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# Muslim Attachments to God and the “Perfect Man” (*Ensān-e Kāmel*): Relationships With Religious Orientation and Psychological Adjustment in Iran

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This study extended the analysis of attachments to God to Islam. Shiite Muslim university students from Iran ( $N = 243$ ) responded to the Attachment to God Inventory, religious orientation scales, and an array of mental health variables that included empirical markers of an Iranian Muslim personality ideal called the “Perfect Man” (*Ensān-e Kāmel*). Anxious and avoidant attachment styles correlated negatively, rather than positively as has typically been the case with Christians in the West. Anxious attachment was especially predictive of Muslim religious and psychological functioning. Mediation analyses demonstrated that the “Perfect Man” ameliorated linkages of anxious God attachment with psychological maladjustment and suppressed its positive associations with religious adjustment. These data most importantly documented the need to clarify anxious attachments to God within the Muslim psychology of religion.

*Keywords:* attachment, anxiety, Islam, psychological adjustment, religious orientations

Attachment frameworks have illuminated the psychology of religion (Kirkpatrick, 2005). This work rests upon the assumption that attachments in human relationships clarify religious commitments (e.g., Granqvist, Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2010). In his foundational insights, Bowlby (1980, 1982) argued that children early in life form representations of themselves in relationship with caregivers and that these internal working models (IWM) of attachment then affect future psychosocial functioning. In this process, children ideally pursue and maintain proximity with caregivers, experience attachment figures as a source of safety and as a safe base for exploration, and become anxious during times of separation (Ainsworth, 1985). Researchers see in these dynamics of early attachment parallels with later adult relationships with God (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 1998).

Among these parallels are different types of attachment. Variations in early childhood environments produce what are sometimes described as four attachment types (e.g., Bartholomew, 1990). For instance, a secure type develops out of ideal psychos-

ocial arrangements and essentially reflects an IWM in which both the self and attachment figures are represented favorably. Other types deviate from this ideal. Anxiety predominates in a preoccupied type as the self but not the attachment figure is represented as inadequate. A dismissing type instead displays a distancing from or an ambivalence about others as the IWM characterizes attachment figures but not the self as problematic. With a fearful type, the IWM offers a negative evaluation of both the self and attachment figures. Examinations of these four types have successfully clarified the relationships of believers with God (e.g., Beck, 2006a; Cooper, Bruce, Harman, & Boccaccini, 2009).

In response to this evidence, researchers have proposed two principal frameworks for explaining God attachments based upon human attachments. Advocates of the compensation model argued that relationships with God represent an attempt to make up for deficits in human attachments (Kirkpatrick, 1997). Those defending the correspondence model claimed instead that attachments to God mirror human attachments (Hall, Fujikawa, Halcrow, Hill, & Delane, 2009). Commentators also suggested that both models have validity (e.g., Beck, 2006b).

Development of the Attachment to God Inventory (AGI; Beck & McDonald, 2004) has facilitated efforts to study individual (Beck 2006a, 2006b; McDonald, Beck, Allison, & Norsworthy, 2005) and type (Cooper et al., 2009) differences in God attachments. The AGI Avoidance Scale assesses “themes of difficulty depending on God, unwillingness with expressing intimacy with God, and need for self-reliance” (Beck & McDonald, 2004, p. 94). However, the AGI Anxiety Scale records “angry protest, fears of abandonment by God, anxiety over lovability, and jealousy” (Beck

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& McDonald, 2004, p. 95). Beyond their ability to identify correlates of these two attachment styles, AGI Anxiety and Avoidance Scales also make it possible to construct the four attachment types. The secure type scores low on both measures whereas the fearful type scores high on both. In contrast, the preoccupied type displays high scores only on the AGI Anxiety Scale with the dismissing type scoring high only on the AGI Avoidance Scale.

Christians from the West have served as the principal research participants in this area of investigation. Beck and McDonald (2004) emphasize, however "From a theological stance, one prerequisite for an attachment bond to exist in a faith would be that the believer experiences God as 'personal' in nature and that the relationship with the Deity approximates the criteria of an attachment bond" (p. 101). They name Islam as one of the religions that meets these criteria. The present study sought to expand the analysis of God attachments to Islam by examining an Iranian Muslim sample. Pursuit of that goal involved use of the two AGI measures to examine both the correlates and type differences associated with Muslim attachments to God.

### Muslim Attachments to God

Religious traditions presumably have impacts on God attachments beyond those associated with the early psychosocial environment (Beck & McDonald, 2004; Granqvist, 1998; Kirkpatrick, 1997). With regard to Islam, Miner, Ghobary, Dowson, and Procter (2014) recently argued "Muslims may be more vulnerable to an anxious style of attachment than Christians because Islam emphasizes a highly mediated relationship with God who is available only to those who follow prescribed rituals to remove sins" (p. 91). Anxious God attachment as a Muslim theme may also be evident in verses from the Qur'an which say, for example "Do not create mischief in the land after it has been set in order. Pray to him with fear and hope. Surely the mercy of Allah is always close to those who do good to others" (Malik, 1997, 7:56). In short, Muslim attachments to God should include an element of "fear." This fear may reside in the fact that God's mercy is contingent not only upon the rituals mentioned by Miner et al. (2014), but also upon a way of life that avoids "mischief" and does "good." For those who "do good," hope resides in the always available mercy of God. The overall implication, therefore, is that Muslim religious commitments should correlate positively with the AGI Anxiety Scale.

A very different prediction appears for an avoidant style of God attachment. In Arabic, the word "Islam" means "surrender." A "Muslim" is someone who surrenders to God (Nasr, 2002), and this surrender is to a God who in relationship to the believer is always "closer to him than his jugular vein" (Malik, 1997, 50:16). Avoidance of the always nearby God is, therefore, theologically impossible and incompatible with Muslim surrender. Muslim religious commitments, therefore, should correlate negatively rather than positively with the AGI Avoidance Scale. Among other things, this prediction implies that a reverse scoring of the God Avoidance Scale would express Islamic "surrender" and that lower AGI Avoidance scores, therefore, can be taken as a culturally relevant index of Muslim religious adjustment.

In order to test these predictions about religious adjustment, Iranian research participants responded to widely used Religious Orientation Scales (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). The intrinsic

religious orientation attempts to operationalize a faith in which religion defines the ultimate motivation in a believer's life. The extrinsic religious orientation includes two factors that assess the use of religion to achieve other ends. With the extrinsic personal orientation, a person relies upon religion as a source of psychological comfort and well-being. The extrinsic social orientation reflects a use of religion in order to obtain desired social outcomes. In Muslim societies, intrinsic and extrinsic personal religious orientations typically predict religious and psychological adjustment, but the extrinsic social motivation displays a weak and ambiguous pattern of relationships (Ghorbani, Watson, & Khan, 2007). If anxious attachment represents a vulnerability of and avoidant attachment a theological incompatibility with Muslim commitments, then the intrinsic and extrinsic personal orientations should correlate positively with the AGI Anxiety and negatively with the AGI Avoidance Scales. Predictions for the extrinsic social orientation seemed unclear given its ambiguous implications.

### Anxious God Attachment and Muslim Adjustment

Anxiety as a possible vulnerability of Muslim attachments to God has important additional implications. Perhaps most basically, anxious God attachment as an element of Muslim faithfulness should correlate negatively with the Muslim unfaithfulness of avoidant God attachment. Such an outcome would contrast with findings for Christians in the West where these two variables correlate positively and where AGI Anxiety more strongly than AGI Avoidance scores predict psychological maladjustment (e.g., Beck & McDonald, 2004; Cooper et al., 2009). If attachments to God have the same mental health implications in Muslim societies as they do in the West, then the paradoxical suggestion would be that the anxiety of Muslim (religious) adjustment would promote Muslim (psychological) maladjustment. Adjustment would dictate maladjustment.

One opportunity for dismissing this paradox might be to assume that anxious God attachment does not have the same negative psychological impact in Muslims. This possibility seems unlikely because such an assumption would render "anxiety" a vacuous concept in which "fear" in Muslim attachments to God would have no real meaning. The hypothesis, therefore, was that the AGI Anxiety as well as AGI Avoidance Scale would predict poorer Muslim mental health as assessed by an array of instruments already established as valid within the Iranian cultural context (Ghorbani, Watson, Chen, & Norballa, 2012; Ghorbani, Watson, Rezazadeh, & Cunningham, 2011; Ghorbani, Watson, & Weathington, 2009). Specifically, the expectation was that both AGI measures would correlate negatively with the adjustment of integrative self-knowledge (Ghorbani, Watson, & Hargis, 2008), self-control (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004), mindfulness (Brown & Ryan, 2003), and self-compassion (Raes, Pommier, Neff, & Van Gucht, 2011) and positively with the maladjustment of dispositional anxiety and depression (Costello & Comrey, 1967).

Confirmation of these predictions about mental health would then document a need to clarify an issue in which Muslim religious adjustment would seem to dictate Muslim personality maladjustment. One useful point of departure for addressing this issue might be to remember that the Qur'an verse says "Surely the mercy of Allah is always close to those who do good to others" (Malik, 1997, 7:56). Hope in overcoming anxiety comes through faithfulness in doing the "good" that secures God's mercy. Such faithfulness may appear in the "Perfect Man" (*Ensan-e Kāmel*) who

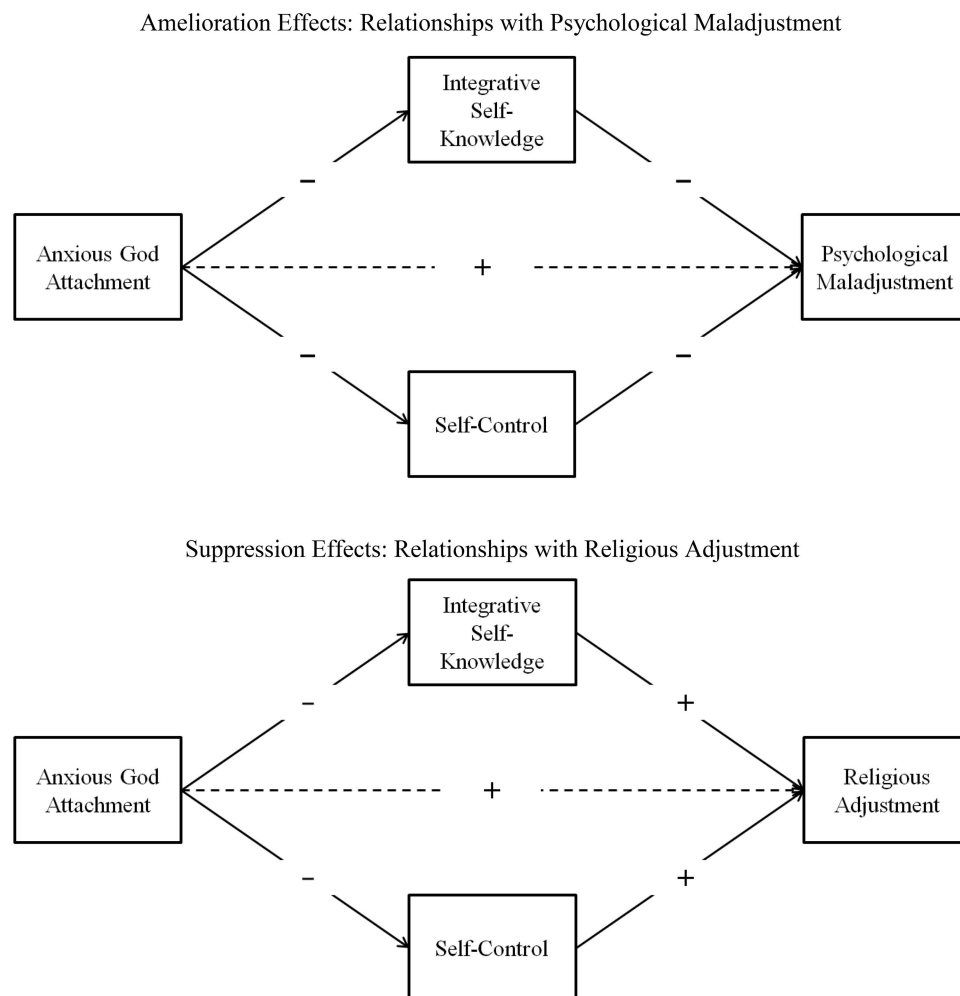
represents an Iranian Islamic mystical ideal (Motahharī, 2000). This ideal assumes that the Qur'an commands actualization of a "Perfect Man" through self-knowledge and self-control (Shimamoto, 2008). Self-insightful self-control should lead to purification. Purification should then enhance abilities of the self to "do good" and should thereby bring a believer closer to the anxiety-relieving mercy of God.

This suggestion about the "Perfect Man" can be explored with the integrative self-knowledge and self-control scales. These two instruments have been established as useful empirical markers of this Iranian mystical ideal (Ghorbani et al., 2011). Logically, the influences of anxious God attachment should flow through the personality dynamics of the "Perfect Man." Hence, as recorded by integrative self-knowledge and self-control, the "Perfect Man" should mediate linkages of anxious God attachment with the other

religious and psychological variables examined in this project. Figure 1 sketches the two basic possibilities.

First, mediation analyses should reveal an amelioration effect in which the "Perfect Man" reduces connections of anxious God attachment with poorer mental health. More specifically, integrative self-knowledge and self-control should at least partially inhibit relationships of anxious God attachment with the "Psychological Maladjustment" of Figure 1. In other words, mediation should account for a process that brings Muslims closer to the mercy of God and should consequently diminish ties of anxious God attachment with "Psychological Maladjustment" as made apparent in lower mindfulness and self-compassion and in higher anxiety and depression.

Second, suppression effects should appear as well. Confidence in the mercy of God through actualization of the "Perfect Man"



*Figure 1.* "Perfect Man" mediation of associations for anxious God attachment. The AGI Anxiety Scale measured anxious God attachment. Integrative self-knowledge and self-control scales served as empirical markers of the "Perfect Man." "Psychological Maladjustment" appeared in lower self-compassion and mindfulness and in higher depression and anxiety. "Religious Adjustment" appeared in stronger intrinsic and extrinsic personal religious orientations and in lower AGI avoidance scores. The mediation models predict that an accounting of influences associated with the "Perfect Man" should reduce linkages of anxious God attachment with psychological maladjustment while increasing them with religious adjustment. Amelioration effects = relationships with psychological maladjustment; Suppression effects = relationships with religious adjustment.

suggests that integrative self-knowledge and self-control should also reduce ties of anxious God attachment with the “Religious Adjustment” of Figure 1. Accounting for that reduction through mediation analyses should, therefore, strengthen relationships of anxious God attachment with “Religious Adjustment” as made evident in higher intrinsic and extrinsic personal religious orientations and in lower AGI God avoidance scores.

Along with correlational evidence, suppression effects would document a vulnerability to anxious God attachment within Muslim religious consciousness. Statistical procedures controlling for that vulnerability should produce clearer evidence of Muslim mental health. Specifically, partial correlations controlling for the AGI Anxiety Scale should reveal that the intrinsic and extrinsic personal religious orientations more strongly predict better and that AGI Avoidance Scale more strongly predicts poorer psychological functioning.

Finally, any comprehensive understanding of God attachments in Muslims would presumably require examination of the four attachment types. In conformity with findings from the West, the expectation was that the secure type would display the most consistent religious and psychological adjustment with the fearful type being most consistently maladjusted. Preoccupied and dismissing types should fall in between, being somewhat like the secure type in some ways, but more like the fearful type in others. Relative to speculation about the “Perfect Man” and the problem of anxiety, the secure type should in particular score higher than the more anxious preoccupied type in its integrative self-knowledge and self-control.

### Hypotheses

In summary, this project sought to extend analysis of the God attachments to the Muslim cultural context of Iran. Procedures tested seven sets of hypotheses.

First, AGI Anxiety and Avoidance Scales should correlate negatively.

Second, anxious God attachment should correlate positively and avoidant God attachment should correlate negatively with the intrinsic and extrinsic personal religious orientations.

Third, AGI Anxiety and Avoidance Scales should predict poorer mental health as made evident in correlations with lower integrative self-knowledge, self-control, self-compassion, and mindfulness, and with higher anxiety and depression.

Fourth, as empirical markers of the “Perfect Man” in mediation analyses, integrative self-knowledge and self-control should ameliorate (i.e., reduce) relationships of the AGI Anxiety Scale with psychological maladjustment. Again, this psychological maladjustment should be evident in negative connections with self-compassion and mindfulness and in positive ties with anxiety and depression.

Fifth, in mediation analyses, integrative self-knowledge and self-control should also produce evidence of suppressing AGI Anxiety Scale relationships with religious adjustment. In other words, mediation should increase ties of the AGI Anxiety Scale with religious adjustment as made evident in positive relationships with the intrinsic and extrinsic personal orientations and in a negative linkage with the AGI Avoidance Scale.

Sixth, partial correlations controlling for the AGI Anxiety Scale should strengthen ties of the intrinsic and extrinsic personal reli-

gious orientations with healthier psychological functioning and also uncover stronger connections of avoidant God attachment with psychological maladjustment.

Finally, strongest evidence of religious and psychological adjustment should appear for the secure attachment type. The fearful type should be the most maladjusted, and the preoccupied and dismissing types should fall between these two extremes. The secure type should also score higher than the more anxious preoccupied type on the integrative self-knowledge and self-control markers of the “Perfect Man.”

## Method

### Participants

All research participants were Shiite Muslims enrolled in the University of Tehran. Average age of these 94 men and 149 women was 21.1 ( $SD = 1.7$ ). All but 13 were unmarried. The group as a whole was 16.2% freshmen, 32.4% sophomore, 24.9% junior, 23.7% senior, and 2.8% more advanced studies. Academic majors included 29.1% various engineering specializations, 21.2% clinical and counseling psychology, 15.4% management, 14.8% other social sciences, 10.4% natural sciences and associated applied disciplines, 4.1% education, 2.5% statistics, and 2.5% a mix of other disciplines.

### Materials

A single questionnaire booklet contained all psychological scales. Permission to use these measures took place in conjunction with the present or previous projects. Creation of a Persian Integrative Self-Knowledge Scale occurred during initial development of this instrument (Ghorbani et al., 2008). Translation of all but the AGI and the shorter version of the Self-Compassion Scale (Raes et al., 2011) happened in preparations for previous studies. In all translation procedures, one person translated a scale from English into Persian, and then another translated it back into English. Meaningful divergences between original and back-translated statements were rare and easily resolved through revisions in the Persian translation. Unless otherwise noted, reactions to all statements within a scale ranged across 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) response options. The scoring of all constructs involved computation of the average response per item. Measures appeared in the questionnaire booklet in the order in which they are described below.

**Attachment to God.** The Attachment to God Inventory included a 14-item measure of avoidance of intimacy with God and a 14-item index of anxiety about abandonment by God (Beck & McDonald, 2004). Avoidant God attachment ( $M = 2.36$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ,  $\alpha = .87$ ) appeared in such statements as “I prefer not to depend too much on God.” A representative expression of anxious God attachment ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ,  $\alpha = .89$ ) said “I often worry about whether God is pleased with me.” This instrument used a Likert scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

**Integrative self-knowledge.** Making up the integrative self-knowledge scale ( $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ,  $\alpha = .80$ ) were 12 statements to which participants reacted with 1 (*largely untrue*) to 5 (*largely true*) response options. Psychometric adequacy of the Persian expression of this construct was established during its

creation in tandem with an English version of the same instrument administered to Americans (Ghorbani et al., 2008). In three Iranian samples, internal reliabilities exceeded .80, and validity of the instrument seemed clear in its expected correlations with over a dozen psychological constructs that also appeared in three American samples. A sample item said “By thinking deeply about myself, I can discover what I really want in life and how I might get it.”

**Religious orientation.** Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) religious orientation measures were modified for use within the Iranian Muslim context. Eight statements defined the intrinsic religious orientation ( $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ,  $\alpha = .75$ ). the extrinsic personal orientation subscale included three items ( $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ,  $\alpha = .86$ ), as did the extrinsic social measure ( $M = 1.9$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ,  $\alpha = .75$ ). Illustrating the intrinsic orientation was the self-report “My whole approach to life is based on my religion.” A representative expression of the extrinsic personal motivation said “What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow.” A sample extrinsic social item said “One reason for my being the member of a Mosque or religious gathering is that such membership helps to establish a person in the community.” Validity of the Persian versions of these scales has been confirmed in numerous Iranian studies (Ghorbani et al., 2007). In a previous analysis of the “Perfect Man,” for example, internal reliabilities were .82 for the intrinsic and extrinsic personal and .71 for the extrinsic social orientations (Ghorbani et al., 2011). The intrinsic and extrinsic personal motivations also correlated as expected with various indices of mystical experience and spiritual transcendence. The extrinsic social orientation displayed a more limited pattern of relationships.

**Anxiety and depression.** Costello and Comrey (1967) anxiety and depression scales assessed dispositional anxiety (nine items,  $M = 2.83$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ,  $\alpha = .79$ ) and depression (14 items,  $M = 2.27$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ,  $\alpha = .89$ ). Reflecting anxiety was the statement “I’m a restless and tense person.” Depression appeared in such self-reports as “I feel sad and depressed.” Persian translations of these two measures have been used in numerous Iranian investigations. In an analysis of self-compassion, for example, internal reliability for depression was .91 whereas it was .73 for anxiety. Both measures also correlated negatively, as expected, with self-compassion, integrative self-knowledge, and the basic need satisfactions of autonomy competence, and relatedness (Ghorbani et al., 2012).

**Self-compassion.** A shorter 12-item version of a larger scale recorded self-compassion (Raes et al., 2011). A previous investigation used the longer original self-compassion scale and confirmed the conceptual validity of this construct in Iran by uncovering linkages with greater self-esteem and basic need satisfaction and with lower depression and anxiety (Ghorbani et al., 2012). Illustrating this measure was the statement “I’m kind to myself when I’m experiencing suffering.” Responses to each expression of self-compassion ranged from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*). One statement displayed a negative item-to-total correlation, and its elimination produced a more internally reliable measure for use in this project ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ,  $\alpha = .73$ ).

**Mindfulness.** The Brown and Ryan (2003) mindfulness attention awareness scale assesses individual differences in tendencies to be mindful of ongoing experience through use of 15 reverse-scored expressions of its absence (e.g., “I find it difficult to stay

focused on what’s happening in the present”). In one previous project, the Persian translation of this measure displayed an internal reliability of .81 across three Iranian samples and exhibited expected relationships with over a dozen other psychological constructs (Ghorbani et al., 2009). These data paralleled findings obtained with three American samples. Responses ranged from 1 (*almost always*) to 5 (*almost never*). One item exhibited a negative item-to-total correlation, and a maximization of internal consistency followed its elimination ( $M = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ,  $\alpha = .85$ ).

**Self-control.** The Brief Self-Control Scale ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ,  $\alpha = .80$ ) included 13 items (Tangney et al., 2004). In one previous use of the Persian translation of this measure, self-control exhibited adequate internal reliability ( $\alpha = .80$ ) and demonstrated its validity in clarifying the “Perfect Man” by correlating predictably with measures of religious orientation, mystical experience, and spiritual transcendence (Ghorbani et al., 2011). Indicative of self-control was the claim “I am good at resisting temptation.” This scale used 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*) response options.

## Procedure

All procedures complied with institutional guidelines for the conduct of ethical research. Recruitment of research participants occurred in December, 2013, through announcements made in an array of classes at the University of Tehran. Those who wished to volunteer for the project remained in the room after the class was over and then received the research materials. Participants entered all responses to psychological scales directly on the questionnaire booklet. All who volunteered completed the project. Responding was confidential, and debriefing procedures were made available. Researchers transferred participant responses from the questionnaire booklet into an SPSS data file.

## Analysis

Statistical analyses moved methodically through the empirical questions of this project. Computation of correlation coefficients first documented relationships that existed among all measures. Mediation analyses then examined integrative self-knowledge and self-control as possible “Perfect Man” mediators of AGI anxiety relationships with other variables. These procedures followed the recommendations of Hayes (2012) with significance tests of indirect effects using bootstrap generated confidence interval (CI) estimations. Examination of these data maintained the conventional focus on unstandardized regression coefficients. Next, partial correlations controlling for anxious God attachment reexamined relationships of the religious orientation and avoidant God attachment scales with other constructs.

Final focus was on the God attachment types. Construction of the four types rested upon the use of medians from the two Beck and McDonald (2004) God Attachment Scales. Iranian investigations have often uncovered sex differences in religious and psychological functioning (e.g., Ghorbani, Watson, Aghababaei, & Chen, 2014; Ghorbani, Watson, Geranmayepour, & Chen, 2014a); so, a preliminary assessment determined whether gender should also be included as an independent variable in these procedures. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) examined group differences in the three religious orientations, and then a second MANOVA analyzed the mental health measures.

Inclusion of the extrinsic social orientation in all analyses made it possible to further clarify a measure that has had ambiguous implications in previous Muslim investigations.

## Results

### Correlations

Correlations among all measure appear in Table 1. AGI Anxiety and Avoidance Scales did, as expected, correlate negatively and did exhibit opposite implications for religiosity. Specifically, anxious God attachment predicted higher and avoidant God attachment predicted lower levels of all three religious orientations. Both forms of attachment also pointed toward poorer mental health. The broader maladjustment of anxious God attachment seemed evident in its inverse linkages with integrative self-knowledge, self-control, self-compassion, and mindfulness and in its positive associations with anxiety and depression. The more limited disturbances of avoidant God attachment appeared in its connections with lower mindfulness and greater depression.

Relationships observed for religious motivation and psychological measures were generally in line with expectations. All three religious orientations correlated positively. The relative adjustment of the intrinsic and extrinsic personal orientations seemed evident in connections with greater mindfulness and lower depression. The intrinsic scale also correlated positively with self-control. The extrinsic social scale displayed inverse linkages with integrative self-knowledge and with mindfulness, revealing once again at least some ties with maladjustment. As indices of more adjusted psychological functioning, integrative self-knowledge, self-control, self-compassion, and mindfulness correlated positively with each other and negatively with the maladjustment of anxiety and depression. These latter two indices of maladjustment correlated positively with each other.

### Mediation Analyses

Again, mediation analyses evaluated models of how the “Perfect Man” might affect relationships of anxious God attachment with psychological maladjustment and with religious adjustment (see Figure 1 above). Table 2 demonstrates that both models received support. As predicted by the amelioration model, the “Perfect

Man” reduced ties of the AGI Anxiety Scale with psychological maladjustment. Full mediation appeared with the mindfulness and depression dependent variables, and partial mediation occurred with self-compassion and anxiety. Both integrative self-knowledge and self-control served as significant mediators in each of these analyses.

In support of the suppression model, religious adjustment in fact became more vulnerable to anxious God attachment once statistical procedures accounted for influences of the “Perfect Man.” The inverse connection of anxious God attachment with avoidant God attachment became more robust with integrative self-knowledge explaining this effect. Direct ties of anxious God attachment with the intrinsic and extrinsic personal orientations also became stronger. Both markers of the “Perfect Man” contributed to this intrinsic orientation result. Self-control explained the extrinsic personal effect. The overall mediation effect was not significant for the positive AGI Anxiety association with the extrinsic social orientation. Some evidence of suppression, nevertheless, appeared with the self-control mediator.

### Partial Correlations

Again, correlation and mediation results suggested that anxious God attachment might interfere with the ability of Muslim religious adjustment to predict psychological adjustment. Partial correlations controlling for the AGI Anxiety Scale confirmed that possibility. For the intrinsic scale, connections with greater self-control ( $r_{ab.c} = .27$ ) and mindfulness ( $r_{ab.c} = .30$ ) and with lower depression ( $r_{ab.c} = -.26$ ,  $ps < .001$ ) became stronger. A positive connection with integrative self-knowledge ( $r_{ab.c} = .26$ ,  $p < .001$ ) also emerged for the first time.

After partialing out the AGI Anxiety Scale, extrinsic personal linkages became stronger with mindfulness ( $r_{ab.c} = .27$ ) and depression ( $r_{ab.c} = -.32$ ,  $ps < .001$ ), and partial correlations uncovered completely new relationships with greater integrative self-knowledge ( $r_{ab.c} = .15$ ), self-control ( $r_{ab.c} = .25$ ), and self-compassion ( $r_{ab.c} = .15$ ,  $ps < .05$ ).

Partial correlations also strengthened relationships of avoidant God attachment with lower integrative self-knowledge ( $r_{ab.c} = -.25$ ) and mindfulness ( $r_{ab.c} = -.28$ ) and with greater depression ( $r_{ab.c} = .36$ ,  $ps < .001$ ). New inverse ties also

Table 1

Correlations Among God Attachment, Religious Orientation, and Psychological Adjustment Measures

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. AGI anxiety	—	-.38***	.37***	.43***	.27***	-.32***	-.26***	-.32***	-.21***	.44***	.26***
2. AGI avoidance		—	-.66***	-.66***	-.16*	-.10	-.07	.00	-.17**	-.08	.23***
3. Intrinsic orientation			—	.65***	.31***	.11	.15*	-.05	.19**	.07	-.14*
4. Extrinsic personal orientation				—	.34***	-.01	.11	.00	.14*	.09	-.17*
5. Extrinsic social orientation					—	-.14*	.06	-.06	-.16*	.07	.10
6. Integrative self-knowledge						—	.50***	.43***	.58***	-.47***	-.51***
7. Self-control							—	.39***	.48***	-.38***	-.47***
8. Self-compassion								—	.27***	-.55***	-.53***
9. Mindfulness									—	-.26***	-.39***
10. Anxiety										—	.47***
11. Depression											—

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 2

Analysis of Integrative Self-Knowledge (ISK) and Self-Control (SC) as Mediators of Relationships of Anxious God Attachment as an Independent Variable Predicting Various Religious and Psychological Dependent Variables

Dependent variable	R <sup>2</sup>	Total (LL to UL)	Indirect ISK (LL to UL)	Indirect SC (LL to UL)	Direct without mediators	Direct effect
Avoidance of God	.21***	.08 (.04 to .15)*	.06 (.02 to .12)*	.02 (-.01 to .06)	-.35***	-.43***
Intrinsic orientation	.22***	-.09 (-.15 to -.05)*	-.05 (-.11 to -.01)*	-.04 (-.10 to -.01)*	.35***	.44***
Extrinsic personal orientation	.23***	-.10 (-.17 to -.04)*	-.02 (-.09 to .04)	-.08 (-.15 to -.03)*	.63***	.73***
Extrinsic social orientation	.11***	-.01 (-.06 to .06)	.05 (-.01 to .12)	-.06 (-.12 to -.02)*	.30***	.31***
Self-compassion	.25***	-.10 (-.16 to -.06)*	-.06 (-.11 to -.03)*	-.04 (-.08 to -.01)*	-.23***	-.13**
Mindfulness	.39***	-.21 (-.30 to -.14)*	-.15 (-.22 to -.09)*	-.06 (-.12 to -.03)*	-.22***	-.01
Anxiety	.33***	.12 (.07 to .18)*	.08 (.04 to .14)*	.04 (.01 to .08)*	.39***	.27***
Depression	.33***	.16 (.10 to .23)*	.10 (.05 to .16)*	.06 (.03 to .11)*	.23***	.07

Note. R<sup>2</sup> values assess the overall significance of the mediation model. "Indirect" effects examine whether the influence of the mediator was significant as defined by the lower limits (LL) and upper limits (UL) of the confidence intervals. "Direct without mediator" effects reveal the association of the independent variable with a dependent variable, whereas the "Direct effect" describes this same relationship after accounting for the influence of the potential mediators.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

appeared with self-control ( $r_{ab.c} = -.18$ ) and self-compassion ( $r_{ab.c} = -.14$ ,  $ps < .05$ ).

Finally, partial correlations depicted the extrinsic social motivation as less maladjusted. Previously negative linkages with integrative self-knowledge ( $r_{ab.c} = -.05$ ) and mindfulness ( $r_{ab.c} = -.11$ ,  $ps > .09$ ) became nonsignificant, and a new direct connection appeared with self-control ( $r_{ab.c} = .14$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Problematic mental health implications of this religious motivation, therefore, seemed at least somewhat attributable to anxious God attachment.

### Organization of MANOVA Procedures

Assessment of the God attachment types required completion of several preliminary steps. Procedures first constructed the four types using medians of 2.99 for anxious God attachment and 2.28 for avoidant God attachment. Scores below both those medians defined the secure type ( $N = 49$ , 20.3%). The preoccupied type ( $N = 67$ , 27.8%) was above the median only on anxious God attachment, whereas the dismissing type ( $N = 66$ , 27.4%) was above the median only on avoidant God attachment. Individuals in the fearful type ( $N = 59$ , 24.5%) scored above the median on both instruments.

Gender proved to be a noteworthy variable. Men and women differed in their responses to the AGI scales, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .963$ ,  $F(2, 238) = 4.59$ ,  $p < .05$ . Women ( $M \pm S.E.M. = 3.01 \pm .90$ ) scored higher than men ( $2.54 \pm .70$ ) on anxious God attach-

ment,  $F(1, 239) = 4.15$ ,  $p < .05$ . Men ( $2.79 \pm .74$ ) scored higher than women ( $2.25 \pm .82$ ) on avoidant God attachment,  $F(1, 239) = 8.05$ ,  $p < .01$ .

Types also displayed a significant association with gender,  $\chi^2(3) = 20.92$ ,  $p < .001$ . For men, frequencies of the four types were 16 (17.2%) for secure, 13 (14%) for preoccupied, 37 (39.8%) for dismissing, and 27 (29.0%) for fearful types. Frequencies for women were 33 (22.3%) for secure, 54 (36.5%) for preoccupied, 29 (19.6%) for dismissing, and 32 (21.6%) for fearful types. In other words, women proved to be more strongly represented within the secure and especially within the preoccupied types, whereas men more strongly defined the fearful and especially the dismissing types. These analyses made it clear that MANOVA procedures needed to include Gender along with God attachment types as independent variables.

### MANOVA for Religious Orientations

Significant type differences appeared with the religious motivation measures, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .617$ ,  $F(9, 562.34) = 13.72$ ,  $p = .001$ . As Table 3 demonstrates, the dismissing type was significantly lower in its intrinsic orientation than the other three types, and the fearful type was also significantly lower than the secure and preoccupied types. Secure and preoccupied types scored highest in their extrinsic personal orientation with the dismissing type lowest and the fearful type in between. The preoccupied type displayed the highest extrinsic social mean, which was signifi-

Table 3

Gender and God Attachment Type Differences in Religious Orientation

Variable	Gender			God attachment type				F
	Men	Women	F	Secure	Preoccupied	Dismissing	Fearful	
Intrinsic orientation	3.25 $\pm$ .08	3.26 $\pm$ .06	.01	3.51 $\pm$ .10 <sup>a</sup>	3.75 $\pm$ .10 <sup>a</sup>	2.68 $\pm$ .08 <sup>b</sup>	3.11 $\pm$ .09 <sup>c</sup>	30.25***
Extrinsic personal orientation	3.12 $\pm$ .11	3.48 $\pm$ .08	6.35*	3.72 $\pm$ .15 <sup>a</sup>	3.98 $\pm$ .15 <sup>a</sup>	2.27 $\pm$ .12 <sup>b</sup>	3.28 $\pm$ .13 <sup>c</sup>	32.52***
Extrinsic social orientation	1.86 $\pm$ .10	1.94 $\pm$ .08	.37	1.75 $\pm$ .14 <sup>a,c</sup>	2.17 $\pm$ .11 <sup>b,c</sup>	1.61 $\pm$ .11 <sup>a</sup>	2.08 $\pm$ .12 <sup>a,b,c</sup>	4.47***

Note. Presented for each gender and God attachment type are the mean and standard error of the mean ( $M \pm SEM$ ). For God attachment types, one mean with a letter superscript shared by another mean identifies a nonsignificant post hoc comparison ( $p < .05$ ).

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



cantly different only from the lowest average displayed by the dismissing type.

Complexities appeared in data related to gender. The overall difference between men and women was of borderline significance, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .967$ ,  $F(3, 231) = 2.63$ ,  $p = .05$ . This outcome occurred because women scored higher than men on the extrinsic personal orientation. Gender and the God attachment types also displayed a significant interaction, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .908$ ,  $F(9, 562.34) = 2.52$ ,  $p < .01$ . This effect was attributable solely to the extrinsic personal orientation,  $F(3, 233) = 3.84$ ,  $p < .01$ . Further analyses revealed gender differences in this measure for the secure,  $t(47) = 3.63$ ,  $p < .01$ , and preoccupied,  $t(65) = 2.66$ ,  $p < .05$ , but not for the dismissing,  $t(64) = 0.18$ ,  $p = .86$ , or fearful,  $t(57) = -1.12$ ,  $p = .27$ , types. Within the secure type, women ( $4.20 \pm .13$ ) scored higher than men ( $3.23 \pm .27$ ). Women ( $4.29 \pm .10$ ) also scored higher than men ( $3.67 \pm .26$ ) within the preoccupied type. With regard to the two nonsignificant comparisons, extrinsic personal averages were  $2.30 \pm .25$  for women and  $2.24 \pm .20$  for men within the dismissing type, and  $3.15 \pm .20$  for women and  $3.41 \pm .10$  for men within the fearful type. In short, the significant interaction appeared because women scored higher than men on the extrinsic personal scale, but only when they belonged to the secure and preoccupied types.

### MANOVA for Psychological Adjustment Measures

MANOVA procedures uncovered type differences in psychological adjustment that generally conformed to expectations, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .759$ ,  $F(18, 645.37) = 3.67$ ,  $p < .001$ . Table 4 demonstrates that across all post hoc comparisons, the secure type was always at the healthiest and the fearful type was always at the unhealthiest pole of psychological functioning. The dismissing type was consistently more adjusted than the fearful type and either not different from or significantly more maladjusted than the secure type. The preoccupied type displayed both similarities and difference with each of the other three types. Importantly, the secure type did, as predicted, score higher than the preoccupied type on self-control, but the expected parallel effect with integrative self-knowledge failed to materialize.

Men and women displayed overall differences in their psychological adjustment, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .918$ ,  $F(6, 228) = 3.40$ ,  $p < .01$ . Explaining this result were the higher scores of women on self-control and mindfulness (see Table 4). Gender did not significantly interact with God attachment types in predicting psycho-

logical functioning, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .923$ ,  $F(18, 645.37) = 1.03$ ,  $p = .42$ .

### Discussion

Most generally, this study made it clear that attachment frameworks can supply useful insights into religious traditions outside the West. Such a conclusion received support in a confirmation of previous speculation that Muslims may be vulnerable to anxiety in their attachments to God (Miner et al., 2014). That vulnerability was the most noteworthy result of this examination of a Shiite Muslim sample in Iran, but analysis of a Muslim personality ideal called the "Perfect Man" also suggested that anxious God attachment was not in conformity with Islamic norms for religious and psychological adjustment.

Data for the AGI supplied decisive evidence in this clarification of Muslim attachments to God. Positive AGI anxiety linkages with all three religious orientations documented the Muslim vulnerability to anxiety. For the AGI Avoidance Scale, these relationships were instead negative, and this pattern revealed a Muslim "avoidance of avoidance" that pointed toward the "surrender" to God that defines Islam. Anxious and avoidant God attachment also correlated negatively. This inverse relationship was in contrast with the positive association that is more typically observed with Western Christians (e.g., Beck & McDonald, 2004), and it further established anxiety as a vulnerability of the surrender involved in the Muslim "avoidance of avoidance." That these relationships had important mental health implications was clear in findings that the AGI Anxiety, more consistently than the AGI Avoidance Scale predicted psychological maladjustment.

This investigation also supported the suggestion that actualization of a Muslim "Perfect Man" should enhance self-perceived abilities of the believer to "do good" and thereby reduce their anxiety by getting closer to the mercy of God (Malik, 1997, 7:56; Motahhari, 2000; Shimamoto, 2008). As in a previous study (Ghorbani et al., 2011), integrative self-knowledge and self-control served as empirical markers of the "Perfect Man." These two measures fully or partially ameliorated AGI anxiety relationships with the psychological maladjustment of lower self-compassion and mindfulness and higher anxiety and depression. Integrative self-knowledge and self-control also suppressed relationships of the AGI Anxiety Scale with higher levels of all three religious orientations and with lower AGI avoidance scores. Suppression effects, therefore, suggested that the personality dynamics of the

Table 4  
Gender and God Attachment Type Differences in Psychological Adjustment

Variable	Gender		F	God attachment type				F
	Men	Women		Secure	Preoccupied	Dismissing	Fearful	
Integrative self-knowledge	3.59 ± .07	3.64 ± .05	.27	3.86 ± .10 <sup>a</sup>	3.65 ± .10 <sup>a</sup>	3.72 ± .08 <sup>a</sup>	3.22 ± .08 <sup>b</sup>	10.47***
Self-control	3.09 ± .07	3.33 ± .05	7.55**	3.40 ± .10 <sup>a</sup>	3.21 ± .10 <sup>b</sup>	3.29 ± .08 <sup>a,b</sup>	2.93 ± .08 <sup>c</sup>	5.54**
Self-compassion	3.15 ± .06	3.21 ± .05	.70	3.28 ± .09 <sup>a</sup>	3.07 ± .10 <sup>a,b</sup>	3.29 ± .08 <sup>a</sup>	2.95 ± .08 <sup>b</sup>	4.12**
Mindfulness	3.69 ± .09	4.04 ± .07	9.31**	4.22 ± .12 <sup>a</sup>	3.87 ± .12 <sup>a,b</sup>	3.91 ± .10 <sup>b</sup>	3.46 ± .11 <sup>c</sup>	7.75***
Anxiety	2.77 ± .08	2.84 ± .06	.50	2.50 ± .11 <sup>a</sup>	3.05 ± .11 <sup>b</sup>	2.56 ± .09 <sup>a</sup>	3.11 ± .09 <sup>b</sup>	10.33***
Depression	2.38 ± .08	2.20 ± .06	3.30	1.95 ± .11 <sup>a</sup>	2.21 ± .11 <sup>a,b</sup>	2.36 ± .09 <sup>b</sup>	2.64 ± .09 <sup>c</sup>	8.31***

Note. Presented for each gender and God attachment type are the mean and standard error of the mean ( $M \pm SEM$ ). For God attachment types, a mean with a letter superscript shared by another mean identifies a nonsignificant post hoc comparison ( $p < .05$ ).

\*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

“Perfect Man” operated to reduce the psychological impact of the anxious God attachment that may accompany Muslim faithfulness.

Statistical procedures controlling for anxious God attachment further documented the important role of anxiety in Muslim personality functioning. After removing variance associated with AGI anxiety scores, partial correlations produced stronger linkages of the religious orientation and avoidant god attachment measures with psychological adjustment and maladjustment, respectively. Hence, anxious God attachment obscured evidence of Muslim mental health. Noteworthy was the ability of partial correlations to yield stronger and more consistent findings that the intrinsic and extrinsic personal orientations predicted greater integrative self-knowledge and self-control. In other words, sincere Muslim religious motivations displayed clearer connections with the “Perfect Man” after statistical procedures accounted for anxious attachments to God.

God attachment types displayed largely expected religious and psychological characteristics. The secure type most consistently described religious and psychological adjustment. The preoccupied type was like the secure type in displaying the strongest intrinsic and extrinsic personal religious motivations, and this finding further confirmed a Muslim vulnerability to anxiety. The relative mental health of the secure type was, nevertheless, evident in its greater self-control and lower anxiety relative to the preoccupied type. Such a result suggested that self-control was an especially noteworthy feature of the “Perfect Man” that worked against the vulnerability of anxious God attachment; although, mediation analyses did demonstrate that integrative self-knowledge had its role to play as well. With regard to other types, the dismissing, even more than the fearful type, displayed the lowest intrinsic and extrinsic personal scores. This result once again suggested a fundamental incompatibility between God avoidance and Muslim “surrender.” The intermediate intrinsic and extrinsic personal scores of the fearful type pointed toward an ambivalent avoidance that was at least somewhat adulterated by anxious “surrender.” The problematic implications of this ambivalence seemed evident in the consistent positioning of the fearful type at the most maladjusted pole of psychological functioning.

### Additional Implications

Results of this investigation had other noteworthy implications. Avoidant God attachment displayed less extensive connections with psychological maladjustment than did anxious God attachment. Such outcomes have sometimes occurred in studies examining Western Christians, and interpretations of this pattern of differences have varied. Avoidant God attachments, for example, might simply be less problematic (Knabb & Pelletier, 2014), or they might reflect a more Stoic approach to life (Cooper et al., 2009). Another possibility is that such data might unmask psychometric inadequacies associated the AGI Avoidance Scale (Hall et al., 2009). With Western Christians, AGI Anxiety and Avoidance Scales correlate positively, but an inverse linkage between these two measures in Iran suggests the possibility of a different explanation for Muslims. Avoidance may operate as a defense against the anxiety that is a vulnerability of Muslim attachments to God. Support for that suggestion appeared in the ability of partial correlations controlling for anxious God attachment to increase connections of the AGI avoidance measure with maladjustment.

Relative to broader theoretical issues, these data questioned previous interpretations of attachment within the psychology of religion. The most direct challenge appeared for the compensation model. The greater anxiety associated with Muslim attachments to God presumably could in no way reflect compensation. Opportunities for applying the correspondence model also seemed limited. Confirmation of that model would presumably require anxiety-inducing caregiving as a Muslim norm to which Muslim attachments to God would then correspond. That possibility seems unlikely given previous demonstrations that indices of sincere Muslim commitments like the intrinsic and extrinsic personal orientations predict a relative mental health that should be incompatible with an anxious IWM (e.g., Ghorbani et al., 2007). Moreover, the intrinsic and extrinsic personal orientations predicted better mental health in the present project after partial correlations controlled for AGI anxiety scores, including stronger ties with the two empirical markers of the “Perfect Man.” Partial correlations also produced stronger inverse connections of anxious God attachment with the “Perfect Man.” Anxious God attachments, therefore, seemed to work against the display of a Muslim personality ideal and thus could not “correspond” to normative Muslim caregiving arrangements and attachments to God.

Anxious God attachments seemed instead to highlight a Muslim vulnerability. One implication of this conclusion is that attachment in the psychology of religion cannot be fully reduced to individual differences in early life experiences. In reading and reciting religious texts, believers may take a role in relationship to God (Källstad, 1987; Van der Lans, 1987; Wikström, 1987) and that role may define tradition-relevant forms of attachment. Muslim role-taking appears to have anxiety as a specific vulnerability, just as Miner et al. (2014) argued. The ability of the intrinsic, extrinsic personal, and “Perfect Man” constructs to predict psychological adjustment, nevertheless, revealed that Islam has resources for overcoming anxious God attachment. Beyond the Qur’anic recommendation to “do good” in order to find “hope” in the “mercy” of God (Malik, 1997, 7:56), one other verse asserts, for example “Allah says: ‘O My servants who have transgressed against their souls, do not despair of Allah’s mercy, for Allah forgives all sins. It is He Who is the Forgiving, the Merciful’” (Malik, 1997, 39:53). Another adds “O my sons! . . . Never give up hope of Allah’s mercy; in fact, none despairs of Allah’s mercy except the unbelieving people” (Malik, 1997, 12:87). Islam emphasizes that fear of God must be balanced by hope in the mercy of God. Hence, anxious God attachment cannot be the norm in Muslim role-taking.

Psychologically healthy attachments to God may be expressed in a recently developed Muslim Experiential Religiousness Scale (Ghorbani, Watson, Geranmayepour, & Chen, 2014a). Designed as a measure of Muslim spirituality, this instrument reliably predicts psychological adjustment (Ghorbani, Watson, Geranmayepour, & Chen, 2013, 2014a, 2014b) and essentially describes Muslim attachments to God in terms of three Qur’anic themes involving closeness, submission, and love. One item says, for instance “Intimate closeness to God is at the core of my efforts to be religious.” Another implies that God serves as safe haven for exploration (Ainsworth, 1985) “What has given me peace in all of my life difficulties is being in submission to God’s will.” Especially relevant to the present project is yet another item that points toward a mixture of “fear” and “hope” in Muslim spirituality: “Sometimes, submission to God simultaneously creates within me a fear

and a love of God.” Future investigations might examine the possibility that Muslim experiential religiousness can usefully clarify the mentally healthy psychological dynamics that presumably can operate in relationships among the AGI, “Perfect Man,” and other relevant constructs.

As in previous investigations (Ghorbani et al., 2007), the extrinsic social orientation displayed weak connections with psychological maladjustment. Specifically, this scale correlated negatively with integrative self-knowledge and mindfulness. Problematic implications of this motivation seemed at least somewhat attributable to anxious God attachment because partial correlations controlling for the AGI Anxiety Scale rendered these negative correlations nonsignificant and uncovered a direct linkage with self-control. Such data supplemented previous findings in suggesting the need for other instruments that can operationalize the beneficial social motivations that may accompany religious commitments (Ghorbani, Watson, Zarehi, & Shamohammadi, 2010; Watson, Chen, & Ghorbani, 2014).

Gender differences appeared. Women scored higher than men on the extrinsic personal orientation and lower on avoidant God attachment. These results seemed in line with previous findings that women often display greater religiosity (e.g., Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 1996). Rather than revealing a vulnerability associated with a greater openness to religion, their higher levels of anxious God attachment could have reflected tendencies of women to self-report greater anxiety in general (McLean & Anderson, 2009); but arguing against that explanation was the failure of women to score significantly higher on the Anxiety Scale. In conformity with previous findings (Chapple, Vaske, & Hope, 2010), women exhibited greater self-control, but their higher mindfulness was in contrast with at least one observation in the West (MacKillop & Anderson, 2007). Mindfulness data perhaps revealed a cultural difference that deserves additional research attention.

### Limitations

As in every investigation, limitations dictate a need for interpretative caution. Some limitations revolved around characteristics of the sample. University students served as the research participants. Whether the present conclusions generalize more broadly across Iranian society will require additional studies that use more representative samples. In addition, Iran is a Shiite Muslim society. Any assumption that the present findings can elucidate attachments to God in largely Sunni Muslim societies or in Muslims living as a minority group within non-Islamic societies would be premature.

Other limitations pointed toward broader conceptual concerns. All conclusions essentially rested upon correlational findings. Such data cannot supply definitive evidence of causality. This caution applies even to mediation analyses that examined so-called “causal models.”

Linguistic concerns may also be important. The “Perfect Man” should not be reified because it represents a metaphor that usefully captures Iranian Muslim themes about a personality ideal. Shimamoto (2008) emphasizes “In general, the notion of the ‘Perfect Man’ is rarely discussed from a philosophical perspective among the general public,” but “discussions of the theme from the mystical standpoint are abundant and widespread” (pp. 30–31). In the

present and in a previous project (Ghorbani et al., 2011), self-control and integrative self-knowledge scales served as convenient, already validated measures of personality processes relevant to the “Perfect Man.” The language of these instruments is, nevertheless, secular. More striking findings about Muslim attachments to God might appear if new measures expressed self-knowledge and self-control in more explicitly religious and mystical terms.

Finally, conclusions of this project rested upon use of a very specific array of measures that presumably only begin to clarify Muslim attachments to God. More complete understandings will require analyses of additional tradition-relevant variables. That possibility was already mentioned with regard to Muslim experiential religiousness. Miner et al. (2014) have also offered important specific suggestions about the need to develop instruments that explore attachment in a language that is sensitive to Islamic perspectives.

### Conclusion

Most noteworthy in this investigation was the demonstration that Muslims may be especially vulnerable to anxiety in their relationships with God. That possibility points toward important questions for future research. Additional factors that ameliorate anxious God attachment, for example, need to be identified. With regard to psychological practice, these data suggest that anxious attachments to God may be a prominent concern for those in educational and counseling environments who seek to nurture Muslim religious adjustment. Efforts to promote that purpose might benefit from deeper insights into Muslim spirituality, Muslim personality ideals, and tradition-specific perspectives on hope in the mercy and love of God. Finally, anxiety in Muslim attachments to God suggests a need to expand interpretative frameworks within the psychology of religion. Neither the compensation nor correspondence models seemed useful in explicating the anxious God attachment of Iranian Muslims. Theoretical innovations may need to explain how role-taking processes within a religious tradition might influence attachments to God (e.g., Wikström, 1987). Such a possibility presumably would apply not only to Islam, but also across all other religious traditions in which an attachment framework seems warranted.

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