

Development of Islamic Psychology in the 20th Century: A Study of Muhammad Uthman Najati

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Abstract

Mohammad Uthman Najati is a pioneering scholar in the field of Islamic psychology, offering a critical analysis to Western psychological paradigms while formulating a robust framework for integrating Islamic teachings into psychological discourse. His scholarship is centered on the methodological development of Islamic psychology, utilizing the Quran and Sunnah as foundational sources to establish psychological principles aligned with the Islamic worldview. This paper examines Najati's contribution across multiple dimensions, including his critique of behaviorism, psychoanalysis, and humanistic psychology, his methodological approach to the establishment of an Islamic psychological framework, and his strategies for integrating Islamic epistemology within psychological inquiry. Furthermore, it explores key psychological constructs derived from Islamic sources, his perspectives on emotional stress and mental health, and the role of religious practices such as *wudhu* and Quranic recitation in psychological well-being. This paper underscores the epistemological gaps in conventional psychological models and advocates for an Islamic psychological paradigm that incorporates the spiritual and moral dimensions of human cognition and behavior.

Keywords: Islamic Psychology, Mental Health, Emotional stress, Wudhu and Anxiety

1. Introduction:

The field of psychology has been largely shaped by Western theories, which often overlook the spiritual and ethical aspects of human life. While approaches such as behaviorism, psychoanalysis, and humanistic psychology have contributed important insights, they are mainly based on materialistic and reductionist views. Mohammad Uthman Najati, a leading scholar in Islamic Psychology, has made significant contributions by developing a psychological framework rooted in the Quran and Sunnah. His work critically examines Western psychological theories, identifying their limitations and proposing an alternative approach that integrates Islamic teachings into Psychology. Najati's contribution covers several key areas, including a critique of major Western psychological schools, the foundation of Islamic Psychology as a distinct field, and the development of a plan to establish it as an academic discipline. He highlights the role of spiritual awareness, moral values, and religious practices in promoting psychological

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well-being. His research particularly focuses on the benefits of Islamic rituals, such as *wudhu* and Quranic recitation, in reducing anxiety and improving mental health. Additionally, he explores important psychological concepts like emotional stress, motivation, and parenting from an Islamic perspective. This paper aims to systematically analyse Najati's contribution, especially his critiques of behaviorism, psychoanalysis, and humanistic psychology, along with his proposed methodology for Islamic Psychology. By examining the frameworks in Islamic Psychology, as well as the psychological principles found in the Quran and Sunnah, this study seeks to demonstrate the value of an Islamic perspective in addressing modern psychological issues. The study advocates for the inclusion of Islamic Psychotherapy in both academic studies and clinical practice, promoting a more complete and holistic understanding of human behavior and mental well-being.

2. Mohammad Uthman Najati: Life and Works

Muhammad Uthman Najati was born in 1914 in Khartoum, Sudan. He began his academic journey in Psychology at Fuad al-Awwal University, earning his degree in 1938 and later completing a thesis in 1942 titled *al-Idrāk al-Hissi 'inda Ibni Sina* (The Five Senses in Ibn Sina's Perspective). This research sparked his interest in exploring psychological concepts within the Quran and Hadith. Initially influenced by Ibn Sina's views on Islamic Psychology, Najati later developed his own perspective by studying the soul's principles in the Quran, the traditions of the Prophet, and classical Islamic scholarship. He pursued further studies in Psychology at Yale University, where he earned a second master's degree and a doctorate. His academic contribution gained recognition both in Sudan and internationally. After completing his doctorate, Najati became a lecturer at Kuwait University, where he authored *al-Qur'an wa 'Ilmu al-Nafs*, further establishing his role as a leading figure in Islamic Psychology (Najati 2016). Uthman Najati played a pivotal role in shaping Islamic Psychology through his works, including *'Ilm al-Nafs wa al-Qur'ān*, *'Ilm al-Nafs wa al-Hadith al-Nabawi*, and *Madkhal ilā 'Ilm al-Nafs al-Islami*. His scholarship critically examined dominant psychological theories and proposed an alternative framework grounded in Islamic principles to address contemporary psychological challenges. Najati served as the Dean of Imam Muhammad bin 'Abdul Aziz Ali Su'ud al-Islamiyyah University in Riyadh and was an active member of various professional organizations, including the American Psychological Association and the Association of Non-Physician Psychotherapists in Egypt. He also contributed to the Comparative Civilization Research Association alongside scholars from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and the United States. His extensive writings in Psychology include *'Ilm al-Nafs wa al-Hayah*, *Al-Idrāk al-Hissi 'inda Ibni Sina*, *Al-Dirāsāt al-Nafsiyyah 'inda 'Ulamā al-Muslimīn*, and *Al-Qur'an wa 'Ilmu al-Nafs*, among others. In recognition of his contribution, he was awarded the prestigious King Faisal International Prize by Saudi Arabia. Najati passed away in Cairo in 2000, leaving behind a significant intellectual legacy in Psychology. His critique of modern psychology remains essential in highlighting the need for an Islamic perspective that integrates spiritual and moral dimensions into psychological thought (Muslih, et al, 2023).

Uthman Najati emerged as a leading figure in Arab Psychology during the late 20th century. After earning his Ph.D. from Yale University, he played a key role in advancing Psychology in the Arab world. He was instrumental in establishing the first Psychology department in the Gulf region at Kuwait University and introduced an independent Islamic Psychology course at the undergraduate level. He later taught a graduate course on the subject at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (1985–1987). Najati contributed significantly to the development of Islamic Psychology, supervising the extensive three-volume *'Ilm al-Nafs fi al-Turath al-Islami* (Psychological Sciences in the Islamic Heritage), published by

International Institute of Islamic Thought. His scholarship involved annotating and analyzing numerous classical Islamic psychological texts, particularly in *Al-Dirasat al-Nafsanīyya 'ind al-'Ulama' al-Muslimin* (Psychological Studies of Muslim Scholars, 1993). He explored both Quranic and Sunnah-based Psychology as well as contributions from classical Muslim scholars, further elaborating his insights in *Madkhal ila 'Ilm al-Nafs al-Islami* (An Introduction to Islamic Psychology). Despite his recognition in the Arab world, Najati remained relatively unknown outside it. His work on Ibn Sina's theory of human perception was acknowledged and praised by Shaykh Mustafa Abd al-Raziq, former Grand Shaykh of Al-Azhar. His contribution to Psychology, recognized as early as the 1940s, earned him prestigious awards, including the King Faisal International Prize (Haque, et al, 2021). One of Najati's final works, *Madkhal ila 'Ilm al-Nafs al-Islami* (An Introduction to Islamic Psychology), was published in 2001, a year after his death. This book summarized his vision for Islamic Psychology and is considered a key contribution to the field. It offers foundational principles for building Islamic Psychology, providing a historical overview of the movement, key terminologies, and notable contributors. Najati's first task in the book was to clarify the terminology and concepts of Islamic Psychology, noting the lack of consensus on a term for the discipline. He preferred the term *'Ilm al-Nafs al-Islami* (Islamic Psychology) and defined it as a Psychology based on Islamic understandings of the human being, Islamic principles, and the truths of Shari'ah (Haque, et al, 2021). Uthman Najati, a prominent figure in Islamic Psychology, proposed a balanced approach to integrating Western psychological findings with Islamic teachings. He believed that while certain Western psychological theories might conflict with Islamic principles, empirical, evidence-based findings could coexist with Islamic beliefs. This perspective aligns with Malik Badri's critique, which cautioned against uncritically adopting secular psychological paradigms that might overlook spiritual dimensions. Najati outlined six foundational concepts for Islamic Psychology.

1. Faith in Core Beliefs: Acknowledging belief in Allah, angels, revealed scriptures, prophets, and the Day of Judgment as central to understanding human Psychology.
2. Unity of Truth: Recognizing that rational and revealed truths are harmonious, supporting the compatibility of science and religion.
3. Duality of Human Nature: Understanding humans as beings composed of both body and soul, influencing psychological processes.
4. Innate Goodness: Believing that humans are born with an inherent inclination toward goodness, guiding moral and ethical behaviors.
5. Free Will: Emphasizing human agency and responsibility in making choices, which are essential for moral accountability.
6. Scriptural Authority: Considering the Quran and Sunnah as primary sources of knowledge about human nature and behavior.

These principles underscore a holistic view of Psychology that integrates spiritual and empirical insights, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding human behavior within an Islamic context. Uthman Najati significantly advanced the field of Islamic Psychology within universities across the Muslim world. He identified historical, political, and social factors impeding growth for Islamic Psychology, notably the division between religious and secular educational tracks. Najati advocated for integrating Islamic Psychology elements into Islamic studies curricula, promoting a holistic approach that combines traditional Islamic teachings with contemporary psychological insights (Najati 2016). His seminal works, *The Quran and Psychology* (1982) and *The Prophetic Hadith and Psychology* (1989), delve into psychological themes within Islamic scriptures, offering both theoretical perspectives and

practical treatments. Najati emphasized a holistic methodology, contrasting with the reductionist tendencies of modern Psychology. Najati believed that exploring Islamic intellectual heritage is crucial for establishing Islamic Psychology as a discipline (Najati, 2016). This exploration:

1. Enables scholars to utilize fifteenth centuries of knowledge.
2. Addresses historical gaps often overlooked by modern Psychology historians.
3. Builds upon psychological insights from Muslim scholars within their communities.
4. Demonstrates approaches reconciling Islamic knowledge with other cultural traditions.
5. Facilitates a comprehensive understanding of human nature.
6. Aligns with psychological truths found in the Quran and Sunnah (Najati, 2016).

In the 1940s, Najati began correlating Ibn Sina's sensory perception theories with modern Psychology, culminating in his 1993 monograph, *Psychological Studies of Muslim Scholars*. This work examines the psychological contributions of fourteenth scholars, focusing on their psychological rather than philosophical themes. He also led an International Institute of Islamic Thought project summarizing over three hundred treatises by more than 100 Muslim scholars, resulting in the 2008 publication *Ilm al-Nafs fi al-Thurath al-Islami* (Psychological Sciences in the Islamic Heritage), aiming to guide future Islamic Psychology research. Despite these efforts, organizational support for Islamic Psychology has been limited, with minimal university-level courses and integration into mainstream curricula. Sociopolitical factors contribute to this decline, alongside challenges like language barriers hindering access to existing literature. Institutions like Al-Azhar University, where scholars receive training in both social sciences and religious studies, are well-positioned to advance Islamic Psychology (Haque 2023). However, collaborative projects remain scarce, and individual efforts often lack coordination. The monograph "Psychological Studies of Muslim Scholars, delves into the psychological perspectives of twelve prominent Muslim scholars:

- Al-Kindi
- Al-Razi
- Al-Farabi
- Ibn Miskawayh
- Ibn Sina
- Ibn Hazm
- Al-Ghazali
- Ibn Bajjah
- Ibn Tufail
- Ibn Rushd
- Ibn Tamiyya
- Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah

Najati emphasized the psychological aspects of these scholars' works, distinguishing his approach from others like Attas, Nasr, and Yasien Mohamed, who primarily focused on philosophical interpretations. The enthusiasm for Islamic Psychology has varied regionally. In Egypt, individual scholars showed interest in the 1980s and 1990s, but institutional support has waned since 2010. Organizational backing for Islamic Psychology remains minimal, with only occasional conferences held during the late 20th century. Entities like the World Islamic Association for Mental Health exist nominally but often lack the resources and direction to effectively promote Islamic Psychology research. Academic offerings in Islamic

Psychology are scarce. Few universities provide dedicated courses, and integration with mainstream curricula is limited. This gap highlights the need for more structured educational programs. Initiatives such as the "Islamic Psychology Diploma" by Usul Academy, in collaboration with Khalil Center, aim to address this need by offering rigorous, university-level courses that blend traditional Islamic knowledge with contemporary psychological practices. Najati's extensive research and publications, including "The Quran and Psychology" (1982) and "The Prophetic Hadith and Psychology" (1989), have significantly advanced the field of Islamic Psychology. These works provide a holistic understanding of human nature, encompassing various states, traits, drives, emotions, ailments, deviations, and pathways to well-being. Najati argued that the primary distinction between modern Psychology and Islamic Psychology lies in modern psychology's reductionist tendencies, whereas Islamic Psychology adopts a more holistic approach. A critical step in establishing Islamic Psychology as a discipline involves delving into the rich tapestry of Islamic intellectual heritage. This exploration allows scholars to:

1. Utilize Centuries of Knowledge: Tap into fifteenth centuries of psychological insights from Muslim scholars.
2. Bridge Historical Gaps: Address the oversight of Islamic contributions in the historiography of modern Psychology.
3. Build on Existing Knowledge: Expand upon the psychological wisdom produced within Muslim communities.
4. Reconcile Diverse Knowledge Systems: Harmonize Islamic teachings with insights from other cultures and traditions, reflecting the integrative approaches of early scholars.
5. Develop a Holistic Understanding: Foster a comprehensive view of human beings, aligning with the multifaceted nature of Islamic Psychology.
6. Complement Scriptural Truths: Align psychological truths with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.

Najati's scholarly endeavours have laid a robust foundation for the advancement of Islamic Psychology. However, realizing the full potential of Islamic Psychology requires concerted efforts in education, research, and institutional support to overcome existing challenges and promote its integration into academic and practical domains (Haque, 2023).

In his 2001 book, *Madkhal ila 'Ilm al-Nafs al-Islami* (An Introduction to Islamic Psychology), published posthumously, Najati outlined foundational principles for the emerging field of Islamic Psychology. He emphasized the importance of harmonizing rational and revealed truths, asserting that they should not be in conflict. Najati also highlighted a balanced approach to modern Psychology, advocating for the acceptance of empirical findings while critically assessing theoretical constructs. Central to his vision was the exploration of Islamic scriptures to extract psychological insights, aiming to bridge the gap between traditional Islamic teachings and contemporary psychological science (Haque, 2023).

3. Critique of Western Psychological Thought:

Uthman Najati argued that Western Psychology predominantly emphasizes biological, habitual, and attitudinal aspects of human behavior, often overlooking the spiritual dimensions inherent in human experience. He believed this focus led to a limited understanding of human nature, particularly in addressing psychological issues that require spiritual healing. Najati asserted that the neglect of the soul, or 'psyche,' in Western psychological frameworks resulted in a 'soulless Psychology,' inadequate for comprehending the full complexity of human Psychology. Modern Psychology's emphasis on empirical

and scientific methods has led to a focus on biological, habitual, and attitudinal aspects of human behavior, often overlooking spiritual dimensions. This approach, rooted in the materialistic and atheistic perspectives of early pioneers like Sigmund Freud and Wilhelm Wundt, has marginalized religious and spiritual considerations in understanding human nature. Critics argue that this reductionist view presents a fragmented and mechanistic understanding of humanity, failing to encompass the holistic nature of human experience. Uthman Najati has advocated for integrating Islamic perspectives into psychological discourse. Najati's work emphasizes the importance of exploring Islamic intellectual heritage to bridge the gap between traditional religious knowledge and modern psychological theories. His efforts aim to develop a more comprehensive and culturally relevant framework for understanding human behavior. By incorporating spiritual and religious dimensions, Islamic Psychology seeks to offer a more holistic understanding of human beings, addressing the shortcomings of traditional Western psychological models. This approach not only enriches psychological theory but also provides culturally sensitive therapeutic practices that resonate with individuals' spiritual and cultural identities (Muslih, et al, 2023). Muhammad Uthman Najati, in his book *Al-Qur'an wa 'Ilmu al-Nafs*, critiques modern Psychology's omission of the soul in its studies. He argues that contemporary psychiatrists rely heavily on physical science methodologies, focusing solely on observable mental symptoms. This materialistic approach, according to Najati, reduces humans to mere animals, overlooking the unique spiritual dimension that distinguishes humans from animals (Najati 2016). Uthman Najati and Erich Fromm both critiqued modern Psychology's focus on observable behaviors and physiological aspects, arguing that this approach neglects the study of the soul and spiritual dimensions inherent to human nature. Fromm noted that Psychology often addressed trivial issues fitting a presumed scientific method, while overlooking significant human phenomena such as conscience, values, love, reason, and morality. This materialistic perspective, according to both scholars, reduces human beings to mere animals, overlooking the unique spiritual dimension that distinguishes humans from other species (Fromm, 1959).

4. Key Differences Between Western and Islamic Psychology:

Uthman Najati identified key distinctions between Islamic and Western Psychology, particularly in their conceptualization of *'Ilm al-Nafs* (psychology). He referenced Ibn Sina's (Avicenna's) division of psychology into two domains:

1. Metaphysical Psychology (*'Ilm al-Nafs al-Mitāfīzīqī*): This branch explores the essence and existence of the soul, delving into questions about its materiality and its relationship with the body. It addresses aspects beyond the scope of empirical research, focusing on the spiritual and non-material dimensions of human existence.
2. Natural Psychology (*'Ilm al-Nafs al-Thabi'i*): This area examines the soul's faculties, including growth, sensory experiences, and cognitive functions. It considers how physical and environmental factors influence mental processes, aligning more closely with empirical observations.

Najati argued that Western Psychology's focus on observable behavior and physiological processes neglects these metaphysical aspects, leading to a limited understanding of human nature. By integrating both dimensions, Islamic Psychology offers a more holistic perspective on human Psychology, encompassing both empirical and spiritual elements (Muslih, et al, 2023). Uthman Najati, emphasized the importance of integrating both the physical and metaphysical aspects of the soul in psychological studies. He distinguished Islamic Psychology (*'Ilm al-Nafs al-Islami*) from Western Psychology by grounding it in Islamic principles, which consider divine sources and acknowledge a spiritual dimension. This approach

involves examining human nature through scientific research alongside insights from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the works of Islamic scholars in theology, philosophy, and Sufism (Najati, 2016). Uthman Najati offers a critique of modern psychology by highlighting its focus on observable, physical aspects of human behavior, often overlooking the metaphysical dimensions of the soul. He advocates for an Islamic perspective that integrates both empirical research and spiritual insights from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and classical Islamic scholarship (Kholdid Muslih, et al 2023). Modern psychology faces an epistemological divide between positivist approaches, exemplified by behaviorism, and non-positivist perspectives, such as psychoanalysis and humanistic psychology. This division often excludes religious considerations from psychological theories. Integrating religious aspects into psychological practice has been shown to influence personal functioning and may enhance therapeutic outcomes (Henrique, 2011).

By integrating both sources, Islamic Psychology offers a more holistic understanding of human nature, bridging empirical observations with spiritual insights (Najati, 2016). Uthman Najati offers a nuanced perspective on modern Psychology, distinguishing between theories rooted in empirical research and those influenced by materialistic or atheistic viewpoints. He acknowledges the value of psychological theories grounded in authentic experimental results, such as those related to sensory knowledge, memory, learning, and the theory of forgetting. These theories, based on empirical evidence, are considered beneficial and applicable in daily life. However, Najati critiques theories that emerge from materialistic and atheistic perspectives, particularly those that study human behavior through animal research. He argues that these approaches overlook the metaphysical aspects of human nature and fail to recognize the role of religion in understanding the human psyche. In contrast, Islamic Psychology emphasizes a comprehensive view that integrates both empirical research and spiritual insights derived from the Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. This approach acknowledges the importance of both human reason and divine revelation in studying human behavior and mental processes. By combining empirical evidence with spiritual teachings, Islamic Psychology seeks to provide a more holistic understanding of the human mind, addressing both the physical and metaphysical dimensions of human existence (Najati, 2016). Uthman Najati critiques modern psychology's reliance on animal experimentation, influenced by Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory, which views humans as evolved animals. He points out that while animal studies aim to minimize variables present in human research, they often overlook the unique spiritual aspects of human psychology. This approach aligns with a positivist epistemology, focusing solely on observable phenomena and neglecting unobservable elements like consciousness and values. Consequently, Najati argues, modern Psychology may fail to address the full complexity of human behavior by excluding these non-material dimensions. Uthman Najati, as highlighted by Malik Badri, critiques animal experimentation in Psychology from an atheistic standpoint. He argues that studying humans without considering their souls renders them soulless (Badri, 2016).

Uthman Najati critiques behaviorism for its exclusive focus on observable behaviors through conditioned reflexes, a perspective influenced by Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory. He argues that this approach reduces human beings to mere animals, neglecting the spiritual dimension that distinguishes humans from other species. This criticism aligns with broader concerns about behaviourism's materialistic view, which overlooks internal mental processes and the complexities of human thought, emotion, and cognition (Charles, et al 2004). Uthman Najati critiques behaviorism for its reductionist approach, which often involves conducting animal experiments to infer human behavior. This view aligns with critiques from scholars like Robert Agros and George Stancio, who note that behaviourism's focus on observable

behavior and material factors neglects the mind and spiritual dimensions, reducing humans to lifeless matter manipulated by external forces (Najati, 2016).

Uthman Najati critiques Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis for lacking rigorous scientific methodology, as Freud focused on the psyche's inner workings without empirical validation. This approach, according to Najati, overlooks the spiritual dimension of human behavior, reducing humans to mere material beings. Critics like Robert Agros and George Stancio echo this view, suggesting that behaviourism's materialistic focus neglects the mind's role, treating humans as lifeless matter manipulated by external forces. Uthman Najati critiques Freud's psychosexual development theory, arguing that psychoanalysis lacks scientific rigor and relies on subjective data from patient statements. He suggests that this approach does not adhere to positivist principles, highlighting a departure from empirical research (Najati, 2016).

Sigmund Freud theorized that religious beliefs are illusions crafted by humans to alleviate existential anxieties and confront life's challenges. He posited that these beliefs stem from a deep-seated yearning for a protective, paternal figure, mirroring the dependency experienced in childhood. According to Freud, religion serves as a comforting construct, offering solace in the face of life's uncertainties (Freud, 2010). Najati argued that behaviourism's exclusive focus on observable behavior and its neglect of internal mental states render it inadequate for understanding human nature. He believed this approach reduces humans to mere automatons, ignoring the spiritual and moral dimensions integral to human identity. This critique aligns with concerns that behaviourism's materialistic focus overlooks the complexities of human experience (Najati, 2016).

Despite his critiques, Najati recognized the value in humanistic Psychology, which emphasizes individual potential, self-awareness, and personal growth. He appreciated its focus on human values, morals, and spirituality, viewing it as a more holistic approach to understanding human behavior. This perspective aligns with the humanistic view that intentionality and ethical values are key psychological forces determining human behavior. In summary, Uthman Najati advocated for a psychological framework that integrates empirical research with Islamic teachings, acknowledging both the material and spiritual dimensions of human existence. He believed that incorporating these elements provides a more comprehensive understanding of human behavior, aligning with contemporary movements toward holistic psychology that consider mental, physical, emotional, relational, social, and spiritual aspects as interconnected parts of a whole system. However, Najati notes a divergence in the understanding of spirituality between humanistic Psychology and Islamic teachings. While humanistic psychology associates spiritual motives with self-actualization and humanistic values, Islamic spirituality encompasses a broader, religiously grounded concept of spirituality. Najati acknowledges that humanistic Psychology offers a more progressive perspective by recognizing the role of spirituality but points out that its interpretation differs from the Islamic view, which sees spirituality as connected to divine consciousness and religious practice (Najati, 2000).

Najati's critique highlights the need for a psychological framework that harmonizes scientific research with spiritual understanding, integrating empirical findings with the rich spiritual heritage found in religious traditions. Uthman Najati identifies three main issues within modern psychology (Najati, 2000):

1. Terminological Alignment: He emphasizes that psychological terms should accurately reflect the realities observed in empirical research.
2. Epistemological Concerns: Najati critiques the epistemological foundations of various psychological schools:

- Behaviorism: He argues that its positivist approach leads to a reductionist understanding of humans, focusing solely on observable behavior and neglecting internal processes.
 - Psychoanalysis: He points out that some of its theories lack empirical support and adopt a deterministic view of human behavior.
 - Humanism: While acknowledging its focus on human values and self-realization, he notes its lack of engagement with revelatory epistemology, limiting its integration of religious and spiritual dimensions.
3. **Worldview Bias:** Najati observes that modern psychology predominantly reflects a materialistic and atheistic Western worldview, which may not align with Islamic perspectives or other religious viewpoints.

William James, in his seminal work *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, emphasized the importance of studying individual religious experiences, attitudes, and feelings, highlighting their significance in human life. He employed qualitative research methods to explore these personal religious experiences, providing valuable insights into their nature. Neglecting the study of religious experiences in Psychology would be a significant oversight, given their profound impact on human behavior and well-being. Additionally, research indicates that spiritual practices can enhance mental health and aid in coping with stress, further underscoring the need to incorporate spirituality into psychological studies (James, 2009).

5. Methodological Framework Proposed by Mohammad Uthman Najati:

Uthman Najati, has long addressed the integration of Psychology and Religion. In response to Western Psychology's dominance, which often excludes considerations of God and religion, he proposed a seven-step strategy to develop Islamic Psychology (Najati, 2016).

1. **Master Modern Psychology:** Gain a thorough understanding of contemporary psychological theories and practices.
2. **Master Islamic Traditions:** Study Islamic teachings, including the Qur'an and Hadith, to inform psychological perspectives.
3. **Explore Muslim Intellectual Heritage:** Delve into the contributions of Muslim scholars to Psychology.
4. **Critique Modern Psychology:** Evaluate and challenge aspects of modern psychology from an Islamic viewpoint.
5. **Conduct Empirical Research:** Perform research that aligns with both Islamic principles and psychological methodologies.
6. **Organize Academic Conferences:** Facilitate gatherings to discuss and disseminate Islamic psychological scholarship.
7. **Reconstruct Psychology within an Islamic Framework:** Develop psychological theories and practices rooted in Islamic values. Psychology that respects both scientific rigor and spiritual values (Haque, et al, 2021).

6. Effectiveness of *Wudhu* in Reducing Anxiety:

Wudhu, the Islamic practice of ablution, serves as a nonpharmacological method to alleviate anxiety, offering physical, psychological, and emotional benefits. The act of washing specific body parts during wudu induces relaxation, leading to feelings of peace and calmness. This process can naturally soothe the mind, fostering a sense of tranquillity. Research indicates that wudhu has a refreshing effect, cleansing both body and soul, and restoring energy (Fatoni 2023). According to Muhammad Uthman Najati,

performing *wudhu'* serves not only as a physical preparation for prayer by cleansing the body but also as a means to purify the soul from impurities. The process of *wudhu* incorporates elements such as water, temperature, and gentle massaging motions, which collectively contribute to relaxation and anxiety reduction (Najati, 2016). The act of washing, accompanied by slight pressure on the skin and interlacing of fingers, provides a massage-like effect, serving as a form of relaxation therapy. When performed correctly, *wudhu* can serve as a therapeutic practice for various ailments, including psychosomatic disorders. It is designed to cleanse the soul, facilitating a state of mindfulness and presence before God, thereby achieving spiritual purification and inner calm. Research indicates that washing the body with water before sleep can improve sleep quality. Additionally, neuroscientific studies have shown that cooling the nerve endings in the fingers and toes during *wudhu* can enhance concentration. Furthermore, the limbs involved in *wudhu* contain numerous acupuncture points that respond to stimuli such as washing and rubbing, potentially contributing to overall well-being. Performing *wudhu'* (ablution) engages three key components—water, temperature, and massage—that collectively contribute to anxiety reduction. Water serves as a cleansing and soothing agent, acting therapeutically. The act of washing specific body parts with gentle pressure and interlacing fingers provides a massaging effect, a recognized relaxation technique. It is a ritual aimed at purifying the soul to facilitate communication with Allah through prayer. Maintaining mindfulness during *wudhu'* ensures that the soul remains connected to the divine, achieving spiritual purification and promoting inner calm. Notably, Austrian neurologist Leopold Werner von Ehrenfels discovered that the most sensitive nerve centres are located near the forehead, hands, and feet—areas targeted during *wudhu'*. Stimulating these centres with fresh water can enhance the health and harmony of the nervous system. Neuroscientists have also found that cooling the nerve endings in the fingers and toes during *wudhu'* can improve concentration. These actions can deliver therapeutic benefits throughout the body's cells, tissues, organs, and systems. For example, acupuncture points on the face, such as located on the nasolabial folds can have both physical and psychological benefits, including the treatment of schizophrenia. Washing the hands from fingertips to elbows, as prescribed in Islamic law, stimulates meridians associated with these acupuncture points. Health experts view *wudu'* as a form of hydromassage. For instance, washing the face acts as a water massage that positively affects the intestines, kidneys, nervous system, and reproductive system. Cleaning the ears involves massaging numerous biological points, which can lower blood pressure and reduce pain. Washing the feet during *wudhu'* has a massaging effect that positively influences the pituitary gland, which regulates hormone release and growth. Additionally, washing between the fingers massages the hair nerves located there. Neurological studies have confirmed that *wudhu'* can cool the nerve endings of the fingers and toes, aiding in concentration (Fatoni, et al 2023). In summary, *wudhu'* offers therapeutic benefits through the stimulation of acupuncture points and nerve centres, leading to improved physical and psychological well-being (Najati, 2016)

7. Mental Health:

Mental health encompasses both physical and psychological aspects of an individual's well-being, which are dynamic and vary among people. Throughout life, individuals encounter situations requiring them to address various mental health challenges. According to Joseph (2011), psychological well-being involves several key components: first, how individuals think, feel, and conduct their daily activities; second, how they perceive themselves in relation to others; and third, their ability to evaluate different options when making decisions about their current circumstances.

Marie Jahoda, in her 1958 study "Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health," identified six criteria essential for assessing mental health:

1. **Positive Attitude Toward the Self:** This involves having a favourable self-image and self-acceptance.
2. **Self-Actualization:** The realization of one's potential, pursuing personal growth, and striving for self-improvement.
3. **Integration:** Achieving a harmonious balance among various aspects of one's personality, effectively managing stress, and maintaining emotional stability.
4. **Autonomy:** Exercising independent thought and behavior, making decisions based on personal values and beliefs.
5. **Accurate Perception of Reality:** Understanding the world objectively, free from distortions or delusions.
6. **Environmental Mastery:** The ability to adapt to and manage one's environment, effectively handling various life situations.

These elements collectively contribute to an individual's overall mental well-being, emphasizing both personal development and effective interaction with one's surroundings. Uthman Najati, has emphasized the importance of integrating spiritual dimensions into mental health. Indicators of mental health encompass (Najati, 2016):

1. **Spiritual Dimension:** This includes unwavering faith in God, consistent worship, trust in divine wisdom, and a continuous sense of closeness to God. It involves fulfilling religious obligations and reflecting on God's presence in daily life.
2. **Psychological Dimension:** This pertains to personal attributes such as honesty, responsibility, autonomy, and freedom from negative emotions like jealousy, pride, anxiety, and insecurity. Adherence to ethical principles, emotional balance, sincerity, acceptance of life's realities, self-control, and humility are vital aspects.
3. **Social Dimension:** This involves nurturing loving and respectful relationships with family members, including parents and siblings, as well as with friends and the broader community. It emphasizes the significance of social connections and support systems in maintaining mental well-being.
4. **Biological Dimension:** This focuses on maintaining physical health, being free from illnesses, and not overburdening oneself physically. It includes paying attention to health and ensuring that physical activities align with one's capabilities (Najati, 2016).

8. Concept of Emotional Stress:

Uthman Najati, an expert in Islamic Psychology, identifies the psychological crises prevalent in Western societies as primarily stemming from a lack of religious engagement, diminished spiritual values, and a poor understanding of life's purpose. He posits that returning to religious values can serve as a therapeutic remedy to these issues. Fariza suggests that emotional problems should be addressed through Islamic methods, tailoring approaches to individual circumstances. One such method includes the recitation of Surah Al-Fatiha, which is believed to alleviate stress and promote inner peace (Fariza, 2005). Al-Sa'idi highlights that emotional stress manifests as disturbances within the soul, presenting as feelings of hesitation, fear, sadness, hatred, jealousy, anger, and shame. Such stress contributes to anxiety, reduced concentration, sleep difficulties, and loss of appetite, ultimately impacting individual and societal productivity (Al-Sa'id, 2009). Aqil describes emotional turmoil as a state of deep agitation that significantly alters one's behavior (Aqil, 1985). Al-Ghazali categorizes human behavior into natural,

automatic, and mental forms, noting that while humans share automatic behaviors with animals, their mental behaviors, influenced by heritage and society, are unique and subject to change. He asserts that emotional turmoil, no matter how intense, can be mitigated through the cultivation of the soul and intellect (Al-Ghazali, 1991). Al-Syarbini observes that individuals lacking life guidance are more susceptible to emotional challenges, especially during difficult times (Al-Syarbini, 2008). This underscores the importance of integrating spiritual and religious practices, such as the recitation of Quranic verses, to foster mental well-being and navigate life's challenges effectively (Najati, 2016).

In Islamic teachings, stress is viewed as psychological strain resulting from feelings of restlessness, disappointment, sadness, and actions that contravene God's commandments or succumb to one's desires. Islamic scholars such as al-Ghazali, al-Razi, Muhammad Uthman Najati, Muhammad 'Izudin Taufik, Samit Atif al-Zin, and Hassan Langgulung have linked stress to emotions and behaviors including anxiety, envy, arrogance, self-admiration, insincerity, and fear (Safri, et al 2018). Najati emphasizes that sadness is a natural emotion experienced when individuals face loss, disappointment, or fail to achieve their goals. He notes that parents often feel profound sadness when their children are harmed or face difficulties. In Islamic teachings, neglecting material needs can lead to social challenges, including unemployment and poverty, potentially resulting in despair and depression. Najati highlights that humans possess innate drives—such as hunger, thirst, and sexual desires—that must be fulfilled in accordance with Islamic principles; failing to satisfy these needs appropriately can lead to frustration and restlessness (Najati, 2016).

Psychotherapy, derived from the Greek words "psyche" (meaning soul or mind) and "therapeia" (meaning healing or treatment), refers to the treatment of mental health issues through psychological methods rather than medications. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, it involves interventions such as suggestion, advice, entertainment, and hypnosis to address spiritual or psychological disorders. Muhammad 'Uthman Najati, in his book "*Al-Qur'an wa Ilmu an-Nafs*," emphasizes that psychotherapy aims to modify an individual's personality or behavior by altering their thoughts and inclinations. (Ulfa, 2022). Psychotherapy serves as a valuable alternative to medication for addressing mental health issues. It involves various techniques such as counseling, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and other therapeutic methods to help individuals manage emotional and psychological challenges. Research indicates that combining psychotherapy with medication can lead to significant improvements in mental health outcomes. Moreover, Psychotherapy can be effective on its own, aiding individuals in coping with stress, depression, and anxiety. This approach focuses on understanding and modifying thought patterns and behaviors, contributing to enhanced emotional well-being without the potential side effects associated with long-term medication use.

Based on the various definitions described above, we can understand that in dealing with various life problems, everyone has the potential to experience mental or mental disorders, either mild or severe. The existence of psychotherapy or mental therapy is a "bright spot" or alternative that can be used to improve a person's mental condition without using drugs that are likely to have side effects if used in the long term. Forms of therapy in Islam: Islamic teachings offer various therapeutic practices aimed at promoting mental and spiritual well-being. These include regular prayers (*Salah*), recitation of the Qur'an, remembrance of Allah (*Dhikr*), fasting during Ramadan (*Sawm*), and acts of charity (*Zakah*). Additionally, engaging in community support and seeking knowledge are encouraged as means to enhance mental health. These practices are believed to foster a balanced and healthy life, aligning with both psychological and spiritual aspects of healing.

Fasting serves as a practice to regulate desires and emotions, enhancing one's ability to manage impulses. According to Uthman Najati, fasting incorporates an element of patience, enabling individuals to endure various challenges. This perspective aligns with Islamic teachings, which emphasize that fasting cultivates patience, helping individuals navigate life's difficulties. Uthman Najati observed that the rituals of Hajj serve as a profound exercise in self-discipline and humility. By donning identical attire, pilgrims transcend distinctions of wealth and status, fostering a sense of equality and unity. This shared experience diminishes feelings of pride and arrogance, promoting a deeper connection with God and a reinforced sense of community among individuals (Najati, 2016). The Qur'an, a divine revelation to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), holds profound significance in purifying the heart and cleansing the soul. Reciting its verses with sincerity fosters a sense of tranquillity, enveloping individuals in divine mercy.

This aligns with Surah Fussilat (41:44), where Allah describes the Qur'an as both guidance and healing for believers.

And if We had made it a non-Arabic Qur'an, they would have said, "Why are its verses not explained in detail (in our language)? Is it a foreign (recitation) and an Arabic (messenger)?" Say, "It is, for those who believe, a guidance and cure." And those who do not believe in their ears is deafness, and it is upon them blindness. Those are being called from a distant place.

Muhammad Uthman Najati, emphasized that reading the Qur'an serves as a remedy for emotional distress stemming from feelings of guilt and sin. He posited that the Qur'an not only stabilizes the soul but also purifies it, guiding individuals back to their innate, pure nature. This process is akin to nourishing the body with healthy food, leading to a healthier heart and mind. Supporting this perspective, research indicates that the Qur'an can heal emotional disorders by purifying the soul. Practices such as reading the Qur'an, engaging in prayers, fasting, charity, remembrance of God (*Dhikr*), contemplation, and seeking blessings are associated with emotional recovery. Additionally, Islamic teachings highlight that the Qur'an serves as a healing agent, alleviating ailments of the heart and providing guidance and mercy to believers. This aligns with the notion that spiritual engagement with the Qur'an fosters emotional well-being and mental clarity. Uthman Najati observed that prayer serves as a remedy for anxiety, distress, and restlessness. By praying, individuals seek Allah's assistance, which alleviates difficulties, strengthens patience, and fosters inner peace (Najati, 2016). This aligns with the Quranic verse: "And when My servants ask you concerning Me, indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me

"And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided..."

Recitation of the Qur'an has the power to cure the hearts because Qur'an is a healing to the diseases of the heart as mentioned in the Qur'an:

"And We send down from the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe." (Surah Isra': 82).

At another place in quran Allah says that: *O mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord (i.e., the Qur'an), and a healing for that (disease) in your breasts - a guidance and a mercy for the believers.* (Surah Yunus: 57).

Mohammad Marmaduke Picktall, in his much celebrated and famous English translation of the Holy Qur'an described the recitation of the Qur'an as "*the inimitable symphony, the very sound of which move men to tears and ecstasy* (Najati, 2016)" Scientific studies have demonstrated that listening to Qur'anic recitation can positively influence physiological and psychological well-being. Ahmed Elkadi, conducting

research at Akbar Clinics in Panama City, Florida, observed that listening to the Qur'an led to relaxation of smooth muscles, reduced heart rate, and alleviated stress and anxiety. These effects were evident regardless of the listener's religious affiliation or understanding of Arabic. Further research indicates that listening to verses emphasizing rewards (*Targheeb*) resulted in greater stress reduction compared to verses highlighting punishments (*Tarheeb*). This suggests that the content and context of the recited verses play a role in their therapeutic impact. These findings underscore the potential of Qur'anic recitation as a non-pharmacological intervention for enhancing mental health and promoting relaxation (Mushtaq, 2021). Muhammad Khair al-Irgisoosi conducted Ph.D. research at the University of Khartoum under the supervision of Malik Badri, focusing on patients with hypertension linked to stress. The study found that listening to Qur'anic recitation significantly lowered blood pressure among participants. In some cases, patients' blood pressure normalized to the extent that their physicians advised discontinuing medication (Badri, 2014). Najati emphasizes that reciting the Qur'an serves as an effective remedy for feelings of restlessness and mental turmoil stemming from guilt. He asserts that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) utilized the Qur'an to address neuroses, highlighting its therapeutic potential for various psychological disturbances and depression (Najati, 2016).

Conclusion:

Mohammad Uthman Najati contribution to Islamic psychology offer valuable insights into the treatment and understanding of mental health within an Islamic framework. His critiques of Western psychological schools reveal significant limitations in addressing the spiritual and holistic aspects of mental well-being. By focusing on the therapeutic potential of Qur'anic recitation, *Wudhu*, and a holistic view of emotional stress, Najati presents a comprehensive approach to mental health that incorporates both psychological and spiritual healing. The development of Islamic psychology, as proposed by Najati, encourages a more inclusive, culturally sensitive framework that acknowledges the spiritual dimensions of human existence. This study demonstrates that Islamic psychology offers alternative methods of mental health care that align with the values and practices of the Muslim community, highlighting the need for further exploration in this field.

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