



The Role of Muslim Ontology in Defining a Schema of Causes and Means of Healing

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Introduction

- Various understandings of existence (ontology) and how we gain knowledge (epistemology) about it
- Muslim and modern medical ontological understandings
- Serve as a foundation for a schema of causes and means of healing.
- Comparing ontological frameworks facilitates a clearer understanding of the agent and means of bringing about healing.

Agenda

- Background – Islamic Doctrine
- Muslim Ontology
- Schema of Healing based on ontology
- Case example - Fever of unknown origin

Background - Islamic Doctrine

Based on three foundational declarations

- Only One Supreme Being and Creator (monotheism/*tawheed*)
- The Finality of Prophethood in the person of Muhammad
- The reality of the Last Day (of Judgment)

Background - The Doctrine of Monotheism

- Allah's existence is eternal and necessary
- He has beautiful and magnificent names and attributes that are eternal
- Nothing is binding on Him

Background - Doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood

- Allah reveals His Word to human beings whom He appoints as messengers and prophets
- Prophets are role models for other human beings in matters of worship; moral conduct and following the Divine Law. Prophets are infallible.
- Allah appointed thousands of prophets – Muhammad being the last
- The revealed word is known as *Wahi* (revelation). Prophets are obligated to follow *Wahi* in all matters that are pertinent to salvation

Background - Doctrine of the Last Day in Islam

- All human beings will be resurrected (physically according to the Sunnis)
- All human beings will be judged in some way or another by Allah Himself. Allah decides on everyone's salvation.
- The purpose of *wahi* (revelation) to prophets is to inform human beings what is necessary and pertinent to their salvation

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Muslim Ontology – Schema of Existence

Realm of Existence	Description
Lahoot (Creator)	Absolute and Eternal Divine existence
Malakoot (Creation)	World of spirits (arwaah) and other celestial beings
Mithal (Creation)	World of non-physical forms and similitudes; Isthmus
Ajsaam (Creation)	World of physical bodies (detectable)

Source of Healing

An Islamic theological perspective defines Allah as the One who heals:

'And when I (Abraham) become sick, then He (Allah) heals me' (Surah Al-Shu'ara, 26/80)

Healing comes from Absolute and Eternal Divine existence (Lahoot)

-- Primary concern is 'how' does one attract divine attention to heal one's illness

Means of Healing - Prophets as Role Models

- Ayyub (Job)
 - *Tawakkul*
 - Perfect trust in Allah and reliance on Him alone
- Jesus - the perfect healer
 - Given leave by Allah to heal without conventional means of healing

Means of Healing - Prophets as Role Models

Prophet Muhammad

- Tawakkul (Lahoot)
 - Advised patients to be patient
 - Active, not passive – may not result in cure
- Seeking Divine assistance for cure
 - Dua (supplication); Sadaqaah (charity)
- Seeking human assistance for cure
 - Incantations; Amulets (Traditional healers)
 - Counseling; Meditation
 - Medications; Surgery

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Fever of Unknown Origin

Defined in 1961 by Petersdorf and Beeson as the following:

- A temperature greater than 38.3°C (101°F) on several occasions,
- More than 3 weeks' duration of illness, and
- Failure to reach a diagnosis despite 1 week of inpatient investigation

How does a Muslim patient seek healing?

Applying Ontology-based Means of Healing

- Tawakkul (Lahoot)
 - Patient is patient
- Seeking Divine assistance for cure
 - Dua (supplication) with certainty that Allah will cure
 - Sadaqaah - good works interceding
- Seeking human assistance for cure
 - Diagnostic testing
 - Medications – empiric treatment
 - Traditional healers - Incantations; Amulets

Discussion

Differing ontological understandings inform how one understands 'who' heals and 'how' to seek healing

Healthcare providers may view patients relying on 'non-physical' means as passive or fatalistic

Understanding alternate ontologies may broaden this view and facilitate enhanced communications

Important not to play role of Allah, Allah heals; others given Allah's leave to heal such as Jesus. Need for Allah's leave for means to heal.

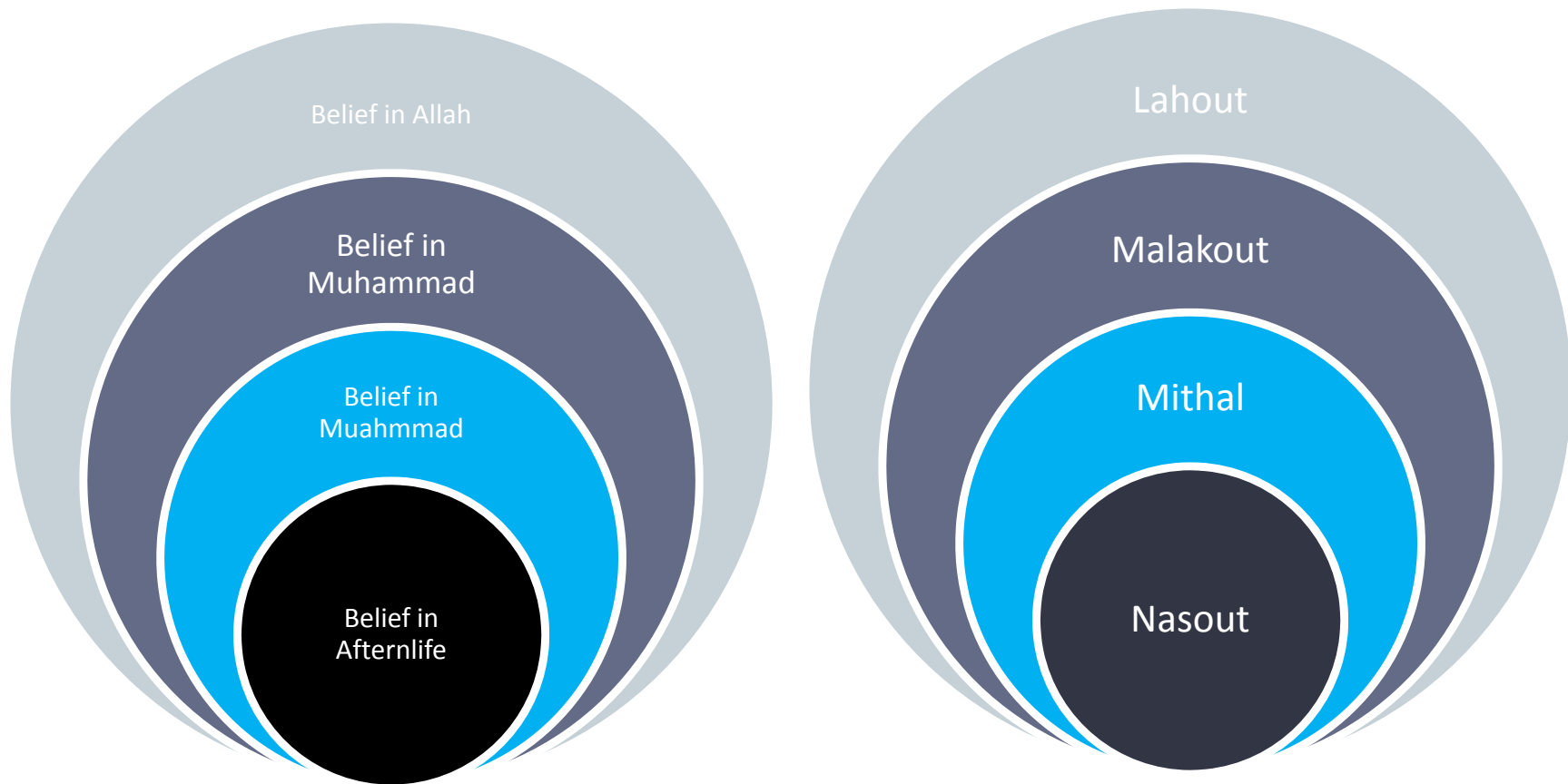
What is the threshold to try empiric treatment?

Conclusion

Any Questions?

Back-up Slides

Muslim Ontology



Islamic Epistemology

Muslims believe there are four major sources of (salvational) knowledge in Islam:

1. The Quran (also referred to as recited Wahi)
2. The Sunnah or known practice of the Prophet Muhammad (also known as non-recited Wahi)
3. Ijmaa' or the consensus of Muslim scholars
4. Qiyas or legal analogy

Muslim theologians and jurists look into all four sources for evidence and inspiration

*Wilāyah (authority and governance) and
its implications for Islamic bioethics: a
Sunni Māturīdi perspective*

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Table 1 Classification system for *ḥukm taklīfī**

Category	Supporting evidence	Level of obligation
<i>Fard</i>	Conclusive textual and contextual evidence from <i>Qur'an</i> , <i>Sunnah</i> , and/or <i>Ijmā'</i> that the action is rewarded in the hereafter	1. To perform the action 2. To believe that the action is an obligation
<i>Harām</i>	Conclusive textual and contextual evidence from <i>Qur'an</i> , <i>Sunnah</i> , and/or <i>Ijmā'</i> that the action is punishable in the hereafter	1. To avoid the action 2. To believe that the action is forbidden
<i>Wājib</i>	Conclusive textual or contextual evidence, but not both, from <i>Qur'an</i> , <i>Sunnah</i> , and/or <i>Ijmā'</i> that the action is rewarded in the hereafter	1. To perform action 2. Not required to believe that the action is an obligation
<i>Makrūh Tahrimī</i>	Conclusive textual or contextual evidence, but not both, from <i>Qur'an</i> , <i>Sunnah</i> , and/or <i>Ijmā'</i> that the action is punishable in the hereafter	1. To avoid action 2. Not required to believe that the action is forbidden
<i>Mustahab</i>	Textual evidence from the <i>Sunnah</i> suggests that the action is rewarded	1. Encouraged to perform action 2. Not required to believe that the action is an obligation
<i>Makrūh Tanzīhi</i>	Textual evidence from the <i>Sunnah</i> suggests that the action is reprehensible	1. Discouraged to perform action 2. Not required to believe that the action is forbidden
<i>Mubāh</i>	Inconclusive evidence that the action is rewarded or punished	1. No obligation to perform or avoid action

* This classification system is based on a Ḥanafī Māturīdī construct