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THE RELEVANCE OF AN ISLAMIC MODEL FOR SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract:

The integration of Islamic-based social work practice models into mainstream social work has aroused considerable interest.

This paper attempts to develop a conceptual framework for an Islamic-based social work model to be incorporated into mainstream social work practices and practical experience with Muslim clients. Implementation of such models adds to social workers' therapeutic experience and reduces pressure on Muslim clients.

The paper also suggests a range of future research topics. To conclude, it is necessary for social worker to familiarize himself with the Islamic-based social work practice models to address his Muslim clients' problems. in Many fields such as family, Psychological Health

Keywords:

- Islam, characteristics curriculum, model, practice, social work

* استاذ مساعد - جامعه الملك عبد العزيز - كلية الآداب والعلوم الانسانية - قسم الاجتماع والخدمة الاجتماعيه.

Introduction

Islam is the second-largest religion by number of adherents worldwide and the fastest growing in the world, with 1.6 billion adherents, or 23% of the global population (Pew Research Center, 2009) There are many Muslim families in majority non-Muslim countries suffering from many problems, For instance, Muslim families may suffer from feelings of alienation in their lives, and estrangement between first generation and second- and third-generation Muslims. The different generations of Muslims are probably unable to understand one another due to different cultural backgrounds and worldviews (World Assembly for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, 2015). This is not related to the conditions of particular Muslim families; rather, it is related to the very social and religious elements of the reality of the Muslim community.

Some Muslim families are built and live between two opposing cultures, giving rise to a problematic bicultural identity and mental conflicts about the character of the Muslim family and consequent feelings of confusion. (Network Alukah, 2015).

‘The family, for example, protects the individual to a given degree from the penetration of standardization into his personal and mental life. It is also a source of an intimate social support’(Khalifa M.A.(2014).). It contributes to redressing one of the causes of alienation and estrangement. Hence, these feelings of alienation and estrangement among Muslims can be eliminated by supporting the institution of the family in the west (Khalifa

M.A.(2014)) Non-Muslim social workers need to be aware of the various challenges that Muslim families in majority non-Muslim countries in the west face, Canada among them.

The Islamic values of family ties, community support, and spiritually based methods of solving social problems are waning with today's modern life (Barise, 2003a). The extended family is shrinking and the number of nuclear families with a smaller number of children is rising (Barise & France, 2004). Thus, the support that Muslims used to receive from their extended family members is diminishing. The decline in the number of siblings and the absence of grandparents and immediate kin, as social support, could lead to isolation and social problems (Barise, 2005). Fostering the spirituality of Muslim clients may provide higher therapeutic potentials for the family's moral and doctrinal values and traditions that would be difficult to accomplish through the traditional western practice models. Fostering the spirituality of Muslim clients may also offer helpful mechanisms for cultural adjustment and thus empower them to overcome many of their everyday challenges, especially those related to cultural alienation in the West (Hall, 2012).

The Muslim client's main attention is to his spiritual system, that is, Islam. The non-Muslim social worker who is adequately familiar with Islamic spirituality will allow the Muslim client to explore the alternatives in the context of these practices in a spiritually neutral environment. This enables the social worker to build a solid relationship with the client without tangible bias, allowing a more dynamic cultural exchange between them both. This exchange

leads to a sound understanding of the identified objectives and therapeutic results, which will help the non-Muslim social worker develop effective therapeutic interventions uniquely designed for Muslim clients and consistent with their belief set (Hall, 2012). This will empower Muslim migrants in western countries to provide social support for themselves (Hall, 2012). Social workers in the west can now create a tolerant environment by building bridges of trust with the Muslim communities beyond what is professionally necessary. The focus should be on these communities, their language, history, and culture (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 2000). Efforts have also been made to link specific aspects of Islamic teachings to social work (Al-Dabbagh, 1993; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000; Azmi, 1991; Barise, 2003a; Barise, 2003b; Barise & France, 2004; Hakim Sarker & Ahmadullah, 1995; Haynes, Eweiss, Mageed and Chung, 1997; Ragab, 1995; Turner, Cheboud, Lopez and Barise, 2002). While the worldwide literature on Islamic indigenization of social work remains limited in both the amount and scope of material (see Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2003), even less has been written about the localization of social work practices within the context of Muslims in North America (Nadir & Dziegielewski, 2001; Rehman & Dziegielewski, 2003) and Canada in particular (e.g., Braise & France, 2004). As Al-Krenawi and Graham put it, 'This research also lead us to identify the need for more comprehensive work on Islam, as we found that most Muslim clients constructed problems and their solutions with strong reference to religion' (2003a, 79). Therefore, there is an urgent need to localize mainstream social work methods to respond

more appropriately to the local context of the Muslim community in Canada and elsewhere.(Barise, 2005)

This paper modestly attempts to conceptualize an Islamically indigenized social work practice model “to be applied to Muslim clients living in majority non-Muslim societies,” aiming at enhancing the social services provided to them. My proposals are based upon the extensive survey of existing research outlined above, my knowledge of existing social work practices in majority-Muslim countries, and my own personal interpretation and application of the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah to the context of modern social work. The first part of the paper sheds light on Muslims living in majority non-Muslim societies and their problems, the second focuses on Islam and its importance in the social work field, the third addresses the characteristics of the Islamic social work approach, and the fourth proposes an Islamic-based social work practice model.

Social Work and Islam:

Islam attaches great importance to the relationship between the individual and God and employs “this relationship in regulating social relations, social and political entities, and fostering economic prosperity” (Saeed, 2006). It is important to realize that Islam equips its adherents with a set of principles for coexistence that directly and deeply affects all aspects of human behavior and includes both cultural and economic activities. Knowledge is required for the production and performance of each of these activities. Islam is a religion, a culture, a set of customs, and a civilization at the same time, as coined by Sardar (Ziauddin,1991). He adds, “Islam is an invaluable high

value providing a cosmic vision. It is the path to reflection on the formation of the universe.

It is a knowledge-based system; it is all about existence and work.” Sardar implies that Islam consists of knowledge and practical application of that knowledge (Sardar, 1991). Noland (2005) also discussed Islam’s encouragement of prosperity and growth. Islam provides a unique worldview and perception for its adherents, enabling them to develop a sound understanding of the reality of the life they are living It succeeds in delving deep and penetrating into all perceptions of life and existence in a completely different way. This helps the non-Muslim social workers identify the areas of concern, prioritize the phenomena in need of study, and set the optimal diagnosis and treatment. It also helps the non-Muslim social workers study the motives behind the conduct of the Muslim client; each behavior has a given motive and significance that need to be interpreted when the non-Muslim social worker conducts his personal evaluation. It also assists him in understanding the Muslim personality, the Muslim family, the social “difficulties s, the description and classification of social problems and life burdens, and the methods of overcoming them (Abdel khalek,G.A,2001).

That is because Islamic spirituality equips Muslim clients with the necessary mechanisms to enable them to face many of the challenges of everyday life and overcome them when living in a Christian/Western environment (Arberry, 2008). This enables the social workers to make proper use of those mechanisms to help Muslim clients address their problems efficiently. It is possible that many Muslims could respond more

positively to an Islamic-based social work approach as compared to mainstream social work methods (e.g. Compton & Galaway1999; Germain and Gitterman 1996; Shulman1999).

Applying the Islam-based practice model enriches the social work field in general as a practical profession with its own fundamental components. This practice model is not merely helpful for non-Muslim social workers; it also helps Muslim social workers in general as one of the models available for the professional social worker suiting the diversity of problems. It also offers more choices for social workers in general to avail of practice models in understanding the individual and his problems (Abdel khalek,G.A,2001), and for social work practice to draw upon the teachings of Islam, to promote successful intervention with practicing members of the Muslim community.

Thus, social work would help the Muslim client satisfy his lawful needs and gain internal and external harmony, synchronicity, and peace (Barise 2005).

Thus, Muslims can contribute to the cultural, political, and economic life in Western societies and be committed to the citizenship principles in accordance with the cultural and geographic pluralism principles that distinguish Islam (World Assembly for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, 2015). Encouragement and efforts aiming at achieving positive integration of Muslims in Western societies, an integration that combines the preservation of Islamic character from one side and the practice of good citizenship on the other side, serves the public interest and contributes to the realization of the principles of security, harmony,

and prosperity (World Assembly for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, 2015).

Characteristics of the Islamic approach in social work:

In my view, Islamic-based social work would be strength-based (Barise, 2005). The strengths perspective emphasizes the power of human beings to overcome adversity (Saleebey, 1997). The strength of the Islamic identity lies in how the values that are embodied in the teachings of Islam guide daily life (Barise and France, 2004).

1. The Islamic social work curriculum derives its origins from the Quran, Sunnah, and other Islamic sciences that also derive their roots from the Quran and Sunnah. It aims at attaining reform and enhancement to improve people's social conditions through fostering the spirit of human unity, and the bringing about of social cohesion corresponding to the universal and general principles derived from the Quran and Sunnah (Ibrahim, 1981).

2. Islam regulates social life according to two categories of principles (Ibrahim, 1981).

First, the innately fixed principles: a set of universal principles and governing rules dictated by religious texts from the Quran and Sunnah to which Muslims should be bound at all times and in all places (Mohsen, 1989).

Secondly, the innately changeable principles: The provisions based on people's customs, habits, and scholar's juristic discretions; that is, the jurisprudential provisions that vary with time and place (The Message of Islam, 2015).

3. It assigns due care to the social, spiritual, and physical needs of human beings based on the fact that human beings consists of two essential elements: one material, which is the body, the other spiritual, which is the soul. Human beings' needs are not only confined to the material level, such as food, clothing, companionship, accommodation, and the like; they have other needs and are driven by other spiritual urges such as worship, education, support, empathy, etc. A balanced and sound person maintains a balance between the gratification of the needs of both categories, material and spiritual alike. They should not satisfy any category of needs at the expense of the other; otherwise, they shall be deviating from the proper course and will consequently face great hardships. The needs of the soul and those of the body must be duly satisfied and neglecting that needed balance drives the person away from the correct Islamic perception of human life (Abu Ma'ati M., 2008).

An Islamic-based social work practice model

Here, I attempt to integrate social work methods and Islamic problem-solving and practices aimed at fostering human development. I conceptualize Islamically indigenized social work as involving the methodical support of an individual, group, or community to meet a lawful need or solve a problem with means permissible in Islam (Barise, 2004). The model proposed below integrates social work processes with my humble understanding of an Islamic worldview, as well as conceptions of helping, problem solving, and change. The specific Islamic concepts

used in the proposed model have been deduced from my personal reading of Islamic references. The concepts selected for inclusion in the proposed model are asking for help and assistance (Isti'anah), consultation (Shura), contemplation (Ta'mul), clarification (Tabyin), informing (Tabligh), reflection (Tadabur), strong willpower (Iradah), determination and strong resolve ('Azm), self-assertiveness (Tawkidiyyah), modeling and simulation (Namzajah and Mukaakah), persistence (Muthabarah), support and establishment (Tad'eem and Tathbeet), and self-evaluation (Muhasbah). My understanding of these concepts shall be elaborated in the proposed practice model below. Although these concepts are part of a practicing Muslim's daily life, for some, they may be practiced separately, without following any particular order in their application.

It should be noted that these are not the only Islamic concepts relevant to social work processes. Early Muslim scholars and counselors such as Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali and Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah used these and many other Islamic concepts to facilitate self-purification and spiritual growth (Badri, 2002). Al-Ghazali (1910) employed these and many other concepts in his powerful book *Ihya Ulum Aldin* (Revival of Religious Sciences). A widely circulated summaries of Al-Ghazali's classical book is *Mukhtasr Minhaj Al-Qasidin* (Summary of the Way of the Seekers, Al-Maqdisi, 1995). Likewise, Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah discussed 66 Islamic concepts for self-purification in his influential book, *Madarij al-salikin* (Stages of Travelers, Al-Jawziyyah, n.d.) as well as his encyclopedia *Fresh bliss in the ethics of the Prophet*

(Abdullah et al., 2014). I have selected 13 of these concepts to develop a problem-solving methodology to meet not only “spiritual needs,” but other human needs as well. I have organized the concepts into problem-solving formats and infer their use within a social work context. According to my understanding of Islam spirituality, it includes all aspects of human life. Therefore, these concepts can be used for problem solving or transformation related to psychological, cognitive, social, or biological needs. Helping one another, collaboration on solving problems, and meeting lawful needs are, in my view, well-established Islamic teachings.

1- Identifying the problem and reaching out for help and assistance: this is the first stage of the Islamic-based social work model. It refers to seeking the help of God, as well as that of people within their limited abilities.

By seeking the help of God, one can successfully face the threats and overcome the difficulties.

In social service terms, the Muslim client realizes his problem, seeks the help of God in solving it, and acknowledges the possibility of seeking the help of people, the social worker for instance, to solve his problem and overcome the difficulties. Thus, the Muslim client is willing to participate appropriately in the process of assistance. It is helpful for the social worker to be aware that as long as the Muslim client faces a difficulty, hardship, or problem, he is prepared to give up the false sense of having full control over his life (dispensing with people) that is associated with the normal conditions of well-being, sometimes with a flavor of arrogance, hampering the needed recognition

of defect or neglect. Hence, the problem may be seen as a manifestation of God's mercy, offering him an opportunity to see the situation from a new perspective. The Muslim client would accept the help in directing his life in a deeper and healthier manner and closer to earning the pleasure of God.

2-Defining and studying the problem: consultation (Shura) means seeking the opinions of others regarding the given problems. It is the second step in my personal understanding of the Islamic social work problem-solving process. When the client realizes the necessity of meeting his need or solving the problem, the social worker and the client start working together on collecting the relevant data. The social worker should concentrate on consulting with the client, trying to see the situation from his perspective. This is the starting point in defining the problem. The social worker should also employ the Shura element to understand the client's perception of the problem. The main task of the social worker at this point is to understand the urges motivating the client to seek help in the first place. Then, the social worker and the client start cooperating in the investigation and study of the problem and gathering the required relevant information. Both of them consult all appropriate sources of information, starting with the client; this information can be gleaned from observing the client's environment or directly from information revealed by the client." The social worker and the client begin examining the factors that caused or contributed to the problem, including those related to the client's character and the specific elements pertinent to the context, both past and present.

3-Analyzing and interpreting the collected data: Following the collection of relevant data, the social worker and the client engage in Ta'mul (contemplation). The term Ta'mul is being used here to mean broader thinking processes entailing both deliberation and reflection. This is the third phase in the Islamic social work model in which the social worker helps the client, through contemplation and analysis of collected data, to connect the pieces of information. The social worker often attempts to reach the correct analysis and interpretation of the information with the client through reflection; he interprets the information and then selects the diversified data, and arranges and organizes them in a meaningful and understandable pattern. Then he selects the directly relevant information and imparts meaning to it, which is the essence of analysis and interpretation.

4- Assessment: the social worker employs two concepts in this phase:

A- Clarification (Tabyin), meaning to make the picture crystal clear with no room for ambiguity. This helps the social worker carry out his task appropriately. The social worker clarifies the findings and analyzes and interprets the data after excluding irrelevant information. Here, the social worker, aided by the client, considers the way the client is leading his life and understands the relationship between his lifestyle and the problems he is facing, thereby realizing the dead end awaiting him were he to rely on humans rather than the Creator. Thus, he realizes that he has no choice but to change or else carry on in the path of psychological misery and spiritual suffering, as

opposed to what can be achieved by means of positive change and treading the path of placing trust in God and contentment with His decrees, on the basis that nothing takes place in the universe except by His will and that He wishes for His slaves nothing other than obedience and submission to His commandments. If they do not, God will turn his back on them and deny them His help and he will lead a life of loss and deprivation, in this world and in the Hereafter.

B- Informing (Tabligh): informing in this context means the social worker reaching a sound assessment of the problem. It helps the client identify the real reasons behind his problem and the strengths and weaknesses of his personality and the environmental context. When the social worker reaches the correct assessment of the problem, he informs the client of the real reasons behind the problem from his point of view. This helps both the client and the social worker to develop and formulate the objectives. These two concepts are the fourth stage in the Islamic social service model.

5- Setting objectives: the social worker employs several concepts in this phase:

A- Reflection (Tadabur), which means to ponder over and consider the consequences of actions. The reflection in this sense extends beyond the present time. The social worker and the client identify the required objectives that need to be achieved. The focus in this phase is on the realization of changes in attitudes and behavior that can be achieved during therapeutic intervention.

B- Willpower, which means preparedness of the heart and mind, being equipped with a strong resolve to

put an action into effect and a strong will to overcome the obstacles with determination. This helps the Muslim client to aspire to higher objectives and reach the highest and most refined ranks designated for the patient and pious.

In this phase, the social worker focuses with the Muslim client on the easily accomplished goals rather than those that are hard to attain. When the social worker employs the client's willpower, this helps to enhance the employment of his energies. In other words, it denotes the optimal employment of the client's potential. This contributes to the success of the plans developed for the Muslim client, safeguards him from chaos, and leads to the rapid achievement of goals, and urges the Muslim client to obey the directions and instructions of the social worker.

The willpower is the force that is employed in preparing the body and heart, a factor that is present in the Muslim client but has not yet been properly employed. The social worker employs the Muslim client's potential to develop strategies to change the ideas and stances that led to the problem.

C- Determination ('Azm) means the resolve to do something. It is helpful in achieving impossible results and overcoming difficulties. The social worker employs this element with the Muslim client to enable him to overcome obstacles hindering the realization of his goals. This means that the Muslim client is facing internal and external difficulties and the determination helps him accomplish his objectives and overcome these internal and external difficulties. These concepts are included in the fifth phase in the Islamic social service model.

6-The implementation of the action plan in the Islamic social work model (therapeutic methods): this is the sixth phase in the Islamic social service model in which the client and social worker identify the tasks required of them both. The main focus in this phase is the translation of ideas and attitudes derived from the Quran and Sunnah into practical models consistent with the latest research findings and studies on psychology, behavior, and the human nervous system. This represents a scientific challenge and an important basis for the Islamic approach in adjusting and modifying human thought. On the practical level, this can be used in many areas of mental health and the treatment of psychological and social problems, as well as community development, through unleashing the potential of the human mind that is under stress due to conflicts and psychological problems. Among the effective methods of thought and behavior modification derived from the Quran and Sunnah which represent an extremely effective practical method are the following: (World Assembly for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought, 2015)

A- The personality of the Prophet Muhammad and self-assertiveness:

Self-assertiveness refers to the ability to express feelings and ideas with a high degree of efficiency and sound mental health. The term gained scientific importance after the studies of the American scientist Salter on 1994 in which he emphasized the importance of self-assertiveness as a character trait (al-Sa'awi, 1993). Wolpe pointed out some years ago that this character trait is an ability that can help to achieve higher levels of mental health through training, and

that studying it can also help in understanding social and psychological problems and in finding the optimal treatment (Wolpe, 1968). Therefore, a large number of scientists have introduced programs for developing training methods on how to acquire this ability (al-Sa'awi, 1993). Self-assertiveness does not merely denote a set of social skills for proper self-expression and defense of the individual's personal rights, but also has other meanings, including the skill of acting wisely in given circumstances and situations. By studying the conduct of the Prophet Muhammad in different contexts, self-assertiveness can easily be probed in the sense indicated by recent studies, combining social skills and the defense of rights by means of wisdom, compassion, and sincere advice..

The Prophet Muhammad manifested exemplary certainty, splendid faith, firmness on principles, and lack of fear of falsehood. It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn Abbas that the Prophet Muhammad said, "Whoever sought the pleasure of God though it was displeasing to the people then God becomes pleased with him, and will make the people pleased with him, and whoever sought the pleasure of the people though it was displeasing to God then God becomes displeased with him and will make the people displeased with him" (Diyyah, 2010). The social worker employs this concept with the Muslim client as one of the therapeutic methods to train him in the skill of acting wisely in situations requiring wisdom according to the given circumstances and requirements, as well as the expression of his feelings and defending his rights by means of wisdom and kindness in order to meet his needs or solve his problem.

B- Modeling and simulation: The Prophet Muhammad employed the technique of providing behavioral models in real- life situations (overt modeling) which is considered the best and most effective learning method. He has provided a role model for Muslims, availing himself of the using of metaphors, personification, urging the listeners to use their imagination, and enhancing their perception. He also made use of stories and parables, descriptive language, and verbal and practical (applied) presentation of information in the various educational situations in a way that facilitates the learning process and helps the individual change his conduct and overcome bad habits and behaviors (Diyah, 2010).

This has enabled Muslims to learn through copying his actions by observation or imitation (observational learning or “modeling”) as one of the most important and latest methods of learning and behavior modification highlighted in the studies of many contemporary scientists, among them Albert Bandura’s study and the research of the social learning theorists (Zahran, 2000).

Moreover, the modification of the way of thinking (cognitive behavior modification) and elimination of negative thinking and destructive defeatism, as well as behavior modification and adopting healthy behavioral patterns of positive, well-established, and sustained habits, will only happen through the transformation from a moralizing culture, scholastic theology, and the philosophy of ethics, into a practical approach based on training and practical application of modern and Islamic behavioral sciences.

The Quran and Sunnah include a huge number of behavioral models and practical applications of optimal conduct in the different aspects of life and under different psychological and social pressures. The Prophet Muhammad provided a living example for people to follow, known in psychology as tacit modeling. Modeling is among the well-known methods of thought and behavior modification in modern psychology.

There is no doubt that many studies and much modern experimental research confirm that human behavior does not change merely by observation or upon realizing the problem (Diyyah, 2010). Directions, advice giving, exhortatory preaching, and theoretical instructions, although important, are not adequate for behavioral modification and instilling new positive behavioral patterns. There is a need to shift from the moralizing approach to modern practical methods. In fact, thought modification is easier said than done and the acquisition of character traits and behavioral habits is even more difficult.

Islam proposed a set of effective methods in this area consistent with recent research findings and the views of contemporary scientists. Al-Ghazali (1910) underlined in his book *Ihya Ulum Aldin* (revival of religious sciences) several methods for thought modification derived from Islamic literature. He used the expression “spiritual exercise” to emphasize the importance of continuous practice and training to acquire and instill the desired behaviors. For example, he demonstrated the optimal anger control and attainment of forbearance and patience through practice that begins with affection, if necessary, for a

sufficient period of time as in Prophetic hadith he said 'Knowledge is acquired through practice and patience is acquired through practice.

The practice should continue for a considerable period until the behavior becomes part of the individual's neurological and behavioral system. This requires commitment and gradual steps, accompanied by firm adherence to a strict and continuous program (al-Sa'awi, 1993). The social worker can help the Muslim client to apply this therapeutic method to solve his problem or change his way of thinking that caused the problem through practicing the new behavior or acquiring the new way of thinking and instilling it in his mind.

C- Persistence in this context mean assiduously carrying out the required actions and constantly practicing them, leaving no room for despair; this entails patience and endurance, and leads to achievement of the success promised in the verse that reads (what means):: {... indeed, We will not allow to be lost the reward of any who did well in deeds.} [Quran 18:30] Among the benefits of persistence in this context is attaining the self-discipline to tolerate boredom and frustration when embarking on tasks entailing diligence and persistence over a period of time that may be seen by a hasty person as too long. It also helps in shielding oneself against haste in the process of fulfilling a given physical and psychological need, as well as controlling anger and recklessness in the face of internal irritation and the urges to haste and imprudence in speech or action. In addition, it helps to foster self-restraint to endure troubles, hardships, and physical and psychological pains. The social worker

makes use of this therapeutic method with the Muslim client to help him attain self-control and self-discipline and overcome boredom. They both start practicing the new way of thinking or behavior and the social worker helps the Muslim client adhere to the training and simulation programs. Achieving this goal may require time, during which he may feel bored. This opportunity also helps him accomplish the tasks that require a long time and this requires the Muslim client to bear the suffering and troubles that accompany the problem-solving process or the satisfaction of a given need.

D- Establishment and rooting: the attainment of any spiritual rank does not essentially mean retaining it for good; this does not apply merely to the spiritual life, but to all walks of life. The forces that positively and negatively affect the human condition are constantly dynamic. It is necessary for the social worker to assist the Muslim client in protecting his newly acquired ideas or behaviors and root them in his heart and mind, and even exert assiduous efforts to acquire new ones. When a person continues to practice the desired habit or behavior for forty days, it becomes well established and takes root in his conduct. This secure establishment and emphasis are accomplished through stressing the need for placing one's trust in God, having good expectations of Him and believing that He will bless him with success as long as he positively embarks on treading His path and has confidence in His aid and assistance granted to those who obey and fear Him. Establishing these facts in the client's heart and making sure that they take root therein helps him to continue to adhere to this path until he returns to his Lord.

2- Self-evaluation (Muhasabah): Muhasabah or self-evaluation is the last process in the Islamic social work model. It helps the social worker and the client to determine the extent to which the chosen strategies have been successfully applied to accomplish the specified objectives. Self-evaluation is used both formatively and summatively in order to provide feedback loops. This corresponds with the use of evaluation in mainstream social work (see Compton & Galaway, 1999). Like all other processes in the Islamic social work model, there is no distinction between the “material” and “spiritual” aspects. Muslims believe that God will evaluate all of their actions in this world and they will be held accountable for them and will be rewarded accordingly, both in this worldly life and in the life that is to come.

Conclusion

It is imperative that all social workers should be able to work in a multicultural society. At present, Muslims form a significant part of the demographic composition of the societies in the EU and the USA. Despite the fact that professional social work has achieved considerable advances in the development of general principles of multicultural social work, little is still known about how Islamic teachings can contribute to social work with Muslims in the EU and USA, though evidence from elsewhere has shown it helps in solving the problems of Muslim families, especially those between spouses. The proposed social work model should be perceived as a step on the way of introducing more social work models from an Islamic perspective. It should be noted that this model is

proposed for clients who believe in and want to practice Islam, wherever they live in the world. Social workers should be fully aware of the different cultures as well as optimal ways of dealing with clients from different cultural backgrounds including the Muslim community.

The proposed model is available to all social workers and clients if they choose to avail themselves of it in the way possibly fitting their needs. It is unethical to force the proposed model on those who do not believe in it, just as it is unethical to force Western social work methods on clients who do not believe in them. Future research in social work should include experimental studies to test and apply this model with the Muslim community. There is also a need for further research on the application of more Islam-based practice models in addressing social and other problems. Many commendable efforts have been made, and still are being made, to introduce Islam-based social practice models by researchers in countries with non-Muslim majorities as well as in Muslim countries.

Acknowledgements:

All thanks and appreciation to those who gave me a helping hand and assistance in the preparation of this research..

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