

***RELIGION AND SOCIAL
INTERVENTION: TOWARDS A MODEL
FOR ISLAMIC COUNSELLING AND
PSYCHOTHERAPY***

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town.

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ABSTRACT

In the field of social and psychological services delivery, counsellors are often confronted with clients whose lifestyles, being and functioning is informed by a particular culture or religious persuasion. Here mainstream theories of intervention may not be appropriate to facilitate maximum client participation in change processes. Different counselling approaches geared towards being client rather than counsellor or organisation specific becomes necessary and need to be developed. Counselling systems should therefore consider cultural paradigms and encourage the notion of diversity in its approaches. This thesis attempts to contribute to this position by examining the role of Islam in counselling and psychotherapy.

It argues that Islam as a religious and cultural tradition can and should form part of cross-cultural counselling approaches. In so doing a descriptive qualitative study is here presented that seeks to develop a conceptual framework for Islamic counselling. Exploring a range of disciplines in the social sciences from historical, cultural and modern perspectives, attempts to define and extract theoretical guidelines for Islamic counselling are articulated. Here Qurānic concepts of human nature and functioning, religio-cultural ritual practices, as well as therapeutic goals and techniques in counselling are pertinent in informing the overall content of this thesis.

To complement this information two in-depth interviews were conducted with practitioners involved in providing counselling services in Islamic settings. These respondents are the Director of an Islamic social welfare agency and a *Shaykh*. As an

exploratory exercise this practical component provides valuable insights into the relationship of theory and practice in Islamic counselling, especially the varied perceptions of scholars and practitioners on this topic. The information elicited from the interviews was recorded, transcribed and has been thematically analysed consistent with key themes of this paper.

The findings of this study suggest that Islamic counselling, while being thought of and implemented as a formal discipline, still stands in need of being developed into a structured counselling framework for social intervention. However, Islamic counselling is informed by a rich religio-cultural tradition and has been practised implicitly as part of cultural processes, which in turn has been verified as having the same therapeutic value in its implementation as mainstream counselling approaches. From this vantage point it is possible for Islamic counselling to be formulated into a unique cultural counselling paradigm, in as far as it is based on tenets of Islam, as well as form part of broader mainstream counselling approaches. Essentially then, Islamic counselling can and should in fact be part of cross-cultural counselling. Given the above, the thesis concludes with considerations and recommendations to guide further research in this area of study.

INTRODUCTION

This study is located at the interface of counselling and religion. It examines the role of Islam in informing cross-cultural counselling service provision with the aim of developing theoretical guidelines for Islamic religio-cultural counselling. In helping professions, the role of culture, diversity and identity is increasingly being emphasised as important factors that determine how people relate to themselves and their environments. Hence there have been many calls for the inclusion of cultural, religious, spiritual and similar issues into processes of social and personal change. These emphases not only highlight a previous neglect of such considerations, but expresses the concern of counselling professionals who often find themselves at a loss to intervene effectively with multi-cultural client bases who hold value systems at variance with their own.

At the level of the client, this tension is commonly experienced as an inability on the side of a practitioner to fully understand the client. At a scholarly level, this discontent finds its expression in an aversion to dominant counselling ideologies. The latter are regarded as asserting a foreign authority onto Islamic religio-cultural systems without consideration for its beliefs and practices. On the other hand, Islamic scholars feel obliged to defend themselves to a point of losing sight of the more salient issues of social service delivery. In the context of these prevailing circumstances, this paper examines issues of help and healing in counselling and psychotherapy. Using Islam as a measure for counselling intervention, it explores the merging points of religion, culture, counselling and psychotherapy and urges an

amicable relationship between these disciplines that would serve the interests of clients, counsellors and change processes.

Chapter 1 examines a conceptual framework and definition for Islamic counselling. It presents a rationale for Islamic counselling given the recognition for the need of cross-cultural counselling methods and religion to be integrated into processes of social intervention. In support of the latter, two dimensions of Islamic counselling are examined. At the religio-cultural level, three studies of helping processes in Muslim communities is highlighted. Here counselling processes manifest implicitly, but have been shown to contain similar therapeutic effects as popular counselling approaches. The modern response to Islamic counselling discusses the contribution of two scholars who have directly addressed this topic. They reject western mainstream counselling approaches and suggest that a theoretical model for Islamic counselling firmly rooted in Islam is long overdue and in need of articulation. The chapter concludes with a working definition for Islamic counselling.

Chapter 2 builds on a theoretical framework for Islamic counselling. To facilitate this process, guidelines are extracted from mainstream counselling paradigms. The central tenets of theory viz. an understanding of human nature, therapeutic goals and counselling techniques, is applied to Islamic literary sources to explicate theoretical principles for an Islamic counselling approach. The use of these tenets in mainstream counselling paradigms of psychoanalysis, behaviourism, existentialism and cognitive therapy is illustrated, to show the broader counselling context for Islamic counselling. When evaluating Islamic information in these terms, interpretation of Qurānic

injunctions on human nature and well being is pertinent. An analysis of such modern scholarly discussion reveals the position of Sufism as the fundamental intellectual resource for Islamic psychology and counselling. The chapter ends by asserting that contributions to Islamic counselling based on Sufism in its present form and by itself are not sufficient to affect maximum participation in counselling encounters. It needs to function as part of varied counselling strategies to be effective.

Chapter 3 explores a practical dimension of Islamic counselling. A qualitative research exercise was conducted with practitioners involved in counselling Muslim clients. The respondents are a senior staff member of an Islamic welfare organisation and a *Shaykh*, both of whom have extensive experience in the field of social service delivery, especially as regards counselling. This exercise acts as a lens through which to view varied perceptions of the theory / practice relationship in Islamic counselling. In addition, it brings to the fore realities of Islamic counselling that may otherwise be overlooked by focusing on theory only. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and are thematically analysed to enrich the overall content of this thesis. It is presented in a narrative style in order to accurately reflect the experience of the respondents.

Chapter 4 concludes this thesis. It sums up the major finding of this study and discusses key considerations in theory building for Islamic counselling. It presents a way forward by offering recommendations to guide and encourage further research in this dynamic field of study.

CHAPTER 1

A conceptual framework and definition for Islamic counselling and psychotherapy

1.1 Introduction

In the social sciences, Islamic counselling and psychotherapy is a discipline that is vaguely defined. Literature and information that is available on this topic are often limited in quantity, perspective and creativity to generate meaningful responses to an Islamic counselling intervention approach. As a result, the concept of Islamic counselling lacks definition and theoretical coherence, necessary to constitute a model of intervention in areas of social service delivery. This is an area of concern, given that Islamic counselling is written and thought of, in many instances, as a formal discipline when in fact, it is not so.

This thesis argues that Islamic counselling can be articulated into a structured theoretical framework. If so formulated, it can form part of broader theoretical paradigms of help and healing. From this perspective, Islamic counselling would function at dual levels where it is developed as a specific counselling approach based on the tenets of Islam, as well as be integrated into the overall discourse of counselling methodologies and social intervention. To facilitate this intent, this study examines, contrasts and explicates theoretical principles from a diverse knowledge base to enrich the study of Islamic counselling. This chapter in particular explores the role and place of Islam in counselling and psychotherapy with the idea of developing

a conceptual framework and definition for Islamic counselling. Pertinent themes inherent in this discussion like culture and religion, and its inter-relatedness to the practices of counselling and psychotherapy will be assessed. Ideally, conceptual and theoretical parameters for Islamic counselling would be determined to provide a sound knowledge base to guide the development of this discussion through to its end.

1.2 Cross-cultural Counselling: A rationale for Islamic counselling

A rationale for Islamic counselling can be found in the broad area of cross-cultural counselling. Increasingly in areas of social intervention, greater diversity and cultural integration in client and counsellor systems are being recognised. The result has been a heightened awareness of the need for culturally appropriate social services to maximise both client and counsellor participation in change processes. This is confirmed by a range of writers on cross-cultural and multicultural counselling, which Axelson (1993) defines as:

Multicultural counselling encompasses all the components of the many different cultural environments in a democratic society, together with the pertinent theories, techniques, and practices of counselling. In this regard, the approach takes into specific consideration the traditional and contemporary backgrounds and environmental experiences of diverse clients and how special needs might be identified and met through the resources of the helping profession (Pg.12).

The author stresses the importance of personal, cultural and social experiences of both client and counsellor in the helping process. In this same vein, Saeki and Borow (1985:223) in a discussion of eastern counselling methods, note the importance of culture as central to therapeutic processes. They emphasise its relevance in eastern

societies, given that in these environments, secularisation of psychotherapeutic processes and detachments from spiritual origins have not occurred. A strong religio-cultural link in helping processes remains apparent. For treatment systems to be effective in its particular settings then, it must define cultural norms for the client, reinforce culturally approved coping behaviour and offer a measure of respite from regular cultural demands. Triandes (1985) and Klineberg (1985) agree, offering an outline on client cultural and behavioural variations that may impact on therapy, and highlight the need for counsellors to explore clients cultural backgrounds and values to facilitate helping processes.

Counsellors and practitioners in the field of social work have added their support to calls for cross-cultural counselling and social services. As practitioners constantly and directly exposed to working with a range of clients, their experience and contribution add depth to this argument. Asamoah (1996:1-3) therefore asserts that the concept of culturally sensitive service provision is no longer strange to social work practitioners, educators and policy makers. A shift in focus has occurred from whether to provide culturally competent services, to instead how best to provide these services. Research showing the significance of culture as a variable in behavioural and interpersonal processes has reinforced this view, which in turn has challenged ethnocentric practices and urged for the development of more culturally relevant counselling strategies.

Similar contributions are offered by Lago (1996:14-15) and Ferguson (1996: 36-41). In their foci on the impact of race and culture in helping professions, they too stress

the role of cultural heritage and its profound, often unconscious effect on stereotypes of others. According to the writers, counsellors need to be aware of their own cultural identities and its potential impact on the counselling encounter. This, together with an understanding of political processes that perpetuate discrimination, can contribute to creative responses to clients. In light of these circumstances, attempts should be made to extend or modify counselling theories to incorporate more appropriate responses to clients. Essentially, as Ferguson notes, social service agencies need to move away from previous held perceptions that viewed clients as multicultural and agencies as mono-cultural. Here clients were typically perceived as alien and dysfunctional and needing to be helped by hastening assimilation into dominant cultures. A more appropriate response would be to acknowledge both client and agency diversity to encourage balanced relationships and avoid stigmatisation of clients. Transcending this old paradigm promotes humanness, shows a willingness to become inclusive and encourages the positive exploration of diversity and culturally relevant intervention.

In South Africa, Tshabalala (1992), a former University of Cape Town academic, added his voice to incorporating multicultural issues in social work treatment modalities, at a time when Apartheid philosophy was still the order of the day. South Africa remains in need of such services, given the diverse make-up of its people, and more importantly, its history of previous gross neglect of such services with its conjoint long-term negative implications. Current attempts in this direction have been made that acknowledge the significance of culture in healing processes. South Africa now provides a good example of the recognition of cross-cultural helping dynamics. Here integration into the broader health care system of traditional healers, who are

equated with psychologists since they provide holistic services to clients that incorporate physical, social and emotional aspects, has been sought (Goosen and Klugman 1996).

Another fundamental dimension of this discussion is the role of religion and spirituality in counselling. Religion and culture are often inextricably linked. As such, in the implementation of cross-cultural counselling, the inclusion of religion is unavoidable. In fact, in the implementation of general counselling, religion is as important and omission in this regard may be problematic. Mattson (1994) and Genia (1994: 71), for example, observe that traditional secular psychotherapy often fails to meet the needs of religious clients and indicate a need for counsellors to become actively involved in efforts towards rapprochement between religion and psychotherapy. In this regard, Genia provides educational recommendations that would enhance this process. Welwood (1984:64-66) has also noted the importance of spirituality in facilitating healing processes. He contends that through spirituality a person can let go of old behavioural patterns and develop new ways of being to attain positive emotional transformation.

Two recent empirical studies relay the importance of religion in counselling. Langston, Privette and Vodanovich (1994) acknowledge the importance of religion in counselling as part of a research study they conducted to investigate mental health values of clergy involved in religious counselling. The study itself focuses on the mental health values of the clergy, which was also measured in relation to the same values in secular therapists. However, as the writers indicate, this is one way of

clarifying a path for collaborative efforts between religion and psychotherapy. In a similar research study Privette, Quackenbos and Bundrick (1994) probed lay views of religious values in counselling and preferences for religious or secular counselling. They confirmed the importance of religion in therapy and the need for the ready availability of such counselling services. Their findings additionally show that certain therapeutic methods for particular problems were preferred, e.g. religious counselling was preferred for marriage and family problems and non-religious counselling for mental illness. Further, some respondents felt that secular counsellors could not help with religious issues. Indications on the whole though were that religion in counselling and psychotherapy was desirable.

The above discussion presents a spectrum of views that validate and encourage the use of culture and religion in counselling. In the context of Islamic counselling, these are encouraging expressions. It provides a platform and a rationale from which to begin to develop an Islamic counselling and psychotherapy methodology. It gives Islamic counselling a firm academic location, which can accommodate varied levels of this discipline, whether theoretical or practical, cultural or modern, as would unfold in this paper. While there is an overall need to develop cross-cultural counselling systems, the South African context lends greater support to this notion. As Axelson has pointed out, cross-cultural and multicultural counselling is part of democratic societies. As an emerging democracy and cognisant of the history of South Africa, efforts in this regard need to be accelerated. Islamic counselling is thus in the ideal environment to be both developed into a formal discourse, and to serve the needs of a democratic society at the level of diversity and cross-cultural social intervention.

1.3 A historical study of Islamic counselling and psychotherapy

Islamic counselling, while yet to be articulated into a formal discipline, is not a new concept. This is evident when exploring the roots of Islamic counselling. When studying the historical impetus of Islamic counselling, a distinct trend emerges that directs this discipline into two defined areas of inquiry. These areas are here identified as cultural and professional perspectives on Islamic counselling. In the former, counselling is not an explicit exercise, rather it is alluded to in the religio-cultural rituals of Muslim communities. These practices are herein also referred to as implicit Islamic counselling. In the case of the latter, the major focus is an emerging discussion of Islamic counselling as a formal discourse, comparable with mainstream, predominantly western counselling paradigms. Separate overviews of these two perspectives follow:

1.3.1 Islamic Counselling: Cultural Perspectives

It is often highlighted that if counselling is equated with giving advice and guidance then it dates back to the beginning of time, having an array of practitioners including shamans and sangomas, friends and family, prophets, priests and soothsayers. Islamic counselling from a cultural perspective finds itself located in this tradition. Counselling is an implicit process and commonly manifests as part of ritual healing practices. Even though these practices do not constitute formal counselling, it has been shown to hold the same therapeutic value as mainstream counselling approaches. Here Islam merges with age-old cultural traditions of Muslim societies, and is

expressed in whichever ritual is performed to effect healing of the "client". In this sense, the practice is Islamically, universally applicable since it integrates Islamic principles into its system. However, at a cultural level, it may be unique to a particular Muslim community's geography, culture, etc. and therefore ideally suited only to that specific culture. As an illustration this could be expressed through, for example, trying to think of a religious visit to a saint's tomb on Robben Island, in comparison to the same exercise undertaken by Arabs in an inland area of the Middle East. The following three case studies succinctly capture the aforementioned points.

Graham and Al-Krenāwī (1996) who support the notion of religio-cultural integration in helping processes argue that Islamic traditional and cultural healing methods can reveal intervention principles consistent with modern helping models. This approach can also be used in conjunction with modern helping methodologies to facilitate the healing process with clients. In a comparative analysis of religious healing in a Canadian Protestant and a Negev Muslim Bedouin society, the role of the Dervish as traditional healer working within an Islamic and cultural framework, is a provocative case that they present to substantiate their argument.

The Bedouin is a Muslim tribal society, amongst whom traditional models of healing have existed even before their conversion to Islam. This community, in addition to having access to modern health and social services, seeks as well the assistance of traditional Bedouin helpers, both male and female, who specialise in different areas of physical and mental health problems. The Dervish is the particular traditional healer who treats mental health and social problems. S/he relies heavily on Islam to affect

change in the “client” and thus the authors note:

Islamic religion has had a profound influence, providing a methodology, epistemology, and a power for those being helped to believe in the efficacy of the helping process, as it is seen to be God’s will as expedited by the Dervish. Dervish helping, then, is an unstigmatising and legitimised aspect of its natural helping system. Dervish terminology, which is based on Bedouin culture, is discernible to the Bedouin client who may not be familiar with western psychiatric/psychosocial nomenclature (pg.35)

In the helping process the Dervish relies on a repertoire of ritualistic communication with the spiritual world. Interventions are based on dialogue with the spirits, invocation of saints for assistance, prayer, reading the Qurān, playing music, dancing, and beating spirits out of the “clients” body. The “client” is also encouraged to visit saint’s tombs and to follow Islamic principles throughout the course of recovery. The inclusion of a healing dimension beyond the physical self, which finds its expression in a popular motif of spirit possession, is stark. This discussion is covered in more depth in the two cases cited hereafter.

In a follow-up study of their observations, Graham and Al-Krenāwī (1997) indicate that when patients from non-western societies are referred to western psychiatry for treatment, they do not abandon their perceptions, culture or belief systems of disease or medicine. Where this is overlooked, or mental health practitioners are unfamiliar with a patient’s culture, miscommunication between the client and practitioner results, which lead to problems in therapy. They present an example of a collaborative effort between modern therapeutic models and engaging the help of a Dervish to assist a Bedouin psychiatric patient, which was successfully implemented, leading to the full recovery of the patient. In fact, based on the modern health care system alone, the

patient was incorrectly diagnosed. Only with the additional help of the Dervish was the patient cured who in turn participated successfully in both counselling systems in follow-up treatment, before being discharged.

The second study on implicit Islamic counselling comes from Smith (1995: 76-79). He discusses a case of Islamic traditional healing in India, as an example of what he calls sacred psychotherapeutics in traditional and pre-modern cultures. Reflecting on the practices of an Indian spiritual healer, he observes that the “counsellor” works in an assumptive world, loosely connected to Qurānic authority, and based on a demonological idiom. Here mental illness is understood in terms of possession by spirits or *Jinn*. *Jinn* possession occurs either through sorcery or on account of the *Jinn's* own desire for a person. The result is incapacitating physical and psychological symptoms that interfere with the personal, social and spiritual well being of the person.

In the treatment process, sacred scripture and invocation of God’s names is important. Mythico-religious use of geometric and natural symbols as well as an array of talismans and amulets to protect the “client” and avert the spirits adds to the efficacy of the healing process. Citing a successful treatment case of the healer, Smith notes that Islamic religious resources can be therapeutically and effectively used in helping processes. Healing is reinforced by a “therapeutic milieu”. The healer’s venue, the mosque, radiates sacred transformative space. Also his/her reputation, and a belief by both the “client” and the healer, that the healer is a channel for the Divine in diagnoses and treatment, enhances effective treatment intervention.

For Smith, this “counselling” method gives descriptive evidence of historical and cultural precedents for the effective use of religious resources for psychotherapy. While the language is different to that employed in Western psychological idiom, the alleviation of symptoms and the restoration of personal and social functioning are as effective. He cautions though, that this approach is essentially grounded in an Islamic cosmology and may only be effective in this religiously rich context.

The last case study is based on Moroccan ethnopsychiatry discussed by Crapanzano (1973) who did a comprehensive analysis of spirit possession and treatment among the *Ḥamadsha*, a religious brotherhood in Morocco. This analysis, unlike the previous two that is applicable more generally except for location, clearly highlights an earlier point that implicit Islamic counselling can be highly culturally specific. The *Ḥamadsha* are members of a diverse, predominately Arab religious brotherhood who trace their spiritual heritage to two Moroccan saints. Their area of expertise is healing, and as Crapanzano notes:

The *Ḥamadsha* are not just curers but successful curers at that, in terms of the standards their society sets and, in some instances, in terms of the standards set by modern medicine. They are able to effect, often dramatically, the remission of symptoms - paralysis, mutism, sudden blindness, severe depressions, nervous palpitations, paraesthesias, and possession-which led the patient or his family initially to seek their help (pg. 4).

The *Ḥamadsha* are particularly renowned for curing spirit (*jinn / jnun* (pl.) possession. The existence of *junun* is attested to in the Quran, and at a popular level is thought of spiritual beings composed of vapour or flames. They are imperceptible to the senses but have the capacity to make themselves visible in various forms, e.g. animal. *Jnun*

may be both male and female and are believed to physically strike or possess a person, quite incidentally, with the person her/himself ignorant of a misdeed that leads to such an affliction.

The *Ḥamadsha* employ two important rituals designed to cure the sick person, which as the writer opines, function as a system of therapy in as far as it employs a structured set of procedures to rehabilitate individuals. The first is pilgrimage to the tombs of their saints. The aim of this visit is to obtain the blessing (*baraka*) of a saint thought to have intercessionary power with God and as such, able to grant special favours to the “client”. This ritual may include animal sacrifice, Qurānic recitation, incense burning and participants often eagerly anticipate instruction and guidance from a saint through dreams.

The second ritual is the performance of the *Ḥadra*, an ecstatic dance for men, that involve self-mutilation through head slashing, in which the “client” participates. Crapanzano notes that this practice contains elements consistent with therapeutically effective elements of Western psychotherapy. The person is central in his own cure by participating in preparations for the dance; he is offered group support by other participants in this ritual; the saints and *jnun* provides a symbolic schema for interpreting the “clients” experiences, which objectify the therapeutic relationship and allow for better management of “counsellor” / “client” relations; a “client” is provided with a new social status, which brings a change in his social identity and self-image as well as expands his social networks. This applies only if initiation into the *Ḥamadsha* cult is included in the healing process, which happens when it is not possible to

restore a distressed individual to his previous condition; and emotional and unconscious issues are resolved or acted out. This occurs through the state of trance induced by the *Ḥadra*. The “client” is subjected to an extreme state of suggestibility that allow for erasure of undesirable behaviour and the learning of new coping ways.

Crapanzano relates both rituals to an underlying anxiety rooted in a conflictual father / son relationship. He suggests that in Arab culture a son is expected to be submissive to his father, the dominant figure in a household whose authority is unquestionable. He is simultaneously expected to live up to this same male ideal especially in relation to his spouse and children. He therefore has to be both submissive and assertive, or conceptually, both female and male. Tension due to an inability to meet the demand of this male role and an unarticulated femininity finds its expression in the *Ḥadra* and obtaining the saint’s *baraka*.

The *Ḥadra* provides the individual with an opportunity to discharge tensions of this dilemma in a socially acceptable manner where feelings of inadequacy and femininity are transformed and the “client” is able to live up to expected male behaviour. It is therefore not unusual that affliction is usually by an arch female spirit (*jinniyya*), *Āisha Qandisha*. She symbolises the feminine aspect that has to be overcome or integrated into the self. In the *Ḥadra* the “client” slashes his head as the spirit dictates, which then not only leaves the patient but is also transformed into the “clients” support. However, it is the saint’s *baraka* as symbolic of the masculine that is the curative element to transform the feminine aspect of *Āisha Qandisha*. The two rituals then work together to effect a cure for the “client”.

The above case studies clearly show how Islamic counselling is practised at an implicit level. In examining a historical base for Islamic counselling from a cultural perspective it is difficult to discern an exact series of events or facts to say for example "this is where it all started". Cultural practices are inherent in any society from its mythological beginnings through to its historical development to the present. Highlighting cases of this nature serve, more importantly, to enhance the knowledge base of a particular discipline and make information available that encourages processes to be more amenable to the unique needs of those it seeks to serve.

These implicit counselling practices add weight to the rationale for Islamic counselling in a modern context. They provide guidelines and prescriptions of what is expected in Islamic cultural counselling. However, modern clients do not necessarily want to participate in such practices. A more explicitly defined method of Islamic counselling therefore needs to be formulated and conceptualised. The practices discussed in this section identify considerations that should be borne in mind when working with Muslim clients. In fact, they may even hold some elements for a general conceptual framework that can be utilised in working with a range of cultural client systems. These considerations could be articulated in the form of needs analyses where the counsellor determines a treatment method that includes responses to questions like: Does the client have a conception of cultural healing? Should a traditional, cultural or spiritual healer be included in the counselling process? etc. When the counsellor is cognisant of these factors and draws on this information in the best interest of clients, the counselling process can become more constructive in meeting the needs of cultural client systems. It facilitates democratic practices in

healing processes and is a mechanism for representative social service intervention.

1.3.2 Islamic counselling: Professional Perspectives

Islamic counselling and psychotherapy from a modern perspective is of recent origin. Few scholars have addressed this area of study in a significant way, beyond assertions that Islamic counselling needs to be developed into a well structured discourse that captures the breath and spirit of Islam, in helping people. Contributions usually respond to the presence of mainstream counselling paradigms as a dominant force in counselling and social intervention. To contextualise this discussion an overview of counselling and psychotherapy is fitting.

Counselling and psychotherapy is generally understood as processes of intervention that involve help and healing in the study and practice of social service delivery. At a professional level, counselling is defined by processes in which counsellors interact with clients to assist them to learn about themselves, deal with their environments, and understand the roles and responsibilities inherent in these relations (Capuzzi and Gross: 1997).

According to Glosoff and Rockwell (1997: 3-10) the counselling profession evolved at the turn of the twentieth century in the United States in response to rapid industrialisation and urbanisation with its concomitant human resource needs and humanitarian concerns. A confluence of social and economic problems together with a milieu of a new and emerging democracy resulted in increased pressure to assist

people to make choices in various areas of their lives. Frank Parsons, a pioneer of the vocational guidance movement of this time, and instrumental in addressing the prevailing concerns through formal vocational counselling, is credited with giving professional counselling its historical impetus. He is often referred to as the father of guidance and his role in the history of counselling is widely accepted.

From a global perspective, this view is radically challenged by Carson and Altai (1994: 197-205) who locate the roots of modern concepts of vocational counselling to a tenth century Iraqi text, the *Rasa'il Ikhwān al-Safā wa-Khillan al-Wafa* or Treatises of the Brothers of Purity. They identify this text as the earliest in Arabic concerned with the fundamental tenets of Parson's work. It contains fifty-one Arabic treatises written around 955 AD by Muslim reformers from the Basra region of Iraq who called themselves the *Ikhwān al-Safā*. In attempts to reform the sciences in the tenth century Islamic world they surveyed all the learned disciplines and classified it under two headings viz. traditional and foreign.

The former pertained to disciplines based on the Quran, the latter to those emerging from human invention. Vocational psychology was located in the foreign science category. Its most important treatises were: Scientific and practical occupations and their goals; The human character and type of personality; Body construction; and Human capacity and knowledge in the sciences. Carson and Altai conclude that the basic elements of vocational counselling did not begin with Parsons in 1909, rather it was identified a millennium ago by Islamic philosophers.

The history of formal psychotherapy also dates to the turn of the century. It is related to the works of Sigmund Freud a physician and neurologist who developed one of the earlier and more influential approaches to psychotherapy viz. psychoanalysis or the analysis of the psyche. In this process, the role of emotions in causing psychological and emotional disturbances is central to understanding and helping clients. Psychotherapy is described thus as a method designed to aid individuals to recognise their potential, learning how to utilise this potential, and working towards removing various obstacles that block full realisation of their capabilities (Fabrikant 1994).

Although counselling and psychotherapy are defined here as distinct categories this is not the norm. It is commonly perceived of as two separate but intimately related disciplines. The nature of this relationship has resulted in an enduring tension as to whether counselling and psychotherapy should be treated separately or as one discourse, a discussion that Patterson (1974) has called an "old saw". Baruth and Huber (1985) state that some professionals agree that no distinction between counselling and psychotherapy exists while others seek to differentiate between the two. They quote Hansen, Stevic and Warner (1982) to indicate that if differentiation is sought, the two disciplines are viewed as related ways of helping people but existing along opposite ends of a continuum. Here counselling is seen as directed at personal change in relation to specific role problems, while psychotherapy attempts to restructure personality. Ivey (1980:13-14) likewise observe that counselling is concerned with assisting normal people to achieve their goals more effectively. Psychotherapy in turn is a longer-term process levelled at changes in personality structure. Often though such distinctions are vague in practice since intervention can

move between both counselling and psychotherapy.

Patterson (1959) agrees that there is no consensus regarding distinctions between counselling and psychotherapy. The basic principles and goals of counselling and psychotherapy are the same. However, differences in techniques do exist. In counselling client faces reality problems on a conscious level accompanied by normal anxiety and the discussion is at a more rational level. In psychotherapy however internal conflicts are more prominent and emotionally intense, which necessitates the use of varied techniques. He offers a definition that incorporates both counselling and psychotherapy:

Psychotherapy is a process involving interpersonal relationships between a therapist and one or more patients or clients by which the former employs psychological methods based on systematic knowledge of the human personality in attempting to improve the mental health of the latter (pg.13).

To resolve the above dilemma most scholars treat counselling and psychotherapy interchangeably and equivalently, a position that is employed in this paper as well.

If Islamic counselling is thought of in the above terms, it could be assumed that what would constitute Islamic counselling, is a mergence of the above elements of counselling and psychotherapy with central tenets of Islam. This is acceptable in as far as it provides a broad purpose for Islamic counselling. Islam is linked with an overarching intent of helping clients attain positive change in their lives. However, beyond this point, as counselling methods take on various philosophical persuasions and objectives, such an analysis is simplistic and quite problematic. The nature and

scope of Islam as an independent religious worldview and debates on Islamic counselling that call for the rejection of western counselling theories substantiate the latter claim, the intricacies of which, are relayed in the following exposition on current trends in Islamic counselling.

Islamic counselling and psychotherapy does not exist as a well-structured theory of intervention that provide practices and procedures on how best to intervene in the lives of clients. It has also yet to be formulated into a working definition to guide intervention in the practice of Islamic counselling. In the absence of such guidelines, writings on Islamic counselling concentrate on stressing the need to develop an Islamic counselling discourse fundamentally based on Islam. The application of Islamic principles to theories outside the realm of Islam or using concepts from mainstream counselling to inform an Islamic approach is therefore discouraged. What emerges then from such scholarly contributions is an intense apologetic stance on how Islamic counselling should be articulated. In effect, such apologetics often overlook and overshadow the merits of Islam in influencing counselling and social intervention.

Key proponents of this view are Badri and Jāfarī, two of very few scholars who directly address the topic of Islamic counselling. Their views are here first examined and then evaluated together. Badri (1979) highlights problems that Muslim psychologists face in the practice of psychology, the most significant being that Muslim psychologists confine themselves to western psychological frameworks. He cautions against this tendency and argues that Western psychologies like psychoanalysis and personality theory, foster distorted concepts of humankind. They

are rooted in materialism and culturally bound to a western culture and therefore not applicable to Islam's unique culture.

Badri's approach tries to refute western counselling methodologies and present counselling that is based on Islam as a feasible alternative. He does concede that western psychotherapy and psychiatry have efficient counselling techniques to deal with psychological suffering and behaviour modification, but adds that on closer examination these techniques are traceable to Islamic sources. Accordingly, he proposes that devout Muslims use these positive aspects of western counselling to develop Islamic psycho-spiritual counselling methodologies to facilitate positive psycho-spiritual attitudes and personalities in Muslim clients. He provides a rationale for its service to Islam saying:

It will be a pity if these methods are not made use of, under the guise of we don't need any Western Kāfir psychology in our Muslim society...In fact, the practising Muslim psychologist can go out of his way to use these therapeutic, as well as any other useful psychological, techniques for the cause of Islam (pg.77-78).

Badri's discussion is based on a broad overview of Islamic psychology. In 1996 he writes specifically on Islamic counselling, but maintains his focus of almost twenty years earlier. He derides western counselling and psychology as scientific and devoid of religion. According to him, it promotes uncensored sexual interpretation of unconscious motives and harnesses amorality, non-judgementalism and empathy, to the extent of accepting negative client behaviour without censure.

This impacts negatively on human responsibility and encourages an environment that

is not conducive to negotiating religious morality that is fundamental to Islam. He describes the process of Islamic counselling as an alternative:

Islamic counselling and psychotherapy has an ancient tradition of changing the behaviour and conduct of clients, sinners, evil doers and patients by cognitive and behavioural psycho-spiritual methods which rely greatly on the virtuous and exalted personality of the master, sheikh or spiritual leader. Counselling as an Islamic endeavour is not an activity left to a few specialised persons. It is in fact a binding responsibility of every Muslim and one of the major duties of the Islamic State. Many aspects of what we now refer to as Counselling is in reality part of the Quranic revelation concerning *al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*, that is, the obligatory duty of urging people to do good and to reject evil (Pg. 184-185).

In addition, he notes that Islam is a way of life where the spiritual interacts with all aspects of human functioning. It is deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of Muslims who have an Islamic model built into their psychic systems. This model contains the positive aspects of the Prophet and is a spiritual reservoir that should ideally be used by counsellors to treat clients. Detailed instructions on implementing successful therapy can also be elicited from the Sirah of the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW), and his traditions. Another source is the biographies of the Prophet's companions that Badri contends is replete with counselling principles consistent with modern counselling techniques.

Jāfari's (1993) argument follows in a similar vein. She criticises western counselling methods as inappropriate to an Islamic context and inadequate to serve the needs of a Muslim clientage. To support her claim, she traces contemporary western counselling to the post renaissance era, a time that witnessed severe negative reactions to the church, faith and spiritualism. This milieu resulted in a separation of physical and

spiritual phenomena and a diminished role of the church, which in turn encouraged the development of counselling. Counselling then came into being as alternative therapeutic healing models to church related doctrines of pity and help, in a society where secularisation was on the increase.

Given the latter, western counselling has its inception in a particular time, which gives it a distinct orientation, identity and focus. Its knowledge base, techniques and practices address the demands of western societies within its own socio-moral value structure and are therefore not relevant in Islamic settings. She acknowledges that Islamic counselling as a professional discipline and practice do not exist and urge for its development in this form. She provides guidelines to formulate an Islamic counselling model: Islamic counselling should consider Divine revelation and its scholarly interpretation and have as its ultimate goal the development of an Islamic personality. This personality needs to be healthy, balanced and directed towards pleasing God so that negative behaviour can be successfully overcome. Ultimately, absolute and constant contentment, which is possible through a consonance of the human psyche with God, should be sought. Means to realise this goal include the constant remembrance of God (*thikr*), truthfulness (*sidq*) and sincerity (*ikhlas*), which enhances physical and spiritual growth. She concludes, in the context of her discussion, that western counselling is logically not applicable to an Islamic milieu. Islamic counselling though is based on universal beliefs and value systems and are generally more applicable to varied environments.

In their attempts to construct an Islamic counselling paradigm both Badri and Jafarī

employ an apologetic stance. They defend Islam against western approaches and assert the superiority of Islamic counselling methods. By accepting the terms of reference of western counselling however, they simultaneously deride and affirm western counselling approaches. This is particularly true for Badri. By implication their contributions present at times defensive, then contradictory, and sometimes amenable to mainstream counselling. The role of Islam in an Islamic counselling method is then lost in a text that emphasises a fundamental return to Islam and a rejection of Western ideologies without a substantial Islamic counselling base to support this view. While a return to Islam for Islamic counselling is indeed necessary, efforts need to be directed to more pertinent details of Islam and focused attempts that can see the concrete realisation of an Islamic counselling methodology. Both Badri and Jāfarī do in fact, contribute to this process. In Badri's description of Islamic counselling, he includes guidance by a *shaykh*, relying on prophetic sources and the concept of an Islamic psychic system. Jāfarī's guidelines for Islamic counselling allude to an important tradition in Islam viz. Sufism or the Islamic mystical tradition of Islam, that is credited with providing the basis for an Islamic psychology. Sufism has addressed key issues of human functioning as relates the context of this paper, and Badri and Jāfarī begin to identify principles that can be used to develop an Islamic counselling theory. A comprehensive discussion of Sufism and its unique endeavour in this regard follow in chapter two.

1.4. *Evaluation*

In an overall assessment of this chapter the following can be discerned. Islamic

counselling as a professional discipline requires formulation into a theory and definition. Based on a rationale for cross-cultural counselling, such theoretical development of Islamic counselling is unquestionable and efforts in this direction should be encouraged. Two distinct trends emerge to enhance this process, a religio-cultural knowledge base and modern scholarly contributions. At the religio-cultural level a conceptual framework is provided that locates Islamic counselling in a rich, cultural heritage. At a modern level however, the possibilities of an Islamic counselling methodology are not always accurately reflected. A historical impetus for professional Islamic counselling, based on the contributions of tenth century Muslim scholars as in the works of the *Ikhwān al-Safā*, is however discernible. This has been championed by more explicit formulations for Islamic counselling.

To conclude, a tentative working definition for Islamic counselling is suggested that capture the essence of this chapter. It is designed to guide the discussion towards a theory and definition of Islamic counselling further and is subject to change as the content of this essay unfolds.

Islamic counselling refers to practices and procedures that seek to effect positive change in the lives of clients. It is a religio-cultural paradigm that integrates key tenets of Islam into its approach and is geared towards promoting personal and social well being of clients.

CHAPTER TWO

Developing a theoretical framework for Islamic counselling

2.1 The role of theory in counselling

Having devised conceptual guidelines and a tentative definition for Islamic counselling, this chapter is designed to develop a theoretical framework for Islamic counselling. A theoretical rationale is a necessary part of counselling processes and is strongly linked to efficiency in helping relations. Counselling theories provide systematic ways of viewing the helping process and according to McWhirter, McWhirter and Herrmann (1997:103-104) are tools to guide counsellors in their exploration of the client's world. Theories, they say, are hypothetical explanations for observed events and serve to make the organisation of information more usable, communicable and practical. It imposes order on observed events and presents a possible world that can be checked against the real world. A theory therefore facilitates greater understanding of the client's world and provides a working model to examine appropriate intervention and change strategies for the client.

In Islamic counselling however, a theoretical framework to guide intervention is indistinct. To facilitate the process of theory building in Islamic counselling this chapter examines a range of relevant Islamic literary sources and extracts from this information fundamental principles that can be integrated into an Islamic counselling theory. The guidelines required for this exercise are located in mainstream western

counselling paradigms. Key elements, constituted in these paradigms that make it theoretically and practically sound, are isolated and used to evaluate Islamic information. By highlighting these core constructs and contrasting it with Islamic sources, a theoretical framework for Islamic counselling is proposed.

2.2 *Counselling theories: Core theoretical constructs for intervention*

In popular counselling approaches, theories encompass three core constructs. It assumes an understanding of human nature; it defines therapeutic goals, and it explores techniques to maximise the therapeutic encounter. Thus, Baruth and Huber write:

It is our conviction that the view of human nature you possess from your already internalised personal philosophy of helping will determine the major external approach to counselling and psychotherapy you will ultimately choose and develop. This view of human nature forms the foundation for your interactions with the client. Along with a therapist's perceptions of therapeutic goals and the therapeutic process, it forms the theoretical basis for helping clients (pg. 22).

A number of counselling theories have developed using this "formula" of human nature, therapeutic goals and techniques. Psychoanalysis, behaviourism, existentialism and cognitive therapy are four counselling approaches that illustrate this methodology. These approaches are commonly categorised into overarching schools of thought each with its own sub categories of counselling models (see appendix 1) and constitute the major paradigms of mainstream western counselling discourse.

In a survey of these approaches Ivey (1980) and Corey (1996) note that in psychoanalysis human nature is deterministic and defined by instincts and unconscious motives of early childhood psychosexual development. Personality growth functions within a fundamental construct of the id, ego and the superego. The id is a primordial, instinctual energy, guided by pleasure and directed towards unhindered expression. The ego is ruled by rationality and the superego is based on a morality principle that strives for perfection. Together the id and superego act as two psychological systems to control the expression of the id. This personality interplay is informed by a mythological construct, the Oedipus complex, which entails a child desiring a parent of the opposite sex and being threatened by the parent of the same sex. Infantile conflict and anxiety manifest later in life and a range of unconscious defence mechanisms is employed to allay these fears.

The ultimate goal of psychotherapy therefore is the attainment of a complete personality reconstruction based on making unconscious activity conscious. By gaining insight of present experiences as located in past events, creative developments and new ways of relating to oneself and others are effected. A key technique employed is free association or talking on whatever comes to mind. Interpretation of this material is central to the counselling process and all additional counselling techniques like dream analysis and analysis of resistance and transference, are used to facilitate this interpretation.

Behaviourism rests on a scientific view of human behaviour, and is concerned with observable action and measurable behaviour. In this approach, learnt behaviour and

experiences define human nature. Individuals are neither inherently positive nor negative but have equal potential for either state based on social learning processes. Interpersonal difficulties are thought to exist due to ineffective learnt patterns of behaviour, which can be modified by relearning new behaviours based on the training techniques of this approach.

The broad goal of behaviour therapy is to create new conditions for learning so that a client's maladaptive behaviour can improve. The therapeutic process rests on additional goals of operationalisation of behaviour, functional analysis, and the selection of socially appropriate goals and behavioural changes. In this process, a client's behaviour is concretised, e.g. emotions are linked to observable bodily tensions. An understanding of how a client's behaviour occurs in her/his environment is sought to comprehend cause and effect dynamics underlying overt behaviour, and an intervention plan is devised based on desired social goals and behavioural changes. A client-specific treatment plan is determined based on techniques selected from a range of options that include relaxation, assertion training, systematic desensitisation, modelling, positive reinforcement and charting or monitoring change.

Existentialism, on which Hoeller (1990) provides a good introduction and history, and which is also referred to as the existential-humanistic tradition, is rooted in philosophy and concerned with human existence. In particular, it explores the meaning and place of a person in the world. Human nature in this approach is positive. It is characterised by self-awareness, freedom and the ability to influence one's destiny to create a meaningful life for oneself. The key concept of existentialism is thus

identified as “being-in-the-world” that implies a reciprocal interaction between an individual and the universe. Where separation from the world occurs, alienation results that reflect not only separateness from others and the universe, but also an inability to act in relationship.

A central goal of counselling is to enable an alienated client to see herself / himself in relation to the world. To facilitate this analysis, individuals are defined by three components viz. *eigenwelt* (the person and his/her body), *mitwelt* (other people in the world) and *umwelt* (the biological and physical world). The person may feel alienation in any one of these areas and experience existential anxiety, which is compounded by personal responsibility in the face of uncertainty and mortality. Unlike most therapies, the existential approach does not have a well-defined set of techniques. While techniques from other orientations are applied, this approach posits that it is the quality of the client/therapist relationship, based on a philosophy of what it means to be human, that heals.

The cognitive approach, according to George (1981) and Baruth and Huber (1985), is premised on the belief that cognitions are the most important determinants of human emotion and behaviours. Human nature has dual possibilities in its potential to equally acquire adaptive, rational thinking or maladaptive, irrational thinking. In counselling, it is assumed that dysfunctional thinking, e.g. over-generalisation, exaggeration, faulty deductions and unproven assumptions, need to be eliminated for the helping process to be successful. It is this goal to which the therapeutic process is directed. Varied techniques usually of a short-term nature are employed to affect

positive change. These techniques, found in the counselling methods of this approach, include transactional analysis, script and game analysis, and implementing tasks to monitor and evaluate self-defeating thoughts and replace it with adaptive thinking patterns.

The above exposition shows how concepts of human nature, therapeutic goals and techniques are applied to formulate counselling theories. In addition, it identifies the broad area of traditional western counselling methodologies, from which it is often asserted that most counselling methods have developed. It is however by no means representative of the many counselling methods that exists. In fact, writers often exclude psychoanalysis in their works as a viable counselling approach, given its decreasing appeal and the emergence of new innovative counselling theories. This method of using guidelines of human nature, therapeutic goals and techniques will now be extended to Islamic literary sources to extrapolate principles for an Islamic counselling theoretical framework. This process is here not explicit. It is instead a study of information that alludes to such constructs that can be extracted and integrated into an Islamic counselling theoretical framework.

2.3 Theory building in Islamic counselling

The notion of isolating concepts of human nature, therapeutic goals and counselling techniques in Islamic literary sources, to build on a theoretical framework for Islamic counselling, is a novel exploratory exercise. It rests on the premise that the formulation of an Islamic counselling theory is possible using the above core tenets as guidelines. This methodology is apposite, given that Islamic counselling as an

independent religio-cultural method will form part of spectra of counselling methods that are similarly defined. As such, this approach allows for consistency in method. Its application though, is not meant to limit the possibilities for defining Islamic counselling theory, instead it provides the groundwork from which further theoretical development is possible.

In Islam, information abounds directly from the Qurān and the Prophetic example that point to an understanding of human beings and their role, functioning and well being on earth. In fact, one could say that at the heart of the Qurān is an understanding of this multiplicity of humankind to which Divine guidance is directed. However, as Ba-Yūnus (1984:73) points out, the Qurān and the Sunnah do not constitute social sciences, rather the basic assumptions of Islamic social sciences should instead be derived from these sources. Many scholars have undertaken such analyses of Qurānic and Prophetic information to consolidate concepts of human nature and functioning. Their analyses are the main focus of the following section, which seeks to establish the grounds for an Islamic theory of counselling. Qurānic and Prophetic injunctions are not quoted verbatim. (Appendix 2 gives a list of Qurānic verses commonly used to support findings in this field).

Discussion on Islamic counselling is located in the field of Islamic psychology, a discipline in its formative stages, which is informed by Sufism, the mystical tradition of Islam (See Appendix 3 for an overview). In fact, an automatic association of Sufism with Islamic psychology is commonplace in writings on both disciplines. Sufism is therefore the main resource for developing concepts of Islamic psychology

and counselling and as such, share a similar overarching theoretical status as the counselling approaches discussed earlier.

Sufi writings in turn rely on information from Islamic scholars of the eleventh and twelfth century who have produced distinguished works in the fields of medicine, philosophy, ethics and related sciences. Of particular import are the works of Ibn Sīnā (d.1037) and al-Ghazzālī (d.1111). Their treatises on human nature and functioning signify a start, at least as far back as can be discerned to date, of scholastic activity on these topics as manifest in Islam. Albeit that this paper argues that a well articulated theoretical framework for Islamic counselling does not exist, current Sufi contributions do constitute attempts in this regard. The most coherent attempt is from Laleh Bakhtiar who purports to present an Islamic personality paradigm and a theory of counselling. Given this assertion an in-depth evaluation of her approach is warranted. However, before doing so an understanding of human nature in Islam and scholarly contributions in this regard, is presented.

Any Islamic interpretation of human nature is in the first instance located in the Qurān. The Qurānic cosmology of human nature is rooted in a primordial covenant elicited from humankind to serve God, of which Espisito (1991) writes:

The essence of human uniqueness lies in one's vocation as God's representative on earth. God has given people the earth as a divine trust (33:72); they are thus His vicegerents or agents on earth (2:30, 35:39) to whom God has made all creation subservient (16:12-14). It is on the basis of how this vicegerency is executed, or how God's will in history is realised or actualised, that a person will be rewarded or punished...It is here that we see the roots of Islamic ethics. God, ordains; humankind is to implement His will...As God's representatives, the measure of human actions, and indeed life, is the extent to which the Muslim contributes to the realisation of God's will on earth (pg. 28).

This concept, based on vicegerency of humankind, informs human nature within the overall Islamic context. At a human level, human nature includes spiritual and biological components. In a compilation of writings on Qurānic concepts on the human psyche, Ansārī (1992), Aḥmad (1992) and Ḥaq (1992) notes that the Qurān describes the human psyche by the terms *rūḥ* (spirit or soul), *nafs* (self), and *qalb* (heart). The *rūḥ* symbolises the Divine element breathed into humankind at creation, which places humankind in a superior position to the rest of creation. It has an intrinsic capacity for God-consciousness as well as an unlimited capacity to acquire knowledge. Detailed knowledge of the *rūḥ* however, is known only to God and is limited in human comprehension.

The *qalb* is the faculty of human personality capable of moral judgement, self-understanding and wisdom and is linked to the functions of the sensory organs. It is the spiritual core of human nature and is central in determining human behaviour. Overt behaviour is thus manifestations of the heart's states and conditions. If the functions of the heart are blocked, the sensory organs also lose their utility and a person is not able to function as a fully spiritual responsive being. The *nafs* is the third aspect of the human psyche. It consists of three states viz. *al-nafs al-ammārah bi al-su*, *al-nafs al-lawwāmah* and *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*. Moḥamed (1996) a South African pioneer of Islamic psychology in a discussion of the *nafs* delineates it as follows:

- 1) *Al-nafs al-ammārah*, or the commanding self is the lowest level of the *nafs*. It is the locus of egoistic drives, is prone to evil, and has a tendency towards gratifying biological and emotional needs.

- 2) *Al-nafs al-lawwāmah*. This is the reproachful self. It is a stage above the lower *nafs*, which provokes a sense of conscience and guides a person to inner truth and away from negative actions.
- 3) *Al-nafs al-muṭma'innah* or the contented self is the superior level of the *nafs*. It is achieved when a person is free from the carnal self and aspires to the highest levels of spiritual balance.

An additional concept, the *'aql* is highlighted by Amjad (1992) as part of the human psyche that regulates the faculties of the self. In total, the *rūh*, *qalb*, *nafs* and *'aql* constitute the human psyche. These terms are often referred to interchangeably in both English and Arabic, which does make definition unclear. However, the above overview, in the main, is a standard criterion of the human psyche, as a part of human nature, in Islam.

In addition to the notion of human nature as incorporating vicegerency and the human psyche, a third Qurānic concept strongly influences human nature. Known as *fiṭra*, this concept is comprehensively covered by Moḥamed (1996) who presents it as the overriding Islamic concept of human nature. He discusses it in the context of vicegerency and the human psyche but they are secondary to *fiṭra* that constitutes human nature.

Moḥamed describes *fiṭra* by different forms, e.g. as an inborn natural disposition, a primary motive, an active inclination, a spiritual instinct. It is essentially a component of human nature directed towards right action and submission to God. Various

scholarly interpretations of *fiṭra* exist, but as Moḥamed contends, no scholar, including himself, has produced a model interpretation of *fiṭra*. He selects for himself a positive interpretation of *fiṭra* as found in classical orthodox sources, which he defines first by a negative identification:

Fiṭra does not refer to man's outward behaviour; nor to his psyche, personality or character. A definition of *fiṭra* does not involve the role of man as an individual or a collectivity as such. Rather, *fiṭra* pertains to the deep, common essence of man. It is humankind's natural and universal innate predisposition for goodness and submission to One God (Pg. 32).

Based on this positive interpretation, *fiṭra* is part of the human spiritual composition that is unalterable and directed towards knowing God. It functions independently of evil, which is not part of human nature but external misguidance in the social environment. In the absence of evil, the spontaneous and natural actualisation of *fiṭra* can therefore occur. Moḥammed contradicts this position when he covers the psychological implications of *fiṭra* as expressed by the *nafs*. He notes that although humankind is born in a state of *fiṭra* s/he has a vulnerability to evil that is intrinsic in human nature, found in the *nafs*, which is the *Al-nafs al-ammārah*.

The *nafs* then is an aspect of human nature, which alongside positive qualities holds a negative tendency, capable of directing humankind to rebel against God. It is commonly asserted that the *nafs* is the focal point for human development based on movement from the lower self, *al-nafs al-ammārah* to the highest spiritual levels, *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*. From an Islamic perspective, this process symbolises the most important practical goal of humankind on earth, the completion of which sees a merging of the self with the spirit and the heart and constant God-consciousness is

attained. According to Moḥammed, this practical goal of liberation from the lower *nafs* to attain reunion of the self with the soul facilitates an ultimate goal of actualising *fiṭra*. However, the ideal to produce a synthesis between *fiṭra*, *rūḥ* and *nafs*, is questionable given his explanation of opposing tensions of good and evil as part of human nature. It implies that evil would instead have to be repressed or overcome but remains part of human nature with humankind forever prone to evil and continuously having to struggle to maintain a positive spiritual state of being.

In sum, the confluence of vicegerency, the human psyche and its components, and the notion of *fiṭra*, constitute an overarching structure of the Islamic concept of human nature. The integration of these components to reflect Divine unity or *Tawḥīd*, based on a natural inclination to God by overcoming the lower self to attain the virtues of the spirit, is the process that completes the Islamic position on human nature, behaviour and functioning. As such, human nature in Islam consists of both a concept and a process of development. Key factors that can positively impact on this process is human intellect, free will and Divine guidance.

It is this fundamental paradigm that is perpetuated and elaborated upon by various writers that form the basis of Islamic psychology. In Sufism the extension of this paradigm manifests in a practical process that provide a method for the achievement of Divine unity. Naṣr (1967: 145-153), a prolific exponent of Sufism, writes of this process as the integration of humankind. Dividing the human condition into body, mind and spirit, he argues that it is these elements that need to be integrated into a proper centre of being, where God as the ineffable Being resides. Only then can

humankind reflect her/his intrinsic Divine qualities and the oneness of God.

This process is facilitated by the Sufi spiritual way or *ṭarīqah*, usually a series of stages a person develops through to the Divine (See appendix 4 for list of stages). The methods to enhance the latter, are practice of the *Shari'ah* and performing the daily prayers in Islam. The ideal method though, would be to expand prayer so that one partakes in a continuous litany, known as *dhikr* (invocation) of which Nasr writes:

Sufism uses the quintessential form of prayer, the *dhikr* or invocation in which all otherness and separation from the Divine is removed and man achieves *Tawhīd*. The *dhikr* begins by gradually transforming man's psyche until finally it becomes man's real nature with which he identifies himself. With the help of the *dhikr*, ...man first gains an integrated soul, pure and whole like gold, and then in the *dhikr* he offers his soul to God in this supreme form of sacrifice (Pg. 150).

According to Naṣr this integration removes from humankind all tensions that stem from a natural urge for the Divine, until the goal of reflecting Divine unity is achieved.

In contrast, Raḥmān's (1980) extension of the Islamic paradigm of humankind concentrates on the social implications of human nature. According to him, the concept of vicegerency as expressed in fulfilling God's mission on earth is fundamental. The main goal of this mission is for humankind to create a just moral social order, which should eliminate corruption on earth. Thus, eradication of poverty, economic equity, strengthening the basic family unit and the Muslim community, in the context of commanding good and forbidding evil should be encouraged. Here personal and collective social responsibility and societal interaction

are pertinent, and the writer employs the term *jihād* to describe this human endeavour to create a just moral order. Congruent with this position, human personality needs to be nurtured as a creative, moral being, which renders it in service to God based on social action. This state is defined by *taqwa* that denote a fully integrated, whole personality. It includes protecting oneself against negative conduct, a positive sense of fear that emerge from a recognition of responsibility in this life and the hereafter, and a recognition of Gods judgement as the final judgement over human action.

A slightly divergent extension of the Islamic paradigm of human nature is presented by Saleem (1989: 75-81) who delineates human nature into actual and potential nature. Based on a Qurānic verse, he contends that actual nature consists of six innate desires, viz. love for women, sons, gold and silver, horses, cattle and land. This nature is inclined towards material welfare. However, given that human nature should instead be based on spiritual well being these desires need to function under God's commandment. Potential nature facilitates this process. It represents the conscience and four additional aspects of the soul, viz. conscience of right and wrong, recognition of God, insight into the behaviour of the psyche, and responsibility to bring about God's way on earth. The author notes that actual and potential nature posses different functions and remain in conflict. This conflict can be overcome for potential nature to reign, by following the prophetic example. For Saleem then, human nature is defined by material desire that should transform into spiritual desires, based on Prophetic example. The essence of his view is not different to those covered above, other than that he uses a different Qurānic verse in his interpretation.

The Islamic paradigm of human nature and functioning at cosmic, human and practical dimensions, discussed above, are also the core tenets of Sufism and which is expressed as Islamic psychology. It is exactly this paradigm that Laleh Bakhtiar presents as her Islamic theory of personality and counselling. Her approach is a replica of this Islamic paradigm to which she adds aspects of cosmology, numerology, astrology and similar sciences of Sufi origin, and which she expresses in the idiom of western counselling.

Bakhtiar's works rest on a series of three publications entitled, *God's will be done*. Volume 1 was published in 1993 and Volumes 2 and 3 in 1994. The first is the locus of her personality theory. She links Islamic psychology to the study of Ethics and Philosophy by scholars of the early Islamic period, notably Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazzālī, and renames it psychoethics. This psychoethics describes her perspective on personality: God breathed his spirit into humankind who accepted the trust of the universe. This constituted a covenant making humankind Divine representatives to implement God's way on earth, a duty that can be enhanced by two types of Divine guidance viz. a primordial guidance, *fiṭra* or acquired guidance as in revelation.

Focusing on the soul, she observes that it is a single substance having many functions and is described by the terms, heart, self, spirit and intellect. In its human form the soul is the self, which consists of three systems comprehensible by reason. The systems of the self need to be individually perfected, for a specific virtue attached to each to develop. Here Bakhtiar relays the concept of the *nafs*, using western counselling terminology. The following diagram contrasts her approach with classical

Sufi terms:

<i>Classical Sufism</i>	<i>Bakhtiar</i>	<i>Emotion acquired</i>
<i>Al-nafs al-ammārah</i>	The affective system	Temperance
<i>Al-nafs al-lawwāmah</i>	The behavioural system	Courage
<i>Al-nafs al-muṭma'innah</i>	The cognitive system	Wisdom

Bakhtiar repeats the explanation of the human psyche discussed earlier and forwards it as a personality theory. She includes a dimension of virtues, the acquisition of which reinforces the goal of psychoethics, to preserve one's *fiṭra*. If these emotions remain balanced under the cognitive system, a fourth overarching trait, justice is attained and a person is fully centred. In this state, one should ideally act in a manner that others benefit, by encouraging positive actions and preventing negative behaviour.

Bakhtiar's second volume is her theory of counselling that she presents as a model for moral healing. It is also designed as a self-help tool to spiritual bliss and has as its main goal spiritual chivalry, a process to attain nearness to God, and of which she writes:

Spiritual Chivalry (*futuwwah*) consists in the manifestation of the Light of the original nature (*fiṭrat Allah*) and its gaining mastery over the negative effects within the physical form. All positive traits become manifest within the self and all negative qualities disappear. The human being perseveres in these affairs until the force of the animal self (passions) is broken, its strength and negative traits overcome and firmness becomes the person's second nature. Then all kinds of temperance and courage become firmly rooted in him. All the varieties of wisdom and justice become manifest in him in actuality (Pg. 11-12).

This process is implemented by adherents known as spiritual warriors, using the Law and the Way to provide guidelines. It is also understood in terms of “the presence of God”, *wajh Allah*, a Sufi concept, which according to the writer is known in the West as the Enneagram. She does not define this term, but asserts that the Islamic equivalent is the greater struggle or *jihād al-akbar*. This struggle is between reason and the lower *nafs* that she refers to as an inner idol. This inner idol should be destroyed to remove hypocrisy, polytheism and diversion from *Tawhīd*. Given the central role of reason here, its development is advised at three levels: through inner spiritual processes (psychoethics); between the self and others (socioethics); and between the self and God (theoethics). This assists a person to contain human passions, encourage just interaction, and accept the duty of God’s representative on earth. The four aforementioned virtues are acquired, and belief in one God, the last day, charity and *taqwa* is strengthened. Here again Bakhtiar repeats the process of spiritual realisation as covered earlier by Naṣr’s perspective, using the *Shari’ah* or *ṭarīqah* as guidelines.

Additional techniques to facilitate this process are based on her postulation that the self is a microcosm of the macrocosmic universe. Rigorous self-examination of this relationship, through chanting, invocation and rhythmic breathing can advance moral perfection. She includes the use of numbers, geometry, letters, astrology and spiritual alchemy in her methodology, which she connects to the spiritual quest. The result is an intricate interplay of nature and the self. As an example, the self is equated with lead, a circle of unity, and a threefold division into cognition, perception and motivation. It can also be defined by natural elements like fire, water, and

qualities of God's names, the effects of which can be conveyed to society through the actions of the participant. She further assigns seven stages, each with a list of God's names, to the three levels of the *nafs* for invocation, to transform the *nafs* to perfection. (See Appendix 6 for an example). It is assumed that if each individual heals in this manner then society and communities can as a logical implication, likewise heal. She concludes by offering criteria to monitor interaction and relationships with others and to assist participants to determine their exact position in achieving this moral healing.

Bakhtiar's theory of personality and counselling is a clear repetition of an Islamic standard paradigm of human nature and well being that has its impetus in the Quran. It rests on the fundamental framework of vicegerency, human psyche and the goal of attaining Divine unity. At a scholarly level, this paradigm is rooted in the works of al Ghazzālī, in the *Iḥyā' ulūm-al-dīn*, The revival of religious learnings, discussed by 'Umar-ud-dīn (1997) and Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-najāt*, Book of Salvation translated by Raḥmān (1952). In a perusal of these works, all these and other concepts that scholars¹ on this topic cover, can be found. Concepts are transformed and redefined congruent with modern counselling and psychology. Bakhtiar's contribution in this respect is limited then to the Sufī perspective with an often random association of tenets of human nature in Islam with western counselling terminology. As a result she

¹ Various scholars have written articles that point specifically to the topics of Islamic psychology and counselling. However they are not always directly related to this discussion. A list of such articles is included in the bibliography for supplementary reading and to guide future research in Islamic counselling. These are from 'Obeid (1988), Khilji (1984), Kemp (1996), El 'azāyem and Hedāyat-dibā (1994), El 'Azāyem (1994), al-'Adāwī et al. (1997), Erfān (1978), Banawi and Stockton (1993), Ilyās (1992) and 'Alawī (1992). Additional scholarly contributions that are consistent with the discussion of Islamic counselling as discussed in this chapter are: Shariāti (1974), 'Azmi (1991), al-'Attas (1990) Haeri (1997) and Riaz (1992)

places fundamental counselling concepts in opposition to each other, e.g. affective, behavioural, and cognitive systems are western counselling schools of thought that she equates with the *nafs*. She thus defines the *nafs* as counselling methodologies. Further, her affective counselling techniques that include unconditional positive regard, empathy and genuineness are in fact central tenets of client-centred therapy, founded by Carl Rogers and are key conditions necessary for a supportive therapeutic relationship (Prochaska: 1979: 118-119). Essentially though, concepts of human nature and functioning from the Quran have been maintained and used through various ages and centuries to the present to influence Islamic counselling theory.

2.4 *Evaluation*

In this chapter, the development of theory for Islamic counselling has been guided by key constructs of western counselling systems based on concepts of human nature, therapeutic goals and counselling techniques. These constructs are clearly identifiable in western paradigms, which are more established and structured counselling approaches. In synthesising the constructs of human nature, therapeutic goal and techniques into an Islamic counselling framework a pattern is discernible. The following defines Islamic counselling congruent with mainstream counselling paradigms and suggests its necessary theoretical base.

Human nature is informed by a cosmological construct of a primordial covenant that holds humankind responsible to honour God, by acting as a representative to bring about God's order on earth. At a human dimension, human nature manifests as the

human psyche, which consists of the *rūh*, *qalb*, *nafs* and *ʿaql*. The concept of *fiṭra* encompasses this cosmological and human composition and acts as the motivating force to ensure human integration into a spiritual whole.

The implication of this composition sees an individual as both inclined towards the Divine, as well as drawn towards negative conduct. These opposing tensions are a framework for action, which should be geared toward the goal of reflecting Divine unity. This notion can serve as the ultimate goal in Islamic counselling to reflect Divine unity and *Tawḥīd*. This is possible through positively transforming the *nafs*, actualising one's *fiṭra*, and causing it to merge with the *rūh*. In this context the ultimate goal of Islamic counselling is essentially a long-term spiritual goal as is the goal of transformation of the *nafs*.

The factors that can be equated with Islamic counselling techniques include practice of the *Shariʿah*, daily prayers, *dhikr*, following the Prophetic example, following a Ṣufi spiritual path, implementing the cognitive, affective and behavioural techniques as presented by Bakhtiar, or participating in social action to affect change as Raḥmān assert.

The cosmic and human dimensions of humankind in Islam, including its goals, is a viable framework for a construct of human nature in Islamic counselling. In fact Ba Yūnus (1984:71) quoting Syed 'Alī Ashraf notes that it is impossible to create an Islamic school of psychology if the Qurānic concept of human nature, including the relationship between body, self and spirit, and humankind's destiny as the vicegerent

of God on earth is overlooked or evaded. Likewise al- Hāshimī (1981) asserts that Islamic psychological studies cannot be complete unless it includes spiritual values in accordance with *fiṭra*. This accurately reflects what is perhaps the only acceptable position an Islamic counselling method can be based on, and with which clients seeking Islamic counselling would identify and thus respond to.

However, if the above approach is accepted in its totality as an Islamic counselling theory, including the processes that lead to spiritual realisation, certain problematic issues arise. Firstly, the Şufi perspective of the *ṭarīqah* in this process presents as an individualistic approach to human development. It assumes that if a person is able to attain self-realisation this can have a positive ripple effect on society. The “client” is thus placed in a position of passivity in relation to society. S/he can become integrated without participating in societal change since this is an automatic implication of self-integration. Whether such integration can occur is questionable, especially when client's problems are social rather than personal. Such an approach loses sight of the many societal problems that individuals and groups face which may not be related to spirituality.

A central concern is then to what extent can this Şufi approach in its current form address the ordinary concerns and problems of “clients” that lead them to seek counselling services. These possibilities are limited when one considers an assertion by Naşr that Sufism works best for Şufis. According to him, it is only the Şufi who knows the full mysteries of *Tawḥīd*. Integration of human nature therefore requires a willingness to accept Şufi teachings and discipline. People who would prefer not to follow this approach as part of Islamic counselling then, would be excluded from

Islamic helping processes. The Şufi process for spiritual realisation acts then as a closed system that may not by itself be appropriate for Islamic counselling. Certainly, such individual development alone may not be effective in addressing social issues.

Further, the daily problems in people's lives are often not religious or spiritual concerns. Jafarī (1993) observes that recent psychological and social problems occupying the attention of the western researchers include the high rates of suicide, alienation, cognitive dissonance, chronic depression, extramarital relations, broken families, single parenting, unwed mothers, juvenile delinquency, vandalism, drug addiction and AIDS. It is such problems that Muslims are exposed to as well, and for which many welfare organisations exist to provide social and psychological services.

Perhaps Raḥmān's approach as implementing societal action appears the most feasible process in this context. However, as a broader goal of effecting societal change, it should be linked to specific concrete action in the lives of clients. The client is then encouraged to be part of reciprocal processes that can impact positively on personal and societal change. This process can facilitate the ultimate goals of seeking Divine unity and use of the spiritual techniques as discussed above can be employed as part of this process. Fundamentally though, while the long-term goals of counselling are spiritual, immediate and short term counselling goals should be based on relevant and available resources that may not necessarily be of a religious nature.

Given the above, and expanding on the conceptual framework of Islamic counselling in chapter 1, a theoretical framework for Islamic counselling is tentatively defined as follows:

Islam counselling is a counselling system that is based on the Qurānic cosmic and human concept of humankind. It has as its guiding philosophy goals of social and personal development, geared toward an ultimate goal of reflecting Divine unity. In this process intervention is designed consistent with clients prevailing problems at both personal and social levels to encourage positive human development.

CHAPTER THREE

Theory and practice in Islamic Counselling: Two case studies.

3.1 Aims and objectives

To enrich the discussion of a conceptual and theoretical framework on Islamic counselling, this chapter introduces a practical dimension into this study. This practical component rests on an exploratory research exercise designed to examine how Islamic counselling is implemented at the level of actual intervention and to utilise this information to support the overall theoretical content of this paper. In this regard, it draws on oral information elicited through in-depth interviews with two respondents actively involved in counselling in Islamic settings in Cape Town.

Preliminary inquiry into the discipline of Islamic counselling revealed that dual perceptions about Islamic counselling exist. Islamic counselling was often thought of as a formal discipline and practice but accompanied by a concomitant expression for the need of an articulated Islamic counselling approach. In this exercise such contrasting perceptions are examined through the experience of counselling practitioners to provide succinct details on divergence or confluence in theory and practice. It brings into the discussion relevant practical and social views that can impact positively on this study making it more inclusive and representative. The inclusion of a practical component into this study is a necessary part of developing a model for Islamic counselling. Contributions that have thusfar been made to the formulation of Islamic counselling are largely based on theoretical inputs. However,

counselling is fundamentally based in practice and as such, this practical dimension can assist in constructing a coherent theoretical model for Islamic counselling.

3.2 *Research sample*

The respondents selected for this study were a senior staff member of a welfare agency and a community religious leader. The first interview was conducted with the Director of the Islamic Social and Welfare Association (ISWA). ISWA as a social service agency for Muslim clients. ISWA is a Cape Town based organisation that provides, professional social welfare services to communities of the Western Cape in general, and to Muslim communities in particular. The organisation started in 1986 to seek solutions for an alarming increase in the divorce rates amongst Muslim people, as well as to respond to an overwhelming need for structured social services for Muslim clients. It has since developed into a fully fledged social welfare agency and includes in its services, general psycho-social counselling, specialised marital counselling, training of community workers, family reconstruction programmes, setting up self-help projects and childcare awareness programmes (ISWA Newsletter 1996: 7-10).

The second interview was conducted with a *Shaykh* based at the *Azzavia* mosque in Walmer Estate, Cape Town. He is actively involved in various religious activities at the mosque including counselling. His selection in this study was based on his reputation as a prominent and active participant in religious and community issues. In the Cape, a *Shaykh* is traditionally identified as a religious leader who studied Islam

in the Middle East. On their return here, such scholars usually established a school and attracted a congregation, through which leadership was exercised. Initially, amidst many internal religious disputes in the nineteenth century, they defined independent places for themselves in the community and have since come to function under the Muslim Judicial Council, the largest organisation representing Muslim religious leaders in the Cape (Tayob 1995: 51-52). Given the position of both respondents they were considered ideal resource people to provide information to enhance the content of this study

3.3 *Research methodology and design*

This exercise is based on interviewing the respondents to elicit oral information on the practice of Islamic counselling. The interviews were conducted for an hour each at the agency and mosque respectively. It was electronically recorded and transcribed verbatim, after which this information was verified with the respondents. A list of questions was used as a guideline for both respondents and the interviewer. (See appendix 7 for question list). This information was analysed thematically, consistent with key themes of this paper and its findings are presented here in narrative form together with an interpretative analysis.

This research exercise falls within the ambit of qualitative research, which Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 2) define as a multi-method research methodology that involves an interpretative and naturalistic approach to subject matter. Research phenomena are studied in their natural settings to interpret information in terms of meanings which

people bring to them and include a range of empirical materials like case studies, interview, or personal experience.

Many writers endorse the use of qualitative methods in research. Silverman (1993:27-28) indicates that qualitative research provides a broader version of theory than simply relationships between variables. It enhances effective theory development and is a flexible methodology that does not confine theorising to social scientist alone, but allow for varied views to be integrated into its method. Likewise Allan (1991:180) asserts that qualitative research fosters new lines of inquiry. It is of an exploratory nature that uses respondent's own understandings of events in analysing social settings, rather than assume that worldviews are already known and accepted in a particular form. Guba and Lincoln (1994:106) and Fielding and Fielding (1986:27,44) concur. They point out that quantitative data provide rich insights into human behaviour and highlight that such research can complement data collection. This claim is supported by Wright (1997) who conducted a study using qualitative research information to complement quantitative data.

The method of qualitative research consistent with this study is the case study design that is expressed by Stake (1994) as:

In what we may call instrumental case study, a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue of refinement of theory. The case is of secondary interest: it plays a supportive role, facilitating and understanding of something else. The choice of case is made because it is expected to advance our understanding of that other interest...Case studies are of value in refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation, as well as helping to establish the limits of generalisability (pg. 237, 245).

Rose (1991:197) quotes Yin to indicate that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomena within its real life context, often where the boundaries between issues and its context are not clear. As such, it provides fresh insights and interesting data on new and varied issues and according to Phillips (1971: 99, 129) its methodological advantage is in the context of discovery rather than justification in data analysis. The unstandardised interview, as was employed in this exercise, usually serves as the most appropriate method to elicit information where discovery is the emphasis, and as Measor (1985) indicates allows for flexibility, with the interviewer free to develop each situation as required. This overall research approach to develop and support an Islamic counselling theoretical framework is ideal given that Islamic counselling as a profession is relatively new and its formulation can be influenced through the personal experiences of counselling practitioners.

3.4 *Data Analysis and Presentation*

The data of this study is presented in a narrative form based on a thematic analysis. In narrative presentation, Janesick (1994: 215) observes that a researcher can use inductive analysis in that categories, themes and patterns can come from the data, an approach to which Rossman and Marshall (1989: 112-120) agree. She notes that while there is no one best system for analysis, staying closest to the data is the most powerful means of conveying information. Thus, in this study, pertinent themes were isolated congruent with those discussed in the previous chapters and the information is interpreted consistent with these themes in a narrative style.

According to Slim and Thomson (1995: 67, 1-10) first person testimony is more engaging than interpretation alone and yields valuable insights about events or investigations of a particular area of knowledge or experience. Zeller (1995: 78) stresses that narrative may be a case study's most compelling attribute and quotes Stake (1978) to suggest an informal, perhaps narrative writing style with verbatim quotations and like illustrations as most appropriate for case studies. Wulff (1995:279,285-291) in discussing research methods in the psychology of religion refers to such presentation as a self-report, a precise record of freely expressed verbal communication that represents a defined range of personal experience or reflection. This study attempts to capture the essence of the above positive elements of qualitative research design and presentation and integrate it into the overall purpose of developing a theoretical framework for Islamic counselling.

3.5 *Results: Thematic and narrative interpretation.*

The following are the themes into which the information of this study was placed and discussed. Responses are not always continuous and are spaced to indicate different sections of the interviews.

Defining Islamic counselling: Client and counsellor perceptions
Islamic counselling: Concepts of human nature
Islamic counselling: Defining therapeutic goals.
Islamic counselling: Techniques and the therapeutic process
Islamic counselling: The way forward

Responses are given as ISWA- respondent 1 (R1) and the *Shaykh*- respondent 2 (R2).

A rationale for Islamic counselling: Client and counsellor perspectives

The respondents were asked to reflect on helping processes in the history of Islam to give an idea of how counselling has been defined and understood in Islamic tradition. In an expression of veneration for the Prophet (SAW) R1 locates the roots of Islamic counselling to the Prophet (SAW) while R2 focuses on Islamic scholarship including the works of al-Ghazzālī. The latter is a trend identified in chapter two, which permeates theoretical information on the topic of Islamic psychology and counselling. Both respondents point to implicit counselling as opposed to professional counselling as discussed in chapter one, but it is not here directly related to religio-cultural ritual. R2 acknowledge though that professional Islamic counselling requires formulation into a structured methodology.

Hatch and Wisniewski (1995: 113) has asserted that narrative inquiry connects the lives and stories of individuals to an understanding of larger human and social phenomenon. Similarly Marks (1989:39-55), writing on the correspondence among three South African women, observe that narrative can reveal a wider social order where a tapestry of social issues is intertwined. It is inextricably linked to societal contexts and gives a deep understanding into common themes into the life of a society. Through the responses of the participants these phenomena unveil in relation to the Muslim community. R2's response reflects this insight by his reference to women that include violence against women, poor marital relations, and ignorance of religious leaders in these matters.

R1: Yes, even during the time of the Prophet. He trained his household, he

trained his wives, he trained his *sahābah*, they were actually taught by him the principles of counselling...and immediately even after he passed away, there was a period of great development in the history of Islam and this development could only have taken place in an atmosphere of constructiveness. Very great development, where Islam spread to many, many countries, the East, Africa to Asian continents and if we talk about ordinary, straight-forward simple counselling, he actually trained his household, his wives to do that work and his *sahābah*, his companions. They were taught the art of counselling.

Just to give you a very interesting story, during his time, a woman came to him and told him she's got a problem with her son. Her son eats dates too much, continuously, he loves it and he eats it and he doesn't eat his food and she's been struggling with him now for a while...can't the Prophet come and speak to him. This is related by one of the authentic *ḥadīth* and one of the *sahābah*. So he promised her that he would come and see her and speak to this son...and a week went pass and he didn't go, two weeks went pass and he didn't go, the third week she approached him again...she said 'I waited for you and you never came'. He said "the reason I couldn't come straight away, because I'm also addicted to dates and in order for me to counsel your son properly I've got to wean myself off first". Now that is the way the Prophet counselled, first by action.

(R2) I think throughout history there has been various approaches determined by the particular perspectives of the scholars. People have not sort of examined in any detail the process of counselling as such. In fact, that constitutes a topic on its own. Many theses can go on this idea of history of Islamic counselling. I have done a bit of work on this and I've come across certain interesting perspectives with regard to handling of marriage problems. In the *Muhgni*, *Shaykh* Sharbīnī quotes Imam Ghazzālī on intervention crisis and intervention in marriage in the case of abused women, as saying that in that case, it is imperative to separate the people, not by *fasakh* or the *ṭālaq*, but informally. This may be applied in cases of both physical and emotional abuse. Often I find that many imams don't make this distinction. They tend to concentrate on physical abuse as the only kind of abuse which constitutes grounds for *fasakh*...whereas in our classical heritage...almost a thousand years ago, we find the distinction already being made.

It's been there all the time. We should not accept it in an ossified way. I think we have a tradition to turn to, to greatly inform our approaches today given the peculiar circumstances within which we live. I think there is a lot about our classical legacy from which we can learn. In fact, when we compare certain contemporary Muslim attitudes previously classical one's, then we in fact note a distinct retrogression. When we look at the role of women five hundred to a thousand years ago, for example, then one cannot but note that their position has become worse. I'm not saying that five hundred years ago the role of women was ideal or that was the way it ought to be. I'm not saying

that. Even there, there was a lot of room for improvement. But their role that they played in their capacity as '*Ulamā*', writer, builders of universities, caraveserais have diminished considerably.

R1 expresses the tension of western and Islamic counselling methodologies, a view that holds affinities to the views of Badri and Jafarī in chapter one, and asserts the value of Islamic counselling as opposed to mainstream counselling methods.

R1) So the helping profession is very broad and helping in social development is self-help, and that was encouraged. It's now a modern trend in society. Western society started with the handout system. Islam society started with the self-help system and only today, it's a modern development. The holistic development of the person where character, the self-esteem of the person, all those aspects of the human personality, is enhanced by the various methods the Prophet used.

I'm talking about western paradigms. I'm talking about so-called Western paradigms because even so-called western paradigms come from Islamic history. Like workshopping, it's a modern concept but the Prophet (SAW) taught by participation in groups, one thousand four hundred years ago. He didn't stand on a platform and lecture to people, his first method of teaching was in groups encouraging questions and answering. So groupwork and workshopping, it wasn't known as that then, but it's the same method we're using today...that is so popular now, and its also a faster method of reaching people...It's very rarely that it happens, it's not the norm...but there is a tension between West and Islamic ways of implementing the helping process.

R1 responds to the question of religion in relation to culture and its integration into the counselling encounter. The respondent and researcher express different understandings on this concept as relates religious and popular culture. She makes a clear distinction between religion and culture and cautions the researcher for not making this distinction. Her response however confirms the use of cross-cultural counselling:

Very much so. Even the Prophet (SAW) said when they conquered certain countries, when they went to take the word of Islam and they met opposition, and they had battles and they won, the first thing the Prophet said is respect

the culture.... So culture was respected again 1400 years ago and it was recognised then already as a very important component in helping people. You've got to help people from where they are...because you will find that you can help that person if you help him in the context of his culture...much quicker...Yes. But even Islamic culture. Islam is a religion. It shouldn't be confused with a culture. The culture is the way people have evolved in their geographic boundaries, areas, and countries...Islam combines religion, culture, conduct, ethics in one bag. So you must just be clear when you talk about Islamic culture...what do you mean...when you do actually write about it...to be aware of that.

The impact of Islamic counselling on client participation and the response of clients was discussed to ascertain if a need for Islamic counselling could in fact be discerned. This would then give an indication to the feasibility of developing an Islamic counselling approach. Both respondents acknowledge the need and importance for an Islamic counselling methodology to effect positive change in the lives of Muslim clients. Their affirmation reinforces the rationale and need for cross-cultural counselling and R1 allude to tensions that develop through the helping process if religio-culture issues are not considered. The latter is a similar dynamic to that discussed by Graham and al-Krenāwī in chapter one. Again the social problems that clients experience are highlighted.

(R1) Yes. They immediately feel safe, they feel at home, they feel accepted. Sometimes some clients feel intimidated...because they think you sitting here with a scarf and a long top and you're fanatic. Maybe that client is not at that stage of development. Maybe that client haven't covered her or himself up properly. Maybe, if it's a drug addict they still in the denial stage. Immediately when you put them at ease and you say, look don't judge us, we've also gone through that process that you going through...it didn't happen to us overnight...it's a process of development'. We do that and then you see then really taking it easy, relaxing and feeling safe. In fact Muslims prefer to come to us...They request Islamic counselling. It's a very big need. They need us.

Yes, yes. They choose to come here. They think we would be able to identify to their approach to the problem. I'll give you another example. A woman came in here one day. She's married a revert, her husband. After a year, he

started drinking. How? Socialising and going to parties and this woman was most upset because he had promised her and he was taught and told not to. Then she took him to the state Social Worker. She didn't know about us so she went there for counselling. Then the Social Worker said to her 'you mustn't be so harsh, you mustn't be so difficult' he's only taking a social drink and he's not an alcoholic. Now that's the difference between the Islamic and non-Muslim counsellor...where we will tell him it's totally out for you but we will help you overcome it. We will take your hand and take you wherever you must be...but you must leave wine. It's not accepted in Islam, but we will do it in the most caring way. The non-Muslim social worker will not understand the strict taboo on alcohol.

(R2) They come to the *masjid* for that purpose...but there appears to be a skepticism with regard to secular institutions. I sat with NICRO (National Institute for Crime and Rehabilitation of Offenders) for a few Thursdays just to workshop some issues as regards their Muslim clients. It was an interesting experience. Many of them feel that many of these people ignore the Islamic values...sometimes Muslims are skeptical about the ability of non-Muslim counsellors to help them...its amazing how such a simple word like *Inshā' Allah* means to Muslims...or like *al ḥamd li Allah*...mentioning of these words they immediately connect and identify with the counsellor

Yes, there is a lot of identification and it facilitates the helping process. That definitely happens. One lady still said, "*Shaykh* I feel alienated"...she didn't say it like that..."She doesn't know my values, my *dīn*, she spoke other stuff, terms that I don't understand, terms such as Tough Love". I think they need that kind of identification, not necessarily the *Shaykh* but someone that connect with them. We are busy trying to help people and have to look at means and methods that best facilitate this. Some of them feel Muslim professional counsellors know too little about the *dīn*. It disturbs the communication...we need to look at that...Purely from experience...I think the fact that they come and see a *Shaykh* for example solves half of their problems...you merely act as a facilitator.

Islamic counselling: Concepts of human nature

The respondents were asked about the formulation of their own approaches in their particular work settings as well as the integration of religion into these approaches. Both expressed the importance of the Islamic standard paradigm of human nature articulated in chapter two especially in relation to the process and goals of human

development as defined by the *nafs*. R1 alludes to the concept of *fiṭra* as part of human nature and a goal and process of therapy. She extends this concept to a wider client base in a discussion of the general application of her approach:

R1) Islam addresses the human personality so beautifully in a balanced way. Islam addresses the *rūḥ*, the *nafs*, the *qalb* and combines it with a spiritual force, with the force of *īmān* of self-esteem, of accountability. Islam does that whether you can read or write. If you have grown up in a Muslim home, a proper Muslim home, those ethics are inculcated naturally by the parents as part of your Islamic lifestyle from small. It responds naturally to the human being because the human being is created by Allah naturally to strive towards Allah. Every human being has been created like that. Islam does not agree on the concept of sin...that we are born in sin. In Islam, we are born in *jannah*. We are created pure and good at birth.

Now every human being aspires to that when they are born, so it is easy when you teach the child that from small, they respond to it. And then you find that people that have not been exposed to that, if you actually expose them to that, it takes longer than to inculcate it, but they naturally want to respond to it. They might never have heard about good values and ethics, they might have grown up in a home where battering and drug abuse and things went on, but the moment you give these good qualities, these Islamic qualities and you guide them alongside these qualities, then you will find there is a yearning to want to learn more...and that works so well.

I will choose my words according to the person that I work with and that has a very good effect...because whether its Islamically or non-Muslims...Allah has created us within that creation with a need to go back to him. We've got to go back to him...and that need is always reaching out, looking for the road to go, which is the road to go. When you talk about the moral and higher aspects and the principles and values and the belief system...then you excite that person, the next person, the person you counselling...because some people come, they've lost their belief, they've never even had a belief, they've heard the word maybe in their culture of the Bagavad Gita or they've heard the word of the Bible but they've never paid attention to it...and you come and touch that little spot of where their need is...now they will open up to a counsellor...they wont open up those fears to anybody else.

In chapter two the concept of *fiṭra* was discussed as viewed by Moḥamed. It is part of the human spiritual composition that is directed towards knowing and submitting to God, and is important in actualising human potential. In mainstream counselling

methods a similar construct, self-actualisation, discussed by Patterson (1959, 1974) holds affinities to the concept of *fiṭra* that add weight to incorporating such concepts as therapeutic long-term goals. Patterson postulates that self-actualisation is a basic motive of human beings that seeks to enhance and preserve the self. He proposes that it be the ultimate goal of counselling, which should then be geared towards implementing processes for clients to become self-actualising. Many factors can impede on the development of self-actualising persons, e.g. physical illness, deprivation and lack resources. Counselling, however, is concerned with emotional deprivation as an impediment to self-actualisation. The motivation to actualise human potential has societal implications as well. It requires facilitative reciprocal relationships, by which a person develops a positive self-concept, accepts her/himself and others, and functions at a high level using her/his potential as a desirable member of society. R2's response focuses on the *nafs* and the conjoint process of human development that is consistent with the overall discussion of human nature in Islam.

R2) The process itself is a long one...it's a long battle with the self. The Quran makes so many references to different levels of the self. The *nafs al-ammārah*, the inciting self. The *nafs al-lawwāmah*, the reprimanding self, where you attain to the condition where you have informed yourself enough about human nature to actively and constructively criticise yourself and see your own faults. The *nafs al-muṭma'innah*, on the other hand, is the tranquil self, the self that is at peace with itself and Allah. All these terms are referred to in the Quran.

Once you have been able to successfully criticise yourself in order to be able to see yourself for what you are, then you are able to progress to the level of *muṭma'innah*. The *Khalwatīyyah* Sufi order adds four more categories to the above three. From the *muṭma'innah* level you advance to the *nafs al-mulhamah*, the inspired self, and from there to the *nafs al-rādiyyah*, the contented self, and then on to the *nafs al-marḍīyyah*, the self which enjoys the satisfaction of Allah and finally the *nafs al-kāmilah*, the perfected self, as represented by the character of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Islamic counselling: Defining therapeutic goals

Therapeutic goals were not explicitly discussed by the respondents but consistent with the general themes of this paper. R1's response is covered by her aforementioned reference to *fitra*. The focus here is R2's response who discusses the concept of *taubah*.

R2) The process that they normally refer you to is *taubah*. The whole issue of *taubah*. The idea of *taubah* too you find different approaches towards *taubah*. The most feasible approach, I found is that *taubah* is seen as a process and not one of those instant self help tools...that you use to convert a person, from one second to another, into a good human being. And that unfortunately is an attitude now that I find a bit disturbing, that *taubah* is seen as a process that happens overnight or in seconds, whereas in fact the way I have read the issue of *taubah* is that it is regarded as a process, which begins with the decision to refrain or stop from the deviant deeds which one is engaged in. The decision is to be accompanied by a sense of remorse along with the determination never to return to it. And where you have inflicted harm upon another human being you have to go to that person, you have to apologise to that person, but it has everything to do with the 'azm, the determination...implying that its a process...as Muslims we exhorted to repeat the *taubah* after a relapse into ones previous decadent ways...In this continuing cycle of relapse and repentance it is a moral requirement that we never lose faith in the mercy of Allah. Our determination to overcome our weakness and continue faith in the mercy of Allah are therefore two crucial components in the process of *taubah*. In this process a deviant person may also turn to another to assist him or her in their efforts to reform themselves.

That has made me believe that *taubah* has been historically understood as a process and not this sitting back and saying *astaghfir Allah wa atūbu ilayh* (I seek forgiveness from Allah). You can say this to help yourself on, but that's not the process. This distinction of the *Khalwatīyyah* I find very interesting. Looking at all these its obvious that many of the 'Ulamā' have seen *taubah* as a process...and the issue of despair...Allah ta 'ālā says, *la taqnatū min raḥmat Allah*, never despair of the mercy of Allah. No matter how bad thing are, you don't despair. Despair does not mark the condition of a Muslim. I think that this is the underlying feature, that no one, whether you are a counsellor or whether you are being counselled, that none should despair. The counsellor should not despair that there is no hope for the person, nor should that person despair that there is no hope for him or her. This is extremely important, and I believe that the whole concept of *rahmah* here defines that particular approach. The process of counselling must take into account these elements of *mawaddah* (love), *rahmah* (mercy), and *iḥsāan* (kindness).

The efforts of both parties, counselor and counselled should be directed at realising these elements in both attempts at reconciliation or in the question of effecting a separation. In ignoring these values we are in danger of alienation ourselves from the spirit of Islam which infuses our lives with purpose and meaning. Yes, I believe that these elements constitute an integral part of the counselling process.

In a *hadith* the Prophet related that Allah had said *Sabaqat rahmatī ghaḍabī*...(my mercy always precedes, and infinitely precedes my anger). The emphasis here, once again is on *rahmah*...and what we have to institute as counsellors is try to the best of our capacity is try to realise that path, that *sifa*, quality of *Allah ta 'ala* in the process, that interaction and that communication between counsellor and counselled. I think that *rahmah* must underlie that approach. The very process of *taubah* takes into account the whole issue of the *rahmah* of Allah...Generally speaking, the process of *taubah*, the whole process of *taubah* is very important. I consider it as a process as a long term one, as a long-term issue, a long-term process which has got to be looked at through the eyes of *rahmah* so to speak, and without *qunūf*, without despair.

Respondent 2 also indicates that therapeutic goals should be defined by *ṣabr* (patience), *qaḍā* and *qadr* (predestination), but that these should not be unconditionally accepted in all circumstances. He discusses these concepts in the context of a social dynamic where Muslim women are abused and told that they should have patience and that this is part of their destiny, to the extent of internalising such negative information. *Ṣabr*, he notes should be exercised in matters beyond human control, e.g. a natural disaster. However, in matters within one's control attempts should actively be made to change such circumstances. He observes similar misconceptions in relation to predestination and in the context of the above makes an important point of clarifying concepts in counselling, which should be part of Islamic counselling.

R2)...and I find so many women who say...'but *Shaykh* we've been told', 'Ons moet *Ṣabr*', 'But *Shaykh* we've been told that we must *Ṣabr*'.... and they

tell me, like to instruct me that I must say 'my dear girl please *sabr*' and I cant say it to her...and it's *ḥarām* for me to say that. What I'm saying is that there are certain concepts that we've got to get right. These too are issues that impact heavily on approaches to counselling. Misconceptions about *qaḍā* and *qadr* are closely linked to misconceptions about *sabr*...These are all issues that impact heavily on our counselling. So you tell a person 'yes but its been ordained, its been decreed, "*dit is uitgesit*'. What are you doing here? You not only making the person a prisoner of their past...but you are also effectively making them prisoners of their future...and that is the problem...that we fail to understand the concept of *qaḍā* and *qadr*. We forget that Muhammad (SAW) said that a *dua* can deflect the *qaḍā* and *qadr*.... If you are going to talk to the person that it is '*uitgesit*' that person has the right to say but where is my shield...is there nothing that I can do about it.... Is there nothing that *Allah ta'ālā* says that I can do about it...and there is so much *Allah ta'ālā* tells you about it...In other words we are not empowering them, we are in fact abusing them with certain concepts which have not traditionally been accepted but erroneously accepted

The concept of *taubah* is important in the *Ṣufi ṭarīqah* as a long-term goal of human development and as Arberry (1979) indicates, is the first stage of the *Ṣufi* quest for spiritual realisation. In the above context it is expressed as both a goal and process of Islamic counselling. This response is a reflection of al-Ghazzālī's discussion of *taubah* in his *Iḥyā' ulūm-al-Dīn* in a section on constructive virtues. 'Umar-ud-dīn (1991: 210) relates it as the first step towards spiritual progress. It is the basis of a virtuous life and is a spiritual conversion that rescues a person from sin and involves complete transformation of the self to achieve the highest spiritual ends. He notes that abstinence, poverty and *ṣabr* (endurance of suffering) are pertinent to the process. R2's response is therefore essentially at one with Sufism and he confirms the role of Sufism in his approach as part of Islamic counselling.

R2) Yes, I agree with that. I see myself as being part of that stream. That is where we learn about *taubah*, what is *shukr* (gratitude), what is *ridā* (contentment), what is *kibr* (arrogance), *ḥasad* (malicious envy), it is basically a process of destruction...you are destroying yourself. If you cannot come to terms, the relationship you are in drugs, etc....you more basically destroying yourself. So how do you get out of those issues? By turning to the *munājāt*....

particularly Imam Ghazzālī...We increase the potential of effecting the required transformation within ourselves. My view is that the Sufis have best developed these principles of inner transformation. Particularly Imām Ghazzālī...they have concentrated on those issues, spiritual values, and psychological issues. That is their major contribution.

Islamic counselling: Techniques and the therapeutic process

Discussing key elements that can facilitate the healing process, and as such, the formulation of counselling techniques in the helping process, the following was highlighted: R1 notes that she developed her approach based on experience over a period of 25 years. Through in-depth studies of the *Sharī'ah*, client's case histories, stakeholders in the Islamic field, like *Imāms*, *Shaykhs*, jurists, and university resources she was able to enhance her knowledge base and approach.

R1) First of all, ISWA starts with the belief that human beings must be developed holistically and counselling must be a means of empowerment and counselling must not create dependence either emotionally or materially. We start from that perspective.

Acceptance of the client. Total and unconditional acceptance of the person, of the human being. To build up their trust first of all. Before you can even work with them, you've got to accept them...We know that when we come to a counsellor the things we are coming for is un-Islamic...but the total acceptance of the client that facilitates the whole process.

And this way of counselling, bringing people into the understanding of Islam and even letting go when its necessary to let go...and to believe in Allah and to believe that Allah has got in his Divine wisdom a reason and although you think that person is the end of the world, then you must reaffirm your *kalimah*, because then you must reaffirm your *la ilāha illā Allah*, There is only one Allah...That's your *imān* and your faith, which I build up in the client

Like I say, we don't want to be seen as a religious, 'holier than thou preaching' group of people and we are not. We are not religious fanatics here. We are academics but we get it over to the client that we are here for their spiritual needs as well...and we make them aware that they do have a spiritual side. We subtly, carefully, lovingly make them aware that man has a spiritual need. So that approach like I said is not immediate. When they come here

people are overwhelmed with their problems, so we address the problem and that comes with 3,4,5,6, sessions. Probably the third session down the line we will tell them 'this is the steps that we will be following, but you must remember, you and I need to work with Allah *subhānahu wa ta 'ālā* also. We've got to bring Allah into this program, so we can appeal to him to assist us in whatever we want to do to get our plan of action successfully running'. That is the approach that we use. The Islamic component yes. Yes, we will introduce it...even our counsellors and ourselves, we believe that we are not the be all, the end all, the know all, the only power that can solve problems. We do believe in the Unseen Power and we have to make the client aware at some stage or the other. We do that.

(R2) When it comes to problems. If you have a problem, then just vent, unpack all the problems. Get the parties separately so that they can't influence each other. And I get the other partners to talk...get off his chest, so that I can have a fair idea, then get them together afterwards then allow both to speak. Never to take sides or showing favouritism. Although if one sees that the one side has a stronger case, then gently as firmly as possible make the other partner aware of the fact that I think, as an as objective observer of what is happening here... One's role as a counsellor in this process is to act as a mirror by which the aggrieved parties can arrive at an objective understanding of the issues, which bedevil their lives.... The wealth of spirituality in Islam is another source that we need to look in the process healing people and their relationship.

When I look at processes of counselling for example...I've sat and I've seen and I've witnessed occasions and moments of counselling, which is not counselling at all. It amounts in fact, to abuse against the person in need of help. These are issues that are worrying. Now I am not also blaming the people for doing this, maybe they are not correctly informed. Maybe they think for example that that's the way you do it...but technique in counselling is extremely important. Often we find the counsellor pounding the deviant with threats of *jahanam* and *adhāb*, punishment, in a very direct and almost self-righteous way. If there is any need to remind the "deviant" of his/her posthumous condition in *ākhirah*, then a preferred method, for example would be to quote a relevant verse from the Quran or saying of the Prophet, to that effect, with accompanying explanations. This method is much more preferable than telling people directly they will roast in hell for having committed such and such an act... I think these are important techniques. While technique is important, it is equally important for the counsellor to develop a social consciousness in line with the egalitarian spirit of Islam. I say this for the reason that only in the context of this spirit that great '*ulamā*' as the *a'immaḥ 'asharah*, *Imāms* of the cities, could emerge.

He discusses here the example of the Imāms of the classical period, most of whom

were slaves. One scholar, Fudayl ibn 'Iyād was a highway robber who became a prominent leader and scholar given the society's tolerance at that time. This example was used to highlight a lack of tolerance in current society. His idea of clarifying concepts as a technique of the therapeutic process is again stressed and he notes the Sufi technique of *dhikr*.

R2) What I believe is certain concepts need to be focused upon before one gets to the healing process, before one gets down to actively trying to get those people together...to clear certain issues cobwebs and so on...what is *ṣabr*, what is abuse, the rights of people under these circumstances. We need to be frank and honest about these issues...then, set about the counselling process. Often what solves the problem...its quite amazing.

I do believe in the process of counselling apart from the many other techniques that you can employ as a professional counsellor. How do we go about trying to heal or find solutions for those particular issues? The basic concepts need to be clarified... Because you can advertently or inadvertently abuse a person who seeks counselling in the first place.

And I fully agree with the fact that *dhikr* is a process too. I believe that it is as part of the healing processes. I'm reluctant to reduce it to purely social and psychological efficacy. I do believe it operates interpersonally and vertically, between ourselves and *Allah ta 'ālā*. It definitely has a function at the horizontal, social level...I, but there is also that so called vertical level which exists between ourselves and *Allah ta 'ālā* where we try to attain the *qurba* of Allah...but *dhikr* definitely is in a way also a healing process on the path of becoming a more complete and better individual.

Islamic counselling: The way forward

In assessing a future and role of Islamic counselling based on the information of these interviews, some comments of the respondent's counselling methodologies are reflected upon. There is an explicit acknowledgment of the integration of both Islamic and secular methods. R1 has indicated that scientific methods refer also to applying skills of mainstream counselling in the therapeutic process, e.g. problem

assessment, active listening, etc. R2 highlights here as well as earlier in his comments, the inevitability of having to work with other agencies for counselling and social intervention, either through referral or mutual consultation on issues of importance to Muslim clients.

R1) I would say an approach here that seventy percent successfully combines our scientific and Islamic counselling. We combine the two very successfully and its amazing what comes out of your work. Its amazing the kind of success rate you have by combining the spiritual Islamic and scientific methodologies. We integrate spiritual counselling with scientific counselling. We use scientific methods. When we start with a client, we do not use immediately spiritual counselling. We will place ourselves at the point where the client is at, that point...and you come in on spiritual counselling at a later stage. We look at the problem and we work technically through the problem until we reach a certain stage where the client feels comfortable and then we can introduce spiritual counselling if we asses that it's necessary

R2) My view at the moment is that one needs professional counsellors because the stress that the many *Imāms* go through handling these things. They are not equipped to handle these kinds of issues. My personal view is that people involved, that one ought to get professional counsellors who are trained in that particular direction and then get themselves informed with regard to the Islamic background. Most of the issues relate to matters of an ethical nature. Other issues need particular directives about the *Shar'ī* rulings and that is where the problem stems, at that level.

Here are a few students here who are in this class and we have some of our students here at ISWA who have dedicated themselves in that way while at the same time they are informing themselves with regard to certain *Shar'ī* issues...and I think that is important. OK that is my view, in fact we here are seriously looking at that direction to get, employ counsellors whom we often refer to as secular counsellors, secular background, secular venue and get them more informed about these issues...When I do see that there is something seriously wrong, then I do recommend people. I definitely do that, if I see that this person could be suicidal, if I suspect that some violence can result that could be beyond my skills at the moment, I definitely get someone else in, I refer to another professional agency.

The concept of an integrative approach in counselling has been acknowledged by many scholars of mainstream counselling. One view relevant to the approach

employed by the respondents is highlighted by Prochaska (1979: 150). He indicates that many systems of theories differ primarily in their content or theory of personality, while agreeing on the process or theory of therapeutic change. In the above context this acknowledgment is clear. Concepts of an Islamic paradigm of human nature and goals are joined with therapeutic processes that rest on skills of mainstream counselling paradigms.

3.5 *Evaluation*

It is clear that consistencies can be discerned between the information of this research exercise and that of the preceding chapters, many of which have been highlighted in the actual interpretation of themes. An apologetic tendency is evident in the information of this chapter, which is not unusual as reflected in chapter one. The role of Sufism in counselling is gain stressed, which is subject to the same concern covered in chapter two in respect of its appropriateness for counselling in relation to wider societal concerns. Similar notions of the Islamic paradigm of human nature, therapeutic goals of *fiṭra* and *taubah* and skills, of *dhikr* are here again isolated. In this respect the relationship between Islamic counselling theory and practice is consistent.

It is the opinion of the researcher that the strength of this practical exercise rests mostly on the wider contexts of Islamic counselling that is revealed through the information of the respondents. Pertinent social issues are revealed that affect the daily lives of Muslim clients and to which both personal and social counselling

should be directed. Here one sees how Islamic counselling theory cannot be removed from its practice. It is an integral part of articulating a theoretical framework for Islamic counselling and should continuously be encouraged. In retrospect, it appears that certain themes could perhaps have been more distinctly covered by the researcher, e.g. how do the participants exactly utilise the Islamic concepts of human nature as part of actual practical information. However as an exploratory survey important issues have been highlighted and point to further research possibilities on Islamic counselling.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion and recommendations

The terms Islamic counselling and Islamic psychotherapy imply an integration of a religious worldview with modern concepts of helping processes. In this thesis this relationship has been examined at various levels in an attempt to develop a model for Islamic counselling. In this regard, two levels of inquiry emerged that inform the content of Islamic counselling viz. a religio-cultural level and a professional level. At a religio-cultural level, case studies based on Islamic ritual and cultural practices revealed that Islamic counselling has been implicitly practised through the ages. This implicit counselling, within its own cultural context, was shown to have a therapeutic value consistent with mainstream counselling systems. In this form it provided a rationale for Islamic counselling to be articulated as a cross-cultural counselling paradigm, in accordance with increasing recognition for the role of religious and cultural issues in counselling. At a professional level Islamic counselling could only be vaguely defined and contributions in this respect were largely based on apologetic assertions of what Islamic counselling should constitute. However, having so assessed Islamic counselling, a conceptual framework and working definition for Islamic counselling could be articulated as the first step to developing a model for Islamic counselling.

This information was expounded upon by an attempt to develop a theoretical framework for Islamic counselling. Here guidelines for this exercise were drawn from

mainstream counselling systems, which were simultaneously discussed as the broader theoretical counselling structure within which an Islamic counselling as a religio-cultural paradigm would be located. This discussion thus focused on the Qurānic perspective of human nature and functioning and the extension of this Qurānic position through the Islamic mystical tradition of Sufism. The impact of Sufism as constituting an Islamic psychology and its influence as the main resource for Islamic counselling was highlighted.

In this analysis it became clear that Sufism in its practical process and method could not by itself function as a counselling paradigm or psychology for Islamic counselling. As such, Islamic counselling has essentially been defined in Şufi terms. An awareness of social issues as part of intervention areas for Islamic counselling raised concerns about the ability of such Şufi counselling to adequately address issues of this nature. By its admission of being workable for Şufis only, it stands to exclude a range of people who could otherwise benefit from Islamic counselling. Those not directly interested in the process of spiritual realisation, but who nevertheless have problems were excluded.

This discussion concluded with an unconditional acceptance and encouragement of the Qurānic concept of human nature and long-term spiritual goals as part of a model for Islamic counselling. The Qurānic position should be the guiding philosophy of Islamic counselling as has been propounded by various scholars on this topic. At the level of practical social intervention, it was necessary to formulate concrete goals consistent with the prevailing problems affecting clients. As such, clients could

become active participants in affecting change in their lives and participate in reciprocal change processes.

An extension of this study through a practical research exercise highlighted the need for Islamic counselling. This was apparent from the position of practitioners and of clients, as expressed through the experience of these counsellors. This exercise also saw an affirmation for Islamic counselling based both on Islamic principles and integrating precepts and skills of mainstream counselling paradigms. The responses of the research participants were consistent with the general theoretical persuasion of the discussion on Islamic counselling especially as relates the articulation of an Islamic counselling approach and the role of Sufism as a counselling approach. The reality of social problems experienced by client's, identified through the counselling experiences of the respondents, reinforced the need for Islamic counselling to incorporate a social dimension into its approach.

In presenting an overall assessment of this paper, certain themes that permeate the discussion can be discerned. Scholars on Islamic counselling and psychology appear particularly averse to mainstream western counselling paradigms that are viewed as devoid of religious or spiritual dimensions. This response is more often directed at psychoanalysis. Indeed, the founder of psychoanalysis, Freud, was keen to reduce religion to a universal obsessional neurosis and an illusion based on infantile sexuality and anxiety (1970: 48-55). This lack of consideration for the spiritual in mainstream counselling however, is not only a concern of scholars on Islamic counselling. It is in fact, a concern of mainstream western counselling discussions as well.

The latter has resulted in what Leuger and Sheikh (1989: 224-228) discuss as an emerging fourth force of psychotherapy, in addition to psychoanalysis, behaviourism and existentialism, called transpersonal psychotherapy. Transpersonal psychotherapy integrates a range of transpersonal dimensions like spiritual, cosmic and meditative that seek to liberate clients from the restrictions of personality to merge with a wider universal consciousness. This approach however remains focused at an individual level and the writers quote Fadiman (1980) to indicate that the end result of transpersonal psychotherapy is not successful adjustment to the prevailing culture, but the experience of a state of liberation, enlightenment or gnosis as defined in various traditions.

The disinclination of Muslim scholars to mainstream counselling methodologies is often counteracted in their very own positions, both theoretically and in practice. While mainstream counselling methods are questioned, its use is simultaneously affirmed in therapeutic processes. Here counselling techniques of behaviour therapy seems to be the major focus and asserted as the most viable for inclusion into an Islamic counselling paradigm, e.g. systematic desensitisation, modelling. The result of this dual position is a clear apologetic position manifesting as part of the text.

In both theory and practice, the integration of Islamic and mainstream counselling methodologies appear unavoidable. In fact, the term Islamic counselling itself constitutes a position of religious and modern methods. Counselling as a discipline itself connotes a particular period and genre rooted in vocational guidance as has been identified with Frank Parsons. In addition, parallels in theoretical constructs are also

apparent. As was pointed out in chapter three, the notion of self actualisation holds affinities to the concept of *fiṭra*. Likewise the psychoanalytic concept of id/ego/superego is similar to the discussion of the *nafs*. Mohamed though, expresses a disinclination for such a view. He indicates that the concept of *nafs* does not in any way agree with Freudian psycho-sexual development and that the idea of unconscious sexual motives underlying stages of human development should be rejected for its nihilistic position. In the context of this thesis, if Freud is to be rejected it should be for his disregard for religio-cultural practices, the value of which has clearly been highlighted in this paper. It is exactly such notions of defining the “other” as pathological that results in a disregard for the value of religion and culture of various people, and the resultant inability of counselling paradigms to meet the needs of cultural client systems.

Notwithstanding the latter, Islamic and western counselling worldviews are compatible in their central aims as regard intervention. All are directed at facilitating positive human well-being. A common objective and intent is thus evident, and it is this purpose that needs to be utilised in the best interest of those seeking help through the counselling encounter. In this regard, Sheikh and Sheikh (1989: xiv) writing about eastern and western approaches to healing, note that attempts to prove the supremacy of western science over eastern knowledge, or vice versa, are generally unproductive. They note that western views have traditionally focused on objective, observable and measurable phenomena as real. This preoccupation with the concrete has fostered a worldview in which humankind is seen as merely as highly developed beings, with the spiritual side of human nature as expressed in religion either ignored

atmospheric temperatures. The end result is an array of symbols and illustrations that point to the nature or position of an individual in his/her quest to God (See appendix 5 for an example). Other recommended techniques for moral development are classed:

<i>Cognitive Techniques</i>	<i>Behavioural Techniques</i>	<i>Affective Techniques</i>
Gaining knowledge Seeking Divine blessings Counting one's blessings Self Talk Being self-reflective Studying mathematical sciences	Self training Modelling Controlling anger Observation of and association with persons with positive traits	Speaking to people at their level that imply: Unconditional positive regard, empathy and genuiness Not inciting the lower <i>nafs</i>

The implementation of this process requires a master / disciple relationship. A person is initiated into a group or individual process and guided to achieve nearness to God. In the absence of such guidance, and as a self-help strategy, the author advises that potential followers to adhere to the teachings of a Sufi order, the *Naqshabandiyyah*.

In her last volume, Bakhtiar adds additional techniques to her model of healing based on remembrance of God's names, or *dhikr*. She discusses this activity and its ritual preparation and advises continuous recitation of the names of God until it engulfs the participant. Letter and numerical equivalents are again attached to the names of God and methods of invocation based on these associations are offered to facilitate the healing process. She asserts that in this process the self is receptive to assuming

or deemed pathological. In contrast, eastern disciplines acknowledge varied realities ranging from the hidden to the manifest with human beings portrayed as reflections of the universe, and thus ultimately divine. Hence, the major focus here has been the attainment of inner freedom. However, the latter approach has often been at the expense of pressing practical problems that are overlooked. The writers therefore contend that both systems possess unique strengths by which each could benefit from the other, and encourage a genuine synthesis of the great achievements of eastern and western healing approaches.

From an Islamic position, the perspective of the Islamisation of knowledge pioneered by al-Fārūqī (Sāfi 1993; Khalīl1991, Langgulung1989) is a similar response to the relationship between western and Islamic knowledge. Muḥammad (1989: 23) has articulated this view that seeks an integration of Islamic and modern disciplines. Muslim scholars are encouraged to gain mastery over the modern disciplines. This is however only a first prerequisite. This information should be integrated into the corpus of the Islamic legacy by selectively adapting its components according to the worldview of Islam. New ways in which the reformed disciplines can serve the ideas of Islam should then be adopted and forwarded by scholars both Muslim and non-Muslims so that a new ordering of thought in Islamic disciplines can be effected. This presents another option for developing an Islamic counselling paradigm.

In mainstream counselling, the concept of eclecticism has been another strategy of intervention. While cross-cultural counselling acknowledges the integration of religio-cultural aspects into counselling, the integration of methods and techniques in

counselling is expressed in the concept of eclecticism. In counselling, theories are often not rigidly adhered to, and broad margins of flexibility allow for use of skills and concepts from different theories in order to best benefit the needs of the client. McWirther et al. (1997:106-118) recommend such an eclectic approach as a pragmatic device for applying counselling techniques.. They note that a single theory may fail to help with specific client's problems and propose that counsellors maintain a position of eclecticism. Accordingly they indicate:

The eclectic individual believes that a single viewpoint and theoretical position is limiting and that concepts, procedures, and techniques from many sources must be used to best serve the needs of the person(s) seeking help. When counsellors deliberately attempt to incorporate into their practices the terminology, techniques, concepts, and procedures of more than one unified theory, the result is eclecticism (Pg. 106).

The writers caution against an understanding of eclecticism as the indiscriminate and arbitrary collection of different theoretical concepts. Rather, it is a sophisticated process of selecting an approach that meets the needs of the client and problem resolution, based on an in-depth knowledge of an array of counselling methodologies and put into a theoretical and practical conceptual framework.

Eclecticism is defined within mainstream counselling. Prochaska (1979) argues that eclecticism is relativistic, as relates various aspects of counselling. He asserts that the major mainstream counselling paradigms have largely been constituted of verbal therapies where it is assumed that increasing individual consciousness is a major process of change. By increasing consciousness, information is made available to individuals to effectively respond to issues affecting them. The latter, together with

catharsis and choice, represents the heart of traditional verbal psychotherapies that include the psychoanalytic and the humanistic tradition. The focus is on the subjective aspects of the individual and inner-directed change that can counteract external environmental pressure. Behavioural therapy in turn focuses on the environment and sets limits on inner-directed change, and as such, inner potential for change is ignored. Prochaska therefore proposes a position that goes beyond the relativism of eclecticism. He calls it a transtheoretical approach, which allows for wider integration and discovery of concepts that transcend present theories of therapy, into the counselling encounter.

It is in this direction that this thesis has sought to move, by integrating the dimension of social issues and action into an Islamic counselling paradigm. This focus on the social is another theme that has permeated this discussion. It seeks to look beyond the individuality of counselling paradigms to relate Islamic counselling to societal contexts, and assert a position of defining social goals relevant to the prevailing circumstance and issues that affect clients.

A final and very important theme that has been consistent in this paper is the inclusion of a South African perspective. While this study focuses on Islamic counselling, the unique context of South Africa has also been considered. As was highlighted in chapter one, the South African milieu presents an ideal environment for allowing an Islamic counselling position to be formulated. With South Africa's recent transformation to democracy and its concomitant challenges, Islamic counselling can now be a channel through which to seek both the personal and social change to

promote and participate in this democratic transformation. Such participation based on diversity should be encouraged so that the axiom “Unity in Diversity” can be realised.

In conclusion, Islamic counselling can be a dynamic and vibrant counselling methodology at both personal and social levels and should be encouraged in theory and practice. In the process of developing a model for Islamic counselling, another benefit has emerged from this study. Not only has it initiated the latter but a methodology for similar articulation of cross-cultural counselling paradigms is presented. However Islamic counselling is a discipline that remains in need of further research and articulation, for which the recommendations are forwarded:

1. Islamic counselling be tentatively defined and guided by the preliminary definitions covered in this study, which would together be articulated as:

Islamic counselling is a religio-cultural counselling paradigm that integrates key tenets of Islam into its approach. It is a counselling system that is based on the Qurānic cosmic and human concepts of humankind. It has as its guiding philosophy goals of personal and social development, geared towards reflecting an ultimate goal of Divine unity. In this process intervention is designed consistent with clients prevailing circumstances to encourage positive human development.

2. The historical professional impetus for Islamic counselling be located in the works of the classical philosophers and mystics like the *Ihwān al safā*.
3. That Islamic counselling intervention processes be based on eclectic or transtheoretical designs. This could include the Islamisation of knowledge approach.
4. That Islamic counselling intervention include:

- a) an initial religio-cultural needs assessment that ascertains a client's position on cultural and social issues. This could encourage the formulation of relevant intervention strategies.
 - b) clarification of key Islamic terms as forwarded by Shaykh Serajh Hendricks
 - c) a measure of social participation by clients on a short or long-term basis as assessed by practitioners.
 - d) spiritual techniques and goals as defined in this paper as part of the overall helping and healing process, e.g. *fiṭra* as illustrated by Mrs Mintin
5. In regard to point 4 the development of an inventory is recommended as part of future research on Islamic counselling
 6. That studies and research on Islamic counselling as far as possible integrate a practical component into its discussion.

APPENDIX 1

Counselling Approaches and models of therapy

AFFECTIVE APPROACHES	BEHAVIOURAL APPROACHES	COGNITIVE APPROACHES
Client-Centered Therapy	Behavioural Counselling	Rational Emotive Therapy
Gestalt Therapy	Reality Therapy	Transactional Analysis
Existential Therapy		Trait-factor Counselling
Alderian Counselling		
Psychoanalytic Counselling		

Source: *Theory Methods and Processes of Counselling and Psychotherapy*
Ricky L. George

APPENDIX 2

Qurānic Verses

Chapter 2 Verse 30 (vicegerency)

And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: Wilt thou place therein one who would do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn thy praise and sanctify thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not.

Chapter 12: 53 (al-nafs al-ammārah)

I do not exculpate myself. Lo! the (human) soul enjoineeth unto evil, save that whereon my Lord hath mercy. Lo! my lord is Forgiving, Merciful.

Chapter 75 Verse 2 (al-nafs al-Lawwāmah)

Nay, I swear by the accusing soul (that this Scripture is true).

Chapter 89 Verse 27-30 (al-nafs al-muṭma'inna)

But ah! Thou soul at peace!
Return unto thy Lord, content in His good pleasure!
Enter thou among My bondsmen
Enter thou My Garden!

Chapter 3 Verse 14 (love of material wealth)

Beautified for mankind is love of the joys (that come) from women and offspring, and stored –up heaps of gold and silver, and horses branded (with their mark), and cattle and land. That is comfort of the life of the world. Allah! With Him is a more excellent abode.

Chapter 10 Verse 99 (free-will)

And if thy Lord willed , all who are in the earth would have believed together. Wouldst thou (Muḥammad) compel men until they are believers?

Chapter 15 Verses 28-29 (Divine spirit)

And (remember) when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am creating a mortal out of potter's clay of black mud altered, So, when I have made him and have breathed into him of My spirit, do ye fall down, prostrating yourselves unto him.

Chapter 91 Verses 7-9 (passions)

And a Soul and Him who perfected it
And inspired it (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it.
He is indeed successful who causeth it to grow.

Chapter 17 Verse 85 (rūh)

They will ask thee concerning the Spirit. Say: The Spirit is by command of my Lord, and of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little.

Chapter 95 Verse 4 (best of moulds)

Surely We created man of the best stature.

Chapter 55 Verse 60; Chapter 2 Verse 21 (taqwa)

Is the reward of goodness aught save goodness?

O mankind! Worship your Lord, Who hath created you and those before you, so that ye may ward off (evil).

Chapter 2 Verse 6-7; Ch 16: 106-108. (qalb)

As for the disbelievers, whether thou warn them or warn them not it is all one for them; They believe not. Allah hath sealed their hearing and their hearts, and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be an awful doom.

Whoso disbelieveth in Allah after his belief-save him who is forced thereto and whose heart is still content with Faith-but whoso findeth ease in disbelief: On them is wrath from Allah. Theirs will be an awful doom. That is because they have chosen the life of the world rather than the hereafter, and because Allah guideth not the disbelieving folk, Such are they whose hearts and ears and eyes Allah hath sealed. And such are the heedless.

Source: The Meaning of the Glorious Qurān: An explanatory translation by Moḥammed Marmaduke Pickthall.

APPENDIX 3

Overview of Sufism

The term Sufism (*taṣawwuf*) is thought to be derived from the Arabic term *Ṣuf* (wool) since early ascetics of Islam are said to have worn woollen garments to symbolise simplicity and rejection of the world. Sufism is the spiritual way or inner dimension of Islam that encompasses the science of the direct knowledge of God. *Ṣufis* claim their inspiration and teachings from the Prophet who is said to have taught important principles of esoteric Islam to his Companions, which was in turn passed on to succeeding generations, and in this instance, *Ṣufi* adherents. The *Qurān* and *ḥadīth* are continuously reflected upon and union with God (*ittiḥād*) and the realisation of the oneness of God (*Tawḥīd*) are essential goals sought. (Glasse 1989: 375-377). Expanding on this theme, Annemarie Schimmel (1975) writes of Sufism as the generally accepted name for Islamic mysticism which in its formative period meant mainly an interiorisation of Islam, together with a personal experience of *Tawḥīd* or to declare that God is One. Her explanation of mysticism as love for the Absolute best captures the fundamentals of Sufism, where through this Divine love, the mystic is able to bear afflictions seen as coming from God to test the purity of their souls, as well as have their hearts carried to the Divine presence. The experiences of mystics hold three important features of which she writes:

The *Ṣufi*'s have spoken of the threefold meaning of *taṣawwuf* according to the *sharī'a*, the Muslim law, the *ṭarīqa*, the mystical path, and the *ḥaqīqa*, the Truth. It is a purification on different levels, first from the lower qualities and the turpitude of the soul, then from the bondage of human qualities, and eventually a purification and election on the level of attributes (pg.16)

Arberry (1979: 74-79) reflecting on the *Risāla* of al Qushairī, and early theorist of Sufism credited with accomplishing the classical formulation of mystical *Ṣufi* doctrine, notes that this path to God that *Ṣufis* seek entails a quest to the Divine through a series of stations and states, the former being a stage of spiritual attainment resulting from personal effort, the latter a spiritual mood as determined by God. This journey starts with *taubah* / conversion and following a pattern of forty five stations and states, culminates in *shauq* or yearning to be constantly with God.

APPENDIX 4

List of stations and States in Sufism according to Al-Qushairi

1.	Tauba	Conversion
2.	Mujāhada	Earnest striving after mystical life
3.	Khalwa wa-‘uzla	Solitariness and withdrawal
4.	Taqwa	The awe of God
5.	Wara’	Abstaining
6.	Zuhd	Renunciation
7.	Ṣamt	Silence
8.	Khauf	Fear
9.	Rajā’	Hope
10.	Huzm	Sorrow
11.	Fu, tark al shahwa	Hunger, denial of appetite
12.	Khushū’, tawādū.	Fearfulness, humility
13.	Mukhālafat al-nafs wa dhikr ‘uyūbiha.	Opposition to the carnal soul
14.	Qanā’a	Contentment
15.	Tawakkul	Trust in God
16.	Shukr	Thankfulness
17.	Yaqīn	Firm Faith
18.	Sabr	Patience
19.	Muraqaba	Constant awareness of God
	Ridā	Satisfaction

Rida has been viewed by certain Sufis as the last of the stations and the first of the states.

20.	Ubūdiya	Servanthood
21.	Irāda	Desire
22.	Istiqāma	Uprightness
23.	Ikhlas	Sincerity
24.	Ṣidq	Truthfulness
25.	Ḥayā’	Shame
26.	Hurriya	Magnanimity
27.	Dhikr	Remembrance
28.	Futuwa	Chivalrousness
29.	Firāsa	Insight
30.	Khuluq	Moral Character
31.	Fud, Sakhā	Generosity
32.	Ghaira	Jealousy
33.	Wilāya	Being in God’s protection
34.	Du’a	Prayer
35.	Faqr	Poverty
36.	Taṣauwuf	Purity
37.	Adāb	Decent manners
38.	Safar	Travel
39.	Suḥba	Companionship
40.	Tauḥīd	True belief in one God
41.	Noble Dying	(No Arabic given)
42.	Ma’arifa	Gnosis
43.	Maḥabba	Love
44.	Shauq	Yearning to be constantly with God

Source: Sufism: An Account of the Mystics in Islam: A.J. Arberry

NATURE IN ITS MODE OF OPERATION IN THE SELF DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS

GOD'S SELF-DISCLOSURE:

CREATOR

CLAY COMBINATION OF:

ELEMENTS/
MINERALS



EARTH/COLD AND DRY
WATER/COLD AND MOIST
FIRE/HOT AND DRY
AIR/HOT AND MOIST

PLANTS



NUTRITIVE, GROWTH, AND REPRODUCTION FUNCTIONS

ANIMALS



PERCEPTION AND MOTIVATION

+ DIVINE SPIRIT

HUMANS

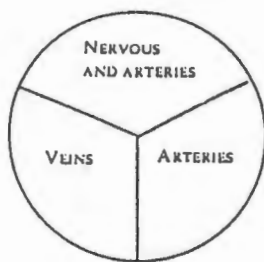


COGNITION

PHYSIOLOGICAL LEVELS

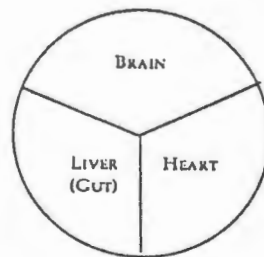
ENERGY SYSTEMS FOR THE DYNAMICS OF SELF:

NERVOUS SYSTEM
ARTERIES
VEINS



ORGANS

BRAIN
HEART
LIVER (CUT)

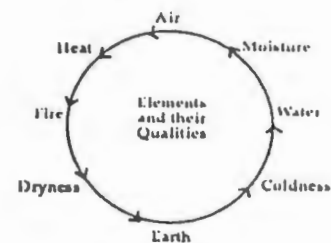


SHOWN AS IF THE SELF IS WITHIN THE CIRCLE LOOKING OUT TO MIRROR THE UNIVERSE SO THAT THE HEART IS ON THE LEFT FROM WITHIN AND ON THE RIGHT FROM WITH-OUT. THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE LIVER (CUT).

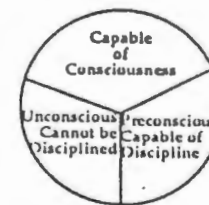
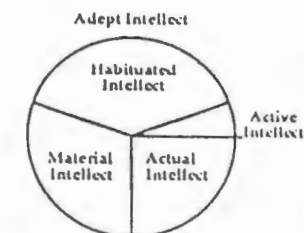
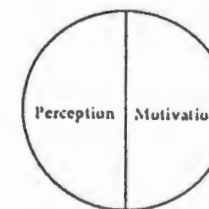
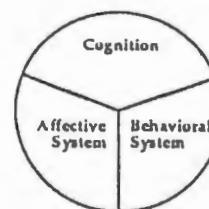
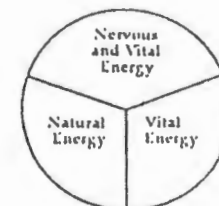
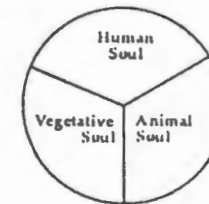
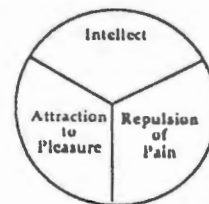
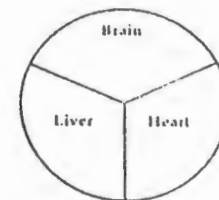
TOPOGRAPHY



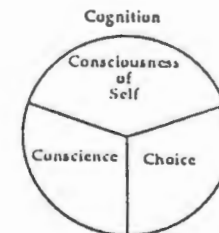
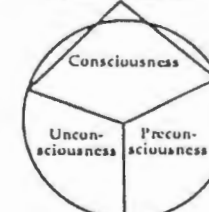
STRUCTURE



DYNAMICS



Overconsciousness



7: The Topography, Structure, and Dynamics of the Self

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APPENDIX 3

APPENDIX 6

List of seven stages and names of God for invocation in moral healing of the systems of the self: Transformation of the Behavioural system (al-nafs al-lawwāmah) to acquire Courage.

Stage 1 - Compassion (Humility, Courtesy)

Al-Raḥmān	The Compassionate
Al-Raḥīm	The Merciful
Al- Mu'min	The Giver of Faith
Al-Muḥaymin	The Guardian
Al-Ghaḥfār	The Forgiver

Stage 2 - Moral Reasonableness

Al- Wahāb	The Bestower
Al- Razzāq	The Provider
Al-Fattāh	The Opener
Al-Halīm	The Forebearing
Al-Ghaḥfūr	The Concealer of Faults

Stage 3 - Thankfulness / Generosity

Al-Shakūr	The Rewarder of Thankfulness
Al-Muqīt	The Nourisher
Al-Hasīb	The Reckoner
Al-Karīm	The Generous

Stage 4 - Vigilance

Al-Raqīb	The Vigilant
Al-Mujīb	The Responder to Prayer
Al-Wadūd	The Loving
Al-Shahīd	The Witness

Stage 5 - Trust

Al-Wakīl	The Trustee
Al-Walī	The Friend

Stage 6 - Repentance

Al- Tawwāb	The Acceptor of Repentance
Al- Muntakim	The Avenger
Al- Afū	The Pardoner

Stage 7 - Patience

Al- Ra'ūf	The Clement
Al-Mughnī	The Enricher
Al Hādī	The Guide
Al-Ṣabur	The Patient

Source: God's Will be Done Volume III Moral Healing through the Most Beautiful names. The Practice of Spiritual Chivalry. Laleh Bakhtiar.

APPENDIX 7

Research questions

1. As a religious counsellor what is your understanding of the helping process in the history of Islam.
2. As an Islamic organisation / counsellor what counselling approaches do you employ with clients
3. How have you formulated your approach or how has it developed.
4. What are the most commonly experienced problems that you encounter.
5. How do you integrate an Islamic perspective in addressing these problems.
6. How do clients respond to this.
7. Do you think there is a need to integrate culture or religion in the helping process.
8. Do you think the integration of religion and culture into a counselling perspective can impact positively on the healing process.
9. Does client perception of you as a Muslim counsellor facilitate the counselling process.
10. Do you think there is a common counselling framework used in the broad field of service delivery for Muslim people.
11. What would be the key elements you find facilitate the helping process with Muslim clients.
12. Does tension exist in employing standard paradigms in relation to clients informed by a religious tradition. How does this manifest.
13. What is your judgement of outcomes.

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