PSYCHOSOCIAL- AND MEANING-MAKING FUNCTIONS OF PRAYER IN THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF MUSLIMS IN SWEDEN
─ A study in the field of psychology of religion.

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Abstract

In the psychology of religion, prayer is one area which has received relatively small attention in the past. In the case of Muslim prayer, with a few exceptions, the field is yet to be explored. This convergent parallel mixed-methods study examined the relationship of Muslim prayer acts and perceived psychosocial functions and meaning-making functions. The data was gathered using semi-constructed interviews as well as standardized instruments: Brief RCOPE, Sense of Coherence (SoC) and CD-RISC 2 resilience scale. The participants consisted of twelve males and four females currently residing in the central parts of Sweden. Focus was placed on the five daily prayers (Ṣalāt), the supplication prayer (Duʿāʾ) as well as the constant reminder of God (Dhikr). The theoretical parts focused mainly on meaning-making, coping, and ritual theory. The research question of this study was: "What role or roles do Muslim rituals, with a focus on prayer, have in the psychosocial functions and meaning-making functions in everyday life?". For the Brief RCOPE questionnaire, the results included relatively high scores for positive coping and relatively low scores for negative coping (Positive Coping max: 28,00; min: 20,00; average: 23,75; range: 8,00. Negative Coping max: 15,00; min: 7,00, average: 10,19; range: 8,00. Religious coping on a general level max: 1,00; min 2,00, average: 1,06; range: 1,00). For the Sense of Coherence (SoC) scale, the results included different scores, in total medium to low (max: 75,00; min: 44,00; average: 56,00; range: 31,00). In the case of CD-RISC 2 resilience scale, the results were diverse with both high and low scores (max: 8,00; min: 3,00; average: 5,56; range: 5,00). From the interviews, several findings emerged including the centrality of prayer in the informant's lives. Meaning-making emerged as a central part concerning all forms of prayer. The Muslim identity was also seen as absolutely central in their life. When performing prayers in line with the informants' own theological understanding, this produced very positive feelings. When not performing the prayers, this resulted in negative feelings and anxiety. The latter also related to a more or less constant stress of not being a good enough Muslim and therefore ending up in Hell after death for most of the informants. The religious community was seen as very positive since many of the informants struggled with what they thought of as Un-Islamic values and behaviors present in the surrounding society.

Keywords: Islam, prayer, psychosocial functions, meaning-making functions, psychology of religion.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The subject of the study is to the relations between Muslim rituals, mainly the prayer sessions, and how it is related to psychosocial functions and meaning-making functions in the everyday life of persons with a Muslim identity in Sweden. This revolves around how the informants experience prayer sessions, as well as other forms of prayer and devotional acts, in their life. Prayer in Islam has a very particular place, making it a suitable area of inquiry concerning the everyday life of Muslims.

The study of Islamic prayer in the psychology of religion is one that is in many ways lacking. Although there is some research, all too few studies have tried to analyze the concept of prayer in this field. One of the earlier attempts regarding this (not Islamic prayer though) was made by Heiler (1932), focusing on different aspects of prayer. For him, one who wanted to write the history of religion could do so by writing the history of prayer. Even though these attempts might feel a bit dated today, the importance of the topic cannot be ignored. In one of his works he claims that:

> Accordingly, there can be no doubt at all that prayer is the heart and centre of all religion. Not in dogmas and institutions, not in rites and ethical ideals, but in prayer do we grasp the peculiar quality of the religious life. In the words of a prayer we can penetrate into the deepest and the most intimate movements of the religious soul. (Heiler, 1932, p.XV)

Whether or not one would accept the above statement, it does grasp one crucial topic in the study of religion — the actual practice that is performed by the believer. Prayer can thus capture moments in a person's life that share both external factors, as mediated through the religion, as well as internal psychological aspects. The forms prayer can and does take include a multitude of varieties that relate to specific religious dogma or other established practices, giving the prayer phenomenon a clear link to the religious tradition at hand. The internalization of this through and by the performance of the prayer act compromises the human experience, making this intersection a topic of interest in the study of the psychology of religion.

In Islam, there are mainly two forms of prayer: (1.) Ṣalāt which is the ritualistic prayer and holds the status as the second of the five Pillars of Islam. Ṣalāt is supposed to be performed five times a day although some variations and exceptions also occur, and (2.) Duʿāʾ which is a supplication prayer. Both forms have their origin of the commandment in the Quran. It has been said that "It is in Islam that obligatory prayer appears in its most stringent form. The individualistic prayer (Duʿāʾ) as well as the prayer of public worship is secondary to prayer of obligation (salāt)." (Heiler, 1932, p.348) This further highlights the importance of the ritual prayer as the most important form of prayer in Islam. A communal aspect can also

be seen here since Duʿāʾ does not per se include the physical aspects of ritual as Ṣalāt does.

The two main branches of Islam, Sunni, and Shia share most of the contents regarding the anatomy of the prayer and adjacent practices. There are some divergences between them, and when this occurs, the variations will be presented. The status of the theological debate between these branches, which can vary considerably, are out of the scope for this study. Only the fundamental differences will be noted. A short remark regarding the "third" branch of Islam; Sufism - can also be made here. Although Sufism in not a branch like Sunni and Shia, it is sometimes regarded as such. Sufism is in many ways a very broad term for the mystical variations of folk Islam, and many of their practices vary to a high degree from the Sunni and Shia practices. Sufism will not be examined further here.

Table 1. Commands regarding Ṣalāt and Duʿāʾ

Commands regarding Ṣalāt
O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, God is with the patient. (Sūrah 2 verse 153)
And when you have completed the prayer, remember God standing, sitting, or [lying] on your sides. But when you become secure, re-establish [regular] prayer. **Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.** (Sūrah 4 verse 103, bold attribution not in original text)
Indeed, I am God. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance. (Sūrah 20 verse 14)
No! Do not obey him. **But prostrate and draw near [to God].** (Sūrah 96 verse 19, bold attribution not in original text)
Command regarding Duʿāʾ
And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you." Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible. (Sūrah 40 verse 60, bold attribution not in original text)

Qur'an. Saheeh International Translation (2013).

Since Ṣalāt holds the second place of the Pillars of Islam, the act is seen as sacred. The pillars in their respective order: (1.) the declaration of faith (Shahada), (2.) ritual prayer (aṣ-Ṣalāt), (3.) fasting during Ramadan (Sawm), (4.) alms for the poor (Zakat) and (5.) pilgrimage to Mecca (Ḥajj) (Encyclopedia of World Religions, 2006, p.520).

Regarding the word Ṣalāt:

> The word does not appear in the pre-Islamic Arabia. The word has most likely been taken from the Aramaic noun sʿlōtā which means to bow. The word was used by the Aramaic speaking Jews for arnida (the adenon prayer). […] In the Quran the word has at least four meanings: (1) God and the angels perform by blessing Gods servant (Surah 33:43). (2) All created in Heaven and on earth perform as an expression for the universal Islām (Surah 24:41). (3) Further is also the prayer the prophets before Mohammad prayed (Surah 21:71-

73). (4) Finally the daily ritual prayers. When the informants use the word it is in regard to the daily ritualistic prayers. (Lindgren, 2005, p.80) [Translation by researcher]

One aspect central to the Muslim understanding of Ṣalāt is the direct link between the performer and Allāh since no other deity or person is needed for the act. This creates a unique connection between the two parties (Newby, 2002, p.189f). Just like the other Pillars of Islam, Ṣalāt puts emphasis on the performance of the act, hence the orthopraxy of the religion. The orthodoxy should not be neglected, but believing without praying is often regarded as problematic. This also includes the intention of the performer since both the act itself as well as the intention (Arabic: niyyah) is to be judged. Some scholars have thus said that "In this regard, Islam strikes a balance between extremes of orthodoxy or orthopraxy." (Newby, 2002, p.166). The obligatory prayers can be combined with voluntary prayer sessions performed adjacent to the first. This is widely regarded as a mark of deep faith. For the devout performer, when there is a shortage of time available for the prayer session, one can adhere only to the mandatory parts while removing the voluntary.

1.1.1. Researcher background

A short remark regarding the researcher's background should be made to minimize any unintended bias. No individual is ever objective regarding any subject present, no matter the intentions. The worldview, setting, as well as cultural factors are just some aspects one must be cautious of when positioning oneself regarding the research subject at hand. The researcher of this study was raised in a Christian surrounding, both in primary and secondary socialization. The researcher is not a Muslim by belief nor are there any ties to any Muslim community. University courses completed by the researcher include, but are not limited to, the psychology of religion — with a particular focus on Islam, Islamic theology, ethics, the Arabic language and Middle Eastern studies.

1.2. Aim and purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the Muslim prayer sessions and their function concerning the performer's psychosocial function and meaning-making functions in everyday life. Using a combination of qualitative (semi-structured interviews) and quantitative methods (psychometrics through the use of Brief RCOPE, Sense of Coherence, and CD-RISC 2 scale), the central aspects of prayer in relation to the above topics will be studied. Since the prayer session is a core foundation of the Islamic belief system, it is often well incorporated into the Muslim identity. Combining the ritualistic aspects of the prayers performed as an aspect of religious life in conjunction with the perceived effects on the performer's life can increase the understanding of how Islamic rituals affect the individual's life. In this study the setting is Sweden, and this creates some interesting topics concerning the relationship between the believer and the surrounding society. Since prayer is performed not only as a closed off section of life, other forms of prayer are included, as well as adjacent parts of the informant's life that relate to prayers.

1.3. Research question

For this study, a primary research question is operationalized into sub-questions in psychosocial- and meaning-making functions.

Primary research question:
What role or roles do Muslim rituals, with a focus on prayer, have on the psychosocial functions and meaning-making functions in everyday life?

This is a relatively broad question with many possibilities for operationalization. Returning to the two main themes of the study; 1) psychosocial functions and 2) meaning-making functions — these two areas will be used for operationalization. In accord with the mixed methods employed in this study, both deductive as well as inductive sub-questions are used to operationalize the primary research question. These relate to the use of different methods and instruments in the study, and the theoretical framework used.

For exploring the psychosocial functions, the following sub-questions will be used:
1. What perceived roles do the prayers have in the everyday life of the Muslim participants?
2. What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the psychosocial functions in relation to resilience (CD-RISC 2)?
3. What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the psychosocial functions in relation to Sense of Coherence (SoC)?
4. What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the psychosocial functions in relation to religious coping (Brief RCOPE)?

For exploring the meaning-making functions the following sub-question will be used:
5. What perceived roles do the prayers have in the everyday life of the Muslim participants in relation to their meaning-making functions?
6. What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the meaning-making functions in relation to religious coping (Brief RCOPE)?
7. What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the meaning-making functions in relation to global and specific meaning-making?

Please note that sub-question 1 and 5 focus on the informant's perception while sub-question 2 to 4 and 6 to 7 focus on the theoretical perspective employed by the researcher. Material for sub-question 1 and 6 will be derived from the interviews. The names of the instruments used are included since these theoretical perspectives correlate to each sub-question. For sub-question 2 to 4 and 6 the corresponding instrument will be utilized, as well as data from the interviews.

1.4. Limitation and focus

There are several limitations related to this study. They consist of several aspects combined. The primary limiting factor is the number of participants. The limited number is related to the necessary time restrictions for this type of thesis in conjunction with the number of free volunteers. The process of recruiting participants is, in this case, a cumbersome process since the researcher is coming

from outside the Muslim community where there are no established networks. The participants that have volunteered constitute a relatively homogenous population. This is not a problem for the qualitative method applied in this study. The population consists of 75% male and 25% female. A study where a gender balance of male and female participants would have been preferred but not possible at this time.

1.5. Definitions and terminology

The following section will present the central definitions and explain the terminology used in this study.

1.5.1. Religion and religiosity

For this study, the primary definition relates to religion as a search process. This is a known perspective in the psychology of religion that blends both substantive and functional aspects of religion (Oman, 2013, p.39). The latter is especially important here since the aim of this study is to relate religiosity to practical aspects of the informant's life. It is not of importance for this study to in investigate a prescribed essence of religion in general, and Islam in particular. Focus is on how the belief system and religious practices are interlinked with well-being and other psychological components. Here religion is defined as: "search for significance in ways related to the sacred" (Pargament, 1997). The sacred, to which the search relates, is seen as "God, divine beings, or a transcendent reality" (Oman, 2013, p.32). This definition is indeed quite broad and in order to narrow this scope one can look further. This is also for making between spirituality and religiosity. Spirituality is here defined as follows:

> Spirituality is the personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about relationship to the sacred or transcendent, which may (or may not) lead to or arise from the development of religious rituals and the formation of community. (Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001, p.18)

While religion is defined as:

> Religion is an organised system of beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols designed (a) to facilitate closeness to die sacred or transcendent (God, higher power, or ultimate truth/reality) and (b) to foster an understanding of one's relationship and responsibility to others in living together in a community. (Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001, p.18)

As one can see the primary difference between spirituality and religion, as used here, lies in the institutionalization of the belief system at hand. Spirituality can thus be a web of looser ties while religiosity, at least to some degree, is seen as more rigid in that it also regulates interpersonal actions. The latter definition of religion also includes a key component which is a community. This also emphasizes the relational aspect of the religious practice, situating it in a temporal and geographical locality.

Religion is perhaps one of the most diverse and debated human phenomena to date. It spans over many spheres of life and can be seen to relate to most parts in the

human life as well as the world surrounding us. What does, and does not, belong to the sphere of religion is no easy task to comprehend or outline. No attempt to make a full explanation regarding this discourse will be done here. Religiosity is used in this thesis to indicate that the person, the believer, adheres and attributes at least some part(s) of his/her life and thought model to actively relate to the sphere of religion. This includes practices as well as the worldview present. Given that Islam in many ways is a religion of practice where rituals such as Ṣalāt constitute parts of the foundation of the religion, the practitioners can indeed be said to be religious since "To participate in a ritual is to accept it, so that acceptance spells obligation and therefore morality" (Segal, 2009, p.75). Even though not all parts of the extensively broad theology presented might be accepted or internalized by the practitioner, on some level one is bound by the concept of religiosity related to the belief at hand. The acceptance, as constituted by the practitioner, can also be seen as a natural extension of the above understanding of religion where the communal aspects cannot be isolated. Using this view places the experiences by the believers at the center. In that regard, this definition also fits well with the project's research methodology, presented in section 3.2.

1.5.2. Islam

It is here presumed that the reader, to some degree, will be familiar with the basic understanding of what Islam is and what constitutes it. The aspects presented here are of interest and relevance for this study. Islam is the world's second largest religion, where around 1.8 billion people are attributed to belong to this religion (PEW, 2017).

The Arabic name is of importance since it is frequently used by Muslims regarding the content of the religion. "The root s-l-m from which the word Islam is derived, means 'safe and unharmed, unimpaired.'" (Lewis & Churchill, 2009, p,9) Most often, the word is understood as meaning "peace" – the same found in the greeting Salaam; "peace be upon you". Another important derivation of the word means "to surrender [oneself]" or simply "submission", where the believer is understood to place his or her faith upon Allah (Lewis & Churchill, 2009, p,9).

The word *Allāh* and God are used interchangeably in this study, and no normative character is given to either of them. From a Muslim perspective, this is in line with the general theological understanding since Islam only recognizes one god.

1.5.3. Health and well-being

Health and well-being are important but sometime elusive categories. In this study, they are used in conjunction with psychosocial functions since both these terms relates to this area. Many definitions have been used to describe health throughout history where two of the more common are: "Health: The state of being free from illness or injury" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016) and "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity[1]" (WHO, 1948).

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[1] The Definition has not been amended since 1948 (WHO, 2003).

As one can see the main difference is whether the presence of well-being is achieved or not. The definition from the Oxford Dictionary (2016) seems to be a negative one, where only absence is of importance. The argument can be made that one can be healthy but not feel well; that is in a state of well-being. The latter does instead focus also on well-being, but making it into a binary hierarchy where only the presence of *complete*" physical, mental and social well-being" accord to the state of health. Unfortunately, this definition is of such narrow character that very few persons would ever qualify as the lived human experience include such a multitude of feelings and emotions (Huber, 2011). In that sense, the above definition of health is of more use, even though the one from WHO seem to capture something else of importance: namely the human need for well-being. Combining the two definitions above and then deconstruct the binary essence of the WHO definition can be of use. Well-being is indeed an important part of a healthy life, and it can take many forms in that:

> Synonyms for well-being include happiness, joy, satisfaction, enjoyment, fulfillment, pleasure, contentment, and other indicators of a life that is full and complete. Well-being is not a condition that one achieves after reaching some type of threshold of good feelings. Rather, it exists on a continuum, ranging from states of very low well-being (including severe depression and hopelessness) to those of very high well-being (genuine happiness) that are sustained over time. (Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001, p.97)

Even this definition mainly focuses on mental health the same approach can be expanded to other forms of physical states. The important part here is how well-being and thus also health is not a binary phenomenon but instead existing on a continuum. Here health and well-being are interlinked and cannot be seen as separate entities. This view is also supported by other researchers trying to formulate a new definition to replace the one employed by WHO. One such attempt suggests using a "concept" or "conceptual framework" rather than an exact definition "The first step towards using the concept of "health, as the ability to adapt and to self manage" is to identify and characterise it for the three domains of health: physical, mental, and social." (Huber, 2011, p.2) In part, this definition relates to Antonovsky (1987) in the sense that a wholeness is needed to reliably assess and measure health. The combination of the three domains; physical, mental, and social, provides a broader combination of possibilities, and in relation to the vagueness of the concept, it is more applicable in relation to how one can characterize health as a functioning state rather than an absolute.

1.5.4. Meaning

Meaning is one of the central themes of this study. Just like many other phenomena, meaning can be thought of in many ways. Central to the understanding is to what categories meaning is related. Meaning is central to the human life and "Humans construct frameworks of meaning by which to understand themselves and life, to generate purpose, and to shape goals and expectations for the future." (Kelley & Chan, 2012, p.203)Meaning is directional, relating to the individual's current and future directions and not a set of static entities that can be held over time, thus "[…] meaning is not a property of utterances or actions; the term 'meaning' instead articulates the ways in which such performances inferentially draw upon and transform the field of prior performances in which they are situated." (Rouse, 2001,

p.3126) Concerning this, to understand what meaning is one has to know how it is produced. In the theoretical chapter, the model for meaning-making by Park (2013, p.357ff) will be presented further. In short, this view presents meaning-making concerning two dimensions: global meaning, and situational meaning. The former is an overarching set of beliefs regarding the world as a whole, including dimensions as theodicies, nature of humans, sin, afterlife, etc. (Park, 2013, p.359). The latter relates to the immanent practices and beliefs experienced throughout life. When there is a difference between the two levels, often mediated through a stressful event, variations in understanding occur. The individual then tries to change the understanding to make sense of the situation at hand. This is a dialectic process that is continually evolving. Reactions and changes in beliefs are thus interlinked between the levels, that are mutually codependent. This view is compatible with the citation of Rouse (2001, p.3126) in that the process is continually going on – and in a sense, is never "finished" (since human life is never static). This understanding is also in line with the concept of religion as a search process outlined above. When one combines these understandings in the field of psychology of religion, religion and meaning become intertwined phenomenon of the human psyche.

1.6. Setting and background

The setting of this study takes place in Sweden. The participants come from several towns in the middle/central parts of Sweden. These are well-populated areas part of, or adjacent to, cities and metropolitan areas. No participants live in the countryside or smaller towns.

The number of Muslims in Sweden today was difficult to assess since the Swedish State does not collect information regarding the population's religious affiliation anymore. In 1930, when the last census was performed in Sweden only 15 persons identified themselves as Muslims (Larsson, 2005, p.456f). The number able to be retrieved is from *Myndigheten för stöd till trossamfund*, a government agency responsible for state funding of established religious organizations (other than the Church of Sweden that is not funded by *this government agency*. They base their numbers on individuals actively affiliated with a registered religious organization that receives funding from the state based on membership numbers. The last number is from 2011, and in this case, there were 110,000 Muslims registered (*Myndigheten för stöd till trossamfund,* 2011). The actual numbers are probably higher, and numbers around half a million circulate in the media (Sydsvenskan, 2006-02-09), while academic resources estimated that in the year 2000 there were between 250,000 and 300,000 Muslims residing in Sweden (Jones, 2005, p.4679). One should also note that these numbers do not reflect how the individuals assessed perform religious duties. Religious affiliation is a highly complex phenomenon based on several factors including (but not limited to) belief, kinship, ethnicity and cultural markers. In some academic literature, this is described as: number of people of "attributed" Muslim origin (Tottoli, 2015, p.87). In the latter case numbers also vary from 250,000 to 300,000 for the years 2000/2001 and 350,000 to 400,000 for years 2009/2010 Muslims in Sweden (Tottoli, 2015, p.87).

1.6.1. The anatomy of prayer

This section is included to acquaint the reader further with the Muslim ritual prayer (Ṣalāt). This section should also be seen in light of Muslim orthopraxy and some of the regulations prescribed for whom should perform the prayer act. How Ṣalāt is performed is very well codified within Islam.

A description of the central ritual for this research study, regarding Muslim prayer, is provided here. This is not an exhaustive presentation since the subject is very broad. There are two main forms of prayer in Islam; Ṣalāt and Duʿāʾ. There are other variants and other versions used in certain cases not mentioned here. Ṣalāt is the ritual prayer practiced in Islam. It is one of the five Pillars of Islam (arkān al-Islām), the core set of practices for every Muslim. It is deemed mandatory for all Muslims with the exceptions of: women who are menstruating, women who are having bleedings in the 40 days after childbirth, or individuals who are of prepubescent age. Ṣalāt is commonly viewed as the second most important pillar, after the Shahāda (the creed of Islam stating that "There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God"). This gives Ṣalāt a very special place in Islam. Ṣalāt is performed five times each day at a particular set of times that varies during the year, in agreement with the lunar calendar used in Islam. The five prayers are called Fajr, Zuhr, Asr, Maghreb and Isha. To perform Ṣalāt certain conditions have to be met, including ritual ablution (Wudû) when using water or if unavailable with sand (Tayammun). The latter is seldomly applied in a Western context. Except for the ablution, the intention of the praying person should be in the right state. Here the focus is placed upon Allāh, and the prayer act and the thoughts should not divert from these.

1.6.1.1. Introduction and call to prayer (Adhan)

The descriptions here come from a variety of sources. For the ritual ablution and ritual prayer, these sources are Svenskt islamiskt stöd (2006), Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer (2007) and Just One Message (2012). Observations by the researcher as well as discussions with the informants of this study were also employed. When using sources in Swedish, all translations are made by the researcher. The Arabic transliteration is left unchanged from the source (Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006).

Before the prayer session, the mosque calls the Adhan; "call to prayer". Where mosques are frequent, for example in the Arab countries in the Middle East, the Adhan is always performed (Newby, 2002, p.190). In the Swedish setting, only a few mosques are allowed to call for the prayer due to restrictions in the neighborhood (Sveriges Radio, 2013). Today there is also a variety of electronic equipment available as support including special clocks as well as smartphone applications. Many Muslim congregations also display the exact prayer times on their websites or in printed calendars. The reason for this is since the prayer is related to the sunrise sun's position in the sky and therefore varies considerably through the year depending on the location. The call to prayer (Adhan) varies slightly between Sunni and Shia.

Table 2. Sunni Adhan

Recitals	Transliteration	Translation
x4	Allāhu akbar	God is the greatest.
x2	Ash-hadu an-lā ilāha illā allāh	I acknowledge that there is no god but God.
x2	Ash-hadu anna Muhammadan-Rasul ullāh	I acknowledge that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.
x2	Hayya'alas-ṣalāh	Hasten to prayer.
x2	Hayya ʿalal-falāḥ	Hasten to success.
x2	As-Ṣalātu Khayrun Minan-nawm	Prayer is better than sleep. *1.
x2	Allāhu akbar	God is the greatest.
x1	Lā ilāha illā-Allāh	There is no god but God.

*1. This line is only recited in Fajr (morning) prayer's Adhan.

Table 3. Shia Adhan

Recitals	Transliteration	Translation
x4	Allāhu akbar	God is the greatest.
x2	Ash-hadu an-lā ilāha illā allāh	I acknowledge that there is no god but God.
x2	Ash-hadu anna Muhammadan-Rasul ullāh	I acknowledge that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.
x2	Ash-hadu anna Alīyan walī-ullāh	I testify that Ali is the Viceregent of God.
x2	Hayya'alas-ṣalāh	Hasten to prayer.
x2	Hayya ʿalal-falāḥ	Hasten to success.
x2	Ḥayya ʿala khayr al ʿamal	The time for the best of deeds has come!
x2	Allāhu akbar	God is the greatest.
x2	Lā ilāha illā-Allāh	There is no god but God.

Table 4. Prayer times

Name	Prescribed time of prayer session	Number of obligatory prostration units (Rak'ats)
Fajr	Between dawn and sunrise.	2
Zuhr	After true noon but before Asr.	4
Asr	In the afternoon.	4
Maghrib	After sunset but before dusk.	3
Isha	From dusk until dawn.	4

For a detailed example of prayer times see Appendix G.

Ṣalāt consists of five Ṣalawāt (pl. of Ṣalāt) each day. Each session consists of a number of prostration units called Rak'ats. The number varies between the five different prayer sessions.

To perform the prayer, there are several criteria for the Muslim needed to render the prayer valid. Due to the strict orthopraxy of the Islamic prayer, the performer needs to pay close attention to several aspects. The criteria come from several historical sources. The commands are present in the Quran but also through the tradition of Hadiths and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers. Throughout history the rules that have been formed are in almost all aspects general for the entire Muslim population. There are minor variations present, both between Sunni and Shia Muslims as well as within the branches. The latter differences are attributed to the different legal schools of Islam (s. maḏhab, pl. maḏāhib). In general, the variations by the various branches are still seen as valid by the other branches. (Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

The criteria that need to be met are:
• The performer needs to be Muslim.
• To be of sound mind. This includes not being affected by alcohol and/or drugs and to be of generally sound mental health.
• Know that the time for the prayer is right. The mandatory prayers have a time window when they need to be performed to be valid.
• Be ritually pure. This is achieved through the ablution rite.
• Be appropriately dressed. For men, this includes covering the body between the navel and the ankles as well as the shoulders. For women, this varies due to the branch, but it is often interpreted as covering the whole body except the face and hands.
• Facing the Qiblah. The Qiblah points to the direction towards Mecca.
• Praying for the right reason. The intention needed is to pray for God's sake and i.e. not to show off in front of others.
(Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

1.6.1.2. Ritual ablution (Wudû)
Before the prayer session, the person performs the ritual ablution. The commandment is found in the Quran:

O you who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles. And if you are in a state of Jana bah, 215 then purify yourselves. But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women 216 and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it. God does not intend to make difficulty for you, but He intends to purify you and complete His favor upon you that you may be grateful. (Sūrah 5 verse 6)

The ritual ablution consists of several mandatory parts as well as voluntary ones. The voluntary parts are considered part of the Sunnah, the following of the Prophet Muhammed and therefore prescribed as good. The voluntary parts are performed

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more often when there is extra time. (Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

The mandatory parts of ritual ablution (Wudû)
• To have the right intention regarding the ablution in following God's command regarding the performance of the rite (niyyah, Arabic: intent).
• To wash the face. This includes the area between the hairline, the chin as well as the ears.
• To wash the hands and forearms, including the elbows.
• To stroke the head from front to back with one or both hands while wet.
• To wash the feet and ankles.
• To perform the ritual ablution in the above-prescribed order.
The water used must be clean and flowing. The latter includes tap water, from a well or river, as well as scooping it out of a bucket or similar bowl. For the water to be considered pure, it must not have any alteration to the color, smell or taste. (Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

The voluntary parts of the ritual ablution before the mandatory parts:
• Before the ritual ablution say: "bismillâh ir-rahmân ir-rahîm" ("In the name of God, the most Gracious, the most Compassionate" or "In the name of God, the most Gracious, the most Merciful").
• To clean one's teeth.
• To wash the hands three (3) times.
• To rinse the mouth three (3) times.
• To fill the nose with water and blow out, repeated three (3) times.
(Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

The voluntary parts of the ritual ablution after the mandatory parts:
• To wash the ears with the index finger and thumb. This is usually performed after striking the head with wet hand(s).
• To repeat all mandatory parts of the ritual ablution three (3) times.
• Always perform the washing from right to left. For example, right foot and ankle first, then left foot and ankle and so on.
• To perform the ritual ablution in one procedure without any break or pause.
• To conserve the water and not perform any of the described parts more than three (3) times.
(Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

The ritual ablution is always performed before the prayer act. If any of the following occurs after the ritual ablution but before the prayer act, the ritual purity is understood to be impaired, and the ablution must be repeated.
Acts that put a person in minor ritual impurity:
• Excrements from the penis, vagina, and anus. This includes urine, secretion, feces and air. Vomit or blood from the nose is not considered to put the person in the state of ritual impurity.
• Touching the genitals with bare hands.
• Sleeping.

• Being unconscious.

If performing the ritual ablution (Wudû) the person is once again seen as ritually pure. The above acts put a person in a minor state of ritual impurity. Apart from these acts some occurrences instead put a person in a higher state of ritual impurity. To regain ritual purity, a full ablution (ghusl) is required to perform the prayer act. (Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

 Acts that put a person in higher ritual impurity:
• Penetration of the penis in a vagina.
• Ejaculation and/or orgasm.
• Menstruation. The state of higher ritual impurity is considered permanent until the bleeding has fully stopped.
• Bleeding that occurs as a result of childbirth.

The above states or acts need to be followed by the full ablution (ghusl) for the person to be considered ritually pure and to perform the prayer act. (Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

1.6.1.3. The full ablution (Ghusl)

In the full ablution rite all parts of the body need to be cleaned with water. Just as the case of ritual ablution the intent (niyyah) has to be right for the act to be considered valid.

The parts of full ablution (ghusl):
• To wash the hands three (3) times.
• To wash the genitals.
• To perform the ritual ablution (wudû) according to the above description.
• To wet the hair on the head three (3) times such that water reaches the skin on the skull.
• To wash the whole body in water, generally from right to left.

(Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

Except for the acts described above that put a person in the higher state of ritual impurity, that then should be followed by the full ablution rite, the acts are also performed on dead persons. Once a person is deceased, the full ablution is performed. Even though the full ablution is not mandatory it is often recommended before performing any of the following acts:
• Before the Friday communal prayer.
• Before the prayers of Eid al-Fitr (a Muslim festivity: "festival of breaking of the fast" that ends the fasting of the Muslim holy month Ramadan).
• Before entering Mecca.

(Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

Sometimes there is a scarcity of water that impairs the ability to perform the ritual or full ablution. In this case, there is an alternative method available called the dry ablution (Tayammum). Where water usually is abundant, this rite is extremely seldom used but is still seen as a valid alternative should the need arise.

The dry ablution (Tayammum) is valid under the following states:
• When no or not enough water to perform the act of ablution is present.
• If the person is ill or injured where one could expect the water to worsen this state.
• If the person is fearful for oneself, one's relatives, one's possessions or other forms of reprisals if one journeys to collect water for the ablution.
• If the water is needed for other more important task, for example to drink or use in cooking. Here the need puts the religious act on hold.
• If the prayer time window will pass if the person needs to collect water.
When water once again is available the ritual state that was present for the person before the water scarcity once again reinstates itself. This results in that either the ritual ablution or the full ablution need to be performed to regain ritual purity depending on this state. (Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

1.6.1.4. The prayer act

As in the case of ritual ablution the individual performing the prayer must be in the right mindset (niyyah) for the prayer to be deemed valid. As stated above there are slight variations between the different legal schools of Islam (s. maḏhab, pl. maḏāhib), including branches of Sunni and Shia. The prayer act is performed in a direction towards Mecca. In mosques, this direction is usually at the front of the large hall used for prayer, marker by a cutout in the wall. This direction is called Qibla. If no marking is present, one can use a compass to find the direction. If no direction is available, the performer has to guess the direction. The prayer is seen as valid even if the direction is not correct, since the intent of the prayer was correct. The prayer act is performed without shoes, but socks can be worn. A prayer rug, or if not available a substitute cloth, is used as an area of prayer. In mosques, the floor of the prayer room is fitted with large rugs. If no rug or substitute is available, the prayer act can be performed nonetheless (Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012). For a visual presentation of Ṣalāt see Aydin, (1992).

In order of performance:
• First the *takbîrat al-ihram* is performed where the individual utters the words *Allāhu akbar* (God is greater[2]) while raising the hands in line with the head, gently spreading the fingers (a.). The hands and face should align roughly with the position later performed in the prostration part (c.). The eyes should focus on the point where the forehead later will touch the rug in prostration (S*ujûd*).
• The left hand is placed on the abdomen while the right hand gently grips the left wrist, all performed in one motion.
• Often, although not mandatory, the words *a'ûdhu billâhi min ash-shaytân ir-rajîm* (I seek shelter with God from Satan, the rejected) are uttered before the first prostration unit (Rak'at).
• **[This is the first step of a Rak'at]** The first Sūrah (*al-Fâtiha* "the opening") of the Quran is recited:

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[2] Allāhu akbar: *Allāhu* means God in definite form while *akbar* is the elative form of great meaning "great" or more predominately "greater", as in "always greater than [anything else]". The term for saying *Allāhu akbar* is "Takbîr". Takbîr is also used on many other occasions.

Table 5. Sūrah al-Fâtiha ("The Opening")

1	*bismillâh ir-rahmân ir-rahîm*	In the name of God, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.
2	*al-hamdulillâhi rabbil-ʻâlamîn*	[All] praise is [due] to God, Lord of the worlds –
3	*ar-rahmân ir-rahîm*	The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful,
4	*mâliki yaumid-dîn*	Sovereign on the day of Recompence.
5	*iyyâka naʻbudu wa iyyâka nastaʻîn*	It is You we worship and You we ask for help.
6	*ihdinas-sirât al-mustaqîm*	Guide us to the straight path –
7	*sirât alladhîna anʻamta ʻalaihim ghayrilmaghdûbi ʻalaihim walad-dâllîn*	The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.

Qur'an. Saheeh International Translation (2013).

- The word *âmîn* (amen) is uttered.
- Although not mandatory, sometimes one or more of the shorter *Sūrah's* of the Quran is recited here. If so, often one of the shorter ones is used (Sūrah 112 (*al-Ikhlās* "Purification"), 113 (*al-Falaq* "Daybreak") or 114 (*an-Nās* "Mankind")) see Appendix H for these.
- *Takbîr* is performed (*Allāhu akbar* is spoken) while hands are raised in line with the head (a.).
- A "Rukû'" is performed where the hands are placed on the knees while the back, legs and arms are stretched straight. The eyes should focus on the point where the forehead later will touch the rug in prostration (*Sujûd*).
- The words *subhâna rabbiyal-ʻazîm* (glory to the Lord, the Almighty) are uttered three (3) times.
- The person stands up, first raising the hands to the head (a.) then at once placing them on the side of the body (d.). The phrase *samiʻallâhu liman hamidah* (Allah hears those who praise Him) are spoken followed by the phrase *rabbanâ wa lakal-hamd* (praise is due to our Lord).
- *Takbîr* is performed (*Allāhu akbar* is spoken) as the person performs the *Sujûd* (prostration). During *Sujûd* the forehead, nose, palms, knees and toes shall touch the ground (/prayer rug) at the same time. Palms should be beside the shoulders/head. The fingers lie flat pointing toward the *qibla* (c.).
- The phrase *subhâna rabbiyal-a'lâ* (glory be to my Lord, the most high) is uttered three (3) times.
- The head and upper body are lifted as *Takbîr* is performed (*Allāhu akbar* is spoken) (f.). The left foot should point to the right while the body rests on it. Hands are place on the thighs.
- One of the two (2) following phrases are spoken; *rabbighfirlî, rabbighfirlî* (Lord forgive me, Lord forgive me), or *allahummaghfirlî warhamnî wajburnî warfaʻnî wahdinî wʻâfinî warzuknî* (Lord forgive me, be merciful towards me, strengthen me, elevate me, guide me, give me mercy, support me).

- A new prostration unit is performed (*sujûd*), started with the *takbîr* (*Allāhu akbar* is spoken) followed by the phrase *subhâna rabbiyal-a'lâ* (glory be to my Lord, the most high) is uttered three (3) times (g.) [This is the last step of a *Rak'at*].
- The head and upper body are raised again, resting on the left foot (h.).
- The person stands again (b.) while the consecutive steps of the Rak'at are performed once again [the steps of the *Rak'at*, from first to last step, excluding a voluntary reading of one or more Sūrah's].
- The head and upper body are raised again, resting on the left foot (h.). The hands placed on the thighs. On the right hand the index finger is pointed forward in line with the leg, while the thumb and middle finger's top are joined in a circle. The eyes are pointed toward the index finger.
- A first *Tashahud* is performed by uttering the phrase *attahiyyâtul-mubârakâtus-salawâtut-tayyibâtu lillâh, as-salâmu 'alaika ayyuhan-nabiyyu wa rahmatullâhi wa barakâtu, as-salâmu 'alaina wa 'alâ 'ibâdillâhis-sâlihîn, ashhadu an lâ ilâha illallâh, wa ashhadu anna muhammad rasûlullâh* (The greetings, prayers and the good things of life belongs to God. Peace, mercy and blessings of God be with you, O Prophet. May peace be upon us and on the devout servants of God. I testify that there is no god but God and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.).
- During the morning prayer (Fajr) the following from here until the [ending begins] are not performed.
- The person stands (b.) and *Takbîr* is performed.
- The consecutive steps of the Rak'at are performed once again **[the steps of the Rak'at, from first to last step, excluding a voluntary reading of one or more Sūrah's]**. During the dawn (*maghrib*) prayer the stage h. is not performed, instead one moves to the **[ending begins]**.
- The consecutive steps of the Rak'at are performed once again [the steps of the Rak'at, from first to last step, excluding a voluntary reading of one or more Sūrah's].
- The head and upper body are raised again, resting on the left foot (h.). The hands placed on the thighs. On the right hand the index finger is pointed forward in line with the leg, while the thumb and middle finger's top are joined in a circle. The eyes are pointed toward the index finger. *Takbîr* is performed.
- A second Tashahud is performed by uttering the words *attahiyyâtul-mubârakâtus-salawâtut-tayyibâtu lillâh, as-salâmu 'alaika ayyuhan-nabiyyu wa rahmatullâhi wa barakâtu, as-salâmu 'alaina wa 'alâ 'ibâdillâhis-sâlihîn, ashhadu an lâ ilâha illallâh, wa ashhadu anna muhammad rasûlullâh* (The greetings, prayers and the good things of life belong to God. Peace, mercy and blessings of God be with you, O Prophet. May peace be upon us and on the devout servants of God. I testify that there is no god but God and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.) [This is the same as above in the first one].
- **[ending begins]** The performer asked God to remember the prophet and his family by the phrase *allâhumma salli 'alâ muhammad, wa 'alâ âli muhammad, kamâ sallaita 'alâ ibrâhîma wa 'alâ âli ibrâhîm, innaka hamîdummajîd, allâhumma bârik 'alâ muhammad, wa 'alâ âli muhammad, kamâ bârakta 'alâ ibrâhîma wa 'alâ âli ibrâhîm, innaka hamîdummajîd* (O God, bless Muhammad and Muhammad's family as You blessed Abraham and Abraham's family. You are the most Praised, the most Glorious. O God, be gracious unto Muhammad and Muhammad's family as You were gracious unto Abraham and Abraham's family. You are the most Praised, the most Glorious.).

- The last step is the greeting (S*aslîm*) to fellow persons praying, by first moving the head to the right (i.) and saying *as-salâmu 'alaikum wa rahmatullâh* (peace and God's grace be with you) then moving the head to the left (j.) and saying the same thing. This ends the prayer.

(Svenskt islamiskt stöd, 2006, Institutionen för Islamiska Interpretationer, 2007 & Just One Message, 2012)

For Sujûd the Shia Muslims use a small disc made of burnt clay to place the forehead on, instead of the ground. This disc is called 'Turbah, derived from the word "tarab" meaning "mud" which is considered a pure (Tahr) material in Islam. A note should be made here that it is allowed to perform the prayer wearing shoes, but only if they are entirely clean or struck by mud (since, as stated, mud is seen as a "pure" material in Islam). The origin here is that the Prophet Muhammad used to pray on the ground which consisted of mud and therefore it is part of the S*unnah* (considered good behavior, not to be confused with the branch Sunni [as opposed to Shia] — although it is derived from the same word).

Chapter 2 Previous research and Theory

2.1. Previous research

The area of studying Muslim prayer and its psychological implications for participants is an underdeveloped area in the field of religious studies (Lindgren, 2005, 159f). Very few studies in the psychology of religion have focused on the prayer experience, and when this has been done, it has almost exclusively concentrated on the Christian experience and thus neglecting other religious and spiritual traditions. Instead, more focus on this topic has been placed in other fields of research such as medicine and health studies. With Islam being the second largest religion in the world this is very surprising. As Lindgren writes:

> The lack of empirical research on Muslims' prayer experiences is especially remarkable in the light of the fact that Islam is one of the largest religions of the world and that the Muslims have developed an extraordinarily rich tradition of prayers over the centuries…
> (Lindgren, 2005, p.160)

This is also confirmed when doing database searches. Using the Internet-based tool from Uppsala University Library[3] searching for the following terms and combinations only resulted in the cited 17-page article from Lindgren (2005) found via the ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials[4] that was of interest for this study.

Search terms used: *"muslim prayer", "islam prayer", "islamic prayer", "ṣalāt", "muslim ṣalāt", "islam ṣalāt", "islamic ṣalāt".*

The condition for the search was to only find full-text entries. For the word Ṣalāt both variations with and without the punctuation were used (i.e. "ṣalāt" and "salat"). The searches were conducted on 2014-10-12, 2014-11-21 and 2015-02-04.

On 2016-05-18 further searches were made regarding the meaning-making processes of Islam. For the topic of religious meaning and meaning-making several studies of interest were found, but only a few had any direct link to Islam or a Muslim population. For the search terms "meaning-making islam" and "meaning-making in islam" only ten entries were found. None of these were of interest for this study and related to other topics instead.

The lack of previous research in the psychology of religion with Muslim demographics regarding prayer, available in English, proved problematic when doing the current study. Only relying on English and Swedish sources here might have had a negative impact regarding this, but was necessary regarding time and

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[3] http://www.ub.uu.se/?languageId=1
[4] http://ub-uu-se.beta.libguides.com/go.php?c=3204201

language constraints. In future studies, perhaps sources in e.g. Arabic can be used as well, which might increase the available data.

2.1.1. Islamic and Christian prayer

The most extensive work found that correlated most to the topic of this study is the doctoral thesis of Tomas Lindgren's *Bön som akt och erfarenhet* (2001)[5]. In this explorative study, the narrative construction of prayers among Christians and Muslims are compared to each other. The main distinction relates to the prayer experience and the prayer act, where Lindgren's research primarily studies the former. This is due to the constructionist relational perspective applied where the informants' experiences are translated through their thought processes and language. Focusing on the description, comparison, and psychological translation, Lindgren himself describes the study as "psychophenomenology" (2005, p.12). The study is based on the view that culture and religion are dynamic processes that interact and interchange, both for a social group as well as the individuals in that group. Viewing culture as a set of shared beliefs and practices, inherited through time but not rooted in biology, the perspective applied opens for a critical perspective (in the classical connotation of the word). When understanding religion, Lindgren emphasizes a substantial description based on a set of shared beliefs in a superhuman entity (2005, p.14f). For hierarchical purposes, and adhering to the social constructionist perspective applied, the religious definition is seen as subordinated to culture. Also, as noted, the view of what is deemed "Muslim" and "Christian" is not determined by the researcher or an established religious protocol. Instead, the informants may themselves, to the fullest extent possible, provide their picture. The focus presented here will be that of the Muslim representation in the study.

The population for the study was 35 informants in total, 17 Muslims and 18 Christians. The data gathering was performed 1997-1999 in Sweden. Of the Muslims, 14 were men (age 25-62) and three were women (age 32-48). Fourteen of the Muslims were Sunni and three were Shia. The material was gathered through qualitative interviews. Alongside these interviews, which provide the mainstay of the material, observations of prayer acts, as well as adjacent behaviors were conducted to enhance the ability to perform the necessary analytical steps and to become familiar with the setting of the informants (Lindgren, 2005, p.37ff).

Concerning the Muslim prayer experience, the study covers a range of topics. These include the general prayer life of the informants. In the case of the Muslim part of the population, a number of experiences were provided. Most noticeably was the division between the inner and outer experiences that Ṣalāt, Dhikr, and Duʿāʾ provided, a dimension hard to live without for the informants. It did provide a core part of the informants' lives. The other part relates to the discrepancy between the ideal performance of the prayer acts and the actual lived experience. In some cases, the latter was not upheld to the standard the informants wished, thus resulting in negative feelings (Lindgren, 2005, p.71ff). When performing one or more types of prayer, they seemed to increase the scope of which others were performed as well. This could be described as a positive spiral, where acts and engagements in

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[5] English: *Prayer as act and experience.*

religious activities provided a higher level over all in the faith. For some informants, the prayer act of Ṣalāt was seen as mandatory to the level that when one does not perform it anymore, the individual could not consider himself/herself Muslim anymore (Lindgren, 2005, p.73f). This relates to the concept of Ṣalāt as one of the five pillars of Islam. There is also a distinction between the concept of Islam and Imān; the former refers to the persons performing the five pillars of Islam and thus can call themselves Muslims by practice, while the latter relates to the faith in the heart by the individual (Lindgren, 2005, p.74f). In general, the prayer life of the Muslim informants seems very coherent no matter gender, cultural background, being Sunni and Shia. It consists of Ṣalāt, Du'ā' and Dhikr which are related to each other (Lindgren, 2005, p.75). Apart from this, some of the informants also did provide the notion that work, as well as other types of actives, could be seen as prayer or related to their faith. It is noted here that there is a general discrepancy here between Islam and "the West", where more parts of life are included in faith than is considered so from "the West" (Lindgren, 2005, p.76).

All of the Muslim informants regarded Ṣalāt as special in terms of the inherent value in the practice of it. This is in line with the general understanding of Islam as well (Lindgren, 2005, p.80). The prayer act is regarded as the epitome of the embodiment of the Muslim faith. For the informants in this study, all Muslim participants considered the communal practice of Ṣalāt as of higher value than when performed solitarily. The reasoning here stems from a theological understanding that the reward (thawāb) by God is greater when performed collectively (Lindgren, 2005, p.80). The informants provided accounts of presence by God, purity, happiness and love. Also, a deep connection with God as well as general calmness was presented as apparent occurrences. The different physical aspects of the prayer act were highlighted but not outlined in more detail, instead the whole experience was brought forward as positive emotions.

For Du'ā' many of the informants performed these in conjunction to Ṣalāt while still kneeling. There were several types reported by the informants that also occurred through the day, for example when cleaning, washing the dishes and traveling. These were made part of the everyday routine and in many ways, were an integral component of these actions. Some Du'ā' was performed only when needed, for example when the informant wished for something special. It was noted by at least one informant that he felt ashamed for most often only performing this type of Du'ā' and thus only engaging with God when in need. This provided a feeling of guilt since he only remembered God when he was down (Lindgren, 2005, p.83). Even though Du'ā' can be of a free form, it was also common to use standardized phrases, incorporating recitation of for example the Koran, to structure the prayer and create a feeling of prayer tranquility. Since Ṣalāt is performed in a standardized way where the language is Arabic, the free form Du'ā' is often conducted in the informant's native tongue. For the informants, several accounts were given where this was regarded positive, for example concerning the omnipotence and all-knowing properties of God. The latter was exemplified by the informants indicating that God understands the believer no matter which language he or she speaks (Lindgren, 2005, p.85).

Regarding Dhikr, no coherent scheme was provided by the informants of the study. Instead the notion that there is no consent was brought forward. For some

informants, Dhikr was performed as soon as they were not occupied with other things or had a clouded mind. Some performed it more seldom. Almost always Dhikr was conducted solitarily or sometimes in direct conjunction with Ṣalāt, much like Du'ā' could also be carried out as noted above. Sometimes the informants would recite standardized prayers such as tasbīḥ (repeating: subhāna Allāh, "(I proclaim) honor to God"), tawḥīd (repeating: Lā ilāha illā Allāh, "there is no god but God") or Shahāda (Lindgren, 2005, p.87). The central aspect of remembrance as always highlighted and presented a way of connecting and receiving a closer relationship with God. In some instances, a tasbiḥa (string of beads or prayer rope) was used by the informants when uttering the names of God. The latter included a theological connotation referenced in Islam where God is said to have 99 glorious names and the one who repeats them will enter Paradise (Lindgren, 2005, p.88).

Concerning the prayer, in this study, an analytical difference is presented separating structure and content. The structure of the Muslim population of the study in the form of Ṣalāt and Dhikr followed an explicit schema, while the Du'ā' as stated earlier was more free form. For the content, Ṣalāt follows precise guidelines while also Dhikr to some extent included the parts as described previously in this section. The content of Du'ā' on the other hand varied considerably. The latter part was thought of as more dialogical while the two former involved a single direction (Lindgren, 2005, p.96). Many of the informants provided accounts of God as present during Ṣalāt, this had been particularly prominent during Sujûd (prostration) where a feeling of tranquility or calmness was present. For some the experience of the felt close relationship with God was said to be of ecstatic character (Lindgren, 2005, p.99). This could also be heightened further during collective prayer sessions. For the informants that had performed the pilgrimage (Ḥajj) to Mecca, the locality of the prayer performed in this space provided a unique feeling of closeness to God. Similar experiences were also described from other holy sites (Lindgren, 2005, p.101f). The structure of the experience of closeness to God followed a particular narrative, where the experience always followed after the prayer act.

To some extent the material presented in this study also overlaps with the article *The Narrative Construction of Muslim Prayer Experiences* (Lindgren, 2005). One such example is with prayers answered and unanswered prayers. This section is thus omitted here and presented in the next section. The same goes for the structuring of life stories by the informants, as described in a linear, non-linear and semi-linear way, mainly by factors of primary or secondary socialization, which are interesting but of less importance for the current research study.

The function of the prayers could sometimes be described as instrumental. This was during hardship and when the informant felt the need to request something, either physical or in the form of divine intervention. Although this may be part of it, the instrumental value did not remove the extrinsic value by the faith in itself. The latter was perhaps thus seen as more prominent since it was also present during other times where the expression through faith was seen as the value itself. At-large the informants indicated that the religion was the primary entity in itself worthy of ascribing to, and should not be reduced to mere instrumental values (Lindgren, 2005, p.166ff). Relating to the latter, the informants used different types of prayers to induce certain feelings. The expressive and instrumental functions of prayers

were this intertwined, often reinforcing the other part. If for example, an informant used Du'ā' in a more instrumental way at first to cope with particular hardships, the religious understanding was highlighted and brought forward, also relating to expressive or intrinsic functions of faith in the person's life (Lindgren, 2005, p.167f).

Providing a base for a religious meaning system, the structuring of prayer acts makes it possible to embed the notion and presuppositions in everyday life. A dialectical relationship is formed since the physical, and cognitive structuring of the body and mind relates to the religious meaning system, while at the same time providing a space for it and to some extent also reshaping it. This can be done through for example free-form prayers or when understanding the daily activities as part of performing faith the everyday life. This also relates to the social group in which the informant belongs, making a case for both individualizing as well as socializing factors of the religion. The prayer acts do perform a reinforcing function concerning the overall faith, where one moves into the view of a believer, providing value in the situation at hand (Lindgren, 2005, p.175f).

2.1.2. Islamic prayer

In the 2005 article Lindgren explores how practicing Muslims structure their prayer sessions, and an understanding of how their prayer is part of the everyday life in a broader sense, according to a particular narrative. Being based in a social constructionist approach, Lindgren (2005) uses narrative theory based on the notion that language is the core construction element of social reality. Here a certain view of language thought, and perception is seen as the meditative element of personal experience in the world (Lindgren, 2005, p.160f). Drawing upon earlier works by narrative psychologists, Lindgren presents his work in a way where individuals seem to structure many of their experiences in agreement with narratives already present in the world. The narratives employed often follow a temporal lineage (beginning, middle, end), making a case for a starting and end point easily projectable. In between these points, other events are usually placed in temporal order, although there are circumstances where the sequence is based upon believed importance in ascending order or vice versa. The included events in the narrative are then linked in a grammatical structure that more easily make sense for the one describing them. The way in which the story grammar is used in the speech act is part of the social heritage. This is another part where the social interactions become visible since the staging of the sequences is learned from surrounding sources, including family, friends, work, popular culture and other instances. The narrative structure is thus not separated from other parts of life. Instead, it is an integral part of — and thus also reflects — the social situation in which the individual is immersed. The latter is especially important in the case of Muslim belief since this is a clear example of how some narrative grammar is constructed concerning the overarching belief system employed by the individual that shares some or many of the same signs and symbols present in the culture. Just to study the narrative structure is not enough. Instead, one should go further and study the function it has on the individual. This is because:

> An analysis of the functions of storytelling can give an answer to why people create the narratives the way they do and explain whether and how these narratives help the individual

to maintain a specific religious identity in the flux of discourses in modern society. (Lindgren, 2005, p162)

For the empirical material of the 2005 article, 18 Muslims of age 25 to 83 years old were interviewed. 15 men (2 Shia and 13 Sunni) and three women (1 Shia and 2 Sunni) were included as part of a convenience sample between 1997 and 2002. One of the main focus areas of the study explored the concept of answered prayers by the informants. In line with the theological concept of God in Islam, the entity at hand is believed to be omnipotent in the full sense of the word. Hera a clear link to the experiences of the informants could be seen since:

> Most of the informants told me about different kinds of concrete answers to prayer. These narratives included answers such as help in acute crisis, recovery from sickness, recovery from drug addiction, help in situations of social and economical problems, help finding an apartment, help passing an exam, spiritual guidance, and so on. (Lindgren, 2005, p.163)

In many ways, the results provided showed that the narrative structure of the believed answers to prayer by the informants showed similarities. This strengthened the hypothesis that the narration is linked to other aspects of social life. Often many characters were provided in the storyline, presented in a temporal lineage. Early on in the narrative presented a difficult situation arose which later could be concluded in a favorable manner. Placed in a secular setting, the sequence of the narrated parts follows the same pattern. The prayer, seen as the act motivating a "miracle", always preceded the final and concluding event of the story told, hence, the prayer act was understood by the narrators as the immediate cause of events resolving the issue at hand. From the viewpoint of the narrator understanding the situation as a result of prayer, there were very seldom unique events only occurring in the particular case. Instead, this also follows the social context, thus:

> Illustrating a general narrative principle, the experience of answered prayers is structured according to collective narratives known to the person praying. Availability of these collective narratives is one of the most important psychological prerequisites for experiences of answered prayers. Which narratives are picked up from the tradition and used as scripts for the experiences and which are excluded depends upon the thematic similarities between the narrative in the tradition and the situation of the person praying. (Lindgren, 2005, p.165)

As a result of the above, the interchange of beliefs by group members continues to evolve. Here another observation is made about the theological character of the faith at hand. The themes that were often presented could be linked to the Quran and Hadith literature and therefore function as a communal reference point (or perhaps even discursive space) that can bridge gaps in the story and link it backward in time to the great stories told by the theological literature. The "mythical" times and present time are then interwoven through the Muslim faith in agreement with the wish of Allāh, further strengthening the group identity and having a social function. In conjunction with the social identity, the person narrating the story of an answered prayer also receives an individualizing function from the experienced events. This is because Allāh has chosen him or her and then answered the prayer. This results in a place where the individual has had a connection with Allāh but also with the social group where the story is told. The presumed function of the answered prayer is thus twofold, enhancing both the individual and the group at the same time (Lindgren, 2005, p.165f). The recollection of first-hand sightings follows this procedure regarding psychological functions.

In the cases where the prayer goes unanswered, the situation is of another kind. Most informants in the presented research could recollect that they had sometimes prayed and not received what they asked for, but none could present a coherent narrative representing specific cases of this often told in a fragmented way, interrupted by other theological inquiries. One interpretation is that "It was clear that the informants found the question of unanswered prayer problematic and maybe even threatening." (Lindgren, 2005, p.167) According to Islamic theology and the mainstream beliefs, Allāh always listens, but why some instances of prayer go unanswered is impossible to comprehend. For most participants, it seemed hard since it does not follow the general beliefs of Allāh as omnipotent and always listening to prayers. Following this one view is that the negative impact of this was not reflected in the social group since it did not benefit or enhance intragroup dynamics. Instead, it is left untouched where the members instead focused on what they believe are positive aspects of the faith. When trying to formulate a story as to why prayers were not answered, some informants understood it as a test by Allāh. Since they could bear more, Allāh wanted them to keep trying and thus still being in the care of Allāh. Another view presented by the informants was that the prayer would eventually be answered, but since Allāh knows best, the timing was not right but that it would eventually be so. Besides these, some presented the notion that Allāh would not answer their prayers since they had not redeemed themselves from sin to the extent they should. The last presented understanding was that Allāh would grant them another gift instead. This is also supported by the theological understanding presented within Islam that Allāh as all-knowing could introduce the individual with a better option than they could think of. In this instance, the unanswered prayer could be reinterpreted as an answered prayer (Lindgren, 2005, p.168f).

Later on, Lindgren (2005, p.169f) discusses how the informants in many regards follow the same pattern as Christian interviewees', relating this notion to the social context of bilingual persons where this might differ from monolingual Muslim individuals (as this study was performed in Swedish). Although this perception was present, the study culminates in the understanding that the Islamic identity of the informants still outweighs the Western culture presented. And that this — to some extent at least — is due to the design of the study as performed in the interview situation where the interviewer is a white, non-Muslim, academic male. This would then result in a positioning of the interviewees' identity that would enhance the Islamic parts further. Concluding the study, Lindgren notes:

> The narrative perspective decentralizes the self by focusing on the narratives and the social scene where religious experiences are staged and constructed. This way of analyzing individuals' experiences is in sharp contrast to earlier prayer research where it is usually taken for granted that the experience is "located" within the individual, even when social influences are emphasized. (Lindgren, 2005, p.170)

Given the field of psychology of religion, this perspective broadens the base of what is included in a fascinating way. Not focusing only on the individual and the internal aspects provide links to see the religious affirmation in a wider sense. And later:

> That the function of creating and telling narratives about prayer experiences is completely overlooked in earlier research is to be regretted, for attention to this function can make clear how these narratives help the individual remain a Jew, a Christian, or a Muslim in the modern society. This study indicates that narratives of answered prayers create feelings of affinity

for other Muslims, which is of utmost importance when it comes to the individual's ability to maintain a Muslim identity, given the fact that a religious worldview requires a social structure for its maintenance (Berger & Luckmann, 1976). The narratives give him or her, furthermore, an identity as a unique person in relation both to his or her representations of God and to other persons in the group. Finally, the narratives and the strategies make it possible for the informants to integrate problems and traumas into the shared religious system of meanings. The Islamic message to the world is thus confirmed in the life of the individual. (Lindgren, 2005, p.170)

As seen in these passages, there is a multitude of relational aspects present that binds the internal psychological phenomena to the group and social settings provide a space for interaction. Individuals are not isolated islands. Instead, they function in a web of relations and discourses that provide a logical space for the narratives created. The Islamic teachings and theology are a core part of this narrative set, in Lindgren's study as well as the present study, in combination with other social aspects in which the individuals and their prayers are located.

2.1.3. Prayer (in general)

Some recent research on prayer in the field of psychology of religion has focused on the direction of prayer. One such study was performed by Kevin Ladd and Bernard Spilka in *Inward, Outward, and Upward: Cognitive Aspects of Prayer* (2002). Focus here was on using factor analysis on material provided by informants when describing their prayer experiences to locate the foci of different prayers. This was conducted through the concept of "pray-as-connection" which could relate to different areas: of inward (connection with oneself), outward (human-human connection), or upward (human-divine connection) (Ladd & Spilka, 2002, p.475). Presenting earlier studies showed that many of the previous concepts described provided semantic overlap between different researchers. Proposing a theory of inwards, outwards and upwards prayer, the authors asked informants what they "thought about" while praying. For participants, they used:

> Both traditional and nontraditional students (N = 368; 214 women and 154 men; mean age = 27 years) from undergraduate courses at a midwestern state university provided data. Participants were primarily Caucasian (92 percent), with 3 percent African American, 2 percent Asian, and 2 percent Hispanic. Religiously, 43 percent were Protestant, 31 percent Catholic, 10 percent unaffiliated, 7 percent "other," and 4 percent agnostics. Roughly 2 percent claimed atheism and slightly less than 2 percent identified themselves with other traditions. Forty-nine percent attended religious events at least once per month, and 51 percent prayed at least once a week. (Ladd & Spilka, 2002, p.478f)

Making an investigation from two-factor deductions, "factor analysis revealed eight primary factors: two inward, four outward, and two upward. Three second-order factors emerged (two outward and one upward). However, no general-factor appeared." (Ladd & Spilka, 2002, p.475). Not usually included when describing prayer, in this study by "incorporating more "uncomfortable" aspects of prayer (self-examination, expressions of personal troubles, and an impassioned sharing of others' pain)" (Ladd & Spilka, 2002, p.482) a broader perspective of what actually is present during prayer could be presented. Providing a model for further research, the authors of the study highlight the need for further studies in the field of emotions and prayer.

Continuing the research of the precious study Ladd, and Spilka sought to validate the model provided in Inward, Outward, Upward Prayer: Scale Reliability and Validation (2006). As noted from the first study:

> Inward prayers emphasise self-examination. Outward prayers focus on strengthening human-human connections. Upward prayers centre on the human-divine relationship. Eight first-order factors reflected this tripartite notion of the directions in which prayer can provide connectivity (Ladd & Spilka, 2006, p.233).

The authors make the case that one of the primary functions of prayer is structuring of the spiritual and cognitive character. This relates to the need to make sense of the surrounding world, especially in the case of religious beliefs which otherwise might be hard to grasp. Trying to engage with order and disorder, the individual will employ different strategies of prayer mode to do so. This relates to, but is at the same time not the same as, "meaning" and "control" processes (Ladd & Spilka, 2006, p.234). Prayer can in that regard be seen as providing a service for cognitive structure. After validating the scale (not described here, please see original article for details), some impressive results were presented. First, the general verification of the prayer factor (main one), and three subcategories consisting of a total of eight scales was done. Apart from this, the scale here has some limits in that it does not show all fine tunes of the other scale, but instead shows how different factors are connected during prayer (Ladd & Spilka, 2006, p.245). There were correlations between internal concerns and paradoxical prayers and other factors that lacked structure but searched for it. The same was the case for some bold outward prayers which sought to challenge the present structures, and as such did not themselves provide structure. The authors here suggest that challenging the status quo where the structure is present is more easily done by the opposite. Adding to this, attitudes towards death could be seen in the light of social connectivity and a relational approach to current events in life. Here also coping mechanisms are seen as resulting from surrounding events that shape the internal processes of prayer.

2.1.4. Prayer across faiths in health

A very short study was performed by Silton and colleagues in 2013 on who, what, why, how prayer were conducted in a medical setting between chaplains and patients. Data were collected through a 90-minute focus group with eight chaplains from New York City hospitals:

> Three of the four female chaplains were Roman Catholics; two were nuns and the other was a lay chaplain. The fourth female chaplain was a Reform rabbi. The four male chaplains included an Islamic imam, an Orthodox rabbi, a Lutheran minister, and an Episcopal priest. (Silton et al., 2013, p.43)

The results of the study found that prayer in this setting was seen by the participants as mainly two different types which included "a) formal liturgical prayers versus informal prayers and b) blessings versus prayers, per se." (Silton et al., 2013, p.43), although some variations between them occurred regarding the wording of being *blessed*.

> A Catholic chaplain indicated that a "blessing" is identified by a specific word-set or specific wording, whereas the imam noted there was no such thing as a blessing in Islam: "We don't

have a blessing traditionally in Islam. We would have a prayer, and we'll have a saying of the Prophet about the sick." (Silton et al., 2013, p.44).

Further, the participants stated that they mainly prayed alongside the patient's bed in conjunction with them. At other times, they prayed individually or with relatives of the patients. In the case of the Imam in the study, he also noted that he regularly, upon request, performed prayers as part of the Friday ceremonial prayer session where other members of the congregation also mentioned the name of the sick individual (Silton et al., 2013, p.47). It was also noted by the Imam that many patients preferred to have him visit them at least once a day to perform Ṣalāt, stating that this made them feel like part of a congregation more clearly. Also, extra prayers were often performed as requested to highlight the wish of the patient's recovery (Silton et al., 2013, p.47f).

In the case of concordant and discordant prayers, the results varied within the group. This was expressed mainly as a result of the patients where they sometimes did not prefer to have a chaplain from another faith perform prayers or blessings for them. For most of the chaplains, though, this was not the case, and they seemed more than willing to pray for patients even when they belonged to other faith groups. For example, "The imam explained that he has no qualms about saying a prayer in the name of God and having a patient of a discordant faith thank Jesus." (Silton et al., 2013, p.48). Six out of the eight participants stated that they saw it not fit to initiate prayer unless the patient requested it. As for the case of when to pray, the accounts varied. Everyone had many occurrences of prayer, and it was often seen as an essential need in their part of the hospital care. Using a small sample, the results are not to generalized, but still provide some insight into the world of hospital chaplains. One note is that, "While the study did not provide one clear answer regarding how to pray, the discussion did confirm that prayer is an indispensable intervention in the chaplain's portfolio." (Silton et al., 2013, p.51) When summarizing the experiences captured in this study it seems that prayer is a central part of the hospital chaplain's repertoire.

2.1.5. Prayer and emotions

In a study published in 2010 the focus was on the emotional regulatory processes that prayer may have on individuals (Sharp, 2010). The material for this study was gathered from domestic violence groups by individuals (n=62) who used prayer as a mechanism to reduce negative emotions (Sharp, 2010, p.421). The participants were drawn from "the middle Tennessee, southern Wisconsin, southern Alabama, metropolitan Boston, San Francisco Bay area, New York City, urban Philadelphia, and the Minneapolis/St. Paul areas" (Sharp, 2010, p.422). They consisted of females that had lived with domestic abuse. Mean age was 40,5 years, minimum age 19 years and maximum age 72 years. The basic conceptualization of prayer here was that it is a) a legitimate imaginary social support and b) how prayer may be used to regulate negative emotions (Sharp, 2010, p.418). A particular note should be given to the utilization of the word imaginary here, where the author used this in a broad sense and mainly set the distinction between observable characters and the imagined one stating that "Both imaginary and concrete interactions are ontologically real." (Sharp, 2010, p.418). In the case of prayer as imaginary interactions, the notion that it is a valid part of the socialization process was brought

forward. This was not separated from other instances but should instead be seen in the context of a broader social reality where many religious denominations adhere to prayer as shaping the perceived reality. Acts of prayer were also seen as a part of social support since they, as previously stated, were presented as valid social interactions. This was not the only strategy employed by individuals but could sometimes take a special place. The interview setting was performed in an inductive manner, starting more generally and later on focusing more on the religious aspects since these were parts most prominently brought forward by the participants. The results showed that prayer with an imagined actor do provide a compelling setting for regulating negative emotion in these cases of domestic abuse.

> In particular, interactions with God through prayer provide individuals (1) an other to whom one can express and vent anger; (2) positive reflected appraisals that help maintain self esteem; (3) reinterpretive cognitions that make situations seem less threatening; (4) an other with whom one can interact to "zone out" negative emotion-inducing stimuli; and (5) an emotion management model to imitate. (Sharp, 2010, p.417)

As seen, there seems to be evidence that prayer can have great impact on the emotion regulatory functions of individuals.

2.1.6. Prayer and forgiveness

Although studies have focused on prayer as well as forgiveness respectively, they have seldom been examined together. In a study published in 2013, 411 undergraduate students at private Christian colleges in the US were studied (Vasiliauskas & McMinn, 2013). The study concerned interpersonal offenses concerning forgiveness. The participants were assigned into three different groups, one prayer group focusing on devotion and forgiveness; one prayer group concentrated on the devotional matter (not including forgiveness) and the one non-contact control group. The study ran for 16 days (Vasiliauskas & McMinn, 2013, p.23ff). The results showed significant changes in the state of forgiveness by the participants in the group mainly focused on devotion and forgiveness and devotion in general. The former also showed a significant change in their empathy for the offender. To the researchers, the finding that there were no significant differences between the two groups performing prayers stood out. In their discussion, topics of whether prayer itself relates to the specific question of forgiveness are discussed. They also related this to the question of to what extent forgiveness is inherent in the Christian tradition, even if it is not specifically focused on at all times. They also related the latter to the state of being a believer and performing prayers, in that individuals may be more reflective than others, not praying, when new perspectives are presented.

> Devotional time, an experience of seeing self in relation to the divine, pulls the believer to an other-focused perspective which may, in turn, draw the believer to sense that there is another reality, another perspective on life, essentially God's perspective. (Vasiliauskas & McMinn, 2013, p.28)

Perceived it this way, prayer may be a useful tool for interpersonal relations in that less focus is placed on the self and more on others surrounding the self.

2.1.7. Meaning-making

On the topic of religion and meaning-making, many studies have been conducted with a variety of results. Just like the case with religious coping, the studies of meaning-making have often focused on the correlation with the physical aspects of health and not primarily on mental health. Some meta-studies though have shown primarily a positive correlation between religion and mental health. In the current study, the physical aspects are of less interest since focus is mainly on psychological aspects of the informant population.

Although employing a different instrument than used in this study, Schnell (2011) provides some interesting insights into the field of individual meaning-making. Relying on multidimensional inventory sources of meaning (*Sources of Meaning and Meaning in Life Questionnaire*, SoMe) "individual differences in meaning-making are analyzed" (Schnell, 2011, p.667). The SoMe instrument used is a 151 item measure relating to 26 sources of meaning. The sample employed in this study was N=603. Focusing on the diversity and density dimensions of meaning-making, it is stated that:

> In order to distinguish clearly between different understandings of breadth, the following terminology is proposed: Density is measured by the number of sources of meaning an individual draws on; diversity stands for the number of domains of meaning represented by the sources of meaning relevant to an individual. (Schnell, 2011, p.667)

When looking at the results, the sample in the study showed that the correlations between different sources of meaning and how meaningful they are varied significantly. Some commitments and areas in the life of the sample population were likely to be more prominent in how they generated meaning. One phenomenon described is *generativity*, the concept by Erik Eriksson focusing on the psychosocial aspect of guiding the coming generations relating to positive progress.

> Generativity is established as the most powerful predictor of meaningfulness. Meaningfulness increases significantly with density and diversity of sources of meaning; the relationship between density and meaningfulness is largely mediated by diversity. Findings indicate that commitment to numerous, diverse, and, especially, selftranscendent sources of meaning enhances the probability of living a meaningful life. (Schnell, 2011, p.667)

As seen here, the focus on interpersonal and permanent progress, and on leaving a mark in the world were important as well as relational and diversity aspects.

2.1.8. Well-being

In a summary of research findings regarding the correlation between religion and well-being, it was found that nearly 80% of the 100 studies examined by the authors provided data that these variables (religion and well-being) were of significance (Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001, p.214f). Even if many studies only showed a modest correlation, the pattern of significance could not be ignored. The results include greater happiness, life satisfaction, morale, or positive affect (Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001, p.101). In the case relating to purpose in life and meaning in life, they provided data concluding that there is a positive correlation between these variables and religion in at least 14 studies examined (Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001, p.100). They attribute this to the understanding that

the religious individuals do not find themselves and their place in this world as being the result of an act of chance. The involvement in religion relates to an understanding of a higher power and its will to perform certain acts. The material provided for these studies mainly came from a North American context, where the main denominations include different Christian branches and only to some minor extent minority religions (in the US) such as Judaism and Hinduism. One study included a Muslim population. Regarding the negative correlation between religion and well-being, it is only attributed to one study regarding college students. The authors regard the study as having methodological faults (Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001, p.113).

2.1.9. Religious coping in the US

On the topic of religious coping in combination with prayer, there is also a lack of previous research. In the US, there has been an increase in using prayer as a coping mechanism for addressing medical procedures and illness. This is shown in the National Health Interview Survey. In 1999 respondents answered that 13.7% used prayer as a coping mechanism (Ni, Smile & Hardy, 2002) which later increased and for the same question the answer was 48% in 2007 (Wachholtz & Sambamoorthi, 2011). This is a dramatic increase in numbers. Although interesting, when examining the studies concerning religious affiliation no data are provided. In the context of the US in 2014 only 0.9% reported to be Muslim (PEW, 2016) making the demographic vastly different from an all-Muslim population.

2.1.10. Religious coping and combat stress

In a longitudinal study, the factors of social support, spirituality, and religious coping were viewed as "potential protective factors against the development of post-trauma stress symptoms and depression among soldiers exposed to combat." (Orton, 2011, p.iii).

> Two hypotheses were tested. First, it was hypothesized that measures of social support, religiosity, and spirituality would, alone or in combination, predict the development of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) related symptoms 6 months after deployment. Second, soldiers who scored lowest on social support prior to trauma exposure would be most likely to develop PTSD symptoms. (Orton, 2011, p.iiif)

Data from the study were collected before deployment and six months after deployment. The findings of this study showed that the soldiers who scored high on negative religious coping before deployment were significantly overrepresented in the group who later on suffered from PTSD. The soldiers who scored high concerning existential well-being reported much lower rates of depression after combat experience. It is suggested that the view perceived by the soldiers had a significant impact on whether depression and PTSD occur after combat. It was suggested that further research should include the view of spiritual and religious involvement both before and after deployment.

2.1.11. Religious coping and bereaved college students

Following some recent studies, studying bereavement in the population of college students has become more popular. Until very recently the scope of these studies had not been sufficient, making the opportunity for further research an open field. The lack of research on this topic among this population is seen as problematic since it may create a deficit in which the lack of tools in the grieving process may decrease well-being at a later point. Since religion is a common area from which resources are drawn during many types of hardship, these are also often used in the case of grieving and processing the loss of a loved one. RCOPE is a frequently used tool used for measuring religious coping. This study mimics a previous one but uses a larger population (N=677 undergraduate students from the US, mean age 19,1 years, predominately female of 62%, underclassmen of 84% freshman or sophomore status, Christians were 68% of participants). Using an earlier study and the data from this sample, a 2-factor analysis was used on a particular 39-item version of the RCOPE scale tailored for measuring grief in the population of college students. "Hierarchical regression models demonstrated the discriminate, convergent, and predictive validity of the instrument." (Lord et al., 2014, p.1302). Religious coping continues to be a resource used by a vast number of individuals, making a case for further specific inquiries more interesting.

2.1.12. Religious coping and Pakistani Muslim university students

This study is of great interest since it uses the Brief RCOPE instrument in a Muslim population, something extremely rare (no other studies in English were found using this instrument in a Muslim population). The aim here was to create a specialized Pakistani Religious Coping Practices Scale to be utilized with a Pakistani Muslim population to explore their use of different strategies concerning religious coping. A sample of 129 Pakistani university students was used where they responded to the Brief RCOPE instrument (positive and negative scales) as well as the new in Pakistani Religious Coping Practices Scale instrument translated into Urdu. The conclusion from this study showed that the newly developed Pakistani Religious Coping Practices Scale and the Brief RCOPE instrument had a positive correlation (Khan & Watson, 2006, p.107ff). It was also showed that:

> The Brief RCOPE Negative Religious Coping scale predicted higher levels of all three symptoms of stress but was unrelated to religious motivation and interest. The new Muslim coping practices measure and the Positive Religious Coping scale were associated with higher levels of religious motivation and interest, and both also exhibited a negative relation with depression once the variance associated with Negative Religious Coping was removed. (Khan & Watson, 2006, p.101)

Amongst other findings, a difference between men and women was found.

> Most important relative to the goals of this project was that women scored higher on both the Positive Religious Coping and Negative Religious Coping subscales. Sex differences did not appear, however, in correlations observed for the Brief RCOPE or for the Pakistani Religious Coping Practices Scale. Attention to sex, therefore, may not be a major concern in future examinations of correlations obtained with these instruments in Pakistani samples. (Khan & Watson, 2006, p.110)

Another area covered was how some parts of the Muslim faith might have skewed the data if compared to a Christian sample. One topic discussed by the authors was

fatalism, in that the understanding of this is perceived differently by the participants amongst different populations. In the Muslim Pakistani case this might have had some impact in that "linkages of Positive Religious Coping with adjustment might become more obvious in procedures that controlled for fatalism." (Khan & Watson, 2006, p.110) This makes a case for performing further research into the specific target population and when necessary using adjusted versions of instruments. The theological understanding by the participants might differ in understanding from the perspectives used by the scholars developing the instruments, who often are active in the US or Europe. Cultural sensitivity, amongst other topics, will thus be needed when developing specific versions of instruments. "These data most importantly confirmed that the Pakistani Religious Coping Practices Scale and the Brief RCOPE were useful for examining how Pakistani Muslims cope with stress." (Khan & Watson, 2006, p.101)

2.1.13. Religious coping and anti-Muslim attitudes

In a study performed in the US, links between religious coping, the understanding that Muslims desecrate Christian values and teachings and more general anti-Muslim attitudes were examined (Abu Raiya et al., 2008). Participants in the study were Christian undergraduate students of whom "between 3.7% and 28% perceived Muslims as a threat to Christian values and teachings" (Abu Raiya et al., 2008, p.311). Several variables were used to control the variance of the sample. The main findings showed that the higher level of viewing Muslims as a threat to their Christian faith, mainly through desecration of their teachings, correlated to higher anti-Muslim attitudes. Another of the findings showed that the participants who scored high regarding positive religious coping to a much lesser extent held anti-Muslim values. This was brought forward in relation to theological aspects like forgiveness and learning from people of other faiths — amongst others, Muslims (Abu Raiya et al., 2008, p.320ff). On the other hand, negative religious coping methods by the participants correlated with higher anti-Muslim attitudes. The latter often related to the view that God was punishing the Muslims.

> Further, religious coping methods partially mediated the associations between desecration and anti-Muslim attitudes. Higher levels of authoritarianism, religious particularism, fundamentalism, and greater exposure to messages of desecration predicted perceptions of Muslims as desecrators of Christianity. (Abu Raiya et al., 2008, p.310)

This study also showed the importance of religious coping and how it can be related to different aspects of negative emotions concerning other groups. The central influence regarding the findings of this study was how religious coping refers to other spheres of life. This included prejudice as well as other feelings and emotions. Religious coping was thus a valuable component in understanding religiousness and how the attitudes towards a god or similar entity might impact other relational aspects as well.

2.2. Presentation of the theoretical frame

For this study, a series of theoretical perspectives will be used to create a theoretical frame. The various theories will be presented separately and then a section on their relation and how to integrate them in this study is given.

2.2.1. Religion and meaning

The main theory used in this study is provided by Crystal Park, psychologist of religion and clinical psychologist (Park 2013). Park claims that "Meaning is widely regarded as central to human experience" (2013, p.357). Although "meaning" is often widely used with different notions attributed to it, the perspective presented here focuses on how meaning is created and upheld — with an emphasis on process rather than essence. Drawing on Viktor Frankl, Park (2013, p.357) states that "will to meaning" is a primary human motive which must actively be created and upheld by all individuals — it is not an inherent property of human life present by itself at all times. Although present, the processes of creating meaning are not known consciously at all times, and perhaps sometimes not at all. A meaning-making process is thus used to comprehend the stimuli and perceptions of the world. Adding to this is the human psyche which is well capable of not only interpreting the stimuli and perceptions, but also looking forward, trying to find meaning, and evaluating a broad set of perspectives. This is one of the aspects that significantly sets humans apart from most other animals. Experiencing and evaluating feelings, goals and purpose are all part of the human experience.

The theory of meaning by Park (2013, p.357ff) provides a model of meaning-making with two dimensions: global meaning (1) and situational meaning (2). In the first dimension, this is the abstract overlying level that corresponds to a general level of ontological understanding of the world, where aims and goals, the sense that there is a purpose to life as well as a broader understanding of culture and society lay. This dimensional level can be seen as more abstract than the second one, further from the individual's life. The situational meaning-making dimension corresponds to the actual events taking place in an individual's life, based on lived experience. In this dimensional level, the individual has to apply the more theoretical and abstract knowledge or understanding to be able to successfully navigate through different real life situations, both joyful and stressful. Park makes the case that when these two levels are aligned and do not differ much the individual has a positive view on meaning-making. When these two do not correspond well, there is cognitive dissonance that will lead to stress or discomfort in the individual's life. The greater the discrepancy between these levels is the greater the perceived stress or discomfort is. The individual also tries to change the understanding of the situation in accordance with the other level, depending on which of them is perceived to create the wrongful understanding. This also leads to the possibility of change in either level depending on how the situation needs to be addressed.

The process of meaning-making occurs during the restoration and (re-)evaluation of the global meaning in light of appraised event meaning. Park (2013, p.360) provides examples, like an individual being assaulted by a stranger, therefore shattering the previous notion that the world is a fair place but also regarding goals like staying secure from threat. Many more examples can be provided like this. As

stated above, it is the discrepancies between global and situational meaning that relate to the level of distress an individual feel, but also what may initiate a meaning-making process. In some circumstances, the discrepancy between the global and situational meaning is too large too easily be reattributed by the meaning-making process. In a case like this great psychological distress or illness (included, but not limited to states of depression) is often the result. The result of the meaning-making process is meaning(s) made. This or these outcomes can relate to either the global meaning being adjusted or the way the situational meaning is understood. In both these cases, the results may be both an enhancement to the individual or a detraction regarding meaning. For a reference figure of the meaning-making model, please see Park, 2013, p.359.

Park (2013, p.360ff) presents several cases that show that religion is the meaning system of choice in many cases since it provides many of the core aspects of a stable meaning system for the individual. This is put in opposition to a scientific, or naturalistic materialism, which she means will not provide the same level of comfort for the individual. A strong claim, in this case, is to the supposed purpose in life at a transcendental level, often related to a divine deity that creates or upholds an "outside" view of what is good. The understanding here is that the individual must not succumb to a subjective understanding of what is good but rather that the "objective" deity (most often in the form of a god) ensures this. Since religion is widely available as a system providing a framework for meaning-making it in many ways, it serves as a self-enhancing entity. Another aspect is the many varieties and branches that are available, making the claim broader since more individuals have an easier time finding a version that fits their needs. Some types also work as part of a mixed system, assessing worldview needs and making space for meaning-making. The processes that occur when different worldview systems are in conflict will not be elaborated further, but it should be noted that mixed systems are often internalized by individuals — although this also varies depending on the context. In the case where religion is used as the central part of the global meaning system employed by individuals, the characteristics of the belief will largely shape their understanding of both the world as a whole as well as other people's place in it (Park, 2013, p.361f). In the cases where a god or similar deity is part of the belief, the character of that entity will directly impact other understandings. Examples range from a god that can be forgiving, benevolent, wrathful or distant sometimes correlating with how human nature is to be understood. Examples of the latter include if a person is created in the images of a [the] god, is sinful in nature but also how deeds are to be understood. Deeds or other acts often relate to a perceived understanding of an afterlife and what it will presumably be like — some aspects not always easy to distinguish. A key element is whether the god or deity can directly impact inherent life on earth (an actively acting god), or if the case is more distant. Many theological theories have been provided during history but will not be discussed further here due to space limitations. One of the remarks that Park (2013, p.362f) touches upon is the state of theodicy concerning psychology of religion. This concept discusses the question of human suffering in the world, often in relation with a premise that if there is a loving god — how could it allow, sometimes unbearable, human suffering? How this question is both asked as well as answered can provide some interesting insights to how meaning-making processes occur in relation to both actual events (situational meaning) as well as global meaning. Examples in these cases include, but are not limited to, how

suffering can lead to future gains or ultimate goals, such as salvation — or in some cases punishment for bad deeds. The same can be seen inverted when good deeds occur, often exemplified in a Christian context by prosperity theology.

Concerning global beliefs and goals, the belief system employed can serve many functions — especially in relation to the acts by the religious individual. These include both positive and negative goals that must be taken into consideration when assessing their function. In some cases, supremacy and domination are part of these belief systems, often in relation to a rigid understanding of the theology at hand. Here very rigid systems of belief can be very destructive, both for the individual as well as the surroundings depending on the actions performed. Although extremism is often discussed in relation to religiosity, instead labeling this rigid or fixed can often be more fruitful since the notion is less judging. Regarding religion and meaning in life, Park (2013, p.364ff) sees this as a very underdeveloped area that needs more attention. The studies used earlier have often only provided a very shallow understanding of how meaning is made and not employed adequate strategies to gain any deeper knowledge regarding this complex topic. What has been shown through studies is that there is a correlation between intrinsic religiousness and a positive view of meaning in life. It should be noted here that the studies here are in a Christian context in North America.

Religion also provides a framework for situational meaning. These events can range from the most mundane tasks of everyday life to more exceptional ones that might occur. The framework functions as a basic scheme when the individual interprets the world around him/her. Through cognitive experience, perception, language, and memory, the religious worldview filters these and relates them to other understandings of the world. Depending on the belief system at hand, the output of the understanding for the individual can take a variety of forms. Religious variations depending on different systems or branches can, based on their substance and lived experience, influence how and to what extent the situational meaning is related to global meaning (Park, 2013, p.365ff). Different religions traditions, relating to properties such as theology, relate to other functions when determining perspectives and perceptions. These can be seen to operate both from a top-down perspective as well as a bottom-up perspective depending on the situation. As part of the meaning-making model described above, adjustments to the global meaning can be made depending on the situational meaning and outcomes from events. The global level is then once again used to (re)interpret situations, creating a constant system of meaning production in relation to variances in adjustments — both small and large. Research has shown that many belief systems often are employed in such a manner that pre-existing expectations are confirmed or reinforced. A conclusion here is that for many (or most) individuals change does not come easy. Structuring of perceptions and notions that reinforce previous belief can, therefore, be given higher weight than information that would require the individual to re-evaluate his/her belief system. As already explained, there are constant processes of both evaluation and re-evaluation as part of the adjustments to the meaning-making model — but how different actions are internalized and structured on the cognitive level may vary.

Another topic relating to situational meaning is how larger, global meanings are broken down and conceptualized through daily life. Goals and striving, for example

in relation to a god or deity, are often pursued through many small actions. In this regard, the daily activities can also be related to the overarching system of belief at a transcendental level. Through structuring both daily tasks, not in themselves coded as religious, to the performance of religious rituals, can both provide a situation in which the individual relates their global meaning and belief. This structuring actively relates the belief system to ordinary tasks in that the framework for evaluating them stems from the global belief system — often in the form of religion. The worldview thus includes relations to virtually all spheres of life.

The situational meaning of traumatic or exceptional cases of lived experience trigger adjustments in the system of meaning-making for the individual. As explained above, a constant adjustment aligning global and situational meaning is in play. Discrepancies experienced are sought to be reduced so that the different part of the system form a coherent entity. Religious belief has been shown to provide robust systems of how meaning is made and how to interpret difficult situations of life (Park, 2013, p.366ff). Examples here include how the individual understands the traumatic or stressful event as a test by a god, sometimes in relation to ultimate goals and an understanding of an afterlife. The framework that religion provides to the individual influences all aspects of how a situation is interpreted, both when it first occurs but also later when it is put into perspective. In the latter case, meaning is often made by interpreting the stressful event in a less demanding manner, placing that particular event on a larger scale. Initial appraisals can also vary in that the global understanding provides different strategies to be employed by the individual during the actual occurrence.

A central part of meaning-making processes is in what regard they relate to and interact with other processes. Concerning stressful events, different coping mechanisms are of particular interest. Coping mechanisms work in many different ways, from both changing the view of appraised meanings to amending the global meaning system. Many coping mechanisms with a religious connotation work especially in relation to meaning-making efforts. This compromise both active efforts as well as less intrusive thoughts (Park, 2013, p.369). As in the case of both situational and global meaning, the processes of coping are related to different forms of faith and to what extent a presumed god or deity's characteristics are perceived to manifest themselves. Rigid understandings, as well as forgiveness or benevolence, can influence how coping processes relate to interpretations of the situation.

In the case of changed appraisal meaning in light of stressful or traumatic events, the religious aspects of a meaning system are often used to reattribute how the situation is to be perceived. Often the situation is re-examined from a viewpoint that lessens the stress posed to the individual. Not seldom individuals can interpret the events concerning a perceived god or deity, for example, that the harm inflicted upon them was intentional as a result of earlier deeds. If the harm is understood as neglect by the god or deity, the global meaning system can be revisited for further adjustments. Often though religions provide a space for positive attributions to stressful events, trying to make sense of the situation from a positive standpoint. This can be the case even if the trauma inflicted is severe, since it can be interpreted to serve future goals not known to the individual but that the presumed god or deity is well aware of. At this point the transcendental aspect, as perceived through

theology, can be a powerful motivator in sustaining the global meaning. As previously stated, in most cases the individual only will try to adjust the global meaning system if necessary. A note concerning negative outcomes should also be made. Just because an individual believes in a god or deity, this belief does not necessarily indicate something beneficial. The god can be judgmental and punishing, issuing punishment at its choosing. If one believes in a god with such attributes, the question of whether one would like it or not is not always resourceful since there is no way of changing it. If the distance between situational and global meaning is too large, the adjustment of global meaning can mean a major change. These cases can lead to conversion, changing of a denomination or religious branch as well as de-conversion when applicable. As seen here, there are a multitude of variables that need to be taken into account when studying meaning-making processes.

2.2.2. Religion and coping

Virtually all humans sometimes experience times of struggle and hardship. Just as other emotions and events during life, the worldview and meaning systems — as well as ideologies and the like — are combined to form a lens for approaching and addressing life. The cognitive, as well as other aspects of religion and religiosity, are parts of these systems for a broad majority of humans (PEW, 2012). The resources employed by religious individuals vary but have been part of religions for thousands of years (Pargament et al. 2013, p.560). These strategies and resources cover a large variety of beliefs and actions that the religious individual may use in his/her daily life. Depending on several different circumstances, the coping mechanisms offered may both be beneficial to the individual as well as directly harmful. In many cases the results from using religious resources man be both beneficial and damaging to the individual at the same time depending on what understanding one is examining. Since religion plays such a large role in how many people understand the world: "Perhaps then, it should come as no surprise that where we find crisis and tragedy, we often find religion." (Pargament et al., 2013, p.560).

In modern times, religion and coping have often been examined from a critical perspective, mainly seeing the resources used as passive defenses. Pargament and colleagues (2013, p.561) refer to Sigmund Freud who posed the view that religion is to be understood mainly as a defensive mechanism used by individuals. The thought behind this was that when faced with a threat, the individual places the causality of this upon a supernatural force (for example a god), thus escaping reality and hiding from the truth. Later this view has been challenged significantly and active coping strategies and resources have been studied from a positive standpoint to add a balancing view to the negative assessment. Almost all research regarding religious coping has been conducted with a Christian demographic, although some studies have used a Hindu or Jewish population. In the case of Islam, only a few studies have been performed.

Although religion can work in manners of active coping, passive coping mechanisms also play a role. When used as a coping mechanism to reduce anxiety, there is a correlation between patients that are about to undergo severe surgery – in

that this population has a higher degree of belief in a god, superstitious beliefs, as well as anxiety – than others. This variation is reduced after the surgical procedure, and when compared to a control group undergoing only minor surgery, their beliefs did not change before and after surgery (Pargament et al., 2013, p.561). Adjacent to this, from other fields of study it has been concluded that:

> More recently, terror management theory studies point to links between death-related fears and heightened signs of religiousness (Vail et al., 2010). Other studies have shown that people are more likely to turn to religious beliefs and practices in time of greater uncertainty (Hogg, Adelman & Blagg, 2010). (Pargament et al., 2013, p.561).

Seeing the higher degree of practice and belief in religious systems in times of uncertainty add to the understanding of areas where religious coping is present. Even if some would argue that this is because religion is only defensive in nature, more perspectives should be added. The way in which the coping functions can be both active and passive respectively, not only shielding the individual from traumatic events but also enhancing queries in forward-orienting directions. A prominent example is how religion and meaning-making can provide further guidance from traumatic or harmful events (please see the section on meaning-making above). Apart from meaning-making, other perspectives where religion can function concerning — or as part(s) of — coping mechanisms affecting areas like pursuits of the sacred, self-regulation mechanisms, intimacy, and relational perspectives as well as goal-seeking concerning a transcendental level to name a few. As in the case of meaning-making, which in many ways is linked to and intertwined with the theoretical perspectives of religion and coping, these coping patterns can actively be engaged in transformational processes when the individual encounters adverse or traumatic events. Examples here include how these events can be viewed through a sacred lens and thus adding new understandings of the situation. Transformative perspectives can cover a broad range of events but are perhaps more often thought of concerning major life-changing events — of both joy and stress. These may include birth, rites of baptism, receiving communion, marriage, death, and funerals. In cases where these events provide stress and emotional harm to the individual, for example addressing death of loved ones and at funerals, the reinterpretation of the situation — through the sacred lens — may add perspectives which make the situation more bearable and not adding to or resulting in apathy. This may include understandings like how a god is trying to teach the individual a valuable lesson, as an opportunity for spiritual growth, or as part of a larger benevolent plan in a play by a god not visible to the individual at that point (Pargament et al., 2013, p.561f). The above perspectives and situations are supported in empirical studies showing that active religious coping is more present than passive coping. Part of this stems from the way individuals seek meaning but also understand that a god has given them the tools to cope with a situation. This is where the basic understanding of a just god is present, not laying more stress on an individual than she can handle. This sometimes includes a relational approach working together with a perceived god. This active form of coping is related to positive coping outcomes. There seems to be a link between a stressful situation, and in what regard that may be part of the individual's actions, or if it appears to be an act of chance. Passive coping strategies relate to negative outcomes in situations where one can engage actively to change the outcome, for example in relation problem. On the other side, in situations where the occurrence seems to be an act of chance — like an accident or illness — passive coping

strategies are related to positive outcomes (Pargament et al., 2013, p.562). It thus seems that different situations require different coping strategies and that the results may vary depending on these as well. It should be noted that the worldview, religious understanding, as well as other factors are intertwined here — making religious coping a broad area of inquiry that requires a complex model of investigation .

Concerning meaning-making theory outlined earlier, the coping theory presented here can interject and, as will be presented later on, function in a supportive character. Not all religious or similar beliefs are beneficial for the believer since the presupposed god or deity might or might not be of a benevolent character in the eyes of the believer or may be perceived to act in an unexpected way.. If — or when — this is the case, coping theory can serve as a bridge between the understanding of the "acts" performed by a god or deity, and how to interpret them from the view of the believer. Positive religious coping serves a supportive function, while negative religious coping is related to states of negative health outcomes. Thus, measuring coping, and specifically how the believer understands the god or deity, can prove useful when studying meaning-making processes as well.

Religious coping, just like religion and religiousness in general, is not a simple topic and it involves a multitude of areas that requires in-depth studies. Earlier religious coping has sometimes only been described in the shallowest ways, not carefully examining the plethora of engagements present in this field. When studying religious coping, areas of interest include how much religion is involved in the coping processes, how it is involved, who is the participant, where does this occur, what is actually done or performed, when is it done, where does the processes take place as well as why is this type of involvement carried out (Pargament et al., 2013, p.562f). For a comprehensive list of methods of religious coping, please see Appendix J.

As stated in the literature on this subject (Pargament et al., 2013, p.563) the perhaps most ambitious way to measure coping is done with the 105-item measure named RCOPE ("R" for religious) of 21 different items of religious coping. "The coping methods encompass active, passive, and interactive strategies; emotion-focused and problem-focused approaches; and cognitive, behavioral, interpersonal, and spiritual domains." (Pargament et al., 2013, p.563) These are then operationalized through five key areas of interest where "the search for meaning, the search for mastery and control, the search for comfort and closeness to God, the search for intimacy and closeness to God, and the search for life transformation." (Pargament et al., 2013, p.563) These areas can be studied both from a macro as well as a micro perspective. The latter form gives greater depth to various functions of these perspectives and how they work. In short, there are two broad areas of religious coping: (1) positive coping and (2) negative coping. Positive coping shows a secure relationship with the presumed god or deity as well as a high functioning in the understanding of spiritual connections with other people. Negative coping shows the opposite, often a constant struggle both with the presumed god or deity, but also with other people and ultimately the self (Pargament et al., 2013, p.563). These two overarching categories provide a useful tool for scholars when studying religious coping. In short, there is a correlation between positive religious coping and benefits in health and psychological adjustments. Inversely, positive religious coping is negatively

related to negative outcomes of stressors in life (Pargament et al., 2013, p.564f). Data sets for this have been collected from various numbers of stressors and events, including both physical and psychological illnesses. Positive religious coping relates to personal growth when faced with situations like a natural disaster, death of relatives, sexual abuse, life-threatening accidents, and assaults. For negative religious coping processes, there is an established correlation both with negative psychological and physiological impact for the individual. This includes struggles with the self, anxiety, depression, and other stressors. When faced with physical problems, negative religious coping is correlated with a decline in overall health (often adding to mental stress as well). Mortality rates are also higher for this group. Correlations exist for both HIV/AIDS, various cancer forms, cardiovascular illness and auto-immune diseases and negative religious coping (Pargament et al., 2013, p.565). As already stated "Religious coping is not automatically beneficial and some types are more harmful than others." (Pargament et al., 2013, p.565) As said at the beginning of this section, most studies have used a Christian sample. There are instruments developed specifically for Hindus, Jews, and Muslims. Regarding the Muslim context, a discussion of the instruments will be provided in Chapter 5.

Another aspect that has to be considered is how religious coping seems to provide further or "more" coping strategies that are not provided by other variables. When sampling and adjusting the outcome for different variables, including demographics and other variables like a non-religious coping mechanism, there is still an area that cannot be explained away by other factors. Religious coping, therefore, seems to add dimensions or strategies that are not employed outside this area (Pargament et al., 2013, p.566). This is a very significant finding adding to the importance of study in the field of religious coping. Religious coping does not occur in a separate instance of an individual's life unlike other forms of coping mechanisms. Instead, a worldview and other factors are already in play when the need for a religious coping mechanism arises. This should be understood in light of the section on meaning-making above, in that no individual is a tabula rasa. The orientation system at hand involves both inter- and intra-personal concepts; including relationships, beliefs, embedded religious practices as well as personality traits. When examining specific religious rituals and practices, the orienting system appears to influence the type of coping strategies used:

> Specifically, religious prayer (emphasizing communion with God) was related to collaborative and deferring coping, whereas meditative prayer (focused on the self rather than God) was related to receptive coping, which assumes a more impersonal God and acceptance toward situations one cannot control.
> Thus, as a general disposition, the orienting system may influence the types of religious coping strategies employed in specific situations. General resources (e.g., intrinsic religious orientation, secure attachment to God, church attendance) lead to more positive religious coping strategies, whereas general burdens (e.g., insecure attachment to God, neuroticism) lead to more negative religious coping methods. However, it is important to stress that specific religious coping methods are related more directly to the resolution of critical situations. (Pargament et al., 2013, p.567)

The orientations and previous as well as present and future practices, therefore provide a crucial role in understanding how an individual may react to various events and stressors. This should also be seen in the light of religious coping when related to more positive outcomes. Individuals embedded in an environment where there is a high degree of religiosity can, therefore, be seen as having a greater

predisposition for religious coping. Feeling secure in a social context where the tools and strategies of religious traditions provide coping mechanisms can thus further add to the outcome. In the field of prayer, there are studies that provide a correlation between meditative prayer and reduced anxiety and depression (Pargament et al., 2013, p.568f). In addition to these findings, there are several studies adding to the field of therapeutic interventions when religious coping is used, but this is not of primary interest for the current study and will therefore not be further explained here — for further suggested reading in this area, please see Pargament et al., 2013, p.568ff.

2.2.3. Sense of Coherence (SoC)

The term Sense of Coherence (SoC) is coined by the researcher Aaron Antonovsky whose work is located in the field of medical sociology. Another term attributed to him is the *salutogenic* perspective, where one focuses on the factors and positive aspects that are related to maintaining good health. If the study of disease and illness focuses on the negative aspects and what impairs the ability to maintain good health, Antonovsky´s perspective sees the phenomenon from the other side. The reason for this is, in Antonovsky's regard, that all too many studies have focused on the negative aspects of human life instead of trying to capture the positive aspects that relate to health. Relating to the WHO definition of health above, this perspective focuses on how this is achieved. For Antonovsky the binary distinction by the WHO definition is not a suitable one, and instead, the perspective he outlines is more in line with the one used that is influenced by Koenig, McCullough and Larson (2001, p.97), since health is not a binary state but instead operates on a continuum. As a background for the theory relating to Sense of Coherence Antonovsky studied several health factors and their relation to stress and coping. One of the prominent examples of this research relates to coping and stress in a population of Holocaust survivors. When the population of Holocaust survivors was studied, mainly focusing on women, he found that 71% suffered from negative mental health whereas in the control group 49% suffered from negative mental health. Instead of focusing on the negative aspect, though, Antonovsky instead pointed to the fact that 29% of the women Holocaust survivors were of good mental health (Antonovsky, 1987). This led to the salutogenic model focusing on the positive aspects that are used to maintain good health. Antonovsky understands these as continuous processes that are present throughout the entire human life. This includes both positive and negative emotions and presents at the same time, and that may vary depending on the situation. A relational perspective of understanding good mental health is also applied since the factors that contribute to health and well-being are interlinked and combine several aspects from the person's life. Antonovsky describes the negative aspects as generalized resource deficits (GRD:s) that contribute to destabilizing a person's locus of control. As a resource to combat these negative aspects are an individual's generalized resistance resources (GRR:s).

Just as the case with the theory on religious coping, the function of using Sense of Coherence (SoC) is to relate it to the meaning-making theory and how it is employed in relation to the interviews later on. Since one of the aims of this study relates to well-being, the use of Antonovsky's theory is a suitable choice. Using the salutogenic perspective in relation to a broader understanding of health, one can

explore other relations in the lives of the informants. Another part of the study, although not a main goal, but an interesting part, is exploring the setting used (Sweden). Here the use of the Sense of Coherence (SoC) theory can provide another dimension on the lives of the informants, and not only prayer but on a larger scale how they view their day to day lives in relation to well-being.

These are a combination of different resources used to maintain good mental health and well-being (Antonovsky, 1987, p.47ff). These can be seen as single entities but also as a group since they usually are present together in some combination. This should also be considered in relation to the greater theory of health not as a binary entity but as existing on a continuum. In the salutogenic model the individual always strives to maintain a "Sense of Coherence" (SoC). This is the state comprising factors that result in making sense of one's current life and situation. As mentioned above, this is challenged by different GRD:s throughout life. At times, depending on the resources a person has disposable, this may cause a deficit in health and well-being that may result in a pathological state of psychological illness. The GRR:s provide a stable platform for the individual that contribute to the feeling of Sense of Coherence. The GRR:s come in a variety of forms such as psychological, relational, social, and physical (including economic proficiency). Both GRD:s and GRR:s are present at the same time and provide opposing effects in the "power struggle" of an individual's well-being. Different "stressors" can be found that relate to negative feelings resulting in lesser well-being.

Antonovsky defines Sense of Coherence in the following way:

> Sense of Coherence is a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable and explicable; (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement. (Antonovsky, 1987, p.19)

As seen there are several parts integrated into the understanding of Sense of Coherence. These are intertwined and indissoluble but can still be examined, at least to some extent, as parts. Important though is the total sum which is expected to exceed the individual parts. Antonovsky provides three components in the context of the Sense of Coherence:

1. **Comprehensibility**: this is the notion that inner and outer stimuli appear in an orderly and structured manner. Understanding processes and relations between processes is critical here since a well-structured understanding of different phenomena can be seen a foundation for the other two components. Predictability is considered as an elongation of this since random events and processes could not yield any viable understanding of where events would or could lead. The opposite of a functional comprehensibility could be to "understand" information and processes as chaotic, unstructured, unordered, random and irrational. An important part is that comprehensibility does not correspond to desirable events since even undesirable events — such as illness, accidents, war and death — can also be predictable and non-random (Antonovsky, 1987, p.44f).

2. **Manageability**: this is the array of disposable resources available to the individual in dealing with stimuli and different situations. This can be both personal resources as well as a plethora offered by relatives or from other forms of relations. The latter form can include a variety that spans from family and friends, communal figures or medical staff, religious authorities from a congregation or the equivalent but also an understanding stemming from a religious belief. The last part should be read as God or similar force not leaving the individual. Troublesome times and undesirable events occur in most individual's life and manageability focuses on the actual resources used in not having the understanding that one is just a victim of circumstance (Antonovsky, 1987, p.45).

3. **Meaningfulness**: is the central component providing a direction in life. This usually occurs when being engaged in relations and events one find giving a purpose in life. Personal engagement is often a key aspect here since the individual wishes to be seen as an agent that purposefully engage in processes and relations that provide a positive notion for them. The engagements might not always be easy but instead the opposite. There might be a relation stemming from the level of engagement in a particular process or event that is related to the level of satisfaction as a result of that engagement. Just as in the case of the former two components of SoC the processes or events are not always pleasant for the individual, and many might be quite the contrary. An individual with a high level of meaningfulness is one who finds topics and areas in life worth investing time and energy in (Antonovsky, 1987, p.45f).

The three different components of Sense of Coherence relate to each other. In cases where the individual either has a high or low Sense of Coherence their condition is stable (type 1 and in the table below). In the other cases, there is an internal relation of the components that has to be examined. Antonovsky (1987, p.48ff) writes that some of the cases are very unusual since their internal relations do not stack. In the table below this is represented by cases 2 and 7. In the first instance (2) a comprehensibility is seen as a prerequisite of manageability and meaningfulness since an individual who does not possess the first component likely will not have the two second components. The same patterns is found in case) since an individual who cannot comprehend a situation and finds no reason to do so either, seldom can manage well. Examining the cases 3, 4, 5, & 6. it is clear that meaningfulness is a central component (Antonovsky, 1987, p.50f). Even if the other aspects either are in place or not (types 3 & 4) one who finds the situation meaningful usually will fare quite well or at least press in that direction. Usually, the other two components (comprehensibility and manageability) do increase in scope for these individuals. The opposite is seen in the other cases (types 6 & 7) where the individual who does not find meaning in the event or processes usually presses downward. In this case, the other two components (comprehensibility and manageability) will likely decrease in scope over time — if there is no intervention — resulting in in less capability regarding these components as well. As stated, the central component is in many regards meaningfulness since this is the motivational aspect giving the individual a reason to engage at all.

Table 6. Dynamic relations between the components of SoC

Type	Component			
	Comprehensibility	**Manageability**	**Meaningfulness**	**Prediction**
1.	high	high	high	stable
2.	low	high	high	unusual
3.	high	low	high	press upward
4.	low	low	high	press upward
5.	high	high	low	press downward
6.	high	low	low	press downward
7.	low	high	low	unusual
8.	low	low	low	stable

(Antonovsky, 1987, p.48)

2.2.4. Resilience

Resilience as a term is widely used in different disciplines of science, referring to various properties in relation to withstanding outside influence. The properties can consist of both individual and group mechanisms. "In the social sciences, resilience is commonly used to describe a person or community's ability to withstand and rebound from adversity." (Mintz, 2012, p.1292) Virtually all humans are affected by hardship and variations in life that pose negative influences on them; resilience is the ability to refrain from more permanent forms of effects from these events. Historically the academic research on resilience has mainly focused on children, often related to their achievements in school (Mintz, 2012, p.1292). Only more recently have studies come to include adults. "Research on resilience in adults often focuses on mental health status after difficult events, and measures things like depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other mental health concerns." (Mintz, 2012, p.1292) Resilience is widely used in relation to the surrounding society, focusing on the functionalist abilities of the individual or group to readjust to "normal" life after traumatic events. A wide range of occurrences can be present here, ranging from being assaulted, the loss of a significant other, to the experiences of war and torture. The same perspective is often used in relation to migration, which is often seen as a traumatic life experience for the individual or group (Mintz, 2012, p.1292f).

The resilience perspective employed in this study also brings the supportive character in relation to meaning-making, much like Sense of Coherence (SoC), where the stability of the informants' understandings of their ability to withstand challenges are measured. Resilience in this regard should be understood also as having a relation to well-being, where one important part is how to relate to challenges.

This same framework is often used to study resilience in immigrants. Immigration is often a tremendously difficult experience, and immigrants may experience adversity in their countries of origin that provokes immigration such as violence,

abuse, persecution, and war, difficulty during the actual process of immigration such as difficulty crossing borders or attaining documentation for legal immigration, and difficulty adjusting to the new culture where they live — both the culture of the immigrant community where they reside if there is one, and adjustment to the new country where they live — language, customs, expectations, services, government, policing, and general cultural expectations. Often, these adversities are interlocking and multilayered, so researchers look for the individual and community characteristics that allow immigrants and their children to adjust and thrive in the new society where they live. (Mintz, 2012, p.1292f)

Although not included in the list above, religion is of course, an aspect of "general cultural expectations". This also involves the perspective of the migrant who is not a refugee, but instead moves by choice or other circumstances. The impact of cultural variations can still pose difficulties in the life of the individual. Positive factors relating to resilience include but are not limited to the following: an active community — both of religious or non-religious character, often with ethnic localities, personal notions of success and support from significant others, language skills and economic factors are also important more often than not (Mintz, 2012, p.1294). A note should also be made here in relation to variation concerning cultures. The same behavior may not be reflected in general values between settings. "Mental health may be framed differently in nations where immigrants are coming from and where they are going to, and so the notion of resilience becomes more complicated when notions of what "health" is are different." (Mintz, 2012, p.1294) Often, migrants have a different understanding of social relations and obligations and an understanding of self and identity that is predicated upon different assumptions about being human. Many migrants bring approaches to health care, child-rearing, and close relationships, to name only three domains, that may be significantly different than the host country and that may create tension and stress between the migrant community and the host culture. (Pickren, 2014, p.19)

In relation to the above, migrants usually also bring with them a set of cultural practices that provides positive aspects concerning resilience. This makes the topic reflexive and varied, not an "either or" perspective. This can include both communal and individualistic aspects, including religion as a source. An important part of resilience is that it is not a static set of behaviors, instead "Resilience can only be defined in context. That is, it is a process rather than a static phenomenon." (Pickren, 2014, p.17). This current study focuses on the psychological aspects of resilience, but other theories relating to neurobiology — or relations between psychology and neurobiology — are also available. "In recent years, the focus on individual resilience has led psychologists to suggest evolutionary factors, potential neurobiological pathways, and genetic predisposi-tions as causative factors in childhood resilience." (Pickren, 2014. p.18) Both the concept of Sense of Coherence (SoC) (Antonovsky, 1987) and religious coping relate to the concept of resilience as well, in that they – and other similar theories – share a family resemblance to resilience (Pickren, 2014. p.18).

2.2.5. Ritual theory

Prayer is in its essence a form of rite, expressed through the body placed in space and time. Prayer is not merely an act of performance isolated from other entities and attributes. At the very center of much prayer, as exemplified through Ṣalāt, is the ritualized body. A suitable perspective of understanding ritual and ritualization is provided by Bell (2009). One can argue whether Bell (2009) provides a theory in the stricter sense or if it is, in her words, more of a framework on how to understand the phenomenon. Central to Bell's understanding is the focus on ritualization and its functions. In focus is the actor or performer of the ritual(s), as seen in a social context — the latter of great importance. The ritual is always part of a social context where there are power relations in play. Rituals are performed and reenacted as means of social control and domination. The performance demarcated in space and time always relates to different spheres of power, either within the group or outside it. The center stage for the ritual, as created through ritualization by the ritualized body, is not only the act in itself but also how it structures the body of the performer. The body itself becomes a stage for power relations through this. In many cases, more so in religions heavy in orthopraxy like Islam, the rigidity of ritual (like Ṣalāt) is a prominent example of this. Rituals are often separated from more mundane tasks of the everyday life, often shown in functions like rigidity, repetitive action, demarcations in time and space and from intentions. Bell (2009) in many ways deviate from earlier understandings of ritual theory that she criticizes for not putting enough emphasis on the performance of the rite (through the ritualized body) and what stems from this. She writes that:

> In sum, it is a major reversal of traditional theory to hypothesise that ritual activity is not the 'instrument' of more basic purposes, such as power, politics, or social control, which are usually seen as existing before or outside the activities of the rite. It puts interpretive analysis on a new footing to suggest that ritual practices are themselves the very production and negotiation of power relations. (Bell, 2009, p.196)

This makes ritualization a more important topic in itself than just seeing it as an instrument for other purposes. This must also always be considered in a particular cultural context since codes and applications can vary widely between settings. Space is of importance here, since not only the performance of the rite is located in a temporal space, but also is the way the body relates to that space. Space is also linked to power, both physical and social. In this regard, the body, as part of the rite, relates to other relationships of power. Here Bell (2009) refers to Michel Foucault in the premise that the individual body is the smallest part from which larger social relationships are created. The body, through the rite, not only structures itself but is also a constituent of larger social bodies. These larger social bodies then relate to other social bodies as well, and many of them — often of various sizes, operate at the same time in negotiating power relations. Relationships of power are always in play, and here Bell (2009) also follows Foucault. The modes of power are twofold since they act from two perspectives at once. At first, the rite can be seen only to create a social control or domination of the individual, something that occurs. Later, though, through the performance of the rite the individual can be seen as empowered through the same performance. This constitutes a top-down as well as bottom-up perspective. Seeing this in a cultural context the relationships are both intra- and intergroup at the same time, where ritual, as stated, is not a separate object.

When assessing the power of ritual theory, it should not be understood as having a standalone character in this study - instead, the perspective brought forward by Bell has a central role in understanding how rituals such as Ṣalāt might be created in relation to the meaning-making processes of informants. The character of this study focuses on a ritualized space consisting mainly of the prayer acts, but as in the cases mentioned earlier, a broader perspective is applied where one cannot simply "close off" the prayer setting from other parts of life. This is also related to the understanding of ritual as central, but just as other phenomena can be of both positive and negative character (such as religious coping), the negative space where rituals (such as Ṣalāt) are not performed might prove useful in a discursive sense since the ritualization of prayer not only relates to the prayer act "itself".

The case for this research study of Muslim ritual prayer (Ṣalāt) and the relations it has to the informants' social life adheres very well to the theory by Bell (2009) since Ṣalāt, through the orthopraxy of Islam, in many ways can be seen as epitomizing rite and ritualization. In this regard, the ritualized body is of interest since that concept is in itself present in the prayer act and acts adjacent, like ritual ablution. Both the embodiment as well as the physical space used for the ritual are of great importance. The physical manifestations of both the ritual in itself through ritualization as well as the mosque are intertwined through a dialectic relationship that provides a particular operational setting for the entities that are being studied. Other aspects such as clothing and mindset as well as interactions — on several analytical levels — need to be understood.

2.2.6. Existential Worldview Categories

This part of the theory will be used to provide a brief, but powerful typology in mapping informants' existential worldviews. This existential worldview typology was developed by DeMarinis (2008) to present different existing worldview representations available in postmodern Sweden. Sweden provides an unusual setting since it is the country providing the highest scores on "secular-rational" as well as "self-expression" values in the World Value Survey (2016; see also Appendix I for the WVS map). A growing number of immigrants as well as ethnic Swedes with different worldviews now comprise the population, indicating that different existential worldviews are present in the Swedish society today. It is stated that "The term existential functions here is used as an umbrella term to encompass a wide range of meaning-making operations which provide operational narratives, value structures, and decisional pathways as well as the ritualized expressions of such." (DeMarinis, 2008, p.59) This is thus a broad understanding of the existential meaning that is easily integrated with other theories. The typology map here is based upon an earlier theoretical mapping of worldview positions in psychology of religion by David Wulff, which consisted of categories 1 to 4. DeMarinis' empirical study provides a background that makes categories 5 and 6 necessary when mapping the typology in the Swedish cultural context. Categories 1 to 4 are self-explanatory from the model (see Figure 1 below). These represent worldviews with a classical transcendent dimension, here understood in terms of a more vertical transcendent framework with a supernatural god figure. Both more literal, fundamentalist positions as well as more symbolic, interpretive positions are represented in both presence or absence of a vertical transcendent structure.

Worldview categories 5 and 6 need more explanation. In the mixed position (category 5) a fluid stance is taken by some individuals not firmly placed in one of the categories 1 to 4. This can be seen as part of postmodern societies where truths are not fixed, and there is a combination or ongoing negotiation of values and expressions. Category 6 is when there is a lack of a functioning worldview, there has never been one or where a prior worldview is not able to function. In this case, the result is psychologically and often psychosocially damaging, and can severely affect individual's life. This theory will not be elaborated further but rather function to place the informants within the existential worldview typology to provide some extra information adding to the total understating of their position.

Figure 1. Existential Worldview Typology in Postmodern Sweden

Operational Existential Worldview Categories

Including Transcendent Dimension

1 Worldview

4 Worldview

Literal Interpretation

5 Mixed Worldview

Symbolic Interpretation

2 Worldview

3 Worldview

Excluding Transcendent Dimension

6 Lacking Worldview Function
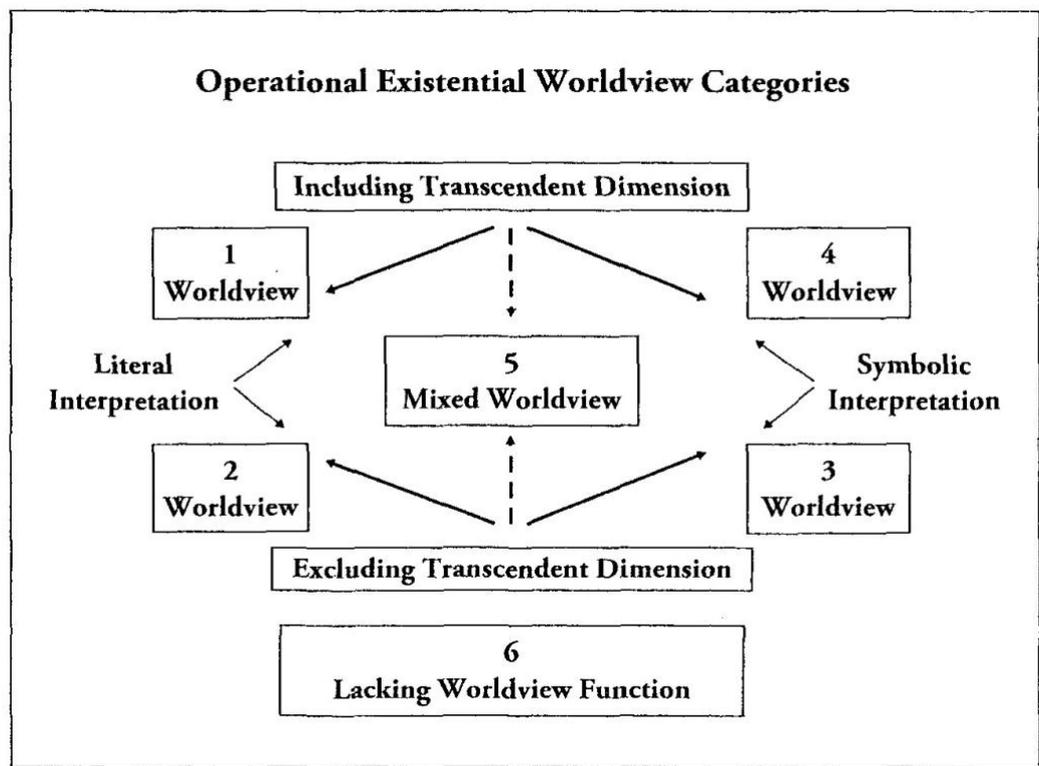
Figure 1. Operational Existential Worldview Categories
(DeMarinis, 2008, p.65) Image used with the author's permission.

2.3. Working theoretical framework

On the theoretical level, the above perspectives will be combined as outlined below to form the study's theoretical framework.

In this study, psychosocial functions related to the sacred sphere of religiosity is a central concern. The motivations made by or in relation to the belief system of the respondents need to be understood since a sense of coherence is a profound part of meaning-making and can be seen as opposite to cognitive dissonance. The goals of the religion or interpretation at hand functions as a self-regulatory process, which alters the behavior of the religious individuals, resulting in changed behaviors and underrating of the world. This is also seen in relation to the source of the motivation

that can be a combination of both written scripture, in this case, the Quran, and a social context including both religious and non-religious elements such as a religious scholar or the surrounding society in which the religion is currently situated.

Drawing upon several theoretical perspectives as presented above of course pose some serious considerations regarding their integration in a study like this. Seeing psychosocial health and well-being as complex concepts that are both complex and elusive require more than a unique understanding of how to engage with matters like this. Still not claiming the above theoretical perspectives to cover all parts of this complexity, their different parts together add value when trying to see the big picture of how people's everyday life are affected by religious beliefs or other forms of worldview systems. The meaning-making theory should be viewed as integrated into the other theories when examining the material. Both Sense of Coherence (SoC) and religious coping are very useful in measuring different aspects of religiousness in relation to health and well-being. From these perspectives, a picture will emerge upon how the individuals both cope with stressful situations in their lives as well as an overall level of how they manage on a day to day basis. Adding resilience and worldview typology to this should not alter the results in any way, instead be seen as an integral aspect adding to the larger understanding here. From the interviews, the meaning-making processes will be examined and studied for a more elaborate picture to emerge where the researcher more thoroughly can engage with the informants. The combination of these theoretical perspectives as well as different methods and tools for engaging with the target population should provide new insights in this regard.

As mentioned earlier in the respective sections on said theories, the interaction among them is crucial to understand the combined outcome of the study. In line with the aim of providing insight into the relation between prayer and psychosocial functions as well as well-being in light of meaning-making processes – the latter serve as the foundational theory which also is reflected in the material gathered since the semi-structured interviews serve as the main material, and the instruments Brief RCOPE, Sense of Coherence (SoC), and CS-RISC 2 function in a supportive character to provide a broader picture as well as enhance the validity of the results from the qualitative part. From an epistemological viewpoint, there are variances in how the theories have emerged and what they claim to provide. In this study, in relation to how the theories are used, the supportive character of the instruments, as well as ritual theory and existential worldview typology in relation to meaning-making theory integration, should not pose any threat to the validity of the study.

A mixed method study, combining different qualitative instruments in combination with qualitative inquiries, will hopefully encompass more than single focus studies.

Chapter 3 Method and Material

3.1. Research Design

The empirical research study was carried out through individual interviews with practicing Muslims. In addition to the interviews, quantitative instruments were also used. The primary design for the study, as well as the general outline, are taken from Creswell (2009). Creswell (2009) provides excellent outlines on how to produce a study in a structural way. The design chosen for this study was the convergent parallel mixed method (Creswell, 2009, p.219ff). This method relies on the notion that quantitative and qualitative data can provide different insights regarding the same topic. This design is based on qualitative and quantitative data gathered in parallel. This can be done with various sample groups and the number of respondents for the different methods employed. Usually, a large number of respondents is positive when making quantitative inquiries but can, depending on the aims and research questions of the study be of the same number as the quantitative part, also with the same informants (Creswell, 2009, p.222f). The latter is used in this study since the quantitative data gathered will be used to support the data collected from the qualitative part (interviews), which constitutes the main part of this study.

3.2. Methods used

This section describes the techniques and instruments used during this study. In all cases, except one instance, the informants first participated in the interview, and after it had finished, they were asked to fill in the forms for the three instruments used. The instruments were handed out in the following order: 1. Brief RCOPE, 2. Sense of Coherence (SoC), and 3. CD-RISC 2. In the instance where the instruments were distributed in the middle of interview, this was due to an unfortunate noise from a nearby construction site.

3.2.1. The interviews

Valuable work in the field of understanding Muslim prayer and some of the implications of it is provided by Lindgren (2001) in his doctoral thesis *Bön som akt och erfarenhet. En religionspsykologisk studie av bönens uttryck, förutsättningar och funktioner i en muslimsk och kristen kontext.* Some of the methods used by Lindgren (2001) were used as a starting point for shaping the interview process in this study.

The interviews consisted of semi-structured interviews and were of open-ended character to maximize the possibilities of the respondents to elaborate on the relevant topics for them. Some closed questions also occurred corresponding to the

theme visited. This was in line with the method employed by Lindgren (2005, p.37f) where some too strict closed questions only interview setting would not be able to adapt to the topics the informants found most valuable to speak of. The questions centered around the goals and incentives of the alms as part of the theological implications in relation to the individual's religiosity. For the interview guide see Appendix B.

Particular emphasis was placed on different levels of religious practitioners, i.e., both imams and possibly other religious leaders or figures as well as individuals only frequent the mosque less actively. This will likely increase the perspectives presented to give a more holistic view and improve the validity of the study.

As a complement to the interviews, observations were also performed to broaden the material gathered. This also corresponds to the understanding of the rituals in the life of the informants where the researcher was able to validate many parts of the informants' interpretations of their prayer acts (Lindgren, 2005, p.38). The same regard the reading of literature, where the researcher aims to provide a submerging understanding of the informant's lives and what cultural understanding is at play.

The interviews were conducted in a setting chosen in dialogue with the participants to ensure a comfortable environment where one could speak freely. All requests by the informants were met regarding location. The locations included, but were not limited to; mosques, prayer rooms, conference/seminar rooms, homes as well as public cafés.

The researcher tried to establish a sense of *closeness* during the interviews. This closeness is related not only to the validity of a study but also in an ethical sense where the researcher wishes to provide the informants a safe space to freely present their view of the topic at hand (Malterud, 2003, p.199ff). By being familiar (to the greatest possible extent given the circumstances) with the cultural and religious setting of the informants the researcher could increase the possibility of making a positive connection where the informant feels confident.

Fourteen of the interviews were conducted in Swedish and 2 in English. For most of the interviews in Swedish some English expressions where used. In some of the interviews, some terms or statements were presented in Arabic when the informants chose to do so. In the latter case the researcher was knowledgeable enough in the Arabic language to fully interpret these statements and incorporate their meanings into the material.

3.2.2. Brief RCOPE instrument

The most widely used tool for measuring religious coping is the short version of RCOPE: Brief RCOPE (please see Appendix C for the questionnaire). The Brief RCOPE questionnaire consists of seven positive coping items (item 1-7) and seven negative coping items (item 8-14). The last item (item 15) was added to see the overall level. All items are scored on a four-grade scale: 1. not at all, 2. somewhat, 3. quite a bit, and 4. a great deal. The positive coping items are inversely related to negative outcomes of religious coping and vice versa. The two parts, positive and

negative sections, are not combined. Instead, they are used to provide a picture where the respondent, in theory, could score high, medium, or low in both sections. In practice, though there are usually discrepancies between these two parts.

3.2.3. Sense of Coherence (SoC) scale

The scale developed by Antonovsky (1987) for measuring Sense of Coherence first appeared in a version of 29 questions (SoC-29). Later a short-version with 13 questions (SoC-13) have been developed. In the SoC-29 there are 11 comprehensibility, 10 manageability, and 8 meaningfulness items presented on a 7 grade scale. 13 of the items are in the negative form, resulting in the reverse points when scoring (1 is substituted with 7, 2 is substituted with 6 and so on) (Antonovsky, 1993, p.726). In the SoC-13 there are 5 comprehensibility, 4 manageability, and 4 meaningfulness items presented on a 7 grade scale. 13 of the items are in the negative form, resulting in the reverse points when scoring.

Regarding the Sense of Coherence scale's reliability Antonovsky writes in a section on Internal consistency:

> The Cronbach alpha measure of internal consistency has been reported to me for 26 studies using SOC-29. The average alpha, unweighted for sample size, in the 8 published studies is 0.91 (range, 0.86-0.95); in the 3 theses/dissertations, 0.85 (range, 0.82-0.86); in the 15 unpublished studies, 0.88 (range, 0.83-0.93). The alpha in those studies which have used SOC-13 is somewhat lower, as expected with fewer items, but still acceptable. The average alpha, unweighted for sample size, in the 5 published studies is 0.82 (range, 0.74-0.91); in the 4 theses/dissertations, 0.81 (range 0.78-0.84); in the 7 unpublished studies, 0.78 (range, 0.74-0.84). Kalimo and Vuori [23], using a method developed by Tarkkonen, reported a reliability co-efficient of 0.93 in their Finnish national study of 706 adults aged 31-44. (Antonovsky, 1993, p.727)

All samples are in a western context that of course should be noted. Nonetheless, the scale seems to be a well-developed tool for measuring how an individual makes sense of his or her surroundings. A second note should also be made that even though the tree components of the Sense of Coherence scale are present, the scale is intended to be assessed as a single measure (Antonovsky, 1993, p.731f).

For the present project, the SoC-13 version was used (please see Appendix D). The Swedish SoC-29 and 13 versions have been used with different populations in Sweden and have high internal consistency (Eriksson & Lindström, 2005).

3.2.4. CD-RISC 2 scale

There is a range of instruments available to measure resilience. One of the better known is the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC). There are three main versions of the scale, relating to the numbers of items in the questionnaire: 25, 10 and 2. This study will use the 2-item version CD-RISC 2 (CD-RISC, 2009). Please see Appendix E for the instrument. This instrument is now validated and available in a large number of languages, including English and Swedish. The Swedish version have been translated and validated by Cetrez and DeMarinis, Uppsala University.

When the CD-RISC 2 was validated, the following mean values were given as baseline in a study of US general population. Scores varied depending on diagnosis (Vaishnavi et al., 2007).

Table 7. CD-RISC 2 mean score reference

Population	Score
General population	6.91
Family Medicine outpatients	6.04
Psychiatric outpatients	6.12
Depressed patients	5.12
Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) patients	4.96
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) patients	4.7

(Vaishnavi et al., 2007)

3.2.5. Transliteration and translation

The Swedish and Arabic translation into English used for the interview material were as near as possible to the words and meaning utilized by the informants. All translations are done by the researcher.

For the Arabic transliteration, the method described in *Standard Arabic: An elementary — intermediate course* (Schulz, Krahl, & Reuschel, 2000) was used. When using other citations, the transliteration from that source was utilized and not converted.

When making reference to the Quran, the Saheeh International Translation (2013) was used. This is a renowned English version used throughout the world and readily available online, free of charge.

3.3. Material

The material for this study consisted of 16 recorded interviews derived from 16 informants. Each informant also completed the three instruments described.

3.3.1. Selection of participants

The participants were selected based on their belief system. The primary factor for choosing participants was their Muslim faith in combination with their performance of Muslim prayer sessions. This was the crucial combination since a perceived Muslim identity might be present without the performative religious acts such as prayer sessions. In that case, the Muslim identity could be seen as more of a cultural marker than a religious faith.

The convenience sample used for this study emerged from several sources. These included former fellow students from Arabic and Middle Eastern studies of Muslim faith who were asked if they could provide names of persons who were willing to participate as informants in this study. Several mosques and Islamic societies were also contacted to see if they could provide names. After a few initial requests, several of the first rounds of informants provided further names from their congregations, mosques, Islamic societies and friends. In this regard, a snowball effect was provided that proved very useful. Due to the use of a convenience sample in relation to the snowball effect, the informant demographics did not comprise evenly of male and female informants. At first, the chance of having any female informants seemed low. This was an effect of the predominantly male contexts from which the informant demographic was drawn. In time, several female informants were added as well.

The setting in which the study is carried out should also be noted. All participants are drawn from Mosques and Muslim congregations in medium size towns in the middle/central parts of Sweden. The participants are residents in several municipalities and more than one county. The result could be very different if the selection was composed of participants from other parts of Sweden. The data collection for the study was performed from September to December 2014.

3.3.2. Data collection

All participants were interviewed one time. The interview was recorded using digital recording equipment. The interviews, including all other collected data, were conducted over a two-month period.

During the interviews, in most cases towards the end of the provided time, the Brief RCOPE, Sense of Coherence (SoC) and CD-RISC 2 forms were filled by the informants. The researcher was present to clarify any questions. There was no time limit for the participants during this part.

After the interviews, extensive notes were prepared regarding the impressions and other, non-spoken, bits of information that could provide useful information for the process.

3.3.3. Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The transcription process was conducted in two steps to ensure the best possible quality. After the first transcription a second, and sometimes a third playback was done to minimize errors.

The citations used in the results chapter, which were recorded in Swedish, have been translated into English. The original Swedish transcriptions will not be presented. During the translation, there was an inevitable process of removing some nuances from the actual words used. Careful consideration was made during this phase to due the informants' words justice regarding the meaning and the words chosen.

For the qualitative part, the coding was performed in the computer software program OpenCode 4.03[6]. Corresponding to the theoretical framework of areas used to construct the interview questions, separate theoretical categories were created to perform the coding. Each category included separate items for various possible aspects. In the OpenCode software the "Code"-field was used for the items while the "Synthesis 1"-field was used for the categories.

Table 8. Category and Code list

Coding list by categories				
Category: Identity	**Category: Religious experience**	**Category: (Perceived) life changing experience**	**Category: Sources of communication and inspiration**	**Category: Worldview system typology**
Cultural	Solitary experience	Positive feeling	Media	Worldview 1
Group	Social experience	Negative feeling	Social media	Worldview 2
Religious	Religious motivation	Daily life experience/function	Lifestyle	Worldview 3
Category: Types of prayer	Punishment	Anxiety	Quran	Worldview 4
Ṣalāt	Reward	Security	Hadith	Worldview 5
Duʿāʾ	Justice	Fear	Verbal	Worldview 6
Dhikr	Submission	Distrust	Social communication	
Category: Prayer function	Sin	Stress	Family	
Focus	Virtue	Calmness	Friends	
Non-focus	Forgiveness	Freedom	Religious community traditional	
Category: Relation to God		Devotion	Religious community modern	
Closeness to God		Test of faith	Books	
Distance to God		Hope		

The table should be read from top to bottom (e.g. the category *Identity* consists of the items *Individual, Cultural, Group,* and *religious*).

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[6] http://www.phmed.umu.se/english/units/epidemiology/research/open-code/#

The above categories were created in two steps. At first, a preliminary outline was made deductively by the researcher. Here previous studies were used as well as theoretical considerations based on other parts of the literature used. After the initial coding process had been performed, a second revision of the coding list was conducted. This time a more inductive method was used, drawing upon the initial findings in the material provided. In this regard, a top-down approach was used and then complemented by a bottom-up approach.

Demographic and questionnaire date were entered into the computer software program Microsoft Excel for the production of statistics.

3.3.4. Ethical considerations

Religious affiliation and religious performance can be seen as private matters and can be very sensitive in nature. This study, therefore, involved serious ethical considerations. Though this level of university research does not require approval by an ethics review board in Sweden (Central Ethical Review Board, 2017), all such ethical considerations required by such were taken into account through the supervision of the project advisor.

The informants were assured of the strict ethical considerations and confidentiality of the research study (Malterud, 2003, p.202f). No financial gains were present for the participants or the researcher during any stage of the study.

All participants freely volunteered to be part of this study. All participants were given oral as well as written documentation related to the purpose of the study, how the collected data would be handled and stored as well as how to opt out at any time and how the data would be presented. All informants signed an informed consent document. In addition, a provision was made for contact with a mental health worker in the eventuality that a participant might be distressed afterwards by something raised in the interview.

3.3.5. Validity and reliability considerations

Validity and reliability considerations are core parts of every aspect of a study like this. Being a mixed-methods study, both qualitative and quantitative considerations have to be mentioned. Validity and reliability concerns have been an integrated part throughout the study. Focusing on the qualitative aspects, being the central part of the study, the [qualitative] validity refers to the accuracy of the findings and the procedures employed by the researcher, while the [qualitative] reliability refers to the consistency of approach by the researcher (Creswell, 2014, p.201). In line with the previous remarks, the following validity strategies (Creswell, 2014, p.201) have been used throughout the study:

Triangulation: the use of "different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes" (Creswell, 2014, p.201). The methods employed here include the interviews, observations, and the instruments – which together are used to create an overall result of the study.

Rich, thick description: The results from the interview are extensively provided for the reader to provide an in-depth picture of the material gathered throughout the study (Creswell, 2014, p.202). Many citations by the informants for each category are used to enhance this further. The detailed presentation of the prayer act and the ablution are other examples of this strategy.

Researcher bias: To clarify the researcher bias is hugely important for the reader to assess the validity of the results (Creswell, 2014, p.202). This topic is addressed both in the form of the researcher background (section 1.1.1.), as well as in the theoretical frameworks used which also should be seen as an extension of the researcher background.

Negative of discrepant information: The presentation of variations in the material which provide a more valid result, since the actual world is never simple – but rather complex (Creswell, 2014, p.202).

Spending prolonged time in the field: "In this way, the researcher develops an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study and can convey detail about the site and people that lend credibility to the narrative account" (Creswell, 2014, p.202). This area should be seen concerning the temporal extent of the study performed and is thus relative in which the qualitative experience shapes the outcome. This area has been addressed by the number of interviews performed in a wide variety of settings, and are further enhanced by the number of observations made by the researcher in said settings. By creating a firm familiarity with the settings in which the informants live and express their faith, the nuances of said milieu and practices can be transferred to the reader. Adjacent to this, the cultural and linguistic aspects should not be underestimated.

Peer debriefing: by using an external part to review the results of the study, the outcome is more likely to resonate with a broader audience (Creswell, 2014, p.202) and provide *inter-reader reliability*. This area has been addressed by the use of the supervising professor, extensively knowledgeable in the field of psychology of religion.

External auditor of the whole project: by using an external part to not only audit regarding the results, but greater reliability is also provided (Creswell, 2014, p.202f). In this study, this area is addressed in the same manner as the previous point.

Qualitative generalization: to present the results and analysis in that they do not provide generalizability outside the specific informants and settings studied. The qualitative research approach employed here do not provide this, which is not the intent (Creswell, 2014, p.203f). In this study, this area is addressed by specifically stating this, both in the theoretical framework, here, as well as in the analysis chapter.

Chapter 4 Results

The results will be presented separately first the interviews, and then the instruments: Brief RCOPE, Sense of Coherence (SoC) and CD-RISC 2 scale. The interviews provide the qualitative part of the study while the other three questionnaires provide quantitative data. In the qualitative part, quotes from the interviews will be presented to support the interpretations made. Due to the vast amount of interview material only themes of direct relevance for the research questions are presented in this thesis.

4.1. Informant demographic

No detailed breakdown of the informant population used in this study will be presented due to ethical and privacy reasons. Some data have been omitted for this reason. All informants viewed themselves as Muslims both by belief and practice. The informant population consisted of 16 subjects, 12 men and four women. The age span of the population varied from 19 to 68 years with an average age of 28 years. The study was carried out in more than one city. The population spanned three counties in the east-central part of Sweden. Most of the informants were Swedish citizens. The majority of the population was raised in a Muslim family setting where both parents were practicing Muslims. Some were only, as described by themselves, Muslim by identity but not by faith when growing up. A small portion of the population was not raised in a Muslim home and converted only later in their life. The majority viewed themselves as Sunni Muslims. A few would not accept the divisions of, for example, Sunni and Shia branches and would not like to be associated with any prefix like this. A small portion of the informants viewed themselves as Shia Muslims. About half of the informants were members of a mosque or Islamic association. Most of the informants presented their family heritage from countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Africa. However, a portion presented their heritage from Northern Europe. The informants were born in more than ten different countries. A portion of the informants were married. Some were married but are now divorced. A small number of the informants had children. All informants were currently employed in full-time jobs, full-time studies or the equivalent.

4.2. Results from the interviews

The qualitative part of this study, represented by the interviews, will be presented with excerpts from the interviews separated by category and then by subgroups relating to the specific code (as found in the statements are used to exemplify the standing and belief of the informants. As outlined above, careful considerations have been made when translating the statements. The data provided here are in no way comprehensive, and only reflect a part of the whole data set. The entire data

set from the interviews spans about 386 A4 pages single space of text in the OpenCode software, where each line is represented by a single statement. The total recorded time from the 16 interviews is just above 17 hours and 16 minutes. The translations are done to best reflect the modality and nuances of the spoken language by the informants, including slang phrases and deviations due to the differences between the languages (Swedish and English). Arabic words are left untranslated to further add to the most literal wording possible. Many of the excerpts below fit with more than one code but have been placed to highlight one example at a time. No excerpt is present more than once. The number of entries can differ depending on the category, this should be seen as a reflection of how often the topic was present during the interviews. The sentences presented should serve as a general representation from the material. The number in parenthesis represent the lines from the original transcriptions.

Small notes will be presented to provide a brief background or surrounding for each of the interview quotes below. Careful consideration has been taken to give the informants' material the fairest presentation possible.

4.2.1. Identity

The identity marker provides information on how prayer experience is perceived.

4.2.1.1. Cultural

Overall the variations presented from different cultural perspectives were not that prominent. In general most informants were indifferent to the differences given in the Islamic culture.

> It can be different, I think. Well, depending on which country and culture you are from and that can reflect in interpretations, so it might differ a bit. Then there are lots of denominations and lots of groups, and they may vary, vary in practice. Not in the unity, that is in the unity of God or more important matters, but in less, then there are minor issues. Regarding how many extra prayers you should do, about how much extra fasting and such matters. They can differ. Informant 02 (439-449)

The idea that Islamic values and cultural values should not be mixed were strong. Several informants felt sad that the perceived Islamic values were not being held to the high degree intended.

> In that so many now, well, in later times it has been that Islam is mixed with culture. And such things like that. So that, well, unfortunately, so that some countries have lost, well the spiritual. Just because it has just turned into a just tradition. That, that is how you do it. Ah, that you lose the involvement in, well, in being Muslim. Informant 13 (369-376)

4.2.1.2. Group

Almost all of the informants were clear regarding their perspective on their group identity but did not express disregard for other groups, especially the variations of Islam being practiced.

> Eh, eh, so I am Sunni, no doubt about it. It does not mean that I hate Shia or so or have any negative thinking about them. It is only political, I think it is unnecessary with this divide. They, it is, the people can live together even if they have different interpretations I believe. For that is what it is about. Informant 01 (408-415)

> Well, I am Sunni. But Sunni-Muslims consider Shia-Muslims not to be real Muslims. But I have friends that are Shia-Muslims, so I don't care about that. I will not sit and say that I hate you because you are Shia or something. I don't care for that. Informant 12 (88-95)

Here is one example of how the informant perceived the political as well as other group divisions as problematic. This can also be seen in light of the idea of the global Muslim community (Ummah).

> The Middle East, it is crucial what, who you belong to. Not only what denomination you belong to but also what clan you belong to. And from where you are. And this I perceive is negative, it I perceive is negative. It should not be like that. Rather, you are Muslim; that is enough. And I view Muslim not as an opposite to Christianity, Judaism, or Hinduism or so rather the word "Muslim" is a calling to a person who says "yes" to God who buys into the whole concept. If you compare with traffic rules, a Muslim is one who drives on the right side of the road. If the person then has faults in other aspects like you have no seatbelt, the lights are not working, drives too fast, then that is a different discussion. Informant 01 (428-445)

From the group perspective, almost all informants expressed the thought that all humans are born Muslim. This is seen as part of the Islamic theology where Islam is perceived as the "natural religion" of the world since the prophet Abraham.

> In Islam, you believe that all are born as Muslims. But then if you are born in Sweden in a Swedish family, in a Swedish Christian family, then the Christian part is geared up but the Muslim part is always there, but they do not find it. Then when you start to seek it step by step, it is not easy either. But yeah, all are born as Muslims. Informant 02 (604-610)

4.2.1.3. Religious

One of the most prominent reactions during the interviews was how strongly the informants felt that their religious affiliation constituted a founding part of their identity.

> Yes, I am Muslim. That is the first. It is not [COUNTRY NAME OMITTED] or Swedish or any other nationality but rather Islam. That is what is most important to me. Informant 02 (1233-1236)

On the question of what Islam was, this statement was given.

> Eh, good question. I would describe it as, purity. Purity and a peaceful, peaceful religion. And more as a lifestyle than just belief. Eh, it is more a lifestyle, it affects the whole life as such, for the better. Informant 03 (86-92)

On the question of what creates meaning in life, several informants directly stated that their religion was the most important part. This overlapped with the idea of religious identity as a foundation for their identity.

> Eh, first and foremost it is my religion. My identity as a Muslim. Then in addition to that there is, well, family. Family, school and so on. But first and foremost it is Islam. Informant 03 (126-130)

> A few things, yes. It is Islam. My family. My friends. Knowledge. Education is critical. Informant 06 (175-180)

A recurring theme in the interviews is that the social aspect of Islam is highlighted.

> First hand it is group identity, actually. It is important in Islam to see it as, you call it, well, the Muslim world. Informant 03 (182-184)

Also the dialectic relationship between the group or society and the individual was highlighted in many interviews. How good deeds affect the world in a positive way was a recurring theme. On the other hand, negative temptations were also present.

> Ummah[7], right. That is the most important. But then it is also important how you as an individual, how your Islam is. That affects you and those around you. Informant 03 (189-193)

Just as above concerning their identity, most informants did not perceive the Sunni and Shia divide as a major divide. Although it should be noted that most of the informants were very clear that it was still their version that was "right". It is important to note how historical occurrences were referenced.

> I don't see it as the most serious divide in the world. As Sunni, I can recognize that the Shia-position is, it is a version. And I don't think it is an irrational conclusion to end in that belief. I believe the proof for the Sunni-understanding is stronger. Therefore I am Sunni. But if you see the divide as it actually is, it is a political matter. It centers on who will be the successor of the Caliphate after the prophet Muhammad's death. Peace be upon him[8]. Informant 09 (255-265)

> I am Shia. And there are lots of Sunni. But as I said to you before, when I became a Muslim, I really wanted Islam! Then I mean God and the Quran. But all this with Shia and Sunni, to me, that is just a lot of made-up stuff. Because there is a simple verse in the Quran where God says: Keep each other on God's rope and do not split up. Informant 15 (1991-2001)

The idea of religious identity also created a space relating to the perceived prescriptions of life in this world.

> To me as a Muslim, the basic thought of life is as Allāh says in the Quran, he says that I have created mankind for them to worship. Informant 10 (65-69)

For several of the informants, the result of the deeds in this life were one of the most prominent motivators in living now, but also as an inevitable occurrence in the future. A direct line was here created from the identity in life now to the idea of an afterlife.

> Yes, worship me, yes. And then there are other rules that come after that. But that is the essential thing regarding life. That well, yeah, we shall worship God. And then come to Hell or Paradise. Informant 10 (73-77)

Although variations were presented, the pillars of Islam, and especially the prayer act was introduced as a core foundation for identity. Both orthodoxy and orthopraxy were perceived as important.

> The prayer is a pillar. It is what makes you a Muslim or not. But faith is at a different level. It is like a higher level. That is there are different levels. You actually don't know which one you belong to. Because it is, it is God who know. But you can say that yes, I am Muslim. But how much we are believers, that we do not know. Informant 10 (861-869)

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[7] Ummah is the Arabic word for *community*. In the Islamic context it often refers to a concept of the commonwealth of the Muslims; a transnational community of all believers.

[8] The phrase *peace be upon him* (abbreviation *pbuh* in writing [English])(ʿalayhi as-salām) is commonly used in religious writing and speech after the names of the prophets of Islam. An extended version reads *salla llāhu ʿalayhi wa-alehe wa-sallam* (abbreviation *SAWS* in writing [English])(prayer of God be upon him and his family and peace). The latter form is known as *ṣalawāt* in Arabic (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Not all, but many of the informants not only stated that their Islamic identity was of the utmost importance, but they also had a great interest in elaborating on this point. Here one informant said how he felt after intentionally reverting to Islam after not having lived by all the rules. He noted that faith is also a lifestyle that is perceived to influence all aspects of life.

> Well, if I will call myself Muslim, then I want to actually know one hundred percent what it means. Because I want to follow something. I want to follow not because my ancestors did. I came. I am Muslim. I am born Muslim. But what does it mean to be Muslim? If I will be Muslim, then I will be it in every aspect. That is how I feel. Informant 13 (174-185)

The religious part, for most of the informants, included both orthodoxy and orthopraxy. The orthodoxy is highlighted, and should not be seen as opposite to the point noted above regarding orthopraxy – that one need not to pray to be Muslim, but as another part. One informant expressed what it means to believe as a Muslim. The same thoughts are found among many of the other informants as well.

> Yes. Believe in one God. Yeah, just one mighty God. We don't have a lot of gods. And we believe in all prophets. From Adam to Mohammed. And we have to believe in all sacred books[9]. We don't deny any books, but we say that some books have been modified. Or adjusted. But we believe in all books. And our Prophet ordered us not to deny any book. If you don't believe it, don't deny it. Just take it like it is. And we also believe in Judgment Day. And we believe in angels. Books and prophets. And some angels. And I think there is something else that I don't remember. Informant 16 (78-100)

4.2.2. Prayer function

4.2.2.1. Focus

Focus during prayer was not always present, but when it was, almost all of the informants gave statements regarding the tranquility of the experience.

> Because for example when you bow down, in Sujûd. Then you are like calmest. It is, I do not know how to explain. Because then the whole body is most relaxed in that position. That I think is critical. Then, it is during Sujûd that I do not think of anything else. When I stand, my thoughts may wander. But when I am kneeling down, I don't know. There has to be some meaning there; I do not have much knowledge about it. Informant 06 (728-740)

The search for focus during prayer was a common theme for the informants. Several saw it as their duty to focus as much as possible. This topic and experience were also considered in terms of being a process for improving one's closeness to God.

> That it is about really that my concentration today will be better than what it was yesterday. And in the evening it will be better than it was in the morning. That you really take it like that you try to master it. Just like someone trying to master martial arts. Informant 09 (1091-1097)

4.2.2.2. Non-focus

Although hard to make an evaluation of how often there was focus during prayer as opposed to non-focus, both themes were present. It seemed like many of the informants had a hard time getting as relaxed as they wished to be during prayer in their everyday life.

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[9] The statement regarding "all the sacred books" here refer to the large number of Hadiths, telling the stories of the prophet Muhammad, in Islamic theology referred to as his *Sunnah*.

But sometimes, when you have a dip in your belief, at times it is difficult. You stand there, and there are a lot of rituals you should do in the prayer. Like reading the opening chapter, the Sūrah, and you should read some more short passages. And then maybe reading in cycles. Because there are different periods in the prayer. So perhaps you have forgotten that you even read the first. Because you are not present there. It just, you just do it as some ritual. You go up and down without feeling it. And that is, it is linked to how strong your faith is. And therefore I can feel this is a bit hard for non-practitioners, the persons, can have a hard time entering this. To pray and such. Informant 08 (755-770)

The stress brought up did not only relate to the prayer act itself but could be seen as impacting their whole life since several of the informants stated that praying is a necessity for being Muslim.

Like when you come to pray, you also have to forget the other things. You pray and still like think. If you still think of other things. When I am finished with the prayer I will do like this, cook dinner or I will study this. Then you do not really pray. Like that is why you have to think of the prayer. What you say when you pray. So it can be like you think of other things, other things. And then it is not, the prayer becomes just like, stand, sit, the movements and such stuff. Informant 10 (298-309)

It shouldn't be like that. But yeah, actually, it happens. If I am stressed about something or something. And when I pray, I am just making some moves. You don't feel anything. And that is not about the pray. Informant 16 (893-898)

4.2.3. Types of prayer

4.2.3.1. Ṣalāt
Ṣalāt was the mainstay of several of the informant's daily routines. All of them performed it, at least from time to time. The occurrences varied considerably among the informants and also over time for many of them.

It is five times per day, yes. In general, it is thankfully the case that I stay to the prayer schedule but sometimes I am a bit too lazy or something like that. That you postpone it. But ah, also thankfully, at the end of each day I do mine. Informant 04 (338-344)

Sometimes the informants described it as a burden to be able to fit it into the daily routine. Most of the informants expressed that the prayer act is an appreciated part of their life.

I do not feel that it is a duty when I perform it- It doesn't feel that, that I **must** do anything now. Some things feel like that but not the prayer actually. It feels nice to me; I like to pray. I feel like this: it is a few minutes, five minutes that I can let go of what worries me. It doesn't, unfortunately, work all the time, and sometimes you pray and think of a hundred different things but, eh, but, eh, I think that, or I feel that I feel good when I pray. I would pray, and it is about, you do Wudū, you are a bit fresher, you feel, eh, now I have, it is a bit fresher. You stand there and, eh, it is time to talk to God. God is someone that I can say everything to without all of the world getting to know. Yes, and it is a special thing to me since I usually do not talk to everybody about everything. There are things from my past that I have nothing against telling, but there are things that I don't even tell my family or friends. It is a good occasion to say things. Well for me it is like this. So it feels nice I think. Informant 04 (611-635)

Just as noted in the case of Muslim identity, a few of the informants presented their praying as being the most meaningful activity in their life. They highlighted this

aspect of the religion and emphasized that it outperformed other aspects, including family relations. This is concisely exemplified by this informant.

> So the most meaningful thing in my life is to do the prayer and then come the children or family. Informant 05 (303-304)

Aspects of the freedom to choose a location for the prayer was presented as making it easier to fit it into the daily routine more easily. Strict rules still do apply, but this freedom made it more possible.

> Rather it is like, what is important in Islamic prayer is that it does not need to be done in a Mosque. You can pray pretty much everywhere. As long as it is clean. I can pray in a classroom. I can pray that is as long as I know the direction towards Mecca. And as long as it is clean, and that I see nothing that is unclean. Perhaps I can fold out something. Preferably, a prayer rug, if there is none I can pray anyway. Then perhaps I place something, a table or a chair, or pray against the wall, so no-one passes in front of me. But otherwise there are no other restrictions. Informant 08 (198-210)

The prayer act was viewed by most of the informants as giving a special meaning to their life. They presented it as a core act of worshipping God. The very act of praying was seen as worship in a structured way.

> Providing meaning. Yes, because you worship God when you pray that is. That is what shows how you worship God. Well, that you pray five times per day that is, well, give time to God. Well, you worship him, so then you do it. Like during the prayer. So yes, the prayer is what makes you worship God actually. I think you worship God through the prayer. Informant 12 (226-238)

As above, the same emphasize was presented here. For several, the act of performing more prayers in addition to the mandatory times was put forward as even more rewarding. This was related to the deeds of the prophet Muhammad as told in the Hadiths describing his Sunnah.

> Yeah, but, yeah it's special. But also, also you should know something. It's one of the most meaningful things in the life. But also, this meaning is related to your situation. Because, for example, if you are really in a good state of faith it will be more beautiful. And if you are so bad and your prayer will be like, like you will feel shame. You do Ṣalāt, and you will ask to be better. And it's more meaningful when you do more than what Allāh ordered. Because you have five prayers. And if you do more, it is more and more beautiful, such as if you pray during the night or something like this. Informant 14 (509-522)

4.2.3.2. Duʿāʾ

All of the informants stated that they do make Duʿāʾ but the scope in which it was performed varied considerably. Some performed it several times per day, for example after each Ṣalāt while others did it from time to time when there was time.

> Duʿāʾ is after the prayer [Ṣalāt], it is not always so that you have time for it. Sometimes it happens that you have to hurry so Duʿāʾ is not mandatory so usually I skip it. Shorten the prayer a bit by reading less and making Duʿāʾ in the prayer less. However, a good prayer to me is that I can pray a lot, especially when making Sujûd when you are totally prostrated. I am convinced it is best, or I heard from several Imams and scholars that this Duʿāʾ is best. And I try to extend it, but not when you are a bit stressed. Informant 04 (380-391)

Several of the informants have integrated this part as a more automatic part of their daily life. Making Duʿāʾ and therefore remembering God (also see the section on

Dhikr below) provided a surrounding structure for their everyday lives. No action, how big or small, was supposed to be untouched by the relational presence of God.

> No, a lot of times actually. Because when you eat, make Duʿāʾ. Or when, especially when I go by bike, after work or when I come home. I pray if I think of any person. I think about a lot of things. So if something I hated from a person comes up, I pray for it to be fixed. If I remember something bad, I would pray to fix it. I like, if I wake up in the night, in the middle of the night. I pray, and I make Duʿāʾ. And then sleep again. Yeah, I think this is the most meaningful Duʿāʾ for me. Informant 14 (615-629)

4.2.3.3. Dhikr

Several of the informants provided accounts that they made Dhikr a constant part of their life. For others, it was more occasional when they saw something special or were in a particular mood. This informant stated that Dhikr is always present.

> Not every day. But sometimes if I feel that I perhaps do my prayers, to myself that is, inside, and sometimes after my Ṣalāt then I can pray, then I make Duʿāʾ and so on. But the remembrance is always there, Dhikr. Informant 02 (733-736)

For several of the informants, they did not feel worthy in relation to God, to be able to ask for worldly things since they did not feel they were deserving of these. This came from an anxiety of not being as good in performing their religious duties as they wished.

> I have a hard time asking for, for things. Because I feel I should be better myself. That is better with my prayers, then be able to pray for, for something. Except for forgiveness that is. But I would have a really hard time asking for real things. That I have a hard time with. Informant 02 (768-775)

Many of the informants presented accounts of God being in their mind most of the time, present in all aspects of daily life – relating both to religious performances such as prayer, as well as other aspects.

> God is there well always, always. Then it is, well, that everything is connected. Talk about prayer and how your personality is and that, that you behave and, but ever present he always is. But yes. Informant 03 (720-724)

While some had a sense of God being constantly present, others experienced God as being more present during religious activities. The perceived strength varied considerably.

> I try to read a lot of the Quran, that is just a part of my daily routine. Which I also think most practicing Muslims do. And it is also, just to us, one of the highest forms of remembering God. To read the word of God. Informant 09 (871-876)

> Yeah, actually. But I often think of God. Well, I don't know. I have always had that way of thinking, that I think of God often. It does not have to be during the time I should pray. Informant 12 (469-474)

> Yeah, well most often, yes. I cannot remember any time when I didn't feel God present in my daily life. It is not that I try. It just comes automatically. Like all I do, the starting point is my faith. And that is because I have a goal. And that is nothing I find negative or so, it does not make things complicated for me. Because it is natural. It comes very naturally to me. And then perhaps some others feel like this: but God how extreme you are, stop. Or like this: can't you just relax from the religion for a while? Like that. But yeah, well. It can be perceived different by people who perhaps do not think like I do. Yes, well, yes, yes. I have it if you

count it by percentage, so perhaps ninety percent of the time I have my religion and God in my mind. In one way or another. Informant 13 (1050-1075)

4.2.4. Relation to God

This category explored the perceived closeness or distance to God.

4.2.4.1. Closeness to God

Most of the informants provided several accounts of their relationship with God and in many instances presented it as close. The perceived closeness to God often stemmed from religious activities while others felt it on a more constant basis.

> I believe that God listens to people's prayers in general, especially if, it says in the Quran, chapter 29, it says that God listens preferably to two types of man: the one who is darker – the man who is oppressed [1], and the man who is in hardship [2]. Doesn't matter in my understanding. It doesn't matter if you are Christian, Muslim, drinker[10] or what. All people who are in need have direct entrance to God! So I usually say that it is idiotic not to ask God. Informant 01 (985-994)

Sometimes accounts were given that represented a relation aspect of the closeness to God, which came from experiencing religious activities. Also, Islamic history was a motivating factor on several occasions as exemplified here from the Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah.

> I mean that if you save on a regular basis and it works excellent, no problem here, and suddenly you need money yourself. And if you go to the bank and say that I would like to borrow some money to finance, whatever it is, then it is more likely that you will get a yes. But if you have no relation to this bank, and just walk in there and say "I want to borrow half a million", "no, why should we give you half a million?". I think God works pretty much in the same way. Ha wants to see you. And Muhammed said that if you pray and pray and do not get what you ask for, just keep doing it. Because God sometimes like to see you. He wants to hear your sound, your voice. That is why, he know that when you get what you want, then you forget God. It is what we spoke about, the human forgets. Yes, such things. Informant 01 (1025-1042)

Here it was exemplified as performing the daily prayers and the meaning of them.

> Yes, it feels like you get closer to him. That it does. It feels, it is what is kind of the meaning of prayer as well that you have a connection to God and such. Informant 03 (429-432)

As pointed out above, the relational aspect of God is perceived to be central. Perhaps the most prominent account given to care for this relationship was by performing the daily prayers.

> But if you forget the other things, and focus on what we say, then you feel like relaxed and calm. Like, you stand, in front of God. That is the thing with the prayer. Look. It is like you should be in a relation. That is with God. So when you think of this and make a run for it. And forget all the other things, then you will like feel something. Kind of like, well, special. Informant 10 (310-321)

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[10] The term "drinker" here refers to the common understanding in Islam that drinking alcohol is forbidden (haram) and understood to be a sin.

Just as above, the time spent and how life is prioritized seemed to be present on many occasions. This can be seen as God answering those who call for him through worship.

> I feel like this. If I prioritize he who has control over everything. Or to have time to talk with the one who controls everything.Then God will, well, control things for me too. Just because you show that you prioritize time with him. Informant 13 (587-59

An example of finding God through conversion and the impact on performing religious duties.

> But to me, it was more like I found something. I found God. It was like this, I can't, I can't disappoint God. It felt like I had him with me all the time. So I started doing the things because I had, what shall you say, a love for it like that. It doesn't matter who said anything to me. Regarding God's existence or not. No, I knew I had God with me. So I must make him proud. That. I felt, I cannot let down. Informant 15 (246-258)

Most of the informants provided accounts that they felt peaceful or tranquil when performing the prayers and being present and focusd. It was also perceived to be, as chosen by God, at the core of the very Muslim identity.

> Yeah. And there are no worries about anything. Just very calm. Yeah. And grateful that God selected me to pray. Because we believe that it is not by my skills that I became a Muslim. No. That God gives me this gift. And I should thank him for it. And it is the best gift I think. To be Muslim. And to be able to be in contact with him. Five times per day. I think that is the best thing I could have. Yeah. Informant 16 (708-723)

4.2.4.2. Distance to God

Many accounts were also given on feeling the distance to God. The occurrence of this feeling varied between the informants as well as for individuals over time. Other factors were also present relating it to other parts of daily life.

> One time you are stronger than the other, in that way yes, when I have less strength in what I believe in then things occur that are not good. And oh, I blame myself failing in my closeness. In that way I have always said that the meaningful in my life is the prayer itself. Informant 05 (277-284)

Here the distance is related to the absence of praying and also highlights the notion that performing the daily prayers is essential to the Muslim identity.

> But as said, some think it is enough to be Muslim. Doesn't need to do things. But in some interpretations, and then I would say that I may be very strict now. But if you are not, if you leave the prayer, and you are not, and you think there is a God and such. If you say, that is enough. Then you are not a Muslim in that interpretation. If you say so. But if you say that you are lazy and such. And regret and come back and let go of that, and regret and come back again. In that way it is up to God and what should I say, and see what weighs in for you. It is up to Him to forgive or not. But when you say that in the Quran, there is no prayer, I do not want that. Then you are not a Muslim because you remove a pillar. One pillar of the five. Informant 05 (520-541)

Stressful events of daily life accounts like these were also given.

> Well, like, I had read regarding Muslims who discharge endorphins and such. Like, like feel-good-feelings. But you should still be calm and such, like this, concentrate and all that. But it isn't always that it comes to that. And most occasions it does not become like that. That is what makes you fight more, to get a complete prayer. So that you, really give one hundred percent during prayer. But when you are stressed perhaps, then you just pray. You just

perform the act. You don't make this psychological perhaps. You should try to think of God when you pray. You should try to understand the verses you read. But when you are stressed you are not. Then it is just that you do things and not think about them. So it is most often like that. Informant 12 (410-427)

4.2.5. Religious experience

4.2.5.1. Solitary experience

For most of the informants, there was particular emphasis placed upon the notion that the prayer act both provided a source of meaning but also provides benefits for the person doing it. Some variations did occur, most prominently regarding the incentives described as to why the prayer is performed.

> It is for my sake. It is for my sake, because I feel better and feel well. But then it is that I make an act that God wants me to do. That he wants me to make it this way. Then I feel, the, well, I don't know, how to explain it this way. Then It is for my sake since it makes me feel well, but then also to make God pleased as well. And to get a reward for it. It is a rather egoistic thing actually; you can think like that sometimes. Yeah, I don't know how to explain it. Because of the fear that God would not be pleased with oneself. Then you want to be performing it more. But that is rather not the idea, but it is that I should feel better and better. Informant 02 (920-935)

Most of the informants were adamant in describing these experiences, and for several of them described as unique. Here one informant describes the feeling of praying.

> It is like trying to explain a particular taste. Or a pain to someone. If you have eaten pineapple and I have never done it, and I want you to explain it, how does it taste? And try to make me explain which becomes impossible. The closest you will say is perhaps, it is sweet and it is fruity. But you will never be able to explain what a pineapple actually taste like. But to you, it is one hundred percent reality. Just by me saying the word you can remember the taste exactly, just by eating it once in your life. Right? And I think faith is in that way. Informant 09 (113-128)

A few of the informants provided accounts that they labeled as extraordinary or even supernatural. At first, some were hesitant to provide these reports since it seemed that they worried that their experience would not be taken seriously. After emphasis by the researcher that no judgment would be placed upon them for sharing their experience, some of them followed through.

> My fingers were glowing like this. I don't know. Like before when I was in [PLACE OMITTED]. And my boyfriend just laughed. I don't know. And like when I saw cows and they just looked at me. And just, what is happening? And then my cellphone died in the middle of nowhere. And I thought it was. And so I listened on a Sūrah that is named The Cow. And just like, okay. But yes, so I sit before I say salam aleikum ahramatullah. And then it feels like I can just disappear it feels like. Or like that, I can just let go. And so sometimes it feels like I should not fear death. Eh, but I still fear death. But it feels like if I just could let go and trust in God's almighty power. Then I would, like, be able to disappear into the consciousness more. But it feels like everything becomes hazy. I just can look like, what, and it feels like that. That I can be like that for several hours or so. But sometimes I still get distracted so I must say so. But first it gets hazy, and it feels nice. And yeah, so can come thoughts. But not many thoughts. You don't think and such. Can feel like you just want to collapse so. No. But it feels relaxing. Informant 11 (1111-1143)

The question regarding praying alone versus praying in a group provided different accounts. With proponents of both positions. Here one informant speaks on the topic of praying in group.

> Well, no, it is not really important. It is more that I feel a community perhaps. But I think you get more rewards actually. I think. If you pray together. With several. I think. I am not sure regarding this. Informant 12 (387-395)

4.2.5.2. Social experience

Many of the informants brought up the topic regarding living in Sweden and the hardships that followed from this since it is not a Muslim country. When traveling abroad, several spoke of the ease in both finding time as well as space to perform their daily prayers.

> It is nothing, many can blame that we live in a pretty, pretty secular society and as said, I have been abroad in Jordan and the Middle East, or Muslim countries and there it has been easier. Easier to pray five times a day. Informant 03 (340-344)

While some, as noted, preferred praying alone, many found comfort and preferred praying in a group. There were several accounts regarding the preferred place for prayin. The most common and preferred place and means were being together in the Mosque. Here one participant comments on the topic of performing the Friday prayer in the Mosque.

> Yes. It is like a kind of community, you meet your friends there, and you meet relatives there. There it also feels like a pause from life, but perhaps a little bit longer pause than if you go and pray in school during five minutes when you have the time. Go a bit earlier to the mosque, sitting there praying, reading the Quran. Then perform the prayer, together with the people, perhaps staying a little bit longer. Then you meet friends afterward and maybe have a cup of coffee, so the pause gets extended. Informant 03 (529-538)

Just as in the cases above, there were variations as to which of the prayers they preferred performing alone and which performing together. Here one informant spoke on the topic of praying together.

> I actually think so, especially the night prayer. It is the last prayer in the day, during the day, and it would be nice just to sit a bit after prayer and, or before the prayer and just talk with people, maybe listen to a short remembrance and such things. I would appreciate it. The morning prayer as well, as well I like to pray in the Mosque. Before I moved to, or the first year I moved to [CITY NAME OMITTED] and in [CITY NAME OMITTED] the place to pray was very close to me. So I used to go to morning prayer, and it was nice to see all the cheerful people that early in the morning. It was nice. Informant 04 (673-685)

The surrounding was perceived to be critical to many of the informants. This was brought forward both in the context of global aspects (by the idea of the Ummah), as well as living as a minority in a non-Muslim country such as Sweden.

> That is the congregation is very important so that I can feel safe in my congregation. Because I need, when I need help also I can go there. My goal, people testify about it, the social is very important. Friends, what should we say, my children also have some friends who are Muslims. Informant 05 (715-721)

A topic discussed by several informants was that of converting. No matter whether they were converts (or reverts as described by some) or not, they had thoughts regarding others becoming Muslim and starting to practice their faith more openly.

For example many converts and so, I presume, have a really hard time. You are alone. Yes, for example during Ramadan, when you should break the fasting. For the human as an individual, as a whole, even as believer or non-believer, then you are, you live best in a group. You are one; you are not a lone wolf so to speak. You, you live in a group. Either you are married and have children, or you live together with the parents, siblings. It would be really hard to live in a cave alone, so to speak. Informant 08 (684-698)

4.2.6. Perceived life changing experience

4.2.6.1. Positive feelings

Even though not all of the informants provided accounts relating to perceived life changing experiences, many did with a wide range of experiences.

I have always been a believer since I was young. I always looked at Mom when she prayed or read the Quran and such. And asked lots of questions. And then when I grew up I started to read on Islam. And then it felt right somehow. Informant 02 (178-184)

Here the informant speaks on the topic of submission before God (also described more closely later). In this case, the positive feeling should be noted.

Yes, exactly. I mean, I would never bow down for anything else. That would, that would not work. It would feel wrong. But in front of God, then it feels totally natural. Totally right. Informant 02 (976-981)

The positive feelings, as stated above, were varied. Here is one who comments on a more daily basis of experience and how it relates to his/her well-being. The informant here speaks on the topic of how it feels after performing the prayer.

It feels, feels like a new beginning anyway. You recharge, kind of was like charging the cellphone; now it is one hundred percent. You can now go about and take care of your business. Informant 03 (905-908)

It is the most important thing in my everyday life. I can't even remember the last time I didn't pray on time. Informant 09 (611-612)

As some of the informants were converts (or reverts as described in some cases), they had more prominent experiences from their life. For several of these, they provided accounts of the moment before and after they realized they were believers.

Oh, I must say a lot. Before I was in [CITY NAME OMITTED] these four years, eh, it was the first time I was involved in the student life. Because I studied [EDUCATION OMITTED] there then and things got out of hand. And sunk pretty deep there so I, that when I started to practice it became a rather large change. I stopped a lot of stuff I used to do. Especially, partying, alcohol, yes, [DRUG NAME OMITTED]. Got a massive beard. And started slowly but surely, yes, leaving all I used to do. A lot of what I used to do. Informant 04 (134-146)

The experience of converting was emphasized as a strong feeling.

Yeah, it was probably the most amazing experience I ever had. That is, what to say. All of the physical and intellectual delights you ever had. This was, it really was like this. I don't understand how I could have missed this! How can the others not see this! And this I believe in I enter. Enter this state at first. That, how can others not see this? And you become really; you start to preach a lot. Want to talk people into it. After a while you take it easy here, I think. You get to understand how it really is. But yes, it was an unbelievable feeling. Informant 09 (590-605)

Here on conversion.

> Like woke up. Like that. I have no anxiety or such. I just, oh shit, life is probably pretty good anyway. Started talking more to Mom as well. Before I never spoke to her. Don't know what happened. So now I have a better relation with Mom as well and all. And so, don't know. Just it happened a lot of strange things. In [PLACE OMITTED]. So I just, oh. Some revelations. No, but I just am OK. I believe in Islam. I am Muslim. So first I just wanted, you know like, now I will read the Quran! Now I will learn Arabic! Informant 11 (184-201)

The converts provided strong accounts of their views on life before and after converting. This highlights one of the most powerful accounts given and can also be related to meaning-making processes.

> I don't know, I have had suicidal thoughts before. And just like, not like Ann Heberlein said more, like I don't want to die, but I don't want to live. But now it feels like I appreciate life even more. Am I totally crazy, I don't want to die. There are lots of magnificent things to see. At the same time, it feels like time, needs more time. That, if you believe, I think, it will be well in the life hereafter or so. Informant 11 (1150-1158)

4.2.6.2. Negative feelings

Many of the informants provided accounts of negative feelings. Almost all had experiences of negative feelings in relation to their faith, most often when not performing the religious duties to the standard they felt was correct. Here the informant talks about this regarding prayer.

> I think it is interesting that it is a recommendation. I believe it says. I read. It is mandatory. Of course, it is! That I think is a bit wrong. But I do not always pray. Because it is bad that I do not pray when I can. And then I just use it like to kind of relax and so. Informant 11 (575-587)

Several negative feelings were presented, including guilt, shame and general negative feelings..

> If you are doing well in your faith and your behavior. Then you feel good. If not, you will feel ashamed. And the more you are focused, the more you feel. More meaningful for your prayers. Unfortunately, I don't know; our lives are a little bit distressed. Busy, and these things. It doesn't give you the time really. And because of that, I like to pray in groups. Where you have the time. Informant 14 (651-661)

4.2.7. Religious motivation

Motivations varied for performing religious duties perhaps most often in relation to prayers..

4.2.7.1. Punishment

Almost all informants provided substantial accounts of the fear of being punished by God for not performing their religious duties to the correct standard.

> Yes, but it is rather included. As a believer you kind of believe, believe in that one's actions, the good and the bad, that they will be present and that you do not want so much of the bad and to not be able to make it to Paradise or save oneself or make God, how do you say, but that he is to be pleased with oneself. That is there. Those thoughts are present all, all the time. Informant 02 (862-868)

Here anxiety is expressed when the informant did not perform the prayers and how worrisome that can be.

> It is rather what we devout Muslims worry about, Hell. The fire. The punishment. Informant 03 (611-612)

Here is an expression on the topic of accepting what God is perceived to provide for the humans.

> But you forget what God has given you. He can take it away from you. And an important verse in the Quran says kind of like this. Those who have not prayed, they will on Judgement Day, and their backs will, what should you say, be like made out of wood. And they will not be able to bow down. Instead, stand like this. God will tell them, okay, now pray. They will say, we cannot. He will say to them; I have given them a chance in life. And you didn't do it. They will not, it is too late for you. Judgement Day next, you cannot regret what you have done earlier. So yeah, there you have it. Informant 05 (1402-1416)

The perception that life on earth as we know it is limited gave a solid basis for many of the informants in relation to the perception of an afterlife and that one must prepare for it.

> People have deviated from the religion. Also, I think. This with people stealing. That you do that. Because had you been a believer and practitioner, then you would not do bad deeds. Then you would see before making anything bad against this person that you would get bad deeds. I will myself receive it on the Judgement Day. How long will I live here on earth? Fifty, sixty, say one hundred years. So I will have collected only bad deeds. That won't help me at all later. So before I make something good to this person or bad. Then I must consider, is that something God will be pleased with this action or not? Informant 08 (963-978)

Several of the informants noted that to be Muslim was to be chosen by God.

> In the Quran, Allāh says, if I wanted to I would have made you all Muslims. But this is not so. The basic idea or point with life is that you can decide what to do. You have the choice; you get to choose. And then like, in the second life, you will get what you have deserved. So it is like. And it is like. It is like this; all is explained. Do like this. Behave like this. And if you worship God you will get this and this, and this, and this. If you don't do this or if you do other things. That you say to you that you cannot do them. Then you will be punished or so. Informant 10 (167-184)

On the fear of what will happen if one does not pray.

> There is an excellent chance that you end up in Hell if you do not pray. Informant 12 (515-516)

Some provided accounts on the relationship to non-believers (that are not Muslim in this case). This, as in some other cases, provided a ground for spreading the word of Islam and wanting others to convert to save them from Hell. The act of spreading the word is perceived to be non-selfish.

> Well, now I speak as a Muslim that is. Well, well, it is only those who believe in God who will enter Paradise. So to speak. And the rest will not do it. And it says that several times in the Quran. Those who are kafir[11], those who are, well non-believers. They will end up in Hell. And then you don't want that to happen to people. Especial if you have friends who are

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[11] *kāfir* (pl. *kuffār*) is used by Muslims for someone who denies the truth, that is the belief God. Literally it means "to hide/cover [the truth]". It is most often perceived to have a derogatory connotation.

not Muslim. But, well, I may end up in Hell myself. But I think, then you want to pass the message to them as well. I feel. So all can take part in the message. Yes, God wants all to be Muslims if you say so. Informant 12 (780-796)

The Quran was cited by several as the perceived word of God, and described the consequences o not believing.

Because you know, there is in the Quran, that if you don't believe and deny God like that, that you end up in Hell. Informant 15 (367-368)

4.2.7.2. Reward

As an opposite to the idea of punishment by God, the belief that there are rewards for those who are good Muslims was very prominent. Almost all of the informants provided accounts of the idea that there is a book in Heaven in which God marks good and bad deeds, which are then summed up on the Judgement Day. Here the informant speaks of the healing power of praying and what a gift that is from God.

So you do the prayer, and it takes five minutes. But then you sit for fifteen minutes and "hamdullillah…". I believe that is what Jesus spoke about. God's domain within. I believe that is what the prayer is for. You say words that make you well. It is the software known as the language gains from and with, well, these prophets, a new function in the world. It is not only that I have tried to talk to you. And tried to get you to change thoughts. They also provide a healing function. It is an experience that you cannot have, can not experience unless you pray. Informant 01 (271-283)

The rewards could be both of a transcendental character as well as of amore imminent nature.

I have seen that when people return from the pilgrimage [Ḥajj], they are like a blank page. All they ask for is served to them. Until a few weeks pass and they become like all others. Same thing when you convert to Islam. Because then, God opens a new page for you. The first time, you can ask God for a scythe, and you will get it. Wa-Allah, I have tried it. Informant 01 (1100-1108)

When comparing transcendent and imminent rewards there was no question as to what was preferred. This was also related to the belief that the life on earth is limited in time while the afterlife is forever (whether that is then experienced in Heaven or Hell).

Not that it is not important, but I think that it is more important with, with the next life. If you say so. I would, if I could have one prayer come true, I would never ask for worldly things. It would, of course,be in Paradise. Because that is how I feel. Yeah, that is rather that when you make Duʿāʾ, it is more that God should forgive me and strengthen me in my faith. Not that I do not want fortune or to invent something or get a house or so, no. It is not that. Informant 02 (781-793)

The wish to make it to Paradise was expressed as a tremendous motivator by all who spoke of it.

That, that I cannot answer. I hope, but it is hard. It is not that all, whoever get in there. Not in Islamic belief. It takes a lot. Informant 02 (885-889)

The understanding of the rewards of the life in the hereafter also was used for several of the informants to provide motivation for performing good deeds in this world.

Because there is a famous Hadith where a man when he dies, then actually his or hers book closes. The good and the bad deeds. Except for three things. The book will be open. For things like, if you have had a son or a daughter or some family that pray for you. Do like, pray, yes pray to God to forgive you or ask God. So like, prayers, then you will get good deeds. If you have done something good and, have left so mething good in this life on earth. For example, if you have written a book. Things others find useful after your death. Then you get rewards, or good deeds, for all others who find it useful. And then there was something... We'll see. Oh yeah, right. It was one who gives knowledge that is useful to others. Or if you pay alms or if you have built something. You have provided, you have given the alms, you have kind of paid something, that is left. So I try to think kind of, yes when I die. So I try to think of it a lot. But here in Sweden, it is much with some projects, buildings of Mosques and so. Even if I do not have millions, I provide a hundred kronor there. Informant 08 (1085-1116)

For many, the temptations in life were seen as a hardship and many saw them as a test. The reward was often related to the gravity of the temptation neglected. Here one informant speaks on the temptations in life.

Yes, absolutely. Ah. There are a lot. You know, well, well, well, even in the Quran it says that we,. well, people, Like ibn Adam[12], so we will. It is that we will appreciate, no love certain things. No, that is things that are forbidden. So there is a lot that is tempting that is forbidden. And that is the basic idea. Will you do it or not? We say to you, okay, this is forbidden. And now you have a choice. So will you do it anyway or will you not do it? When you know that you will do it, that is not good. You will be punished for this. And you know that when you do not do it, then you will be rewarded something greater in the future. So it is just like, will you be patient and take it easy now. And also wait until you get something better or give it a go? Informant 10 (461-483)

On the topic of what motivates one to do good deeds in this life.

I think, the only thing you have are your good deeds. So I try to absorb, it may sound wrong. But I really try to collect as much good deeds as possible. That is what I think, it is the only thing I will have with me upwards later. Until Judgement Day and when I will answer to what I have done and not done. Informant 15 (798-805)

Only two of the informants provided accounts that they believed they would end up in Paradise.

So that, I never worry like that. That, like this, I perhaps helped this person too much and like that. No, not at all. I will receive it all. I am one hundred percent here. In one way or another. Informant 15 (1000-1006)

4.2.7.3. Justice

Very seldom did the informants speak of judgment in more direct terms, it was rather related to punishment or reward. Of course, these categories did overlap to some extent.

Well, I believe that we live in a world that is created, created, it has not existed from random events rather that it is designed. And that the one who has created this world is a God, we call him God. And it is a being without gender. Almighty. All-knowing and has no competitor or any other that rivals Him in this. And, eh, I believe that God has created man in his image. It means that the human has something immortal in him. It is the soul. No one has seen the soul; no one can define exactly what it is about, but no, the soul is what goes to another level when the body goes to the earth. When we die. And then, further, in history will the life at

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[12] *ibn* means "son of". The term *ibn Adam* usually refers to the whole of mankind since all men are perceived to be in the lineage from Adam (Islam shares the same understanding here in line with Judaism and Christianity regarding Adam as the first man created in the image of God).

this place will cease. And we are gathered in front of this God, who that day will bring judgment because the people have behaved badly to one another. And that it is bad that some are losers all the time. Yes, and then will we be sorted there, to what is forever. Informant 01 (374-397)

4.2.7.4. Submission

All informants provided, at least to some extent, an account that submission in front of God was the highest form of devotion. Ths was understood as being one of the most motivating factors for performing religious acts. It was perceived as pleasing to God.

> I have created man and jinn only for them to make ibādat[13]. Right? They should worship Me. Informant 01 (211-214)

The feelings provided by submitting themselves were often of unyielding character.

> I have though a lot of Sujûd when you bow with the head. And that I like more. Of the prayer because of it really being an act of submission. That you show that, no but I believe in God. I do this for God but also myself. But in this way show that I really try, try to follow what God has said. And come closer to God. So that is important to me. To bow down, to place the forehead on the ground in front of, in front of God. Because that feeling is, is something totally different to me. Yes, but I think that is what is most important. Informant 02 (959-972)

Here one informant speaks regarding performing the prayer and why it is like that.

> I, of course, pray because I believe that is something that God has commanded. First and foremost. And it is to obey. But I think that all He has commanded us. Whether it is things, we shall do. Or it is things that He has forbidden; it is things that favor us. That it is not meaningless things, but rather we will get something from it. So from that perspective, I do it for my sake. Definitely. Informant 09 (710-721)

The different parts of the praying act, for many, were perceived to have different meanings. The act itself was often felt to bring along certain powers. Here on Sujûd.

> Right, that one I think is very symbolic. Because. Islam, okay, it is this submission to God. In body and soul. And you also have to subjugate yourself to certain things. That is. Which is one of my answers to many questions I receive. Because people want to rationalize almost everything. And I think it is important to recognize that there are aspects of Islam that are, from our perspective irrational. Not that they are meaningless or irrational from God's perspective, so there is wisdom behind everything. But you have to explain to people, that here this is this aspect. That there is an aspect here that we do not have access to with our limited intellect. Informant 09 (987-1003)

Here one informant gives an account of when faith transcends the logic of the mind and thus becomes something more.

> And also to subjugate yourself that is like, what can you say, one of the most prominent ways in really showing God that I believe in that and follow this. That I do not only perform what I can through rational access. Rather I also do those things that I cannot access. Because I just believe in it. Informant 09 (1036-1042)

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[13] Arabic: "to worship", usually refers to religious acts in devotion of God

4.2.7.5. Sin

The negative motivating factor for performing actions or deeds that were understood to be sinful was often present. Here one informant notes how prayer can keep immoral behavior at bay.

> Eh, that the prayer provides an important function. It organizes your life. It is a reminder that you cannot act in just any way. Because that when the human is very, so to say eager, or, a sinner. Let me say it in other words. The human is a boarder-breaking creature. And then eh, and then, there is the prayer session. The prayer session is supposed to have the function to awaken you and say; hey, you cannot do that. Yeah. To make repentance and betterment it is. Informant 01 (118-129)

Sinful deeds included a wide array of actions, from speech acts to more direct physical deeds. Here one informant describes the idea that God does not like sinful behavior but also is seen as present in the informant's life.

> I do not believe that God replaces you and your, your effort, but God is that little extra. He makes what is peaceful and right, and meaningful and tastes good. Same here, I don't know, I do not know how it works. But I see in my life that when some things went wrong, that I sat and said to myself "Hey!, look what have you done!" And it almost always shows that I have done something bad. It is enough to talk trash about someone. God does not like when you talk bad about people. God does not like it. It is really Hell, very serious and so obvious to me that I wish all people understood how the system works. Informant 01 (839-854)

The presence of sinful deeds was often brought up by the informants, often presented as a consequence of not being stronger in faith.

> Well, we have some, we have a desire. And that can, it cannot always be on, well you make faults and to if you shall follow a religion and be a practitioner then it can be difficult. You do wrong and sin and such. And then I would, it would be better if you did not do it. If you have more strength, if you were stronger to oneself. To reject. Informant 02 (461-469)

Here the sinful behavior is also related to being in a secular society where there are deviations present to interfere with the Muslim everyday life.

> It can be hard to find places to pray. The food is an important matter. You have not always access to halal meat and such. Then there is lots on TV and such that you should not watch. That is such so much, many cultures like that. That perhaps is not so good in a Muslim perspective. Informant 02 (486-492)

As in the above case, the informant here rejects the parts of secular Sweden where perceived nudity is seen as disturbing since it is Un-Islamic.

> No, but for example in the summers there can be a lot of nakedness. And then, you should not watch, but when you are out on the street, it occurs automatically. Yes, you, on TV perhaps come many Un-Islamic movies or programs and such. And you are raised here, so you are accustomed to it. Perhaps that is not so good either. Informant 02 (496-502)

Not praying, or not praying on time was often given as an example of sinful behaviors. This indicates how important the prayer was for most of the informants in their everyday life. Here on the topic of missing prayer.

> Well, that is such, you call them feelings of guilt. That you have not done it. It can be like, oh well, that you feel, well, now I have sinned since I did not pray on time. Informant 05 (462-465)

I think it is a great sin if you miss. That I think about all the time. That when I miss the prayer then I sin. Then I worry. Informant 06 (912-915)

4.2.7.6. Virtue

Virtue and virtuous behaviors were a recurring theme for many of the informants. They provided several accounts of good deeds performed as well as the intention behind them. This was noted in relation to pleasing God.

> It also says in the Quran. It says, ah, lots of places that you can be better, and you can be worse. But it is about, well you know that we are watched by the decree of cleanliness, it is likely true. But this is a symbol; it is of course so that you should have clean hands and such. And feet and such, clean. But the important point is to keep oneself on the side of cleanliness. And what does it mean to keep on the side of cleanliness? You shall not lie, you shall not steal, you shall not eat bad food. Well, haram food, it is about pig meat. No-one contests this. It is not about pig meat. There is no-one eating pig meat in Muhammed's time. You shall not eat food that is not sufficient or how you say. Yes, eh, so it is about keeping oneself clean. Informant 01 (865-881)

As also noted earlier, the spreading of the word of Islam was often deemed a virtuous behavior. It was often referenced as a non-selfish act. Here one informant speaks on the topic of why people should convert to Islam.

> Personally, it is to help people. Because you as a Muslim believe that it is the right path. So you want the one walking beside you to also reach the right path. So personally it is to help others, not that it would affect me in any way. It would not help me, or provide me with more power and such if the one beside me were Muslim. It is rather more because you believe to such a degree in it and what you do is helping. Informant 03 (1028-1038)

Virtuous behavior was sometimes referenced as something that provided meaning in the informant's life.

> Eh, I think that you should follow the religion in the best possible way that you can but at the same time, and it is also a part of the religion, to help others. And I like that a lot. To help, the day I help someone it is a good day, and that is what I like to do more in my studies, and hopefully, it will be like that. So helping people gives life meaning. I think, for me, the joy is there to be able to help someone, help someone, making it easier for someone. Informant 04 (232-241)

When virtuous behavior was seen as being linked with the religion and a motivator for doing good deeds.

> Mom said that I was kind when young. But I think the religion made me pursue chances to help more. Before, you found someone, ok, "do you need help", you helped. But now I feel, now I feel that I should pursue those who need help and help. Yes, That was the reason I two years ago started to engage in [CHARITY NAME OMITTED] and that was the reason I chose to study [UNIVERSITY PROGRAM NAME OMITTED]. I heard it is a good way heading towards NGO:s and charities and voluntary work. So yes, the religion is what make me seek these people and yes, try to help. Informant 04 (250-263)

Virtuous behaviors were not always easy since some of the rules and obligations in Sweden provided obstacles. Instead, then the thought of why something was done or not was presented in relation to God. Here one informant speaks of working in an environment with specific clothing-rules.

> It is short sleeves. And it is pants. And so. But to me, that is not such a big deal. Because I also think it is a lot like what your intention is. I am not there to show off. That is, I don't wear these clothes because you should look at me! Rather I do it to work and help people. So

the intention, which I have always thought is the important thing in what you do. I think God judges me on my intention. Informant 06 (326-338)

Virtuous behaviors can also include not giving up even after doing bad deeds. Here on the topic of the afterlife.

> I believe that I, and actually all Muslims, because it is actually mandatory for Muslims to be confident regarding their faith. To not be able to think there is a chance that I may be wrong. Actually to be certain regarding one's faith is actually one of the demands, to a Muslim. Informant 09 (129-134)

As referenced from the Quran, and brought to life by the informants, the virtues of Muslim life were seen to touch upon all aspects of life.

> I should do something useful. And this is from time to time. Even with my friends and the researchers. My Muslim friends in the research. Always, we try to renew this intention. That we do this not just because we need a better life but also to help. Because God wants us to, like what the Quran ordered us to search. Yeah, to have the knowledge and to do. I mean, it's the work, worship and yeah. Informant 14 (409-419)

4.2.7.7. Forgiveness

All informants provided a view of God as being forgiving. There were some variations on when it could or could not occur. Most often the idea was expressed that God was forgiving as long as one did return to performing the religious acts and to being a good Muslim.

> Then maybe someone says: "Yes, but I have not done anything, why should I plead forgiveness?" It shows that the very words mean something. And then people sit, intelligent people here, as I see it, they sit like this: "Astaffarullah, astaffarullah, astaffarullah, astaffarullah, astaffarullah..". Do you know what that means? Astraffaru, it means to plead forgiveness. It comes from ghufra, ghufran, it is forgiveness. Yeah, I beg God for forgiveness. Informant 01 (225-236)

Here the informant speaks of everybody having the possibility of becoming Muslim. Here God is perceived to be forgiving and always having the door open for those who want to turn to the Muslim faith.

> I think so. Yes, I believe so. Regardless of who you are, or how much you have sinned and something alike, I am, I actually think that you can become, because I have the time, because I started to practice and think I kind of reverted. That it was, it was, it was at a very bad time, and I did a lot of bad things so I would like to think that all is forgiven before I started to practice. Informant 04 (784-792)

Here one informant speaks of the relationship between punishment and reward.

> I really believe that God is forgiving. I also think he should punish us for, eh, bad deeds that we did. But he is compassionate more than a punishing God. I think that, really, and I think the door is always open for everyone. I really hope that everybody becomes a Muslim. That I can actually not deny. Informant 04 (799-807)

Almost all informants spoke of good deeds as what was necessary to enter paradise, but some also spoke of the importance of Allāh's grace as a crucial component here.

> And then the prophet also says like this; it is not your actions that take you to Paradise. It is Allāh's grace that takes you to Paradise. If it were not for Allāh, he has made it possible for you to do these good deeds. Then you would not have done them. And if he, how should I say, has hindered you from doing the evil. Then you have gone and and done them anyway.

> So it is the grace that includes all of it. And the prayers are part of the grace. Informant 05 (1348-1358)

For some informants, their relationship to God was brought forward as more rewarding than relationships between people. In this example, one informant speak of how extraordinary God is.

> But that God is the only one who understands me. And therefore can judge me. But he never judges me either. Or so. That I find truly nice. Then I can express my thoughts and, when you say Sujûd, that is what it is called when you bow down. And I have read that something happens when you have the head like this. That all your thoughts are brought forward, like that, unintentional. Do I do it? So I just ask for forgiveness then. Informant 11 (593-603)

Here the notion is given that God is loving and forgiving for all.

> I really try to follow what can be followed. Then there are numerous examples when God is merciful. God is good. Even people who are not believers, still God likes them a lot too. Then I think, but I who am a believer and really want to follow God. Informant 15 (1210-1217)

Some of the informants did not like how they perceived many other Muslims using faith as a threatening system . Here instead the forgiving aspects are highlighted.

> You know there are many who use God's wrath, as it says in the Quran. And try to scare others. You know, in the end, it gets like this, yeah but I will end up in Hell. But it is wrong! Because when I look more at God's love and what God promise regarding how forgiving He is. I see him like. Well, to me it is rather impossible not to forgive. That picture I have of God. That it is impossible that He won't forgive me. Because that He also says in the Quran. His mercifulness and niceness are more than his anger, or what you say. Do you understand? Informant 15 (1261-1276)

Even though almost all of the informants were worried about doing enough for their faith, most of them still sought refuge in their belief that God is forgiving. Here one informant speaks on the topic of worrying about the wrath of God.

> You should always worry. It is not like that, but I tell you something. You should, eh, eh. To not really. Of course, God is peaceful. And is merciful and everything. But you shouldn't only rely on that. Because if you rely only on that, you will do nothing good. You say that God is merciful and you all will be in Heaven. And then you will do nothing. So no, you shouldn't rely on that. And you shouldn't also think in the other extreme. That God is not merciful, and everyone will go to Hell. No, it is not like that. But you should be in the middle. You should do work. And do good stuff. And believe that you will be in Heaven by that mercifulness. But not by my job. Or not by my doing. Or not by my deeds. It is at His mercy. But you shouldn't leave everything. You should do some good stuff. To be involved in this mercy. Yeah. Informant 16 (811-837)

4.2.8. Daily life experience/function

The daily religiosity of the informants provided a broad range of daily life experiences and functions. This could occur from both prayer as well as other acts.

4.2.8.1. Anxiety

Almost all of the informants provided accounts that they felt anxiety from time to time. For some it was more seldom, while others lived with it more or less constantly. There were different topics noted that were understood to provide the source for the anxiety. Often, though, as with the other cases, the experience or

function stemmed from performing or not performing their religious duties to a high standard. Here one informant speaks on variations in faith.

> Well, well, I have, have weak moments. Then I have had moments of strength. So it has been up and down. But I have always had, I have always had a belief, and when there have been moments of weakness I have turned to it more, I have felt less, less calm in myself. Informant 02 (226-231)

As stated above, neglecting or not being able to fulfill religious duties such as praying was for many of the informants a constant source of anxiety. Here one informant speaks on the topic of missing prayer.

> No, not that it does not matter. Because I think you should make up the missed ones. But it is not the same. Because, how should I explain it? If I miss a prayer voluntarily. From laziness, if you say so. And then try to make it later, then it will never be the same. Sure, I would have performed my prayers, and it would have been done but it will, for me it feels like not the same as to pray on time. And then it does not count in the same way either. I perhaps should make my prayers later but it just, I do not feel this is the same. If you say so. But I am not saying that it is not important to make them later. Because it is important. But yeah, I have a long way there. If you say so. Informant 02 (700-719)

As other accounts also mention, the stress of everyday life in conjunction with living in Sweden as a secular society was often felt as a hardship. Here one informant speaks of the topic on finding time for prayer in the everyday life.

> It is first that, that you blame yourself, that it is your fault, you can't complain about anything else. There are opportunities to pray here, there are mosques, there are prayer rooms, places for prayer in the schools. It is very, I think many elements are here actually. Perhaps one's friends for example. Those you surround yourself with. I think that affects it a lot too. But first and foremost it is your responsibility. Informant 03 (355-363)

Provided below is a short dialogue with one of the informants. In this instance, the source for the anxiety stemmed from thinking of the afterlife almost every day and thus worrying about not performing religious acts to the necessary extent.

> Because we Muslims, we believe in life after this and that you should not hold on in this life. So it is a kind of alarm and we need to think that we have a life after this as well. Informant 03 (471-474)
> RESEARCHER: Do you often think about that? (476)
> Yeah, almost everyday actually. Informant 03 (478)
> RESEARCHER: And how does that feel? (480)
> Eh, worrisome. No, but it, it feels so and so. It feels, it feels, that it would feel better if I were a better Muslim actually. I think so. But I think everybody has that, that everybody worries. He who does not pray five times a day and performs everything but perhaps is not such a good person. Informant 03 (482-490)

The following comment by an informant concerns the topic of whether prayer was thought of as important in life.

> I, unfortunately, slack off with it. Not by intention, but it just gets like that. And if I get up that day, sometimes there are days that are really hard to pray those days, I just feel like I fail too much. That I have not given God what is His. Or what is right I threw away, especially since I got so much from Him and should thank quite a lot. And as said, when I don't pray I am not doing quite well, I feel there is something I should have done but have not done. Informant 04 (324-334)

For some of the informants the religious duties, and perhaps especially the prayer acts, were thought of as critical.

> I think the prayer is to me like everything else that is needed to survive. That is to see it like eating, like sleeping, like all that. Kind of basic. It has not always been like that. But, and that is not always the priority, but I feel very weird if I just don't. Something is missing inside of me if I have not performed my prayer. Informant 06 (404-411)

A small number of the informants also provided information that their knowledge of Islam was not broad enough, also making this a source of anxiety.

> And I just want to say that I don't know that much regarding Islam. So most of what I talk about is from my experience. I hope God forgives me. That I don't do anything bad. Informant 11 (3-6)

Even for some of the informants that provided accounts of being very devout Muslims and performing most or all religious duties, as they felt compelled to, there could still be instances of anxiety.

> All you do, that everything should be correct and follow everything that God has said. That is when you enter Paradise. Because that is what it is all about, Paradise or Hell. So yes, you think about it. Yes, you always think if what you do is enough. You think like that. Even though you do everything, you can feel like, yeah but this is perhaps not enough. So then I may not end up where I want to be. Informant 12 (573-583)

4.2.8.2. Security

Almost all of the informants provided accounts that their faith served as a foundation for security in their lives. This could stem both from more mundane everyday actions to more specialized cases relating to extraordinary circumstances. Security was felt both concerning the faith itself as well as how it gives strength to face adversities. The statement that all is in God's hands was voiced often, and that one should thus not worry. In this declaration, one informant speaks of the security in life provided by performing the prayers.

> I can tell you, well I usually say to my children that "my children, if you have a problem, go and pray". Because, during life, you will see that sometimes it goes well for you and sometimes it goes bad. It is unavoidable for all people. There is no human that lives well all the time. No-one lives badly all the time. And notice that the best things, the best things in life cost nothing. It is what is fascinating. So how much money you have or not have, eh, influence and means, but these are not deep things. You will have trouble; you will lose, people you love will pass away from you or you pass away and move on. Therefore, I mean, there is a relation no-one can take away from you. It is God. It is the prayer. This is fascinating. Mohammed says to his wife, when he was sad, whatever happened, he goes to pray. And that is the best you can do. Put your guilt on God. "I can't handle this; you have to take this for me". He fixes it. It is what makes people remain believers. If it does not work, not one single believer will remain on earth! But people believe because they see that it means something to them. Informant 01 (796-826)

Almost all of the informants spoke of their conviction that God always listens to them. The relation to whether their prayers and desires were met as they hoped was varied. Some felt that they received material rewards while others often spoke more of a transcendental character concerning rewards. Also several talked about how God knows what is best for them, even though they wished or longed for something else.

I think that always God, God always listens. Maybe you do not always get what you asked for. But he listens always I think. It is just comforting to me because I know, I am convinced. I have read a lot and heard many talk about acceptance of Duʿāʾ. That, that God listens to you. And I firmly believe that God always listens to you. Maybe what you ask for is not good for you right now, is not good for you at all. So you do not get it. But I believe that it has its benefits like, that, well, God helps by instead of giving you something you asked for removes something that would havel happe ned to you. And such. That this to me, actually is enough. I don't think I have to have everything I ask God for. Informant 04 (412-430)

For some the security was cited more directly. Here one informant speaks of what faith means in this life.

Yeah, sure. My faith is about to me, more about security. To be able to lean back and see that now there is a support or back or wall or what to say that I can lean on so that when things occur, like up and down, it is the only refuge that I have if you say so. Often. And due to that, I have been through a lot in my life, so I have there found the balance. Otherwise, it could have ended up terrible in my life. Informant 05 (69-76)

Security was also presented through the view that God wants what is best for them. For some, this view guided most or all instances in life. For some Islam was seen as flexible while for others it was much stricter.

The fact is that Islam provides leeway there, it is safe like that. But it is something I have considered. If I say like this. We will travel to [CITY NAME OMITTED] next week. I will book my train ticket planned around the prayer times. That simply is the way my life works. Informant 09 (746-751)

Here is one account provided on the topic of if everyone can become Muslim. There is an unyielding sense here that Islam is the true religion and would impact the world for the better.

Yes, yes! My goal is like that people should become Muslim that is. Because I know that is. Because I know that this is the true religion. But others may not see this. So, well, like to me it is. So I want to pass this knowledge, or not knowledge. I want to pass this message that is. To all people. I think all should take part in this. Then it is yourself who choose if you want to be Muslim or not. Informant 12 (715-728)

Some variations were provided on the topic of what faith is to the informants. Here one informant speaks about conviction.

Well, to me it is just pure conviction. If I would describe it in one word. Just conviction. Yeah, well, you have a belief in something that is not really physical. Or like something you cannot explain but still everything feels logical. And therefore you also get convinced very easily as well. So I would describe it as conviction and liberation. Actually. Informant 13 (98-109)

Certainty regarding theological matters was often raised by the informants.

But well, I don't know how to formulate it. Well, you know that you know as a Muslim. As a Muslim, you know that there awaits a Paradise. And there awaits a Hell. So it is like, you are just stupid if you do not choose Paradise. Like that. Informant 13 (1134-1140)

While some informants provided accounts that one should follow Islam without questioning it, here is one account where the informant spoke on what is right in Sweden (and should also be seen as representative for the West). This was one of few accounts given that was not negative towards Sweden or the West. Here the informant speaks on the topic of faith.

But there is one thing I am very happy with. And that is, that I have been in the Swedish school. And have, am in the progress of getting an academic degree. It is this critical eye. There is a lot that is said in the name of Islam that people make up and such. So I am very happy to be raised here and have this criticism of sources. I have listened a lot but not accepted all. I won't agree with all the Imams say. You know, they are not perfect either. But there are a lot who think like this, yeah but it is an Imam, he must be right at once. He is a scholar, or he must have. It is nothing, which you do not think yourself at first. And have this criticism of the sources. So that. And I discuss a lot with my Dad and with my Mom and my uncle who is very religious. In that way I create a strong faith. So it is much stronger. I won't receive; I won't receive everything just because. I think if I had lived in my home country, [MIDDLE EAST COUNTRY] or [MIDDLE EAST COUNTRY], the whole surrounding is Muslim. So it automatically becomes that, well, all they say is true. That is just the way it is. There is no criticism of the sources down there. I don't judge them. But I think most just follow along. Just as everyone else is doing it, I will do it too. Without even checking why, how, what does Islam say? It there this, is there that? So I started to look at what it was all about. And that has made my faith truly strong now. Informant 15 (169-207)

As stated earlier the prayer session was seen often as a source of security. The relation to God would then provide you with security in life. Here one informant speaks on the topic of praying as providing security regarding their psychological well-being.

It's rest to us. Praying is rest I think. For us, to be calmer. And you believe that everything is in the hands of God. So you don't need to worry about anything. This, money, health, everything is in his hands. So you should be very calm. And this is a matter of who I am. I'm Muslim. And why you follow just one God. And I think, following just one God, how I say it, it collects all lost energy from each fear. Your fear of poverty. Fear of being ill. Your fear of losing your family. But when you know that everything is in the hands of just one God, then you fear only from him. You don't need to separate your feelings like that. And have fear from everything. Ah, I just don't fear from people. I know that everything that goes down bad is in His hands. I don't fear from illness. I don't fear from poverty at all. I don't fear from anything. Because it is just in his hands. What he wants will happen. So you just want one God. You follow one God. Your heart should be just, how to say, filled with one thing. And one God. You don't need to separate yourself into a lot of fears. Like that. Yeah. Informant 16 (902-936)

4.2.8.3. Fear

In opposition to security, and also related to anxiety, almost all of the informants provided accounts of fear. This could stem from various sources. One of the most common themes here was the fear of death, but not death itself but rather the fear of ending up in Hell in the afterlife. It seemed to be present very often for most of the informants.

Well, I had so much death agony some years ago. Because of very many of my relatives just died. And then I started to think if I am a believer and the meaning of life and such. And then I started to practice my faith more as well. Also that my husband converted as well then. And he was more like; I saw him pray, and he asked: have you prayed? And I was like: no I kind of haven't. Then you got a bit ashamed. And then you started to think a bit. I try at least. And then I did, and then I got stuck in it. And then my death agony was lowered. Then I thought, then this is what helps me in my life. So in that way, I started with the prayer for real. I have always prayed since I was young. But not like the way I do now. Rather it was like I didn't pray on time. Or didn't make the ablution out of laziness, and now instead I just get on with the prayer anyway. Or was like thinking of many other things when praying. So yeah, it has been a long journey. Informant 06 (417-442)

As stated above, the idea of an afterlife was one of the most prominent causes for fear in the life of the informants.

> Yes, very much fear, if you make faults then it can turn out very bad in the afterlife. Like, it is a fear of where I will turn up? The punishment in the grave. And Hell. And many always say that, but think that God is forgiving. On the Judgement Day, he can forgive you for all. And those who have lots of sin can end up in Paradise. And such. But we do not know. And that is the fear I have. I do not know. I have lots of control issues. I cannot control this. Informant 06 (1422-1437)

As in most other cases, there could be ambivalence as to whether one should have hope or fear. More often than not, though, the latter was more prominently brought forward by the informants. Here one of them notes the balance between hope and fear.

> Because there are Muslims, that fall into this as well. That there is so much anxiety resulting in people almost giving up. That it is blown for me. I am so bad I will never be forgiven. And this is totally forbidden in Islam. Because God is the one who forgives. The other extreme would be just to have hope. That God is loving, and it does not matter what we do. He will never punish so. And living in some fantasy world and suddenly, what happens to the moral in that case? I can do whatever I wish since God is so merciful. Which He is. But I think the balance is extremely important. I would never sit here and say that I do not worry. Because I don't know what happens to me either. Tomorrow or in a week. I sit here today and say that I am Muslim. I don't know what happens tomorrow. I don't know what happens in a week. Informant 09 (1174-1196)

As with the case above, the fear of Hell was present. The uncertainty of knowing was present in the strong answers of many, the insecurity caused by the fear of not knowing

> No, of course, I am afraid to go to Hell! Actually. Actually, it's a mixture of. Because I don't know how I can describe that. But always you have mixtures of feelings. That you, you have the fear and you have the hope to go to the Heaven. And this. But because you are not sure in the best, most religious moments. You are not sure. Yeah, you are afraid if you make something bad. Informant 14 (454-465)

4.2.8.4. Distrust

One of the topics often brought up by the informants without first being asked about it by the researcher, related to distrust. Here notions were given both concerning the surrounding society, in this case, secular Sweden that was in many instances looked upon in a non-favorable way. There were also several accounts given on perceived troubles within the Muslim community. These related both to Muslim countries, for example in the Middle East, as well as in and between different factions here in Sweden. Several accounts of racism between Muslims with different ethnicities was provided, often concerning Mosques or organized groups.

> Unfortunately, the Mosque is a bit far away, and there is no place to pray close to me. And I don't know anyone close, so often it is alone. Unfortunately, with work and everything it is that if I make it to the Mosque one Friday per month then I am very happy. Unfortunately, it usually is alone. Plus that, as said, the Mosque is, well, not quite all people there are good people. Some, sometimes it is no good, and I instead stay at home and pray. Informant 04 (648-658)

Here one informant speaks of being discriminated in the Swedish society for being Muslim.

> I think education is very important because, you have this a lot that Muslims create a strong Ummah. That is a strong people. And then I think that in Sweden it is very important that you get an education just to get into society. Because I think that if you do not have an

education you have a very hard time to get a job. Especially when you are a Muslim. Informant 06 (191-198)

And continues:

> This name thing I have thought about now. Because, for example, my husband, he has added a name. To his surname. But he has not done that in the Swedish Tax Agency. Thinks that if we hear it in the Swedish Taxation Agency it kind of becomes public. But how is it then when he will enter the job market? Like that. So you have a few thoughts. Or if you are about to travel. It becomes a kind of, is like an imprint. If you are named a certain way it is like that, yeah. Informant 06 (221-232)

As stated above, there are variations within the Muslim community that the informants felt were a breeding ground for trouble. Here one tells of being judged by fellow Muslims when being in the Mosque.

> Then you should have the right clothes, you should not wear makeup, you should not wear perfume. Well, there are a lot of things that, that others think. You shouldn't be like that because that is something that is not Islam. So I don't know. It feels like, if I enter the Mosque, well a lot of the women there are wearing makeup. Or wearing perfume and have nice clothes and such. But there are those other sisters who are not, and judge us who have it. And then it does not feel sanctifying to go to the Mosque. There when you are together with these others. Informant 06 (510-521)

One of the informants spoke of double standards within the Muslim community. This example relates to women.

> But to me, it feels like those who are not wearing a scarf judge us who wear it more. Because when you have started to wear the scarf, then you should be perfect. There are very many women who think like that. For example, one of my girlfriends. Because sometimes I wear pants or when I got married and my brother-in-law walked in on me when I wasn't wearing a scarf. And then it is something she comments on. Yes, but he shouldn't even be there, and you were not wearing the scarf. And then, well that kind of thing. That, I get a lot of comments from sisters who do not wear a scarf. And who do not dress right? At the same, time I don't think it is suitable for them too. Why should it be right for her, because she does not wear a scarf? Why should it be wrong for me to do the same thing because I wear the scarf? Informant 06 (534-556)

As earlier noted, some parts of the Muslim community were not looked upon favorably by the informants. Here on forcing women to wear the scarf.

> I think it should be every women's own thing. It is she who should choose. Because a woman, that is a hijab does not reflect who you are. Rather, a woman who does not have a scarf can be more pious than women with a scarf. So the outside does not reflect how pious I am. No, it should be up to oneself. Because no, otherwise it does not count in the eyes of God anyway. Like fathers who forces their daughters to wear a scarf, for whom is it? Is it for God, or for the father's sake? For society, for the relatives, for the daughter's sake? Well, it is such a weird practice. I do not understand it. Informant 06 (641-656)

While many of the informants felt it is hard to live as a practicing Muslim in Sweden, some did not feel this to be a problem. Here one account is given on the topic of finding time for prayer.

> Because many argue that, many Muslims try to argue that we do not have time. Which, it is simply not true. It is not true. It is just about priorities. You have time for cigarettes and an infinite number of coffee breaks. Thirty-minute lunches. But not the time for what you actually think is most important. So, there is a difference in will and will so to speak. If you ask a smoker, then he can say, yes I want to quit. But no effort at all here. If he really wants

to quit, then he will really try. And then start the struggle. Then this starts for real. This inner struggle you talk of, that we all know of. Informant 09 (778-795)

Here is a counter example, from those who felt living in Sweden as a Muslim to be hard.

I didn't feel it at first. Like, well, as a person then. I, in that I have not always worn the scarf. I put it on when I was eighteen I think. And then it was not like. Well, I wasn't seen as a Muslim. And people couldn't identify me as a Muslim. So the scarf is amongst others in Islam that is, something important. That distinguish you as a Muslim. But, I experience with time. And with the years it is like. The hostilities towards Islam have increased. And it is a kind of pattern happening. And it, I experience it more now than before at least. And the more I, I feel them more I distance myself from, this, what to say, the worldly. And focus on the religious or the spiritual, the more I feel that, that you live in two separate worlds. That, that, that it perhaps is hard to outsiders to understand. Are they totally nuts in their head or what are they doing?! Well, that it kind of, that you question it all. Perhaps it then turns into a form of hatred then. Informant 13 (255-277)

Also, some informants who gave the notion of being very devout felt that relatives and others in their surrounding were a bit hypocritical when it came to faith. Statements were given that one should not deviate from the religion in good nor bad times.

Quite many times during this period it was the case that people who passed away. And when someone passes away, the mood gets like this. All become serious and start. You know how you see when people are regretful. Shit, I regret certain things. Suddenly everything becomes serious when someone dies. And it had me started thinking like this. Why does it become like this when someone dies? Why do people become pathetic? Here, and I sit and worry on these and these things. And they start, you know when it becomes serious like that. Why are they not like that before? Informant 15 (429-444)

While almost all of the informants wished for all people to become Muslim, several felt disappointed by the countries that are Muslim. Once again the feeling of Islam mixing with political matters and cultural issues was brought forward. Here one informant speaks on the topic of people becoming Muslim.

Of course. It should be. But it, the problem is that you become Muslim only in identity. Yeah, you are not practicing Islam. I don't see any country now. There is no country at all. That is practicing true Islam. Even Saudi Arabia or Qatar or you know. They are not practicing Islam. And that is very hard to practice. In, I don't know even how to. Of course, we have an example. The prophet Muhammed, he practiced Islam. And the people around him. But there is no country now that is trying to do something like that. No-one even comes close. Not by any means. Yeah. Informant 16 (247-365)

4.2.8.5. Stress

Almost all of the informants felt stress in their everyday life concerning their faith. Often it was related to practical matters such as finding a time and place to perform their daily prayers.

No, it is not about that, it is about myself that I do not want to make a matter because that I do not want to say that you have to take this into consideration. Perhaps there are such things as job and school; it can be hard to find a place to pray. You do not want to roll out the prayer rug in the cantina to pray there either. Informant 02 (523-530)

And continues:

Well, it is the most important. Because through the prayer, I don't know how to explain it but, the prayer is an enormous and important part of Muslims. And if you are practicing and pray regularly then you feel better and more devout and then it is easier to be more devout. And then it feels better. Inside as well. Then if you miss a lot of prayers and slack off, then it only feels worse. Because then, because then you cannot be really practicing. Rather you move in the other direction, and it can be a massive war inside. Informant 02 (655-668)

Not only troubles were felt from the secular society in Sweden, but several of the informants also provided accounts of the darkness during winter and how it was harder for them than it would have been if they lived in the Middle East.

Especially in the winter, it is very hard. Because they come with only an hour between them and you, do not have the time at all. First, after morning prayer so is the first at half, half to twelve something. And the other at one and the other at three, so it is really tight. Especially if you work or have school, then it can be a problem, you don't have time to run, then you can miss a lot. So it can be hard. Informant 02 (908-916)

As noted the stress of not finding the time to pray was most prominent. Here an account is provided on not praying if the time is short.

Because you know. I can pray. And pray quickly. But it doesn't feel fair or such. It feels like I should. It doesn't take more than five minutes. Eh, yeah. Informant 11 (833-839)

And continues:

Because you know sometimes, I feel like this, it is stressful. I don't even have time for my lunch in a moment of calmness. Because I know I have to pray. But it is a mandatory thing. I must do so. Yeah, it is stressful sometimes. Informant 15 (1740-1745)

4.2.8.6. Calmness

Calmness was described by almost all of the informants as a result of performing their prayers, if not always, at least from time to time. Here one informant speaks of how it feels during a well-performed prayer session.

Like, I feel more like that there is nothing going wrong in here rather that you feel good. It feels like the anxiety passes. That, that it is good. I relax from all the stress and all the worldly things and have a break from, well, life. Informant 03 (419-424)

Not only the prayer but also surrounding religious acts were a source for feeling calm. Here one informant speaks on performing the ablution.

Eh, it just feels like feels that you, I don't know, it feels like you should, when it comes to ablution and all that, that it disconnects it all. That you have to do, all you have to do is think about and concentrate. On one topic, and that is the prayer and God. This with the ablution and all the movements during prayer, which make you, well, alert. Like that. Informant 03 (857-865)

The theological parts and the systemic thought of Islam were also a source for meaning and grounding, and as such relieving stress. Here is an account noting the prayer as a pillar of Islam.

It is after the Shahāda, after that. After that comes the prayer, it is there where you will be asked when you die on the day of judgment will resurrect. And then the first question in prayer, if it is correct all others will be easier. If it is not correct, all others will be harder. And it is that people, shall we say Muslims, are often talking about in Mosques and so on. Prayer, prayer in the Friday sermon. All other. And the children as young. Prays, pray, pray. And I would think that without the prayer, I think a lot could have turned out bad in life.

> Because it attracts this energy that people could fight about or something. But if you have prayed you get more harmonious, a bit calmer and such. Informant 05 (496-513)

A few of the informants spoke of the notion that prayer provided them with calmness not found before. Here an account is given on the topic of how it feels during prayer.

> Yeah, you feel more than calm. That is it. You forget all the anxiety. Therefore when I have had a crisis. I needed psychology, therapy, sometimes. If you end up in another situation. If you have a problem in yourself or, have ended up in something bad. First, you go directly to God, pray. So you calm down. It is a connection. Direct connection. The soul. Informant 07 (752-764)

4.2.8.7. Freedom

While not universally spoken of by the informants, especially not if seen concerning what can perhaps be seen as the opposite in the form of submission, still several accounts were given on how their Islamic faith provided them with freedom in life in a way they felt could not have been experienced otherwise.

> But I became a devout Muslim about twenty years ago. I was so surprised. Oh my God, how could I have missed this?! I am born Muslim. And have been in Mosques and read the Quran and a lot of other books and thought I had understood it all. But it turned out I had not understood everything. Rather it is something happening. It is a new, a new, a new, what is it in Swedish? A new space opens for you. Something new, it is something like the first love. Yes, or when you get your driver's license. It is a huge happening, right? Yes, and then I understood that religion gives your life a new dimension. A new meaning. I do not know if it is like that for everybody. That I do not know. Informant 01 (510-526)

Also, the understanding of the Muslim sources, by some of the informants, was given as a means of knowing how to act. They felt that they had the power to know and do both good and bad deeds. Here such an account is given concerning Muslim history.

> It has to do with the source. That I want to choose what is more right. From my religion, from my understanding, it is Allāh's path that is more correct to me. It is more to me to follow than others could be. But the choice is there, and people can choose what they want to do. But for me, it was correct, as this link backward, but also Madahib, Madahib is, these four Imams are very important as you know, my respect for them is not like if they had not taught me anything. So at my part, I take what is correct from them, but also it should not be that I also, should you say, reject what they say. No, that would be disastrous if you say so. Informant 05 (133-147)

Here an account is provided by an informant on that God has given people the power to feel well and live free through their Muslim faith, but that most since have deviated from it resulting in a loss of meaning in life.

> God has given, before Abraham we have, all those had the meaning of life. The more you move closer to God you are, live freely in life. All is there before. But I don't know why we have become more, what is it called, denying God. For sure, you cannot deny God directly. They search for something. Informant 07 (553-561)

Just as with freewill in other instances, the notion was given that one could choose what to perform and not. But as always, and especially as seen in other areas, one always has to face the consequences of whether or not something is done.

You always have the possibility to choose. That is, anyway here I have no problem to pray and such. I can pray when it is time to pray. And I can, I am not forced to make anything I do not want to. And I can do what I please. It is easy. It is okay. Informant 10 (133-140)

4.2.8.8. Devotion

All informants spoke of devotion at least to some extent. Many of them had a strong opinion on what was a good act of devotion and tried to live out that part to the best possible extent. Devotion was most often seen as a goal in itself by the perceived thought that that was what God wanted people to do. Here one informant speaks of what is meaningful in Islam.

Ey, what is meaningful is the religion. That it gives life meaning. I am not only here to eat and drink and sleep and to take a crap and stuff. All living beings do that. Rather you are human, and it costs. You are human, the word in Arabic is really amazing. Not many have thought about it. The word "human" comes from the verb "anasa". "Anasa". It means to spend time with. To socialize with. Informant 01 (459-468)

This account also provides an etymological explanation as to why one should be a devout Muslim, relating it to the very language. A note should be made here that since the Quran is written in Arabic it is seen as the perfect holy language.

Yes, it's direct. There is a social aspect, but humanity is a group on its own. A breed. And then there is, well the verb "anasa" can also be derived from another noun which is "nisien", "nisien", the human is forgetting. It does not mean to forget; rather the human can add and subtract, choose and reject, the human has freedom. You are not a given being once and for all. Rather you, me and others are changeable. Take a trick, and we influence and are influenced, and that is what characterizes a human. Therefor the religion, it is about you to make yourself better, to better yourself, to better yourself. Informant 01 (472-485)

Different views were presented on how one could be a devout Muslim. Here is one account on praying the religious alms.

How do you better yourself? Well, you, well it says so many times in the Quran. It says that you should zakat, zakat, it is from where the alms are. Informant 01 (486-489)

And continues:

Okay, you make zakat for your money. You cleanse them. You give that away to keep, keep what is clean to one hundred percent. It is the same thing with your soul, your spirit, your being. It needs cleansing, constant cleansing. Through prayer, through fasting, through saying something good. By listening to something good. By taking a walk in the forest and to contemplate on nature. That is how I view it. Informant 01 (493-502)

This account relates the belief that the very existence of the informant is faith and it is what creates meaning.

Oh, eh, creates meaning. But I think it is very much the faith. That it is that, I would not be able to see my life without the belief. And that is perhaps what creates meaning then. If you speak of the religion. Yes, but that I have a faith so I can turn back to it, that feeling, that is what I would like to say. Informant 02 (203-209)

Devotion, as said, could stem from different acts. Here one informant speaks of the need to spread the good word of Islam since there was a feeling that people in the surroundings were deviating from the religion.

Actually in, what is it called, I had become active when I arrived in Sweden. So I have seen it as a lot of Muslims. That behave badly when it comes to Islam. And I didn't know the

language or so. And I tried a bit, most of them were from [COUNTRY NAME OMITTED] and so. I am from [COUNTRY NAME OMITTED]. So that place where I lived in [CITY NAME OMITTED]. That we have a place. Where you make the prayers. Used to go there and I had been looking around. So many newly arrived, or have just come to Sweden. That do not follow, what is it called, do not respect others. And I thought that I am needed here, someone must, someone must inform them that Muslims must inform other people. Therefore I thought that I must do something. Informant 07 (55-71)

Although noted by many of the informants, only a smaller number talked of performing extra prayers. When done, though, it was seen as very positive and a high form of devotion and not only being done to the least possible extent. Here on the topic of performing extra prayers.

> Always perform these. Because if you do not let go of the voluntary then you will never let go of the mandatory. Never let go of them. But only, if you have placed your limit. Your limits in these five. If you just take one step back you have lost something mandatory. But if you place your minimum limit at ten, fifteen, twenty. Then you will never lose these five. Informant 09 (831-840)

Many of the informants also wished for being more devout, but from time to time had a hard time being that in their everyday life.

> For example. The Quran is something I would like, well to be able to study more. And, well, implement more as well. In its entirety. You have faults in different ways. And that is actually in our nature. Yeah, if there is something that would make my life more meaningful and give it more sweetness. Then it is if I could live from the Quran in a better way. And yes, more have closer contact with God and such. Well. Ah. Like that. Perhaps study Islam more, that is much more in depth and such. Informant 13 (417-433)

When asked about what is meaningful in life, several of the informants directly described their devotion in relation to God as the most prominent example.

> Actually, the most thing that gives meaning to my life is to be a slave to God. Actually. The service. What gives meaning. Because if you remove this part. Then I will be like something without any meaning. I mean, it is just, you will be like some reactions and will end in nothing. So, it is like, the meaning of my life, always I think in this way. It's like, we are in this room. If we don't know exactly why we are here. Then there is no meaning. Maybe we will just go and dance and make something. Maybe we will be happy you know. Not matter. But there is no meaning. But if we know exactly why we are here. Then there is meaning for our presence. Not just to pass the time and to have fun like this. Yeah, this is the meaning of my life. And this is the most meaningful thing for me. Informant 14 (317-340)

4.2.8.9. Test of faith

Almost all of the informants had experienced a test of faith. The reasoning among them varied. Sometimes the test was supposed to be induced by God while others instead brought up the secular society in Sweden as a source for this. This example focuses on a theological test of faith.

> It has a lot to do with how much grace God wants to give you. How hard He wants you to fight, I think personally. That, in the Quran, it says that the more God loves you, the harder He will make your life. I am confident about this actually. Informant 04 (559-563)

Here one informant speaks of how hardship and destiny also are connected. This was not brought up all too often, but there were a few instances. This is linked to the perception of God as all right as well.

As I said to you, that I have in my life, without specific details, very, every human passes through hard times. In their life, it cannot be all, and well, even Kamprad has his days. But, eh, when I feel very down in a situation I now have suddenly, then I go and turn to God. And in that, I find comfort in that my prayers I have since I was young I have felt that the situation is addressed. I have not found once my questioning of God, but why God, do you not like that stuff and such? That you cannot do as a Muslim. Why question. Because destiny and such is connected with what happens. In our life and such. Informant 05 (255-271)

The idea that the Swedish society provided temptations that were Un-Islamic was often considered problematic by the informants. Here one speak of this struggle.

And that is why you must always ransack yourself. We have. How was I today? How have I been. Especially this materialistic, here in Sweden or as we live in Europe. You see so many temptations everywhere. And it becomes, it is all the time this struggle. Between this, between that. Particularly during the summer, there are plenty; there are women, uncovered. And so there is that. So you. There is this constant struggle, with your soul. You have to control the self. There is that who always drives towards desires and such. And you have to control it. It is not very easy. Informant 08 (777-794)

The temptations were almost always related by the informants to the struggle of the soul, considering it in relation to the perceived afterlife.

I do actually think of death. Because I, actually you should think. There is a famous Hadith that says, often think on the destroyer of happiness. That is death. Because death does not make a difference for you, whether you are man or women. Whether it is a certain age or work category. You can die any day. Twenty years, twenty-five years. And then you will be asked for the life you have lived. What have you made with these twenty-five years? Has it been good deeds, has it been bad deeds? And so on. How was it, have you been subject to different temptations and such? Or have you tried to keep this struggle with your soul? With yourself and so on. Informant 08 (988-1007)

The performance of the religious acts in themselves was presented as providing a ground for a test of faith for the informants. Here is one account of the struggle of praying early in the morning.

Now it is the time, and you have to do it and so on. However, I think that is kind of only part of it. Except that, it is one of the Devil's tricks. To try to deceive you in this way. To make you occupied all the time. All the time try to make it hard. So it rather is one's ego, it works like that. The soul, it is a struggle. That you have to care for. Informant 09 (898-907)

As noted earlier the Swedish society was one of the most prominent sources cited by the informants when thinking of a test of faith. This was often contrasted with Muslim countries being seen as more favorable.

I think it is much harder in Sweden to be Muslim, a good Muslim, compared to someone living in a Muslim country. Because there all comes automatically. They learn, well most of them; most learn in school. So it is not as demanding. Informant 12 (605-610)

And continues:

Well, in Sweden it is rather hard to be a good Muslim if you say so. Because it is not, well, it is not, things aren't made easy for you so to speak. But God is forbearing, he understands that it is harder for us that is. Such things. And then the scarf as well. That as well. Well, it was rather hard to put it on at first. Informant 12 (632-642)

4.2.8.10. Hope

Although not one of the most recurring themes discussed by the informants a few accounts regarding hope were given. Here is one who speaks on the thought of the Judgment Day.

> Yeah, but that is the thing. That it is generous. That God is generous. It is not like there is a limited number of spots in the Paradise. Well, I hope I will enter there. There is space for all. No shortage of living spaces. Informant 09 (1278-1286)

Also relating to security, some instances of hope was provided. Here when one informant speaks on faith.

> That it is that powerful, well it can withstand almost everything. I really think that you have. Well, if you have God by your side, then it doesn't matter what you go through here. It is meaningless in comparison. That it is worth withstanding these things. So that, I feel that it is not nice. But well you have a spark of hope all the time. And that is what make things worth it all the time. Because you know, it won't just ebb out. Informant 13 (287-299)

4.2.9. Sources of communication and inspiration

The sources of communication and inspiration did vary between the informants. Most of them had more than one of the presented.

4.2.9.1. Media

Media was one source cited, although it was only in a very few instances. Here one informant speaks of finding faith.

> Yes. I have been active in the Palestinian question, interested in it, not active, interested in the Palestinian question since long, long ago. And it started when I followed the news all the time, especially Al Jazeera. And they, Al Jazeera, had two Sheikhs that they interviewed all the time. One was [NAME OMITTED], and the other was [NAME OMITTED]. I liked what they told about, so I started watching videos more and such. Yes, in the end, I was kind of compelled and started to practice. Because before, my parents were very secular. And not religious at all. So I am not raised a lot in that, this religion. Informant 04 (107-121)

4.2.9.2. Social media

Social media was used by several of the informants as a source for communication and inspiration. The first example named was most often a smartphone.

> I do listen a lot. To lectures and stuff on the Internet. Informant 02 (390-391)

Except for smartphone apps, YouTube was brought up on several occasions as well.

> Yes, but there is actually a lot on YouTube. Lectures and I have an app. Informant 03 (635-637)

This also relates to YouTube, but some instances were given where Podcasts were used.

> [NAME OF LECTURER OMITTED FOR PRIVACY REASONS]
> He I listen to more because he makes you be, he makes you listen, or he makes me listen. A bit more than one who maybe talks about important matters but just, just kind of reads it. All the time. Rather he makes you think about it. At the same time, he has humor as well. Laughs a bit, even though you know it is serious matters he can do that, he can talk about it with, well, ease. I think that is rather important. Informant 03 (664-673)

One point noted was that many of those the informants listened to were not Imams or religious scholars from within Islam, but instead perceived as ordinary Muslims who felt they had something to say regarding their faith.

I am not afraid to die that I think of what happens after. Because well, I use to watch YouTube and all that. Well, reminders. On, not an Imam, but scholars who speak. Informant 12 (538-542)

4.2.9.3. Lifestyle

In some instances, the informants described how the surrounding lifestyle of other Muslims was used as a source for inspiration. Here the social aspect should be highlighted and related to the earlier topic.

> In the end, saying for me as a Muslim. I must have a place where I can feel motivated in a group. Then they make you more motivated than if you are alone. Example, if I miss the prayer a few days perhaps, and there is no congregation who reminds me about it? People do not ask, where is [Informant 05]? Why does he not come to the Mosque? And so. Such things. I have friends that often go. Almost daily. It is a reminder; they become my alarm clock. Informant 05 (698-709)

When having converted, the lifestyle of friends and people close to the informant played a significant part in providing a space where the informant could feel safe and inspired. Here is one such account on the topic of conversion.

> But when I had the opportunity to spend time with people who practiced Islam. So that was something. The attraction, of course, increased then. And when I started to taste it by participating, then I followed along to the Mosque and tested this. And they fasted together with us. Then I noticed, what really happened, it was that I started to take this seriously. When I finally reached a point, this is what I believe in. So enough of the game here. That I will pray five times per day. I don't care anymore. And in the beginning, it was a real struggle to wake in the morning and be punctual with all of this. But I noticed it made me feel good. That it created a real conflict in the heart. That when I had these two different powers in the heart. The positive one which I longed for. And the negative that tried to make me return to the old lifestyle. So I just came to a point. If I have any peace at all, I must choose one of them. And the choice was really certain. Informant 09 (503-531)

The lifestyle of others was, as noted, perceived as a positive resource. This was brought forward both when living as a minority group in secular Sweden as well as when abroad in the Muslim countries.

> Because that is the thing with Islam that it is not just like to pray. And just to have a relationship with God. The thing is like, well, the lifestyle. It comes with the whole package so to speak. It is like friends saying to me: "If you are someone who is lightly affected. So you must not have, you have to avoid bad friends who will affect you negatively and such." Informant 10 (99-107)

For some, the lifestyle was there from birth since they were raised in very religious homes. Here is one such instance. There is some overlap here concerning family as described later.

> But I kind of was raised with Islam my whole life. I have always heard the Quran. I have learned to pray since when you should learn to pray, seven years. So it has always been my whole life that is. So I don't see Islam as something that has entered my life. Informant 12 (157-162)

On having the lifestyle of Islam.

> Well, you know, there are five pillars and such. They perhaps skip one or so. But it is a whole package, Islam. You can't skip one or two. You take the whole package or nothing. So that way I also started to think when I was eighteen, nineteen. Do I really want to follow this then

I must follow all of it? Or I can just leave it. But, so I started to follow this. Now I am here today. Informant 15 (143-153)

4.2.9.4. Quran

For all of the informants, the Quran was seen as the most prominent source of inspiration. There were differences in how much they had studied it as well as how it was used as part of their faith. Some informants spoke Arabic very well while others did not and could thus not read the Quran in its original language.

> Yes, then I started visiting the Mosque frequently and then a new curiousness was created with me that wow, why does it say so much about the Jews all the time in this book? About Christians, what does that has to do with this? I mean, well I am raised in an environment where people had spread rumors that Muhammad is no real prophet, which he stole the texts from the Bible. He had a friend there, a neighbor who had told him and then he wrote it. And then I have to choose here. And then I took a course with the Jehovah's Witnesses; I read the Bible with them for two years. Maybe even longer. And that was a very good investment because then I understood that Muhammed is a real prophet. There is proof in the Quran of it. Do you know how they are? Well, there is proof in the Quran. It says things that Muhammed possibly could not know. Yes, and then you know that who told this to Muhammed is not a human but something higher. He claimed himself that he had contact with the archangel Gabriel. Informant 01 (531-554)

When pointing towards the Quran, the notion was given that it was not something that could be debatable. It was seen as the perfect word of God not tampered with and therefore would override all other instances. Here the account also relates to doing good deeds.

> You cannot, in the Quran it says, you should not force people. Just leave them alone. And take care of the people. You will save one life; it means you will have saved the whole world. If you kill a person, just one person, you have killed hugely. It is a huge mistake to kill people. The Quran has forbidden it. The Quran has also encouraged people to help other people. Informant 07 (676-685)

Some of the informants saw it as part of their duty to become more engaged in Quran studies. A small number of the informants had set it as their goal to memorize all of the Quran as part of their devotion.

> Yes, I have attended different Quran-schools and such. In the weekends, Saturday and Sunday and so. Then now when I got a bit older I have attended, so I have continued with it. There is, there are certain Quran-teachers that can provide a certificate. And you have to study around, I think, five years with this Quran-teacher. To get it. And to even begin this, certificate, he first makes a test. To judge your level. And if your level is so and so, in the beginning, you have to repeat the rules, repeat the readings. Before you can start to take this certificate. So then I had to check when I started in 2010. He said to me, no you have to repeat some. You have to develop your ability some. You have to develop your ability before you can get into this. Oh well, I thought, OK. Then I frequented going during the holidays. Saturday, I remember, in [CITY NAME OMITTED]. And then I continued reading once a week for him. Just one page. Informant (251-275)

The Quran was presented by the informants as unaltered and perfect in itself. It was also used as evidence regarding itself, in line with the understanding of many Muslims that the Quran can only be interpreted with and by the Quran itself.

> And when I am talking about evidence. Also inside the religion. I mean the strongest text. Because for example, the Quran is preserved. From Mohammed to now. It is the same book. The same thing. But for example, the Hadith. Or Sunnah, the things that the Messenger said.

It was transferred by a number of people. So you cannot say it is 100% the messenger said that. So some evidence is strong and some evidence is weak. Informant 14 (257-268)

4.2.9.5. Hadiths

While not as prominent as the Quran, various Hadiths relating to the Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah was used. When speaking on this topic only in one instance was a reference to which Hadith was being cited by the informant. All other mentions were presented more sweepingly.

I know there is a Hadith that say you are born Muslim and then you are made Christian, Jew, or other through the parents. That I believe in. Informant 04 (756-759)

Here the word Hadith was not used but merely implied for a knowledgeable audience since the life and tales of the Prophet Muhammad (his Sunnah) is presented in various Hadiths.

Eh, as said, I believe in like the prophet said that I believe that you are born Muslim and then become Christian or other through the parents. But I personally think it is something bad because yes, our Islam, I think from my perspective, has, has allowed that those who do not want to be Muslims not to be Muslims. I believe that you become Muslim, not that you are it all the time. Informant 04 (768-778)

As noted earlier, the Sunni and Shia branch do not all share the same Hadiths. Here is one account from the difference of Shia Hadiths from the Sunni perspective.

Even if the main parts are the same. The five pillars, you have the same Quran. On the other hand, the Hadith collection, for example. They do not recognize some collections for example. If you know Bukhari and Muslim? These large collections. That are very authentic. All come almost directly after the Quran. Even that authentic. I do not think they recognize these as that authentic. Then they also have some; they have other opinions regarding some companions and such. Companions of the Prophet. One of his wife. And it was a bit; it has become a religious separation actually. And even how you, the way you pray. And so on. Informant 08 (168-186)

Another account that referenced the life of the Prophet Muhammad implied the use of the Hadiths. Here the informant speaks on what is meaningful in life.

Many things are meaningful. What is most meaningful is, to me, is what I understand that Islam explains as the very meaning of existence. One of those is to worship God. By following the prophet Muhammad by example. So there is something very meaningful. That I put in front of everything else. And that also is one of the things God says in the Quran. That, that he created us to worship him. That is without a doubt one of most prominent meanings. But it is also said in the Quran that, that we are created to be deputies here on earth. Informant 09 (370-382)

Even on controversial topics, Hadiths were to be used as a source of inspiration. Here is an account given on the question if everyone can become Muslim.

Now they ask regarding IS as well. So we explain that it probably is people that are not well in their head. But I also say, not to defend them in any way: What if we had been in their circumstances? We all sit here and see each other as relatively rational. And if each of us had lost a parent. Or child. Or sibling. Or husband. Or wife. In front of our eyes. If we had lived in a country, that was under constant occupation for ten years. How extreme would we have become? That we do not know! We don't know. As long the person is alive I think one must consider all people as potential Muslims. Many Muslims, unfortunately, fall into some kind of mentality, that it is us against them. But, because there is an interesting Hadith that says

that to really believe you should wish your brother what you wish yourself. Informant 09 (1222-1247)

Only a few of the informants spoke of themselves reading some or many of the Hadiths. It was most often presented more sweepingly. Here though is one account of reading the Hadiths.

> Yeah, yeah, yeah. I have read both in Bukhari and Muslim. And there are a lot of other books that are validated phrases of Mohammed. But these are only the strongly correct ones. Bukhari collected about 200,000, and he just mentioned 4000 or 2000. That was that he was sure 100% that they are correct. Yeah, he wouldn't, anything he doubted by even 1% that is a lie. Or there is any misjudging or the narrator of it. He just excluded it. So from 200,000 he just kept 4000. I think it has just the very verified ones. Informant 16 (217-231)

The verification from within the Muslim community was seen as critical. The idea that the authentic word from the prophet Muhammad's times is preserved is a strong one.

> I think it is very important for the phrases, yeah. I think the validation was very important. And the. It has, I don't know how it is. I don't know the criteria that Bukhari selected these phrases exactly. Because I am not a Hadith scientist. Yeah, it has its own science. But this book has been reviewed I think, for over 1000 years. Every scientist came and tried to verify this book. And I think it is a verified book now. So I don't think there is any doubt about it. It has been checked millions of times. If one makes a mistake, he first tries to go to Bukhari and check it. So I think it has been checked many times. So I think it is correct. Yeah. Informant 16 (237-255)

4.2.9.6. Verbal

On some occasions, the informants spoke of verbal communication. This could often occur in or near a Mosque or a place for prayers.

> On, I always thought there was a God, but I was not careful in following, I didn't follow anything. It was, yes, it is sufficient that you believe there is a God. But, yes but then, it became more that faith; it is little more than just believing. Rather started practicing. And the prayer [Ṣalāt] was the first to come. Then followed the fasting, then I started to frequent a lot of lectures. And started to let everything go, yes all I used to do. But the prayer came first. Informant 04 (173-184)

One informant gave an account of listening to a Sheik.

> Yes, like a Sheikh. Like then talk about. And then they usually like this, like focus a lot on. Well, the life after this. Because that is often what make people become fearful and come back to the religion. But it is a fact that we all will die. It says that in the Quran. All will die. Like that is something all will do. But you should try your best to prepare yourself, like. So yes, but is something I think of. Informant 12 (546-559)

4.2.9.7. Social communication

Social communication was not brought up by the informants. This could be due to some overlap with other categories such as 4.2.9.2 Social media, 4.2.9.6. Verbal, 4.2.9.8., 4.2.9.9 Friends, 4.2.9.10. Religious community traditional, and 4.2.9.11. Religious community modern.

4.2.9.8. Family

For many, the family was seen as having a great impact on their religious understanding. In some instances, this came from their family being religious. while

others could still respect their family, although they were not religious in the sense that the informant would have wished for.

> I have always been a believer. But I do not come from an overly religious family. Rather we are a typical [COUNTRY NAME OMITTED] family. We have me and Mom who practiced when I was young. It was only she. Then in more recent years, when I grew up, then she also started. And then two of my sisters. But it was not that now everyone had to pray and now all must fast and such. It was not like that. Informant 02 (167-174)

Even when not living with their parents, the parents were presented as having a significant impact on how religion was to be perceived. In this statement, the informant both presents the prayer as being chosen while at the same time being prescribed by the parent.

> I came to Sweden and the only thing I knew about my religion, it is, what should I say, Dads way of praying. And he was very, what should I say, the only thing he asked for us was not to stop praying. It is the only thing. Otherwise, there was never forcing in, in, like what should I say, too fast in Ramadan or anything like it. There was nothing like that from his side, so no forcing or such. Never was like that. I was the youngest in the family. And I was spoiled of course. So the chance was there. But often, it is the only thing that he asked of us, if you should say so, do the prayers. None chose it, so we could take care of our religion when we came to Sweden later. For many youths, I have worked a lot with youths, and it is often quite often, what should I say, are being forced to pray. It is very hard to take it to oneself, and it is often both girls and boys, but often girls. And I have, what should I say, long experience in that. That the more you force on them, to believe, the more they will back far from it.. Informant 05 (94-119)

For some, the parent's perception relating to religion provide a foundation for the belief later on. In this example one informant highlight this occurrence when speaking on the topic of faith as always present.

> Not, it has not. Rather it has evolved. Eh, I was raised in a religious family. My Dad and Mom are very religious. And I think their beliefs have evolved during their time as residents in Sweden. They have become more religious or what to say. Because they were not as religious as they are now. So I have evolved in the same way. That when I was in secondary school and high school I was not as firm a believer as I am now. Informant 06 (95-106)

Sometimes the views from the parents differed from the informant in the matter of religion and views on it. Here is one account where the informant still had to relate to the parents' views even though it was disliked.

> My parents are more like, it just is like that. There is nothing to discuss, It just is like that. Because I you have more thoughts then it is, no but please stop you are in the wrong area and such. The same when I was in Quran-school. When I questioned the Imam, it was like. Yes, but it is like this and that, so he called home to my parents and said yes but [Informant 06] asked too much. And that I had deviated from the religion because I ask. But it just is because I want to understand. Informant 06 (1095-1105)

4.2.9.9. Friends
For many of the informants, there were clear presentations of how important friends were both as a source of inspiration as well as for contact and communication.

> No, then it would be very hard. Alone I would not manage. Because then I could not answer my questions. So it is very nice to have several friends who are believers. In the same way, as I am. And ask questions and such. But only to be able to ask questions and maybe ask stupid questions so you can get answers and so. Informant 02 (404-412)

Some of the informants also spoke of their relation concerning friends who do not possess the same Muslim faith but instead belong to other religions. Here is one such account.

> I have not been tempted by other beliefs; rather I have gained strength in mine. Perhaps it is mean to say but I only feel more right when I talk to others regarding their faith. That mine is more right that is. Then it is I who gain strength. Informant 02 (554-558)

Just as in the case of lifestyle as a source of inspiration, their friends have had an impact for several of the informants after converting.

> And I remember when I started praying. And I spent time with a person, he was very careful with it. In a time when I was not. He helped a lot. And we were at the university and everything. He said, that if we don't do this, every day, when will we do it? It is that the only difference between us and everybody else here is that we believe in something and they do not believe in anything? And that is not what Islam is about. And the fact that I remember his words today means that it had a rather large impact. Informant 09 (626-638)

4.2.9.10. Religious community traditional

Religious communities were present for all informants in one way or another. For most there was a local Mosque or interest group for Muslims that they frequented. They provided several sources and resources for the informants and what they sought in their life.

> Then there are lectures here in [city name omitted] the Mosque that I used to frequent. Then I have friends that share the same faith that I do. Then you talk. It happens that you speak a lot there. Ask questions and reveal answers and so. Informant 02 (395-399)

Here the informant speaks on the topic of being raised in a religious home.

> Yes, you can say that. My mother is very practicing. So, I always have attended Quran-schools and such. When I was young. And I had to learn very early on with the Quran and how to pronounce it. Because it is rather, even if you speak Arabic, it is rather hard to pronounce it correctly. Then with the verses. The melody, the rules. There are these rules for the melody. You have to read correctly. You have to bind the words. And so on. And there are certain vowels. So it is the teaching of the Quran, you have to learn basic rules and so. Informant 08 (229-246)

Even though for several of the informants there was a relation to for example Mosques many still longed for more of them. Here one informant spoke on living in a Muslim country instead of living in secular Sweden.

> Yeah, generally it would be easier. Because at first, you have more Mosques. You have like, the whole society is saturated by Islam. And you see. It would actually be easier. But on the contrary, unfortunately, today the political picture has become something else. All is not following the Quran, meticulous so to speak. Even though you say you do. It is so much with politics that has gotten into this and you try to use it as a power tool and so on. And so on. And this has resulted in that there is so much corruption and such. In the countries there. Informant 08 (803-819)

When traveling abroad, the notion was presented as more desirable. Here one informant spoke of living in a Muslim country.

> For example, I was in Dubai this summer. And when you frequented a mall or something you still hear the Adhan. Then everybody who is there goes to pray. Because there are Mosques and you can make Wudû and all that. So you can be outside all day, and still you'll

find places to pray in. Or if you just bring out the prayer rug from nowhere. People won't think about what you are doing. So, of course, it is easier there. Informant 12 (317-327)

Here is an account provided by an informant on the topic of living in a Muslim society.

For example, here, there are no Quran-schools and such. And if there is they are not serious. So I have to read all at home that is. But if I had lived in a Muslim country then you would be able to learn much more of the Quran. Because I am like almost twenty-one. Then you usually are done with the Quran perhaps. That is, to memorize it. And such things. Informant 12 (1092-1100)

4.2.9.11. Religious community modern

No instance of this was present in the material of this study.

4.2.9.12. Books

Only a very few of the informants spoke of reading religious books.

Because I started to frequent seminars. I started to get interested more. Read books. Started to Google. There are vast resources on the Internet. Informant 15 (164-168)

4.2.10. Worldview system typology

4.2.10.1. Worldview 1

In a definite majority of the accounts examined, the worldview typology presented in this material was the worldview 1 that was presented. This compromise of including transcendental dimension and literal interpretation of the worldview. Here one informant speaks of talking to a family member.

No, I have a brother that I often get into discussions with. We fight a bit. He, he, he is also a Muslim and believer but in his own way. And it is different, as I see it from my view. And it creates discussions and such. Informant 02 (319-324)

In this example, the informant speaks on the topic of atheism.

I have a hard time with that because I cannot think that there is no God, that there is no creator. Then it feels insane; then it feels utterly pointless. Where do we come from, why are we here, why does it look this way, why is the world like this, why is not. No, so many things like this. Why, then, the earth is just a lump in space like any other. Why is there life here? And such matters. Because I, because that I find all that is in this world is perfect in its imperfection. The human is created in such a way that they could live here and animals and plants and everything, such things. So no, for me it seems unreasonable that there is no-one who would have created it. Because I do not think we come from nowhere. That all is just a coincidence. I have a very hard time believing that. Informant 02 (631-649)

Some of the statements presented were more concise.

My belief is more literal. Informant 02 (330)

Here one informant speaks on what to make of the Quran.

If you say so. I, I think that you should believe in all that is in the Quran. Without, without questions, to question it. And he has some problems with that. Informant 02 (334-337)

In this account, one informant speaks regarding a family member who wants to use logic for matters of faith.

> Not a different tradition but he is more, but he like more to think and use science in it all with his logic. And that may not always work in questions of faith. Informant 02 (342-345)

> He is not so deep into this; he looks more in the Quran, and I look more in both the Quran and the Hadiths. I think they are important to. Informant 02 (352-354)

> He's speech and actions and such. Because I, because I am a Sunni Muslim. And in Sunni Islam it is very, then the Hadiths have a very important place. You interpret the Quran from the Hadiths. So, you cannot separate, separate them. And he is more that, he has a hard time believing in the Hadiths and how they got their existence and such. So, it is more like that. Informant 02 (360-368)

In this account, the informant provides the statement that the tradition of Islam does provide enough accounts regarding the validity, even though not being able to judge it all by the self.

> I am not so well acquainted with that. I have not studied it so, but there is those that feel right in some way. I do not know how to explain matters as well; then you have to be very educated to sort them. And I am absolutely not on that level. Informant 02 (378-383)

This is an account provided by one of the informants when speaking on the topic of what is meaningful in life.

> The meaning of my life? Yeah, what is the meaning of life? The meaning of life, to be a good person. Especially helping the people. To and prepare, the second life. Today we have here, short period. Say that we will live one hundred years, two hundred years. Yesterday I read further, what is it called, the course we had. Change in the elders, how it works. The changing life of humans. From young to one hundred years. The cells die themselves, so you cannot control. It is something automatic. But it is the body that dies. But what the soul, the soul lives still. Sometimes, I don't know actually. Somewhat is it called? The scientists had researched, that I had read on different, that the soul before the atheists used to believe that the soul also will die but now they have performed research that the soul will live. I have read on different research, on the Internet. Regarding the soul, we knew as Muslims, for 1435 years, we knew that the soul would live. What is it called, in other religions, they also think that the soul will return? Like the Native Americans, like. Therefore, they worship a lot of saints and such. Or yes. We believe this body will die. The soul will live. Therefore, I must prepare myself now. To be an upright person, to follow, what is it called, this knowledge I have from Islam. And worship God and follow the prophets, yes, knowledge. Then I can live freely. My soul. Informant 07 (438-477)

In this statement, the informant provides the notion that the Islamic faith had higher knowledge that later may trickle down through science as well. Here on the topic of fasting and how it is perceived to be healthy.

> Also, we fast a lot. I fast 5:2. You know 5:2? Informant 07 (1029-1031)

> Two days I fast. And five days I eat. Also, the scientists have learned, it is better for the health. But before we also had in Islam we two days fast. It was the combination. But yes, from the natural sciences and also Islam. Informant 07 (1035-1041)

Here one informant speaks on the understanding that one as a Muslim must be certain regarding some matters.

> I believe that I, and actually all Muslims, because it is actually mandatory for Muslims to be confident regarding their faith. To not be able to think there is a chance that I may be wrong.

> Actually, to be certain regarding one's faith is actually one of the demands, to a Muslim. Informant 09 (129-134)

The importance of truth-claims was a recurring theme for many of the informants.

> To many, I am certain, the majority of those converting, men and women, do it on a rational ground. That they do it because I really feel this is the truth. Informant 09 (214-217)

Here one informant speaks on the topic if the world would be a better place if everybody did become Muslim.

> Ah, the society, it just gets better if everybody in the society is Muslims! And walk and behave well and such. You just get an even better society then. That is my belief. Informant 10 (156-160)

As stated earlier several of the informants did provide the notion that their Islamic faith was the most important part of their life. No leeway regarding their belief not being the right universally was provided.

> Especially. Especially my faith is almost all of my life, or it is rather actually my whole life. So, it is very hard to start from something that will not, well, include my faith. But actually, it can be much, much more that is. Informant 13 (476-481)

As noted earlier, the understanding of Islam as based upon solid evidence was prominent for many of the informants.

> Yeah, I'm Muslim. I believe in one creator. One God. And messengers. They have one message. And they are humans. And I believe in last day. Judgement Day. This is the core of the faith. Of my faith. And there are some things Muslims should do. Like, pray. To pray and to pay two point five percent of your money for somethings like poor people and these things. And to fast and these things. And the faith, I think for me. For Islam I mean, is based on evidence. Not just like blind faith or. Because of that, I believe like that, yeah. And I don't know what to say. Informant 14 (72-91)

4.2.10.2. Worldview 4

A few of the informants provided accounts that which comprise of statements that fit in the worldview category 4. This category combines the transcendental element with a symbolic interpretation of the aspects upon which the informant relies. Here the notion is given that God is loving and forgiving for all, but still perhaps like the Muslims more.

> I really try to follow what can be followed. Then there are numerous examples when God is merciful. God is good. Even people who are not believers, still God likes them a lot too. Then I think, but I who are a believer and really want to follow God. Then he should also somewhere like me. Informant 15 (1210-1218)

Some of the informants did not like how they perceived many other Muslims to be using the faith as a protagonist. Here instead the forgiving aspects are highlighted.

> You know there are many who uses Gods wrath, as it says in the Quran. And try to scare. You know, in the end, it gets like this, yeah but I will end up in Hell. But it is wrong! Because when I look more at Gods love and what God promise regarding how forgiving he is. I see him like. Well, to me it is rather impossible not to forgive. That picture I have of God. That it is impossible that he won't forgive me. Because that he also says in the Quran. His mercifulness and niceness are more than his anger, or what you say. Do you understand? Informant 15 (1261-1276)

Both of the previous statements also fit in with the category 4.2.7.7. Forgiveness, but are here used to highlight the understanding provided that not only the literal interpretation of the Islamic faith could provide forgiveness.

4.2.10.3. Worldview 2, 3, 5, and 6
None of the worldviews 3, 4, 5, or 6 were present in the material.

4.3. Results from Brief RCOPE questionnaire

Below are the results from the Brief RCOPE questionnaire presented by each informant. The results from this part of the study show that there is a clear separation in regard from positive coping and negative coping for all informants. Almost all informants (14 out of 16) scored in the top third possible section on positive coping. The remaining (2 out of 16) scored just adjacent to this top third section positioning themselves in the top part of the middle section. Almost all informants (15 out of 16) scored in the bottom third section possible regarding negative coping. The remaining (1 out of 16) scored adjacent to this in the bottom score of the middle section. Although this is a small sample of the population, the results here provide a clear picture of the relation of the informants positive and negative coping scores.

In this small sample population, almost all of the informants use positive religious coping as a strategy, while at the same time this does not contribute to a higher score of negative religious coping. In the overall coping category, the result is also clear in which almost all (15 out of 16) informants scored the top in most involvement from religion in their coping processes. The remaining (1 out of 16) scored the adjacent with the score to the top position. A short note should be made here concerning the qualitative part of the study where this informant also decided between the top position and this one but ultimately choosing the second position. This is evident in the recordings but not provided in the above transcriptions. Please once again note that this is a small sample and larger statistical connections can therefore not be made.

Table 9. Brief RCOPE Scoring

	Positive Coping	Negative Coping
Max	28,00	15,00
Min	20,00	7,00
Average	23,75	10,19
Range	8,00	8,00

The scale minimum is 7 and the scale maximum is 28.

Table 10. Religious coping on a general level

	General coping
Max	1,00
Min	2,00
Average	1,06
Range	1,00

The scale minimum is 4. and the scale maximum is 1.

Please note that the maximum value for the general coping scale is 1. where the informants state that religion is very involved in their life when coping with the stressful situation[14]. All but one of them scored maximum here showing that religion is immensely important in their life as coping.

As a reminder; positive religious coping often includes a perceived safe and secure relationship with the god or deity, while the negative religious coping often include the opposite; a constant struggle with the god or deity - as well as others (Pargament et al., 2013, p.564). In summary, there is a clear picture emerging from the informants in this study. All (or almost all) score high on the positive religious coping. All (or almost all) score low on the negative religious coping.

4.4. Results from Sense of Coherence (SoC) questionnaire

Below are the scores from the Sense of Coherence (SoC) questionnaire presented by each informant. The result from this part shows that half of the informants (8 out of 16) score on the lower part of the scale. Almost half (7 out of 16) score on the medium section of the scale. Only a minor part (1 out of 16) score on the high part of the scale. Although there is this variation, the scoring is still rather coherent in that the informants scoring on the lower section receive high scorer for that part as well as informants scoring in the high section receive low scores for that section. The overall picture emerging from the material is to be perceived as medium-low. This is due to variations in the material and the scoring is not always an absolute in this regard.

Although there are variations within the group the scores provided are more coherent than not in that regard were no informants received top or bottom score for the whole table.

Table 11. Sense of Coherence (SoC) scoring

	Sense of Coherence
Max	75,00
Min	44,00
Average	56,00
Range	31,00

The scale minimum is 13. and the scale maximum is 91.

Table 12. Sense of Coherence (SoC) score value sections

	SoC-29	SoC-13
Low	($\leq$ 122)	($\leq$ 55)
Medium	(123-162)	(56-73)
High	($\geq$ 163)	($\geq$ 74)
		(45% of Soc-29)

The reversed questions in the scale (SoC-13) are the following: 1, 2, 3 & 10.

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[14] See Appendix C for the scale.

4.5. Results from the CD-RISC 2 scale

Below are the results from the CD-RISC 2 resilience scale. As seen in the numbers half of the informants scored six or higher while the other half scored below that. When examining the results in relation to Vaishnavi et al., (2007) it is clear that this population scores rather low. Seen as a group, this means that there are moderate to low level of resilience for the population. A cut-off point might be placed at the value of six in relation to Vaishnavi et al., (2007) since this relate to a functioning population, although not necessarily to the highest possible extent.

Table 13. CD-RISC 2 scale results

	CD-RISC 2
Max	8,00
Min	3,00
Average	5,56
Range	5,00

The scale minimum is 2. and the scale maximum is 10.

When the CD-RISC 2 was validated, the following mean values were given as baseline in a study of US general population. Scores varied depending on diagnosis (Vaishnavi et al., 2007).

Table 14. CD-RISC 2 mean score reference

Population	Score
General population	6.91
Family Medicine outpatients	6.04
Psychiatric outpatients	6.12
Depressed patients	5.12
Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) patients	4.96
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) patients	4.7

(Vaishnavi et al., 2007)

When comparing the results of this study with the reference scoring of Vaishnavi et al. (2007) it is seen that half (8 out of 16) scored the same value of depressed patients, GAD patients, and PTSD patients. This is reasonable low. Also considering that 3 of the 16 scored well below these numbers as well should induce some worry. More on this topic will be discussed in the analysis below.

Chapter 5 Analysis

5.1. Analysis

In this section, the theoretical perspectives will be applied to the results of this study and the study's results will be examined in light of prior research. The analysis will not be made for the individual informants. Instead, themes and trends present among the population as a group will be presented. This is both in line with the ethical consideration presented above as well as provides a congruent picture of how the informants think regarding the subject studied. In layman terms, one can perhaps say that "this is how it can be to be Muslim in Sweden today". As noted in the method-part, this is not a sequential study, so no trends over times can be detected. Instead, an "as is" or rather "was then" perspective is applied[15].

5.1.1. Analysis of the interviews through the theoretical perspectives

When reflecting on the meaning-making theory presented earlier and applied to the qualitative part of this study several findings can be presented. This is not a complete list. Instead, it highlights some of the most prominent findings. Returning to the sub-questions from chapter 1, three of them are used here.

For exploring the psychosocial functions, the following sub-question was used:
1. *What perceived roles do the prayers have in the everyday life of the Muslim participants?*

For exploring the meaning-making functions, the following sub-questions were used:
5. *What perceived roles do the prayers have in the everyday life of the Muslim participants in relation to their meaning-making functions?*
 7. *What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the meaning-making functions in relation to global and specific meaning-making?*

Initially, it can be said that meaning-making occurred both within the prayer session (Ṣalāt) as well as the supplication prayer (Duʿāʾ), and from adjacent parts of the informant's life. This relates to Park's (2013) theory of meaning-making; both directly, exemplified in the prayer sessions, and indirectly, from the general outlook made by the informants regarding the presence of their faith. No clear line can be drawn here since for so many of the informants the Islamic identity and their understanding of themselves as Muslim reached into most or almost all parts of life. As seen above meaning-making processes were applied to a wide variety of

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[15] Even though it should not be presumed, the experiences and thoughts of the informants may change over time. This snapshot, cross-sectional approach only claims to be valid in the instance of time when the study was performed.

situations, essentially transcending situation limited in time or space such as the ritual prayer. Meaning was perceived to be present in all parts of life since all parts relate to their Muslim identity where the most common understating brought forward was that God is always present and therefore, also can directly interfere with the immanent life. As seen earlier, the Muslim identity and the perceived relation to God presented an overarching construct from which meaning was constantly derived. This is not an entity existing singularly but instead connects to the larger global movement of Islam (the Ummah). In this case, a combined picture emerged where both the individual actions were perceived to be hugely important, for example via prayers or doing good deeds, as well as the surrounding and relational aspect of the community. For many of the informants, the Muslim identity was brought forward as the most prominent marker of their identity. Note that some of them named this identity ahead of family, ethnic heritage or nationality. Religion as the primary source of meaning must therefore be seen as a core, for some of the informants, around which all other parts revolve. For some others, it was presented as hugely prominent, even though they, for example, did not put it before relation to their family.

When examining the ritual prayer session this was seen as hugely important both in everyday life but also relating to the perceived understand of eschatology. There were many instances present where the prayer could be seen as a bridge, combining the physical aspects of this world with the idea of an afterlife – the latter which corresponds to Park's level of *global meaning* (2013, p.357ff). Sources of meaning were thus presented first through a transcendental character in relation to God, but also served as a more immanent entity providing certain vital aspects for the informant's life here on earth. In the latter case, there were two trends clearly visible: (1.) when the prayer was performed in good fashion with no time constraint, and (2.) when there was not enough time for the prayer. In the first instance, the prayer served as a resource for calmness and peace in an otherwise hectic everyday life often filled with burden and time constraints. Taking time each day to interact with God was presented in terms of immense tranquility and peace. When there was a shortage of time and thus the prayer was performed very fast, or in other instances later or even not at all, this provided significant discomfort for the informants. Constant stress and fear arose from not feeling like they could perform their duties as prescribed by God, and this haunted them. Looking at both these experiences, it can be said that the prayer sessions provided a source of meaning, but that this could be related to both positive and negative outcomes for the informants. Overall, this was very present in their everyday life, in line with Park's theory of *global* and *situational* meaning (Park, 2013).

Relating to the negative aspects of fear and anxiety from not performing their presumed religious duties, almost all of the informants presented a fear of death almost on a daily basis. This should be seen as a constant source of anxiety and stress present in the informants' lives. The fear was not of being a good enough Muslim in the eyes of God and therefore not qualifying for entering Heaven after death, but instead going to Hell. For almost all of the informants, this question was problematic in that it served dual purposes. This fear of death was a source both related to doing good deeds and staying away from doing bad deeds, and, as more often presented related to what was perceived to be Un-Islamic. When asked if they thought they would enter Heaven or Hell upon death, almost none would dare

answer it but rather referred to the understanding that this is something only God knows, and one should perhaps not jinx it. In relation to the theory by Park (2013, p.357ff), the informants ascribed meaning from these negative aspects, still navigating the world. Having this stable understanding of faith, through strong claims that cannot be negotiated, it did not seem like the informants re-evaluated their faith from the situational level; instead it was seen as part of the ontological aspect of the world, thus in line with global meaning by Park (2013) affecting the situational outlook by the informants. Only a very low number seemed sure they would enter Heaven while none thought they would enter Hell. The latter was related to answers regarding the question of hope. When analyzing the answers, a dual theme did emerge. Almost all had the constant fear of death and then even entering Hell, but none of them actually thought they actually would. Here it is important to note that all of the informants provided notions of hope in this regard. Perhaps it would be easy to fall from faith if this hope was not present. In continuing their Muslim identity, whatever may be ascribed to it, for most of the informants, it seemed that fear and hope went hand in hand. It appeared that fear and anxiety were present for many of the informants that would be described both as more moderate in their relation to how often and to what extent they performed different religious actions, as well as for the more devout members. Here it seems that the fear of not being good enough in the eyes of God was a recurring theme joined with hope. Most thought that if they started to pray more often, God would forgive them and as long as they turned back *reasonably* soon, they would perhaps not have to worry to a larger extent. Here some flexibility is seen, opening for a more variable view of faith then previously shown. Park (2013) views this as part of the variations within religion, and here the stability of the faith seems to be present – even when the informants are not satisfied with their performance. This should be seen also in relation to the idea that many of them expressed, wishing that they would pray more often, but still could not force themselves to do so, even though they — sometimes as often as every day — worried about ending up in Hell. Why this occurs was not known thoroughly known, but reasons given related to not finding the time, *just not doing it* but also that they felt ashamed in front of God since they had not been praying as they should and therefore felt they were in a bad streak.

In relation to identity concerns, most rejected the Sunni and Shia divide, stating that it was more about politics or culture rather than serious division. Relating this to the different choices of religion, something Park (2013, p.360ff) suggests is part of the attractiveness of religion, the variations presented seemed stable enough to not focus on the division, instead on the closeness of faith in relation to non-Muslims. Some of them though felt that there were divisions, and, in most instances, these seemed to be held by those less informed in what the other branch thought or stood for. Wishing for a global Muslim community in the form of Ummah was very prominent. This was also related to the understanding that none or almost none of the countries in the world lived through Muslim faith on a larger scale. Residing in Muslim countries would provide, most expressed, a more comfortable environment for following the performances of the Muslim identity and the ascribed rituals. This was more or less uniformly presented as something to be longed for and wished. Also presented was the notion that it would be better if all individuals in Sweden, and perhaps even the world, would convert to Islam. For some, this topic was problematic in that it seemed that they feared Islamophobia if Islam was openly presented. Even though almost all mentioned this, they were also clear in that this

world conversion to Islam would not occur. The reasoning for this varied but both individual factors (such as people having hard hearts) or divine factors (in that God would choose only some) were presented. In either case, this also provided a source of meaning in that being part of a select group presented them with certain possibilities (such as eventually entering Paradise or getting certain favors in life) while at the same time creating duties (such as the performance of religious rituals). The latter part also could be counted as meaning-making in that doing good deeds, in which actively trying to spread what is perceived as the good word of Islam to the world, served a particular purpose. Meaning was that made both from within the group and in relation to the outside world, viewing God as the guarantor of good (Park, 2013, p.361f). There were several levels at play here combining both individual and group perspectives with both transcendental aspects in relation to God, as well as the surrounding society in a more immanent fashion. Returning for a moment to the question of the Sunni and Shia divide, even though this often was presented as mainly a political division, the relation from within one's own branch was not generally problematized. Even though this was seen to be problematic, only in two cases was one's own position not taken for granted as being correct. Most expressed that there should be one tradition only, and of course, it should be the one the informant presented that should provide the base for the tradition.

In relation to the question of fear and hope above, meaning-making seemed to be very present in how the understanding of good and bad deeds was performed. Wishing to better themselves, most informants still struggled with internal matters on how and what to do. This related both to the good deeds performed in questioning if they are good enough and sufficient in amount. On the other hand, the bad deeds performed also provided a source of anxiety and sometimes stress. This anxiety was related to performing or not performing religious rituals such as the prayers to the extent possible, as well as talking badly about someone else. In relation to Park's theory of re-evaluating meaning, apparently these actions or presumed neglect of actions were sufficient to change global meaning (Park, 2013, p.360), instead corresponding to the idea of a stable religious presence (Park, 2013, 362f). Another source troublesome for many of the informants was the topic of temptations in everyday life. Here living in Sweden, as presented as a representative of "The West", many thought that there were temptations that were hard to ignore. Brought up several times was the question of public nudity (not as in full nudity, but more lightly-dressed women) as well as TV-shows and movies that were not considered to be of good Muslim character. The desires presented here provided a source of anxiety but at the same time could also provide a source of positive meaning for the informants. When struggling with these questions, if falling into the temptation, one would feel bad or even ashamed. Contrary to this, living in this environment could provide greater satisfaction when refraining from engagement. This was ascribed both to the self, yet also, and perhaps more prominently, to God. For example, several informants stated that God knows that it is harder for them to live in an Un-Islamic society, and is therefore more forgiving when they do bad deeds or not perform their religious duties to the most rigorous extent. There was a variation presented in that the intention of the informants was brought forward as sometimes more important than the actual doing of the deeds. Many instances were given of this. One example of this was the case of the informant wearing Non-Islamic clothes in a way she felt was not in line with the teachings of Islam, but due to the intention presented, it would still be okay.

Being in the secular and 'Western' Swedish context as a Muslim, was presented in different ways. Two very different views were presented. Some described the Muslim community, focusing mainly on Sweden and in their experience, as divided and full of prejudice and racism. The other view instead focused heavily on the positive aspects of having a local Muslim community that could provide a supportive setting for them. In this instance, the local Muslim community was highly praised for providing them, and also the society, with functions not otherwise available to them. For the ones negative to these, they sometimes felt that hardliners or "bad people" were present in the Mosques or other parts of the Muslim community, not providing space for variations in thought or practice. Also, several instances of racism were presented. All of the informants that were not of Arab origin, felt that what they described as "the Arabs" though better of themselves in relation to Muslim people from for example Africa. The views presented were thus of a very negative kind. The ones not presenting this view instead provided the notion that all were always welcome in the Muslim community, and that all are equal there. This can also be seen in relation to the problematic view many had to the surrounding society, as also described earlier, where many felt that there were instances of both Islamophobia and racism directed towards them from the Swedish society as a whole. This created a setting where there were double fronts on which one must battle, both within and on the outside of the Muslim community. Park (2013, p.365ff) suggests religiousness to be very strong, in a sense that it is not easily changed. Adding this to the theoretical part on global and situational meaning, for these informants, it seemed very hard for them to change their view on the global level – making stability dominant to reflexivity. As in other instances, a dual image emerged here, where the refuge provided within the Muslim community was seen as necessary, but not without a cost. At the same time, as so many provided mainly a negative picture of the surrounding Swedish society, some of the informants were very clear in that they also rejoiced in relation to some parts of this society, mainly focusing on freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of practice (of religion). Another area also seen as favorable was the possibility of education, either for themselves or their children. Not having focused on socioeconomic factors in this study, at least to some extent the area was touched upon by the informants, where they saw education as needed for success.

When ascribing meaning, all informants, as noted, related it to the religious character of themselves and their involvement in the Islamic faith. This provided a rather homogenous picture of which worldview typology (DeMarinis, 2008) was very prominent in that almost all fell into the same category. All informants included transcendent elements as well as, even though it could vary to some degree, also having a literal interpretation of their faith as presented. As seen in the excerpts from the interviews, some things cannot be questioned. This included the topic of faith as well as the sources for it. None of the informants provided a notion, for example, that the Quran even possibly could be something else than the eternal word of God. Although as seen in the material there were variations in how the informants perceived faith to be expressed, the central understanding was still a more or less literal one. Faith seemed to be a source of meaning for many, which for the majority provided a fixed setting of rules and teachings (orthopraxy and orthodoxy) to which one had to relate. This is in line with Park's theory of "fixing" and ascribing to a "stable" understanding of religion, where one can rely on a God or deity to uphold the world (2013, p.360ff). Stemming from this fixed

understanding of orthopraxy and orthodoxy, the meanings and relations to other matters of this world also were joined. One prominent example here was the scientific view as related to the Islamic teachings. This could be seen in two different ways. First, a scientific approach was for many of the informants critical in that the Islamic faith and the ascribed sources were to be perceived as unaltered. For example, several informants related that the Quran is still the same, not changed in any way since the prophet Muhammad received it from God. This also related to the Hadiths and the work surrounding them, making the claim that Islam is undoubtedly based on evidence. For some informants, though, not to say that this view was not shared by them, but rather that it did not provide the full explanation. Instead here the view was presented that there is something in matters of faith where one simply has to believe and not rely on scientific inquiries. The other setting in which several informants related their Islamic faith to science was when they understood the former to be a result of the latter. In these instances, the science only just now has caught up with the teachings already given in the Islamic faith and sources (for example the Quran) for a very long time. Examples here included the understanding that some dietary variations are good for the humans (for example fasting) and that things prescribed as bad by Islam now also are seen as bad by the scientific community (such as alcohol, tobacco, and others). The view presented of science was thus twofold in that it both stems from within Islam and now, in 'modern' science, is being discovered what was already known to Muslims long ago; as well as being a source for validating the perception of the Islamic faith in literary studies or other forms of validity research from within the Muslim community.

5.1.2. Relating the interview results to prior research

One of the most prominent contributions to the topic of Muslim prayer in Sweden was made by Lindgren (2001, 2005). One of the topics presented in his study relates to the informants' understanding of the discrepancy between the ideal understanding of prayer frequency and their actual experience (Lindgren, 2005). When the actual did not meet the ideal, the participants displayed negative feelings and anxiety. The same phenomenon was very much present in this study. The absence of prayer seemed to have a direct impact on the negative spectrum of emotions here. This phenomenon is thus confirmed here as well. The importance of prayer and of prayer frequency were also brought forward by the informants in this study. As mentioned by Lindgren (2005, p.73f) some of the informants in his study saw the abolishment of the prayer acts as deviating from the faith. Although not as apparent in this study, this understanding was also present. When looking at the prayer frequency, it is hard to assess the differences between the studies since the qualitative data may differ or not be presented in full.

A second finding in the Lindgren study (2005, p. 76) was the inclusion of aspects of daily life in faith and how this contrasted to the faith of the people in "the West" in general is understood. The same can be seen in this study since most of the informants also seemed to relate a vast number of activities in their everyday life to their Muslim faith, while pointing out that many of the "native" Swedes did not focus on a religious aspect in their everyday life.

A third finding concerned the Du'ā' and that some felt guilty by only remembering God when they felt down (Lindgren, 2005, p.83). The same was displayed in this study but from both sides. Some felt this way while others looked down upon the ones who only expressed their faith when in need. This provided a dual picture that while the phenomenon was present, the views of it as negative were presented from more than one side. Relating to Dhikr, the findings in this study are well in line with Lindgren (2005, p.87f) in that it is a very present phenomenon but varied in scope and extension depending on the individual.

Relating the findings in this study regarding psychological functions to the one of Lindgren (2011) several points can be mentioned. The function of identity seem well in line, in that it provides both functions of individualization as well as social aspects. The two seem intertwined, and in both studies, the informants described the importance of both functions and that they are linked. Although this study does not focus on the narrative part as Lindgren's does (2005, 2011) some similarities can be found. In this study, several informants provided accounts of being in the presence of God as well as of God answering prayers for them. At a glance, the results here thus seem in line with the ones from Lindgren (2005, 2011).

All in all, the findings in this study confirm many of the findings from Lindgren (2005, 2011) regarding the religiosity of the Muslim population used. The sample size is somewhat coherent, but the time of the studies is separated by almost a decade. Although there is the aspect of time variance, most of the results match. This also relates to the need for a longitudinal study of a population to make sure there are no other personal factors present.

Focusing on the meaning-making aspect of the prayer ritual, the results from this study relate to the findings of Ladd and Spilka (2002). In their study Ladd and Spilka (2002) describes prayers as having a dual function of providing meaning and control. The control aspect is in not present in this study, so it will not be discussed further. The meaning-making aspect is present in both studies. As seen in the results above, all informants provided accounts of prayer as a significant part of their quest for meaning-making. In that regard, this study is well in line with the findings of Ladd and Spilka (2002), relating to the finding that a transcendent nature in a structured way seemed to provide comfort for the informants. When examining the different aspects of prayer proposed there are different findings between the studies. In their study: "Inward prayers emphasize self-examination. Outward prayers focus on strengthening human-human connections. Upward prayers center on the human-divine relationship" (Ladd & Spilka, 2006, p.233). In the results of the present study, all "directions" of prayer were present, although the methodology employed here did not focus on the specific directions and how they would relate to different relations. Future research could provide more insight here by studying possible differences between faith groups.

Concerning the health aspect of prayer in relation to Silton and colleagues (2013), just a few remarks can be made. In the case of the Imam that presented the notion that the patients he was visiting appreciated being able to perform Ṣalāt with him, so in the current study one informant brought forward aspects of his sick father and the continuing need for him to pray. Although not equivalent, there seem to be

concerns in the situation of need or illness that prayer is still an important component in the individual's life.

This study does not focus especially on emotions, but it is, of course, present in the life of the informants. In the study performed by Sharp (2010) prayer was seen as a mediator and an outlet to regulate emotions, especially negative ones. The same can be seen in this study. Almost all informants presented that they preferred to pray and thus talk to God when in need or feeling down. The notion that God would always listen and not be distant was emphasized. This could be seen in relation to psychological functions and fulfilling the role of an emotional outlet. It also was emphasized that after prayer the informants felt positive. This relates to the earlier presented concept of prayer frequency as desired by the informants. This could be linked to self-esteem as presented by Sharp (2010) where prayer impacted the well-being of the informants providing positive emotions.

This study did not focus specifically on forgiveness, the topic however arose during the interviews. Several of the informants described themselves as less vindictive when treated in a negative way by people in their surroundings. The reasoning for this was that God would eventually bring justice and thus punish the wrongdoers. The relational aspect here seems to focus on the relationship with God and thus to focus away from negative encounters with other persons. The difference between prayer frequency between informants was not studied in detail, the ones who seemed to pray more frequently were more talkative regarding this subject. In relation to the study by Vasiliauskas and McMinn (2013), one can only confirm that prayer and forgiveness to some extent seem to be linked in that focus was directed away from negative feeling and towards the prayer session.

When examining the results concerning meaning-making, several aspects were of interest. All informants presented the prayer and prayer experience as having a special place in creating meaning. Other areas of meaning in their lives was also brought forward, for example, family, friends, and education. Still, the Islamic faith had a central role, and for most, it was presented as the epitome of meaning in their lives. This is in line with the study performed by Schnell (2011) where some areas provided greater importance for the meaning-making aspects of the informants. Regarding the concepts of *density* and *breadth* by Schnell (2011), where strong and diverse sources of meaning increased the chances for an individual to have a live a meaningful life, no clear results emerged in this study. Nonetheless, both concepts seem to be related to the faith and prayer experience of the informants in this study. As seen earlier, the Islamic faith was for most informants not a separate entity in their lives but instead entangled and intertwined with many areas of life. This was also highlighted by the concept of remembrance (Dhikr) where the relation to God and faith was often present. Seeing this, both concepts from Schnell (2011) were present here, even if the theoretical divide was not part of this study since it did not focus on these two aspects (density and breadth) of prayer separation. In relation to the concept of *generativity*, several informants provided an account that would fit well with this concept. A notable example is when they explained that positive deeds follow you after death. They believed that anything you create in this world that has an enduring impact in the world will benefit you after death.

Not focusing primarily on well-being, it was still a part of this study. In the general sense, a complex picture emerges here since the faith of the informants seems to provide both positive and negative impacts on life regarding psychological functions (as exemplified by the prayer act. What needs to be emphasized in the current study is the complex picture that emerges of faith as having different aspects leading to both positive and negative impact on the informants' lives. This is in line with the general position posed by Koenig, McCullough and Larson (2001), since the breadth of their studies included positive and negative relations as well.

5.1.3. Analysis of the Brief RCOPE questionnaire

This section relates to two of the sub-questions. For exploring the psychosocial functions, the following sub-question was used:
4. *What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the psychosocial functions in relation to religious coping (Brief RCOPE)?*

For exploring the meaning-making functions the following sub-question was used:
6. *What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the meaning-making functions in relation to religious coping (Brief RCOPE)?*

As seen in the results above there is a clear separation concerning positive religious coping and negative religious coping. Almost all informants scored high on positive religious coping and low on negative religious coping. Religion provides a positive resource when coping with hard times and with troublesome matters in everyday life. From the material, the relational aspect in their religion was present in that the informants engaged in praying and asking God for things. The belief that God listens and can participate in real matters also suggests a particular understanding of faith in that it is both transcendent and immanent at the same time. This is also in line with the overall religiousness expressed by the informants in the interviews, where almost all spoke of feeling a closeness to God. On the contrary, in negative religious coping, the lower scores show that the informants had a firm belief in God and their faith. It seems that it is not easily shattered or altered since they do not fall from faith even during harder times of life. Relating this to the variations of strength in faith as presented in the interviews, the informants still retained their Muslim identity and did not leave the religious model for explaining different matters in life.

An interesting observation is that there seems to be no obvious correlation between the informants scoring high or low in the positive section, and whether they scored high or low in the negative section. Although this is a small sample and no real statistics can be made, the internal variations provide a complex picture where low and high scores on the separate items are not congruent.

On the overall level of involvement of religion in the coping processes by the informants all but one scored on top. This is well in line with the positive and negative scores as well as the results emerging from the interview material. Linking theses together provides a picture showing that the informants draw upon religious resources for virtually every part of their life. One can say that the transcend parts of the religion are made immanent throughout life by the informants, but still retain

the transcend character in that it encompasses most or all aspects of life and the afterlife. This is also supported by the data from the interviews where many of the informants spoke wishfully of having a global Islamic society and that such would improve their quality of life.

In relation to the different theme areas for religious coping, the informants in this study included the following central theme areas: *Religious methods of coping to find meaning*, *Religious methods of coping to gain mastery and control*, *Religious methods of coping to gain comfort and closeness to God*, and *Religious methods of coping to achieve a life transformation* (Pargament, Falb, Ano & Wachholtz, 2013). A short note can be made in that most of the types were provided within the material, with one exception not being present to the same extent: *the religious methods of coping to gain intimacy with others and closeness to God* (Pargament, Falb, Ano & Wachholtz, 2013) (see Appendix J for the full list). This is part of a cultural aspect, where the Brief RCOPE instrument was developed in a Christian setting. Some of the informants pointed to their understanding of God as "more transcendent", and thus less in terms of "personalization", with whom one could have a close relationship – something the informants thought Christians had but they rejected due to this theological understanding of God as "more transcendent". Apart from this one being only partly present, all others were present frequently during the interviews. *[T]he religious methods of coping to gain intimacy with others and closeness to God* (Pargament, Falb, Ano & Wachholtz, 2013) was present in relation to community, although most informants focused on their personal achievements or failures (for example to pray on time and so on). In line with the results from the Brief RCOPE questionnaire, the positive coping mechanisms were more often present than the negative ones, thus supporting the data from the instrument in conjunction with the interviews.

Religious coping is one of the areas where the theoretical literature was very well integrated with the instrument being used. As presented in the chapter on this theory, the scope and validity are more than well suited for this type of study. All informants provided a clear account that they used prayer as part of their coping mechanisms. Studying the results, there is a clear divide between the positive and negative coping outcomes. Since this is a cross-sectional study, no variance over time can be produced. This further highlights the need for a longitudinal study of this topic, especially when seen in relation to the previous research of prayer frequency as part of coping mechanisms by Ni, Smile and Hardy (2002) and Wachholtz and Sambamoorthi (2011). This is also supported by Orton's (2011) longitudinal methodology.

When examining the results from the Brief RCOPE in relation to the interviews both point towards the greater impact of positive religious coping. One aspect not discussed earlier is the eventual implications of cultural variance. As noted previously in the study of Khan and Watson (2006) they developed a particular scale for assessing religious coping for the Pakistani population (Pakistani Religious Coping Practices Scale). Their findings that women scored higher on both positive and negative religious coping scales than men are interesting. In the current study, no such specific variation due to gender was found. Regarding Khan and Watson's (2006) findings of how fatalism might have skewed the data, no such thing can be seen in this study. Although it should be noted that some of the

informants did feel that the Brief RCOPE questionnaire revolved around Christian faith. The latter might be an important area for future research since variations between religious groups, and also within the same religion concerning different branches, relating to theological understandings might skew the outcome data. Being sensitive to variations between religious groups, denominations and cultural factors should be taken into greater consideration in the future when developing instruments or adapting them to different settings. In this study, as in the case of the study performed by Khan and Watson (2006), religious coping proved to be an effective measure of the Muslim demographic, both from the instrument and the interviews

The study by Abu Raiya and colleagues (2008) uses a vastly different demography and format. However, a short remark can be made. In that study, there was a link between negative religious coping and a higher degree of hostility towards Muslims by the Christian sample. Since most of the informants in this study scored low on the negative religious coping scale, and had an inverse correlation with that of the study by Abu Raiya (2008), the informants in this study might therefore be sympathetic to the surrounding Christian majority – a case that, although not specifically studied, could be made. In many regards the informants of this study were favorable to the Christian majority, but not of the practices in life relating to sexuality and perceived lack of faith. As discussed earlier in the analysis of the interviews, most informants seemed disappointed and felt rejected by society by citing feelings of racism and islamophobia.

5.1.4. Analysis of the Sense of Coherence (SoC) questionnaire

The data in this part should be seen as supportive in character since it provides a background reading regarding the informant's lives. Regarding psychological functions and the prayer rituals the primary data were provided in the interview section. Nevertheless, information on the general state of the informant's lives is of importance to compare with the content presented during the interviews.

For exploring the psychosocial functions, the following sub-question was used:
3. *What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the psychosocial functions in relation to Sense of Coherence (SoC)?*

The results from Sense of Coherence (SoC) are in line with the results from and analysis of the interviews. As presented earlier there is a complex picture presented by the informants in that both positive and negative aspects relating to their religiosity are present in everyday life. This complexity and sometimes oppositional character of different aspect of their religiosity are also seen in the SoC data. When examining the scores, the medium to medium low values are the most common. In this very small sample, the results support the material from the qualitative part. As for most humans, the informants provided different views and aspects of life in that it is filled both with pain and pleasure. Looking at the numbers here, the population of this study seemed to be between the two pain and pleasure spectrum ends. It is not extraordinary in either a positive or negative aspect, instead they are generally in the middle range in the total engagement of life. What underlying phenomena that produced these scores are outside the scope of this study, but some ideas

perhaps could be found in the interview data. There seemed to be ground for improvement in the life of the informants regarding a need for a more integrated sense of coherence. This could relate to cultural understandings, perceived differences and to what extent the informants had a feeling of integration into the Swedish society. The latter should be seen in relation to the setting where they are, as described by several of the informants, they see themselves as representatives of a minority religion, being scrutinized by the general majority population. This might provide a feeling of anxiety and "otherness". When looking at the countries from which many of the informants have their heritage, in relation to the differences presented in the World Value Survey (2016) discrepancies could be, at least in part, attributed to this. Whether this is related to the prayer act is of course hard to tell since the SoC instrument does not provide any question regarding why it is a certain way. If looking at the SoC data as supportive and relating to the notion that most informants displayed an understanding of Islam as absolutely central to their lives and identity, and many felt that they were living in a difficult cultural environment regarding Islam, then there could indeed be a link between the two phenomena.

5.1.5. Analysis of the CD-RISC 2 scale

As with the Sense of Coherence (SoC) data above, this instrument functioned in a supportive role. Resilience scores provided another level of understanding the informant's lives.
For exploring the psychosocial functions, the following sub-question was used:
2. *What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the psychosocial functions in relation to resilience?*

The results from the CD-RISC 2 scale provided a picture that is in line with both the qualitative part as well as the SoC data. The results were varied for the informants. They support the findings from the interviews, that the informants were used to dealing with complex matters in life and experienced various hardships, but at the same time not presenting them in a dramatic fashion where they would be given too much weight. The scores for the CD-RISC-2 are not clearly following trends with the other instruments (as the others seem to support the data provided from the interviews). Instead, there seem to be little coherence between the scoring of the informants in this study, adding to the complex picture described earlier where there can be multiple connotations or feelings present, for example by both having hope of entering paradise after death, while at the same time being fearful of entering hell instead – the same is present in a wide range of areas as described earlier.

When looking at the results from the SoC scale and CD-RISC 2 scale, the data seem to support a moderate to a moderate-low level of engagement and of resilience resources in their life. When faced with hardship or other negative occurrences this might make this group, as a whole, more susceptible to having a negative psychological outcome relating to depression or similar states in their current cultural context. Although there are variations within the group, several of the informants seem to be vulnerable to negative psychological outcomes when examining the data from these instruments. This data also relates to some of the data provided during the interviews where many of the informants provided

accounts of negative feelings in the Swedish society. The cultural aspect can also be of interest here since many, or perhaps even most, are generally not very integrated into the majority culture's ways. This seemed like a recurring theme where the feeling of "otherness" was present. The latter also relates to the understanding of Islamophobia and also of perceived discrimination discussed by many of the informants. This places them in a vulnerable position where they do not feel they have the same secure connection and establishment as ethnic Swedes or other well-established groups do.

In reference to the data provided from the US study, most of the informants scored on average to low with the comparable sample (Vaishnavi et al., 2007). The setting and different factors at hand making further assessment hard, especially since there are variances in present factors, including cultural. The group seems to be at a vulnerable state here, and it should be seen as worrying that several of the informants scored very low on this scale. The score is no evidence that the informants suffers from depression or similar states, but future research should study the prevalence of negative resilience outcomes in relation to well-being in a demographic like this.

5.1.6. Summarizing reflections on the result data

When reflecting on the results from all of the gathered data, several themes are recurring. The prayer act, as well as the supplication prayer, hold a central role in the life of the informants. This is present regardless of how often they pray. The performance of prayer can, to some extent, be likened to how devout the informants see themselves, where the more devout (in their words) ones always make time for prayer. The ones not praying as often wish to do so, but for several reasons, this does not occur. The prayer act seems to play dual roles in the everyday life of the informants when there is time and space, it provides a well sought-after refuge in the otherwise hectic life where feelings of tranquility and closeness to God can be present. When there is a time constraint, feelings are the opposite, and instead, this produces feelings of anxiety and fear of not being a "good enough" Muslim. The latter also relates to the fear of not going to Paradise in the afterlife but instead ending up in Hell. This point is also related to feelings of fear and anxiety. When contrasted to the idea of a very forgiving God, also here this dual image emerges since God is perceived by the informants to be both forgiving as well as un-forgiving. Regarding the idea that there would be no God, the informants felt this as an impossible situation. This can perhaps be related to the accounts provided regarding existential worldview typology, where almost all of them can be ascribed to category 1 (including transcendent dimension *and* literal interpretation). In relation to this understanding, the worldview presented and the idea of religion as a search process; all, or almost all, of the informants, seem to have found parts of what they are looking for. At this point, it seems more of a question of how to interpret the views of Islam but also how to practice it in everyday life. Returning to Bell (2009) regarding ritual and ritualization, the prayer act seems to have a structuring function on the body but also in a temporal sense. The state of the Islamic orthopraxy, as exemplified by Ṣalāt, shows this very well. How the informants present their actions and feelings in relation to the prayer act follows this very well. Relating this to the prayer times of Ṣalāt, this not only structures the

body but also the timeframe for everyday life. From the perspective of the informants, this seems to provide closeness to God and other positive feelings. In relation to the data of the Sense of Coherence (SoC) and CD-RISC 2 scales, as well as the accounts given during the interviews regarding negative aspects of life, the position of Ṣalāt in everyday life can be understood as having an orderly, structuring function.

5.2. Concluding reflection on the central research questions

As seen above in addressing the study's sub-questions, there is a highly complex picture presented from this material. In many instances, there was not a simple *either-or* perspective that the informants present but rather a *both-and* perspective. Some major themes were prominent. On an overarching level, it is clear that the informants drew many different forms of meaning from the complexities of life. These included acts and aspects both within the faith as well as in relation to the surrounding society. The most prominent result of this study showed that there is no simple way to describe the meaning-making process in a merely positive or negative fashion. Instead, an inclusive perspective emerged where faith for the informants provided both positive and negative aspects in a large variety of areas. There were variations within the material provided but still this dualistic aspect of their religiousness was very inherent here. Both tranquility and stress, calmness and anxiety, fear and hope, trust and distrust as well as comfort and discomfort, were related to the religious beliefs and practices here. Several informants also seemed to be susceptible to negative psychological outcomes, if faced with hardships or struggles in life, making them vulnerable as a group.

Returning to the primary research question, after examining all operationalized the sub-questions, some overall reflections can be given.

Primary research question:
What role or roles do Muslim rituals, with a focus on prayer, have in the psychosocial functions and meaning-making functions in everyday life?

Trying to answer this is as already seen no easy task. The variations provided, not only between the informants but also for each of the informants, show how complex this topic is. In short though, there are several psychosocial functions provided here. They include, but are not limited to, questions of tranquility and stress, calmness and anxiety, fear and hope, trust and distrust as well as comfort and discomfort when trying to navigate within their faith. Both the phenomena of ritual prayer sessions and supplication prayer, as well as other forms of expressions of the faith, are very prominent in this group. The complexity was also present during other parts of the informants' lives, when not actively engaging in prayer, but still presenting dual feelings of tranquility and stress, calmness and anxiety, fear and hope, trust and distrust. Looking at it this way, the material provides a clear view that the informants' lives are embedded in a religious framework. This is very much present during the everyday lives of the informants but varies in scope. This is also contrasted to how the informants feel about the larger Swedish society, where many of them have felt marginalized and often unavoidably labeled as representatives of Islam.

Regarding the prayer sessions as well as supplication prayer, they provide a sacred space in the lives of the informants. The informants presented prayer as hugely important both in that it is a physical manifestation of their faith in their everyday life but also a link to the transcendent reality. The latter also relates to the understanding of an afterlife and the functions of religion in everyday life, where matters of eschatology were very prominent. In relation to meaning-making, the discursive power of Islam in the informant's everyday lives is prominent. Meaning-making is derived directly from the prayer sessions, and many informants provided accounts of Islam and the prayer sessions as the absolute center of both their identity and meaning-making functions.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1. Theoretical reflections

Regarding the theoretical parts, a study like this could be improved on several levels. One of the more prominent areas would be the initial integration of the theoretical perspectives used. More work on the internal relations between the theories would have benefited the study later on and also streamlined the process. The theoretical scope of the study could have been reduced and this might have allowed for deeper analysis.

Reflecting on the theory of meaning-making by Park (2013) some critical aspects can be presented. As seen, this theory corresponds to two levels of meaning, a global and a situational meaning. On the general level of meaning-making, this theory provides a very good picture. If the design of this study had been created in another way, the fit of the theory might have been better. As stated, the theory is very good, but the conceptualization could have been done in another manner. The two levels are not separated in this study and instead rely on the theory as a more overarching entity. This results in the theory not being used to its full potential since only very limited observations can be made in relation to the two different levels of meaning as a result of the data provided here.

When examining the results from the interviews in this material with the other instruments (Brief RCOPE, Sense of Coherence (SoC) and CD-RISC 2 scale), a more focused and narrower study could have used Park's theory in a more effective way. In any case, the informants' perceptions of their religious experiences as mediated through prayer especially, still seems to fit the theoretical approach offered by Park (2013). One of the aspects of the theory that provided a good fit was how global meaning-making could be conceptualized through everyday events. If seeing the global meaning in relation to a theological discourse as inherent for the informants, uses of religious language and concepts to understand them were present. This can be exemplified by the concept of Dhikr, where several of the informants provided notions of how they filtered their everyday tasks through a religious filter. The latter also relates to the concept of cleavage between global and situational meaning in Park's theory (2013). Not only larger traumatic events sparked a disruption that lead to a shift in how meaning was created. From the empirical data in this study, it rather seemed to be an ongoing process, constantly being negotiated between the individual and her/his set of beliefs in relation to the surrounding world. Smaller shifts were of course much harder to notice but still seem to be there. Some of empirical data showed that trauma or larger negative experiences provided a ground for shifting in the process of meaning-making, so likely both these phenomena are present at the same time and only vary in scope over time depending on the situation in which the individual finds herself. All in all, thought, the theoretical perspective used from Park (2013) proved very useful as a framework for this study.

One concern regarding Brief RCOPE as an instrument is important to note. Brief RCOPE is a validated instrument that is widely used which ensures good quality. Some aspects of it may still not always be of the utmost relevance. There could be cultural or religious differences that could influence validity of the questionnaire in various ways. In this study, some remarks were made by the informants that they felt that some of the questions, especially in the negative coping part, were of a "more Christian character" in that they did not cohere with their theological understating of Islam. Concerns for how, where, and for whom the instruments used have been created relates to cultural validation. This also relates to a larger cultural need to validate instruments in cultural minority groups, in this case Muslims in Sweden. This would have further added to the size of this study, but for future work, this would be important.

On the meta-theoretical level, a short discussion is needed. In a mixed-methods study like this one the integration of the different theoretical approaches used is of importance. The complexity dramatically increases with the number of theories, or parts of theories, used. As presented earlier the main theory in this study is the meaning-making one from Park (2013). Which is mainly used for the interviews. This clearly provides the mainstay of the study while the other parts, although very important, hold more of a supportive character. Looking at the perspectives described by Creswell (2013) regarding research design the integration could have been improved. One aspect here is how the validity could have improved by making a more focused study. The outcome of the supporting character of the different theories used all seem to benefit the idea that the meaning-making aspect relates to other parts of life, and is not sectioned off. In this regard, the instruments from Brief RCOPE, Sense of Coherence (SoC), and CS-RISC 2, provided useful information in relation to the interviews. If more time had been at hand, the integration of said theories could have been improved in that a further harmonization of them could have been added to the section on theories used. Regarding Brief RCOPE and the coping theory presented, the positive religious outcome clearly was of higher value than the negative religious coping. The note that not all understandings of a god or deity are positive could be confirmed in that almost all of the informants held the view that they feared for their soul to end in hell after this life. Thus, the use of both a positive and negative account of religious coping provided insights. In relation to Sense of Coherence (SoC), the instrument proved useful in showing the vulnerability of several of the informants, while also providing information that some of them are faring very well of. As a group though, and especially in relation to the other theories used, the picture is clear that many of the informants are in a more vulnerable position. The use of this theory on coherence added to this insight. The resilience theory was perhaps of more supportive character all along, something that did not change in relation to the outcome in the study. The value added though, should not be underestimated in that it brought insights regarding especially vulnerability.

6.2. Methodological reflections

One of the most prominent aspects that emerged was the large amount of data collected in this study. This posed a serious constraint on the researcher, especially in the instance of preparing all the transcriptions which took over a month to

perform. Apart from this, though, the material provided a rich and thick description of the target population for this study – well in line with the perspective prescribed by Creswell for this type of study (2014, p.202). Overall the small sample provided a vast material, making it both interesting and also providing variations. Some further considerations might have been useful, related to the criteria for informant selection. When making the samples and, as in this instance, using a snowball method of gathering informants it was not always easy to distinguish whether for example religious branch could have been known before the actual interview session.

This being a small study with a precise time constraint did not provide leeway here but instead the gathered material needed to be used. Looking back on the actual material provided, a rule of thumb is perhaps that the researcher should stop collecting material when there seems to be no real new data emerging. In this case, this occurred after roughly ten to twelve of the interviews were performed. In hindsight, perhaps ten or twelve informants would have been enough, but making the selection more selectively could have provided a good enough sample for this study. Another aspect regarding the population of this study is, although relatively few in numbers, how many different backgrounds and types of experiences are included here. There are several places of birth, different ethnicities and so forth. The same can be said for factors such as educational background, where some of the informants were studying at graduate or post-graduate levels, while others had only lower levels of education and were earning their living from manual labor. At the study's beginning, it was not clear how many participants one could find. Many studies mainly for example use a target population of college or university students since they are often easier to draft. While there are certainly positive aspects in those cases, such as natural limits in age and educational level, the method employed here were not limited in scope in that regard. In that way, the empirical material provided in this study covers a broader perspective and therefore less homogenous age or educational profile.

As seen in the chapter on the results, excerpts from the interviews form a large part of the chapter. As always hard choices have to be made and it has been no easy task only to include what is presented here. There are numerous other parts that also provided more padding to the themes explored in this study. Some of the material omitted was for ethical reasons. Even though it surely can be tempting for a researcher to include "exciting" parts, in this case, that was never a possibility. The security and privacy of the informants should always be put first. Not giving anything away here, the topics omitted were related to, amongst other topics, relationships regarding love and intimacy unknown by the informant's families. Not going into the debate on whether or not there would be a possibility of the informant's security in relation to psychological or physical harm, a researcher must be cautious when making these considerations. The same caution was taken for other sensitive subjects such as how other participants in the Muslim community do or do not fit in line with the prescribed theology and whether or not they are hardliners. In this study, even though there of course are personal variations, the relation to prayer for many of the informants was presented in a relatively coherent fashion. This can be seen as a positive methodological outcome since the sample did not deviate too much internally. In relation to the operationalization of this study, the number of categories and sub-categories could have been dramatically

decreased or perhaps combined. In the initial stages, the broad scope seemed like a good choice but instead generated an enormous amount of work later on. When this was realized the project was already breaking the planned time limits initially set and thus changes were not possible.

In relation to validity and the researcher's background, as briefly outlined in section 1.1.1., some aspects of this study would probably not have been performed unless some key elements of dialogue and knowledge in the theology of Islam had been present. Critically speaking, the "outsider" perspective (in that the researcher is not himself a Muslim), while knowledgeable in the theology and practice of Muslim faith was beneficial. One aspect here is the "neutral" aspect of the researcher not being engaged in the differences of theological interpretations from a personal standpoint – in the eyes of the informants – provided a venue for some leeway in the way the informants were able to present their understanding of the Muslim faith and practice. Hade the researcher been a Muslim, the outcome might have differed – especially if there was a discrepancy in relation to denominations between the researcher and the informant at hand. This is supported by the notion where several informants had very precise understandings of being a "good" Muslim or not in relation to the Sunni/Shia divide. Being part of certain discourses provides different insights and possibly provides different venues for research. One such example could be that the snowball sample would have turned out differently.

6.3. Contributions

As previously stated the area of Muslim prayer experience in relation to everyday life is still very much an unexplored area. The previous work of Lindgren (2005, 2011) has in some sense paved the way for further inquiries. The contribution of this empirical study adds to this area. The main contribution is regarding the complex picture of Muslim prayer and how it relates to meaning-making and psychological functions in everyday life. Prayer is a source of meaning-making for the studied population in Sweden today. The Muslim faith in general, and the prayer act, in particular, are centered in the life of the informants. This is also present when not praying since their worldview is embedded in a religious framework encompassing numerous aspects of life. Further, the dual image of prayer as both a source of positive and negative emotions in the everyday life is of importance. The understanding that prayer can be a positive source regarding psychological functions could be used in other research later on. Also, the negative aspects of prayer are of importance since they can help increase knowledge in relation to possible issues for health and well-being. The data also show that several of the informants may be vulnerable to negative psychological outcomes if faced with hardship. Though no causality can be given here between health and religion, this does raise questions about how well the current health care system can meet the needs of a particular ´religious minority population . Although this is a small study, hopefully, it will contribute to the overall picture of how individuals of the Muslim faith can perceive and relate acts of prayer to their everyday life in contemporary Sweden, where the role of the prayer act is central to the life of the informants. The latter also relates to the cultural setting where most of the Muslim populations inhabit countries that are far from Sweden in this regard (see Appendix I for reference).

6.4. Suggestions for future research

Although the results of this study cannot be generalized to the Muslim population in general, or in central parts of Sweden in particular, it is hoped that the study can be of interest and of use through providing a snapshot or current picture of how the prayer experience of Muslims can be perceived in Sweden today. Further research is still needed in this much-unexplored field, hopefully drawing upon a larger sample size and more specialized criteria for how the participants are selected. A topic of interest could be the understating and experience of how prayer varies between a female and male demographic. This is an area not explored in this study due to time constraints in combination with the uneven sample size for the genders (four females and twelve males). In that regard, this study provides a gender-neutral perspective which unfortunately may not capture all the nuances that could be found if looked for. From the small sample provided here, there did not seem to be any apparent discrepancies between the genders. Longitudinal studies would also be important to follow patterns of prayer as daily life circumstances change, and possible changes in relation to the place of prayer in the life of the believer.

Summary

In the psychology of religion, prayer is one area that has received relatively little attention outside of the US. In the case of Muslim prayer, with a few exceptions, the field is yet to be explored. The most prominent contribution in Sweden has been made by Lindgren (2005, 2011). The current convergent parallel mixed-methods study examined the relationship of Muslim prayer acts and perceived psychosocial functions and meaning-making functions. The data were gathered using semi-constructed interviews as well as standardized instruments; Brief RCOPE, Sense of Coherence (SoC), and CD-RISC 2 resilience scale.

The participants consisted of twelve males and four females currently residing in the central parts of Sweden. Focus was placed on the five daily prayers (Ṣalāt), the supplication prayer (Duʿāʾ) as well as the constant reminder of God (Dhikr). The theoretical parts focused on meaning-making based on Park (2013), religious coping by Pargament et al. (2013), the Sense of Coherence by Antonovsky (1987) and ritual theory formulated by Bell (2009). The central research question of this study is as follows: *"What role or roles do Muslim rituals, with a focus on prayer, have in the psychosocial functions and meaning-making functions in everyday life?"*.

This question was then operationalized into sub-questions regarding the different focus areas. For exploring the psychosocial functions, the following sub-questions were used: 1. What perceived roles do the prayers have in the everyday life of the Muslim participants? 2. What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the psychosocial functions in relation to resilience (CD-RISC 2)? 3. What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the psychosocial functions in relation to Sense of Coherence (SoC)? 4. What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the psychosocial functions in relation to religious coping (Brief RCOPE)?

For exploring the meaning-making functions the following sub-questions was used: 5. What perceived roles do the prayers have in the everyday life of the Muslim participants in relation to their meaning-making functions? 6. What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the meaning-making functions in relation to religious coping (Brief RCOPE)? 7. What role or roles do the prayer rituals have in the meaning-making functions in relation to global and specific meaning-making?

From the interviews, several findings emerged including the centrality of prayer in the informant's lives. Meaning-making emerged as a central part in relation to all forms of prayer, making the prayer act highly important in the lives of the informants. The Muslim identity was also seen as absolutely central in their lives. When ranked in order of what created meaning in the lives of the informants, the Islamic faith was noted as prominent, with other sources following including family, friends, and education.

For the Brief RCOPE questionnaire, the results included relatively high scores for positive coping and relatively low scores for negative coping (Positive Coping max: 28,00; min: 20,00; average: 23,75; range: 8,00. Negative Coping max: 15,00; min: 7,00, average: 10,19; range: 8,00. Religious coping on a general level max: 1,00; min 2,00, average: 1,06; range: 1,00). For the Sense of Coherence (SoC) scale, the results included different scores, in total medium to low (max: 75,00; min: 44,00; average: 56,00; range: 31,00). In the case of CD-RISC 2 resilience scale, the results were diverse with both high and low scores (max: 8,00; min: 3,00; average: 5,56; range: 5,00).

When performing prayers in line with the informants own theological understanding, this produced very positive feelings. When not performing the prayers, this resulted in negative feelings and anxiety. This provides a complex picture where the results of the study show that the prayer act is contributing both to positive and negative emotions for the informants in their everyday life. Faith had a twofold core function: holding a central role in daily religious activities and mediating different areas of life. The latter relates to the concept of remembrance (Dhikr) as ever so often present in the lives of the informants. This also shows that a vast number of areas in their lives were related to the Islamic faith, creating a worldview to which other concepts were related to and filtered through.

For the majority, regarding not praying, this also related to a more or less constant stress of not being a good enough Muslim and therefore ending up in Hell after death. The religious community was seen as very positive since many of the informants struggled with what they thought of as Un-Islamic values and behaviors present in the surrounding society. Several of the informants also showed signs of a low sense of coherence and resilience, possibly making them more vulnerable to negative psychological states in case of hardships or struggles in life. Since this is a cross-sectional study, suggestions for future research include the need for longitudinal studies that would permit studying possible variations over time in the lives of the informants in relation to prayer.

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Appendix A Letter to the informants

Information for participants of the study *Perspectives om muslim prayer*

UPPSALA UNIVERSITET

This document contains important information regarding ethics and confidentiality. This document is a compliment to oral information received at the interview session. This information is based on the guidelines form the Central Ethics Board[1]

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE
This study is conducted at the Theology Faculty (Uppsala University) and is part of a *master thesis* (E-thesis, advanced level). This project spanns over 20 weeks and shall include a personally conducted research study. A master thesis is usually conducted one of the last two semesters as part of a five year program in the science of religion.

The purpose of the study is to better understand psychosocial functions and existential meaning in conjunction with the muslim prayer. The muslim prayer is a central part of the muslim belief, and here the practicing muslim are able to describe his or hers experiences and perspectives connected to the prayer. Extremely few studies have focused on islamic prayer, whereas any contribution in this field is very positive. The ability to add to this knowledge is central in this study.

REQUEST OF PARTICIPATION
You are asked to participate in this study based on your religious affiliation. The information is provided by a person who recommended you as a participant.

HOW IS THE STUDY CONDUCTED?
The study is conducted in the form of one (1) interview. The interview is scheduled to last 30-60 minutes but the time can vary. No other involvement is needed.

DATA AND CONFIDENTIALITY HANDLING
The interviews will be transcribed and stored digitally. Any data who can be connected to a real person will NOT ber part of the finished study. Examples of this is names, ages, residence area or names of visited mosques. Only the researcher and the supervising professor at Uppsala University will have access to this data. After the study is finished these data will be erased.

HOW TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?
The study will be presented in the form of a master thesis and will be available digitally via Uppsala Universitet. Information is provided from the link below.[2] If you wish, the researcher can contact you when the study is available.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
The participation is truly voluntary. You can at any time stop your participation by contacting the researcher. In this case all collected data will be erased.

RESPONSIBLE
Responsible for the study (named *researcher* above) is the master student Martin Langby. Supervising professor is Valerie DeMarinis, professor in psychology of religion at the Theology Faculty, Uppsala University (available on valerie.demarinis@teol.uu.se alt. 018-471 22 00).

For questions, please contact: Martin Langby on martin.langby.1343@student.uu.se (073 - 508 92 50)

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[1] http://www.epn.se/sv/uppsala/om-naemnden/

[2] http://www.ub.uu.se/publicera/studentuppsatser/

Intervjuguide

1. Inledning och bakgrund
- Välkommen och tack
- Konfidentialitet, endast jag och handledare har tillgång till materialet
- Inget rätt eller fel svar, det finns ingen dömande komponent
- Namn
- Ålder
- Var bor du nu?
  ○ Har du alltid bott där?
  ○ Om inte; var bodde du innan?
- Familj
- Medlem i moské eller islamisk förening/förbund
- Hur skulle du beskriva din tro?

2. Meningsskapande
- Kan du berätta vad som är meningsfullt i ditt liv?
  ○ Kan du utveckla?
  ○ Har det alltid varit så eller har det förändrat sig över tid?
- Känner du att du har möjlighet att göra meningsfulla aktiviteter?
- Om du kunde förändra något i ditt liv så att du skulle uppleva mer mening, vad skulle det vara?
- Upplever du att bönen är viktig i ditt liv?
  ○ Varför?
  ○ Hur?
- Tror du bönen är en specifik källa till mening i ditt liv?
  ○ Hur då?

3. Bönen
- Vad är bön för dig?
- Hur ofta ber du?
  ○ Vilken typ av bön ber du?
  ○ Hur ofta ber du Şalāt?
- Hur känner du dig innan bönen?
- Hur känner du dig under bönen?
- Hur känner du dig efter bönen?
- Ber du någon annan bön än Şalāt (ex. du´ā)?
- Upplever du att bönen påverkar dig i ditt vardagsliv?
  ○ Hur påverkar bönen dig i ditt vardagsliv?
- Ber du någon gång tillsammans med andra?
  ○ Ser bönen som en social aktivitet?

- För vems skull ber du?

4. brief RCOPE
- 14 frågor, gå igenom tillsammans?
- Lägg till frågan nedan:
  ○ Brief RCOPE

Overall Religious/Spiritual Coping Item
To what extent is your religion involved in understanding or dealing with stressful situations in any way?*
1 - Very involved
2 - Somewhat involved 3 - Not very involved
4 - Not involved at all

5. KASAM (SoC)
- 13 kort-version, gå igenom tillsammans?

6. Resilience questions
- 2 frågor, gå igenom tillsammans?

7. Avslutning
- Är det något mer du vill berätta om?
  ○ Tack så mycket!

Använd informellt språk
Humma inte
Var uppmuntrande
Anteckna efteråt

Appendix C Brief RCOPE questionnaire

Brief RCOPE

The following items deal with ways you coped with the negative event in your life. There are many ways to try to deal with problems. These items ask what you did to cope with this negative event. Obviously different people deal with things in different ways, but we are interested in how you tried to deal with it. Each item says something about a particular way of coping. We want to know to what extent you did what the item says. How much or how frequently. Don't answer on the basis of what worked or not – just whether or not you did it. Use these response choices. Try to rate each item separately in your mind from the others. Make your answers as true FOR YOU as you can. Circle the answer that best applies to you.

1 – not at all
2 – somewhat
3 – quite a bit
4 – a great deal

1. Looked for a stronger connection with God.	1	2	3	4
2. Sought God's love and care.	1	2	3	4
3. Sought help from God in letting go of my anger.	1	2	3	4
4. Tried to put my plans into action together with God.	1	2	3	4
5. Tried to see how God might be trying to strengthen me in this situation.	1	2	3	4
6. Asked forgiveness for my sins.	1	2	3	4
7. Focused on religion to stop worrying about my problems.	1	2	3	4
8. Wondered whether God had abandoned me.	1	2	3	4
9. Felt punished by God for my lack of devotion.	1	2	3	4
10. Wondered what I did for God to punish me.	1	2	3	4
11. Questioned God's love for me.	1	2	3	4
12. Wondered whether my church had abandoned me.	1	2	3	4
13. Decided the devil made this happen.	1	2	3	4
14. Questioned the power of God.	1	2	3	4

To what extent is your religion involved in the understanding and handling of stressful situations at large?

1. Very involved
2. Somewhat involved
3. Not very involved
4. Not involved at all

Pargament, K., Feuille, M. & Burdzy, D. (2011). *The Brief RCOPE: Current Psychometric Status of a Short Measure of Religious Coping* in *Religions* 2011, 2(1), 51-76; doi:10.3390/rel2010051.

Appendix D Sense of Coherence (short version) questionnaire

Informant number:................

1. Do you have the feeling that you don't really care about what goes on around you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very seldom or never						Very often

2. Has it happened in the past that you were surprised by the behaviour of people whom you thought you knew well?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never happened						Always happened

3. Has it happened that people whom you counted on disappointed you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never happened						Always happened

4. Until now your life has had:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No clear goals or purpose at all						Very clear goals and purpose

5. Do you have the feeling that you're being treated unfairly?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very often						Very seldom or never

6. Do you have the feeling that you are in an unfamiliar situation and don't know what to do?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very often						Very seldom or never

7. Doing the things you do every day is:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A source of deep pleasure and satisfaction						A source of pain and boredom

1

Informant number:................

8. Do you have very mixed-up feelings and ideas?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very often						Very seldom or never

9. Does it happen that you have feelings inside you would rather not feel?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very often						Very seldom or never

10. Many people – even those with a strong character – sometimes feel like sad sacks (losers) in certain situations. How often have you felt this way in the past?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never						Very often

11. When something happened, have you generally found that:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
You overestimated or underestimated its importance						You saw things in the right proportion

12. How often do you have the feeling that there's little meaning in the things you do in your daily life?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very often						Very seldom or never

13. How often do you have feelings that you're not sure you can keep under control?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very often						Very seldom or never

2

Antonovsky, A. (1987). *Unravelling the mystery of health: How people manage stress and stay well.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Appendix E Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 2)

Intervjuperson:………………

	Not true at all	Seldom true	Sometimes true	Often true	Almost always true
A. I can adjust to changes.	0r	1r	2r	3r	4r
B. I tend to recover after illness, injury or other hardships.	0r	1r	2r	3r	4r

CD-RISC, Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (2009). *User Guide*. Webpage, www.cd-risc.com/user-guide.php, Downloaded, 2016-11-04.

Appendix F Informed consent

Participation in the study *Perspectives om muslim prayer*

This document refers to
• Information for participants of the study *Perspectives om muslim prayer*

- -

I have been briefed concerning the information regarding the study and here give my informed consent to participate in this interview being conducted in the ethical manner told:

Signature:_____

Full name: _____

INT.NR:

Appendix G Prayer times for Uppsala, May 2016

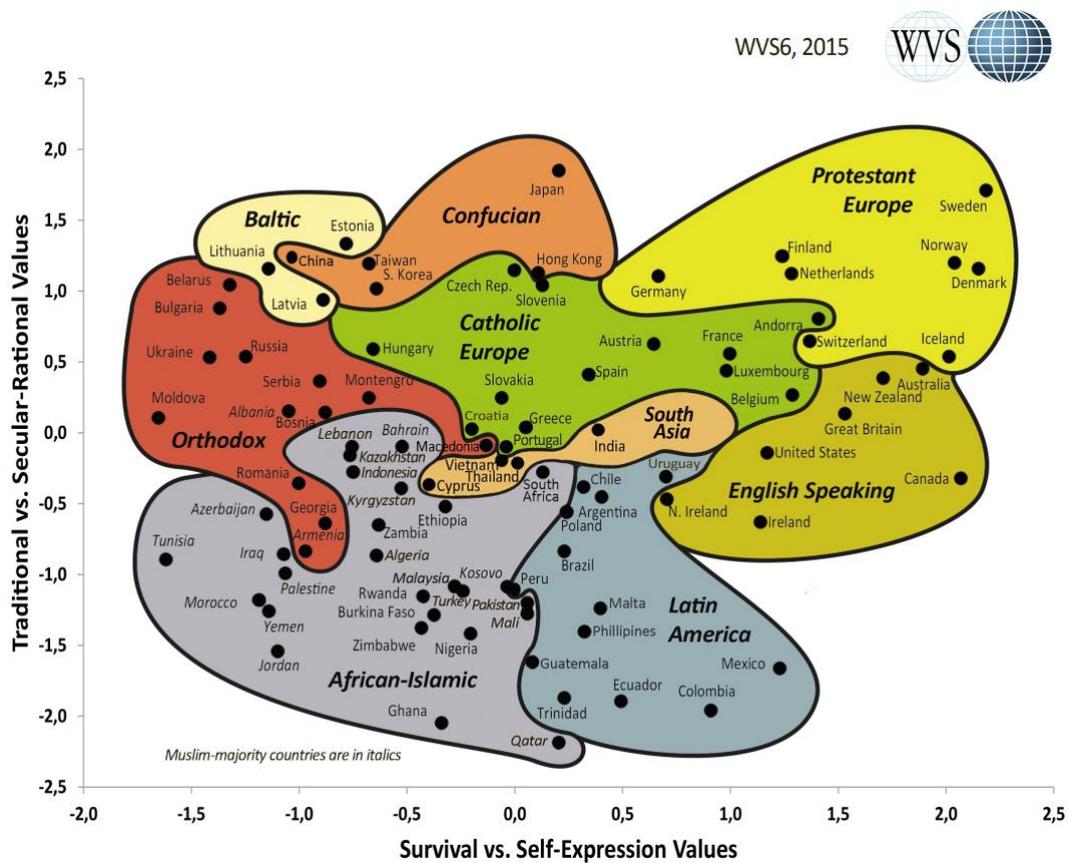| Day	Fajr	Sunrise	Zuhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
1	02:20	04:47	12:47	16:59	20:48	23:02
2	02:18	04:44	12:47	17:00	20:50	23:03
3	02:17	04:42	12:47	17:01	20:53	23:04
4	02:16	04:39	12:47	17:02	20:55	23:05
5	02:15	04:36	12:47	17:03	20:58	23:06
6	02:14	04:34	12:47	17:04	21:00	23:07
7	02:14	04:34	12:47	17:04	21:00	23:07
8	02:13	04:31	12:46	17:05	21:03	23:08
9	02:11	04:26	12:46	17:06	21:07	23:10
10	02:10	04:24	12:46	17:07	21:10	23:11
11	02:09	04:21	12:46	17:08	21:12	23:12
12	02:08	04:19	12:46	17:09	21:15	23:13
13	02:07	04:16	12:46	17:10	21:17	23:14
14	02:06	04:14	12:46	17:11	21:19	23:15
15	02:06	04:12	12:46	17:12	21:22	23:16
16	02:05	04:09	12:46	17:13	21:24	23:17
17	02:04	04:07	12:46	17:14	21:26	23:18
18	02:03	04:05	12:46	17:15	21:29	23:19
19	02:02	04:03	12:46	17:15	21:31	23:20
20	02:01	04:01	12:47	17:16	21:33	23:21
21	02:01	03:59	12:47	17:17	21:35	23:22
22	02:01	03:59	12:47	17:17	21:35	23:22
23	02:00	03:57	12:47	17:18	21:37	23:23
24	01:58	03:53	12:47	17:19	21:42	23:25
25	01:58	03:51	12:47	17:20	21:44	23:26
26	01:57	03:49	12:47	17:21	21:46	23:27
27	01:56	03:47	12:47	17:22	21:48	23:28
28	01:56	03:45	12:47	17:22	21:49	23:29
29	01:55	03:44	12:47	17:23	21:51	23:29
30	01:55	03:42	12:48	17:24	21:53	23:30
31	01:54	03:41	12:48	17:24	21:55	23:31

Retrieved from: http://www.bonetider.se/bonetider/ (2016-05-03).

Appendix H Sūrah 112 al-Ikhlās (”Purification”), 113 al-Falaq (”Daybreak”) and 114 an-Nās (”Mankind”)

Sūrah 113	al-Falaq	”Daybreak"
	b-ismi-llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīmi	In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
1	Qul 'A`ūdhu Birabbi Al-Falaqi	Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak
2	Min Sharri Mā Khalaqa	From the evil of that which He created
3	Wa Min Sharri Ghāsiqin 'Idhā Waqaba	And from the evil of darkness when it settles
4	Wa Min Sharri An-Naffāthāti Fī Al-`Uqadi	And from the evil of the blowers in knots
5	Wa Min Sharri Ĥāsidin 'Idhā Ĥasada	And from the evil of an envier when he envies."
Sūrah 112	al-Ikhlās	”Purification”
	b-ismi-llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīmi	In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
1	Qul Huwa Allāhu 'Aĥadun	Say, ”He is Allah, [who is] One,
2	Allāhu Aṣ-Ṣamadu	Allah, the Eternal Refuge
3	Lam Yalid Wa Lam Yūlad	He neither begets nor is born,
4	Walam Yakun Lahu Kufūan 'Aĥadun	Nor is there to Him any equivalent."
Sūrah 114	an-Nās	”Mankind”
	b-ismi-llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīmi	In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
1	Qul 'A`ūdhu Birabbi An-Nāsi	Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind,
2	Maliki An-Nāsi	The Sovereign of mankind.
3	Ilahi An-Nāsi	The God of mankind,
4	Min Sharri Al-Waswāsi Al-Khannāsi	From the evil of the retreating whisperer -
5	Al-Ladhī Yuwaswisu Fī Ṣudūri An-Nāsi	Who whispers [evil] into the breasts of mankind -
6	Mina Al-Jinnati Wa An-Nāsi	From among the jinn and mankind."

Qur'an. *Saheeh International Translation* (2013). Maktabah Booksellers and Publishers. Birmingham, United Kingdom. The Qur'an Project Distribution Centre. Luton, United Kingdom.

Appendix I Inglehart–Welzel Cultural Map

World Value Survey (2016). Inglehart–Welzel Cultural Map, Wave 6 (2010-2014)
http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp

Appendix J The Many Methods of Religious Coping

TABLE 28.1. The Many Methods of Religious Coping

Religious methods of coping to find meaning
- *Benevolent religious reappraisal*—redefining the stressor through religion as potentially beneficial
- *Punishing God reappraisal*—redefining the stressor as a punishment from God for the individual's sins
- *Demonic reappraisal*—redefining the stressor as an act of the Devil
- *Reappraisal of God's powers*—redefining God's power to influence the stressful situation

Religious methods of coping to gain mastery and control
- *Collaborative religious coping*—seeking control through a partnership with God in problem solving
- *Passive religious deferral*—passive waiting for God to control the situation
- *Active religious surrender*—active giving up of control to God in coping
- *Pleading for direct intercession*—seeking control indirectly by pleading to God for a miracle or divine intervention
- *Self-directing religious coping*—seeking control through individual initiative rather than help from God

Religious methods of coping to gain comfort and closeness to God
- *Seeking spiritual support*—searching for comfort and reassurance through God's love and care
- *Religious focus*—engaging in religious activities to shift focus from the stressor
- *Religious purification*—searching for spiritual cleansing through religious actions
- *Spiritual connection*—seeking a sense of connectedness with forces that transcend the self
- *Spiritual discontent*—expressing confusion and dissatisfaction with God' relationship to the individual in the stressful situation
- *Marking religious boundaries*—clearly demarcating acceptable from unacceptable religious behavior and remaining within religious boundaries

Religious methods of coping to gain intimacy with others and closeness to God
- *Seeking support from clergy or members*—searching for intimacy and reassurance through the love and care of congregation members and clergy
- *Religious helping*—attempting to provide spiritual support and comfort to others
- *Interpersonal religious discontent*—expressing confusion and dissatisfaction with the relationship of clergy or members to the individual in the stressful situation

Religious methods of coping to achieve a life transformation
- *Seeking religious direction*—looking to religion for assistance in finding a new direction for living
- *Religious conversion*—looking to religion for a radical change in life
- *Religious forgiving*—looking to religion for help in shifting from anger, hurt, and fear associated with an offense to peace

Pargament, K., Falb, M., Ano, G. & Wachholtz A. (2013). *The Religious Dimension of Coping* in Paloutzian, R. F. & Park, C. L. (2013). *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality. Second Edition.* New York: The Guilford press. p.564.