



## Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims in Russia: Activities, Problems and Solutions

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**Abstract:** The article discusses the main directions of activities of the Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims. The Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims (APAM) was created in Russia on 29 September 2017, at the first scientific-practical conference “Islam: psychological stability as the basis of personal and social well-being”, which took place in Moscow. The Association is an all-Russian organization that deals with solving problems of practical, empirical, theoretical and educational nature. Psychological counseling for Muslims is a professional psychological assistance, which relies on the knowledge about the peculiarities of the client’s faith significant to his personality. These are religious beliefs, religious language, sacred stories and legends, ritual practices, traditions and customs of Muslim peoples.

**Keywords:** Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims; Islamic psychology; Psychological counseling for Muslims

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## Ассоциация психологической помощи мусульманам в России: деятельность, проблемы и пути их решения

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**Резюме:** В статье рассказывается об основных направлениях деятельности Ассоциации психологической помощи мусульманам. Ассоциация психологической помощи мусульманам (АППМ) была создана в России 29 сентября 2017 года на первой научно-практической конференции «Ислам: психологическая устойчивость – основа личного и общественного благополучия», проходившей в Москве. Ассоциация является общероссийской организацией, занимающейся решением проблем как практического, эмпирического, теоретического, так и образовательного характера. Психологическое консультирование мусульман – это профессиональная психологическая помощь с использованием знаний об особенностях веры клиента, которые важны для его личности: религиозные верования, религиозный язык, священные истории и легенды, ритуальные практики, традиции и обычаи мусульманских народов.

**Ключевые слова:** Ассоциация психологической помощи мусульманам; исламская психология; психологическое консультирование мусульман

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### Introduction

The intensive development of Islamic thought in Russia and the needs of Muslims have led to the necessity of establishing a professional psychological community whose activities are related to maintaining Muslims' psychological health.

By 2015, the need to provide regular professional psychological assistance to Muslims and their families has become evident. Professional psychological technologies should be consistent with the specificity of Islam and its lifestyle. The development of Islamic psychology as a branch of applied psychology is at stake.



Nowadays Islamic psychologists actively work with alcohol and drug addictions, solve problems of child-parent relations, deal with family and marriage issues, interethnic and interreligious relations, help people in difficult life situations, rehabilitate Muslims after breaking with criminal groups, etc.

However, we must admit that every specialist treats the problem of providing spiritual-oriented psychological assistance within the framework of Islam in his own way and there is no aggregate methodological approach. Before 2015, there was very little information in Russian psychology as well as in religious (Islamic) science that can be attributed, at least indirectly, to the problems of the psychology of Islam. Practically there was no scientific research in this area; there was no analysis and comprehension of practical results and work experience. At the same time, there were many questions on the agenda that have a direct relation to the psychological health of the Muslim person and the psychological security of society in general.

The actual request of the society is the problem of deep psychological study of religiously motivated extremism problem and psychological prevention of given phenomenon. It is obvious that individuals, inclined to extremist activity, are people who have numerous unprocessed serious psychological problems that are the primary cause of extremist behaviour.

Another important issue for the Muslim society is the family problem, child-parent relations. Muslims themselves and their family members show a constant need in dealing with different psychological issues, including interethnic/interreligious kin: active migration has increased the number of inter-ethnic/inter-religious marriages, where one of the spouses is a Muslim. There is a list of psychological issues that are very important to spot and analyze both in the field of psychology and in the field of Islam: the problem of religious conversion, which leads to increasing of the number of «non-ethnic», for example, Russian Muslims; counteraction to addictions, depressions and other problems of modern society by the means of Islamic knowledge and religious practice. Thus, the request for the development of psychological problems within the framework of Islam is great and considerably exceeds the offer.



In order to generalize the practical experience and theoretical knowledge about the psychological characteristics of Muslims accumulated in the regions of the Russian Federation by psychologists, teachers, imams, theologians, philosophers, Islamic scholars and ethnographers the Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims<sup>1</sup> (APAM) was established. As the unified coordinating centre, it provides systematic professional and spiritually oriented psychological assistance to Muslims.

### **Goals and objectives of the Association of Psychology Assistance to Muslims**

The APAM aims to coordinate the activities of all interested specialists (psychologists, imams, teachers, etc.) in the development of the psychology of Islam as the applied field of the psychology of religion for the successful resolution of the actual psychological problems of Russian Muslims and the provision of spiritually oriented psychological assistance. In its practice APAM is based on the scientific legacy of the great Muslim scholars: Abu Zajd Al-Balhi [1], Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariya ar-Razi [2], Abu Hamid al-Gazali [3], Ibn Kaiim al-Dzhauziyya [4], as well as modern Islamic psychologists M. Badri [5-8], B. Riyono [9], G. H. Rassool [10], M.M. Amer [11], A. Utz [12], M. Daneshpour [13], Sh. Ijaz, M. T. Khalily, I. Ahmad [14], C. York Al-Karam [15], R. Skinner [16-17] and others.

There are five main objectives of APAM activities:

1. Study, identification, generalization of advanced Russian and foreign Islamic and psychological experience accumulated in the field of the psychology of religion
2. Provision of network interaction of specialists in different areas in the complex work on implementation of various programs and directions of the Association, positive experience exchange of the regions of the Russian Federation
3. Realization of programs of professional development of specialists through courses, round tables, seminars, scientific and practical conferences
4. Development, adaptation and definition of optimal psychological methods, forms and methods of spiritually oriented psychological assistance to Muslims

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<sup>1</sup> <http://islampsiholog.ru>



5. Provide timely professional psychological assistance to Muslims, taking into account and applying Islamic knowledge through means of various forms and methods of work, including the helpline.

The example APAM scientific activity is an annual conference of science and practical work “Islam: psychological stability as the basis of personal and social well-being” or round tables on the most critical issues, as well as refresher courses and seminars, webinars and online discussions. It’s important to carefully select research tools and interpret results of an empirical research accurately, since the vast majority of modern psychological methods for studying religion, religious identity and religious fundamentalism are created for a Christian research sample or consider religion from a secular point of view. In this regard, the methods must be adapted for the Muslim research sample and when interpreting the results, the Islamic view of a Muslim person should be taken into account.

The APAM in Russia aims to solve the problem of applying scientific approaches to the psychological counselling of Muslims. For a deep understanding of the psychology of a Muslim and the implementation of psychological counselling in the Islamic paradigm, it is necessary to rely on the ideas of the personality development that have been formed in Islam.

Psychologists, who share the religious views of their clients, use sources of the psychological stability of believers in the fundamentals of faith.

The specifics of Islamic psychological counselling should be given sustained attention. There are some debatable questions in the field of Islam and psychology:

- What amount of Islamic knowledge should a professional psychological counsellor have to provide psychological support to a Muslim?
- Can an Islamic psychologist be a non-practising Muslim or practise other religion?
- Can an Islamic psychologist be an atheist, who takes into account the religious identity of his client?

In spite of theoretical issues, APAM provides different research. Association scientists study the accumulated Russian and foreign experience both in the field of the psychology of religion in general and in the field of the psychology of Islam, also



the contribution of Muslim scholars to the development of psychology is studied. Research work includes the following approaches:

1. Analysis and study of Russian and foreign experience in the field of the psychology of religion.
2. Correlation of existing knowledge and experience in the field of psychology with the canons of Islam.
3. Conducting scientific psychological empirical studies aimed at studying the psychological characteristics of Muslims.
4. Analysis of the results of domestic and foreign empirical research for the implementation of scientifically based psychological assistance by Muslims of the Russian Federation.

The Association pays great attention to the development of scientific activities in Russia. For this aim, empirical studies are conducted, with their results published in the international peer-reviewed journal "Minbar. Islamic Studies "and in the Association's journal "Islam: personality and society". There are some examples of exploratory topics:

- Spirituality as a source of individual resilience: results of the psychological study [18].
- The End of Life Concept and its Development among Russian Children (aged 6 to 8 years) [19].
- Conversion to Islam: Its Motives and Consequences Through the Looking Glass of Social and Psychological Research [20].
- Value Orientations of Muslim Youth in the North-Western Caucasus [21].
- The Role of the Perceptual Aspect of Communication in the Professional Activity of a Muslim Cleric [22].
- Islamic Psychology: from the monotheistic paradigm to a personality theory [23].
- Psychological Counseling for Muslims: the Analysis of Foreign Literature [25].
- Religious Group Identification and Ethno-National Attitudes in Buddhist, Muslim and Orthodox Youth [25].



The logical continuation of the chosen line of development for the Association becomes **Educational and methodical activity**. It is important to improve the professional qualifications of specialists through courses, round tables, seminars, scientific and practical conferences. We suggest the following subjects:

1. Development and creation of educational programs and manuals aimed at developing and improving the professional competencies of specialists.
2. Organization and conduct of refresher courses, webinars for psychologists, teachers, imams and other interested specialists.
3. Consultation and support of specialists in the implementation of the programs of the Association of Islamic Psychologists.
4. Development of methodological guides on the psychology of Islam for regional centres of psychological assistance, madrassas, educational institutions.
5. Publication of the results of conducted research in the scientific peer-reviewed journal «Minbar. Islamic Studies», the scientific and educational journal «Islam: personality and society».

Another perspective vector of development is **Master's Program "Psychology of the East: Ethnicity, Religion and Intercultural Communication"**<sup>1</sup> based on the educational platform of Moscow State University of Psychology & Education<sup>2</sup> (MSUPE) is one of the top universities of psychological and pedagogical studies in Russia. Founded under the initiative of the Moscow Government, the University trains high qualified specialists in the field of education, healthcare and social protection. Apart from getting a strong theoretical foundation, the students of the University acquire necessary practical skills by working in psychological centres and educational institutions.

In 2019, Moscow State University of Psychology and Education in cooperation with the Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims have created a Master's programme "Psychology of the East: ethnicity, religion and intercultural communication".

The programme aims to train psychologists in the field of cross-cultural communication with representatives of the East, taking into consideration their

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<sup>1</sup> <http://vostok-mgppu.ru/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://mgppu.ru/>



ethnic and religious characteristics. Geographically, it mainly focuses on the Middle East, East Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Ural-Volga region.

Students are considered to choose one of the educational fields connected with a particular oriental language (Arabic, Korean or Chinese).

The Arabic department of the Master's degree is a unique educational programme that combines the development of skills in the field of cross-cultural communication, psychology and Islamic studies. Students are getting knowledge in:

- Arabic with an experienced professor;
- History and modern culture of Muslim peoples of the world;
- Psychology of Islam;
- Ethnic psychology and features of cross-cultural communication with representatives of peoples professing Islam;
- The specific features of the psychological work with Muslims.

An attendee of Master's degree takes part in international projects and exchange programs with universities of Morocco, Indonesia (in particular with Gadjah Mada University<sup>1</sup> (Yogyakarta, Indonesia)) and the United Arab Emirates.

We hope that the implementation of abovementioned Master's program will create a new generation of psychologists who are ready to work with clients professing Islam. Thus, a new direction of theoretical and practical knowledge is formed in Russia. Its goal is the psychological study of the Muslim community of Russia, the phenomenon of religious identity in Islam and psychological assistance to Muslim clients.

Our Association provides the educational program for further training called "Psychological counselling to Muslims". The main goal of this program is to form the following competencies:

1. The knowledge of religion and religious consciousness (the concept and components of religious identity, individual psychological characteristics of a person, which can influence the choice of a destructive sector trend, types of religious manipulations and others).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ugm.ac.id/>





2. Cross-cultural psychological competencies (knowledge about the specifics of the ethnic culture of Muslim clients, which has a significant impact on the nature of psychological assistance).

3. Methodological competence in the field of psychological counselling (the ability to make qualified judgments, form hypotheses, test, make decisions in each situation, achieving results). This program introduces work in such approaches as systemic family therapy, gestalt method, existential approach and monodrama capabilities.

4. Differential psychological competence in determining client's psycho type and individual organization level.

Psychological counselling for Muslims is a professional psychological assistance using knowledge about the peculiarities of the client's faith that are significant to his personality. These are religious beliefs, religious language, sacred stories and legends, ritual practices, traditions and customs of Muslim peoples. During the study of mental health services effectiveness in the United States, it was found that cultural minorities do not continue therapy after the first visit to a counsellor in 50% of cases. The reason is that counselling does not take into account their value and ideological positions or does not comply with special terms of counselling. For an observant Muslim, an important issue is the permissibility of both psychological help itself from the point of view of religion, as well as its individual approaches and methods. In this regard, establishing the trust of a consulting psychologist with a Muslim is not an easy task, achieved with their mutual understanding of the matters of religion, ritual practices and traditions. The most trustful figure is the consultant who is Muslim himself.

There are some educational tools used during the classes and online training. Students have the opportunity to watch the lectures and participate in the discussions. This program includes practical exercises, where students in pairs work out the proposed exercises for practising the skills of a counselling psychologist. In the last month of training, specialists conduct psychological consultations of the clients and they are able to receive recommendations from the teachers.

Knowledge of the religious specifics helps in solving a professional task - psychological assessment and analysis of problems, presented at psychological



counselling to a psychologist by a religious person (Muslim families and children from such families). After the training students note high level of acquired professional confidence and mastery in working with Muslim clients.

Providing qualified assistance to Muslim clients, a consulting psychologist should have knowledge of Islamic theology. The facts of starting Master programmes in Islamic psychology in Islamic universities (Russian Islamic Institute in Kazan, Moscow Islamic Institute) are actively discussed in Russia nowadays. It must be a comprehensive psychological and theological training, which, along with the necessary psychological disciplines, will include courses in Islamic theology, revealing the basics of Islam, information about what is permitted and forbidden, ideas about a person in Islam (“kalb” (heart), “nafs” (soul), “niyyat” (intention)) and so on [3]. Knowledge of the Quran and the Hadith will provide theological basis and necessary arguments for effective correlation with a Muslim client. It will also give an opportunity to form the psychological stability of the personality, using the resource of faith.

The main disciplines of the course “Psychological counselling of Muslims» are:

- Introduction to Islamic Psychology;
- The development of Islamic psychological thought in the Russian Federation;
- Fundamentals of religious identity (analysis of the psychological aspects of faith);
- Methods of studying religious consciousness;
- Psychology of fanaticism. Destructive sects (theory, practice);
- The radicalization of women in modern society;
- The main directions of work with people in destructive sects;
- Ethnic and cultural specificity of a Muslim client;
- Counselling of parent-child relationships in Muslim families (age-related psychology in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah, the difference between religious education and religious breeding, the responsibility of parents in matters of upbringing, practical techniques for working with children and parents);



- Systematic family counselling for Muslim families (including the main types of violation of beliefs that lead to dysfunctions, working with divorce facts, with married couples, practical techniques);
- Gestalt approach in psychological counselling of Muslims (the basis of the method, practical techniques for work);
- Work with dreams in the practice of a Muslim psychologist;
- Islamic view of the monodrama method. Monodrama as a tool for a psychologist;
- The concept of “cleansing the heart” as part of the Ghazali teachings. Definition of the concepts of “ruh” and “nafs”. Types of nafs.

Mostly all APAM activities are practically oriented. It includes:

1. Approbation of various psychological technologies with reliance on religious aspects (Islam).
2. Carrying out the events (training, master classes, round tables, discussion meetings, counselling, etc.) aimed at socialization and adaptation of Muslims in modern society.
3. Carrying out the activities aimed at rehabilitation of Muslims who occurred in difficulties.
4. Psychological rehabilitation of those who experienced extremist propaganda, recruitment, as well as those who entered extremist organizations.
5. Working with Muslim prisoners, especially susceptible to extremist propaganda.
6. Coordinating and searching specialists needed creating a special database of Islamic psychologists.
7. Online psychological counselling through the website [islampsiholog.ru](http://islampsiholog.ru).

There is a very specific area of activity provided by the Association. It is Muslim Psychological Aid Association Hotline Phone. The first call to the Hotline took place on March 27, 2018. During the year and a half of the hotline operation, 306 calls were received from different regions of Russia, as well as from Turkey, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the USA, the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Saudi Arabia. Here is some statistics to make a picture clear. Out of the total number of calls,



77.6% come from women and 22.3% from men. 62.2% receive instant psychological assistance, 37.8% of calls are redirected to the Association's specialists, who provide assistance both online and offline. The age of those who seek psychological help is from 23 to 65 years. The examples can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**The examples of typical addresses for help**

Matters related to the relationship of the spouses	Counselling on divorce issues, financial relationships of the spouses, jealousy of one of the spouses, polygamy, the treason of one of the spouses, domestic violence
Issues related to personality problems	Depressive states, obsessive states, panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive syndrome, addictions (gambling, drug addiction), the search for the meaning of life and motivation for life, a crisis of faith, suicidal intentions, and childhood traumas
Issues related to children	Parent-child relationships, child outcast in the family, fear of pregnancy, motivation for learning, professional self-determination
Other issues	Assistance in finding a spouse to create a family, one of the spouses has become a radical, relationships with parents, loss of a loved one, life-threatening, auto-aggression, anger, motivation to study, continuing education courses and professional psychological education

Requests for psychological assistance are received on the phone, as well as through e-mail, different kinds of messengers and social networks.

One of the most important issues is that APAM provides Psychological assistance to Muslim migrants. For modern Russia, the solution to the migration problem is one of the basic priorities. For example, by 1 June, 2019, 716,118 migrants came to Russia from Kyrgyzstan, 1,303,302 from Tajikistan, 2,188,835 from Uzbekistan. It is not a secret that the citizens of these republics are predominantly Muslims.

Thus, the Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims considers the provision of psychological assistance to the most vulnerable groups of Muslims, who are migrants from Central Asian countries. The Association's specialists are implementing the project called "Socio-psychological adaptation of migrants in a metropolis" the purpose of which is to adapt migrants to live in large cities dealing



with the difficulties in integration, as well as reducing conflicts in communities where ethnic groups of different origin come into contact. It is important to understand that psychologists consider the state of migration as an extreme situation, the experience of which, in a psychological context, is characterized as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Among the psychological problems of migrants are:

- disturbances in the emotional sphere: depression, loss of interest in life, lethargy up to apathy and depression or irritability, aggressiveness, uncontrolled outbursts of anger;
- sleep disorders;
- violations in the motivational sphere: changing the hierarchy of needs and value orientations, lowering the level of claims, falling self-esteem, inability to satisfy needs, problems of an existential plan;
- cognitive impairment: disorders of memory, attention, thinking;
- identity crisis;
- problems in the field of interpersonal communication with representatives of one's own and foreign cultures;
- psychosomatic symptoms and disorders.

The Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims conducts work among migrants and has qualified specialists in various regions of the Russian Federation. Our specialists have knowledge and experience in the work with representatives of different ethnic groups professing Islam.

Back in 1998, a German psychotherapist and psychiatrist of Iranian origin Hamid Peseshkian PhD in the field of Russia studies wrote, «the era of monocultural psychotherapy has exhausted itself and is about to complete» [28, p. 4]. If psychologists and their clients belong to different cultural groups, the specialists need some knowledge about the clients' culture, as the cultural specificity (ethnic, religious, regional) has a significant impact on the psychological characteristics of the former. In addition, it affects their perception of the psychologist, as well as the process of psychological counselling and its dynamics.

The ethnic psychology of each Muslim people has both specific and similar characteristics. The specificity of Muslim communities is the collectivist nature of their culture, gravitating towards closeness and the maximum conservation of their values.



For an observing Muslim, an important issue is the permissibility of both psychological assistance to itself and its approaches and methods from the point of view of religion. In this regard, establishing the trust of a psychologist-consultant with a Muslim is a difficult task, achievable with their mutual understanding in matters of religion, ritual practices and traditions. The greatest trust is usually given to a Muslim consultant.

The issues of psychological counselling of Muslims are resolved both in countries of the Islamic world and in countries where the Muslim community is a minority. Psychologists who share the religious views of their clients use the sources of psychological stability of believers in the foundations of faith itself. Thus, the religious beliefs of the client can become a significant barrier to the provision of psychological assistance as well as a powerful resource.

Implementation of the project “Socio-psychological adaptation of migrants in a metropolis” allows to:

- provide regular psychological assistance to Muslim migrants on a free basis. It contributes to the harmonization of inter-religious and cross-cultural relations, reduce the confrontation between society and migrants;
- improve the psychological state of migrants, which will contribute to successful adaptation and socialization in the new region of residence;
- form skills of positive self-presentation in a new region of residence based on positive cultural, ethnic, religious features of the social group in which the migrant previously lived, together with a new host country culture. Specialists participating in the project have higher professional education and experience in the field of psychology, pedagogics, medicine (neurology); theological (Islamic) knowledge, knowledge of the psychological characteristics of the cultures of Central Asia; have experience of communication with migrants from Central Asia.

Project Objectives:

1. The formation of the psychological adaptation of migrants to a new cultural environment.
2. Formation of intercultural interaction skills.
3. Informing migrant communities about the possibility of receiving psychological assistance and adaptation in the metropolis by solving psychological problems.



4. Educational work among migrants which aims to explain the need to comply with the law and theological justification of the importance of compliance with Russian laws.

5. Informing specialists and government agencies about the specifics and content of work with Muslim migrants from Central Asia.

Implementation will contribute to the socio-cultural adaptation of migrants, reduce the risk of extremism and radicalism, prevent religious extremism and domestic conflicts, and develop intercultural communication skills. The combination of psychological and theological work will allow for an integrated approach to the problem of migrant integration.

The last issue we should mention is the **Psychological work with religious figures: imams, teachers and students of religious educational institutions.**

The Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims attaches great importance to interaction with religious organizations: The Spiritual administration of Muslims in various regions of Russia, Islamic educational institutions, and mosques. This activity is carried out in various directions.

1. The joint provision of psychological and theological assistance to Muslims.

Muslims often ask imams various questions; discuss their family and marriage problems, relationships with relatives, parent-child relationships. However, the solution of these problems is impossible without the involvement of a psychologist. Therefore, the Association's specialists work closely with imams. Muslims' counselling with psychologist and theologian contributes to a comprehensive solution to the problem in its Sharia and psychological direction. Consultations on creating a family, on divorcing and determining the residence of children with one of the parents after a divorce are in high demand. In various regions of Russia, psychologists of the Association provide advisory assistance exactly in mosques, for example, on Fridays after the juma.

2. Lectures on Islamic psychology for imams.

By the invitation of the Spiritual administration of Muslims of the Russian regions, as well as Islamic educational institutions such as The Bulgarian Islamic Academy, the Russian Islamic Institute, the Moscow Islamic Institute many



psychologists of the Association participate in training courses for imams. Lectures on various psychological topics are very popular among religious figures.

Subjects of lectures and workshops for imams:

- Islamic psychology: theoretical foundations and practical implementation;
- The importance of psychological knowledge in the work of religious leaders;
- Psychological stability as the basis of spiritual and moral self-improvement

of a person;

- Practical work of an imam and psychologist with Muslims;
- Psychology in Islamic enlightenment;
- Fundamentals of family psychology for imams;
- Psychological causes and prevention of religiously motivated extremism;
- Psychological aspects of de-radicalization and re-socialization of adherents

of extremist and terrorist ideologies;

- External and internal religiosity: causes, manifestations, technology of work;
- Conflict-free communication techniques for imams;
- Training imams to work with Muslims with experience in the use of

psychoactive substances (drugs).

### 3. Psychological assistance to religious leaders.

Imams, being in constant contact with Muslims, often experience great stress and problems of emotional burnout in their activities. That is why imams need psychological technology to relieve emotional stress.

The association offers the following topics of psychological workshops for imams:

- Psychological stability of a religious figure;
- Application of the procedural method of psychology in the work of religious leaders;
- The role of self-regulation and mental relaxation in religious activities;
- ART therapy in the Islamic environment: the transformation of destructive feelings into creative ideas;
- Psychodrama through the prism of Islam: Sharia-approved therapy formats.





## Conclusion

In conclusion, we need to say that APAM is the part of increasing world movement. The Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims works closely with foreign experts in the field of Islamic psychology. For example, in October 2018, the specialists of the Association took part in an international conference in Istanbul, where the International Association of Islamic Psychology<sup>1</sup> was established. There we met with experts in the theory and practice of Islamic psychology from many countries of the world and three specialists from Russia became members of the International Association of Islamic Psychology. For us it is very important to keep in touch with Dr Malik Badri, whose books «The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists» [8] and «Cyber-Counseling for Muslim Clients: A Muslim psychologist addressing spiritual problems faced by Muslims» [5] were translated into Russian and published in Russia in 2018 in the collection “Theory and practice of Islamic psychology” [7]. This book can be called the manifesto of Islamic psychology in Russia. We often advise Muslims to use it in their work.

The most important aspect of the Association activities in Russia is the interaction with the International Institute of Islamic Thought<sup>2</sup>, which we carry out through the Idrak Public Association (Baku, Azerbaijan). In October 2019, the association’s specialists took part in the III Forum of CIS Scholars from Revealed Knowledge and Social Sciences Faculties “Islamic Intellectual Thought in the CIS Countries: Past, Present and the Way Forward”<sup>3</sup> in Istanbul. The main idea of the IIIT activity on the integration of scientific knowledge and Islam expressed by the Secretary-General of IIIT Forum Dr Omar Hasan Kasule: “Muslims should be part of a science and develop their approaches to an intellectual heritage, thus the integration of a common civilizational heritage and Islamic values is necessary”<sup>4</sup>. The Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims in Russia is developing this idea in its approaches to the theory and practice of Islamic psychology.

Together with the Idrak Public Association<sup>5</sup>, in 2019 we published in Russian a book by the famous Muslim scientist of the 9th century Abu Zaydal-Balkhi’s “Sustenance

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.islamicpsychology.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://iiit.org/en/home/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://iiit.org/en/islamic-intellectual-thought-cis-countries/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://iiit.org/en/islamic-intellectual-thought-cis-countries/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://idrak.org.az/rus/>



of the Soul: The Cognitive Behavior Therapy of A Ninth Century” [1]. It became very popular in Russia and throughout the Russian-speaking space immediately.

One of the most important stages in the development of the Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims in Russia is the collaboration with the International Association of Muslim Psychologists<sup>1</sup> and our esteemed colleagues from Indonesia. In October 2018, President of the International Association of Muslim Psychologists Dr Bagus Riyono and Dr Phil. Emi Zulaifah, (M. Sc. Vice Dean of the Faculty of Psychology, Social Science and Humanities of the Indonesian Islamic University<sup>2</sup>; Indonesian Representative of the International Association of Muslim Psychologists in Indonesia) attended the Second All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference “ Islam: Psychological Stability is the Basis of Personal and Social Well-Being ” in Moscow. Dr Bagus Riyono delivered a lecture at MSUPE Islamic Psychology as a fundamental and integrated approach in psychology.

In July 2019 8 scientists from Indonesia and students from Islamic University of Indonesia (Yogyakarta) took part at the Third All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference with International Participation “Islam: Psychological Stability as the Basis of Personal and Social Well-Being”. The reports of Indonesian experts made a great impression on the conference participants.

Dr Bagus Riyono and Dr Phil. Emi Zulaifah took part in the XVI European Congress of Psychology<sup>3</sup> in Moscow, where the symposium “Psychology and Religion” was held for the first time, which discussed issues of Christian and Islamic psychology. This issue is very important in the context of the Christian (Orthodox) highest level psychologists’ activity in Russia.

The most important stage of the cooperation was signing an agreement between MSUPE and the International Association of Muslim Psychologists. Due to this fact, there is an opportunity for students and members of the Association of Psychological Assistance to Muslims to participate in an educational programme in Islamic psychology at the Indonesia Islam University (UII). Upon returning to Russia, participants in the educational programme will be able to share their knowledge with colleagues.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://iamphome.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.uui.ac.id/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ecp2019.ru/>



In conclusion, we would like to mention the practical importance of APAM activities. It is aimed at carrying out measures for the prevention and detection of extremist tendency, preventing intra-family and interethnic conflict situations, as well as for carrying out educational activities aimed at harmonization and successful personal development of Muslims.

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