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Can Religion and Psychology Work Together in Clinic? A Philosophical Evaluation*

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Abstract
It has been a general perception that there is animosity between clinical practice and religion. The idea behind this perception seems to be that religion ascribes the human condition to causes that cannot be proven scientifically. However, if anything, this perception only projects a positivist approach of life. Religion and clinical practice are not incompatible. In fact, religion can be employed in clinical practice as a source of insight for three reasons: (1) Religion is the most inclusive one compared to science and philosophy. Science is supposed to deal with particulars. On the other hand, though philosophy deals with universals, it does not tackle whereabouts of the individual before the birth and after the death. (2) Religion is the most profound phenomenon that provides one with answers concerning the meaning of life. (3) Basic religious texts are the richest sources that provide the most profound accounts in terms of psychological resilience. Therefore, religion has a crucial role that cannot be overlooked in clinical practice: it can and should be employed as a source of insight in clinical practice both in treatment and prevention.

Keywords: Religion, Clinical Practice, Psychology of Religion.

Özet
Klinik Ortamda Faal Din: Klinik Uygulamalarda Din İstihdam Edilebilir mi?
Klinik uygulamalarla din arasında düşmansı bir tutumun olduğu genel bir telakkidir. Bu telakkinin ardındaki fikir; dinin, insanlık durumunu bilimsel olarak kanıtlanamayan sebeplere isnat etmesi olarak tezahür etmektedir. Ancak, bu telakki her halükârda hayata ilişkin positivist bir yaklaşım yansıtmaktadır. Din ve klinik uygulama birbiriyle uyumsuz değildir.

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Aslında, bir basiret ve öngörü kaynağı olarak din klinik uygulamalarda üç sebeple istihdam edilebilmektedir: (1) Bilim ve felsefeye nisbetle din, en kapsamlı bir disiplindir. Bilim tikellerle (özgül alanlarla) ilgilenir. Öte yandan felsefe her ne kadar evrensellerle ilgilense de bireyin doğum öncesi ve ölüm sonrasıyla ilgilenmez. (2) Din, hayatın anlamına ilişkin olarak cevap sağlayan en temel-tutarlı fenomendir. (3) Temel dini metinler psikolojik mukavemet bağlamında en esaslı muhasebeler sağlayan zengin kaynaklardır.
Dolayısıyla, dinin klinik uygulamalarda göz ardı edilemez hayati bir rolü söz konusudur: hem tedavi hem de hıfzıssıhha bağlamında bir basiret kaynağı olarak din, klinik uygulamalarda istihdam edilebilir ve edilmelidir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Din, Klinik Uygulamalar, Din Psikolojisi.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between clinical practice and religion is a controversial issue. Yet studying this relationship, attempting to come up with some relatively new accounts as to how religion can absolutely be beneficial to clinical practice, is surprisingly rewarding.

In today's world, psychology of religion as a discipline tackling both subjects under one category is popular. Alongside with its academic popularity, the academic discipline of psychology of religion or as relatively newly called 'psychology of religion and spirituality' attracts questions of concern and interest raised by ordinary people in the least if they are not included yet among its audience.

When attempting to understand the ever possible relationship between clinical practice and religion, the discipline of 'psychology of religion' or 'psychology of religion and spirituality' or, reflecting a more phenomenological standpoint, 'psychology *and* religion' comes to mind. These pairs of words denote in the first place that there is or there could be an instructive relationship between religion and the well-being of individuals.

The locus of attraction by ordinary people toward psychology of religion centers on the fact that these two terms, i.e., psychology and religion, are not parallel terms that normally go in the same line. Psychology is the scientific study of both human psyche and behavior. Religion, on the other hand, is only a branch of humanities, a system of belief and rituals, dealing with both the world and hereafter. Somewhat adding to the complexity of the words of psychology and religion being mentioned together, one has to realize that psychology has now proven to be a science

compared to the time of Alexis Carrel, who stated the following: "Physiology is a science, while psychology awaits its Claude Bernard or its Pasteur. It is in the state of surgery when surgeons were barbers, of chemistry before Lavoisier, at the epoch of the alchemists."[1] Psychology is now considered science by all academic bodies in the world. On the other hand, adding again to the complexity that appears when the word of psychology and religion are combined, the definitions of religion have gone to a point where there is as much inclusiveness as one could think further. For instance, one definition of religion that is perfectly inclusive is the following: "*Religion is a felt practical relationship with what is believed in as a superhuman being or beings*."[2] In today's world, all the more positive qualities of inclusiveness in the definitions of religion considered, religion appears as a more complex phenomenon than ever before.

The intriguing character of the discipline of psychology of religion that consists of two complementary pieces, one being what is considered science and the other not, calls out for the fact that it is a common endeavor of psychologists and scholars of religious studies or scholars of humanities in the larger sense. This common endeavor marks a point to depend on in placing the psychology of religion in an academic framework. Furthermore, it should also be realized that in some countries, psychology of religion was developed largely by psychologists while in some it was developed chiefly by scholars of humanities. For instance, "whereas psychology of religion in America has been advanced primarily by psychologists, in Germany it has always been the province chiefly of philosophers and theologians."[3] Moreover, this statement could be useful to keep in mind to mark the two main orientations of psychology that are still realized in modern psychological studies. Gordon W. Allport gave a precise account concerning these two orientations. According to him, whereas one orientation is dependent on the English philosopher John Locke who "assumed the mind of the individual to be a *tabula rasa* at birth,"[4] the other orientation maintaining "that the person is not a collection of acts, nor simply the locus

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1 Alexis Carrel, *Man, the Unknown* (New York: Halcyon House, 1938), p.156.

2 Robert H. Thouless, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), p.4.

3 David M. Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary* (New York: John Wiley, 1997), p.30.

4 Gordon W. Allport, *Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1955), p.7.

of acts; [on the contrary,] the person is the *source of acts*"[5] is dependent on the German philosopher G. W. Leibnitz.

Allport goes further to associate these orientations with Anglo-Saxon and German traditions:

> For Locke the organism was reactive when stimulated; for Leibnitz it was self-propelled. Perhaps it is because Locke was an English man that this way of thinking, elaborated by Hume and a host of like-minded successors, became so firmly established in the psychology of Britain and America; whereas Leibnitz' view, developed by Kant, has, generally speaking, prevailed in German psychology and elsewhere on the continent.[6]

It seems that these two orientations mark the very foundation of psychology of religion being the discipline to which both psychologists and scholars of religion contribute. In fact, it is not appropriate to see psychology of religion as only consisting of or confined to these two orientations. One could definitely contend that just like the fact "that the history of philosophy is wisely seen as variations on the work of Plato and Aristotle,"[7] psychological works too can be seen as variations of these two orientations. Moreover, strictly considering its research methods, one should keep in mind that there are actually two kinds of psychology of religion: sociological psychology of religion using methods of research such as observation, ground work and questionnaire; and psychological psychology of religion using labs and statistics etc. In other words, even as a pure social science that has nothing whatsoever to do with religion from within in a positivist sense, psychology of religion uses sociological methods which could amount to saying that within psychology of religion there is also a tendency headed toward more inclusive disciplines such as philosophy and religious studies.

Within psychology of religion we see almost a perfect union between psychology *and* religion. Thus it is not surprising to introduce religion as dealing with clinical practice and treatment that that is mostly dealt with within the academic discipline of clinical psychology. Furthermore, following the statement made by Voltaire that "if God did not exist, he

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5 Ibid, p.7. (Brackets are mine).
6 Ibid, p.8.
7 Frank N. Magill, Ian P. McGreal (eds), *Masterpieces of World Philosophy in Summary Form* (New York: Salem Press, 1961), vol. 1, p.258.

would have to be invented,"[8] one could contend that if religion did not exist, it would have to be invented and to that effect people could have seen that one academic discipline or a branch of it could turn into religion also dealing with subjects that are strictly in the realm of religion.

Going back where we started, the assumed animosity between psychology and religion, thus the animosity between psychology-related disciplines and religion stems from the fact that psychology is seen as a science whereas religion is seen otherwise. One important thing that could be taken out as a tangible dimension of this animosity is that psychology is associated with rationality and analytical knowledge whereas religion is associated with intuitive knowledge or simply intuitive way of thinking. Moreover, the decline of religions has led scholars to overlook the importance of intuitive knowledge.[9] However; it has to be realized that the decline of intuitive knowledge does not only harm religion(s) as a source of knowledge, it also reduces the importance and validity of one of the two main orientations in psychology that does speculate about human mind. Because "the progress of science in correlating or reducing mental states to physical states has weakened our confidence in an entity called mind."[10] On the other hand, we now know that it is too simplistic to look at religion as a realm of only intuitive knowledge. Rationality and analytical thinking is also involved in religion. The perfect definition concerning religion stems from an Islamic tradition (*hadith*) called '*Gabriel's Hadith*.' In it we find religion as comprising of three components: belief, action (ritual), and mysticism or *zuhd*.[11] Out of these three, only mysticism is seen as the extension and realm of intuitive knowledge. Islamic texts-based Philosophy (*Kalam*) and Islamic Methodology of Jurisprudence (*Usul'ul Fikh*) or Islamic Law, which as religious disciplines are the extensions of the first two of these three components, are rational sciences or disciplines.

Religion is not something just added to life. It very often organizes the life. Individuals live along with their religious beliefs and try to comply with

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8 Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Human Instincts that Fashion Gods, Spirits and Ancestors* (London: Vintage, 2001), p.23.

9 See Reuben Abel, *Man Is The Measure: A Cordial Invitation to the Central Problems of Philosophy* (New York: Free Press, 1976), pp.196-207.

10 Ibid, p.210.

11 See: Muhammed b. Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahihu'l-Bukhari* (Beirut: Daru'l-Arqam, n.d), pp.25-26. [Kitabu'l-Iman: 2; bab: 37; hadith number: 57, 58.]

the rituals that their religions demand of them. Furthermore, individuals are not separate entities from their religions. They very often bring their religions into new phases of life they are faced with, even when they turn into people disordered mentally. On the other hand, any clinical psychologist, psychoanalyst or psychotherapist would be enriched not only when they learn about the religious beliefs and religiosity level of their patients but also when they simply learn about the notion of religion.

Normally, it is crucial to understand that when there is space for philosophy in the academic realm, there should also be space for religion, which is the case today. And as philosophy has to have anything to say about human well-being, religion cannot be ruled out in that realm. Also, it seems that religion has a greater chance to be more consistent about the well-being of individuals than philosophy. In fact, there are three aspects of religion that cannot be overlooked concerning the well-being of individuals.

RELIGION: THE MOST INCLUSIVE EXPLANATION

Generally speaking, religion seems to have a content of interest that is larger and more inclusive than science and philosophy. In other words, whereas science deals with particulars philosophy and religion deal with universals. At this point, it is also important to realize that religion has a more inclusive content of interest –or rather, command– than philosophy. Because, although philosophy deals with universals, provides science with a method of research and raises consciousness of critique concerning the data being produced by science, it has not much to confidently say about where people were before they were born and where they are going to end up when they die. Religion, on the contrary, has a big portion of space concerning before the birth and after the death. Hence; simply speaking, religion, in terms of the realm of interest and even command, is more inclusive than philosophy and definitely science.

By the way, in a passing reference, it should also be taken into account that science, unlike philosophy and religion, is by no means thought to be the realm of interpretation. This, however, is not the case. In fact, "there has been a growing awareness among both scientists and philosophers that science is not so purely objective as we thought. Scientists do not merely read what's out there in the book of nature. Rather, they interpret the nature,

using their own mental categories."[12] In short, through a deep look at the differences and similarities between science, philosophy and religion, it can be clarified that science is fundamentally no different than philosophy and religion. Science too is subject to interpretation. Going further, one can also come to understand that as the two main research methods, experimentation and observation praised by positivism are similar to –and in a way not compatible with– deductive and inductive ways of reasoning. One can describe all these ways of doing research as analytic and rational. Experimentation is the core aspect of scientific research. However, it should be taken into account that philosophy and religion are basically not oblivious to data provided by science. On the other hand, it should also be realized that when it comes to interpretation of the data provided by science, the way scientists operate is not much different than the way philosophers and scholars of religion do. Thus, the stark reality is that as the two major ways of doing research strictly associated with science, experimentation and observation are not much different than –or rather a lot similar to– deductive and inductive ways of reasoning that are associated with conducting research in philosophy and religious studies.[13]

In the case of religion and even philosophy being beneficial to clinical practice and treatment, the very fact that religion and philosophy deal with universals whereas science deals with particulars. In other words, whereas religion and philosophy are inclined to integrative explanation, science is inclined to elemental explanation. Social Psychologist David Myers specifies a partial hierarchy so as to show the direction from integrative explanation toward elemental explanation. According to him, when an academic discipline becomes more experimental it can be perfectly described as inclined to elemental explanation. From the most integrative level of explanation to the most elemental levels of explanation, Myer's hierarchy is as the following:

THEOLOGY
PHILOSOPHY
SOCIOLOGY
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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12 David G. Myers, *Social Psychology* (New York: The McGraw-Hill, 1983), p.8.

13 For further insights on this subject, see: Robert Wuthnow, "Is There a Place for 'Scientific' Studies of Religion?" in *The Chronicle Review*, (January 24, 2003), B10-B11.

PSYCHOLOGY
BIOLOGY
CHEMISTRY
PHYSICS[14]

As can be seen, according to this hierarchy, theology is thought to be a most integrative level of explanation. The crucial point coming out of the fact that these levels of explanation are not fundamentally different since they all use analytic or rational ways of reasoning is that they need not contradict each other. Moreover, one way of explanation is not supposed to leave out the other way of explanation in order to be considered valid or consistent. They are rather complementary with each other. David Myers gives precise account how these levels of explanation are not to be perceived as opposing each other rather than as complementary:

> We study human beings from the different perspectives that we know as academic disciplines. These perspectives range from basic sciences such as physics and chemistry to integrative disciplines such as philosophy and theology. Which perspective is relevant depends on what you want to talk about. Take love, for example. A physiologist might describe love as a state of arousal. A social psychologist might examine how various characteristics and conditions–good looks, the partners' similarity, sheer repeated exposure–enhance the feeling we call love. A poet would extol the sublime experience love can sometimes be. A theologian might describe love as the God-given goal of human relationships.

We needn't assume that any one of these levels is the *real* explanation. The physiological and emotional perspectives on love, for example, are simply two ways of looking at the same event. One type of explanation need not compete with others. Scientific explanations needn't discredit or replace the perspectives of literature and philosophy. (….) The various explanations can complement one another.[15]

As seen in the above-mentioned account, the fact that there are actually different levels of explanation posits not an 'either this or that situation'; rather, it offers a combination of both appropriately. In short, it is evident

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[14] See Myers, *Social Psychology*, p.6.
[15] Ibid, pp.5-6.

that there are different levels of explanation and they need not contradict each other. On the other hand, the most inclusive or integrative one of these levels of explanation is theological explanation or, said otherwise, the kind of explanation provided by religion.

RELIGION: MASTERMIND ON THE MEANING OF LIFE

The second one of the three aspects of religion we focus on as three main qualities of religion that compel any clinical practitioner not to overlook the importance of religion in clinic is its insurmountable account concerning the meaning of life. The fact that religion, i.e., basic religious texts, is most productive concerning the account about the meaning of life is closely connected with the fact that it presents the most integrative level of explanation. Fundamental religious texts are extraordinary pieces of literature and for this reason it is imperative not to ignore them as a means of insight in clinical practice.

Especially this aspect of religion makes the combination of psychology and religion almost a perfect one. Because, whereas psychology cannot fully explain the purpose of life, religion seems to be a mastermind on the subject. As Sociologist Andrew Greely stated: "Religion starts where psychology leaves off. Try as it might, psychology cannot explain the purpose of human existence, the meaning of human life, the ultimate destiny of the human person."[16]

That religion is a mastermind on the purpose of life basically stems from the fact that it perfectly deals with the idea and the meaning of death. Psychology, of course, can try to provide some answers on the subject. For example, it can state "that the purpose of life is self-fulfillment, that the universe exists for personality development, and that the destiny of humankind is personal growth."[17] Nevertheless, these "are not the sort of answers that can sustain very many human beings for very long, and… [these] are no answers at all for that most fundamental of religious questions: 'What does *my* death mean for me?' Psychology may give hints; religion

[16] Andrew Greely, "Pop Psychology and The Gospel," in *Theology Today*, 33: 3 (1976), pp.224-231, p.231.

[17] Ibid, p.231.

gives responses."[18] Thus, it is apparent that psychology needs religion on the subject.

When the locus of question is the meaning of life the animosity and contest cannot be easily located between religion and science. It is rather that there is an animosity and contest between religion and philosophy in trying to be the most eligible center of attraction concerning the subject. However, it is most useful to focus on how positivism's perception of science came to decline in favor of philosophy. Because, to realize the difference in terms of source value of knowledge between science and philosophy fade away might help to see the difference go away between religion and science. We now live in an era of post-positivist philosophy of science in which the inclination not to classify knowledge and truth as religious, philosophical or scientific is more favorable than ever before.

Positivism promoted the science as the only source or means of knowledge and truth. Said differently, positivism gave rise to the idea of science "as an independent, solitary intellectual citadel, the only scene of rational thought."[19] More specifically, positivism reduced science to experimentation and in doing so left philosophy and religion out of the scientific realm as invaluable sources of knowledge and truth. However, one could contend that positivism's perception of science as an omnipotent entity with a monopoly of rationality is not consistent at least to the extent that philosophy and religion can be ignored as pseudo-sciences. First of all, philosophy and religion are not inimical to experimentation or, in a larger sense, experimental studies. Second, whereas Auguste Comte, the very founder of positivism, perceived experimentation as the absolute criterion for science, he did not see the fundamental flaw in his system of thought regarding the substance of mathematics, which is the very foundation of hard sciences, i.e., biology, chemistry, and physics. In other words, even though he described mathematics as 'natural science,'[20] he could not bring himself to talk about its substance which can be described in no way as experimental.

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18 Ibid, p.231. (Brackets are mine.)

19 Mary Midgley, *Science and Poetry* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.59.

20 See Richard G. Olson, *Science and Scientism in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), p.71.

The vision of an omnipotent science came to decline basically by the works of three eminent philosophers, Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, and Paul Feyerabend. These philosophers also mark the three important milestones of the era called post-positivist philosophy of science. Philosopher John Searle gave a precise account about how positivism's vision of an omnipotent science came to decline as a result of the works of above-mentioned philosophers. According to Searle:

> There were different versions of scientific method, according to the philosophers of that period [positivist period], but they all shared the idea that scientific, empirical propositions are essentially 'testable'. Initially a proposition was thought testable if it could be confirmed, but the most influential version of this idea is [Karl] Popper's claim that empirical propositions are testable if they are falsifiable in principle. That is, in order for a proposition to tell us how the world is as opposed to how it might be or might have been, there must be conceivable state of affairs that would render that proposition false. Propositions of science are, strictly speaking, never verifiable – they simply survive repeated attempts at falsification. Science is in this sense fallible, but it is at the same time rational and cumulative.
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> This picture of the history of science was very dramatically challenged in Thomas Kuhn's book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1962). According to Kuhn, the history of science shows not a gradual and steady accumulation of knowledge but periodic revolutionary overthrows of previous conceptions of reality. (...) 'Normal sciences' always proceeds by puzzle-solving within a paradigm, but revolutionary breakthroughs, rather than puzzle-solving within a paradigm, are matters of overthrowing one paradigm and replacing it with another.
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> Just as Kuhn challenged the picture of science as essentially a matter of a steady accumulation of knowledge, so Paul Feyerabend challenged the conception of there being a unitary rational 'scientific method' (Feyerabend, 1975) [*Against Method*]. Feyerabend tried to show that the history of science reveals not a single rational method but rather a serious of opportunistic, chaotic, desperate (and sometimes even dishonest) attempts to cope with immediate problems. The lesson that Feyerabend draws from this is that we should abandon the constraining idea of there being such a thing as a single,

> rational method that applies everywhere in science; rather, we should adopt an 'anarchistic' view, according to which 'anything goes'.[21]

In the light of this account, one can argue that Kuhn is actually prone to go to a point where he falls in the denial of realism. Further, it can also be stated that what Feyerabend actually does is to zealously present an invitation to a fierce relativism in scientific investigation. "None the less, the effect of these authors has been important in at least the following respect. The positivists' conception of science as a steady accumulation of factual knowledge, and of the task of the philosopher as the conceptual analysis of scientific method, has given way to an attitude to science that is at once more skeptical and more activist."[22]

In short, the account presented by the eminent philosopher John Searle is a clear proof that the difference between scientific knowledge and philosophical knowledge in terms of their values is fading away. Expressions like 'philosophical knowledge' and 'scientific knowledge' are misleading. "Rather," as John Searle states, "it seems… that there is just knowledge and truth, and that in intellectual enterprises we are primarily aiming at knowledge and truth. These may come in a variety of forms, whether in history, mathematics, physics, psychology, literary criticism or philosophy."[23]

Our argumentation is that just as the relationship between philosophy and science has a new phase so as the relationship between religion and science has a more consistent approach in the era of post-positivist philosophy of science. Because, just like philosophy, religion is not oblivious to experimental studies and an important portion of every religion is strictly rational in the sense that it speaks to mind rather than heart. Consequently, to ignore religion rendering it as an invaluable source of knowledge and truth is to say that 'that religion is bad but this religion, which in this case just equals positivism, is good.' As Philosopher Mary Midgley wisely stated: "Notoriously, [Auguste] Comte himself, when he talked of throwing out religion and metaphysics, only meant throwing out

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21 John R. Searle, "Contemporary Philosophy in the United States," in *The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy*, ed. by Nicholas Bunnin and E. P. Tsui-James, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1996), pp.1-24, p.11. (Brackets are mine).

22 Ibid, p.12.

23 Ibid, p.13.

other people's religion and metaphysics and replacing them by better ones of his own invention."[24]

As being a more integrative type of explanation compared to science, philosophy is more enabled to provide answers to such questions as 'what is the meaning of life?', 'where are we coming from?' and 'what is the meaning of my own death?' However, it does not precede religion on this subject.

Although religion seems to be trying to replace religion on the subject, it can by no means be more systematic than religion itself in dealing with before birth and after death. With respect to its endeavor to replace religion, one could argue, the ever-more inclusive definition of philosophy was made by Philosopher Bertrand Russell. According to him, philosophy basically deals with three problems: "Where do we come from? Where do we go to? What shall we do meanwhile?"[25] As in the same line of evidence, another definition of philosophy again made by Bertrand Russell can be worth mentioning: "All *definite* knowledge –so I should contend– belongs to science; all *dogma* as to what surpasses definite knowledge belongs to theology. But between theology and science there is No Man's Land, exposed to attack from both sides; this No Man's Land is philosophy."[26]

In other words, contrary to what Russell says, philosophy is not as much competent as religion to provide accounts concerning the purpose of life. As Psychiatrist Arthur Deikman stated: "Thousands of books of philosophy line the shelves of our libraries without one book providing a satisfactory answer to the fundamental question 'What is the meaning of life?' No verbal answer has ever sufficed – thus the thousands of books."[27]

In fact, one could argue that even the accounts provided by religion concerning the meaning of life can be considered only hints instead of clear-cut answers. However, it should not skip our minds that the subject is more strikingly connected with the domain of religion than that of philosophy, science, and in this sense, psychology and related disciplines such as psychoanalysis and psychiatry.

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24 Midgley, *Science and Poetry*, p.148. (Brackets are mine).

25 In Hunter Mead, *Types and Problems of Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt, 1946), p.54 (fn: 1).

26 Bertrand Russell, "Introductory," *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Touchstone, 1972), p.xiii.

27 Arthur J. Deikman, "A Functional Approach to Mysticism," in *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, volume 7, no. 11-12, November/December 2000, pp. 75-92, p.91.

Perhaps the clear-cut answers require very much of personal endeavor and investigation. These kinds of answers are not to be generalized: everyone has his/her own share specific to his/her own state. But one should come to realize that the subject is mostly in the domain of religion rather than philosophy and science. As Psychiatrist Arthur Deikman stated:

> Psychoanalysts need to recognize that their patients' psychological distress stems from three levels: a) from conflicts of wishes, fears, and fantasies; b) from an absence of perceived meaning; and c) from a frustration of the need to progress in an evolutionary sense, as individuals and as a race. The first level is the domain in which psychiatry functions. The second and third levels require a science appropriate to the task.[28]

Many people look to religion for meaning. In other words, in terms of the meaning or a meaning of life, they prefer religion to philosophy and science. Although religion or spirituality cannot be explained away simply as attempts to counter or avoid the fear of death, "men and women appear to have an innate propensity to find in these experimental systems [religion and spirituality] a meaning and purpose for their existence."[29]

RELIGION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

Inasmuch as religion is advantageous in providing the most integrative accounts in general, since it represents the most integrative level of explanation, and in providing coherent accounts concerning the meaning of life, so it is advantageous in providing accounts that help individuals get psychologically resilient in life. At this stage, one should come to realize that all these three points are closely interconnected: religion is the most integrative level of explanation since it consistently deals with before birth and after death; since it deals with before birth and after death it can provide the most consistent accounts concerning the meaning of life; as a result, it might help people become psychologically resilient. We all make mistakes. We all might be or might have been exposed to psychological traumas. In successfully dealing with the aftermath of traumas we might take refuge in religion simply for the reasons laid down above.

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[28] Ibid, p.92.

[29] David Fontana, *Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality* (Oxford: BPS Blackwell, 2003), p.229. (Brackets are mine).

The fact that religion is a rich source of insight in making people psychologically resilient centers around the fact that it deals with before birth and after death. This, however, brings forth the question whether religion is in anyway functional –or equally functional– in providing insights to any clinical practitioner dealing with non-believing clients –or the clients that, whether spiritual or not– belong to conventional religion.

This question, furthermore, can be extended to even contain people who describe themselves as spiritual rather than religious. Because even though spiritually-oriented people may or may not belong to any organized religion,[30] there are some types of spirituality that exclude reference to the sacred. And "the label 'spiritual' adds luster and legitimacy to any number of values and practices, but the label may ultimately lose meaning and power when it is separated from its sacred core."[31] Hence, people who espouse any type of spirituality that does in no way include reference to the sacred may be involved in the category of non-believers.

To reiterate the question, the religious individual may be inclined to forgive in favor of his/her psychological resilience in the wake of a personal crisis or trauma that he/she faced severely. Because, going along with the famous quotation by Alexander Pope, "'to err is human, to forgive, divine'"[32] is actually aimed at acting in a god-like way. In this case, the religious person coming to a resolution and inner peace through forgiveness may associate his behavior with predestination or the idea of being rewarded (or getting extra reward) in the afterlife. But what could it be that a non-religious or/and a non-believing person would take refuge in, facing the same kinds of problems? Asked a little differently, in the wake of personal crisis or psychological traumas, what is it that religion could provide to non-believing individuals who are in suffering and are in need of becoming psychologically resilient?

To answer the question, at this point, any mention of reference to religion or fundamental texts of religion might be futile; instead, one could only talk about a latent –or indirect, one could say– reference to religion. By the way, one should keep in mind that this way of referring to religion or

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30 See Vicky Genia, "Seküler Psikoterapistler ve Dindar Danışanlar: Mesleki Mülahazalar ve Öneriler," trans. into Turkish by Üzeyir Ok, in *İslâmî Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 12:1 (1999), pp.78-83.

31 Kenneth I. Pargament, *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice* (New York: Guilford, 1997), p.465.

32 Ibid, p. 264.

making use of religion is also useful in dealing with religiously-oriented clients. In other words, religiously-oriented accounts that are aimed at psychological resilience are useful in dealing with both religious and non-religious clients.

Religion at work in clinic can also be beneficial to non-believing clients. Because "knowledge about the human self and behavior is not the product of a single culture but the result of all human experiences in every human culture."[33]

To stay on the subject of forgiveness, a formulation introduced by Thomas Szasz, an American Psychiatrist of Hungarian descent, could be brought forth as an example of latent reference to religious texts. This formulation that is strictly related to psychological resilience and that seems to have stemmed from religious literature and thus is an example f an account inferred from religious literature is the following: "The stupid neither forgive nor forget; the naïve forgive and forget; the wise forgive but do not forget."[34]

In the light of this formulation,[35] it appears that there are three kinds of people. First: those who do forgive and do forget. These kinds of people would be unrealistic and always in turmoil inside since they do not forget. By not forgiving, they would simply avoid –or not be able to see– their part among the reasons that led them to experience personal crises or to be faced with traumas. Because people "tend to attribute success to" their "own personal efforts and ability, while" they "are likely to attribute failure to the difficulty of the task or to bad luck."[36] If anything, these kinds of people would be prone to be blinded as opposed to being guided by the impact of the crises they face. These people, therefore, would not be in harmony with the simple fact that people are supposed to learn even from the calamities

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33 Majed A. Ashy, "Health and Illness from an Islamic Perspective," in *Journal of Religion and Health*, 38:3 (1999), pp.241-257, p.257.

34 Thomas Szasz, *The Second Sin* (New York: Doubley & Company, 1973), p. 51. Szasz also mentions this formulation in another one of his books; see: Thomas Szasz, *The Untamed Tongue* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1991), p.143.

35 Another version of this formulation is mentioned by a Robert Anton Wilson, who attributes it to an unknown Sufi poet: "As one Sufi poet said / The fool neither forgives nor forgets; / The half-enlighted forgive and forget; / The Sufi forgives but does not forget." See: Robert Anton Wilson, "introduction," in Christopher S. Hyatt, *Undoing Yourself with Energized Meditation and Other Devices* (Tempe, AZ: New Falcon, 2002), pp.iv-xix, p.v.

36 S. Feshbach, B. Weiner & A. Bohart, *Personality* (Lexington: Health, 1996), p.287.

they are faced with. Simply speaking, these people would be furious, skeptical and restless, let alone getting closer inch by inch to inner peace.

Second: Those who forgive and forget. These people, to keep it short, would not learn from their experiences because they forget what they forgave. In other words, their forgiveness would not amount to be valuable because they cannot even know or remember whom they forgave.

Third: Those who forgive but never forget. The forgiveness of these people would be extremely beneficial to them since they do not forget about it. By forgiving, they would be peaceful not excluding their mistakes or external conditions that led to their crises. By not forgetting, they would avoid heedlessness not to face the bad experiences over and over again. They are both peaceful and realistic.[37]

At this point, it is worth mentioning that an eminent Turkish poet and essayist, İsmet Özel, derives a further account out of this affirmation. According to him:

> The stupid, with their attitude of not forgiving and not forgetting, are stiff, harsh and violent. They break or get to be broken; they shatter or get to be shattered. The naïve, with their attitude of forgiving and forgetting, are flabby and soft. They cannot break but get to be broken; they cannot shatter but get to be shattered themselves. The wise, with their attitude of forgiving and not forgetting, are resilient and sharp. They neither break nor get to be broken; they neither shatter nor get to be shattered.
>
> The stupid are like stone: when they fall down on the water, they sink. The naïve are like sugar: when they fall down on the water, they melt away. The wise are like oil: when they fall down on the water, they float.[38]

So far, we have tried to prove two points: religion is useful when it is at the disposal of the clinical practitioner and it is also useful for even non-believing clients, i.e., people with no religion or/and people with spiritualities that exclude some reference to the sacred.

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[37] For a further consideration concerning the connection between this formulation and some psychological findings, see: Mehmet Atalay, "Forgive But Not Forget," in *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 9 (2004), pp.121-130.

[38] İsmet Özel, *Faydasız Yazılar [Unuseful Writings]*, (İstanbul: Risale, 1986), pp.26-31.

The accounts derived out of religious texts or given life to with some indirect reference to the notion of religion can be described as philosophical as well as psychological. But they never seize to be religious or spiritual. Another one of such accounts was given by Carl Gustav Jung, the founder of Analytical Psychology. This account is worth studying thoroughly because it could well be seen as an indication of how accounts derived out of religious texts or created with some reference to either religious texts or the notion of religion can help add up to individual resilience whether the individual is an adherent of any conventional religion or not. Furthermore, Jung's account, when in the hands of any clinical practitioner, can be beneficial to non-believing clients who are in need of psychological resilience. The reason for this is, on the one hand, Jung was not Buddhist at all; on the other, he expressed his skepticism about the basic beliefs of Buddhism as he said "the question of karma is obscure to me, as is also the problem of personal rebirth or the transmigration of souls."[39] Nevertheless, Jung was able to harvest a meaning of life specific to himself:

> The idea of rebirth is inseparable from that of karma. The crucial question is whether a man's karma is personal or not. If it *is*, then the preordained destiny with which a man enters life represents an achievement of previous lives, and a personal continuity therefore exists. If, however, this is not so, and an impersonal karma is seized upon in the act of rebirth, then that karma is incarnated again without there being any personal continuity.
>
> Buddha was twice asked by his disciples whether man's karma is personal or not. Each time he fended off the question, and did not go into the matter; to know this, he said, would not contribute to liberating oneself from the illusion of existence...
>
> I know no answer to the question of whether the karma which I live is the outcome of my past lives, or whether it is not rather the achievement of my ancestors, whose heritage comes together in me. Am I a combination of the lives of these ancestors and did I embody these lives again? Have I lived before in the past as a specific personality, and did I progress so far in that life

[39] C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffé, translated from the German by Richard and Clara Winston, (New York: Vintage, 1961), p.319. [Although Jung says again that he began to see the problem of reincarnation somewhat differently than before, he did not bring himself to espouse a definite opinion. See ibid, p.319.]

> that I am now able to seek a solution? I do not know. Buddha left the question open, and I like to assume that he himself did not know with certainty.
>
> (...)
>
> The meaning of my existence is that life has addressed a question to me. Or, conversely, I myself am a question which is addressed to the world, and I must communicate my answer, for otherwise I am dependent upon the world's answer. That is a suprapersonal life task, which I accomplish only by effort and with difficulty.[40]

As seen from the account above referring to religious texts or the notion of religion, one could come up with a meaning of life, which is what Jung did himself. On the other hand, simply speaking, there is no doubt that Jung's immense effort dealing with the meaning of life made him all that resilient psychologically. In fact, while working as a psychiatry professor he had departed from his teaching job at university level for the main purpose of making more time for his ongoing research and eventually left a great legacy behind.

There is a strong connection between religion and psychological resilience. This correlation stems from the fact that religion constitutes the most integrative level of explanation and it deals before and after death. A direct or indirect reference to religious texts or accounts that are derived out of them can provide individuals with psychological resilience. In fact, contrary to what Jung believed concerning Buddha not giving an answer to the question whether karma was personal or not, perhaps, he just viewed both approaches embedded in this question as rightfully-espoused orientations. By not answering the question, Buddha probably wanted to give his disciples the message that each and every one of them had to harvest his/her own account.

CONCLUSION

The intriguing character of the psychology of religion as a discipline comes from the fact that it combines two different realms of investigation that seem inimical to one another. However, it seems that religion and

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[40] Ibid, pp.317-8.

psychology form a perfect union. Because in the post-modern era that we live in, it is all clear that science can be as susceptible to making mistakes as philosophy and religion. In other words, it is now perceivable that rationality is not in the monopoly of science. The way science operates is different than the way philosophy does. And the way philosophy operates is somewhat different than the way religion does. Because they are different realms of investigation. Yet the kinds of knowledge and truth that they produce can be equally important.

Thus, also considering the fact that we live in an era of post-positivist philosophy of science, it is not a far-fetched idea that religion is or could be beneficial to clinical practitioners dealing with their patients. First, religion constitutes the most integrative level of explanation. Clinical practitioners should take religion into account not only at face value but also it has a larger content of interest in its own logic than philosophy and science. Second, since religion deals with the concepts of 'before birth' and 'after death' consistently, it is an ever powerful source concerning the accounts of the meaning of life. Moreover, it is a unique realm of explanation introducing the concept of eternal damnation or eternal salvation. Third, considering the fact that religion in general takes for granted that God is all omnipotent and omniscient, it might be employed as a powerful source concerning the continuous effort to come up with various accounts of psychological resilience.

Lastly, psychology of religion is one special area of inquiry that combines both religion and science especially in terms of clinical practice. As shown in the formulation of psychological forgiveness introduced by Thomas Szasz and the account derived out of Buddhist tradition by Jung, psychology of religion can help combine religious and clinical perspectives in a unique way and bring forth ever familiar, and at times new, forms of knowledge and truth.

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