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Research Article

Story for Every Fall: Adam and Eve as a Narrative of Healing and Return

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Abstract
This conceptual article examines the Adam and Eve narrative in Genesis and the Qur'an through moral injury theory and spiritual bibliotherapy. It draws on a focused, non-systematic reading of the primary passages and cited interpretive and psychological literature. It does not report a systematic search, an independently coded corpus, or a clinical intervention. Four interpretive themes organize the reading: (1) will, responsibility, and forgetfulness; (2) transgression, heedlessness, and rebellion; (3) shame, guilt, estrangement, and confrontation; and (4) hope, restoration, healing, and redemption. Building on these themes, the article proposes a five-stage Narrative-Based Spiritual Repair Cycle: (1) boundary and temptation; (2) transgression and cognitive conflict; (3) shame, guilt, and estrangement; (4) confrontation and narrative reflection; and (5) repentance, forgiveness, and the possibility of repair. The model distinguishes confrontation and narrative reflection as a possible counseling process and links textual motifs to questions for further exploration. Whereas Altınlı Macıć (2025) examines the narrative through moral injury, this article develops a bibliotherapy-oriented account of identification, emotional expression, insight, and meaning-making and considers its possible use in spiritual counseling. The textual comparison concerns Genesis and Qur'anic passages, not separate Jewish, Christian, and Islamic reception histories. The proposed cycle is an interpretive framework; its clinical acceptability and effectiveness have not been tested.

Keywords:
Psychology of Religion • Adam and Eve • Spiritual Counseling • Moral Injury • Bibliotherapy

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Introduction

Literature and reading have long been recognized as sources of psychological and spiritual insights; this tradition dates back to ancient Greece, where books were used in healing practices. Within this historical framework, bibliotherapy, literally meaning “book therapy” or “reading therapy”, has emerged as a therapeutic approach that employs literary and narrative materials to facilitate emotional and spiritual reflection. Although bibliotherapy is still considered a relatively recent mental health intervention and empirical research in this field remains limited (Naj & Kumar, 2021), it has increasingly been used within counseling and spiritual guidance contexts. When sacred texts constitute the primary resource, this approach is commonly referred to as spiritual bibliotherapy. In this approach, various literary forms, including books, narratives, mythological stories, and spiritually oriented texts, are employed to access individuals’ emotional and spiritual processes (Frame, 2003). Throughout history, sacred texts have functioned not only as sources of theological and moral instruction but also as catalysts for deeper psychological reflection. Sacred narratives, therefore, may serve as powerful symbolic frameworks through which individuals confront existential questions, moral dilemmas, and experiences of spiritual or moral injury.

The narrative of Adam and Eve, regarded as the first human beings in the Abrahamic traditions, is among the most universal stories in human history. Occupying a symbolic place in sacred texts, this narrative can make significant contributions to spiritual counseling and care when approached through a bibliotherapeutic framework. Themes such as eating the forbidden fruit, awareness of nakedness, hiding from God, and expulsion from paradise reflect not only theological processes but also psychological ones. These processes may be conceptualized as the testing of human will and responsibility, the experience of value conflict (or violation), the emergence of shame and guilt, the subsequent spiritual alienation, and ultimately the transition toward renewed responsibility and repair through exile. In this respect, the Adam and Eve narrative exhibits striking parallels with the concept of moral injury (Altınlı Macıć, 2025), a phenomenon as old as human history yet only recently articulated within modern psychological literature (Altınlı Macıć, 2022; Koenig et al., 2020).

Moral injury refers to the psychological, social, and spiritual consequences that emerge when individuals perpetrate, fail to prevent, or witness suffering and actions that violate their deeply held moral values and commitments. These experiences frequently lead to a constellation of intense emotional responses, including guilt, shame, anger, withdrawal, spiritual alienation, and a loss of meaning (Drescher et al., 2011; Litz et al., 2009; Litz & Walker, 2025; Nazarov et al., 2024; Richardson et

al., 2020). Research suggests that moral injury manifests across multiple domains, including disruptions in self- and other-perception, alterations in moral cognition, social disconnection, intense moral emotions, self-sabotaging behaviors, and changes in beliefs about meaning, purpose, and spirituality (Litz, 2024). Drawing on the question of whether moral injury may emerge even in the absence of trauma or direct violation through various emotional and cognitive processes, Vaknin and Ne'eman-Haviv (2025) propose a theoretical framework that reconceptualizes moral distress following the violation of personal values. They argue that dominant conceptualizations of moral injury have been criticized for emphasizing clinical and trauma-related dimensions while neglecting their moral, existential, and value-based aspects. This clinical focus has often led to the assumption that moral injury arises only from clearly transgressive acts, thereby overlooking the complex moral conflicts and ambiguities underlying morally distressing experiences. Their model therefore suggests that moral injury should be understood not as a fixed pathological outcome but as a phenomenon along a continuum. Despite these important contributions, there remains no clear consensus regarding the conceptual boundaries of moral injury, particularly in relation to adjacent constructs such as PTSD, moral distress, and spiritual struggle. Moreover, the literature has paid limited attention to the narrative and symbolic frameworks through which individuals interpret experiences of moral transgression, a gap that invites further exploration of narrative resources, including sacred narratives, in processes of moral meaning-making.

A recent therapeutic approach has emphasized the role of narrative reconstruction in addressing moral injury. Accordingly, narrative moviola therapy enables clients to reinterpret morally complex experiences by recounting their stories from multiple perspectives, thereby facilitating meaning-making and moral integration. This development suggests that narrative frameworks play an important role in processing moral transgression and repairing moral identity (Harris et al., 2026). In this respect, sacred narratives may provide particularly rich symbolic frameworks for interpreting experiences of moral transgression and restoration can be interpreted. The narrative of Adam and Eve, for instance, symbolically illustrates awareness, guilt, and the ensuing search for reconnection following a sacred transgression. From this perspective, the narrative also demonstrates significant potential for therapeutic reflection within the context of spiritual counseling and care (Altınlı Macıć, 2025). This article develops a conceptual reading of the Adam and Eve narrative at the intersection of moral injury, spiritual counseling, and bibliotherapy. It first describes the narrative and bibliotherapy concepts, then reads selected passages in Genesis and the Qur'an under four interpretive themes, and finally derives a proposed five-stage framework. The analysis extends the first author's earlier moral-injury reading (Altınlı Macıć, 2025) by specifying how a

willing client might engage with the story as a text, while leaving the clinical usefulness of that proposal for later study.

Purpose

This study examines the Adam and Eve narrative in Genesis 2–3 and Qur'anic passages concerning Adam and his spouse (Q 2:35–37; 7:19–23; 20:115–123) from the perspectives of the psychology of religion and spiritual counseling. Its aim is to identify points of contact between narrative motifs, moral injury concepts, and possible bibliotherapeutic processes, and to propose an interpretive framework for further inquiry. The comparison is limited to these two scriptural accounts. Selected interpretive works are used to clarify particular passages; the study does not systematically compare Jewish, Christian, and Islamic reception traditions or test the efficacy of a counseling intervention.

Method

This is a focused, non-systematic conceptual analysis of published texts. The primary passages were selected because they directly narrate the prohibition, temptation, transgression, recognition of nakedness, response to divine address, and subsequent consequences or guidance in Genesis 2:8–17 and 3:1–24 and Qur'an 2:35–37, 7:19–23, and 20:115–123. The commentaries cited in this article used to clarify particular expressions and interpretive sources, rather than as a systematically selected or comprehensive body of commentary. Passages outside this narrative sequence and works not directly bearing on these concepts were not treated as primary material. The four organizing themes were developed by comparing motifs in these passages across the two texts and considering their relationship to the psychological concepts defined in the cited literature. (1) will, responsibility, and forgetfulness; (2) transgression and temptation; (3) shame, guilt, and estrangement; and (4) hope, repentance, and restoration. These are interpretive categories developed for this argument, not the output of a documented systematic search or independently coded corpus. Braun and Clarke (2006) informed the attention to patterns of meaning, but their full empirical thematic-analysis procedure is not claimed here. The five-stage model in the Discussion is a further theoretical construction from these four themes and the bibliotherapy literature, not an additional empirical finding. No human participants or clinical outcome data were included. Source-to-model correspondence is made explicit in the Discussion. The primary textual loci and theoretical links for each model stage are summarized there so that the proposed model can be distinguished from the four organizing themes.

Bibliotherapy and Sacred Narratives in Spiritual Counseling

Bibliotherapy, one of the techniques used in spiritual counseling, is a method that aims to help individuals understand their own problems and develop coping strategies (Eliasa, 2011) by engaging with literary or sacred texts through reading. Research on particular forms of bibliotherapy and population is discussed in the literature (Bulut, 2010), but its results cannot establish the effectiveness of the sacred narrative or model proposed here. In essence, bibliotherapy may be described as "matching the right book with the right person at the right time" (Öner, 2007, p. 133). Bibliotherapy is a psychotherapeutic approach in which books and other written materials are used under the guidance of a counselor for therapeutic purposes. This method helps individuals develop insight and approach their experiences from new perspectives. The symbolic content found in texts facilitates individuals' ability to confront and to identify with their own experiences. Spiritual and psychological counselors may also draw on methods related to clients' sacred values when appropriate to help them cope with adverse experiences and strengthen their psychological resilience (Doğanay, 2023). Interactive bibliotherapy places the client at the center of the process, emphasizing personal growth, change, and healing (Ekşi & Keskinoğlu, 2020). It encourages adult readers to develop critical and reflective thinking skills and supports the effective application of this method in everyday life (Eliasa, 2011). Interactive bibliotherapy is distinguished by its emphasis on the belief that benefits may depend on a successful triadic relationship among the client, the text, and the bibliotherapist. When facilitated by a professionally competent counselor, interactive bibliotherapy may support individuals in self-exploration, emotional clarification, and the development of therapeutic insight (Rossiter & Brown, 1988). Cohen (as cited in Eliasa, 2011) notes that the interactive bibliotherapy approach is not limited to clinical intervention but also emphasizes personal growth.

Reading possesses intrinsic therapeutic value (Rossiter & Brown, 1988). Owing to its powerful influence on attitudes and behaviors, reading plays a significant role in shaping and transforming of human values (Mehdizadeh & Khosravi, 2019). When appropriately applied, sharing books and stories can facilitate emotional repair. During the reading process, clients have the opportunity to experience their emotions within a safer psychological space by identifying with the characters in the text. Hynes and Hynes-Berry (1986) define bibliotherapy as an interactive process between the client and the text. Within this process, change occurs through catharsis, insight, or the modeling of characters' behavior. The underlying premise of this approach is that engagement with literary characters who resemble the client helps individuals recognize themselves, release emotions, gain new perspectives on life, and establish new modes of interaction (Belen, 2022). From a psychological

perspective, bibliotherapy involves four core stages for the client: identification, catharsis, insight, and universality.

Identification and projection are processes by which listeners or readers perceive characters, settings, or situations as if they were real, enabling individuals to recognize elements that resemble themselves or their circumstances in the selected text. Through this process, the client identifies the protagonist's problem and establishes identification with the protagonist by discerning similarities and differences between the protagonist's experiences and their own. The counselor guides the individual to understand the protagonist's personality traits and relational patterns. This stage provides the foundation for the individual to begin projecting their own difficulties (Öner, 2007). Lenkowsky and Lenkowsky (as cited in Mehdizadeh & Khosravi, 2019) emphasize that during the identification stage, readers gain hope and experience a reduction in tension by learning to view their own problems from a different perspective through the characters, situations, and elements presented in the narrative.

Catharsis, the stage of emotional release and purification, involves eliciting emotions when the listener or reader is psychologically ready. During this phase, individuals begin to recognize emotions that they have previously suppressed or been unable to articulate. Together with the counselor, clients explore which emotions are triggered through their identification with the story's protagonist. Unlike ordinary reading, this stage explicitly aims at emotional purification (Öner, 2007). Most definitions of catharsis emphasize two fundamental components: emotional and cognitive. The emotional component is associated with the intense expression and processing of emotion. In contrast, the cognitive component is associated with the attainment of insight, the emergence of new awareness, and the bringing of unconscious material into consciousness. As a result of this process, positive psychological change may occur (Bukar et al., 2019). Catharsis enables individuals to recognize that others experience problems similar to their own and to express their emotions regarding a particular concept or situation.

Insight refers to the listener's or reader's realization that change is possible and that solutions to problems can be found. Through this awareness, individuals may recognize how they can modify their behaviors, situations, or emotions (Hayes, 1992) and, influenced by the narrative, begin to draw upon their own creative capacities to generate new ways of addressing their difficulties. In this way, bibliotherapy supports the development of a meaningful and integrated awareness of one's life experiences (Öner, 2007), ultimately facilitating processes of psychological and emotional repair. Livengood further notes that through the universality process in bibliotherapy, individuals come to recognize that they are not

alone and develop a sense of trust, grounded in the belief that help similar to that depicted in the text may also be available to them (Livengood, 1961).

Religious literature may be regarded as a functional resource for enriching individuals' faith worlds and spiritual experiences. In multi-faith contexts, spiritual counselors guide individuals in drawing upon their own belief systems and religious resources, such as sacred texts, narratives, and prayer to cultivate spiritual strength (Ağılkaya Şahin, 2017). By recommending books and other writings drawn from clients' own traditions, counselors can help them recognize the multilayered meanings embedded in religious texts and teachings. In this way, individuals may be supported in discovering new meanings in spiritual stories, expressions, and terms that had previously contributed to feelings of constraint or stagnation. Religious texts also offer narratives that serve as models for how individuals may understand and relate to themselves (Pargament, 2007).

Recognizing that the conflicting emotions experienced during sacred or spiritual struggles, such as anger toward God, fear, disappointment, and feelings of abandonment, are human and natural may constitute an important step toward spiritual repair. In fostering this awareness, presenting exemplary figures from the client's own sacred tradition offers a particularly effective approach (Pargament, 2007). From this perspective, the significance of sacred narratives lies not in verifying their historical accuracy but in understanding their existential and psychological functions for human life. Accordingly, believers are encouraged to focus less on the narrative details and more on the deeper meanings and moral insights conveyed through these stories (Doğanay, 2023). Prophetic narratives, in particular, possess considerable therapeutic potential in this regard. However, for these narratives to achieve their full effectiveness, they must be interpreted and adapted to resonate with contemporary contexts (Atalay, 2012). Through its wisdom, narratives, commands, and prohibitions, the Qur'an exerts a therapeutic influence that, within the framework of Qur'an-based Islamic bibliotherapy, guides individuals toward greater self-awareness, supports personal development, and assists in coping with emotional and spiritual distress grounded in divine values. In this process, the guidance of Qur'anic verses contributes to understanding and accepting life situations, developing problem-solving skills, transforming cognitive patterns, and reducing psychological tension (Fauzi et al., 2024).

The Role of the Adam and Eve Narrative in Bibliotherapeutic Practice

The term qissa literally means “to trace someone’s footsteps, to follow closely, or to convey news or an account,” and refers to the step-by-step and detailed narration of events related to a person or occurrence (Şengül, 2022, p. 498). In the Qur’an, this term appears twenty-five times across twenty-one verses in various morphological forms (Öztürk, 2006). Qur’anic narratives, which occupy a central place in the text, serve to elucidate, interpret, and actualize the divine message through concrete examples (Kaya, 2002).

The primary aim of Qur’anic narratives is to remind humanity of the belief in divine unity (tawḥīd) and to emphasize the universality of the divine message. While these narratives affirm the Prophet’s prophethood and the truth of revelation, they also reveal the common source of the revealed religions. At the same time, they function as moral and spiritual warnings, conveying that God grants assistance to believers, while allowing respite or administering punishment to disbelievers. By recalling the blessings bestowed upon chosen servants, Qur’anic narratives encourage righteous deeds and strengthen individuals’ spiritual resilience by highlighting the deceptive role of Satan (Kaya, 2002). In terms of their nature, Qur’anic narratives may be classified into three categories: first, prophetic narratives that recount historical events and figures; second, narratives that describe events occurring during the period of revelation; and third, exemplary narratives related to the unseen realm (Şengül, 2022). Among the prophetic narratives, the story of Adam and Eve is regarded in classical theological literature as a foundational symbolic account for understanding the ontological position of the human being before divine power and the relational bond between God and humanity (Altınlı Macıć, 2025). Individuals possess the potential to transform the quality of their engagement with such narratives in sacred texts. These narratives contain profound symbolic meanings that shape moral, psychological, and spiritual structures. Highlighting this point, Erich Fromm stated that certain texts profoundly shaped his life, noting in particular that the prophetic narratives in the Torah played a decisive role in his personal development (Karacoşkun, 2010). In this context, the Adam and Eve narrative may be considered an archetypal example of self-awareness, inner transformation, and spiritual awakening (Altınlı Macıć, 2025).

The narrative of Adam and Eve, conveyed through similar themes in both the Torah and the Qur’an, constitutes a significant example in spiritual counseling insofar as it is associated with the process of restructuring the human relationship with God along the axes of forgetfulness, transgression, shame, guilt, alienation, crisis of meaning and repentance, as well as hope, forgiveness, and healing. The Adam and Eve narrative appears in both the Torah (Genesis, chapter 3) and in

several chapters of the Qur'an, most notably al-Baqarah, al-A'rāf, and Ṭā Hā. It is among the oldest sacred narratives to center on the themes of human creation, testing, and the Fall. The presence of the narrative in two distinct sacred texts with closely related elements indicates a shared emphasis on humanity's moral and spiritual journey. In both traditions, the story may be interpreted as an early symbolic representation of fractures within the individual's inner moral structure (Altınlı Macıć, 2025).

In the Torah's account, God creates Adam in the Garden of Eden and assigns him the task of cultivating it (Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, 1995/2007, Genesis 2:8–17). Within the garden are the "tree of life" and the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, 1995/2007, Genesis 2:9). God commands Adam not to eat from the tree. However, the serpent deceives Eve by claiming that they will gain wisdom and become like God, and Eve then eats the fruit and gives it to Adam. Upon gaining knowledge, the couple's eyes are opened, and they become aware of their nakedness. Experiencing shame, they cover themselves with fig leaves. When they hear the voice of God, they hide, and during the ensuing questioning, the blame shifts: Adam blames Eve, and Eve blames the serpent. Consequently, God expels them from Eden, commands them to till the soil, provides them with garments and allows them to continue their lives.

The Qur'anic narrative (The Qur'an, 2004, 2:35–37; 7:19–23; 20:115–122), while containing similar themes, differs in its theological emphases. God takes a covenant from Adam, yet Adam fails to demonstrate sufficient resolve (ʿazm) and forgets this commitment. While Adam and his spouse dwell in Paradise, God commands them not to approach a particular tree. Satan deceives them by appealing to their desires for "eternity" and "angelic status." After they eat from the tree, their private parts become exposed, and they become aware of their nakedness, covering themselves with the leaves of Paradise. Following this, God admonishes them, and Adam and his spouse respond, "Our Lord, we have wronged our souls: if You do not forgive us and have mercy, we shall be lost" (The Qur'an, 2004, 7:23). God then sends Adam and his spouse down to earth due to Satan's deception. Subsequently, God teaches Adam the words of repentance, accepts his repentance, guides him to the right path, and restores him to a position of favor.

Both sacred texts address the human being's trial in relation to divine will, focusing on error, repentance, and forgiveness. The narratives particularly emphasize the human propensity to err, while underscoring that sincere remorse and repentance in response to sin play a decisive role in attaining divine forgiveness (Kara, 2014). However, whereas the account in the Torah is conveyed through an

anthropomorphic style (Guthrie, 1980; Guthrie, 1995; Hume, 1957) -such as God walking in the garden-the Qur'anic narrative places greater emphasis on divine authority and mercy. In this respect, the story of Adam and Eve constitutes both a product of a shared cultural heritage and an archetypal narrative that shapes each tradition's understanding of humanity. In a bibliotherapy application conducted as part of her doctoral research, Belen (2022) used the Adam and Eve narrative to explore the meaning of life and existential purpose. She explained that, after refusing to prostrate before Adam, Iblis was granted respite and devoted himself to leading human beings astray. In her account, Satan seeks to do so by provoking distress and anxiety, encouraging miserliness, arousing fear of poverty, creating discord, and deceiving people. Belen also emphasized the narrative's response to these experiences: believers are called to seek refuge in God and to trust that Satan has no authority over those who have faith in Him. She presented the recitation of aʿūdhu billāhi minaʾsh-shayṭāniʾr-rajīm before an undertaking as an expression of that reliance on God. Beyond Belen's application, the Adam and Eve narrative may also offer several avenues for addressing moral injury.

The fall experienced by Adam and Eve symbolizes, within the individual's inner world, processes of guilt, self-awareness, and the search for forgiveness, thereby allowing error to be reinterpreted not as something to be denied but as a potentially transformative experience. In this respect, the narrative may be considered one possible interpretive resource for spiritual guidance that, through its thematic structure, renders visible inner conflict, shame, guilt, and spiritual healing processes, and supports individuals in making meaning of their own life stories (Kasapoğlu, 2004). Accordingly, such narratives function as powerful symbolic patterns that help individuals bridge existential ruptures and reconnect with possibilities of hope and healing. Within this context, bibliotherapy using sacred texts can facilitate collaborative reading and interpretation of the Adam and Eve narrative with a willing client. The themes may prompt reflection on responsibility, shame, and the possibility of repair when the client welcomes such a reading. The themes identified through this conceptual reading of the use of this narrative in bibliotherapy as a form of spiritual counseling are addressed in the following subheadings, within a framework drawing on relevant theological sources, classical and modern commentaries, and the literature on the psychology of religion, spiritual counseling, shame and guilt, and moral injury. The possibilities each theme offers for spiritual counseling are examined in detail.

Will, Responsibility, and Forgetfulness

Will refers to the human capacity to act freely by choosing between good and evil and to assume moral responsibility for those choices (Kılıçoğlu, 2021). Responsibility, in turn, is defined as the awareness of bearing the consequences of one's actions and is regarded in existential psychology as the necessary complement of freedom (Frankl, 1946/2021). Forgetfulness, by contrast, denotes the temporary suspension of awareness and recall, even when the knowledge itself remains present in the mind. Accordingly, abandoning something knowingly is considered heedlessness, whereas abandoning it due to lack of awareness or failure to remember is understood as forgetfulness (Uludağ, 1996).

Within the context of the Adam narrative in the Qur'an, the concept of forgetfulness is most explicitly addressed in the verse, "We also commanded Adam before you, but he forgot and We found him lacking in constancy" (The Qur'an, 2004, 20:115). This statement indicates that forgetfulness constitutes an ontological vulnerability at the core of human existence. Exegetes emphasize that the term "forgetfulness" (nisyān) in this verse does not refer to a mere failure of memory, but rather to a tendency to disregard spiritual truth, pointing to a persistent characteristic of human nature (Esed, 2000). It is further noted that the Arabic term insān, derived from the root n-s-y (forgetfulness), reflects this dimension of the human condition, as humanity is described as having been named for its propensity to forget its covenant (Kökver, 2018). The closing phrase, "we found him lacking in constancy," suggests that although Adam initially displayed the will to adhere to the divine prohibition, he was unable to sustain this determination in the face of Satan's insinuation and seductive guidance (The Qur'an, 2004, 20:115, 120). Taken as a whole, the verse illustrates that when the balance between remembrance, resolve, and responsibility is disrupted, human will be weakened.

Although the act of forgetting is not explicitly articulated in the Torah, the disregard of God's prohibition may be interpreted symbolically as representing both heedlessness, in the sense of conscious neglect, and forgetfulness, understood as a temporary loss of awareness (Uludağ, 1996). In both the Qur'an and the Torah, the forbidden tree serves as a testing ground, revealing human will. This trial simultaneously represents a critical rupture in which tendencies toward forgetfulness, illusion, and self-deception come into play. From this perspective, forgetfulness may also be read as a psychological reality, manifested in the gradual neglect of one's own values, goals, or inner covenant. In the Qur'an, it is narrated that despite God's explicit warning, Adam and his spouse act in accordance with Satan's insinuation: "Adam, this is your enemy, yours and your wife's: do not let him drive you out of the garden and make you miserable" (The Qur'an, 2004,

20:117). Particularly noteworthy in these verses is the emphasis on the human being as a creature tested through the exercise of free will, and on the responsibility-centered nature of the divine address, which directs Adam to assume the consequences of his own choices. From the perspective of spiritual counseling, the verse conveys a powerful message that foregrounds the individual's responsibility to remain mindful and to sustain the active exercise of will.

Transgression, Heedlessness, and Rebellion

In lexical terms, error (khaṭaʾ) is understood as the opposite of correctness and refers to the failure to attain what is right in thought, speech, or action (Apaydın, 1997). Heedlessness (ghaflah) is defined as a state of delusion and estrangement from truth that arises from insufficient vigilance or attentiveness. In this sense, an individual is considered heedless when they abandon what is required despite knowing what is right. Rebellion (ʿiṣyān), by contrast, denotes deviation from obedience, noncompliance with a command, and resistance to accepted norms of conduct (Topaloğlu, 2003). When these concepts of error, heedlessness, and rebellion are read together within the revelatory tradition of the Adam narrative, their significance becomes more pronounced. Adam and Eve are led into error through Satan's insinuations. However, before this, they are directly addressed by a divine warning: "But you and your wife, Adam, live in the Garden. Both of you eat whatever you like, but do not go near this tree or you will become wrongdoers" (The Qur'an, 2004, 7:19).

The expression "you will become wrongdoers" (ẓālimīn) in the verse contains the concept of ẓulm (wrongdoing), a term that requires careful consideration of its meaning and scope. In the Qur'an, the concept of ẓulm is employed in two primary contexts: in more than two hundred instances to denote disbelief, associating partners with God, violation of divine commands, or the commission of sin; and in more than twenty verses to refer to injustice within human relationships (Çağrıcı, 2013). The first instance of ẓulm mentioned in the Qur'an, in the context of disobedience to a divine command and violation, is Adam and Eve's eating the forbidden fruit (Çağrıcı, 2013). Nevertheless, some scholars have interpreted ẓulm not solely as a form of injustice directed toward others, but also as harm or injustice inflicted upon one's own self-that is, self-wrongdoing (Ulutürk, 1990). According to this perspective, when an individual acts contrary to divine command, commits an error, falls into heedlessness, or, in other words, rebels, they in fact inflict harm upon their spiritual being, thereby wronging themselves.

The Qur'an further states explicitly that Satan first creates cognitive confusion and then deceives Adam and Eve by presenting an alluring goal through the desires

for “angelic status” and “eternity”: “Your Lord only forbade you this tree to prevent you becoming angels or immortals” (The Qur’an, 2004, 7:20). In the Torah, the narrative is conveyed within a similar framework, though with differences in symbolic motifs. Whereas the act of temptation in the Qur’an is narrated directly through the figure of Iblis, in the Torah it is symbolized through the motif of the serpent (Öztürk, 2004). Here, an anthropomorphic mode of expression is again evident. In the Torah, the serpent’s statement to the woman, “You will not die; . . . you will be like God” (Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, 1995/2007, Genesis 3:4, 5), corresponds closely to the Qur’anic depiction of Satan’s deception through appeals to immortality and angelic transformation. Thus, both texts converge on the point that human vulnerability is triggered by the desire for immortality and for elevation to a higher state of being.

In the continuation of the verse, Satan’s oath (The Qur’an, 2004, 7:21) represents a manipulative form of discourse through which he presents himself as a benevolent and well-intentioned guide. As articulated in the Qur’anic language, Satan seeks to enhance his credibility by swearing an oath and thereby deceiving Adam and his spouse (The Qur’an, 2004, 7:22). Similarly, in the Torah, the serpent is depicted as distorting God’s words in an effort to generate cognitive doubt (Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, 1995/2007, Genesis 3:1–5). This parallel between the two revelatory traditions reveals a fundamental psychological reality: even when human beings know the truth and are directly addressed by divine revelation, they remain capable of error and deception. Indeed, the broader context of the verses indicates that even those who believe in God may be misled. As expressed in a classical formulation attributed to a scholar, “If someone deceives us by invoking God, we may indeed be deceived,” highlighting this human vulnerability (İbn Kesir, 2012, pp. 96–97). Consequently, in both the Qur’an and the Torah, the Adam narrative presents error as a universal human experience intrinsically linked to will, responsibility, and moral testing.

Shame, Guilt, Estrangement, and Confrontation

Shame and guilt are two fundamental self-evaluative emotions that emerge when individuals become aware of a negative or morally problematic behavior. Guilt is associated with acknowledging one's wrongdoing, assuming responsibility, and developing an inner motivation to repair or compensate for the behavior. Shame, by contrast, manifests when the individual does not limit the error to a specific action but identifies it with the whole self, leading to feelings of worthlessness, inadequacy, and humiliation (Örs Gevrekci & Çırakoğlu, 2017; Söylemez et al., 2018). While guilt tends to motivate individuals toward corrective action and responsibility-taking, shame often prompts a desire to withdraw, hide, or become invisible (Söylemez et al., 2018). For this reason, guilt provides a foundation for constructive confrontation and repair. In contrast, shame is generally regarded as a destructive emotional experience that damages the self, disrupts relational connections, and often results in withdrawal. When individuals are unable to confront these emotions in a healthy manner, they may gradually develop tendency to distance themselves from their sense of self, relationships, and values, a condition that manifests as alienation. In the relevant literature, alienation is defined as an individual's estrangement from both self and environment, the erosion of inner bonds, and the weakening of a sense of control (Kırman & Atak, 2020). Fromm (as cited in Kırman & Atak, 2020) conceptualizes alienation as the human being's disconnection from their essential self, resulting in a progressive weakening of the inner world, while existential thinkers interpret it as the individual's inability to derive meaning from both the self and the external world in a context dominated by meaninglessness and despair. Taken together, these three concepts play a key role in understanding the psychological rupture that occurs in the human inner world following the experience of error as depicted in the Adam narrative (Kırman & Atak, 2020).

In the Qur'an, immediately after Adam and his spouse partake of the forbidden fruit, their nakedness becomes exposed to them (The Qur'an, 2004, 7:22), and they begin to cover themselves with the leaves of Paradise. Exegetical scholars summarize this episode as a narrative in which, upon Adam's fall into error, his previously unseen nakedness became apparent. He began running through Paradise, and his head became entangled in the trees of Paradise. Adam cried out, "Release me," to which the tree replied, "I will not release you." At that moment, God said to Adam, "O Adam, are you fleeing from Me?" Adam responded, "My Lord, I feel ashamed before You" (İbn Kesir, 2012, p. 97). This interpretation, which bears a resemblance to the motif of hiding found in the Torah, illustrates Adam's reaction to his transgression as a vivid example of estrangement, a response that a human being may display when confronted with error, sin, or deception. Through committing

error or sin, the individual becomes disconnected from their original purpose of creation and, as a consequence, experiences alienation from God (Katar, 2003).

The initial reaction to error is often the denial of that error, manifested as a desire to flee from it or distance oneself from it. This episode further demonstrates that when individuals first confront themselves after committing wrongdoing, they experience profound shame and typically respond by attempting to conceal it. In the Qur'an, this state is expressed in the verse, "Adam disobeyed his Lord and was led astray" (The Qur'an, 2004, 20:121), which emphasizes not merely a violation of a prohibition but also a moral rupture, a crisis of meaning, experienced in the face of the divine address. In the subsequent divine call, God invites Adam to confrontation by asking, "Did I not forbid you to approach that tree? Did I not warn you that Satan was your sworn enemy?" (The Qur'an, 2004, 7:22). In response, Adam and his spouse acknowledge their condition, expressing feelings of guilt and remorse by declaring, "Our Lord, we have wronged our souls . . ." (The Qur'an, 2004, 7:23). What is particularly noteworthy in this Qur'anic narrative is that shame, guilt, alienation, and confrontation are presented as an internal, sequential, and interrelated process. In this way, the Qur'an renders visible the psychological dimensions of error through a progression that includes hearing the divine address, covering and hiding (shame), detachment (estrangement) from self, and others, meaning, and hope, movement toward remorse (guilt), and eventual confrontation. From this perspective, the narrative illustrates that denial, expressed through concealment and withdrawal, is often the individual's initial response to error or sin. In contrast, the gradual progression toward inner confrontation initiates the search for forgiveness.

In the Torah's narrative, similar themes are conveyed through the following verse: "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves" (Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, 1995/2007, Genesis 3:7). This scene demonstrates as in the Qur'anic account, that the Torah presents the act of covering as an initial response closely associated with shame. In the subsequent passage, Adam and Eve hide upon hearing the voice of God, and Adam responds to God's question, "Where are you?" by saying, "I was afraid … and I hid myself" (Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, 1995/2007, Genesis 3:9–10). This reveals the transition from shame to alienation. In this respect, the Torah narrative presents the earliest manifestation of guilt as denial of responsibility, and the earliest manifestation of alienation as hiding and withdrawal from relationships.

Denial is present in sacred texts that exhibit similar characteristics. In the Torah narrative, Adam's refusal to assume responsibility for his transgression by

attributing blame to Eve and Eve's attribution of blame to the serpent, constitute clear examples of denial, a defense mechanism employed when individuals are unable to confront feelings of guilt. Defense mechanisms are behaviors that individuals employ unconsciously to alleviate anxiety arising from distressing events. One such mechanism is denial. To escape the anxiety generated by a committed wrongdoing or an adverse situation, individuals may reject reality rather than accept it (Cüceloğlu, 2004). Denial, sometimes referred to as disavowal, is a defense mechanism through which individuals seek to reduce or avoid painful affect by rejecting aspects of a particular reality. From a cognitive–behavioral perspective, this initial reaction corresponds to an avoidance of consciously confronting the error, involving tendencies to ignore or minimize it. In contrast, within the psychoanalytic tradition, it is conceptualized as a defense mechanism (Auchincloss & Samberg, 2012). In this context, rationalization refers to the rejection of moral responsibility by legitimizing behavior through seemingly reasonable justifications; Anna Freud describes this process as the ease with which individuals close their eyes to inconsistencies between cause and effect (Freud, 1936/1993). Alternatively, individuals may engage in denial indirectly through self-serving bias, attributing success to themselves while assigning failure or error to others, thus exhibiting self-protective attributions in situations of failure or wrongdoing (Miller & Ross, 1975). According to the concept of moral disengagement, individuals experience a tension between their belief in being a good and moral person and the reality of having committed an error; to reduce this cognitive dissonance, they may deny the wrongdoing or reinterpret it in ways that minimize its moral significance (Bandura, 1999).

According to Tillich (as cited in Ilgaroğlu & Turan, 2018, p. 694), Adam's state before transgressing the prohibition represents a condition of "dreamlike innocence," in which freedom and responsibility have not yet been actualized in action. Estrangement, by contrast, constitutes an existential rupture that begins when human beings move away from this innocence and actualize their freedom through knowledge and power, often through painful experiences. Tillich conceptualizes alienation not merely as an individual rupture but as an existential struggle in which divine and demonic (or egocentric) forces are interwoven (Ilgaroğlu & Turan, 2018). In this context, alienation deepens as human beings seek to divinize themselves (hubris), deny their limits, and absolutize what is finite (Ilgaroğlu & Turan, 2018). From the perspective of spiritual counseling, this approach allows experiences of error, guilt, shame, and alienation to be understood not merely as pathological emotions but as calls for restructuring and inner transformation. Encouraging the client to acknowledge their finitude and fallenness and to develop an attitude of "affirming life" (responding) may thus become a central therapeutic

aim in the process of spiritual healing (Ilgaroğlu & Turan, 2018). In this way, alienation can be reinterpreted not as an endpoint to be eliminated, but as a threshold to be transcended once the relational bond between the individual and God is reestablished.

Confrontation, literally meaning becoming aware, refers to the individual's acceptance of reality with a sense of responsibility following an error or act of rebellion, including assuming the consequences of one's actions and choosing awareness over denial. In this respect, confrontation is psychologically linked to self-knowledge and to recognizing the reasons underlying one's behavior (Sayın, 2012). Moreover, the concept of ibn al-waqt, understood as facing the truth of the present moment by freeing oneself from the shadows of the past and the future, is regarded as a phenomenon that strengthens spiritual integration and reduces emotional conflict (Sayın, 2012). In this way, confrontation enables individuals to move beyond defensive states that deny error and to initiate a journey of transformation through contact with their own truth.

From a psychological perspective, the Adam narrative offers an archetypal pattern that renders visible the processes of defense, denial, guilt, and confrontation that individuals develop in response to error. Satan's strategy of deception resembles to cognitive distortions, defined in modern psychology as unrealistic automatic thoughts (Gürsu, 2016), while the awareness and remorse that follow error correspond to the individual's effort to restore self-integrity. Confrontation, in this context, transforms guilt into constructive insight and opens pathways for behavioral change. From a spiritual counseling perspective, the narrative presents a powerful bibliotherapeutic model grounded in the understanding that confronting one's actions is essential to both therapeutic and spiritual healing (Ağılkaya Şahin, 2017). It enables clients to safely engage with their own narratives of error or misjudgment, allowing them to transform mistakes through acceptance and repentance rather than through denial. Through identification-one of the core psychological functions of bibliotherapy-individuals may by Adam's example, recognize that error is a natural part of being human, and that true maturity lies in confrontation, responsibility, and reorientation, thereby fostering hope for spiritual healing and renewal.

Hope, Restoration, Healing, and Redemption

Hope may be understood as a cognitive and motivational orientation that propels individuals forward toward a desired goal (Nazir, 2020). According to Snyder, who has conducted extensive research on the subject, hope may at times function as a fluctuating emotional state shaped by life events, while at other times it may be regarded as a relatively stable, dispositional personality trait (Nazir, 2020). Healing, by contrast, is lexically defined as restoring health and bringing about recovery. Closely related to the term heal in Western languages, healing refers to the restoration of disrupted balance, the reestablishment of well-being, and the individual's return to spiritual wholeness (Bahadur & Çapcıoğlu, 2021). In Islamic tradition, the belief that healing comes from God-expressed through the divine name al-Shāfī-and the attribution of healing power to God in Christian theology reflect a shared understanding that the source of healing is ultimately divine (Bahadur & Çapcıoğlu, 2021). The sense of guilt individuals experience in response to wrongdoing also includes the hope of forgiveness and the possibility of salvation through repentance (Ağılkaya Şahin, 2017). In this context, repentance (tawbah) refers to the individual's sincere remorse for a committed sin or error, the abandonment of that wrongdoing, and turning toward God to seek forgiveness and mercy. Indeed, in numerous verses, God commands believers to seek repentance and forgiveness, affirming that this path leads to salvation and true felicity (Tunç, 1981). At the same time, the Qur'an describes itself as a source of healing for humanity and for believers: "It is guidance and healing for those who have faith" (The Qur'an, 2004, 41:44), and "People, a teaching from your Lord has come to you, a healing for what is in [your] hearts, and guidance and mercy for the believers" (The Qur'an, 2004, 10:57).

> But Satan made them slip, and removed them from the state they were in. We said, 'Get out, all of you! You are each other's enemy. On earth you will have a place to stay and livelihood for a time.' Then Adam received some words from his Lord and He accepted his repentance (The Qur'an, 2004, 2:36–37).

The subsequent verse, "later his Lord brought him close, accepted his repentance, and guided him" (The Qur'an, 2004, 20:122), emphasizes that the divine response following error involves election, healing, and reorientation. In this way, the Qur'anic narrative highlights that after transgression, divine turning toward human beings encompasses restoration, guidance, and renewed purpose. According to Esed (2000), in the earliest phases of creation, the human being exists
in a state of innocence guided by instincts, lacking awareness of evil and of the consequences of one's actions; this innocence does not represent a virtue but rather

a static level of consciousness that does not yet allow for moral maturation. The trial associated with the forbidden tree, however, initiates a leap in consciousness through disobedience, directing the human being toward an authentic self endowed with free will, moral discernment, and responsibility. For this reason, Esed argues that the "fall" should not be understood as a regression, but rather as a new stage of development in which the human being encounters moral consciousness.

In the Torah, a similar theme is conveyed through the following statements: "And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them," and "therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken" (Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, 1995/2007, Genesis 3:21, 23). In both texts, although human beings are removed from Paradise as a consequence of their transgression, they are not entirely abandoned; rather, they are preserved through divine mercy and prepared for renewed life. In the Qur'an, this process is symbolized by the acceptance of repentance and divine guidance, whereas in the Torah it is symbolized by God clothing Adam before sending him to earth. Taken together, these narratives reveal that the fall does not represent an end but rather a divine beginning, one that makes hope, healing, and redemption possible.

From a spiritual counseling perspective, the narrative of Adam and Eve may provide imagery for discussing a wish for repair. Indeed, Snyder (as cited in Nazir, 2020) notes that individuals with high levels of hope do not give up in the face of obstacles and can generate alternative pathways. In contrast, those with low levels of hope tend to perceive obstacles as inescapable traps. Similarly, Erikson (as cited in Nazir, 2020) emphasizes that hope constitutes the first fundamental virtue in psychosocial development and plays a constitutive role in the individual's subsequent identity formation. Within the context of spiritual counseling, a willing client may view their own experiences of fall and rupture not as definitive endings but as spaces for renewed beginnings made possible through divine guidance. In this way, engagement with the Adam narrative may offer language for repentance and hope within the bibliotherapy process, supporting individuals in reconstructing their own stories of salvation within the framework of their relationship with God.

Discussion

Beyond classical theological interpretations, the narrative of Adam and Eve offers an archetypal account that symbolically renders visible the processes of value violation, self-evaluation (shame and guilt), relational rupture (estrangement), and reestablishment of connection (repentance and repair) from the perspectives of the psychology of religion and spiritual care. The present reading suggests that the stages of "will-responsibility-forgetfulness," "error/transgression," "shame-guilt-estrangement-confrontation," and "hope-healing-salvation" within the narrative exhibit meaningful parallels with the psychological and spiritual dynamics of moral injury as articulated in contemporary literature (Altınlı Macıć, 2025). This parallelism motivates further examination of the Adam and Eve narrative as a bibliotherapeutic tool in spiritual counseling and care.

Prohibition-Temptation-Freedom: The motif of the "forbidden fruit" in the narrative represents the tension between the human quest for freedom and normative boundaries. Psychological Reactance Theory posits that when individuals perceive their behavioral freedoms to be threatened, the attractiveness of the prohibited object or behavior may increase, thereby strengthening the motivation to restore the lost freedom (Brehm, 1966; Brehm & Brehm, 1981; Steindl et al., 2015). From this perspective, the command "do not approach the tree" may be read not merely as a moral injunction, but also as a framework capable of activating reactance tendencies that emerge within the human experience of limits. In the narrative, the satanic provocation that stimulates desire, the prohibition that intensifies attraction, and the subsequent act of transgression symbolically illustrate the dynamic relationship among boundaries, freedom, and temptation. As noted by Steindl et al. (2015), threats to freedom motivate individuals to make efforts to reclaim the freedoms perceived as having been lost.

This dynamic relationship becomes more intelligible when considered alongside Cognitive Dissonance Theory. According to Festinger, when individuals experience inconsistency between their beliefs (obedience to a divine command) and their behavior (transgression), psychological discomfort arises, prompting them to reduce this discomfort through strategies such as justification, distortion, or the externalization of responsibility (Festinger, 1957). In the narrative, the promise of angelic status, eternity, or wisdom functions as a legitimizing discourse that facilitates the cognitive pathway toward transgression and may be interpreted as a persuasive framework aimed at reducing dissonance. This interpretation aligns with the moral injury literature, which highlights the role of justificatory processes that make violations possible and the subsequent emergence of intrapsychic conflict (Litz et al., 2009). Within this framework, the phenomenon known as the Forbidden

Fruit Effect or the Romeo and Juliet Effect (Driscoll et al., 1972), whereby social constraints or prohibitions intensify desire, further supports the relationship among prohibition, freedom, and temptation as depicted in the narrative.

Shame-Guilt-Alienation: Moral injury is characterized by reactions such as shame, guilt, spiritual alienation, and loss of meaning that arise following the violation of one's core moral values (or witnessing such a violation) (Jinkerson, 2016). In the narrative, symbols that immediately follow the transgression such as the "awareness of nakedness," "covering," and "hiding", immediately following the transgression render visible the transformation of self-evaluation (shame) into relational rupture (estrangement). Here, shame represents a global experience of devaluation directed toward the self, whereas guilt signifies responsibility for a specific behavior and motivation toward repair; the literature frequently emphasizes that shame tends to increase tendencies toward hiding and avoidance, while guilt may enhance motivation for confrontation and repair (Tangney, 1996). In both revelatory traditions, the post-transgression responses of "hiding" and "attributing responsibility to the other" correspond conceptually to patterns of avoidance, denial, and externalization observed in moral injury. The narrative further supports the understanding that moral injury is not merely a psychological symptom but also a crisis of spiritual relatedness. As emphasized by Drescher (as cited in Nash & Litz, 2013), moral injury deepens through the erosion of one's connection to what is perceived as right and through the breakdown of relationships of trust. In the narrative, hiding from God signifies not only fear or avoidance of punishment, but also a powerful symbol of the rupture between the self and its ultimate source of meaning.

Confrontation-Repentance-Reconnection: Within the model proposed by this study, the critical threshold of transformation is confrontation, that is, the acknowledgment of the transgression, the assumption of responsibility, and the reestablishment of alignment between the self and core values. In the moral injury literature, processes of repair are not confined to cognitive restructuring alone; rather, they frequently involve forgiveness, reconnection, the reconstruction of meaning, and the functional role of spiritual practices such as ritual and prayer (Pargament et al., 1998; Pearce et al., 2018). Within a religious framework, the themes of repentance and forgiveness can provide a structure that facilitates the transition from the narrative "I am a bad person" (shame) to "I did something wrong and I can repair it" (responsibility and hope). This framework is also consistent with the positive religious coping strategies identified in the religious coping literature (Pargament et al., 1998).

The Mechanism of Spiritual Bibliotherapy: A Proposed Account of Narrative Engagement: Bibliotherapy may invite clients to view their own life narratives through the text from a safe psychological distance, to process emotions, and to generate new frameworks of meaning. The core process stages emphasized in classical bibliotherapy, identification, catharsis, insight, and universality (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986), can be restructured in alignment with the goals of spiritual counseling. Through identification, clients may recognize that error is an inherent aspect of being human, which may open discussion of shame-based isolation; whether it has a protective function against the common symptom of moral injury: feeling alone and morally tainted. In a proposed process of emotional expression, emotions such as shame, guilt, fear, and anger become expressible through the text; the aim is not merely emotional discharge but rather to render visible the value conflicts these emotions signal. In this way, catharsis serves to facilitate a return to a moral orientation before the violation of shared norms and values (Bukar et al., 2019). At the stage of insight, individuals become aware that hiding and denial may provide short-term relief but produce long-term alienation; this awareness may inform cognitive-moral reframing concerning avoidance and the loss of meaning associated with moral injury. Finally, through universality, individuals recognize that similar ruptures are part of the human condition and that repair is possible, which may open discussion of hope and possible action (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986). In this context, the narrative should not be interpreted as one that "romanticizes transgression," but rather as a map of spiritual transformation that presents the human conditions of violation, their consequences, and the possibilities of repair. In counseling, such a reading would require the client's expressed interest, informed choice, and attention to their tradition, distress, and clinical context; it should not displace indicated mental health care or imply that forgiveness must be immediate. In the Adam and Eve narrative, God's acceptance of repentance and the possibility of reorientation symbolically express that forgiveness offers not only emotional relief but also ontological and relational repair. In this respect, the narrative emphasizes that post-moral injury repair does not amount to "impunity," but unfolds along the axes of responsibility and transformation.

On this textual and theoretical basis, the Narrative-Based Spiritual Repair Cycle is proposed as a five-part interpretive heuristic. The four themes describe clusters of meaning in the texts; the five stages distinguish a possible moment of confrontation and narrative reflection within the broader third-to-fourth-theme transition. Stage 4 is therefore a counseling-oriented inference, not a separate textual event or an observed treatment phase. The stages need not occur in a fixed order in a client's experience.

Source-to-model mapping: Stage 1 (boundary and temptation) draws on Genesis 2:16–17; 3:1–5 and Q 2:35; 7:19–21; 20:115–120, read with the first theme and reactance as an interpretive analogy (Brehm, 1966). Stage 2 (transgression and cognitive conflict) draws on Genesis 3:6, 12–13 and Q 7:22; 20:121, read with the second theme and cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Stage 3 (shame, guilt, and estrangement) draws on Genesis 3:7–10 and Q 7:22–23; 20:121, read with the third theme and shame/guilt theory (Tangney, 1996). Stage 4 (confrontation and narrative reflection) draws on the response to divine questioning in Genesis 3:9–13 and divine reminder and the couple's response in Q 7:22–23; it separates an inferred counseling process from the third theme using interactive bibliotherapy concepts (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986). Stage 5 (repentance, forgiveness, and the possibility of repair) draws on Genesis 3:21–23 and Q 2:37; 20:122–123, read with the fourth theme and moral repair literature (Litz et al., 2009). This source-to-model mapping is interpretive. The five stages constitute a proposed counseling framework, not a universal sequence derived directly from the texts, and the model has not been clinically tested.

1. Boundary and Temptation (Freedom Tension): The individual encounters such a boundary between core values and desires. A prohibition or a principle may be perceived as a loss of freedom, thereby increasing temptation.

2. Transgression and Cognitive Conflict (Moral Violation): When transgression occurs, the individual confronts inconsistency between beliefs and behaviors; tendencies toward justification and denial may become activated.

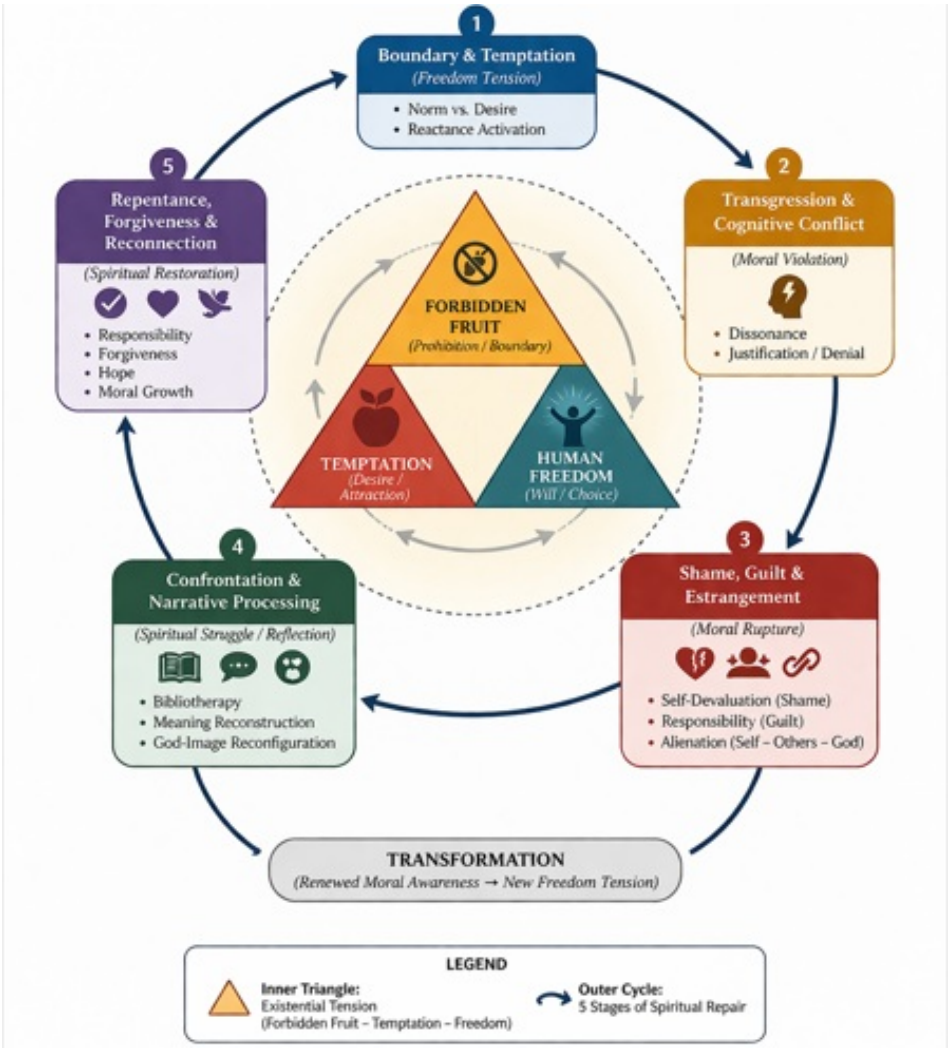
3. Shame, Guilt, and Estrangement (Moral Awareness and Moral Rupture): Following the violation, self-evaluation is disrupted, and the individual may experience estrangement from the self, relationships, and the sacred. This stage constitutes the core of moral injury.

4. Confrontation and Narrative Reflection (Possible Counseling Process): Genesis 3:9–13 and Q 7:22–23 show questioning, response, and acknowledgment in distinct ways. Read alongside interactive bibliotherapy (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986), these motifs suggest questions through which a willing client could explore their own account; they do not establish a tested mechanism.

5. Repentance, Forgiveness, and Reconnection (Proposed Repair): Q 2:37 and 20:122 describe repentance and guidance, while Genesis 3:21–23 portrays clothing and life beyond the garden. Their different emphases support a comparative reflection on consequence and continued relationship, without implying identical theological doctrines or an assured clinical outcome.

Figure 1

Narrative-Based Spiritual Repair Cycle



To synthesize these processes, this study proposes a conceptual framework, the Narrative-Based Spiritual Repair Cycle (Figure 1), that illustrates the cyclical dynamics of moral injury and spiritual repair grounded in the Adam and Eve narrative. This model is intended as a conceptual and interpretive framework rather than a clinically validated intervention model. It offers a tentative map of possible processes for narrative engagement in spiritual counseling and guidance practices. Examining and testing the model across different sacred narratives and in multi-faith contexts may contribute significantly to the literature on the psychology of religion and spiritual care. This conceptual model illustrates the cyclical process

of moral injury and spiritual repair grounded in the Adam and Eve narrative. The inner triangle (forbidden fruit, temptation, and freedom) represents the existential tension that initiates the process, while the outer cycle depicts five stages: (1) boundary and temptation, (2) transgression and cognitive conflict, (3) shame, guilt, and estrangement, (4) confrontation and narrative processing, and (5) repentance, forgiveness, and reconnection. The circular design represents the possibility of revisiting these questions; neither a universal sequence nor a treatment effect has been established. Altınlı Macıć (2025) had already interpreted the Adam and Eve narrative through moral injury, including transgression, shame, estrangement, and repair. This article adds a proposed bibliotherapy pathway and maps four textual themes onto five interpretive stages (Table 1), separating narrative motifs from possible counseling questions. It may inform future research or client-led reflection when appropriate to the client's beliefs and context. It has not been evaluated with clients and establishes no clinical benefit or superiority to existing interventions.

Table 1

Mapping Primary Passages and Interpretive Themes to the Proposed Model Stages

Proposed model stage	Primary passages and textual observation	Related interpretive theme	Theoretical link
1. Boundary and temptation	Genesis 2:16–17; 3:1–5 and Q 2:35; 7:19–21; 20:115–120 depict a boundary and temptation.	Will, responsibility, and forgetfulness	Reactance is used as an interpretive analogy, not as a psychological diagnosis of the narrative figures.
2. Transgression and cognitive conflict	Genesis 3:6, 12–13 and Q 7:22; 20:121 depict transgression and its immediate consequences or responses.	Transgression, heedlessness, and rebellion	Cognitive dissonance offers a possible lens for reflecting on conflict after transgression.
3. Shame, guilt, and estrangement	Genesis 3:7–10 and Q 7:22–23; 20:121 depict exposure, covering, and responses to the act.	Shame, guilt, estrangement, and confrontation	Shame and guilt theory informs the distinction between responses to the act and responses concerning the self.
4. Confrontation and narrative reflection	Genesis 3:9–13 depicts divine questioning; Q 7:22–23 depicts a divine reminder and the couple's response.	Shame, guilt, estrangement, and confrontation	Interactive bibliotherapy informs the proposed counseling process of reflecting on the narrative. Narrative reflection is an addition to the model, not a separate event claimed to occur in the texts.
5. Repentance, forgiveness, and reconnection	Genesis 3:21–23 depicts care alongside expulsion; Q 2:37 and 20:122–123 depict repentance, divine response, and guidance.	Hope, restoration, healing, and redemption	Moral repair literature informs the proposed possibility of working toward reconnection. The two scriptural accounts are not claimed to present identical outcomes.

Conclusion

Human beings, endowed with free will and entrusted with responsibility, may for various reasons experience forgetfulness, fall into heedlessness, commit errors, sin, or rebel. As a result, they may experience feelings of shame and guilt and find themselves in states of alienation, loss of meaning, and spiritual crisis. However, as illustrated in the narrative of Adam and Eve, the divine message affirms that such experiences are not only possible but also normal aspects of human development that may emerge at different stages of life. Moreover, these experiences do not mark an end; rather, they mark a new beginning, one imbued with promise. What may initially appear as punishment ultimately signifies a source of hope and healing that leads toward salvation. Within this framework, forgiveness, reconnection, and the opportunity for a renewed life are made available. Throughout the human lifespan, individuals move back and forth between error and healing, from one form of responsibility to another. Error is part of the human condition, yet resignation is not; what is required is perseverance and commitment to continue the journey. Conveying this message to clients is of critical importance in spiritual counseling and guidance. Sacred narratives may thus be regarded as powerful symbolic tools in spiritual care.

The Genesis and Qur'anic accounts allow a conceptual reading of responsibility, transgression, shame, and possible restoration. Their textual differences also matter: the Qur'anic passages explicitly describe repentance and divine guidance, whereas Genesis narrates clothing and life outside the garden. These motifs may provide language for reflection on moral injury for a client who wishes to engage with them. The argument neither equates the two traditions' doctrines nor shows that a particular narrative produces healing. In any counseling setting, the client's beliefs, consent, safety, and the clinician's scope of competence should govern whether and how a sacred text is discussed. This article offers a focused comparison of the Genesis and Qur'anic Adam narratives and a proposed link between moral injury concepts and spiritual bibliotherapy. The four themes are interpretive categories; the five model stages add a possible counseling-oriented moment of narrative reflection. Relative to Altınlı Macıć (2025), the contribution lies in articulating this bibliotherapy pathway and its boundaries, rather than re-establishing the earlier moral-injury analogy. The model remains a hypothesis for critical discussion and future study. Research with participants would be needed to assess acceptability, process, and outcomes before any claim of clinical effectiveness.

This article offers five related conclusions. First, moral injury has psychological, existential, and spiritual dimensions, making it relevant to the psychology of religion and spiritual counseling. Second, the Genesis and Qur'anic accounts of

Adam and his spouse offer distinct narrative depictions of moral choice, transgression, shame, response, and what follows. These motifs provide a basis for conceptual reflection on moral suffering, without making the two accounts identical. Third, moral injury serves here as an interpretive lens for examining these motifs; the article does not claim that the narrative figures experienced moral injury in a clinical sense. Fourth, the proposed Narrative-Based Spiritual Repair Cycle identifies ways these passages might prompt identification, emotional expression, reflection, and meaning-making in spiritual counseling. Its five stages are a theoretical construction rather than a sequence established by textual or clinical evidence. Finally, the article brings moral injury theory and spiritual bibliotherapy into dialogue with scriptural interpretation. Whether the proposed approach is acceptable or helpful in counseling remains a question for future research.

Future research may extend the present study in several theoretically and methodologically innovative directions. First, the proposed Narrative-Based Spiritual Repair Cycle may be operationalized and empirically examined by developing stage-sensitive assessment tools. Such instruments could measure individuals' positions within different phases of moral injury (e.g., rupture, estrangement, confrontation, repair), thereby enabling a more process-oriented understanding of spiritual and moral transformation. Second, longitudinal and process-oriented qualitative designs may be employed to examine how individuals move through the proposed stages over time. Rather than treating moral injury as a static condition, such studies could illuminate its dynamic, cyclical nature, particularly in relation to narrative engagement and meaning reconstruction. Third, comparative studies across different sacred narratives and religious traditions may investigate whether distinct narratives activate different mechanisms of moral repair. While the Adam and Eve narrative may foreground transgression and responsibility, other narratives may emphasize endurance, trust, or reconciliation. Such comparative analyses could contribute to the development of a typology of narrative-based spiritual coping models. Fourth, future research may explore the differential effects of narrative-based spiritual interventions across diverse populations, including variations by age, gender, religious orientation, and cultural context. This line of inquiry may help determine which narratives or model stages are more salient or therapeutically effective for specific groups. Fifth, experimental and quasi-experimental intervention studies may be designed to examine the impact of structured spiritual bibliotherapy protocols grounded in sacred narratives. These studies could compare narrative-based interventions with other forms of spiritual or psychological support, thereby clarifying the unique contribution of narrative engagement in processes of moral repair. Finally, interdisciplinary research integrating the psychology of religion, narrative psychology, and clinical practice

may further investigate the roles of key constructs such as God-image, religious doubt, and spiritual struggle, within the framework of moral injury. In particular, examining how these constructs interact with different stages of the proposed model may offer deeper insight into the mechanisms underlying both rupture and repair.

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