Chapter 1
Introduction to the Psychology of Islam and Muslims: A Positive Psychology JIHAD

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Abstract Positive Psychology 2.0 brings with it a focus on balancing the study of wellness to include negative conditions that also contribute to growth. Struggle is one such aspect that is inherent to positive change, both within individuals and across social systems. In Islam, struggle is a key component of life. The benefits of positive struggle include the development of character strengths and virtues on an individual level as well as engagement in collective actions toward social justice. This chapter provides a brief look into the ways in which Islamic psychology and Muslim psychology are differentiated in contemporary research. Consideration is given to the importance of Justice, Identity, Healing, Acceptance, and Dogma (JIHAD) as areas of struggle in Muslim communities. These also serve as organizational themes of the current compilation to showcase the move towards a positive psychology of Islam and Muslims.

1.1 Introduction

I would like to start by saying that I am not an Islamic scholar. I am an educator and researcher with a background in psychology, language, and culture. I am also a practicing Muslim. As my personal experiences of Islam may not fit with any singular school of thought or interpretative tradition, my objective in bringing forth this volume is to provide diverse viewpoints grounded in the social sciences that shape our understandings of Islam and the lived experiences of Muslims in different cultural contexts. As a South Asian heterosexual Muslim woman raised in the United States, I acknowledge those identities that are privileged within Muslim communities. From that positioning, I strive to provide a forum in this volume for Muslims who have been historically marginalized and those who continue to be minoritized in Muslim and/or non-Muslim spaces. Moving toward a positive

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psychology of Islam and Muslims requires a deep dive into a variety of disciplines, including philosophy, Islamic studies, global studies, communication and media studies, along with traditional and transcendental approaches to the science of all that is positive.

A Deeper Dive: Sources of Islamic Knowledge

Laila S. Dahan

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is a revelation from God sent down to Prophet Muhammad. The literal meaning of the word Qur'an is "recitation." This sacred book describes the way in which Allah (Arabic for "God") should be worshipped. It is divided into chapters (*surahs*) and further segmented into verses (*ayahs*). In addition to the Qur'an, Muslims obtain insight into how to conduct themselves as Muslims through the *sunnah* and *hadith*. The *sunnah* means "habitual practice" or way of life and encompasses traditional social and permitted practices of the Islamic *ummah*, or community of believers. The *sunnah* contains specifics from the Prophet's life, including his sayings, actions, implicit consent, decisions, and responses to legal and ethical queries (Duderija, 2015). The *hadiths* provide Muslims with the route to the *sunnah* and are much like the Christian gospels. The stories of the prophet and his companions (s*ahaba;* Motzki, 2016) are transmitted through these collections, which are contained in six books that form the backbone of the *sunnah*. Although they are compiled in written form, for centuries the narratives of the *hadiths* were communicated orally. Thus, determining the accuracy of textual references is of prime importance and has led to a system of authentication that takes into consideration the chain of oral transmission as well the character and intellect of each member of that chain.

Shariah law is commonly referred to as Islamic law. However, s*hariah* is not actually "law" as understood by the West (Quraishi-Landes, 2016), although it does inform law (Brown, 2012). *Shariah* law is not made up of regulations that are "adjudicated in court" nor is it a "book of statutes" (Quraishi-Landes, 2016), or a set of rules (Brown, 2012). *Shariah* is considered the ideal law; it is eternal and unchanging (El Fadl, 2012), divine and philosophical (Quraishi-Landes, 2016), and profoundly informed by "a set of moral goals" (Brown, 2012, p. 11). The word *shariah* literally means the "way" or "road" and as a legal term refers to "God's Way" or "God's Law," which communicates to Muslims how to conduct their lives (Qureshi, 2008; Quraishi-Landes, 2015). It is up to individual scholars to comprehend *shariah*, and that interpretation is called *fiqh*, which means "understanding" (Quraishi-Landes, 2016). So, while *shariah* is the eternal law, *fiqh* is driven by humans who are attempting to fulfill the eternal laws, and therefore is "subject to error,

alterable, and contingent" (El Fadl, 2012, para. 52) The *shariah* was created by Islamic legal scholars using the Qur'an and the *sunnah* as their sources (Sabry & Vohra, 2013). Qureshi (2008) further elucidates:

> Since the Qur'an and *sunnah* are unable to offer answers to every question that people encounter in life, the jurists-legal scholars within Muslim societies developed a science of interpreting those texts to come up with specific legal conclusions. And their conclusions . . . make up the doctrinal law that we think about when we think about Islamic law in the sense of the rules governing Muslim lives (pp. 164–165).

Therefore, the guidance that the faithful follow is not definitive, because it does depend on human decisions (Brown, 2012). The *fiqh* rules that are put forth "distinguish between the spiritual value of an action (how God sees it) and the world value of that action (how it affects others)" (Quraishi-Landes, 2016, para. 4). Although *fiqh* rules may compel devout Muslims to pray, a Muslim ruler does not have to enforce that rule. In fact, it is not the place of *fiqh* to help Muslim leaders "police morality" as is evident in Saudi Arabia (Quraishi-Landes, 2016). Ultimately, the accurate role of the state in a "modern *sharia* rule of law system would be to serve the public good" (Quraishi-Landes, 2015, p. 556). While many Muslims are influenced by the Qur'an, *sunnah*, and *hadith*, others are similarly influenced by the early Muslim philosophers and intellectuals who wrote extensively about the social and natural sciences.

While psychology is generally considered the study of the mind and human behaviors, many people are unaware that the term comes from two Greek words: *psyche* (meaning soul) and *logos* (meaning study). As such, psychology literally translates to "the study of the soul". The soul was an intrinsic part of the study and practice of mental health among early Muslim scholars and physicians whose ideas expanded upon those of the ancient Greeks. However, unlike Greek scholars, who positioned their ideas in opposition to Christianity, early Muslim scholars incorporated Islamic perspectives into their theories and applications (Haque, 2004). Bearing in mind that psychology was subsumed within philosophical domains which provided the onus for the study of most human conditions, Table 1.1 provides an overview of some of the contributions that early Muslim scholars made toward understanding and healing the mind (Cohen & Bai, 2016; Haque, 2004; Robinson, 1998; Shuttleworth, 2010).

1.2 Islamic Psychology and Muslim Psychology

Much of the work of early Muslims was eclipsed during the growth of psychology in the twentieth century in Europe and the Americas, partly due to a lack of access to the Arabic language in which this work was published, and partly as a reflection of Western psychology's attempt to create a science separate from philosophical and

Table 1.1 Contributions of early Muslim scholars to the science of the mind

Muslim scholar (year of birth-year of death)	Contributions to psychology	Select written works
Al-Kindi (801–866)	• Cognitive strategies for sadness (depression) • Functions of the soul and intellect	• On Sleep and Dreams • First Philosophy • Eradication of Sorrow
Al-Tabari (838–870)	• Psychotherapy and counseling	• Paradise of Wisdom (*Firdaus al Hikmah*)

Al-Balkhi (850–934)	• Classification of neuroses into four disorders:
	  – fear/anxiety
	  – anger/aggression
	  – sadness/depression
	  – obsession
	• Classification of depression as normal sadness, endogenous depression (originating from the body), and reactive depression (originating from external environment)
	• Cognitive therapy, including spiritual therapies
	• Psychosomatic medicine
		• Sustenance for Bodies and Souls (*Masalih al-Abdan wa al-Anfus*)

Ibn Zakariya Al-Razi (864–932)	• Psychotherapy • Psychosomatic medicine	• The Comprehensive Book of Medicine (*Kitab al-Hawi fi al-Tibb*) • On Spiritual Medicine (*al-Tibb al-Ruhani*)
Al-Farabi (870–950)	• Social psychology • Therapeutic effect of music	• Enumeration of the Sciences (*'Ihsâ' al-'Ulûm*) • Treatise on the Aims of Aristotle's Metaphysics • The Book of Music (*Kitab al-Musiqa*)
Al-Majusi (d. 995)	• Anatomy and physiology of the brain • Mental illness	• The Royal Notebook (*Al-Kitab Al-Malaki*)
Ibn Sina (980–1037)	• Sensation and perception • Mind-body connection • Intuition and intellect • Symptoms and treatment of mood disorders • Memory and processing	• *Book of the Cure (Kitāb al-Shifāʾ)* • The Canon of Medicine (*Al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*)
Al-Ghazali (1058–1111)	• Conceptualization of the self • Physical and spiritual diseases	• Revival of the Religious Sciences (*Ihyâ' 'Ulûm al-Dîn*) • Alchemy of Happiness (*Kimiya'-yi Sa'adat;* shorter version of Revival of the Religious Sciences) • The Niche for Lights (*Mishkāt al-Anwār*) • The Forty Chapters on the

Table 1.1 (continued)

Muslim scholar (year of birth-year of death)	Contributions to psychology	Select written works
		Principles of Religion (*Kitab al-Arba'in fi Usul al-Din*
Ibn Bajjah (1095–1138)	• Active intelligence	• The Regime of the Solitary (*Tadbīr al-Mutawaḥḥid*
Ibn Al-Ayn Zarbi (d. 1153)	• Mind-body connection • Mental health	• Book of Medicine (*Al-Kafi fi-Tibb*)
Ibn Rushd (1126–1198)	• Sensation and imagination • Learning • Types of intellect	• The Decisive Treatise (*Fasl al Maqal*)
Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1149/50–1209)	• Pleasure and pain • Human needs • Emotional conditions and treatments	• Book on the Soul and the Spirit (*Kitab al Nafs Wa'l Ru*)
Muhammad Ibn Ali (Ibn Arabi) (1164–1240)	• Perception and imagination • Intellect • Desires and dreams	• The Bezels of Wisdom (*Fusus al-Hikam*) • The Meccan Illuminations (*al-Futuhat al-makkiyya*)
Ibn-Khaldun (1332–1406)	• Personality • Social cohesion	• Introduction: Multivolume work on History, Sociology, Economics, Politics, and Education (*Muqaddimah*)

religious enquiry (Haque, 2004; Watson, 1960). Although contemporary psychology has begun to incorporate a wider lens that reflects non-Western and indigenous ways of knowing and being, mainstream subdisciplines generally continue to follow Western, usually American, models (Arnett, 2016; Thalmayer, Toscanelli, & Arnett, 2020). Of these, social and personality psychology appear most diversified, and clinical and cognitive psychology the least (Thalmayer et al., 2020). The hesitation to include religion and spirituality (R/S) in psychology may stem in part from the division of science and theism, with each proclaiming a designated space in intellectual enquiry. From this perspective, science is limited to natural events and phenomena, while R/S is the concern of philosophers and theologians. As such, psychologists who attempt to incorporate R/S into the discipline often continue to be met with disdain. Unfortunately, by defining psychology as a neutral enterprise, free from the biases of philosophy, culture, and religion, the universals that psychologists have attempted to discover have instead resulted in creating a privileged set of norms favoring Western, particularly North American, individualistic societies against whom the majority of the world's population is judged (Slife & Reber, 2009).

The division between science and religion makes it particularly difficult to address the behaviors, attitudes, and mental processes of religious individuals who may attribute a significant portion of their identity to their system of faith. In terms of better understanding Muslim populations, who account for approximately 24% of

the world, psychology researchers in the past few years have begun to reinvigorate the study of the self, personhood, and human nature as defined by Islamic paradigms. This has resulted in an Islamic psychology movement that seeks to incorporate Islam and psychology into a single framework by revisiting the contributions of early Muslim scholars to mental processes, disorders, and treatments (Al-Karam, 2018; Rothman & Coyle, 2018; Skinner, 2019). Given this focus, much of the contemporary Islamic psychology literature has been dedicated to clinical and counseling psychology, with some recent calls for expansion into other subdisciplines (Al-Karam, 2020; Pasha-Zaidi, 2019). At the same time, Muslim and non-Muslim psychologists and researchers have been exploring the lived experiences of Muslims for several years using psychological theories developed primarily in the West. In a review of empirical studies from 2006 to 2015, Haque et al. (2016) noted the incorporation of R/S into mainstream psychology by Muslim researchers as well as the acceptance of Western approaches and culturally sensitive adaptations of Western models and tools to study psychological phenomena among Muslim populations. As Muslim psychology is inherently built on the literature available in Western science, studies can be found across existing subdisciplines, with empirical studies being conducted in clinical, counseling, social/personality, industrial/organizational, cultural psychology, and neuroscience.

Despite the somewhat different foundations upon which knowledge is built, both Islamic psychology and Muslim psychology contribute important theories and findings about Muslims to the social science literature. In an earlier article (Pasha-Zaidi, 2019), I suggested expanding the term "Islamic Psychology" to "Islamic Psychologies" (Rothman & Coyle, 2018) in order to open the field to other, particularly non-clinical applications of psychology. While I still believe in broadening the field of study for Islamic psychology, given the foundational work of both indigenous and Western approaches, I think it is equally important to create an umbrella term that allows Islamic psychology and Muslim psychology to develop as separate yet related lines of enquiry. This is in line with Kaplick and Skinner (2017), who suggest a "distinction between *Islamic psychology* (referring to the psychology developed from Islamic sources, i.e., Islam's version of psychology); and *Islam and psychology* (referring to the broader movement that relates Islam to psychology in general)" with topics related to Muslim mental health, lived experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and religious interactions "better categorized under Muslim psychology" (pp. 199–200).

For the purposes of this book, I have chosen the term, "Psychology of Islam and Muslims". Figure 1.1 provides a model for beginning this dialogue. Bearing in mind that Islam considers all human beings to begin their life in submission to God (Joshanloo, 2013) and that "there is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'an 2:256), creating two branches of psychology can hopefully bring greater clarity and organization to the scholarship that focuses on Muslim populations. Additionally, employing a single umbrella term may promote greater collaboration between Muslim researchers with different specializations, while reminding non-Muslim researchers and practitioners of the importance of implicit and explicit norms that
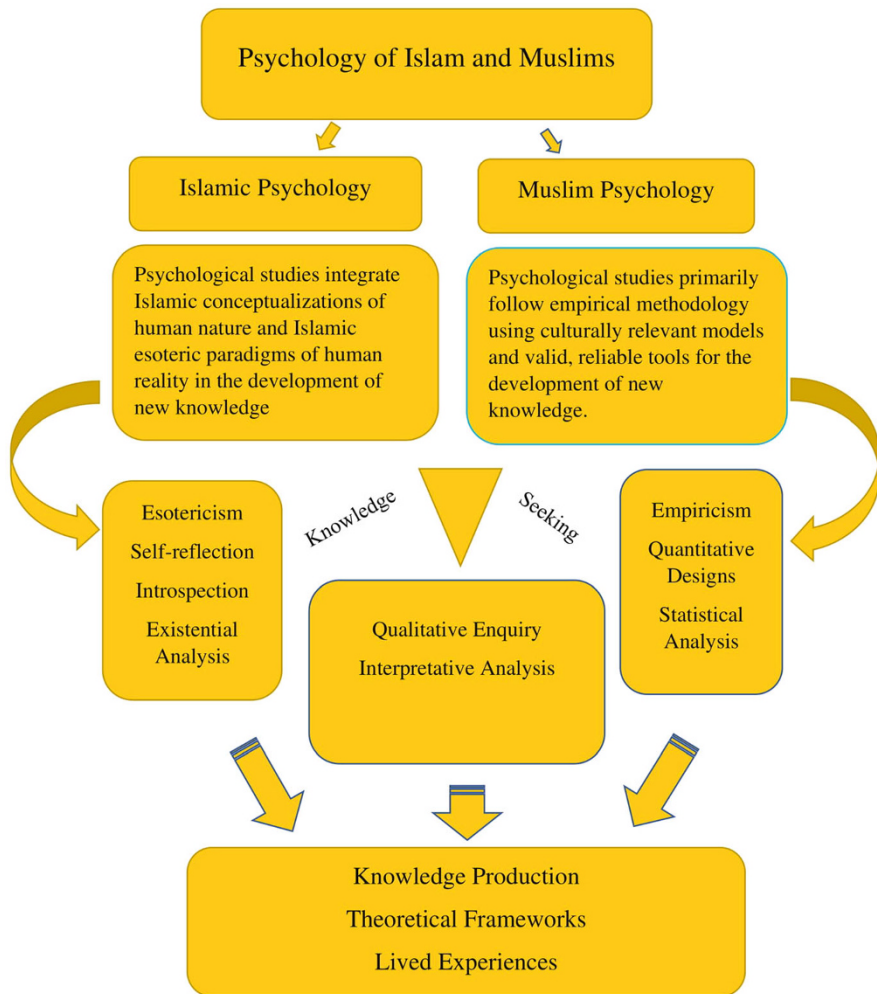
Psychology of Islam and Muslims

Islamic Psychology

Muslim Psychology

Psychological studies integrate Islamic conceptualizations of human nature and Islamic esoteric paradigms of human reality in the development of new knowledge

Psychological studies primarily follow empirical methodology using culturally relevant models and valid, reliable tools for the development of new knowledge.

Esotericism

Self-reflection

Introspection

Existential Analysis

Knowledge

Seeking

Empiricism

Quantitative Designs

Statistical Analysis

Qualitative Enquiry

Interpretative Analysis

Knowledge Production

Theoretical Frameworks

Lived Experiences

Fig. 1.1 Psychology of Islam and Muslims knowledge seeking and production model

Muslims may bring to their experiences, regardless of their level of religiosity or the nuances of their practice.

1.3 The Importance of Struggle in Positive Psychology

In the positive psychology literature, struggle lays the foundation for the behaviors, attitudes, and perspectives that can lead to virtue, meaning, resilience, and wellbeing (Wong, 2011) within individuals and can encourage movements toward social

justice at societal levels. A core value of the move towards Positive Psychology 2.0 (PP 2.0) is the emphasis on balance to correct the "tyranny" of positivity (Held, 2002), which created an artificial separation between the positive and negative aspects of human experience (Wong, 2011). Proponents of this phase of positive psychology prefer the integration of both positive and negative forces to understand the complexities of human life (Ryff & Singer, 2003) using metaphors associated with Eastern faith traditions, particularly the Taoist symbol of the yin and yang—the coexistence of duality in nature. The role of struggle in Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, and most wisdom traditions is inherent in the development of spirituality, a construct that is most often reflected in discussions about meaning of life and purpose.

1.3.1   Jihad al Nafs

In developing an empirically grounded Islamic conceptualization of the self or soul, Rothman (2020) found that the theoretical relationship between the discipline of psychology and the individual Muslim is primarily influenced by *jihad al nafs*, the struggle of the soul to return to its natural state of *fitrah*. *Fitrah*, the innate human connection to God, is central to Islamic psychology and serves as the starting point from which all human experience begins. As the trials of life in this world (*dunya*) cause human beings to get further from the innate purity of their *fitrah*, psychological distress ensues. From this perspective, struggle is not only responsible for negative affect and mental disease, it is key to achieving psychological health and wellbeing. Abdullah (2015) notes that strengths-based perspectives are consistent with the framing of *fitrah* in Islam as both undergird a positive view of humanness and highlight the importance of resilience in the face of struggles, with the growth of one's character and virtue being an integral part of this journey (Rothman, 2020).

1.3.2   Character Strengths and Virtues in Muslim Populations

Peterson and Seligman (2004) defined character strengths as a family of core virtues that have a positive influence on our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. The Values in Action (VIA) classification consists of 24-character strengths organized by six virtue categories recognized across historical, religious, and cultural boundaries (Table 1.2).

   A study of Muslim American youth found that religiosity was correlated with character strengths (kindness, equity, leadership, self-regulation, prudence, gratitude, hope/optimism, spirituality, and forgiveness) that provided protection against stressors (Ahmed, 2009). To better understand the applicability of these conceptualizations across international samples, Park, Peterson, and Seligman (2006) looked at character strengths in 54 countries, including 6 with Muslim majority populations. McGrath's (2015) follow up study of 75 countries also featured a set of Muslim

Table 1.2 VIA classification of character strengths and virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

Virtue categories	Strengths
Wisdom	Creativity, curiosity, judgment, love-of-learning, and perspective
Courage	Bravery, honesty, perseverance, and zest
Humanity	Kindness, love, and social intelligence
Justice	Fairness, leadership, and teamwork
Temperance	Forgiveness, humility, prudence, and self-regulation
Transcendence	Appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, humor, and spirituality

majority nations. Table 1.3 shows the top five strengths in the Muslim majority countries examined. Across the sixteen data points, the strengths identified most often were fairness and judgment. This is consistent with the description of a virtuous society (*al-ijtima' al-fadil*) proposed by Al-Farabi in his treatises on social psychology and political statehood (Macarimbang, 2013) in which justice is of prime importance (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005).

As a model, the VIA classification has been used to further an understanding of the relationship between character strengths and struggles, such as the loss of a loved one (Blanchard, 2021), illness (Umucu, Tansey, Brooks, & Lee, 2020), daily stress (Niemiec, 2019), depression (Acosta, 2013), trauma from public shootings (Schueller, Jayawickreme, Blackie, Forgeard, & Roepke, 2015), war (Shoshani & Slone, 2016) and terrorism (Peterson & Seligman, 2003). The Arabic word for struggle or striving is *jihad*, a term that has become synonymous with warfare and terrorism in political discourse. While military intervention within the precepts of Islamic law is the primary interpretation of the term within the *hadith* of Sahih Al Bukhari,[1] this is not the only meaning of *jihad*. In fact, *jihad al nafs*, the struggle within oneself, is considered to be the "greater *jihad*," particularly within Sufism (Streusand, 1997), the mystical branch of Islam that several authors in this collection discuss. This inner struggle is also the one I focus on in this chapter.

While the VIA categories provide a standardized set of key words to investigate character strengths across diverse populations, to explore Muslim strengths and struggles, it would be helpful to have a classification system that is specific to Islamic virtues. Given that the Arabic term for character is *akhlaq,* which is related to *khaliq* (the Creator) *and makhluq* (the creation), it is important to also consider specifying strengths that build on the relationship between human beings and God (Rahim, 2013). Aligning the Qur'an with the VIA virtue categories, my colleague and I (Pasha-Zaidi & Odeh, 2019) added tolerance, purity/cleanliness, and repentance to the list as a starting point for indigenizing Islamic character strengths. However, strengths like *iman* (faith), *taqwa* (God-consciousness), *ihsa̅n* (spiritual awareness), and *islam* (surrender to God's will) along with honor, pride, and hospitality, which are of immense importance in Muslim majority regions (Lambert, Passmore, & Joshanloo, 2015), are also salient to the discussion (Hirschkind, 2001).

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[1]Sahih Al Bukhari is one of the most commonly referenced in the collection of *hadith*.

Table 1.3 Top 5 VIA classification strengths in select Muslim majority countries (Park et al., 2006; McGrath, 2015)

Country	Park, Peterson, & Seligman (2006) Ranking of top 5 VIA strengths (1 = highest)	McGrath (2015) Ranking of top 5 VIA strengths (1 = highest)
Azerbaijan	1. Fairness 2. Curiosity 3. Learning 4. Judgment 5. Kindness	N/A[a]
Bahrain	1. Judgment 2. Learning 3. Curiosity 4. Fairness 5. Honesty	N/A
Egypt	N/A	1. Kindness 2. Fairness 3. Honesty 4. Gratitude 5. Teamwork
Indonesia	N/A	1. Fairness 2. Hope 3. Judgment 4. Spirituality 5. Honesty
Iran	N/A	1. Honesty 2. Gratitude 3. Fairness 4. Kindness 5. Judgment
Malaysia	1. Fairness 2. Judgment 3. Learning 4. Honesty 5. Curiosity	1. Fairness 2. Judgment 3. Honesty 4. Teamwork 5. Curiosity
Pakistan	N/A	1. Fairness 2. Kindness 3. Honesty 4. Spirituality 5. Teamwork
Qatar	N/A	1. Fairness 2. Kindness 3. Curiosity 4. Honesty 5. Gratitude
Saudi Arabia	N/A	1. Fairness 2. Gratitude 3. Kindness 4. Honesty 5. Judgment

(continued)

Table 1.3 (continued)

Country	Park, Peterson, & Seligman (2006) Ranking of top 5 VIA strengths (1 = highest)	McGrath (2015) Ranking of top 5 VIA strengths (1 = highest)
Turkey	1. Learning 2. Honesty 3. Judgment 4. Kindness 5. Curiosity	1. Honesty 2. Fairness 3. Judgment 4. Kindness 5. Perspective
United Arab Emirates	1. Learning 2. Judgment 3. Gratitude 4. Curiosity 5. Fairness	1. Fairness 2. Judgment 3. Kindness 4. Curiosity 5. Honesty
Uzbekistan	1. Judgment 2. Learning 3. Curiosity 4. Fairness 5. Forgiveness	1. Fairness 2. Judgment 3. Curiosity 4. Kindness 5. Honesty

[a]Country data unavailable

A Deeper Dive: Humor as a Character Strength for Muslim Populations?

Nausheen Pasha-Zaidi

As a proponent of indigeneity, I believe it is important to gauge the applicability of constructs normed on individuals from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) countries to non-WEIRD contexts. Thus, in proposing a set of Islamic strengths based on the Qur'an and aligned with the VIA categories, my colleague and I (Pasha-Zaidi & Odeh, 2019) eliminated humor from the list. In the VIA classification, humor falls within the virtue of transcendence, which also includes appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, and spirituality. While transcendence is a key virtue from an Islamic perspective, the placement of humor within that category may not easily fit the centrality of God as understood by most Muslims. As such, it is not surprising that humor does not appear in the top ten strengths identified by any of the Muslim majority countries in Park et al.'s (2006) study and only appears in the top 10 for three countries (Iran, Egypt, and Uzbekistan) in the McGrath (2015) study. A researcher or practitioner unfamiliar with Muslim norms may infer from this that Muslims are discouraged to find joy in life. However, this is not completely accurate. In fact, the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is characterized as someone who was always smiling, and Muslims are taught that smiling is a form of charity to others. At the same time, the Qur'an cautions against using humor to denigrate others:

(continued)

O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent – then it is those who are the wrongdoers (49:11).

As such, humor, when used in a positive manner to uplift others and make adversities more bearable, would certainly fit as an Islamic strength. However, it also makes sense that as a reflection of transcendence, humor may not be the most endorsed character strength within Muslim populations.

1.3.3   Meaning, Resilience, and Growth through Struggle

Though struggle does not necessarily imply an experience of traumatic events, it is certainly a component of adversity. Frankl's (1955) seminal work on logotherapy proposes that human beings develop meaning from struggle through transcendental love, purposeful work, and courage in the face of difficult circumstances. Like the Islamic conceptualization of the soul, Frankl's model puts forth three components of the self: body, mind, and spirit, with the spirit being the inner core of each person. In this view, human beings are inherently motivated to find meaning in their lives. They have freedom to access a pathway to meaning, even in the most traumatizing conditions, by choosing their attitude toward uncontrollable circumstances and making moment-to-moment decisions in line with their inner core. While it does not negate the hardships of struggle, resilience can be cultivated by facing reality directly (as opposed to denying the need for coping with the situation), meaning making, and using whatever resources, internal and external, that may be available (Coutu, 2002). Research shows that a search for meaning in the aftermath of traumatic events not only builds resilience, it can sometimes lead to positive growth in aspects such as social relations, spirituality, and appreciation of life (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2004).

Struggle can be both individual and collective. For example, in the United States, structural racism has been a collective struggle that African Americans have faced for centuries. Ogbu (1989) contends that a history of institutional barriers has created a deep distrust of Whites and the systems they control, which has forged a collective identity of African Americans and promoted a collective struggle against the structural forces that persist in their subjugation. Among Muslim groups, there have been numerous collective struggles throughout history, including ethnic, political, and territorial ones. Ethnic collective struggles of Muslim minorities are currently found in Myanmar, where the post-colonial militarization of the state along with a rise of political Buddhism and the concept of "national races" (*taingyintha*) has led to the political erasure of Rohingya minorities from Burmese history (Ansar, 2020). While in the Xinjiang Province of northwest China, Uyghur communities continue to be

subjected to government surveillance, detainment, and torture in "re-education camps" (Raza, 2019).

The Israeli-Palestinian apartheid (Falk & Tilley, 2017) is another example of ethnic and religious struggle. Using collective narratives, Srour, Mana, and Sagy (2020) examined the interpretations of sociopolitical and historical events in the region. Differences were found in perceptions of historical events, such as the Holocaust (many Jewish Israelis consider it the worst tragedy for all of humanity and use it as justification for the establishment of a Jewish state, while Palestinians consider it a Jewish tragedy that should not be used to justify the infliction of suffering onto Palestinian people). Additionally, there is the 1948 War (many Jewish Israelis mark it as a day of independence, while Palestinians view it as a catastrophe, or *nakba*), and the current struggles such as the war in Gaza, which many Israelis consider a necessity, and many Palestinians view as a reflection of the violence of the Israeli state. Srour et al. (2020) found additional differences between Muslim and Christian Palestinians, with Muslims believing that an independent state should be Islamic and Christians fearing that an independent Islamic state in Palestine will not afford them equal rights as a minority group. Another example of collective struggle is that of Muslim women around the world, who continue to face racialized and gendered struggles to reclaim their narrative amid conflicting stereotypes of oppression and sexualization from both Western feminists and Islamic patriarchies alike (Zine, 2006).

As collective struggles reflect larger societal ills, they can prompt collective action and social justice movements. In developing an integrative social identity model of collective action (SIMCA), Van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears (2008), note the importance of perceived injustice, efficacy (or the belief in the likelihood of affecting possible change), and identity as antecedents to collective action against inequalities, with politicized identities being particularly cohesive. Furthermore, if those in positions of advantage are able to identify with collective actors, there is a possibility that their allyship can create positive intergroup attitudes, prompt acknowledgment of inequalities, and perhaps even create opportunities for reparations to be considered (Louis, 2009). As such, both individual and collective struggles can pave the way for meaningful change within human beings and societies.

1.4 JIHAD in This Book

As *jihad* in non-Muslim sectors is one of the most vilified Islamic concepts, it seemed a particularly apt opportunity to reclaim the narrative of the term by organizing each section of this collection using the acronym JIHAD to showcase the positive struggles discussed herein. In this book, the acronym stands for *Journeys toward Justice*, *Intersectional Identities, Health and Healing, Acceptance and Allyship*, and *Disrupting Dogma*, with each section providing perspectives about the individual and collective struggles that Muslims face relative to that theme. Given the nature of the content, both esoteric and scientific ideas are presented.

Additionally, in line with the third wave of positive psychology (Lomas, Waters, Williams, Oades, & Kern, 2020), an interdisciplinary approach incorporating aspects of philosophy, anthropology, sociology, cultural, feminist, and media studies, and of course, psychology is used to address spirituality, struggle, and social justice.

1.4.1   Journeys Toward Justice

Justice is an essential part of Islam and a primary struggle within Muslim populations. The Qur'an states: "God commands justice, righteousness, and spending on ones' relatives, and prohibits licentiousness, wrongdoing, and injustice..." (16:90). Thus, Islam demands equality and social interdependence to achieve a peaceful society. Yet, Muslim communities and governments today are experiencing deep rifts between ideology and practice. "The Islamic legal system is both normatively comprehensive and, yet, flexible in adapting to different contexts and challenges, as *shariah* principles orient the legal system in changing times and radically different contexts" (Zoli, Bassiouni, & Khan, 2017, p. 40); yet, confusion reigns in part due to distorted views of Islam propagated by governments and religious leaders who lack intricate understanding about how to apply *shariah* in the context of specific issues. This is further complicated by the fact that extremist groups such as Boko Haram, Daesh/ISIS, and various factions of Al-Qaeda use (or misuse) Islamic principles to justify their actions. As such, it is not surprising that the Pew Research Center (2014) found a varied level of support among Muslims in African, South Asian, and Middle Eastern countries for actions, like suicide bombing, which are untenable in normative Islamic frameworks (Zoli et al., 2017). Muslim communities also struggle with women's rights (Hajjar, 2004), internalized Islamophobia (Suleiman, 2017), anti-immigrant sentiment and colorism (Mohamed, 2017), ethnic conflicts (Mazhar, Khan, & Goraya, 2012), displacement from their homes and families (Hasan, Mitschke, & Ravi, 2018), and a new wave of civil wars (Walter, 2017), including the Syrian conflict, which the United Nations has described as the "worst man-made disaster the world has seen since World War II" (UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2017, para. 3).

While an extended discussion of injustices within Muslim communities and globally is beyond the scope of this chapter, social justice is clearly an area of struggle for Muslims. The chapters in *Journeys toward Justice* address positive struggle in this regard from various standpoints. In "Socially Engaged Islam: Applying Social Psychological Principles to Social Justice, Faith-Based Activism and Extreme Altruism in Muslim Societies," Anisah Bagasra looks at Islamic approaches to altruism and the ways in which Muslims tie their religious identity to social justice activism through religiously motivated actions. In discussing "Research with Minoritized Muslim Communities," Nasreen Shah, Munir Shah, and I focus on research methods that allow for mindfulness and cultural humility in building relationships with Muslim communities, protecting the vulnerabilities of Muslim participants, and ensuring ethical data collection and dissemination of

information that respects cultural and religious norms of Muslim populations. In "Afghan Hazara Asylum Seekers in Athens: Positive Affirmation through Service and Protest," Melissa Kerr Chiovenda employs an ethnographic approach to explore evidence of post-traumatic growth among Afghan refugees in Greece. Finally, in "Muslim Media Psychology and its Effects on Society: The Role of Pakistani TV Serials in Promoting Women's Rights," Iqra Iqbal and I discuss feminism in Pakistan and the portrayal of female role models in selected Pakistani drama serials.

1.4.2   Intersectional Identities

Social identity refers to the ways in which people think about themselves in relation to the groups they inhabit. Proposed by Tajfel (1969), the theory states that group membership provides individuals with a sense of social belonging that divides people into "us" (in-groups) and "them" (out-groups). As the in-group generates positive descriptors of those who belong, individuals gain self-esteem and pride from their group membership, which is further enhanced by negative portrayals and discrimination of out-groups. An offshoot of social identity theory is social categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), which focuses on the cognitive processes involved in classifying oneself as a group member and considers the salience of the categories in which individuals place themselves in different situations. This perspective recognizes the fluidity of both social groups and perceptions of belonging (Huddy, 2001). Identity is further complicated by the relative status of group memberships in different contexts and the intersection at which an individual may stand based not only on self-categorization, but also on the social identities imposed by others. As the term "intersectionality" brings with it a focus on the multidimensional aspects of power and marginalization (Crenshaw, 1989), it is important to consider the influence of social hierarchies such as race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomics, ability/disability, and social class on the spectrum of power and oppression that impact social identity. Furthermore, a slow, but growing emphasis on non-Eurocentric/American psychological models has prompted rich discussion on the navigation of identities within multicultural and international contexts (Ferguson, 2006), thus highlighting the importance of historical, sociopolitical, cultural, national, and religious factors as well.

In "The Struggle of Chosen Identity Amongst Uyghurs While Living Under the Chinese State," K. Tung discusses the impact of China's policies on the identity expression of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, along with common coping strategies, such as art, friendship, and storytelling that are used to respond to the surveillance and "re-education camps" imposed by the Chinese government in the region. In "Working towards a Positive Islamic Identity for Muslim American Women" Tasneem Mandviwala critically evaluates the concept of a Positive Islamic Identity (PII) in light of the intersectional identities of Muslim American women and proposes the development of different PIIs, rather than one universal construct, to accommodate the influence of factors such as gender, age, and culture on identity

development. Finally, in "Sexually Diverse Muslim Women Converts: Where Do They Stand?" Maryam Khan examines the experiences of three sexually diverse female converts who navigate their journeys to Islam through pluralistic approaches to the faith system that include personalized relationships with God, the Qur'an, and Islamic practices.

1.4.3   Health and Healing

Wellbeing is a primary area of study in positive psychology. Rooted in the humanistic tradition of eminent psychologists such Carl Rogers (1961), who emphasized the fully functioning person, and Abraham Maslow (1943), whose hierarchy of needs focused attention on the importance of studying contributors to healthy human development, positive psychology was launched as a separate subdiscipline by Martin Seligman's 1998 Presidential Address to the American Psychological Association (Seligman, 1999). The first wave of positive psychology embarked upon research that decentered the discipline of psychology from its "preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5), while the second wave (PP 2.0) focused on swinging the pendulum towards a balanced approach, integrating both positive and negative influences as well as culturally-relevant constructs in the study of wellness (Wong, 2011). This new trajectory allowed researchers to be more inclusive of existential perspectives in psychology, opening avenues to greater discussion of indigenous approaches to health and healing.

While much of the PP 2.0 literature focuses on the contributions of Eastern religious and spiritual traditions, such as Buddhism and Taoism (Wong, 2013, 2019) less emphasis has been given to Islamic ways of healing (Saniotis, 2018). However, for Muslim researchers and practitioners, as well as those working with practicing Muslims, Islamic practices can be effective positive psychology interventions (Saeedi, Nasab, Zadeh, & Ebrahimi, 2015) and useful addendums to Western therapeutic programs (Al-Karam, 2018; Carter & Rashidi, 2004; Henry, 2015; Zakaria & Akhir, 2019). Henry (2015), for example, notes that Islamic prayer can provide spiritual energy similar to the way that "expanding yeast works in the flour or as the forces of life push the seed into germination" (p. 3). In fact, neurobiological data collected during studies of Islamic prayer show changes in brain waves indicating increased relaxation and cognitive processing (Doufesh, Faisal, Lim, & Ibrahim, 2012; Doufesh, Ibrahim, & Safari, 2016). This is not to suggest that Islamic approaches to healing should replace medical and pharmaceutical options for those struggling with mental illness. Certainly, the implementation of spiritual therapies by those without requisite knowledge and processes for accountability can be ineffective or even detrimental to clients (Martinez et al., 2007). At the same time, ignoring religion and spirituality (R/S) can also be a disservice to practicing Muslims for whom the integration of R/S could lead to positive outcomes. Koenig (2001) suggests that clinicians begin by taking a spiritual history through which they can

determine the importance of R/S in the lives of their clients. "A spiritual history should be taken in a way that . . . sends the message that religion and spirituality are an important area that may influence health for better or worse. Spiritual assessment need not be done at every visit, but rather on occasions when there is more time, such as during a new patient evaluation or on hospital admission. It should not replace a comprehensive and competent evaluation of medical problems" (Koenig, 2001, pp. 1190–1191). For practitioners working with Muslims, taking a spiritual history can determine if a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual approach may be worth considering.

In "Health and Wellbeing: Bridging Secular and Islamic Worldviews," Syed Rizvi and I explore hedonic, eudemonic, and existential (or "chaironic") wellbeing and look at the ways in which the five pillars of Islam can contribute to Muslim health and wellness. In "Incorporating Islamic Principles into Therapy with Muslim American Clients," Nasreen Shah and Munir Shah explore the integration of Islamic principles and practices with Western therapeutic approaches, such as Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to promote psychological healing of practicing Muslim Americans. Finally, in "Gratitude and Wellbeing: Cultivating Islamically-Integrated Pathways to Health and Wellness," Ali Al-Seheel, Kate Bridges-Lyman, Rabia Dasti, and I look at the concept of *shukr*, or gratitude, from an Islamic perspective, and provide suggestions for increasing gratitude through the use of Islamic Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs).

1.4.4   Acceptance and Allyship

The need for affiliation, originally coined by Henry Murray (1938) and popularized by David McClelland (1961), notes the importance of social acceptance in human motivation. Belonging is also a basic tenet of Maslow's theory (1968) and serves as both an antecedent to social connectedness and a protective factor against loneliness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). However, social acceptance for those occupying marginalized categories can be an even greater struggle. While representation of minoritized groups in mainstream spaces is certainly valuable, "social acceptance encompasses the *psychological* inclusion of minorities as group members" (Chen & Hamilton, 2015, p. 2). Moving beyond a tolerance of "others" to acceptance and allyship requires a multifaceted approach that "spans and connects macro, meso, and micro processes and contexts, ranging from societal and organizational ideologies, values, policies, and practices, to leadership models and practices and group norms and climates, to interpersonal behavior and individual experiences of inclusion" (Ferdman, 2017, p. 239). The process is not an easy one; it is fraught with psychological discomfort regarding the boundaries of what each person or group considers acceptable and unacceptable behavior and presupposes a willingness to engage in self-reflection about aspects of difference that may not be immediately visible within the boundaries of one's own experience. While the literature on privilege has often focused on race/ethnicity and gender, Black and Stone (2005) expanded the concept

to include sexual orientation, religious affiliation, differing levels of ability, socio-economics, and age. They also noted a difference between social privilege, where an individual receives benefits based on membership in a prescribed group or groups, and social preference, which entails receiving benefits from membership in a group that is viewed with fondness. For individuals who hold positions at the intersections of oppressed and oppressor, dissecting one's social roles and privileges can be particularly challenging.

Within Muslim communities and spaces, discourse on marginalization is often weighed against the fear of adding fodder to Islamophobic rhetoric. However, it is important for Muslims to reflect on the ways in which we may hold positions of authority or social preference as a result of belonging to a normative or privileged group based on categories such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ableness, and socioeconomics. According to the Qur'an, diversity in human beings is by divine design:

> To each among you have we prescribed a law and an open way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but [His plan is] to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute (5:48).

> From among Allah's signs are the creation of heaven and the earth and the difference of your tongues and the variation of your colors (30:22).

> O mankind! We created you from male and female and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other [not that ye may despise each other]. Verily, the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is fully informed (49:13).

Given the Islamic injunction that "God is the best of judges" (Qur'an, 7:87), it is incumbent upon Muslims to engage in dialogue about the boundaries of acceptance and marginalization and to serve as allies for minoritized individuals within Muslim spaces. In "Decolonizing Muslim Same-Sex Relations: Reframing Queerness as Gender Flexibility to Build Positive Relationships in Muslim Communities," Sarah Shah, Maryam Khan, and Sara Abdel-Latif draw on theories of boundary-making and Orientalism to investigate the social construction of gender performance in the acceptance of queer Muslims within historical and some contemporary Muslim societies. In "The Heart of Autism: Building A Positive Islamic Model of Cognitive Disability," Laila S. Dahan introduces the Heart Model, a positive Islamic Model of Cognitive Disability that expands upon the Islamic conceptualization of self to consider individuals with neuro-atypical development and provides suggestions on how Muslims can better integrate individuals with autism into their communities and spaces. The chapter also includes A Deeper Dive contribution by Imaani Din, a 17-year-old Muslim with autism who provides a glimpse into her world. Finally, in "Promoting Allyship Among South Asian and Arab Muslims with Black and Latino/a Muslims in American Islamic Centers," Meg Warren, Yvonne El Ashmawi, Neneh Kowai-Bell and I discuss colorism, Islamophobia, and allyship, and explore the ways that South Asian and Arab Muslims can support and advocate for Black and Latino/a Muslims in American mosques.

1.4.5 Disrupting Dogma

The "Golden Age of Islam" is generally believed to have begun in the eighth century CE with the rise of the Abbasid caliphate and ended in the thirteenth century CE when the Mongol armies conquered and disseminated Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid empire (Renima, Tiliouine, & Estes, 2016). This time period is often remembered by contemporary Muslims with a sense of wistfulness as a bygone era when Islamic societies flourished, leading the world in scientific and cultural advancements. This was possible in part because the unifying force of the Abbasid empire broke down tribal and national barriers, allowing cultural, religious, and philosophical diversity to thrive. Additionally, forward-thinking leaders, by investing in research and scholarship, provided a rich environment for intellectual growth (Bobrick, 2012; Renima et al., 2016). It is perhaps because of this history of greatness that the decline and decay of Muslim societies today is particularly painful. Instead of a wave of great scientists, mathematicians, and philosophers, Muslim majority regions of the world are better known today for a wave of civil wars (Walter, 2017).

While numerous internal and external factors contributed to the decline of Muslim scholarship and influence beginning in the thirteenth century, perhaps one of the greatest losses is the deterioration of interest in critical thinking and intellectual debate. For Muslims, the Qur'an provides foundational knowledge, but this must be interpreted to reflect the ever-changing needs of society. This process, known as *ijtihad*, relies upon the Qur'an and *sunnah*, along with reasoning and deduction to adapt to societal changes. "As it constitutes a bridge between eternally valid divine injunctions and time specific requirement of every age, it is the key to provide an Islamic interpretation of modern developments and circumstances" (Javed & Javed, 2012, p. 216). Although some scholars believe that the "gates of *ijtihad*" were closed sometime between the tenth and the thirteenth century, as the interpretation of Islamic revelations had been finalized and settled, others contend that the tradition was never truly abandoned (Hallaq, 1984; Javed & Javed, 2012). A revival of the concept appeared in the eighteenth century and continues today by those who seek a way to revitalize Muslim scholarship to meet the current challenges of Muslims around the world (Javed & Javed, 2012; Laluddin, 2015).

As a religion, Islam is not antithetical to science (Pasha-Zaidi, 2019). Unlike Western social sciences which developed in opposition to religion (Zaman, 2009), the great discoveries of the Islamic Golden Age occurred in step with the precepts of the Qur'anic emphasis on knowledge seeking. "The Qur'an depicted the relationship between nature and man, and this inspired the Muslim scholars to study natural phenomena, in order to understand God" (Faruqi, 2006, p. 392). In fact, Al-Faruqi (1989) attributes the "malaise of the *Ummah*" to the distancing of Islamic beliefs from scientific discourse, which both he and Al-Attas (1978, 1993) believe can be remedied by the Islamization of Knowledge or rather, the Islamization of *contemporary* knowledge. In Islam, fundamentals like *aqidah* (creed), *ibadah* (worship), and *akhlaq* (ethics and morality) are timeless, but the manifestation of these concepts vary by time and location. As such, Laluddin (2015) invokes the concept of

maslahah (public good) as a way to reopen the "gates of *ijtihad*" and allow greater flexibility in the development of *fiqh*, or Islamic jurisprudence that benefits contemporary societies, in the hopes of disrupting the malaise of dogma that exists in many Muslim communities.

To begin this crucial step, both scientific and esoteric approaches to knowledge seeking and production are highlighted in this book. In "Spiritual Assessment: Building Positive Resources for the Distressed Souls," Rabia Dasti, Aisha Sitwat, and Amna Anwaar discuss the process of developing the Multidimensional Measure of Islamic Spirituality (MMIS), a quantitative psychological measure that uses Islamic conceptualizations of spirituality to study the religious commitment of Muslims. In "Thoughts on the GCC National Research Context: Challenges to Developing a Local Psychology," Louise Lambert, Saad Ibrahim Yaaqeib, Annie Crookes, Brettjet Cody, and Semma Saad critically analyze the higher education landscape of the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) countries and consider areas of need in the development of a regional psychology. In "The Contribution of Psychoanalysis to a Positive Islamic Psychology," Beyhan Bozkurt and I explore the possibilities of psychoanalysis as a tool for deconstructing subjectivity and apply psychoanalytical thinking to analyze the concept of *sabr* (patience). Finally, in "Sufism and Jungian Psychology: Ways of Knowing and Being," Mansoor Abidi bridges theoretical Sufism and Jungian Psychology by drawing similarities between Ibn 'Arabi's idea of *tanzih* (the soul's descent) and *tashbih* (the soul's ascent) with Jung's individuation process.

1.5   Conclusion

In accordance with the newer waves of positive psychology, this book is a compilation of chapters from varied perspectives in the social sciences and humanities that bridge positive and negative aspects of human existence with the goal of amplifying voices that are lesser heard in discourse related to Islam and Muslims. While I understand that some of the perspectives may be controversial, it is my sincere belief that Muslim scholarship can regain the rigor of its past, however uncomfortable it may be at the outset. I invite you to consider the viewpoints in this book as a collective *jihad al nafs*, a struggle for the soul of Muslim relevance in the ever-changing world we inhabit. Research and media abound with negative coverage and stereotypes of contemporary Muslim societies. It is not enough to fight back against these narratives with counterpoints and outrage; we must also be willing to consider the struggles within our own communities and actively seek justice for those who are marginalized. You may not agree with the viewpoints expressed in this book. My goal is not to create consensus, but rather to open a dialogue that has been stifled by both Muslim and non-Muslim forces and to create a space for self-reflection. If you are uncomfortable at times as you read these perspectives, then you are likely doing it correctly.

I will reiterate here that I am not an Islamic scholar. I am simply a practicing Muslim. In my work as a social scientist, researcher, and educator, I have met with varying levels of disagreement and even disdain about the value of scholarship that highlights a positive psychology of Islam and Muslims, given the troubled state of Muslim affairs around the world. In one instance, my efforts were called "apologist". However, I continue to move forward in the hopes of adding counternarratives to the abundance of negative, deficit-oriented portrayals of Islam and Muslims, while also encouraging a willingness among Muslims to seek out diverse viewpoints, not for the sake of creating enmity or confusion, but to acknowledge that diversity is by divine design. By opening ourselves to begin listening to those whose experiences are different from our own, we may perhaps begin to see some positive growth within ourselves and our communities.

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