]. *Human Development*, 34, 81-87.

<sup>18</sup> Campbell, R. L. (1993). Epistemological problems for neo-Piagetians. In A. Demetriou, A. Efklides, & M. Platsidou, *The architecture and dynamics of developing mind: Experiential structuralism as a frame for unifying cognitive*

such as The psychology of self-esteem, The psychology of freedom, Knowing levels and developmental stages, The concept of li in Confucian moral theory, The social world of the child.

### **Conclusion**

The study of religious experiences and ethical values, especially through the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and psychology, offers deep insights into faith, morality, and human behavior. John Hick and Chad Meister describe religious experiences as universal, diverse, and transformative. These experiences, whether viewed through religious or scientific lenses, show the intricate connection between the divine and the human mind.

Islam's perspective, illustrated by the Five Pillars of Islam and the concept of Religious Personality, presents a holistic approach to spirituality and ethics. According to scholars like Dr. Aisha Sitwat and Ms. Rabia Dasti, Islam integrates belief, worship, and moral behavior, all rooted in God-consciousness and sincere devotion. This approach guides personal conduct and fosters a just society.

From a psychological standpoint, as Dr. Aziz Ahmed Quadri notes, the Quran and Sunnah provide a framework for aligning thoughts and behaviors, resolving conflicts in line with Islamic

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developmental theories. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 58 (5-6, ser. no. 234), 168-191. Campbell, R. L., & Bickhard, M. H. (1986). *Knowing levels and developmental stages*. Basel: S. Karger. Campbell, R. L., & Bickhard, M. H. (1992). Types of constraints on development: An interactivist perspective. *Developmental Review*, 12, 211-238. Campbell, R. L., & Richie, D. M. (1983). Problems in the theory of developmental sequences: Prerequisites and precursors. *Human Development*, 26, 156-172.

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<sup>21</sup> Damon, W. (1977). *The social world of the child*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

<sup>22</sup> Den Uyl, D. J. (1991). The virtue of prudence. New York: Peter Lang. Den Uyl, D. J., & Rasmussen, D. B. (1978). Nozick on the Randian argument. *The Personalist*, 59, 184-205.

Den Uyl, D. J., & Rasmussen, D. B. (1984a). Life, teleology, and eudaimonia in the ethics of Ayn Rand. In D. J. Den Uyl & D. B. Rasmussen (Eds.), *The philosophic thought of Ayn Rand* (pp. 63-80). Urbana: University of Illinois Press

principles. This view challenges the universality of Western psychotherapy, promoting culturally and religiously sensitive practices.

In conclusion, exploring religious experiences and ethical values through the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and psychological perspectives highlights the need to integrate spiritual beliefs with moral and psychological well-being. This integration leads to a balanced and fulfilling life, guided by divine principles and human values.