PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLORATION

Spiritual Energy of Islamic Prayers as a Catalyst for Psychotherapy

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Abstract   Islamic prayers can produce spiritual energy that may yield many psychological benefits, such as amelioration of stress and improvement in subjective well-being, interpersonal sensitivity, and mastery. Islamic prayers can also be integrated into mainstream therapeutic interventions with religious Muslim clients, and this integration can mobilize, transform, and invigorate the process of psychotherapy. This paper provides methods that can be used for the explicit integration of Islamic prayers into traditional psychotherapy. Further, the paper offers strategies for avoiding potential pitfalls that may hamper this process. Finally, a case study illustrating this therapeutic integration and its psychological benefits will be presented.

Keywords   Spirituality · Religion · Islam · Prayers · Spiritual energy · Psychotherapy · Integration · Mental health

Islamic prayers (Salah) can provide Muslim individuals with spiritual energy that can yield many psychological benefits. Practitioners who treat religious Muslim clients may want to invest in the transforming and healing effects of Islamic prayers by integrating them into their therapeutic interventions. If this therapeutic integration is done with sensitivity and care, it may invigorate and mobilize the therapeutic process. This paper addresses two areas that have not received enough coverage in the current literature on integrating spirituality into psychotherapy: First, it examines the integration of Islamic prayers into mainstream psychotherapeutic work. Currently, there are only few studies that examined the role of Islamic prayers in psychological healing, but only in the context of what was described as religious or Islamic psychotherapy, which differs from traditional psychotherapy (e.g., Hamdan 2010; Azhar and Varma 1995; Shah 2005). Second, this paper examined the role of spiritual energy in psychological healing by examining it in the context of Islamic prayers. There is only one study that examined the healing potential of

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spiritual energy, but it did not examine it in the context of prayers. Specifically, Reece et al. (2005) examined the effectiveness of Johrei healing, which is a form of healing that incorporates spiritual energy, and concluded that it increased the positive feelings of participants who received it.

In the first section of this paper, I describe the rituals, types, and practical aspects of Islamic prayers. Next, I explain the process with which Islamic prayers can produce spiritual energy, the different forms of this energy, and its psychological benefits. I then introduce some methods that can be used by practitioners to explicitly integrate Islamic prayers and their spiritual energy into their therapeutic work with religious Muslim clients. Finally, I present a case study that illustrates this therapeutic integration.

Introduction to Islamic Prayers

Salah (prayer) is a very important pillar of the Islamic faith (Hamdan 2010). The other four pillars are: *hajj* (pilgrimage); *zakah* (charity); *shahada* (testifying that there is no God except Allah and that The Prophet Muhammad is His messenger); and *soum* (fasting during the month of Ramadan). According to Islamic traditions, prayers help the believers remember God and protect them, as illustrated by the following verse from Qur'an: "Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book and keep up prayer; surely prayer keeps one away from indecency and evil, and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest, and Allah knows what you do." (Al-Ankabut 29:45).[1] Islamic prayers also include ritual and supplication prayers.

Muslims are obliged to perform ritual prayers five times a day, which are as follows: dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening (Hamdan 2010). This regular schedule allows them to be punctual, disciplined, and appreciative of the value of time (Siddiqui 2008). Muslims are also required to perform the act of ablution before praying, which is the cleaning of one's body (Hamdan 2010). Specifically, ablution includes the washing of the head, hands, arms, face, nostrils, mouth, and feet, as well as the inside and outside of the ear. According to Hamdan (2010), daily ritual prayers contain a *rak'aa*, which is a uniform body movement that includes standing, bowing, prostrating, and kneeling. Muslims are required to do a minimum of two *rak'aa*s during each of the five daily prayers. Siddiqui (2008) outlined the following rules and conditions of Islamic prayer rituals: Muslim worshipers should start their prayers by reciting the first chapter of the Qur'an, "al'fatiha" (the opening), which is comprised of seven verses that stress God's leadership and dominance and request his guidance. During prayers, they recite words that reflect respect and adoration of God, as well as the *shahada*, which is described above. Worshipers should also face the direction of the city of Mecca while praying. Every Friday, noon prayer is replaced by Friday prayer, which includes a sermon by a cleric and two *rak'aas*. Siddiqui also noted that it is compulsory for Muslim males to do this specific prayer in congregations at the Masjid (house of prayers). Nonetheless, Muslims are also encouraged to do daily prayers in Masjid because this would help them learn the concepts of solidarity, equality, and brotherhood (Ghufran 2011).

On the other hand, Muslims practice non-obligatory forms of prayers that do not contain "*rak'aa*" (Hamdan 2010); they are supplication prayers that help sustain their spiritual lives and connect them with the Divine. These prayers include the following: "haja," which is done in times of crises and in search for solutions to difficult problems (Javaheri

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[1] Modern English Translation by Yusuf Ali and Pickthal.

2006); "du'aa," which is done to ask God for forgiveness and strength (Hamdan 2010); "el Istikharah," which is done to seek guidance and wisdom of God in making a decision (Hambly 2011); "tasbih," which is done to extol and glorify God (Rasanayagam 2006); "dhikr," which is done to show remembrance of God through recitation, chanting, or simply remembering God in one's heart (Hamdan 2010); "khawf," which is done in time of fear (Kanjwal 2010); "tawba," which is done to ask for forgiveness from sins (Hamdan 2010); and "safar," which is done during traveling to seek protection from the danger of the road and also after returning from the journey (Saqib 1993).

As this section illustrates, Islamic prayers contain technical, relational, practical, and spiritual elements; however, this paper will focus on the spiritual aspects of these prayers as represented by the spiritual energy they may yield.

Islamic Prayers as a Source of Spiritual Energy

Islamic prayers can produce spiritual energy that has the potential to heal and transform the person who prays. Many theorists argued that prayers in general could generate such energy. For example, James (1917) noted that prayers might fill people with spiritual energy that could influence them both psychologically and physiologically. Breslin and Lewis (2008) also suggested that prayers might possibly activate a latent energy that could be very beneficial to health. Similarly, Lang (1949) argued that persistent prayers might yield a magnificent energy that could protect the believers.

Islamic prayers may produce spiritual energy via two possible mechanisms. The first mechanism is possibly through forging a direct connection with God. According to Ladd and McIntosh (2008), prayers allow for humans' connection with God, and this connection provides them with an exceptionally powerful social partner and promotes a sense of vicarious control. This connection may also provide an animating source for life and consciousness (Stenger 2001) and a powerful emotional and motivational force (Shafranske 1996). Jones (1922) also argued that God is not self-contained but self-giving and comes to people in the form of spiritual energy. Echoing the same sentiment, Islamic beliefs postulate that prayers connect people with God and make them closer to Him (Hamdan 2010). The following verse from the Qur'an highlights this deep connection between God and people through prayers: "He knows the prayer of each one and its glorification, and Allah is Cognizant of what they do." (Light, 24:41). The second possible mechanism with which prayers may produce spiritual energy is through the influence of faith. According to Jones (1922), prayers constituted a sign of faith, and this faith might produce an incredible spiritual energy that could heal and transform people. Similarly, Levin (1993) argued that humans might never be able to conceive of, or engage in, a supernatural power except through faith. Islamic beliefs also stress that prayers solidify and strengthen faith in God, and this faith can then transform and empower the believer. The following verse from the Qur'an shows how faith transforms and strengthens those who pray: "Surely they who believe and do good deeds and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate they shall have their reward from their Lord, and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve." (The Cow, 2:277).

How does this spiritual energy look like? According to Jones (1922), the divine energy produced by prayers may work in people as the expanding yeast works in the flour or as the forces of life push the seed into germination. Other theorists described specific forms and manifestations of spiritual energy: For example, Stenger (2001) described it as a form of energy that is not easily recognized by physics, but can appear in the form of unusual

human experiences, such as a connection to an overwhelming outside force, or attainment of higher level of consciousness. On the other hand, Abenheimer (1956) argued that this energy is often symbolized in material forces and objects, such as fire, light, heat, sound, odors, and pure water. I have received reports of such energy from many clients, who practice Islamic prayers. They often stress that this energy had given them unusual experiences that were very moving and powerful. For example, some clients reported that they experienced unusual physical sensations such as hair standing, unexplained warmth, chills, or a feeling of bliss, while praying. Others reported that they were lifted from the ground by a very strong force.

Having argued that Islamic prayers can produce spiritual energy through the connection with and complete faith in the Divine, I will now describe the psychological benefits of these prayers and their spiritual energy:

Psychological Benefits of Islamic Prayers and Their Spiritual Energy

In writing this section, I was guided by the work of mainstream psychology researchers, who deeply examined the psychological benefits of prayers in general. I also reviewed studies that examined the psychological benefits of Islamic prayers and noted that they converged with the findings of mainstream studies:

Amelioration and Buffering of Stress

Prayers can energize Muslims and help them combat stress and feelings of danger. The following verse from the Qur'an illustrated this benefit: "But if you are in danger, then (say your prayers) on foot or on horseback; and when you are secure, then remember Allah, as He has taught you what you did not know." (The Cow, 2:239). Many psychological studies concluded that prayers could produce this benefit. For example, McCullough (1995) noted that people who prayed had positive expectations about stress because they could re-appraise stressful events in a positive way. Watts (2001) also argued that prayers could help individuals recover from life stressors by calming their mind and body. With respect to studies conducted on the benefits of Islamic prayers, Hamdan (2010) argued that these prayers can relieve worry and distress and bring a sense of peacefulness. Azhar and Varma (1995) also viewed Islamic prayers as a form of meditation that could promote relaxation. Similarly, the results of a study conducted by Khan (2006) on Muslim clients, who resided in Toledo, Ohio, revealed that the majority of participants sought comfort from prayers when they were stressed.

Experience of Intimacy and Inspiration

Prayers can provide Muslims with spiritual energy that helps them experience closeness with the Divine and protects them against feelings of loneliness and isolation. This verse from the Qur'an describes this intimate relationship: "And your Lord says: Pray unto me: and I will hear your prayer" (The Believer, 40:60). Knowing that one is the object of healing may provide healing because it may engender a sense of belonging, being cared for, and supported (Levin 1993). Islamic beliefs postulate that human beings possess a "Fitrah," which is regarded as primordial faith that is implanted by God in human nature to

acknowledge and feel closer to Him, especially during prayers (Shah 2005). Hamdan (2010) also argued that the contemplative nature of prayers draws the worshiper closer to God.

Problem Solution and Mastery

Prayers may provide a sense of efficacy in dealing with life problems, as well as a relaxation response to these problems (Hughes 1997). Further, prayers may foster personal responsibilities for one's actions and can lead the person to pursue positive actions (Mann 1998). With respect to Islamic prayers, Hamdan (2010) noted that they could provide the believer with a continuous source of strength and instill self-discipline and perseverance.

Subjective Well-Being

Prayers can produce a spiritual energy that gives individuals a sense of peace and happiness. The following verse from the Qur'an reflects the relationship between prayers and happiness: "And those who are constant, seeking the pleasure of their Lord, and keep up prayer and spend (benevolently) out of what We have given them secretly and openly and repel evil with good; as for those, they shall have the (happy) issue of the abode." (The Thunder, 13:22). The notion that prayers could increase subjective well-being was already highlighted in some psychological studies. For example, Poloma and Pendleton (1991) noted that prayer is positively associated with life satisfaction and peace. McCullough (1995) attributed this satisfaction to the feeling that God provides answers to prayers. In a study conducted on elderly Muslims, Ghufran (2011) concluded that collective prayers increased their life satisfaction and subjective well-being.

Humility and Interpersonal Sensitivity

Spiritual energy produced by prayers can help worshipers acquire humility and empathy. The following verse from the Qur'an shows that prayers should be done with humility: "O children of Adam! attend to your embellishments at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely He does not love the extravagant" (The Elevated Places, 7:31). Along the same lines, Watts (2001) also argued that prayers help people acknowledge their wrong doings, diminish their egocentricity, and liberate them from excessive pride. Hamdan (2010) also argued that supplication demonstrates the Muslim worshiper's sense of humility while affirming God's power.

Forgiveness

Spiritual energy produced by prayers may help worshipers forgive themselves by allowing them to experience the mercy of God who forgive and wipe out their sins (Hamdan 2007). This process of self-forgiveness is important for personal healing because it helps the worshiper deal with feelings of guilt that may precipitate his or her depression. The following verses from the Qur'an illustrate this point about forgiveness: "And keep up prayer in the two parts of the day and in the first hours of the night; surely good deeds

take away evil deeds this is a reminder to the mindful." (Hud, 11: 114). Also, "And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and obey the Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you". (Al-Noor, 24:56). On the other hand, some studies have shown that prayers could help worshipers forgive others (e.g., Wuthnow 2000; Batson and Marks 2008, and Vasiliauskas and McMinn 2013).

In short, Islamic prayers can yield a spiritual energy that has the potential to heal and transform. It is possible to capitalize on this energy by integrating it into mainstream psychotherapeutic work with religious Muslim clients. However, this task may face many obstacles, as will be described next.

Integrating the Spiritual Energy of Islamic Prayers into Psychotherapeutic Practice

According to Rose et al. (2001), many psychologists receive little training in spiritual and religious issues, and as a result, they have been unwilling to address these issues in therapy. Hillman (1975) attributed Western psychology's lack of interest in spiritual issues to its focus on the attainment of personal mastery and its treatment of spirituality and other unexplained phenomena as irrelevant to human development. Pargament and Park (1995) also attributed psychology's pervasive neglect of spirituality and religiosity to the wrong assumption that they constitute a defense against reality. Further, psychology's preoccupation with the Cartesian notion of the separation of mind and body had replaced the phenomenological approach of examining psychological problems with an objective impersonal one that does not account for unobservable phenomena, such as spirituality (Strawn 2008). Due to this unwelcoming attitude of many psychologists toward spirituality and their lack of preparedness to discuss these issues, religious clients who seek professional help may be hesitant to bring spiritual issues into the therapeutic work (Ripley et al. 2001). They may also be concerned about their therapists' negative or incompatible response to their beliefs (Guinee and Tracey 1997).

Pargament (1997) urged therapists to address their avoidance of spiritual issues by challenging their "spiritual timidity," which is the therapist's fear of addressing spirituality in therapy. Therapists need not to see spirituality as a competing force against counseling (Cook and Wiley 2000). They may also want to be acquainted with research that showed religious clients' preference to have conversations with their therapists about spiritual issues (e.g., Rose et al. 2001). As Pargament (1997) put it, spirituality is often interwoven with problems that some clients bring to psychotherapy, the solution of these problems, and the larger social and cultural context in which these problems were created. He also argued that spirituality should not be dismissed as a static set of beliefs, practices or emotions, but should be considered as a pathway that people follow in search of the sacred features of life. Pargament also urged therapists to increase their spiritual competence by seeking spiritual knowledge and by being open, tolerant, and self-aware.

With respect to clinical work with religious Muslim clients, Shah (2005) argued that human psychology has a spiritual component that requires a non-materialistic approach in addressing it. Hamdan (2007) also noted that Islam covers every aspect of these clients' lives and is in fact a way of life that is not separate from other spheres. As such, it is important for therapists who treat these clients to acknowledge the spiritual dimension of psychotherapy by integrating Islamic prayer and its spiritual energy into their work. Guided by the current research on integrating spirituality into psychotherapy, I will now describe this process of therapeutic integration and its types.

Explicit versus Implicit Integration

Tan (1996) suggested that therapists can integrate spirituality into their clinical practice, either implicitly or explicitly, depending on their comfort level and spiritual orientation to life. According to Tan (1996), implicit integration of spiritual issues denotes the therapists' respect and encouragement of spiritual forces that influence the client without using spiritual resources in their intervention. On the other hand, explicit integration emphasizes the role of spirituality in the effectiveness of therapy, integrates psychological theory with spiritual guidance, and uses spiritual resources, such as prayers, in interventions (Tan 1996). Given this paper's focus on the healing potential of Islamic prayer and its spiritual energy, I describe four measures that can be used for the explicit integration of these prayers into psychotherapy, and they are as follows:

1. *Discussing the role of Islamic prayers and their spiritual energy in clients' lives*: Therapists should include spirituality as a standard dimension in assessing clients (Richards and Bergin 2005). Asking clients about their spirituality may yield significant insight into the way they construe their life struggles (Pargament et al. 2005). Considering the centrality of Islam in the lives of religious Muslim clients, Abu Raiya and Pargament (2010) urged mental health professionals to invite these clients into a religious conversation in which they explicitly inquire about the role of religion in their lives. Hamdan (2007) also argued that it is imperative to discuss spiritual issues with these clients. Accordingly, a discussion of the role of prayers in the client's life can enrich and enhance the therapeutic process.

2. *Encouraging clients to use Islamic prayers outside the therapeutic hour as an adjunct to therapy*. McCullough and Larson (1999) argued that the use of prayers in therapy has an emboldening effect because it increases the client's morale and hope and creates comfort with the therapist and therapy. Hughes (1997) also encouraged therapists to support their clients praying efforts while continuing to maintain a firm grip on common sense. With respect to religious Muslim clients, Abu Raiya and Pargament (2010) urged therapists to help them draw on positive coping methods, such as praying, to deal with stressors. If the clients wish to involve their therapists for informal prayer, Carter (2006) recommended that therapists are respectful of this wish because this might promote healing.

3. *Using Islamic prayers to facilitate therapeutic change.* This is the most important skill of integrating Islamic prayers into psychotherapy since it gives a new and deeper meaning for traditional therapeutic interventions. It is possible that prayers could facilitate therapeutic goals, such as personal transformation, emotional, and behavioral change. Masters and Speilman (2007) argued that perhaps the words and subject matter of the prayer itself may cause the supplicants' cognitive processes to change in ways that are beneficial to them. Therapists may also encourage clients to use spiritual imagery and visualization that fosters the presence of spiritual energy while praying (Pargament 1997). With respect to the existential approach, Farnsworth (1975) argued that prayers can make people God-centered, and this could get them out of their "existential vacuum" and help them relate to others in a more meaningful and loving way.

4. *Attending to and maintaining spiritual energy.* Therapist may want to discuss with their clients strategies they could use to maintain their spiritual energy. For example, Mann (1998) encouraged his clients to attend to their spiritual energy by becoming very present, staying in the moment, and centered in consciousness when they

experience it. Hamdan (2007) also argued that a therapist can help religious Muslim clients revive their spiritual strength as a way of coping with affliction.

Therapists who wish to integrate spirituality into their clinical work with religious Muslim clients need to do that in a professional manner that does not violate professional and ethical standards. I will now provide certain safeguards that could help therapists maintain a professional and ethical attitude while accomplishing this task.

Safeguards for Successful Integration of Islamic Prayers

Attempts of integrating spiritual elements into psychotherapy should be done with utmost sensitivity and care to avoid potential pitfalls that may hamper this process. For example, Shafranske (1996) urged therapists not to enter into a theological discussion of whether truth claims expressed in religious beliefs are true or not. He also warned therapists not to question the veracity of religious and spiritual beliefs because these beliefs are neither reality nor illusions. It is not necessary for the therapist to agree or disagree with clients about their religious beliefs, but to understand the importance of such beliefs (Hodges 2007). Therapists should also be able to discern authentic spiritual experience from ones that are made up or psychotic (Mann 1998). On the other hand, attempts of spiritual integration may inadvertently give a religious authority to the therapist or may lead to the imposition of his or her spiritual value on the clients (Richards and Bergin 2005). Pargament (1997) also argued that therapists should be aware of possible "spiritual over-enthusiasm," which is the tendency to see spirituality as the root of all problems.

Further, therapists need to be mindful of potential boundary violations if they choose to integrate spirituality into their clinical practice. They can easily avoid these violations if they: a) identify their own values, assumptions, strengths, vulnerabilities, limitations, and blind spots (Pargament 1997) and b) use the client's beliefs in pursuing therapeutic goals and according to his or her expressed preference (Hodges 2007).

Finally, I end this paper by presenting a case study that highlights many of the paper's themes, such as efforts to integrate spiritual energy into psychotherapeutic work and the psychological benefits of such integration. The following case is presented in a way that preserved the anonymity of the client. Words in quotes are the words uttered by the client.

Case Study

Background information and presenting problem

Horeya (a pseudonym) is a 50-year-old Egyptian Muslim woman who currently lives in Cairo. She has been married to an Egyptian Muslim Doctor for 30 years and their marriage produced three children (two males and one female). Horeya received a degree in Pharmacy while she was married, but she had never held a job in her life because she preferred to be a "stay-home mom." She considers herself a devout Muslim who attends to praying, fasting, and other religious duties.

Horeya presented with severe symptoms of depression, which included the following: prolonged sadness; lack of interest in life activities; insomnia; lack of appetite; lethargy; and lack of pleasure. She also reported having suicidal ideation, but she never had any plan to end her life. Her depressive symptoms started five years ago after she learned that her two

sons decided to immigrate to the USA. Adding insult to the injury, her daughter was married a year later to a man who accepted a diplomatic post in France. Horeya was both furious and sad about the departure of her three children in such a short period. According to Horeya, her life suddenly stopped because everything that made her busy dissipated in a very short period. For her, "today became the same as tomorrow and yesterday." She also complained that her children hardly call her on the phone, especially after they got married. After dedicating her life to her children, Horeya believed that she was "abandoned" by them.

With respect to her social support system, Horeya disclosed that she never loved her husband because she was "forced" by her mother to marry him despite a significant age difference between them. She also expressed her anger toward him because she believed that he implicitly encouraged her children to immigrate by telling them they had no future in Egypt. She also complained that he dismissed her sad feelings, and this led to constant fights between them. When asked about her relationship with her parents, Horeya reported that her father died shortly after her birth. She also expressed deep resentment toward her mother and accused her of beating her mercilessly in many occasions throughout her life. With respect to friendship, Horeya reported that she only had one close friend, but she stopped talking to her because her life was also "miserable," and she could not tolerate listening to her complaints.

When asked about her treatment history, Horeya reported that she had seen many psychiatrists, but she complained that her encounters with them were always short and meaningless. She also could not tolerate the side effects of the antidepressant medications they prescribed, so she refused to continue taking them. However, she reported that she often consulted with a cleric at Al-Azhar (an Islamic University in Egypt), who encouraged her to pray and told her that prayers could bring her solace and comfort. Horeya thought that this was a good suggestion, but she felt that God did not accept her prayers because she believed that her reasons to be sad were "trivial and unimportant." According to Horeya, people should be sad for "important and real" reasons, such as going through war, poverty, hunger, or trauma, but she had "no right to be sad" since God gave her many "gifts."

Treatment

I used an eclectic approach in treating Horeya. For example, cognitive reframing was used to identify and replace maladaptive thoughts, especially those related to her feelings of helplessness and hopelessness about her situation. A behavioral approach was also used in the form of scheduling and reinforcement of positive behaviors. Further, a short-term psychodynamic model was used to explore the process of loss and mourning she experienced. Finally, an existential approach was used in helping her create/identify certain meanings out of her suffering. Horeya initially responded to these approaches with enthusiasm and seemed to improve, but only for a very short period of time, then she would relapse into deeper depression. After one year of treatment, this pattern was sustained, and I felt that we were experiencing therapeutic stagnation. At the end of one session, I told her that I would keep her in my prayers. For some reason, Horeya felt so touched by this gesture, and this led to a discussion about the role of prayers in her life. She reported that she occasionally experienced a sudden jolt of energy that pushed and shook her while praying. She believed that this energy could help her, but she failed to maintain that feeling when negative thoughts started to intrude into her mind.

By investing in her willingness and enthusiasm to pray, I was able to stimulate our therapeutic process and my traditional therapeutic approaches started to have a deeper and more effective meaning. Specifically, I encouraged Horeya to further discuss her

experiences of praying in therapy and asked her to write down her feelings and thoughts every time she completed her prayers. Further, I stressed that prayer and its spiritual energy had become a very important part of our therapeutic work because of the benefits they might bring. I then urged Horeya to pay deeper attention to the words of prayers and link them to our discussion about changing maladaptive thoughts, mourning, behavioral change, and meaning making. We also discussed ways with which she could maintain prayers and their spiritual energy as part of her daily experiences. For example, she downloaded an application on her mobile phone that has certain Islamic supplications, and she uttered them every time she prayed. She also wrote her own supplication prayer in which she asked God to forgive her, make her children happy, and let her accept reality. Horeya reported that she would read that prayer every time she was "chased" by her negative thoughts, which she believed were destructive.

The integration of prayers into our psychotherapeutic work and the maintenance of these prayers in Horeya's daily routine seemed to have mobilized and invigorated our therapeutic process and yielded many psychological benefits. For example, she started to mourn her losses by accepting her current situation without bitterness or despair. Horeya attributed this acceptance to her intimacy with God through prayers, which allowed her to realize that God's will should be respected. Further, the words of prayer she uttered seemed to challenge her egocentricity and increase her empathy toward her children, as she acknowledged that she had to respect their desire to leave Egypt and build their lives in the USA. She also seemed to reframe her maladaptive thoughts about her hopeless life by focusing on the hope that is conveyed through the words and meanings of prayers. On the other hand, her focus on God through prayers helped her become less self-absorbed and more open to others. In a sense, she seemed to get out of what Farnsworth (1975) called: "existential vacuum." Specifically, she decided to create new meaning in her life through working as a volunteer for an organization that helped the elderly. She was also able to forgive herself because she was convinced that God forgave her, and this lessened her feelings of guilt. However, it was very hard for her to forgive her mother and her husband, and she needed more time to do that. Overall, Horeya was able to tap into her spiritual resources in dealing with her painful reality, and the integration of prayer into our therapeutic work helped us deal with our therapeutic stagnation.

Conclusion

The potential role of spirituality in enhancing the therapy process should not be ignored. This paper focused on the forms and benefits of spiritual energy that could be produced by Islamic prayers, and how this energy could be integrated into psychotherapeutic work with religious Muslim clients. It is my hope that this paper provides mental health professionals, who are currently treating or intending to treat religious Muslim clients with some information about the role of Islamic prayer and its spiritual energy in the lives of these individuals. Such information may enrich their therapeutic work and facilitate their clients' personal growth.

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