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**THE CONCEPT OF PSYCHOSPIRITUAL WELL-BEING FROM  
WESTERN AND ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES:  
A CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION**

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**Abstract:**

The global economy, technological advancements, and quality of life have led to a decline in general well-being and moral and spiritual values, resulting in increased self-destructive behaviours and psychological disorders. The psychospiritual approach, a recent innovation in psychology and therapy, aims to address these limitations by integrating psychological and spiritual dimensions to enhance spiritual well-being and positively influence overall well-being. This study employed qualitative document analysis to explore psychospiritual well-being from both Western and Islamic perspectives and identify components of Islamic psychospiritual well-being that can effectively address mental health issues. The findings indicate that Western psychospiritual frameworks have evolved from a dualistic approach of mind and body to a more comprehensive framework that integrates both psychological and spiritual dimensions. Spiritual well-being is characterized by introspective mystical experiences of the mind, body, and spirit, and the human potential for self-actualization and transcendence. In contrast, the Islamic framework emphasizes maintaining purity and faith through the process of "tazkiyatun an nafs," or the purification of the soul of *mujāhadah al-nafs* (the inner struggle of the soul), *madhmūmmah* (the cleansing of blameworthy traits), *mahmūdah* (the cultivation of praiseworthy traits), and *riyādah al-nafs* (self-discipline), to achieve the revered state of the peaceful and contented soul, the *nafs al-mutma'innah*. This spiritual development is deeply rooted in the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, with a particular focus on Imam al-Ghazali's four key components of psychospiritual well-being: God-consciousness, the Vision of *Dunyā* for *Ākhirah*, Others-centeredness, and

Inner Change. They facilitate a gradual progression towards forging a meaningful connection with Allah SWT and the realisation of Ihsan, or excellence, in both earthly life and the Hereafter.

**Keywords:**

Psychospirituality, Well-Being, Western, Islam, Mental Health

## Introduction

The global economy, technology, and quality of life have made significant progress, but they have also led to a decline in overall well-being and moral and spiritual values. The software industry, characterized by mobility issues, work-life balance imbalances, occupational stress, and financial constraints, has been linked to negative effects on mental health (Hariharan & Kapoor, 2020; Rofiqoh et al., 2025), leading to increased self-destructive behaviours and psychological disorders (Oppenauer et al., 2021). Mental health disorders contribute to 25% of the global disease burden (WHO, 2022), impacting one billion individuals worldwide. Recent research has highlighted the importance of psychological and spiritual well-being in mental health, leading to a shift in research towards focusing on well-being, flourishing, and positive mental health (Koenig, 2012; Sapora, 2016; Saper, 2018; Kiplagat et al., 2019; Lucchetti, 2021; Wahed et al., 2023). In this context, a holistic approach to mental healthcare can enhance resilience and foster a sense of purpose in life (Chirico, 2016; Rahimi et al., 2021). Hence, the past two decades have seen a significant increase in incorporating religious and spiritual elements into medical and mental health interventions, with studies showing positive correlations between these factors and enhanced mental health and adaptation (Dein, 2010; Koenig, 2012; Rahman et al., 2021; Zin et al., 2024).

## Literature Review

### ***Well-Being from the Western Perspective***

The advent of Positive Psychology, led by Martin Seligman in 2003, represents a significant progression from the psychological well-being framework. The Theory of Well-Being delineates five quantifiable components, referred to as PERMA: Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and purpose, and Accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). Recent global studies emphasize the need to integrate psychological depth into the well-being paradigm (Oishi & Westgate, 2022), enabling adept navigation of complex environments and overcoming obstacles.

The understanding of well-being within Western thought has evolved, with the acknowledgement of spiritual well-being as a vital component. The chaironic perspective emphasizes the significance of spiritual and transcendental dimensions in the overall concept of well-being (Zuhdi & Syarief, 2023). Spiritual well-being delves into an individual's core, integrating spiritual beliefs and practices.

### ***Well-Being from the Islamic Perspective***

The Islamic perspective on well-being adopts a holistic framework that integrates societal welfare with mental health, striving for fulfilment in both the present life and the Hereafter. This underscores the necessity of adhering to Islamic tenets, as any deviation from these

principles can result in distress and dissatisfaction, thereby affecting one's overall well-being (Roslan et al., 2022). The Qur'an offers guidance to individuals facing emotional challenges, directing them towards a meaningful and purposeful life.

According to Othman (2019), psychological well-being is defined as a harmonious state that addresses the needs of five fundamental aspects of human nature: body (*jasad*), mind ('*aql*), heart (*qalb*), spirit (*ruh*), and soul (*nafs*). This state is characterized by increased resilience, the ability to distinguish between virtuous and harmful actions, and the cultivation of strong character traits. The internal state of the heart, or "*qalb*", plays a crucial role as the spiritual core of an individual (Kemahli, 2017).

Islamic well-being is characterized by both internal and external contentment, culminating in a state of tranquillity known as "*hayat al-tayyibah*". Islam has established *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* as a fundamental framework for societal well-being, focusing on the advancement of human prosperity and enhancement of individual welfare while minimising harm (Rasool et al., 2020). Furthermore, the Qur'an highlights the importance of holistic human well-being and advocates a balanced approach between the temporal world and the Hereafter, exemplified in Surah al-Baqarah, 2:201, which states, "*And of them, there are some who say: 'Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good and save us from the torment of Fire.'*"

Islamic well-being and happiness are also understood as states of the heart, necessitating a profound comprehension of one's inner self, and importantly, the Islamic perspective on human nature and spiritual development (Abadi & Khan, 2023; Joshanloo & Weijers, 2019; Kemahli, 2017; Abde & Salih, 2015). Unwavering religious faith and virtuous behaviour guided by the principles of *Shari'ah*, with the ultimate support of Allah Almighty, may fortify the self-reproaching soul, empowering individuals to resist negative influences, and suppressing carnal and devilish inclinations, hence ensuring true well-being in both this life and the Hereafter (Wyatt, 2020; Rothman & Coyle, 2018; Arifin & Hamjah, 2017).

### ***Psychospirituality***

Mental health issues can impact individuals across various dimensions, including physical, social, psychological, and spiritual aspects. The psychospiritual approach, a novel development in psychology and therapy, aims to overcome the limitations of conventional methods by integrating these dimensions, including the soul, to enhance spiritual well-being and positively impact overall well-being (Rosman et al., 2022). The concept of psychospirituality, which emerged in the 1930s, represents a fusion of psychological and spiritual dimensions, highlighting the interaction between the mind and soul and an individual's quest for meaning and connection with a transcendent entity such as God (Awang & Zakaria, 2021). It integrates both religious and humanistic aspects, with major world religions displaying distinct psychospiritual features.

In Islamic scholarship, psychospirituality is recognized as a discipline devoted to the study of the soul or "psyche" (Mazlan and Burhan, 2024), or "*jiwa*" or "*ruh*" (Abdullah, 2022), focusing on the spiritual development and well-being of the soul (*nafs*, *ruh*, and *qalb*), intellect ('*aql*), emotions ('*atifah*), and moral behavior (*akhlaq*) (Sa'ari, 2019). It relies on Islamic sources such as the Quran, Sunnah, and teachings of the *Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah* tradition, with the aim of achieving happiness and fulfillment in both the temporal world and afterlife.

According to Awang and Zakaria (2021), Islamic psychospirituality embodies a holistic framework designed to enhance both psychological and spiritual well-being by delving into human nature, faith, and piety. This approach emphasizes a believer's devotion and submission to God, fostering the soul through engagement with the Qur'an and divine guidance, while maintaining a constant awareness of God's presence in all actions. This study, therefore, aims to examine psychospiritual well-being from both Western and Islamic perspectives and identify components of Islamic psychospiritual well-being that can effectively address mental health issues, such as stress, anxiety, and depression, particularly in today's rapidly evolving world.

## Methodology

This study employs a qualitative document analysis method to explore the concept of psychospiritual well-being from both Western and Islamic perspectives in the context of mental health issues. Content analysis is used as an empirical framework, examining existing communication materials (Mayring, 2014) to evaluate aspects like relevance, authenticity, credibility, accuracy, and representativeness (Morgan, 2022). A comprehensive literature review was conducted to explore the concepts of Western and Islamic psychospiritual well-being, focusing on their application to complex mental health challenges, through academic journals, books, published papers, conference proceedings, and other pertinent writing and articles from prior research. The objective is to offer insights into understanding Western and Islamic psychospiritual well-being and delineate the components intrinsic to Islamic psychospiritual well-being. The findings are expected to advance our understanding of these concepts.

## Results and Discussion

### *Concept Of Psychospiritual Well-Being from Western Perspective*

Western well-being has evolved from a dualistic approach to a more comprehensive framework that integrates both psychological and spiritual dimensions (Rohan, 2022). Traditionally, well-being was seen as separate from the mind and body, with psychological well-being encompassing cognitive processes, affective states, emotional regulation, and behavioral functioning. Spiritual well-being, in contrast, is defined by introspective mystical experiences and the human potential for self-actualization and transcendence (Huppert & So, 2013). The psychospiritual paradigm has, therefore, redefined the understanding of well-being by encompassing physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions (Oumarou, 2004). This comprehensive framework promotes a balanced outlook, enabling individuals to achieve harmony among their actions, thoughts, values, and emotions through integrated functioning of the body, mind, and spirit.

The assessment of psychospiritual well-being often uses the Ryff Psychological Well-Being (PWB) (Ryff, 1995) and Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) Scales (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982) which provide a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's psychological and spiritual conditions. However, a recent study by Egunjobi et al. (2023) questioned the validity of combining PWB and SWB Scales to measure psychospiritual well-being, suggesting that the mere combination of psychological and spiritual well-being does not necessarily provide an accurate representation.

To address this limitation, researchers have developed the Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being Scale (P-SWBS), which synthesises psychological, spiritual, and cultural dimensions. While the P-SWBS has shown strong reliability and validity, further testing across various continents is recommended to address the limitations associated with the combined use of the two scales in assessing psychospiritual well-being.

### ***Psychospiritual Well-Being from Islamic Perspective***

Islamic perspectives on human psychology and mental health offer a holistic framework that addresses physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions, which are considered the four essential elements of human creation in Islamic teachings (Mazlan and Burhan, 2024). Various elements, including cognitive processes, personal desires, malevolent forces, environmental factors, family relationships, cultural norms, and worldly attachments, can indirectly affect human well-being. Within the Islamic tradition, followers are urged to adopt measures to safeguard themselves against these challenges (Mohamad, 2019). The Islamic psychospiritual approach, known as "*tazkiyatun al-nafs*," or the purification of the soul, can be employed to foster well-being. This method is rooted in the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, as well as the insights of Islamic scholars, with a particular focus on the Sufistic teachings of Imam al-Ghazali (al-Ghazali, 2015; Ferdous, 2022; Mazlan & Burhan, 2024).

Islamic psychospiritual well-being is an integration of both an objective standard of living and a subjective dimension, as outlined in the Qur'an. Joshanloo (2017) asserts that humans are naturally inclined to submit to Allah SWT, worship Him, and lead a life of virtue, as proclaimed by Allah SWT in Surah at-Tin, 95:4, "*We have indeed created man in the best moulds*". Moreover, the concept of "*fitrah*" signifies an innate tendency towards goodness, divinely bestowed with internal guidance, steering individuals towards piety, devotion to Allah SWT's will, and voluntary observance of Sharī'ah (al-Ghazali, 2015; Ferdous, 2022; Mazlan & Burhan, 2024).

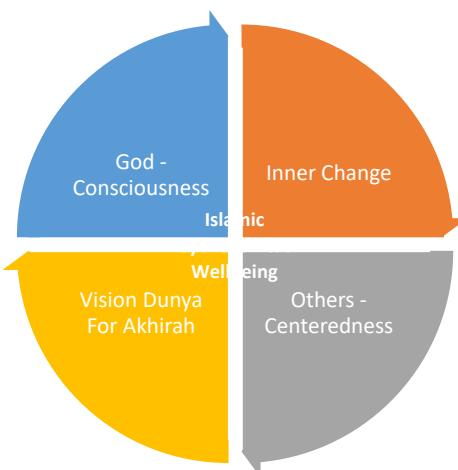
Hassan (2021a), in the same vein, elucidates that the ideal subjective state of well-being within Islam is characterised by tranquillity and contentment, supported by Surah Yusuf, 12:30, which discusses the malevolent nature of the evil-commanding self (*Al-Nafs Al-Ammarah Bisu*) and its incongruence with individual and societal well-being. He further emphasizes the necessity of restraining and silencing this base self through God-consciousness, acts of piety, and unwavering devotion to Allah SWT to achieve the state of tranquillity, involving aligning with God's will, practicing spiritual discipline, and submitting to Allah SWT. Concerns related to worldly matters have been suggested to dissipate (Masroom & Siwok 2013). The Al Quran illustrates the contented self in Surah al-Fajr, 89:27-30, where it is stated, "*Allah will say to the righteous, 'O tranquil soul! Return to your Lord, well-pleased 'with him' and well-pleasing 'to him'. So, join My servants, and enter My Paradise.'*"

Consequently, the Islamic framework for holistic psychospiritual well-being is primarily concerned with maintaining purity and faith, fostering spiritual growth and development through purification of the soul, and addressing mental health challenges.

### ***Elements of Islamic Psychospiritual Well-Being***

This study delves into the core elements of Islamic psychospiritual well-being, drawing upon the framework established in Imam al-Ghazali's Theory of the Soul and Mental Health. This framework identifies five interrelated variables that collectively contribute to a comprehensive

understanding of psychospiritual well-being (Hasan & Tamam, 2018). However, this research refines these variables into four key components: God-consciousness, the Vision of *Dunyā* for *Ākhirah*, Others-centredness, and Inner Change. These components are pivotal in promoting individuals' psychospiritual well-being, as emphasized in the Qur'an and Sunnah.



**Figure 1: The Elements of Islamic Psychospiritual Well-Being**

### ***God-consciousness***

God-consciousness is a crucial concept in Islamic theology, influencing both psychological and spiritual well-being. It serves as a guiding framework, steering individuals towards lives grounded in their divine connection, fostering holistic psychospiritual well-being (Movafagh et al., 2017). The concept of worship is intertwined with God-consciousness, as emphasized in Surah al-Baqarah, 2:21. It serves as a psychospiritual safeguard against harm, encouraging virtuous behaviour, self-discipline, and avoiding wrongdoing (Al Karam, 2018).

Islamic principles underscore the importance of spiritual growth to nurture the soul and forge a meaningful connection with Allah SWT. Research by Bensaid et al. (2021) and Rothman and Coyle (2018) support the notion that this spiritual connection can enhance psychospiritual well-being, aligning with Islamic values and Shari'ah guidelines.

Furthermore, Masroom et al. (2017) asserts that Islamic pillars of *Imān*, *Islām*, and *Ihsān* are essential in fostering inner peace, contentment, and overall well-being. Similarly, Masruri et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of nurturing God-consciousness through consistent adherence to the Qur'an and Prophetic *hadiths* for overcoming psychiatric and mental health issues.

The Islamic tenet of *tawakkul*, which embodies steadfast trust and complete reliance on Allah SWT to alleviate emotional distress, plays a vital role in cultivating God-consciousness through *Imān* (faith). Alhafiza et al. (2022) demonstrated that *tawakkul* empowered students at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) to manage academic, mental, and financial adversities during the Covid-19 pandemic by placing their trust in Allah's decree, preserving their psychospiritual well-being.

### *Vision of Dunyā for Ākhirah*

The Vision of *Dunyā* for *Ākhirah* is a fundamental aspect of psychospiritual well-being, emphasizing the importance of achieving contentment in both present life and the Hereafter (Quadri & Quadri, 2023). *Ākhirah*, a core tenet of *Imān* (faith), fosters an individual's *taqwā* or God-consciousness and is deeply rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and hadiths of the Prophet SAW. This belief represents the ultimate phase of existence, characterized by eternal life and divine blessings. Masroom et al. (2015) contend that individuals who embrace the belief in the Day of Judgment tend to experience reduced levels of anxiety and distress. The conviction in the eternal afterlife transcends the transient and often inequitable nature of worldly existence, fostering a greater acceptance (*redho*) of life's adversities (Ashimi, 2014).

The Qur'an and Sunnah emphasize the importance of cultivating the spiritual dimension, as demonstrated by the teachings of the Prophet SAW. A hadith from Anas ibn Malik suggests that individuals who prioritise the Hereafter will experience contentment and peace, while those who concentrate solely on worldly matters may face poverty and confusion (Fuad, 2016).

Mohammad (2019) elaborates on the vision of *Dunyā* for *Ākhirah*, suggesting that the rewards in the Hereafter mirror those in the present world and that virtuous deeds in this life require the generous offering of one's possessions and self. Parrott (2018) and Tuasikal (2009) support Parrott's perspective, arguing that actions driven solely by worldly gains can lead to significant losses. Abdulla (2021) warns of the certainty of accountability on the Day of Judgment, a pivotal event in the Hereafter. Hence, the current world functions as a testing ground for fostering a purposeful life across these dimensions, with the ultimate goal of achieving well-being and happiness in the eternal hereafter.

### *Others-centredness*

Rashid (2022) highlights the importance of generosity and philanthropy in Islam, which encourage individuals to allocate their resources to the benefit of others, fostering benevolence, charity, kindness, and piety. These principles extend beyond aiding the impoverished and needy, as benefactors experience profound tranquillity and fulfilment. Altruistic behaviour has been found to foster social cohesion and individual well-being with acts of selflessness fortifying interpersonal bonds and fostering psychological well-being and happiness for both recipients and benefactors (Dwimahesi & Musthofa, 2023).

Altruism is considered a vital element of societal advancement in Islamic philosophy, as acts of generosity not only benefit the recipients but also offer the giver personal satisfaction, happiness, and a sense of fulfilment (Rhoads and Marsch (2023). However, a study in China during the Covid-19 pandemic revealed that individuals with strong altruistic tendencies experienced more intense negative emotions, leading to heightened anxiety and depressive symptoms (Feng et al., 2020).

Islamic teachings advocate mutual understanding and cooperation for the collective good, promoting virtuous behaviour towards all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation (Zyad, 2022). Egocentric tendencies, characterized by a "me-first" attitude, conflict with Islamic teachings, as they oppose the ideal of "others-centeredness" as exemplified by historical figures like Pharaoh, Nimrod, and Shaytān (Yahya, 2015). Embracing an "others-centeredness" perspective could empower individuals to instigate change within a morally compromised society driven by fear and love for Allah SWT. Thus, existing research highlights

the significant role of other-centeredness in fostering psychological and spiritual well-being, addressing mental health challenges.

### ***Inner Change***

As articulated by Hasan and Tamam (2018), the concept of "liberation from spiritual heart disease" is rooted in Al-Ghazali's Theory of the Soul and emphasizes the importance of inner change for psychological and spiritual health. This framework provides a comprehensive analysis of the process of freeing oneself from spiritual heart maladies, highlighting the role of soul purification in facilitating positive internal and behavioural changes, promoting personal development in both temporal and eternal realms, and ultimately advancing psychospiritual well-being.

Mazhar et al. (2019) argue that al-Ghazali's theoretical insights remain relevant in contemporary times, while suggesting that spiritual maladies of the heart originate from internal conflicts, leading to an internal struggle where primal instincts often overshadow one's spiritual core. This struggle is seen as a divinely instituted trial and duty bestowed upon humans by Allah SWT.

Correspondingly, Hassan (2021b) argues that the maladies of the spiritual heart contribute to ethical, social, economic, political, and environmental injustices in contemporary societies. Hence, the purification of the soul is a vital component of spiritual development, as underscored by Allah SWT in Surah as-Shams, 91:7-10, "*And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it. And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and righteousness. He has succeeded who purifies it, And he has failed who instills it [with corruption]*". As such, a cognitive therapeutic strategy known as "therapy by the opposites" is recommended, involving identifying undesirable traits like miserliness and recognizing its positive counterpart, such as generosity, through acts of giving (Abdullah, 2011; Parrott, 2019). Moreover, the soul purification process is also achieved through *mujahadah al-nafs* (struggle of the soul), *madhmumah* (cleansing of blameworthy traits), *mahmudah* (cultivation of praiseworthy traits), and *riyadah al-nafs* (self-discipline).

Nonetheless, Parrott (2019) emphasizes the significance of habit formation in fostering positive change and systematic spiritual development. This disciplined method facilitates a gradual progression towards Allah SWT and the realization of Ihsan, or excellence, in both earthly life and the Hereafter.

### **Conclusion**

Modern psychology is currently confronting substantial challenges in addressing mental health and distress, challenges that are intensified by the swift advancements in modernization and technology. The pervasive influence of the internet and modern lifestyles affects individuals across all age groups, with a particularly significant impact on vulnerable youth. In response to these challenges, recent research has increasingly focused on the role of religiosity and spirituality in enhancing psychospiritual well-being as a means to address widespread mental health concerns. Traditional Western theoretical frameworks, which have predominantly concentrated on the physical and mental dimensions, have often neglected the spiritual aspect of human existence, which is essential for a holistic understanding of human nature. This process of spiritual and personal development is believed to transcend earthly life, with the ultimate aspiration of returning to Allah SWT with a heart that is pure, sound, and purified, as

articulated in Surah ash-Shu'ara, 26:88-89, and culminating in Surah al-Fajr, 89:28-30, where individuals are invited into Allah SWT's Paradise, having attained His favour.

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