

## Liberation Psychology from an Islamic Perspective

Some Theoretical and Practical Implications of Psychology with a *Telos* of Justice

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## **Abstract**

Liberation psychology is an emerging field of psychological theory with an orientation towards justice as the of psychology. Rejecting the traditional European psychological practices which have based psychological work on the isolated individual, liberation psychology theorizes that individual wellness is inextricably connected to societal forces of oppression. This paper discusses Islamic connections to liberation psychology, including psychological approaches that are consistent with Islamic assumptions and conceptualizations of the self, human rights in relationship to the principle of tawhid, environmental justice, and an analysis of pathologies of violence in relationship to the Muslim community and the human community.

Keywords: liberation psychology, praxis, Exodus, tawhidic principle, human rights

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for the reason that they tend to neglect an analysis of society, as well as the fact that they are often in conflict with fundamental Islamic assumptions such as the existence of the soul.

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According to Paolo Freire, action is necessarily predicated on reflection, and this constitutes true speech. In , he states: "Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed – even in part – the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world" (87). This combined work of action and reflection is praxis, a concept employed by Marxist thinkers such as Gramsci. Freire, in his pivotal work as an educator in Brazil, called for praxis to be founded on dialogical engagement and the development of critical consciousness.

Martín-Baró built off of liberation theology and Freire's work and called for a dialogical engagement with the world that would question the status quo and break with the dominant culture i

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women, the poor, people of color, and the LGBTQ community is a core piece of an Islamically informed liberation psychology.

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The unity of God and the subsequent contingent nature of all creation and humanity makes all human beings equal before the Absolute Transcendent Creator. In this sense, every person should have the right to live their life and self-actualize in the way that their individual conscience directs them, as no other person can rightly serve as a mediator between them and the Divine Unity. Al-Faruqi states about inclusivity:

All humans are one in the eye of Allah (SWT) except as their deeds distinguish them in moral virtue, in cultural or civilizational achievement. If these deeds are hampered because of preemptive, culturally limiting circumstances, it is a moral duty to alter and remove those culturally limiting circumstances in order to develop a new, healthy set of circumstances, which is always possible. The door to such alteration is never closed. On the other hand, where a person is judged because of these immutable characteristics, a mortal crime, namely, chauvinism, is committed. The implications of such a crime are ominous: both the unity of humanity and Divine unity are violated. Nothing is more odious to Allah (SWT) than shirk . . . and chauvinism implies nothing less than shirk (48).

For this reason, we are mandated as Muslims to embrace238.3 (e) ]T.3 4 -0.3 (s9 (e) 0) 6 (in) -5 (e) 0. -238.3

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There is a question at this point whether arguing that woman affirming interpretations of the Quran and advocating for LGBTQI rights is incompatible with Islam and proposing that be applied to support radical inclusivity is a willful misreading of the Islamic tradition based on wishful thinking, personal agendas that bear no relationship to Islam, and intellectual dishonesty (Habib). However, Islam as it is practiced is a product of people. Yes, the Quran is non-negotiable, but there is currently a huge movement globally for a progressive interpretation of Islam, for a world where the views of progressive Muslims are valued and set the standard for the way that Muslims and Muslim-majority states view major social issues. Muslims for Progressive Values is a particular example of this movement. Their website st

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entertainment and socialization, did not use drugs that were readily available, contrasted with rats in cramped cages where they used drugs to the point of overdosing. This experiment supports the theory that the walls closing in on us from environmental devastation are contributing to the rampant problem of addiction (Brookings; Mate).

There is no question that the environmental crisis is a mental health issue in multiple ways. One way in which it is a mental health issue is the overwhelming greed which has created the crisis in the first place and the psychological orientation to nature which has given rise to this unchecked and unquestioned greed. Most environmentalists cite unchecked human greed as the cause for the environmental crisis, including prominent Muslim intellectuals such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Quadir). Out of control human consumption of the natural world and natural resources has created an unjust relationship between humanity and nature, and it has damag 0.5 (la.5 (2) 0.3 (0) 0.3 Tm ) 16.2 (h -0.5) -0.3 () 0.5 (la)0.5 (d) 0.3 (r) it(2) 0.3 -0.3 (Tm )g 0.2 () (0) 0.3 Tm

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by accepting funding or ideological frames from the CVE program and the ability to object to the imbalanced and biased focus on Muslim

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