

From Theory and Research to Practice: The Experience of Participating in the International Educational Program on Islamic Psychology in Indonesia

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Abstract. The article analyzes the content of the International Intensive educational program on Islamic psychology at Universitas Islam Indonesia, in Yogyakarta, where, for the first time, five experts from Russia took part in 2019. This training of Russian psychologists in Indonesia became possible on the ground of an agreement between the Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims (Russia) and Indonesian Islamic University. The article is presented as an analysis of the lectures and discusses the content of the courses. It also highlights the specifics of psychological counseling in overcoming depression in the context of Islam. Based on the analysis of the content of the International Intensive Course on “Islamic Psychology: From Theory and Research to Practice” in Indonesia, the paper reveals the prospects for the further development of psychological counseling of Muslims in Russia.

Keywords: Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims, depression, forgiveness therapy, Indonesian Islamic University, Islamic psychology, psychological counseling of Muslims

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The establishment of the Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslim in Russia stimulated the intensive development of the theory and practice of psychological counseling for Muslims. Through national and international conferences as well as round table discussions, this organization conducting empirical studies published in “Minbar Islamic Studies. Islam: Personality and Society”, and also translating classical and modern literature into Russian (Al-Balkhi, 2019; Badri, 2018). All of this contributes to a new sphere of a professional system for Russian-cultural-specific psychological counseling construction. During the provision of psychological assistance, the ethnic and religious characteristics of the client are taken into account, which in turn become a resource for a person to gain psychological stability.

Special education and advanced training of psychologists is the most important aspect of the activities of the Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims. For the second year in Kazan, on the basis

of the psychological center (4Life) and the Volga Institute of Continuing Professional Education, a continuing education program has implemented Psychological Counseling for Muslims¹, in which specialists from different regions of Russia, as well as from Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, the USA, Egypt, and other countries, were trained.

Extensive international cooperation over several years has made it possible to get acquainted with the work of Muslim psychologists from around the world, and also made it possible to improve professional qualifications. In 2018, specialists from Russia took part in the founding conference of the International Association of Islamic Psychology, whose activities are described in a number of articles (Pavlova, 2018a, 2018b).

In 2019, the Association for Psychological Assistance to Muslims entered into a cooperation agreement with the Indonesian Islamic University of Yogyakarta (UII)², on the basis of which an international educational program has been held annually since 1995 -

¹Psychological counseling for Muslims. [Electronic resource]. - Access Mode: <https://psy.pinpo.ru/edu/psixologicheskoe-konsultirovanie-musulman/> (accessed 01.10.2020)

²Universitas Islam Indonesia. [Electronic source]. Available at:

<https://www.uui.ac.id> (Accessed: 10.01.2020)

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an intensive course in Islamic psychology. In December 2019, for the first time, four specialists from Russia took part in this training program as students, and O.S. Pavlova - as a teacher. Participation in the international educational program of the student of the magistracy "Oriental Psychology: Ethnicity, Religion, and Intercultural Communication" MGPPU³ E.A. Verchenova became possible, thanks to the conclusion of an agreement on cooperation between Moscow State Psychological and Pedagogical University and the International Association of Muslim Psychologists (IAMP).

The intensive course "Islamic Psychology: From Theory and Research to Practice" was organized with the participation of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Universitas Islam Indonesia, Universitas Gadjah Mada, and various Universities in Indonesia who have affiliation with IAMP. It lasted for four weeks and included lectures on the following topics:

- The structure of Islamic psychology.
- Quality of life in an Islamic perspective.
- Psychological sustainability in the Muslim community.
- Family in terms of Islam.
- Islamic psychology or moral Excellence (Akhlaq ul Karima).
- Development of professional leadership in Indonesia.
- Building a theory of motivation in Islamic psychology.
- Maqasid Based Construction of Quranic Work Ethic Theory
- Islamic psychology and counseling.
- The concept and theory of clinical care using Islamic psychology.
- Social Psychology. Religious identity and monastic orientations of Muslims in a changing world.
- Clinical practice in multicultural communities.
- Psychology issues of Muslim minorities.

The partners in organizing and conducting this program are:

1. Center for the Study of Islamic Psychology of the Indonesian Islamic University (Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta);
2. International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT);

3. Association of psychological assistance to Muslims (Russia);
4. International Association of Muslim Psychologists (IAMP): Dr. Bagus Riyono, DR. Diana Setiawati (Universitas Gadjah Mada);
5. International Islamic University of Malaysia; and
6. Maqasid Institute (Ma'had Maqasid, Indonesia).

The teachers of the program were specialists from Indonesia (Bagus Riyono, Fuad Nashori, Diana Setiawati, Qurotul Uyun, Arif Fahmi, Emi Zulaifah, Nanum Sofia, Ahmad Rusydi, Sus Budiharto), Malaysia (Shukran Abdurahman), Australia (Hanan Dover), India (Akbar Hussein), and Russia (Olga Pavlova). The Russian course participants - members of the Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims and practicing psychologists – were acquainted with a broad development of Islamic psychology theory and practice through the training. For practical work, one useful experience is to know forgiveness psychotherapy - a direction that is actively developing in the USA and Indonesia. Familiarity with specific cognitive-behavioral therapy by considering the mentality of Indonesians, the development of prophetic leadership, and many other topics will provide a new impetus for the development of the theory and practice of psychological counseling for Muslims in Russia. In the material (Pavlova, 2012) published in the journal "Islam: Personality and Society", we gave an analysis of the goals, structure, and features of the program. We will reveal in more detail the contents of a few interesting lectures and the possibility of their practical application in Russian conditions.

Forgiveness and Forgiveness Therapy

According to Beck, Ellis, and Dryden (1979), almost everyone faces the theme of blaming others, society, or himself. Therefore, there is a need for forgiveness for a harmonious and healthy psychological state of a person. The phenomenon of forgiveness over the past 25 years has been the subject of research in scientific psychology. Thus, a number of authors (Karremans & Aarts, 2007) in their works describe the process of conscious and automatic forgiveness; analyze the emotions that arise in the process of forgiveness and unforgiveness. But the topic of forgiveness in terms of religious values is of most interest in the context of our article. The forgiving tendency is connected with the level of religiosity

³Psychology of the East - graduate course at Moscow State Pedagogical University. [Electronic resource]. - Access mode: <http://vostok-mgppu.ru>

(date of treatment 01.10.2020)

(Poloma & Gallup, 1991). It is interesting that in psychological studies, a connection was found between forgiveness and depression: a connection was found between unforgiveness of others and depression among men, while among women, the forgiveness of self is to some extent accompanied by unforgiveness of others and is a protection against depression in unforgiveness of others (2016). The phenomenon of forgiveness is associated with moral emotions, in particular with shame and guilt.

The concept of forgiveness was not widely used in Russia and Europe but was reflected in America, where the founders of this area, Michael E. McCullough and Robert D. Enright, live (McCullough, 2008; Enright, 1996, 2001, 2008, 2011). Forgiveness therapy has been used in Indonesia. Psychologist in Indonesia actively applies this approach to working with clients. The Indonesian psychologist took the work of Michael E. McCullough (2008) and Robert D. Enright (1996, 2001, 2008, 2011) as the basis of the work and finalized the concept based on the cultural context, namely on the peculiarities of the Indonesian Muslim culture.

Psychological work

According to a participating psychologist Asep Haerul Gani (2010), psychological work with the topic of forgiveness is based on several components. Firstly, it is important to consider the format of work. The most preferable is a group, due to the fact that many clients experiencing resentment, loss, betrayal, or any other situation, are not inclined to hide under the psychologist and experience discomfort in voicing their difficulties. The group work format allows each client to see that the therapeutic space unites people with similar needs and difficulties, and everyone around needs permission to respond to their emotions and traumatic or stressful experiences. The second important component is the selection of working methods. It is argued that in order to be effective, it is important to integrate different psychological approaches and schools. This point of view is explained by the fact that by using different paradigms, the client will be able to find at least one approach that is close to his understanding. As a result, it reduces the level of resistance and increases confidence in the therapeutic process, including the leader, the group, and himself. To date, the theory of forgiveness practiced by the psychologist has undergone many changes and improvements. As a result, the number of methods and techniques used has expanded, including the following: Interview, Line of Life, Reaction to

events (think-feel-act), Internal problems, External problems, situations, Collage, Somatic experience, Psychodrama, Prayer (Dua), Dzikir (in the experience of Mr. Gani, the Dzikir practices is taken from the Naqshabandi Thariqa).

Dealing with Depression in the Context of Islam

In a speech by the staff of the Center for Public Mental Health of the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Gadjah Mada, Diana Setiyawati, the topic of the Islamic view of depression can be divided into:

1. Theological position based on the Quran and Sunnah;
2. Theoretical concepts developed by philosophers / religious leaders and Islamic scholars; and
3. Secular beliefs of specialists, individuals, and groups in traditional Muslim societies.

The traditional Islamic concept is based on the idea that mental and behavioral dysfunctions have a psycho-spiritual root and can be directly related to the level of spiritual awareness by the individual of his Creator. Muslims tend to view mental disorders as a test of Allah, the will of Allah, and a form of punishment for sin. Islamic tradition recognizes supernatural connections with mental illness. Heart diseases - this is how Islam usually describes diseases of a psycho-spiritual nature. So, Ibn Kayyim al-Jawziyya divides hearts into three categories: healthy, sick, and dead (Al-Jawziyya, 2014).

In the context of the study of psychological states, it is also important that the Quran describes three types of nafs (souls) of a person:

1. Nafs Al-Ammara, which is literally translated as "ordering", "pushing", "inclined", "masterful", "passionate". This is the soul that is "prone to evil, and if not checked and controlled, it leads to spiritual destruction." We read about it in the Surah "Yusuf" (12:53):

وَمَا أُبْرِئُ نَفْسِي ۚ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي ۚ
إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ [١٢:٥٣]

"And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful." (Sabdin, 2019).

This is the lowest level of nafs development, which encourages a person to do bad and pushes to evil.

2. Nafs Al-Lawwama is literally translated as “reproaching, censuring, hesitating” and is mentioned in the Surah Al-Qiyama (75: 2):

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ [٧٥:٢]

“And I swear by the reproaching soul [to the certainty of resurrection].” (Sabdin, 2019)

Based on the meaning of the word “hesitant”, scientists explain the meaning of such a level of nafs development as hesitating between good and evil. Such a person either sins or repents. On the other hand, if we pay attention to the other meaning of the word “reproaching,” this means that such a Nafs pushes a person to sin, but later reproaches him for committing sin. This condition can be compared with a conscience.

3. Nafs Al-Mutma’inna, it is said in the Surah Al-Fajr (Dawn) (89:27):

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ [٨٩:٢٧]

“[To the righteous it will be said], “O reassured soul,” (Sabdin, 2019).

Nafs Mutma’inna is the highest level of the Nafs development, the level of the highest God-fear and piety. A person with the Nafs at this level is a person who has achieved happiness and peace. This is the highest state of mind in which a person feels peace and tranquility.

What is the cause of depression? One of the main risk factors for depression is negative life events. But the inner state of man is the most important definer: For someone who is satisfied in his heart, the worldly state will not suppress him. Meanwhile, dissatisfaction with life is associated with a lack of life goals, egoism, and other negative psychological states of a believer's life: envy, lies, arrogance.

The work with depression is described in detail in the book “Sustenance of the Soul” by the outstanding Muslim scientist of the 9th century Abu Zayd al-Balkhi, recently published in Russia (Al-Balkhi, 2019). In it, psychologists identify several types of depression: ordinary daily sadness (*huzn*), endogenous depression (which does not depend on external factors), and exogenous depression (which appears under the influence of external factors).

In order to alleviate the condition of a Muslim in depression, Indonesian psychologists actively include a spiritual component in their work. Important recommendations in this case are:

- Faith: Remember that Allah is Merciful. Believe that no matter what happens to us, this is the command of Allah; believe that disease is a test that must be passed with dignity.
- Contentment and gratitude: be content with all that Allah gives. Be content, patient, and grateful for the calamities, knowing that all that Allah bestows is the best for you, and any calamities, when faced with patience, will result in a reward from Allah.
- Make Islam a way of life: make others happy; doing good deeds, empathize with others, perform prayers.
- Confidence and self-reflection: understand one's own feelings. Strengthening the iman, trust in Allah. It will help one to feel that he/she is not alone.

Just as the presence of a reliable attachment to a mother is associated with general well-being, overcoming difficulties, improving mental health, increasing self-esteem, and strengthening relationships, so the presence of a “healthy attachment” to God will be associated with an improvement in the psychological state of the believer: “... And whoever relies upon Allah – then He is sufficient for him...” (Quran, 65: 3) [20, p. 558].

Islam plays an important role in helping Muslims to cope with the negative life events, which helps them both in the prevention and treatment of depression. If a Muslim experiences negative feeling, he is encouraged to resist them through positive thoughts and actions (if possible) or offered to seek professional help if the case is clinical, exactly the same as with any other form of the disease. “For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.” (Quran, 94: 5) (Sabdin, 2019).

Islam encourages people not to give up hope, even if a person committed a grave sin or faced with the most unpleasant life event since there is always the mercy of Allah: “... and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.” (Quran, 12:87) [20, p. 246].

It is necessary to counteract maladaptive thoughts related to hopelessness and feelings of depression because Muslims believe that Allah is All-Seeing, All-Knowing, Wise. “And whoever fears Allah – He will make for him a way out. And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon

Allah – then He is sufficient for him.” (Quran, 65: 2-3) (Sabdin, 2019).

In a lecture by Indonesian experts, the Islamic concept of a stress management strategy was introduced. Its main points are: Trust in Allah. The Qur'an calls on Muslims to fully trust Allah in all matters: “And to Allah belong the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth and to Him will be returned the matter, all of it, so worship Him and rely upon Him. And your Lord is not unaware of that which you do.” (Quran 11: 123) (Sabdin, 2019). Performing prayers. Remembrance of Allah (dhikr): “Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah, hearts are assured.” (Quran, 13:28)(Sabdin, 2019). Patience, restraint, and forgiveness. Positive thinking: “But perhaps you hate a thing, and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing, and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not.” (Quran, 2: 216) (Sabdin, 2019). Community support. The collectivist nature of the culture of Muslim peoples is an essential psychological resource.

To prevent depression, Islamic psychology recommends: Avoid being alone, exercise patience, perform spiritual practices: contemplation (reflection - tafakkur) (Badri, 2008), eat healthy food, perform physical exercises, keeping the body in good shape, do not lose hope for the best not only in this world but also on the Day of Judgment, do not use psychotropic drugs and alcohol, Keep the prayers, recall the stories of the Prophets and Messengers, drawing from them useful examples, read the Quran daily (repeating the Quran and listening to the Quran is recommended daily, especially in the mornings), Smile: it brings peace and happiness for ourselves and everyone around us.

The practices prescribed by the Qur'an for Muslims help to cope with the test and sorrow of life: dhikr (remembrance of Allah), tauba (repentance), dua (prayer), tazkiya (purification), jihad (effort, zeal), tawakkul (hope in Allah), sabr (patience), ikhsan (sincerity), ghafr (forgiveness).

Indonesian experts drew the attention of course participants to several aspects of believer's psychological counseling practices, where psychologists could use spiritually modified cognitive therapy, replacing certain concepts used in Western cognitive therapy with concepts taken from Islamic teachings. The use of spiritually modified cognitive therapy to treat anxiety, depression, and bereavement among Muslims has shown better results than therapy that is not modified to include Islamic principles. The

effectiveness of using such integrative approaches is described in modern psychological literature (Harris, et al., 2006; Rafi, et al., 2019; Babamohamadi, et al., 2017; Mir, et al., 2015; Pearce, et al., 2015; Achour, et al., 2016).

Psychoanalytic approaches are not widespread among Muslims, in contrast to the individualistic Western culture where psychoanalysis is actively used. Islam emphasizes the importance of the community; Muslim cultures are collectivistic; therefore, Muslims are usually turned outward, identifying themselves in religious teachings, culture, and family.

Participation in group therapy practiced in Western countries can also be problematic for many Muslims, as it conflicts with a number of Islamic norms. For example, it may be unacceptable for Muslims to share personal data in a group setting, especially if representatives of the opposite sex are present. However, the effect of working in such groups may be higher if they consist of representatives of the same sex and include values taken from the Islamic faith.

Conclusion

Thus, participation in the international educational program in Indonesia “Islamic Psychology: From Theory and Research to Practice” allowed Russian specialists to get acquainted with the possibilities of an integrative approach to psychological counseling when ethnic and religious characteristics of the client are taken into account, which subsequently becomes a resource for a person to gain psychological stability. The use of Islamic and cross-cultural psychology allows psychologists to be more effective in working with Muslim clients. Moreover, relying on the values of Islam allows the use of a spiritual resource in the counseling process.

Clearly, a psychologist who works with Muslims to develop cross-cultural technology for Muslim psychological counseling requires knowledge from two industries at once: Islamic psychology and theology. Teachers from international education programs have demonstrated a high level of knowledge of Islamic theology, which our Russian colleagues must work for.

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