



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Way of Love

*Towards an Islamic Psychology
of Virtues and Character Development*

Edited by
Carrie M. York, PhD

Key words: Positive Psychology, Virtues, Islamic Psychology, Islam, Spirituality

Introduction

The field of positive psychology, which began in the late 1990s, has sought to understand the nature of well-being, happiness, positive inner states, virtues like love, wisdom, and generosity, as well as how to help people and society develop them. It was born as a criticism of mainstream psychology that it was a field that purported to help people but did so by focusing exclusively on disease, distress, and illness. It was argued that understanding and treating mental disorders was not the same thing as understanding happiness or how to be well. Removing a person's symptoms of depression did not necessarily mean that they would become happy and thrive. Rather, being well or happy is something that needed to be cultivated. Hence, the field of positive psychology began and since then, has been about studying positive subjective experiences, positive individual traits, and institutions that enable positive experiences and positive traits (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Positive psychology is not the only domain that seeks to understand such things. For most of human history, such topics have been the domain of ethics, philosophy and religion. Indeed, the whole point of almost all organized religions is to help its adherents be happy, virtuous people of good character. As this relates to Islam specifically, Prophet Mohammed said he came to teach one thing – good character – and the Islamic tradition has an entire science dedicated to this. It goes by a number of names including Islamic spirituality, Sufism (*tasawwuf*), the science of the self (*ilm al-nafs*), purification of the self (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), and Islamic psychology, amongst a number of other terms. This science is similar to positive psychology in that it, too, deals with the cultivation of health, wellness, positive states, virtues, and good character and it is also similar to mainstream psychology in that it is interested in removing illness and negative states. Until now though, this science has been primarily the domain of religion and spirituality and not one of psychology. The purpose of this book, therefore, is to bring the Islamic science of virtue and character development into the domain of modern psychology.

The kinds of chapters we are interested in receiving should be multidisciplinary in approach, engaging both Islamic and psychological discourses. A conceptual framework that demonstrates such engagement is the Tawheed Paradigm (York Al-Karam, 2018) used in the field of Islamic psychology. Also, this is a hybrid book – academic in nature but written in a way that is accessible to anyone interested in the topic. It could be used on its own as a book on the topic of Islamic virtues and character development or could be used as a textbook in courses on positive psychology, Islamic psychology, Islamic studies, spirituality and health, Islamic healing, and more.

As such, examples of topics we'd like to see include but are not limited to:

- How the constructs of “virtues” and “character development” are defined or conceptualized in the Islamic tradition including primary Islamic sources such as the Quran, hadith, or secondary sources such as classical or modern scholars.

- How specific virtues like wisdom, love, generosity, gratitude, patience, contentment, and others are defined or conceptualized according to primary Islamic sources like the Quran, hadith, as well as how classical or contemporary scholars have defined or conceptualized them within an Islamic context.
- Ways to expand the current list of virtues recognized in the positive psychology literature by proposing new ones from the Islamic tradition. Examples could include but are not limited to God-consciousness (*taqwa*), reliance on God (*tawwakul*), self-vigilance (*muraqaba*), self-accounting/examination (*muhasaba*), and more.
- Novel virtue or character development interventions – historical or current ones.
- Islamic spirituality and/or spiritual practices that lead to virtue/character development.
- Theoretical and/or philosophical similarities/differences between the science of Islamic virtues/character development and that of positive psychology.
- Measuring (Islamic) virtues. Discussion could include examining psychometric scales or other qualitative ways to measure virtues / stations of the soul from the perspective of spiritual development.
- Could include treatments for spiritual diseases and disorders but would have to emphasize virtue development.
- Other topics or themes related to virtues and character development that bridge Islam and psychology, broadly speaking.

Submission Directions

Please submit an abstract of what the proposed full chapter would cover as well as a professional bio of the chapter authors. We ask that submission be made on December 1st ONLY. Authors should submit the requested details via email and with “The Way of Love” in the subject line to: info@alkaraminstitute.org

Timeline

Abstract submission date	December 1 st , 2021
Response deadline	January 1 st , 2022
Full chapters due	April 1 st , 2022
Revisions	Summer 2022
Manuscript completion deadline	September 1 st , 2022

About the Editor

Carrie M. York, PhD is president of the Alkaram Institute – a 501c3 nonprofit research and educational institution dedicated to advancing Islamic psychology to benefit society and improve lives and whose longer-term goal is to become the first Muslim graduate school of psychology in the United States. Her areas of interest include Islamic psychology and psychotherapy, virtues and character development, and Islamic spirituality. She is an associate editor for *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*® – a peer-reviewed scientific journal published by the American Psychological Association and has published a number of journal articles, books chapters, as well as three books: *Mental Health and Psychological Practice in the United Arab Emirates* (2015), *Islamically Integrated Psychotherapy: Uniting Faith and Professional Practice* (2018), and a children’s character development book *Maya and the Seven Limbs* (2020).

About the Publisher

The Alkaram Institute is a 501c3 nonprofit research and educational institution dedicated to advancing Islamic psychology to benefit society and improve lives and whose longer-term goal is to become the first Muslim graduate school of psychology in the United States. It’s new publication wing – Alkaram Press – publishes books on Islamic psychology, spirituality, mental health, wellness, and healing. For more information visit: www.alkaraminstitute.org