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“Psychological Resources for Emotionally Intelligent Dialogue
between Islam, the West, and Indigenous Cultures”

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One of the major obstacles to dialogue between Islam, the West, and indigenous cultures is that intellectuals largely ignore the emotional dimension of conflicts, imagining that once concrete solutions are found, emotions will follow suit. Nevertheless, as contemporary scientific research shows (and to which Islamic psychology points), to the degree that we do not directly deal with emotions, our ability to think through conflicts will become hampered and our solutions to them will become distorted and lacking in wisdom. In spite of two thousand years in which the dominant understanding of thought-process in both Western and Islamic cultures has marginalized the significance of emotions (especially during the ascendancy of reason to the epistemological throne of enlightenment-based modernities), my contention is that since resources for enhancing emotional intelligence (EI) are present in both Islamic traditions and Western culture, they should occupy a prominent place in our educational systems. In the West, although such resources have been utilized, they have yet to be implemented on a large scale at all educational levels. This paper both summarizes Western resources for enhancing EI and suggests similar Islamic resources. Among the Western resources discussed are recent advances in neuroscience (Damasio), psychology of emotional intelligence (Salovey), positive psychology (B.L. Fredrickson), and the evidence-based psychotherapy of Greenberg, “emotion-focused therapy.” Such psychological resources for emotionally intelligent dialogue in Islam - although present in the primary texts of Islam and later developed especially by Sufi advocates of purification of the heart, refinement of the ego-self, and transformation of character - need to be revived, understood, and applied in public education (not utilized solely by scholars and members of Sufi orders). Hence, beginning with Qur’an, *hadith*, and *sirah*, this paper mines jewels of emotionally intelligent Islamic psychological wisdom, supplemented by Sufi texts, especially Sufi *tafsir*. By understanding both Islamic and Western psychological resources, we will be better able to chart new vistas for an emotionally intelligent dialogue of civilizations.