DS PP

DALLAS SOCIETY

FOR PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOLOGY

The Self, the Horde, and the Analytic Therapies:

Bundling Crooked Timber

Bridges Across Oceans: A Muslim Perspective on the Psychological Challenges Faced by 1st and 2nd Generation Immigrants

How a hermeneutic analysis of Islam can help 1st and 2nd generation immigrants to process the impact of their disenfranchised grief.

Dallas Society of Psychoanalytic Psychology

April 09, 2025

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Topics for Discussion:

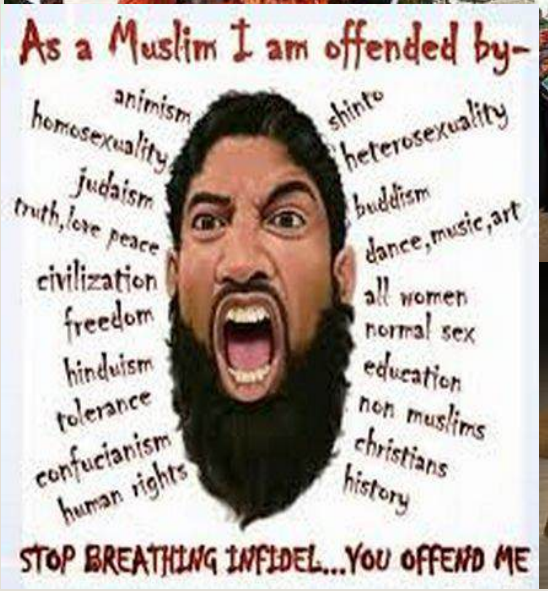
- Islam;When I say Muslim,you say
- Define “immigrant”
- Unrecognized Grief
- Unacknowledged Grief
- Unidentified Assumptions
- How to build a bridge
- Case study: bridge building in action

References

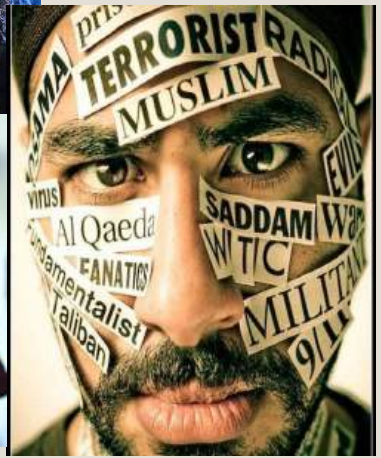
Muslims:

HEBDO

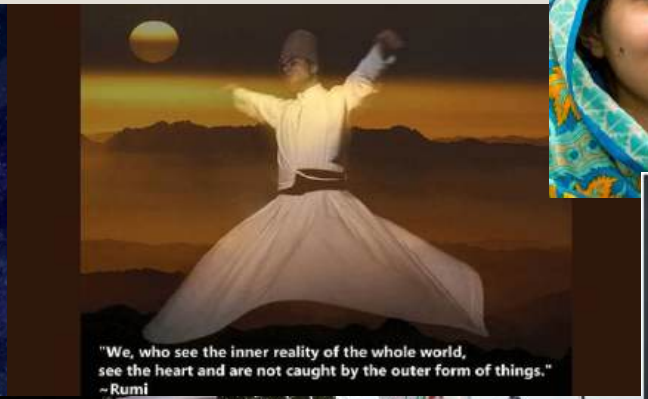
J'AIME
Mohammad (SAW)


As a Muslim I am offended by-
animism
homosexuality
judaism
truth, love peace
civilization
freedom
hinduism
tolerance
confucianism
human rights
shinto
heterosexuality
buddism
dance, music, art
all women
normal sex
education
non muslims
christians
history
STOP BREATHING INFIDEL...YOU OFFEND ME

SHARIA LAW


TERRORIST
MUSLIM
virus
Al Qaeda
FANATICS
Taliban
SADDAM
MILITA

Also Muslims:



An Islamic frame:

Taqwa: God-Consciousness

- Being mindful of God’s presence and attributes
- Constantly aware of one’s relationship and responsibility as His creation

Are they virtue signaling????

Immigrant:

Counting Immigrant Generations

- **1st** = the immigrants
- **1.5 or 2nd** = those who migrate as children
- **3rd** = grandchildren of 1st generation immigrants

1st generation Experience:

“skipped grief” - aka delayed grief
(sometimes indefinitely)

Impact: Why and How

“introjection of object loss informs (feeds) melancholia.”

- Hale Usak

- stoicism = barrier to processing
- *“guest country”*
- *“generational passing down of inner fragility, imperfection and fragmentation”*

1.5 or 2nd Generation Experience:

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skipped grief + unacknowledged grief =

“overlooked mourning”

Overlooked Mourning - A Type of DG:

- **Disenfranchised grief** (DG): *"...is **not or cannot** be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned, socially supported, or that is **misunderstood or trivialized.**"*

- *"…the loss of the homeland and standardized cultural foundation…results in the **pervasive experience of othering**"*

- Salman Akhtar

“Mo”: An Example:

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https://youtu.be/LP3seEeVnxM?si=wDGJkhIbwXPqFeuc

Awareness & Curiosity:

“I divide therefore I am.”

“Re-Cognition, to look over again and empathically “realize” another’s perspective ***before jumping to vocalize allyship****.”*

- Farhad Dalal

Key Takeaways:

- To subgroup is **human**
- Implicit bias: Is the **fear** of Islam limiting tolerance?
- **Listen** rather than hear

How to build a bridge:

Hermeneutic study:

- More accurately interpret the sacred ideology/texts
- Historical, Cultural and Literary context

Applying it to Islam:

- **Reconciling East and West**
  - Reduce feelings of anger, helplessness and incompetence

- **Identify the client's own and inherited biases**
  - clarify their perspective and subsequent life choices.

Case study: 99 names of Allah

33 year old Bengali female, 1.5 generation who immigrated to the US with her parents and younger sister at the age of 13.

- Initial presentation - came with passive SI after being on the night shift at the hospital where she works for the year prior. Endorsed sxs of depression, anxiety, loneliness and high burden of negative self-talk.
- Seen initially for med mgt only but later requested to initiate therapy with me due to seeing **my last name and citing comfort with talking to "someone who understands."**
- Detailed family history revealed that her **parents had emigrated from Bangladesh to escape financial hardship.** Their **marriage was fraught** with pervasive conflicts, father's infidelity, and absence of affection or mutual respect between the spouses well before they moved to the US. Due to the emotional and physical absence of her father (he was always at work and never participated in the child rearing tasks for her and her sister), she, being the older sister, was **parentified by her mother, vacillating between the role of a child and that of a mature adult,** her mother's emotional support and confidante.

Continued…

- **She felt engulfed by her mother**'s histrionic outbursts of anger, alternating with bouts of crying from feelings of helplessness and incompetence.
- Mom is a devout practitioner of the Sunni Muslim traditions of Islam though she has never been active in her mosque or faith community. In fact, she was quite against socializing for fear of embarrassment as her husband's constant infidelities were well known to the community. **She wished for her children to devoutly practice the rituals of the faith in the privacy of their home and engage with the outside world only as necessary. She was ineffective at instilling either in her children.**
- The client also described **feeling repressed and manipulated**. Her mother wielded her **faith sometimes like a weapon,** instilling a fear of doing anything that the Quran forbade and often threatening them that Allah would send them to hell for their lack of piety.
- The client subsequently reacted to this upbringing by focusing all of her energy on her studies with the intent to "get out" of the house and have the means to liberate herself from this "toxic family." She unintentionally equated the entirety of Islamic ideology and South Asian culture with the ways in which she experienced it at home.

Continued…

- She shared **ideas about how South Asian parents are strict, unforgiving, fearful of the other, demanding of their children's loyalty, physical and emotional resources.**
- She also attributed such **harsh and cannibalistic traits to Islam**, seeing it as repressive, transactional and a barrier to a healthy relationship between her and her mother. Despite her distaste and resentment of the religion, she was still plagued by anxious thoughts about visions of hell as described by her mother. **She irrationally worried that not practicing her faith would land her there.**
- One of our numerous tasks has been to create a more balanced understanding of Islamic ideology. Eg: She grew up believing in her mother's description of Allah and therefore saw Him as a **vengeful god**. I referred her to two of the 99 names of Allah: **Al-Muhmeet and Al-Barr.** They mean, **"The Destroyer" and "The Source of all Goodness",** respectively. Together, we compared the two and discussed the value of holding both in mind, simultaneously.

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Notes

3rd individuation - “an adult life reorganization of identity, potential reworking of earlier consolidations in this regard, and a semi-playful extension of a useful psychoanalytic metaphor” - Akhtar

“The failure of mourning leads to a continuous search for the idealized lost object, an inability to love new objects, a depreciation of the value of objects in one’s current life, and an endless pursuit of nostalgic memories for themselves at the expense of inhibition in many areas of existence.” - Werman

“Poly-lingual patients….will have at their disposal a defense that allows them to avoid areas in their psychic life that are problematic. By changing language, they will be able to avoid not only the subset but the whole language of infantile sexuality, thus denying themselves and us access to an area so intimately linked to specific verbal sounds and special names.” - Amati-Mehler