

THE ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF HUMAN NATURE
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT
OF AN ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGY.

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A B S T R A C T.

This thesis constitutes an analysis of the Islâmic conception of the primary elements of human nature, namely, the heart, intellect, will, soul and psyche. This analysis embraces the major schools of thought within the Islâmic tradition. The Islâmic conception of human nature is based on the primary Islâmic sources, namely, Qur'ân, hadîth; and is further substantiated by referring to the works of a variety of classical Islâmic scholars. The Islâmic perspective of the primary elements of man has provided a basis for determining the principles of an Islâmic psychology.

D E D I C A T E D T O :

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DIED RAMAÐÂN 1406 AH

MAY 1986 AD

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّ كَمَا

الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ

Muḥaqqaq Qur'ân, Sûrat al-Nisâ', 'Women' (iv, 1),
copied in the 14th century.

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YASIEN MOHAMED

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION.

The problem of transliteration arises in reproducing names and terms from non-western languages which are written in scripts other than the Latin alphabet.

I have followed the standard system of transliteration for Arabic with slight variations. Instead of the stroke to indicate a long vowel, I have used a "ˆ" as in kitâb (for kitāb). The single inverted comma is used for words such as 'Aql (instead of ʿAql). Names which begin with the article "al" have been used uniformly without distinction between the so-called shamsī and qamarī categories, such as al Tirmīdhī instead of at Tirmīdhī. Needless to say, names of places that have been anglicized, such as Syria (for Sūriya), have not been transliterated.

INTRODUCTION

Muslims today are faced with a crisis of conflicting values which are too obvious to need further elaboration. Although contemporary Muslims still belong to a living religious tradition, they have by no means been immunized from the predominance of modern Western Civilization. On the contrary, Western values have permeated into the entire Muslim world through colonization, technology, mass media and the secular educational system which the Muslims have imitated. As a result of Western influences many modernized Muslims have become alienated from the Islamic tradition, and have developed a feeling of inferiority through their identification with the west. This sense of inferiority is reflected in the apologetic literature of many western educated Muslim scholars. They have made every effort possible either to conform to Western thought or distort the teachings of Islam in order to force a congruence with the dominant secular perspectives. This attempt to integrate secular thought with Islâmic teaching, or expounding Islâmic concepts in western secular terms pervades through modern Islâmic literature, especially in the English language. This

points to a polarization between the western secular and the Islamic traditional perspectives. An attempt to solve this intellectual crisis is to be found in Professor Isma'îl Râjî al Fârûqî's Islamization of Knowledge. He emphasised that the point of departure for the Islamization of the modern discipline should be a mastery of the Islamic legacy.

"Before any elaboration of the specific relevance of Islam to the discipline, it is necessary to discover what the legacy of Islam had to say on the discipline. The legacy of the ancestors must remain for us the starting point of the relevance of Islam. Our Islamization of the discipline would be the poorer if it did not take the legacy into account and did not benefit from the insight of the ancestors."¹

It is therefore in the light of this need to discover the Islamic legacy as a point of departure for an assessment of the modern discipline that motivated us to embark upon this dissertation. Our purpose is to prepare the foundation of an Islamic psychology. The foundation that we intend to establish, or our contribution to this foundation is in the area of the Islamic conception of human nature. The existence of Western psychology is valid and its study as a discipline is valid. It has various practical

applications and its usefulness extends over many other disciplines such as sociology, religion, philosophy, education, criminology, etc; many of these disciplines draw on psychological theories. Psychology can be used to gain insight into human behaviour and has the potential to promote sound human relationships. For these reasons Western psychology has a *raison d'etre*.

Muslims are prepared to acknowledge the existence and potential of psychology, both as a practically useful discipline and as a legitimate area of study on tertiary level.

The Muslim psychologist, as the western psychologist, is compelled to acknowledge the need for a practically applicable psychology. The advanced levels of specialisation and diversification, as may be observed by the separation of branches such as Personality theory, Development psychology, Therapy, etc., inevitably lead to the application of western psychological theories and therapeutic techniques by Muslim psychologists.

However, given the fact that the concept of human nature is central to the study and application of psychological theories and techniques, Muslims see the acceptance of the western discipline as a whole problematic; the Islâmic concept of human nature is radically different

from that of western psychologists. While Muslims may accept the scheme and validity of the Western discipline they cannot accept its content, as it were, because the Western concept of human nature having been derived from humanist, socialist and other secular systems, invariably points to Islamically unacceptable precepts.

From the above it is noted that Muslims acknowledge the validity of psychology as a discipline and that Muslims find this discipline fundamentally incompatible with Islâmic principles. It follows that there is a need for the development of an Islâmic psychology as a distinct discipline which adheres to the following two conditions:

1. The Islâmic psychology must be based on the Islâmic concept of human nature so that Islâmically authentic precepts may be developed.
2. This concept must be derived from the Islâmic legacy, as noted by Prof. Fârûqî.

The purpose of this thesis would therefore be to present a brief survey of the view of representative and authentic Muslim scholars on the subject of human nature with a view to:

- i) propose a foundation which is receptive to an adaptation of the western scheme of the discipline.

- ii) propose a foundation for an Islâmic critique of Western psychologists' conception of human nature.
- iii) provide a basis for the further study of the primary elements of human nature.
- iv) propose a foundation for an Islâmic therapy.

A further motive for embarking on this thesis is to address the psychological problems experienced by Muslims, especially in the West.

Instead of conveniently ignoring such problems, the Muslim psychologist is duty-bound to face them and provide Islâmicly acceptable solutions for them. This creates a dilemma of conflicting values which stem from the fundamental differences between the Islâmic and Western views of man. An Islâmic psychology can provide a basis for an authentic approach to therapy.

Having thus established a *raison d'etre* for an Islâmic psychology, we have answered the need to seek justification for this subsequent development of an Islamic psychology. It is not within the scope of this thesis to do an in-depth study of the elements of human nature, but rather to introduce to the reader samplings of perspectives contained in the Islamic Legacy on each of these elements. It will take more than a life-time to do a detailed and

intensive study of what all the philosophers, Sufis, theologians, jurists, and other scholars have to say about each aspect of human nature. Our exposition of the Islamic conception of human nature is therefore fairly generalized and comprehensive but not exhaustive, here is an attempt to integrate and systematize, in a comparative, analytical and critical way, the contributions of some of the major Islâmic schools and scholars to the subject of the heart, intellect, will psyche and soul. This study of the elements of human nature has served as the basis from which we derived a possible framework and principles for an Islâmic psychology. It is left to subsequent scholars to improve on the present study and to develop a complete model for an Islâmic psychology.

The discipline 'Islâmic psychology' never existed as a separate category of knowledge as known in the West. This does not mean that the Islâmic Legacy is silent on the discipline of psychology; the Islâmic legacy indeed, has at its foundation various principles relevant to the subject, but which are not integrated into a distinct discipline. This problem, as noted by Professor Fârûqî, is characteristic of not only psychology, but also of many other disciplines.

".... the contribution of the legacy to the discipline

is not ready for the modern researcher to obtain, to read or to understand. Indeed, the modern researcher is not equipped even to search in the legacy for Islâm's contribution to the discipline. The reason is that the categories of the modern discipline, sometimes even its very name, are unknown as such in the legacy. Likewise, the legacy may contain worthy materials which are not classifiably relatable to the modern category. The Western trained Muslim scholar is too often defeated by inaccessibility of the legacy. He is strongly tempted to give up in despair, judging that the legacy is silent on the matter whereas the fact is that he is unfamiliar with the legacy's categories under which the sort of material relevant to his discipline is classified. Moreover, the Western trained Muslim scholar has neither the time nor the energy requisite for successful exploration of the vast and colossal works of the legacy of Islâmic learning." ²

To reiterate therefore, even though 'Islamic psychology' may not exist within the legacy, the content of Islâmic psychology is a living reality embedded in the matrix of the Islâmic tradition. This study is therefore a modest attempt to uncover the legacy of Islamic learning on the subject of human nature.

The opening chapter deals with the primordial nature of man (fitrah). Man is born with the natural predisposition

to worship God. The Islâmic way of life is designed to satisfy man's fitrah. Chapter 2 deals with Islâmic epistemology, that is, man's capacity to know through the organs of heart and intellect from the lowest sensory level to the highest level which is direct and immediate perception. Chapter 3 deals with the spiritual (rûh) and psychical (nafs) dimension of man. Man is essentially a spiritual being but his lower nafs which serves as a veil to his spiritual realization needs to be overcome. Through discipline of the lower nafs, the highest nafs (al nafs al Mutmainnah) can be attained. The nafs is then united with the rûh, where inner peace and psycho-spiritual integration is achieved. Chapter 4 deals with the volitional dimension of man. Man is a limited free being who is responsible to God for his actions. He has the liberty and the ability to attain true freedom which involves liberation from the limitations of the lower nafs through genuine submission to God and direct consciousness of Him. In Chapter 5, some of the ideas of the great 11th century spiritual giant and intellectual polymath, Imâm al-Ghazâlî, are discussed in order to show how the elements of human nature may interact and affect human behaviour in its spiritual psychological and ethical dimension. The final chapter is an attempt to introduce the proposed principles and framework of an Islâmic psychology. The dimensions of Islâmic psychology have been derived from the discussion of the Islâmic conception of the various elements

(rûh, nafs, irâdah, 'aql) of human nature. The chapter begins with the metaphysical dimension which serves as the foundation of all the other dimensions. The last part of the chapter deals with the therapeutic dimension of Islâmîc psychology. An outline of the approach to Islâmîc therapy and Islamic counselling is given.

We acknowledge our limitations, both in terms of knowledge and experience. We have, however, made a modest attempt to rearticulate the contributions of some of the greatest classical scholars, many of whom are considered to have attained the highest level of spiritual experience. This attempt in selecting and integrating relevant material from the 'colossal works' of the Islâmîc legacy is an immensely difficult task. It was difficult because the information is scattered all over. This was perhaps because the Islâmîc legacy does not contain a distinct discipline of Islamic psychology. Probably a major reason for the difficulty of the task is that we have had to break new ground in this area, at least in South Africa. To our knowledge we have not found a work that covered the primary elements of human nature as presented in this study. If this work was seen as a starting point for further study in this area, then it would be because we have attempted to systematically integrate relevant material into a framework for an Islamic psychology. The objective of the dissertation would then also have been achieved.

References:

1. al Fârûqî, I.R. Islamization of Knowledge, International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982. p.39.
2. Ibid, p.40.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGINAL GOODNESS OF HUMAN NATURE (FITRAH)

It is appropriate for us to begin this thesis with a chapter on the original nature of man (fitrah) because this concept throws light upon the Islâmic view of man's essential nature. It is therefore the best starting point for a further general discussion of the main components of human nature from an Islâmic point of view.

In the ḥadīth, the last Prophet of Islâm, Muḥammad (SAW) is reported to have said:

عن أبي هريرة (ر) أنه كان يقول : قال رسول الله (ص) :
ما من مولود إلا و يولد على الفطرة ، فأبواه يهودانه ،
و ينصرانه و يمجسانه ، كما تنتج البهيمة بهيمة جمعاء
هل تحسون فيما من جدعاء ؟

رواه مسلم في كتاب "القدر"

"There is not a newborn child who is not born in a state of fitrah. His parents then make him a

Jew, a Christian, or a Magian, just as an animal is born intact. Do you observe any among them that are maimed (at birth)?"¹

This hadith is a key quotation for understanding the concept of human nature. The operative word in this hadith is "fitrah". It literally means original or beginning, and in this context it would mean the original nature or creation.² The Muslim scholars are all agreed on this. There are however, differences of opinion about the nature of this original state of creation. There are basically three views:

- 1) The view that fitrah is a state of intrinsic goodness and intrinsic evil. This view is defended by Sayyid Qutb.³ It represents a dualistic view of human nature.
- 2) The view that fitrah is a state of neither goodness nor evil. This view is accepted by Abû 'Umar ibn Abd al Barr⁴ and represents the neutral view of human nature.
- 3) The view that fitrah is a state of intrinsic goodness. This view is defended by ibn Taymiyyah⁵ and many others. It represents a positive view of human nature.

1. THE DUALISTIC INTERPRETATION OF FITRAH

The dualistic view of fitrah is supported by Sayyid Qutb in his commentary on the following verses from the Qur'ân:

و نفس و ما سواها × فألهمها فجورها و
تقواها × قد أفلح من زكّاهها × و قد خاب
من دساها ×

(١٠ - ٧ : ٩١)

"By the soul and its moulding and inspiration with knowledge of wickedness and piety. Successful is the one who keeps pure, and ruined is the one who corrupts it."

(91:7-10)

و اذ قال ربّك للملائكة ائني خالق بشرا
من طين من حمأ مسنون ×
فاذا سوّيته و نفخت فيه من روحي
فقعوا له ساجدين ×

(٢٩ - ٢٨ : ١٥)

"Your lord said to the angels: "I am creating man from clay. When I have fashioned him and breathed of My Spirit (rûh) into him, kneel down and prostrate yourselves before him."

(15:28-29)

Sayyid Qutb develops his argument by stating that God created man with a duality of nature and ability. What is meant by duality is that two ingredients make up man, earth's clay and God's spirit, two equal tendencies to good and evil; the tendency to follow Divine Guidance or to go astray. Man has the ability to recognise both good and evil in whatever he may encounter, and he is equally capable of directing himself one way or the other. External factors only help to awaken this potential within him, from which he takes his chosen path.⁶

This interpretation is further supplemented by the following two verses:

"And We have shown him the two paths."

(90:10)

"We have shown him the right path, be he grateful or ungrateful."

(73:3)

In addition to his innate ability, man is equipped with a conscious faculty which determines his actions and hence makes him responsible for them. The one who uses his faculty to strengthen his inclination to what is good, to purify

himself and to weaken the evil drive within him, will be prosperous and successful, whereas the one who uses the faculty to oppress the good in him will be at a loss. Since man is free to choose between these two tendencies he is responsible for his actions.⁷

Muhammad Qutb supports the interpretation of fiṭrah as being a dualistic tendency within man. He states that it is the "divine spirit" within man which distinguishes him from animals; and that if man exercises his will to follow the path of this tendency, he will rise above the level of clay, the level of his body. This does not mean that the body is evil, for it has natural needs to be satisfied; but evil arises only when man allows his body to have control over the spiritual tendency in him, or over his innate propensity for good.⁸

In summary, the dualistic interpretation of fiṭrah involves the notion that man is born with two innate inclinations or equal forces, one for good and one for evil.

2. THE NEUTRAL VIEW OF FIṬRAH

A second view of fiṭrah is the neutral one, which is, that man is born neither good nor evil. This view is supported by Abû 'Umar ibn 'Abd al Barr's interpretation of the hadîth quoted above. The argument lies in the view that the

heart of a newborn baby is like the sound newborn animal with all its organs intact. The unmaimed bodies are only maimed after birth. Similarly, the hearts of the newborn children are born in a sound state, without faith (imān) or disbelief (kufr).⁹ It is only after they mature that many of these hearts reach a state of disbelief or belief. Their final destiny to paradise (jannah) or hell (jahannam) cannot be determined at birth since they can only be held responsible for their actions when they reach maturity. The argument that a child born in a state of belief or disbelief holds that the child does not change from this state at all. However in reality individuals do change from one state of belief to another.¹¹ Further, it is impossible for a child at birth to have a sense of belief or disbelief because he is not in a position to understand anything. This argument is supported by the following verse:

و الله أخرجكم من بطون أمهاتكم
لا تعلمون شيئاً ...

(٨٧ : ١٦)

"Allah brings you forth from your mother's womb
not knowing anything

(16:78)

Ibn 'Abd al Barr interprets this verse to indicate that he who does not know anything is not in a position to have îmân (belief) or kufr (disbelief). This he believes to be the most authentic meaning of the word "fiṭrah".¹² In further support of this interpretation of fiṭrah he cites the following verses:

"You will only be rewarded for what you do."

(37:39)

"Every soul will be held in pledge for what it has earned."

(74:38)

"And We have not punished anyone until We have sent a Messenger."

(17:15)

The abovementioned verses suggest the notion of reward, punishment and responsibility in terms of one's knowledge and striving. This is only possible in a mature adult. Hence fiṭrah cannot mean "Islâm", for Islâm and îmân involve declaration by the tongue, belief in the heart and actions by one's limbs. These are absent in a child.¹³

3. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DUALISTIC AND NEUTRAL VIEWS

The dualistic view propounds that man is born with equal inclination towards both good and evil whilst the neutral position is that man is born neither with the inclination for good nor with the inclination for evil but he is born with the ability and potential for both good and evil. The dualistic view implies that man's motivation for good and evil action is basically rooted in the innate tendencies for good and evil, while the neutral view of fitrah suggests that man's motivation for good or evil actions is purely the outcome of environmental influence. The role of the social environment in respect of the dualistic view would be to strengthen the innate tendency for good in man, and to subordinate the evil tendency within him, while the duty of the environment with respect to the neutral view would be to awaken man's potential for good. The righteous man in accordance with the dualistic view, will act righteously on the basis of his conscience which is rooted in the good aspect of his nature and which is strengthened by a good environment. The righteous man of the neutral view will act upon a conscience which was learned and acquired purely from the social environment. Learning of good and evil is, in the case of the dualistic view the outcome of both the innate tendencies for good and evil within man's inherent nature; while in the case of the neutral view, this learning

is acquired not because of any inherent inclination but purely as a result of the environment to which the child is exposed . Man's ethical responsibility, the reward and punishment, for both the neutral and dualistic views comes into effect when he has reached maturity. The propounders of these two views seek to interpret fitrah in the light of man's free-will and responsibility.

4. CRITICISM OF THE DUALISTIC AND NEUTRAL VIEW OF FITRAH

If one's nature is such that one is equally disposed towards good and evil and hence inclined to behave in either way, then one's actual choice of one of these two ways cannot be due to one's nature. Yet Sayyid Qutb believes strongly that the true religion corresponds to true human nature which makes man happy, and that the fundamental flaw of all jahilliyah (non-muslim) systems is that they are opposed to fitrah or true human nature. A fundamental inconsistency is expressed in these two separate beliefs. How is it possible for a person to hold the view that man is born with equal tendencies towards doing good and evil, and at the same time believe that it is better for men to believe in God than to deny His existence. According to the views of Qutb, man must act consistently with his innate nature if he wishes to be happy, thus doing good as well as committing evil will be in harmony with a dualistic view of human nature.

How, therefore, can one even speak of choosing good instead of evil for this would contradict our natural inclination towards evil.

Sayyid Qutb drew support from the verses quoted above (91:7-10) to strengthen his theory of the dualistic nature of man. He overlooked the significant word sawwa¹⁴, and concentrated on the word alhama¹⁵ which he interpreted to mean "to create a disposition or natural preparedness". However, alhama is better understood as "makes someone aware of something". Thus, the meaning of the verse is that God made man aware of good and evil which does not mean he created a natural disposition for good and bad as Sayyid Qutb tries to suggest. Knowledge or awareness of what is good or evil is an essential foundation for responsible ethical action, for to know that something is good suggests that one should do it or act according to that good, and to know that something is evil means that one should avoid it and not act in conformity with that evil.

Advocates of the neutral and dualistic view find support in the following Qur'anic verses: 90:10 and 73:3 (See p.2) for their arguments. However, while the first verse means that God showed man two ways, it does not imply that man

has both good and evil inherent in his nature. We understand the verse to mean that God did not leave man to himself but out of mercy showed man two ways, both good and evil, so that he will know what to follow and what to avoid. In corroboration with other verses and sayings of the Prophet (SAW) we detect the meaning that God guided man to the way of good by sending down prophets to remind him of his good nature and to avoid evil.¹⁶

Advocates of the neutral view understand the second verse (76:3) to mean that God created man neutral between good and evil. He then showed him the way of good and evil. Sayyid Qutb is of the view that God not only made man aware of evil but created man with two equal dispositions, one towards good and the other towards evil.¹⁷ The verse (76:3) states that God guided man to the way (al-sabîl); it does not say two ways. By al-sabil is meant tawhîd (the worship of the one and only God). This is the guidance given to man; he is naturally and originally inclined to worship the one and only God. God then left man to accept the guidance, that is, the guidance of his fiṭrah (natural disposition) or the guidance through Divine revelation and be grateful, or reject it and be ungrateful. This interpretation of the verse is supported by Ibn Kathîr.¹⁸

If moral value has no basis at all in the nature of man then it is difficult to convince someone to do good when the act of goodness does not accord with his true human nature. If we are convinced, for instance, that the feeling for caring for others is a natural instinct in man, then we seek ways of fostering this act to eliminate from our society all factors which hinder its growth.

The view that man is born with an evil tendency or not born in a state of goodness does not accord well with the Divine attributes of mercy, wisdom and justice. God created man in good physical form, and prepared for man an environment that would suit his physical nature. But God, according to the Qur'ân, also created man to worship Him.¹⁹ And it is a general rule that whenever He created something for a purpose, He guides it to that purpose.²⁰ Thus it would contradict Divine justice if man was expected to worship God, to be grateful to Him and to obey his commandments, if God gave man an evil nature which found such behaviours abhorrent, or a neutral nature which was not attracted to such behaviours.

5. THE POSITIVE INTERPRETATION OF FITRAH

The view that man is born in a state of intrinsic goodness is supported by Ibn Kathîr, Abu Hurayrah, al Tabarî and many others. This is the most popular view amongst

classical scholars and is the traditionally accepted view.²²

There are basically two interpretations of what is meant by intrinsic goodness. Both these views are authentic interpretations of fiṭrah.²³ The one interpretation is that fiṭrah means Islâm. In other words, every child is born a Muslim with the natural inclination towards Islâm. If there were no environmental differences every person would naturally be a Muslim. The other popular view is that fiṭrah means one's readiness for Islâm, that one is born with innate ability to recognise one's Creator, acknowledge Him and hence submit to His Commandments. Isma'îl al Fârûqî refers to this unique faculty as the "sensus numinis" which equips man to "acknowledge God as God, and recognise His commandments as the norms or ought-to-be's of all that is"²⁴. The second view of fiṭrah is supported by Mufti Muḥammad Shafî'²⁵ who argues that according to the Qur'ân there is no change in the creation of God (30:30), and fiṭrah is something that is created and therefore is unchanging. Yet we find that people change from a state of belief to a state of unbelief (kufr). Thus, fiṭrah can co-exist with the state of disbelief and therefore fiṭrah cannot be Islam as such. But, fiṭrah according to him, is the preparedness and readiness for Islam. If a child grows

up in disbelief (kufr) that does not mean that he does not have the capacity to change to Islam. His fiṭrah has not changed, his preparedness to accept Islam has remained, despite his original disbelief, or the later change in his belief. This view of the intrinsic goodness of human nature has the merit of being consistent with the Qur'anic verse that the creation of God does not change. According to Muḥammad Shafi' the majority of the scholars who hold that fiṭrah means Islām actually mean that the child is born with the preparedness to accept Islām.²⁶ Imâm al Nawawî²⁷ defines fiṭrah as the unconfirmed state of Imân (faith) until the individual consciously acknowledges his belief. Hence, if a child were to die before he attains discretion he will be of the inmates of paradise.²⁸ This view applies to the children of Polytheistic parents as well, and is supported by the following Prophetic tradition (ḥadīth).

"It is related that the Prophet said that he saw in a vision an old man at the foot of a large tree and around him were children and in the vision he was told that the old man was Abraham and the children that were around him were the children who before attaining the age of discretion had died. At this, some of the Muslims asked him:

"And the children of the polytheists too, O Messenger of Allah?"

The Prophet (SAW) replied: "The children of the polytheists as well."²⁹

There are some juridical implications of this meaning of fiṭrah; the child is born a Muslim, pure, sinless and inclined or predisposed towards the belief and worship of the Creator. There are those who argue, al Qādi abī Ya'li and others, that if fiṭrah means Islam, a child from polytheistic parents cannot inherit from them according to Islamic law. However, al Nawawi argues, that although the child is born in a non-Muslim family, and will be of the inmates of paradise, the laws of this world (dunya) will apply to him, that is, the laws of his parents will apply to him. Ibn Taymiyya defends this view as well.³⁰

The positive perspective to fiṭrah is further elaborated by Shah Waliullah (b.1702), an Indian scholar, who suggests that reference to the intrinsic goodness of man refers to the whole man, and this includes his biological nature. Both the psychological and biological peculiarities of man are incorporated in the notion of fiṭrah. The fulfilment of these natural urges is vital for his survival as a human being. This is also indicated, for instance in the Islamic attitude to celibacy. Islam frowns upon celibacy because it does not accord with man's natural biological

instincts, and is therefore incompatible with man's fitrah, or natural inclination. Instead, Islâm places great stress upon marriage as completing half of one's faith and a means by which man can satisfy his natural biological urges within the framework of the Shari'âh (Islâmic Law).³¹

6. ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE POSITIVE INTERPRETATION OF FITRAH

The text of the hadîth cited at the beginning of this chapter strongly suggests that fitrah is a state of goodness for the following reasons:

- 1) The Prophet (SAW) states that the parents cause the child to be a Jew, a Christian or a Magian, but he does not say they make him a Muslim. It can therefore be supposed that he is born in a state of harmony with Islâm. Since Islâm here is meant in its widest sense of submission to God, Islam encompasses the message of the Prophets before Muhammad (SAW). In other words, his natural state is one in harmony with Islam. If fitrah was not in accordance with Islam, Islâm would have been mentioned amongst the other religions (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1981)³².
- 2) An implication of the above verse is that Judaism, Christianity, Magianism (and every other ideology

as opposed to Islâm) are deviations from a normal state. Notice that this normal state is compared to the unmaimed body of newborn animals, whilst these deviations are analogous to the "maiming" of these original bodies. It follows that the normal state is assumed to be good, while the deviations are considered to be bad (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1981).

- 3) What also follows from this ḥadīth is that while good constitutes the inner state of a person's nature, evil is something that happens after the person is born. Thus, the individual may deviate after birth from his natural state due to the corruption of his parents who represent the most pervasive stimulus of the social environment.

- 4) Whenever Abu Hurayra reported this ḥadīth he used to recite after it the following Qur'ānic verses pointing to the true nature of man;

"Set your face to the religion in sincerity (hanifan) which is Allah's fitrah (the nature made by God) in the state in which He created mankind (fataran nas). There is no change in God's creation. That is the right religion but most people know not".

(30:30)

Abu Hurayra's citation of this verse after the hadith is significant for it indicates that he understood that the fitrah of the hadith refers to the fitrah mentioned in the Qur'anic verse. It is clear that the fitrah referred to in this verse is a good fitrah since the right religion is being described as God's fitrah. It follows, therefore, that Abu Hurayra means Islâm (Al Qurtubî, 1967)³⁴.

Shaykh Tantâwî Jawharî interprets the word hanifan to mean a state of receptivity to the message of tawhîd and Islâm. He refers to the key hadith to point out that imân (faith) is the original state of the newborn baby. He explains that the human mind is like a tabula rasa receptive to both good and bad. However, its original natural quality and predisposition is for the good to dominate it. Corrupt ideas and opinions do not alter the human mind unless the child

is taught these by his parents and his environment. If the child is left to himself, he will come to know the oneness of his Creator.³⁵

Fitratullah refers to the nature of God, which is tawhîd (Oneness of God) the basis on which man was created and hence predisposed to worship the one God.³⁶ Fitrah may also mean what Asad refers to as the natural disposition which connotes in this context, "man's inborn intuitive ability to discern between right and wrong, true and false, and thus, to sense God's existence and Oneness."³⁷ The three religions mentioned in the hadîth are contrasted with fitrah, the natural disposition of man which Asad defines as "man's intrinsic cognition of God and his self-surrender (Islâm) to Him". Thus in this context, the term abdîl (change) comprises the concept of corruption.³⁸

Further support of the positive interpretation of fitrah can be found in the following pertinent verses from the Qur'ân.

- 1) We have already discussed the meaning of the Qur'ânic verses (91:7-10) which the advocates of the dualistic view use to justify their point of view (page 2).

While they interpret the word alhama to mean that God

created man with the inherent disposition for good and evil, we understand it to mean that God only made man aware of good and evil.

2) The following verses are crucial for an understanding of fitrah:

و اذ أخذ ربك من بنى آدم من ظهورهم

ذريتهم و أشهدهم على أنفسهم . أ لست

بربكم . قالوا بلى شهدنا أن تقولوا يوم

القيامة اتنا كنا عن هذا غافلين * أو

تقولوا انما أشرك آبائنا من قبل و كنا

ذرية من بعدهم أ فتهلكنا بما فعل المبطلون *

و كذلك نفعل الآيات و لعلم يرجعون *

(٧ : ١٧٢ - ١٧٤)

"And (remember) when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins their offspring and made them testify respecting themselves (by asking them) "Am I not your Lord" They said: "Yes, we testify lest you should say on the day of resurrection "We were heedless of this or lest you say Our fathers became idolaters before us and we were only the offspring that came after them. Will you destroy us for what the falsemongers did?"

(7:72-174)

Ibn Kathîr comments that God made their offspring generation after generation testify that God is their Lord, just as He originally created them, fatarahum, in this state.³⁹

This verse clearly refers to the nature of man where the nature of man is understood as being the nature made by Allâh, one according to which he has created all men.

This consciousness of God is what constitutes man's intrinsic goodness and it is embedded in the human soul. The Qur'ân even speaks of man's consciousness of God in relation to God's nearness to him:

"We are nearer to him than his life-vein."

(50:16)

and

"We are nearer to it (the soul) than you."

(56:85)

The idea that God is nearer to man than man is to his own self seems to show that the consciousness of the existence of God in the human soul is even clearer than the human consciousness of himself. The rightly guided man, according to al Attas, a contemporary muslim scholar, "realises that his very self, his soul, has already acknowledged God as his Lord, so that such a man recognises his Creator, and Cherisher and Sustainer"⁴⁰. By acknowledging God as the

Creator, the covenant is completed, "therefore we acknowledge our duty to Him, when we so testify concerning ourselves, the obligation is as it were, assumed by us, for it follows from our very nature when it is pure and uncorrupted".⁴¹

7. ETHICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE POSITIVE VIEW OF FIṬRAH

We have briefly discussed the ethical and epistemological implications of the neutral and dualistic view of fiṭrah (page 4). We now turn to a discussion of the ethical and epistemological implications of the positive view of fiṭrah.

The nature of man's fiṭrah is such that he is innately predisposed to recognise his Creator and worship Him. This worship involves submission to the divine will which includes conformity to ethical injunctions. Man's conformity to ethical values is a fulfilment of his divinely ordained purpose of life. Righteous action is therefore natural to him and in harmony with his fiṭrah for God has "pre-emptively implanted in man the love of the good, the love of the values which are the constituents of divine

will." To know and to submit to Divine commandments is therefore second nature to man, and the violation of these commandments is therefore unnatural.⁴²

Man's worship of his Creator is therefore not confined to belief and formal prayer to God, but includes his ethical conduct as well. God prohibits and instructs in matters relating to food and drink; in man's relationship with his wife; and also in relation to how his society should be governed. And since man's true nature is one of intrinsic goodness, man is expected to conform to the divine laws that will guide him towards ethical conduct which in turn will strengthen his original nature and make him more inclined towards values demanded of his nature. Islam is therefore designed to develop a mental state within man which will make the values of truth, honesty, brotherly feelings, etc. dear to one's heart and the opposite qualities, the vices of dishonesty, hypocrisy, etc. would become abhorrent to the individual. When the Qur'ân addresses the companions of the Prophet (SAW) it says:

"God has endeared to you belief, and made it graceful to your hearts; and He has made detestable to you unbelief, ungodliness and disobedience."

(49:7-8)

The believers have developed and sensitised their fitrah to such an extent that they find belief and virtue endearing and disbelief and vice abhorrent.

Moral virtue is therefore a characteristic of human nature. We are easily able to recognise a morally virtuous person and endeavour to emulate him or to attain a high moral standard ourselves. The reason for this easy recognition and endeavour to moral perfection is because of the fitrah that we have been endowed with. I think that Socrates was right in holding that all men possess a capacity for recognising moral virtue.⁴³ We do occasionally recognise those things which are ultimately valuable when we are brought into contact with them, although we do not always recognise them, and often take things to be valuable which are not.

We cannot agree with the subjectivistic theory of ethics which states that notions of values are self-invented; that the values of truth, beauty and goodness are projections of man outside himself. The recognition and persuance of virtue is an innate quality in man, born out of his natural state of fitrah.⁴⁴

If virtue is an innate quality then the learning of it is a rediscovery of what in some sense is already known.

Man's soul has already acknowledged God as his lord, even

before his existence as man (7:172). It is man's duty to return to his original state, which is the state of îmân in which he was born (fitrah). His acquisition of virtue is therefore a recollection or a rediscovery of what was in reality within him. This learning process is explained by Socrates and Plato and is referred to as a sort of anamnesis or recollection. Fitrah is also implied in this theory of knowledge. Learning is a process by which the soul becomes re-acquainted with what it already knows, but has forgotten that it knows. Learning then is the apprehension of inborn knowledge.⁴⁵

Virtue or knowledge of the good may therefore be considered both innate and acquired. It is not innate in the sense that it is the conscious possession of the child at birth. It is innate in the sense that it is an inborn possession of the soul; whether that inborn possession is consciously realised depends, on the right environment. Yet the virtue that results is not the creation of the moral instruction and the right environment, "any more than the blossom on the plant in the conservatory is the creation of the conservatory. The blossom springs from the seed (fitrah) which was there in the first place; the conservatory provides the environment in which alone the seed can blossom."⁴⁶ Fitrah therefore develops and grows as a result of the learning that takes place in the

environment; however man's innate inclination to good (fiṭrah) may be directed towards mistaken ends. He may even make misjudgements as to what is really good, taking to be good what is really not. A bad environment is one that arrests the growth of fiṭrah. A good community is one that encourages blossoming out of the seed of fiṭrah from its citizens, while a bad community stifles the development of man's innate disposition for good (fiṭrah). A good environment from an Islâmic point of view is one that dictates to the individual the life-style that is based upon the divine will. If man is born good why does he still act contrary to what his fiṭrah dictates. The reason for this is that his fiṭrah is bungled by ignorance of divine revelation, and also by acquaintance of falsehood and evil action. This state of ignorance and evil action can be overcome by acting upon divine instruction. Man may be born good but he is also created imperfect and weak (4:28). He therefore needs divine guidance, not to be perfect, but to live in harmony with his nature and hence be happy. His nature requires that he believes in God, be grateful to Him and love Him.

Revelation guides man as to the way in which he should express his gratitude. This is done through worship which is the best means of cultivating fiṭrah and keeping it alive.

Concerning Ṣalâh (prayer) which is the fundamental form of worship the Qur'ân states:

"Verily prayer protects against indecency (fahsha) and dishonour (Munkar) and it makes one mindful of God which is more important."

(29:45)

So we can see that the prescribed forms of worship, if properly and sincerely performed, will prevent the individual from vices and inculcate in him the discipline for proper ethical conduct.

In summary, man is born in a state of fitrah, with an innate sense of his Creator, disposed to worship Him, and inclined to pursue good. He becomes reawakened to his original nature through instruction and training from a good environment, which teaches him to worship his Creator and inculcates in him proper ethical values. These views form the basis for an Islâmic approach to physical, psychological and spiritual development. In other words they are the religious basis for what in the West is referred to as "developmental psychology."

8 SUMMARY

We have discussed basically three views concerning fiṭrah. The first view concerning the duality of human nature states that man is born with an equal disposition for good and evil. The second view is concerned with the neutrality of human nature, that is, man is born neither good nor evil. The third view is the view that man is born intrinsically good. This view has been explained in two different ways. The first view is to see intrinsic goodness as being Islâm itself. The second is to see intrinsic goodness as the inherent tendency towards Islâm. Among these views the dualistic view seems to be more recent and is not supported by the classical scholars. The neutral view seems to be more popular amongst the contemporary educated muslims. The third view in either of its understandings is closest to the traditionally accepted view of Islâm. We have argued strongly for the positive interpretation of fiṭrah. The characteristics of fiṭrah can therefore be summarised as follows:

- 1) Fiṭrah is the natural, original state of man at birth.
- 2) Fiṭrah is a state of intrinsic goodness where man is born pure and sinless.

- 3) Intrinsic goodness does not only imply that man is receptive to ethical values of goodness, but also refers to man's natural inborn predisposition to know his Creator and to submit to Him in worship.
- 4) Fitrah as goodness means that the spiritual and mental nature of man is designed in a way that makes it necessary for him to believe in God and act morally if he wishes to maintain his well-being.
- 5) The essence of this fitrah entails that man believes in God, is faithful to Him, and worships Him alone, and that this is his natural tendency in the absence of counter-factors.
- 6) However, fitrah does not mean the compulsive tendency to be good and accept truth because one has also the ability to be bad and accept falsehood.
- 7) The nature of fitrah is such that it does not require external factors to make it believe in God and be moral, but needs external factors to cause it to deviate or grow to its full potential. It is through the aid of the Divine revelation that fitrah can grow to its natural perfection.

- 8) The make-up of man is such that he is intrinsically designed to assimilate the values of Islâm or to pursue the good. If the fiṭrah is nurtured properly he will find the vice of disbelief abhorrent to him; and if his fiṭrah is well protected and developed he will find belief and virtues endearing to his heart.
- 9) Man deviates from his pure state only after he is born as a result of negative, destructive environmental factors and his free choice of submitting to them. Man protects and cultivates his fiṭrah through instruction and training from a good environment.

9. NOTES AND REFERENCES (CHAPTER 1)

- 1) Hanif, Sahîh Muslim bisharh al-Nawawî, Vol 16, Book of Qadr, al matb'a'ât-al-misriya bi-al-azharf, 1930, p.207

This hadîth (prophetic tradition) was narrated on the authority of Abû Hurayrah, a companion of the Prophet (SAW), by Muslim (d.206-821) who, along with Bukhâri (d.256-870) enjoy the highest fame for the collections of authentic ahâdith (prophetic traditions). This hadîth was also narrated by Bukhâri.

- 2) Ibn Taymiyyah, Abîl 'Abbas Taqqi al Dîn Ahmad bin 'Abd al Halîm, Daru Ta'ârud al 'Aql wa al Naql, Jâmi 'ah al Imam Muḥammad bin Sa'ûd al Islâmiyyah Riyadh, Vol, p359, 1401/1981.
- 3) Sayyid Qutb (d.1389 AH-1966 AD) is a well-known Muslim author. His influence was tremendous, particularly in the Middle East and especially amongst the younger generations. His most important work is his commentary (tafsîr) of the Qur'ân, Fi zilâl al Qu'rân (In the shade of the Qur'ân), which he wrote during his imprisonment (1954-1964) and completed before he was executed by the Egyptian government for his Association with the Iḥwân al Muslimîn (The Muslim Brotherhood).
- 4) Abu 'Umar Yusuf ibn 'Abd al Allâh bin Muhammad bin 'Abd al Barr al Andalûsi al Mâlikî (362 AH-463 AH) was a great hadîth scholar of Spain. He turned to the Mâlikî school of thought but his explanations leant towards the Shâfi 'i fiqh (law).
- 5) Ibn Taymiyya (b.661/1263) in Harran. A famous theologian and Jurist of the Hanbalite school of thought. An enemy of innovation (bid'âh) and interpreter of verses relating to God literally. The founder of the

Wahâbis made much use of the works of the Hanbalî scholars of Damascus, particularly those of ibn Taymiyyah and his disciple ibn Qayyim.

- 6) Qutb, S., Fî zilâl al Qur'ân, Dâru'l-Shurûq, 1979, Vol 6, p.3917
- 7) Ibid, p.3918
- 8) Qutb, M., Dirâsât fi al Nafs al insâniyah, Dâru'l-Shurûq, 1983, pp.338-339
- 9) (al) Qurtubi, Muhammad al Ansârî, A.A., al jâmi 'u al ahkâm al Qur'ân, al maktabul 'arabiyyah, Cairo, 1967, Vol 7, Part 14, p27.
- 10) Ibn Taymiyyah, Op cit, p.380
- 11) al-Qurtubî, Op cit, p.27
- 12) Ibid, p.28 See also ibn Taymiyyah, Op cit, p.382
- 13) Ibid, p.28
- 14) The crucial word in these verses (91:7-10) is sawwâha

(made it in balance and round proportion). The word sawa literally means to make equal or to make something in balanced proportion or to make level or uniform. A person that is upright is known as sawiy in Arabic. The verse would therefore mean that God first created man's nafs (soul) upright, good balanced, etc. He then made man aware of the type of behaviour that would corrupt the soul and cause it to deviate from its upright original nature. Man was also made aware of the type of behaviour that preserves or protects the upright nature of the soul (nafs). The successful person is one who not only protects this original soul but also purifies it (from any evil that may have sustained it), causing it to grow and develop. Failure (the unhappy person) occurs in one who corrupts this soul and its growth to maturity .

- 15) alhama (the fourth form of the root verb lahima) is explained by E.W. Lane "Arabic-English lexicon" to mean directing someone through inspiration, suggesting something to someone or putting something into someone's mind. It is therefore clear that alhama refers to making someone aware of something through inspiration

inspiration or suggestion (ilhâm).

See Lane, E.W., Arabic-English lexicon, The Islâmic text society, Cambridge, 1984.

- 16) Sâbûni, Muhammad 'Ali, Mukhtasar Tafsîr ibn Kathîr (abridged commentary of ibn Kathîr) Dârul al Karîm, Beirut, 1981, Vol. 3, p.641
- 17) Here is another difference between the neutral view and the dualistic view of human nature. The neutral view is that God showed man good and evil, and the dualistic view is that God created man with the innate tendency towards good and evil.
- 18) Sâbûni, M.A., Op cit, p. 641.
Ismaîl bin Amr bin Kathîr al Dimashqî (d.774-1374) wrote one of the better known classical commentaries of the Qur'ân, with more emphasis on soundness of reports.
- 19) Qur'ân, 51:56
- 20) Qur'ân, 20:50
- 21) Ibn Taymiyyah, Op cit, pp.373-377.

Ibn Jarîr al Tabarî (d.310-922) wrote perhaps the most voluminous work on Tafsîr under the title Jami' al-Bayân fi Tafsîr al Qur'ân.

- 22) Ibid, p.367 and p.372
- 23) Shafi', M., Ma'ârif al Qur'ân, Dârul Ma'arif, Karachi, 1976, p.734
- 24) Azzam Salem (Ed) Islam and Contemporary Society, Longman, London and New York, 1982, p.154. (Professor Ismâ'il al Fârûqi (d.1986) is a well known contemporary scholar.)
- 25) Muftî Muhammad Shafi' is the grand muftî of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent.
- 26) Shafi',M., Op cit, pp734-735
- 27) al-Nawawi (b.631-1233-d.676-1277). A shâfi'î jurist, wrote the principle commentary on muslim's Sahih.
- 28) Hanîf, I.M., Sahîh Muslim bi Sharh al Nawawî, Op cit, p.207. There are however, three schools of thought on what will happen to the child from polytheistic parents.

The one school is that the child's destiny will be that of its parents. The other school is silent on the matter. The third school of thought is that the child will be an inmate of paradise. The third view according to Imâm al Nawawî, is the most authentic one, and conforms to the view of the scholars who are rooted in piety and knowledge.

29) Qurtubî, Op cit, p.30

30) Ḥanîf, I.M., Op cit, p208

See also Ibn Taymiyya, Op cit, pp382-383. Thus if one of the parents is Muslim, be it his mother or father, then the child will be regarded as a Muslim and the Islamic law pertaining to him as a Muslim will apply to him. However, if the child is born in a family where his parents are all non-Muslims, although he is in a state of fiṭrah, the laws that will apply to him will be in accordance with that of his parents. Thus, the Islâmic law that would pertain to the child of the Muslim family will not apply to the child from the non-Muslim family. One of the legal difficulties involved in the view that every child is born a Muslim is based on the question of inheritance. From an Islamic point of view a Muslim

child cannot inherit from a non-Muslim parent and vice versa. Now what about the child who is a Muslim before he attains discretion and has parents that are non-Muslims? The difficulty was explained by the fact that the prophetic tradition of every child being born in a state of fiṭrah, is not a legal decision but a narrative one. The other explanation was that being made into a Jew, a Christian or Magian is to be understood in the figurative sense that change takes place in the child from the time of his birth. The legal religion of the child is therefore that of his parents, although he only comes to embrace that religion with maturity of mind. Some scholars have attempted to resolve this problem by supporting the neutral interpretation of fiṭrah.

31) Walliullah, Shah, Hujjatullah al Bâlighah, U.P.,
India, Vol 1, p.394

32) Ibn Taymiyyah, Op cit, pp.44-448.

The reference to being a Jew, Christian and Magian refers to the followers of the distorted forms of these religions and not the pure message which came with the Prophets before Muḥammad (SAW)

- 33) Ibid, p.362
- 34) Qurtubî, Op cit, p.25
- 35) Jawharî, T., Tafsîr al Jawâhir, Mustafâ al bâbî al Halabî, Egypt, 1350 A.H., Vol 15, p.75
- 36) (Al) Râzî., F., al-Tafsîr al Kabîr, Dârul-Kutub al 'ilmiyyah, Tehran, Vol 25, p.119
Fakrudîn al Râzî (b.543-1149) famous theologian and philosopher of religion, attempted to reconcile philosophy with religious traditions.
- 37) Assad M., The Message of the Qur'ân, Dârul Andalus, Jibraltar, 1980, p.621
- 38) Ibid, p.621
- 39) Sâbûnî, Op cit, p.64
- 40) (al) Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib al Attas, Islam, Secularism and the Philosophy of the Future. Mansel Publishing limited, London, 1985, p.52
- 41) 'Ali Yusuf, Tarjamah Ma'ânî al Qur'ân al Karîm, The Islamic University of al-Imâm Muhammad ibn Sa'ûd, Riyâdh, Vol , p.394

- 42) Azzam, S., Islâm and Contemporary Society, Op cit, p.154
- 43) Joad, C.E.E., Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics, Victor Gallanz, Ltd, London, 1938, p.430.
- 44) Ibid, pp.434-435
- 46) Ibid, p. 436

CHAPTER TWO

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF MAN (QALB and 'AQI)

Since man's innate inclination is to worship God (fitrah); or since he is born with an innate predisposition to Islam, it follows that the Islamic way of life would be best-suited to his nature and necessary for his inner peace and happiness. The guidance for the Islamic way of life is expressed in its perfect form in the Qur'anic revelation. God would not be God if he had not endowed man with the faculties by means of which he may be able to understand divine revelation or the organs of perception with which man may recognize his Creator. Apart from revelation as an objective source of knowledge, and guidance, man has been endowed with the organs of cognition, namely, the heart (qalb) and the intellect ('aql). These organs enable man to comprehend the highest source of knowledge, namely, divine revelation, and to perceive at the highest level in the hierarchy of human perception. Man is capable of the lowest level of sensory perception to the highest level of spiritual perception. To facilitate

the understanding of the three levels of human perception, and the relationship of the various elements associated with the three levels, we provide a scheme below. This will also hopefully help in clarifying our use of terminology. It is to be noted that 'aql is capable of both spiritual and intellectual perception, and that the mind is connected to intellectual perception of a discursive nature. The mind is associated with the capacity for reason which is a projection of the 'aql on a mental plane. A distinction is therefore made between reason which is an expression of the mind and intellection which is an expression of 'aql. This distinction between reason and intellection (kashf) is further clarified in this chapter (pp.84-85) and in the final chapter (pp.343-4).

| Level | PERCEPTUAL PROCESS | FACULTY: MEDIUM |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Sensory perception | sight, hearing, smelling, etc. | eyes, ears; |
| 2. Intellectual perception | cognition, reasoning, insight, etc. | 'aql, mind |
| 3. Spiritual perception | intuition, intellection, inspiration | 'aql, qalb |

As can be noted from the table Islâmic epistemology recognizes all levels of perception in man in contrast to the

tendency in Western psychology which recognizes only the sensory and intellectual perception. The three levels of perception are clearly distinguished as indicated above. Although they are at times inter-related one could still manage an appropriate and consistent use of them. In this way, the reader knows if it is a singular distinct level, or a level where, perhaps, 'aql and qalb are combined. The objective of each of these levels of perception is the acquisition of knowledge. Through the senses we acquire knowledge of the physical environment, eg. knowledge of the biosphere. Through the mind we acquire analytical and synthetic knowledge, a prior knowledge which includes knowledge of metaphysical and abstract phenomena, eg. the concept of justice, or the concept of God. The 'heart-knowledge' or knowledge of the intellect ('aql) involves the experience of spiritual realities, eg. elevation of the self, or attaining the presence of God. All these levels of knowledge are "true" and "real". Truth - falsehood, therefore is a scale on which all perceptions of all our faculties may find a place. While Islamic epistemology recognizes all these levels of perception and realities as constituting legitimate knowledge, it however, also recognizes a hierarchy of knowledge, the lowest level being the sensory level of perception, and the highest level constituting the spiritual perception.

An understanding of this hierarchy of knowledge would be incomplete without an elaboration of the organs of cognition namely, the heart (qalb) and intellect ('aql). This chapter deals with divergent perspectives concerning qalb and 'aql. Although the classical scholars may have treated qalb and 'aql as ontological entities associated with the hypostatic names they have given them, they were not, however, blind to the functions to which these hypostatic affirmations are identified with. The functions to which these "hypostatic entities" are connected with are the "functions of consciousness" (Faruqi's expression). The functions of consciousness may be associated with the three levels of perception that we have alluded to in the table. We discuss in this chapter the levels of perception or cognition associated with the qalb and 'aql and the relationship between them. We refer to the philosophical, Sufi and theological schools to articulate a variety of perspectives. We also discuss critically the views of modern scholars. We combine our discussion on both the heart and the intellect for they are intimately related to one another although some scholars would suggest that there is an epistemological bifurcation between the two. In spite of the divergent views concerning the heart and intellect, what is clearly revealed is that Islamic epistemology recognises a level of perception identified with the function of qalb and 'aql which is hardly recognised in

Western psychology. This chapter, then, is important for introducing us to the epistemological dimension of Islâmic psychology.

1. THE SPIRITUAL COGNITION OF THE HEART

The word "qalb" was used in Jahilliyah poetry to express the essential part of man, for it was considered to be the source of all emotions. With the rise of Islâm it took a new meaning and was considered to be not only the source of emotions, but also the centre of faith (imân), purity, certitude and obedience to God.²

"Qalb" is used frequently in the Qur'ân and takes on various shades of meaning.³ We shall begin our discussion with a verse which perhaps can be considered to be crucial for an understanding of the heart as the source of spiritual cognition.

أ فم يسروا فى الأرض فتكون لهم قلوب

يعقلون بها أو آذان يسمعون بها فاتها لا

تعى الأبصار و لكن تعى القلوب التى

فى الصدور ×

(٢٢ : ٤٦)

"Have they not travelled in the land and possessed hearts (qulûb) with which to understand (ya'qilûn), or

ears with which to hear? For surely it is not the eyes which are blind, but blind are the hearts which are in the breasts."

(22:46)

"Travelled in the land" is a metaphor for broadening one's horizons by investigating the reality of things and contemplating upon the phenomena of existence. The heart is capable of such contemplation and insight into the reality of things for it is the heart which understands (ya'qilûn). If man does not see or hear as he should, then it is not the fault of his sensory organs. Such blindness and deafness belong to the heart which is the source of spiritual insight. However, if the heart is lacking in spiritual insight (basîrah) then no amount of physical sight (basar) will allow one to see reality. A person may be able to see the physical signs of Divine power with his eyes; but he may not see the reality of Divine power because he has no insight (basîrah). On the other hand the person who possesses insight (basîrah) is able to see the reality of Divine power clearly for he sees with his heart. It is to be noted that the heart referred to here is one that has insight that comes from faith (imân). The heart informed by faith uncovers the reality of all things as light reveals the reality of physical things in the dark, so the heart, illuminated by faith, has the insight to perceive Divine reality. The heart's insight

is something described as ilhâm (inspiration).⁴ The believer who experiences ilhâm is able to see the deeper reality embodied within all things, in other words, unlike the one who sees creation simply as a physical reality because his heart lacks insight (basîrah), he sees creation as the work of God. When this spiritual vision (ilhâm) is achieved, the individual is able to see with the eye of the heart ; the veils are raised⁵ and perception transcends all physical limits. The true perception of all things is rooted in an alert and open heart. By openness and awareness is meant a heart informed by faith. Proper thinking is not possible when the heart is blind, that is to say, closed to faith (Imân). A blind heart is incapable of certain knowledge. This idea is also expressed in the Qur'ân (50:37) which says that an alert and contemplative heart is the basis for understanding.

انّ في ذلك لذكرى لمن كان له
قلب أو ألقى السمع و هو شهيد *

(٢٧ : ٥٠)

"In this, behold, there is indeed a reminder
for everyone whose heart is wide-awake -

that is, (everyone who) lends ear with a conscious mind."⁶

1.1 REPRESENTATIVE CLASSICAL SCHOLARS

Al Muḥāsibī⁷ compares the heart to the eye which contains the light of sight (baṣar) and which makes us acquainted with visible things. Similarly, the heart is a light (nūr) which makes us perceive the Divine Wisdom (al hikmah al ilâhiyah) which is bâṭinah (hidden) in this universe when we ponder over the harmony and movement of its creation.⁸ It is the heart that determines a man's excellence, distinguishes him from the rest of the creation, for it makes it possible for him to know God and to accept or reject His commandments. The heart in fact has knowledge of this world (al dunyâ) as well as access to knowledge of the hereafter (al âkhirah)⁹.

al Tirmîdhī¹⁰ divides the heart into four parts (maqâmât)¹¹

Each station of the heart has its own characteristics and function. The breast (ṣaḍr) is the abode of the light of Islâm (nūr al Islâm). Islâm is used in a restricted sense to mean the outward actions of obedience to God. The breast is the repository for the knowledge that requires one to perform these acts,

such as the knowledge of the Shari'ah which can be learnt from a book or a teacher. The heart proper (qalb), embedded within the breast (sadr), is the abode of the light of faith (nûr al îmân). By faith is meant the acceptance of the heart of the truth of God's revelation. The heart is the abode of valuable knowledge of reality which is granted by God and cannot be learnt from a book or a teacher. whilst the heart has merely knowledge of reality, the inner heart (fu'âd) is the function of the light of knowledge (nûr al ma'rifah) and has direct vision of reality. The innermost part of the heart (lubb) is the function of the light of unification (nûr al Tawhîd) which forms the basis of the three other spheres and is the recipient of God's grace and beauty. Each of the four stations of the heart is connected with one of the four spiritual ranks of the Sûfi.

The qalb or the "heart proper" is then the abode of the light of faith (nûr al îmân) and the light of (khushû') and piety (taqwâ). It has knowledge, but not a direct vision of reality. In his comment on Surah 22, verse 46, al Tirmidhi states that blindness and sight are attributes of the heart and not of the breast. Although, metaphorically speaking, breast and heart are synonymously used, God refers to the heart of the disbelievers because their breasts and hearts are shrunk, devoid of the light of guidance. Thus

we see that al Tirmîdhî describes the four stations of the heart, and it is the qalb (heart proper) which is the abode which the light of îmân enters and through which knowledge of reality is possible.¹²

al Ghazâlî¹³ also sees the heart as that aspect in man which has the capacity to understand the reality of things. In his Ihyâ' he states that "where the word "qalb" is used in the Qur'ân and the Sunnah it is intended to mean that which understands or comprehends in man and which knows the reality or the essence of things."¹⁴ al Râzî, the famous philosopher and classical commentator on the Qur'ân, affirmed in his tafsîr that the abode of knowledge (ilm) is the heart. In connection with the verse, "Allah has sealed the hearts," (2:7) which is supported by the verse "a trustworthy divine inspiration has alighted with it from on high upon thy heart" (26:193), he also stated that the heart is the place of ignorance and neglect, and that the verse "hearts with which to understand" (qulûbun ya'qilûnabiha) suggests that the heart is an instrument of perception and hence it is the abode of reflection. It would follow that ignorance is associated with the blindness of the heart because if the heart is not open to perception, it is in fact left in a state of ignorance.¹⁵ In his comment on the verse "fi qulûbihim maraḍun" (In their hearts is a disease) he stated that if a particular organ is plagued with

a disease the function of that organ will be affected in proportion to the disease by which it is affected. Any disfunctioning of the heart will adversely affect the individual's recognition and submission to the Creator, for these are the special qualities and functions of the heart. In his comment on the verse "your hearts hardened and then became like rocks" (2:74), al Râzî states that the heart is affected by arguments, experience and time, and that if it is negatively affected, then it can become as hard as a stone.¹⁶ Thus we see that al Râzî views the heart as the centre of knowledge and capable of perception which is referred to as nûr al qalb (light of the heart). The positive effect of belief, recognition of God and obedience to Him stem from knowledge and obedience to God. The disease and blindness of the heart is the result of a lack of recognition and obedience to God.

al Nîsâburî interpreted the verse, "Our lord, let not our hearts swerve after you have guided us",¹⁷ stating that there are two types of supplication (du'â) from people who possess knowledge. The first is that they ask God not to divert their hearts after He has guided them. The second type of supplication is that God bestow mercy from Himself. ("And bestowed upon them mercy")¹⁸ In the first du'â the worshipper

asks God not to incline his heart to falsehood or perverted beliefs. The second supplication is a plea to God to illuminate their hearts with the nûr al ma'rifah (light of knowledge of God); and to bless their limbs and organs through the beauty of obedience, worship and service to God. Thus the first supplication seeks the nûr (light) of îmân, ma'rifah and tawhîd to enter the heart, and the second seeks through the action of the limbs and organs, the light of obedience, worship and service to God. The second supplication therefore suggests that the heart is capable of being illuminated by knowledge of God.¹⁹

al Zamakhsharî, in his tafsir of sûrah al Haj, verse 46, states that "ya'qilûna bihâ", refers to the perception of tawhîd, for the heart is the centre of tagwâ (God-consciousness) in its established state and will have its effect upon all the other parts of the body. The use of the word marad (disease of the heart) can be used both literally to mean pain, and symbolically to mean the various vices in the heart such as disbelief, rancour, disobedience and a consistent determination to do evil.²⁰ Al Qurtubî comments on the same verse and states that Mujâhid is of the view that every person has four eyes. Two eyes in the head to live on earth, and two eyes in the heart to live for the âkhirah (hereafter). If the eyes in the head become blind, but the internal eyes are intact, then

his physical blindness will be of no consequence. On the other hand, if the physical eyes are intact and the internal eyes are blind, then physical sight will be of no avail, and it may even lead him to perdition.

Sahl al Tust'arî (d.283 896), an exponent of classical Sûfism, develops a spiritual psychological archetype in his Tafsîr al Qur'ân. Tustarî discerns two fundamental antagonistic forces within the soul of man: a positive force, the heart (qalb), which turns man towards God and a negative force, the self (nafs), which induces man to turn towards his ego. When Tustârî refers to the spiritual reality of man that is centred on God without particular reference to its actualisation or its opposite force, then he speaks of the heart of man. Tustârî explains the God-centred tendency of the heart by two parallel interpretations of the following verse:

"God has not assigned to any man two hearts (qalbayn) within his breast (jawf)."
(33:4)

Man has only one heart which is turned to his lord (Rabb). It is compared to the face (wajh) which is always turned to God, and inclined to Him alone. Tustarî feels that this verse

refers to "one who turns his face (matawwafin) to God with the intention (qaṣd) of turning around (iltifât). He who pays attention to any other than God, is not intent on turning to his Lord (Rabb), for God says "God has not assigned to any man two hearts within his breast" (33:4). A heart with which he turns to his lord and a heart with which he pursues the affairs of this world (dunyâ). Tust'arî, stresses that the heart is the sole principle within man that is turned to God and that is inclined to Him alone. It is indeed one of the three elements that represents the spiritual principle within man. The spirit (rûh) and the intellect (ʿaql) being the others. They represent the three components of man's soul, but describe three ways of realisation of the very same spiritual reality of man which is centred on God ever since the day of the primordial covenant. Thus, we see that the heart with its God-centred tendency accords with the original nature of man, his fiṭrah, which is naturally inclined towards God.²²

.2 REPRESENTATIVE MODERN SCHOLARS

From the foregoing discussion we may deduce that the classical scholars share the common view on the heart, namely that the heart is the seat of knowledge and perception of God.

We now turn to the views of some of the modern scholars on the spiritual cognition of the heart. Shahidullah Faridi considers the heart to be the intellectual centre of the soul; it operates through the faculties of the mind, reason, imagination and memory. It has to discriminate and choose between the opposite forces of rûh (spirit) and nafs (selfish self), which forms the other two centres of the soul. Whilst Tust'arî sees the heart as a positive element inclined towards God, Faridi sees it as a neutral force which has to choose between opposing forces of good and evil.²³

Muhammad Iqbal (b.1289:1873), the famous poet and philosopher of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, also sees the heart as the organ which can perceive realities other than those open to sense perception and that this perception is an experience which is "as real and coherent as any other experience".²⁴ According to al Jûzû, the heart establishes the presence of God and His existence in a different manner from that of the intellect; it relies upon deep inner sentiment and insight (başirah) and intuition. It is the abode of waḥy (divine inspiration), imân, taqwah and 'ilm (knowledge), al Jûzû draws a distinction between the believing heart (al qalb al mu'min) and the disbelieving heart (al qalb al kâfir). The believing heart is open and receptive to truth whilst the disbelieving heart is closed, ignorant and unreceptive to truth. The nûr or the light that is referred to in Surah 24,

verse 35 is the light that fills the heart. The heart is urged to think (yu'qil) in sûrah al Hajj, verse 46, so that it can become a believing heart; and if it does not think then it becomes blind and unreceptive to the truth of eternal reality. The heart is therefore capable of corruption and impurity.²⁵ The sûfîs, according to Seyyed Hussein Nasr, speak of the "eye of the heart " ('ayn al qalb) which is able to gain a knowledge different from that of the physical eyes, yet direct and immediate like physical vision. This knowledge is principal knowledge which is identified with the heart, or centre of the being of man, rather than the mind which can only provide an indirect form of knowledge and which is a projection of the heart. According to Nasr, the Holy Qur'ân and ahadith allude to the heart as the seat of knowledge and intelligence. The instrument of true knowledge is the heart and its affliction is due to forgetfulness. In some senses, the Qur'ân addresses the heart more than the mind, as in the following verse:²⁶

"O men, now there has come to you an admonition from your Lord, and a healing for what is in the breasts (namely the heart) and a guidance and a mercy to the believers." (10:57)

The following hadîth alludes to the knowledge of the heart which is identified with faith (imân). It is recorded by both Bukhâri and Tirmîdhî:

"Faith descended to the root of the hearts of men, then came down the Qur'ân, and (people) learnt from the Qur'ân and from the example of the Prophet."²⁷

It is to be noted that Sûfîs and their sympathisers lend special significance to the study of heart, which according to them is one of the three organs of spiritual communication.²⁸

And in the words of Nicholson, "the qalb is capable of knowing the essences of all things and when illuminated by faith and knowledge reflects the whole content of the divine mind."²⁹ In a hadith Qudsî, therefore, the Prophet (SAW) is reported to have reported God as saying:

"My earth and My heaven contain Me not, but the heart of My faithful servant contains Me."

The knowledge arrived at through the heart is referred to by the sufis as ma'rifat or 'irfân. It is fundamentally

different from ordinary knowledge ('ilm) which is the result of mental processes, but is a direct knowledge of God based on revelation and depends totally on the will and favour of God, bestowed as a gift upon those who are able to receive it. It is a "light of divine grace that flashes into the heart and overwhelms every human faculty in its dazzling beams."³⁰

In sum, the heart (qalb) is the organ of spiritual cognition; it is capable of knowing God in a direct and immediate way (ma'rifah). The heart's insight is sometimes called ilhâm (inspiration) as it is able to perceive the essence of all things. As such the level of its knowledge transcends sensory experience, it is neither the result of nor dependent upon the logical processes of the mind. Its relationship with the intellect will be discussed later in this chapter, but first we shall discuss the concept of the intellect in Islam and focus on that aspect of the intellect, the role of which scholars generally agree upon.

2. THE RATIONAL COGNITION OF THE INTELLECT ('AQL)

The heart (qalb) possesses many other qualities³¹ but it

is not within the scope of this chapter to discuss them. Our aim is merely to focus upon the epistemological dimension of the heart. The intellect of 'aql' will be treated in the same manner. The status of the intellect and its role in Islâm will be discussed in this section.

The Arabic word for the intellect is al'aql. The scholars are agreed that the intellect is capable of reason, but for some it has a higher function than mere reasoning. We shall, however leave this discussion for the last section of this chapter and focus more specifically on intellect in the ordinary sense of the word.

Man and animal are alike as far as their sensory organs are concerned but what distinguishes man from the animal is that he has been endowed with the intellect. This does not mean that the animal does not have intelligence, but that its intelligence is confined to its instincts. Man's intellect however, enables him to choose and make decisions and hence to exercise his free-will in a particular way. It is this ability to think that is linked to the ideas of responsibility of choice and actions. Man's intellect is therefore capable of moral decision-making and is related to the idea of moral responsibility. The areas of free-will and responsibility have

been the focus of a great debate for centuries in Islamic thought and will be discussed in a separate chapter. This capacity for moral responsibility makes man fundamentally different from the animal. Hence, intelligent decisions in the Islamic context are not just a matter of cleverness,³² but are a matter of whether one has decided upon the values and the ways of goodness (as indicated by fitrah) instead of those of evil (which deviate from fitrah). The ability to make moral decisions, moreover, is the reason that God, according to the Qur'ân, has given man, above all other creatures including the angels, the status and responsibility of Khalifat-Allah.³³ The meaning of the word 'aql' was also related to intelligence during the Jâhiliyyah period until the message brought by the Prophet (SAW) added a new dimension to its meaning. In Islâmîc poetry it became connected to the idea of making moral choices.³⁴ It is therefore not only used to mean reason but also that which binds us to God; in fact, the root meaning of the word 'aql' is to tie or to bind. In other words, it is the faculty in man which connects things or ideas together.³⁵ Those who have gone astray in religion are associated with those who cannot think or use their intelligence, la ya'qilûn. It is significant to note that the Qur'ân associates loss of faith not with the corruption of the will but with the improper use of the intellect.³⁶ There are 49 verses which make reference to

the intellect ('aql), always in the form of a verb, which is a more active way of urging man to apply his intellect.³⁷ Let us look at some of the references of the Qur'ân that illustrate the way in which Islâm encourages the intellect to be used.

First, Islâm encourages man to reflect upon nature. One can understand why Muslims at one stage made such gigantic strides in scientific advancement. They were impelled by the Qur'ân to make scientific investigations. The Qur'ân addressed the intellect, encouraging it to contemplate upon the phenomena of nature:

"The creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of day and night, and the ships which run in the sea with that which profits man and the water that Allâh sends down from the sky, then gives life therewith to the earth after its death and spreads in it all kinds of animals, and the changing of the winds, and the clouds made subservient between heavens and earth, these are surely signs for a people who think (ya 'qilûn)!"

(2:203)

In this verse man is firstly urged to observe creation so that he may be reminded to think of his Creator. Secondly, the

Qur'ân uses intellect in the sense of "logical thinking" as a way to arrive at the truth. This is usually in the form of a dialogue. In Surah Baqarah an example of the power of the dialogue can be seen to show the power of man in relation to the power of God.³⁸ In another dialogue Prophet Abraham (Ebrahim) challenges the blind tradition of idol worshippers of his time. He poses logical arguments to demonstrate the futility of idolworship - arguments that should appeal to one's sense of reason.³⁹ In a further reference in the Qur'ân, God reprimands man for being heedless in his behaviour when called to good. Man is being reprimanded for not using his intellect ('aql): "do you have no sense?"⁴⁰ Thus, we see the concept 'intellect' is conveyed in the Qur'ân as a means by which man realises his relationship with his Creator, and that logical thought helps in this regard.

Thirdly, the intellect of man according to the Qur'ân, gives him superiority over the angels:

و علم آدم الأسماء كلها ثم عرضهم على
الملائكة فقال أنبئوني بأسماء هؤلاء ان كنتم
مادقين x قالوا سبحانك لا علم لنا الا
ما علمتنا انك انت العليم الحكيم x

قال يا آدم أنبئهم بأسمائهم فلما أنبأهم
بأسمائهم قال أ لم أقل لكم اتى أعلم
غيب السماوات و الأرض و أعلم ما تبدون
و ما كنتم تكتمون *

(٢ : ٢١ - ٢٢)

"And He taught Adam the names of all things, and then set them before the angels, and said:

'Tell me the names of the things if you are endowed with wisdom' They said: 'Praise be to Thee! We have no knowledge but what Thou has given us to know. Thou are the Knowing, the Wise.'

He said: 'O Adam, inform them of their names.' And when he had informed them of their names, He said: 'Did I not say to you that I know what you bring to light and what you hide.'

(2:31-33)

According to a contemporary scholar, Muhammad Asad, "the names of all things," denote man's logical definitions and therefore it must refer to their essences to conceptual and

categorical thinking. And by "Adam" is meant the whole human race because in the preceding reference the angels speak of "such as will spread corruption on earth and will shed blood."⁴¹ The angels bowed down to man to demonstrate their acknowledgement of man's superiority, that is, his unique capacity for conceptualization and for moral action.⁴²

They confessed that their knowledge was limited only to what God had taught them.⁴³ God showed them that Adam was able to inform them of 'names' of things, i.e. of the essences.⁴⁴ This convinced the angels of man's superiority, therefore they prostrated themselves to Adam, except Iblis (Satan)⁴⁵ because he considered himself to be superior by virtue of the fact that he was created from fire and man from clay. It is by virtue of this superior knowledge that man has deserved the role of khalifah (Vicegerent of God) on earth. This knowledge and ability given to man is necessary for his earthly existence and his responsibility to his Creator. By contrast, the angels are obedient creatures of God, they cannot disobey Him, and they do not have the role of khalifah on earth which is the essence of man's superiority to the angels. This is why they do not require the knowledge of "the names" which was bestowed upon man. It is this quality of intellect which according to the Qur'ân determines man's

status in relation to the angels, the animals and the rest of creation. The intellect that he has been endowed with enables him to carry out his responsibilities as khalifah.

The concept of 'aql as we have seen is closely connected to the concept of responsibility for action. In a hadith this is related to the question of mental sanity and responsibility of action, before the institution of Islamic law. If the individual is mentally sane then he is liable for punishment if he commits a grave wrong. On the other hand, if an individual loses his senses, he becomes absolved of all responsibility in terms of the Shari'ah.

This we see in the following hadith:

The Prophet was asked concerning Mâlik al Aslami who came to confess to the Prophet (SAW) that he had committed adultery. The Prophet (SAW) said: "Do you know whether his mind is impaired, of any fact which may discredit his confession?"

So it was answered: "All we know of him is that he has a sound and a trustworthy mind."⁴⁶

(narrated by Muslim)

2.1 FACTORS OBSTRUCTING THE INTELLECT

An important theme in the Qur'ân is the question of the factors that obstruct the sound use of the intellect. There are three main factors that obstruct the sound use of the intellect:

- 1) Attachment to certain traditional or commonly held ideas prevent the sound functioning of the mind. One becomes close-minded, blind and unreceptive to new evidence, or even to different ideas. The individual is not prepared to examine critically the thought and customs of his forefathers. The Prophets and the Messengers throughout history have preached the message of tawhîd (Unity of God), but there were many people who were not receptive to this message because they were bound to the traditions and beliefs of their predecessors or the way of life in which they had been reared. The Qur'ân describes their clinging to traditions blindly as one of the main obstacles to sound thinking and to the acceptance of the religion of Tawhîd.

"And when it is said to them, follow what Allâh has revealed, they say: Nay we follow that wherein we found our forefathers. What! Even

though their forefathers had no sense at all,
nor did they follow the right way".

(2:270)

- 2) Lack of sound proof is another chief factor in false thinking among people. Many people make impulsive decisions or arrive at erroneous conclusions which are not based on sound thinking, knowledge and evidence from the Divine Book. Many religious leaders are dangerously divided simply because they are fanatical about opinions which have no support from the clear proofs of the Qur'ân and Ḥadîth. Thus, one's thoughts or conjecture should be subjected to clear proofs from Divine revelation, and from the knowledge and guidance which is based on revelation. In this view reason should be subject to revelation; the intellect should be guided by revelation.

"And among men is he who disputes about Allah without knowledge, and without guidance, and without an illuminating Book."

(22:8)

Numerous other verses in the Qur'ân support the notion that man should base the use of his intellect on Divine Guidance.⁴⁷

- 3) A third factor which inhibits the intellect is emotional confusion and lower desires. They render the individual unable to distinguish truth from falsehood, good from evil and guidance from error.⁴⁸

"But they answer Thee not, know that they only follow their lower desires, and who is more astray than he who follows his lower desires without guidance from Allâh. Surely Allâh does not guide the iniquitous people."

(28:50)⁴⁹

Scholars are therefore generally in agreement that the intellect ('aql) is capable of reason and logical thought. However, they do not see this as an end in itself, but as a means through which the individual may realise his Creator. Classical commentators of the Qur'ân are also in agreement with regard to the capacity of the intellect. al Tabari, for example, states that through contemplation upon the signs of the Creator,⁵⁰ man will learn to realise his Creator; Zamakhsharî also states that those who contemplate with the eyes of the intellect upon nature will realise the bounties of God given to man, which will in turn bring them to have faith in God as the Creator of these bounties.⁵¹ Al Râzî

similarly views the intellect as the basis for the individual's responsibility to seek the signs and proofs of God's existence, so that he may express gratitude, obedience and worship to Him.⁵²

Scholars agree on rational cognition and discursive reasoning as functions of the intellect. However, there are some scholars who understand intellect to mean more than just a faculty of cognition and who tend to attribute holiness to the intellect ('aql). Abu al Dinya glorifies 'aql and makes it the basis for imân (faith) and success in this world (dunya) and in the hereafter (al âkhirah).⁵³ Even the Muslim philosophers attempted to attribute holiness to the intellect. According to al Juzû this trend of thought influenced al Ghazâlî himself who quotes fabricated traditions to demonstrate the nobility of the intellect. The origin of these ahâdîth are to be found in the works of ibn Muḥabbar.⁵⁴ An example of such a hadîth is quoted by al Ghazâlî in his Ihyâ 'Ulûm al Dîn: The Prophet (SAW) said:

"The first thing that Allâh created was 'aql, so Allah said to the 'aql come, then he came, then go, and it went. Then Allah said, I swear by My Power and Majesty that I did not create a being more noble in my estimation than you ('aql), I shall be known

praised and obeyed through you. I shall give as well as take through you. My pleasure and wrath shall follow deeds through you. People shall be rewarded or punished in accordance with you."⁵⁵

Imam ibn Taymiyyah⁵⁶ was asked about the hadîth and he said that it was fabricated. According to the people of the science of hadîth (ahlil 'ilm bil hadîth), reliable books on Islâm do not quote such a hadîth, but it is narrated by people like Dâwud bin al Muhabbar and Ibn 'Arabî.⁵⁷ It is precisely because of the inauthenticity of these ahadîth that has formed the basis of the dispute on 'aql. Some scholars accept them and others do not, or at least not all of them. Perhaps this disagreement dates back to the conflict of opinion that existed between the Mu'tazilites⁵⁸ who emphasised the power of the intellect ('aql) on the one hand and Ahmad ibn Hanbal⁵⁹ and the ahlil hadîth on the other. While the former are considered to be rationalists the latter are considered to be literalists.

3. THE SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OF THE INTELLECT

Scholars are all agreed upon the intellect's ability for rational cognition which God has endowed man with for the purpose of actualising God's will on earth. Through the

intellect man is able to draw conclusions from his observations of the bounties of God and consequently learns to appreciate Him as the One Creator of the entire universe and to show gratitude through obedience to Him. They differ however, with respect to the level of the intellect's perception. Whilst some scholars limit the intellect's capacity for reason and rational perception, others believe that the intellect is also capable of spiritual perception, direct and immediate perception of God as described above. Most scholars who believe in the intellect's ability for direct spiritual perception find support in the hadith on the 'aql as the first creation.

The intellect, therefore, does not function as mere discursive reason, but as "intellectual intuition" which, according to Nasr, when linked to faith (imân) "enables man to penetrate the meaning of religion and more particularly God's word as contained in the Holy Qur'ân. Man must exercise his intelligence to understand God's revelation, but in order to understand God's revelation the intellect must already be illuminated by the light of faith and touched by the grace issuing from revelation."⁶¹ Thus we see that faith becomes an essential prerequisite to fully understand God's revelation, for then the intellect is able to function on a level beyond mere reason.

THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

Nasr critically assesses the Islamic theology of Kalâm which is more concerned with "the understanding of the Will of God than reaching the universal dimension of the intellect".⁶² According to Nasr, this is especially true of the Asharite school⁶³ of thought of Sunni theology which reduces the intellect to the purely human level, subservient to the Will of God, but does not view its role of returning man to God and penetrating into the heart of tawhîd. This view has somewhat been modified by the latter school of Asharism by such men as al Ghazâlî and al Râzî. In the other schools of Kalam, be it Mu'tazilism and Mâturidism in the Sunni world, or in Shi'ite theology, a greater role is given to reason in its interpretation of God's will, as manifested in His revelation. None of these schools, Asharite, Mu'tazilite or Shi'ite, take into account the universal function of intellect which includes intuition, but instead, the function of the theological schools was, according to Nasr, "throughout Islamic history to find rational means to protect the citadel of faith (al imân), but not to enable the intellect to penetrate the inner courtyard of faith and become a ladder which leads to the very heart of the truth of the religion."⁶⁵ A full explanation of the 'aq1 according to

Nasr therefore is not to be found in theology but in religious philosophy and gnosis (ma'rifah). We turn therefore to the views of the philosophers and the Sufis.

3.2 THE PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS

According to Nasr at least three schools can be distinguished in Islamic philosophy. These schools have dealt extensively with the methodology of knowledge and the full meaning of the intellect in its relation to intuition, peripatetic (mashâ'î) philosophy, illuminationist (ishrâqî) theosophy and the "transcendent theosophy" of Sadr al Dîn Shirâzî.⁶⁶

THE MASHÂ' Î SCHOOL

This school drew most of its teachings from Aristotelean and Neoplatonic sources but should not be viewed as a rationalistic school as this term is normally understood in western philosophy. The mashâ'î school is based on a view of the intellect which is metaphysical and not purely philosophical, and makes a clear distinction between the "reflection of the intellect upon the human mind which is reason and the intellect

in itself which transcends the realm of the individual."⁶⁷
A full treatment of the intellect and a theory of knowledge is to be found in the works of Ibn Sîna, the master of the Muslim Peripatetics. Basing himself on the treatises on the intellect by al Kindî and al Fârâbî, bin Sina developed an extensive analysis of the meaning of the intellect in a series of works such as al Shifâ' (The book of healing), and al Naj'ât (the book of Salvation) and Kitâb al Ishârât wal Tâbihât (the book of directives and remarks). Ibn Sina distinguishes between the Active Intellect (al 'aql al fa'al) which is universal and independent of the individual, and the rational function within man. Each individual possesses potential intelligence (bil quwwah) in a latent form. With increase in knowledge the first intelligible forms are placed in the soul from above and the habitual intelligence (bil malâhah) is attained when the intelligibles are fully actualised in the mind, man reaches the level of actual intellect (bi 'al fi 'l) and finally through the completion of this process, the acquired intelligence (mustafâd). Finally, the Active Intellect (al 'aql al fa 'al) which is Divine stands above these stages and illuminates the mind through the act of knowledge. Every act of cognition to Ibn Sîna involves the illumination of the mind by the Active Intellect which bestows upon the mind the form whose knowledge is the knowledge of the object

in question.⁶⁸ Thus we see that in the Perapatetic school there are degrees of intellect which are acquired as man advances in knowledge with the aid of the Active Intellect. As the intellect grows it acquires the function identified with intuition rather than with discursive reason; it becomes capable of spiritual perception.⁶⁹ It is this spiritual perception or intuition which illuminates and removes the boundaries of reason and the limitations of individualistic existence. Metaphysical knowledge should therefore be acquired through "intellectual intuition" (see chapter 4 for a further elaboration of Ibn Sina). Traditionally, the Masha'i school is called hikmah bahthiyyah (rational argumentative philosophy) in contrast to the Isshrâqî school which is called hikmah dhawqiyyah (intuitive philosophy).⁷⁰

ISHRAQI OR ILLUMINATIVE SCHOOL

This school was founded by Shaykh al Isshrâq Shihâb al Dîn Shurawardî, lays greater emphasis on the intuitive aspect of the intellect and the grades of knowledge which range from which includes the sensual to the principal, metaphysical knowledge. He emphasises the principal of adequation according

to which "each plane of reality there corresponds to an instrument of knowledge adequate to the task of knowing that particular reality."⁷¹ Characteristic of Ishrâqî epistemology is that every form of knowledge is an outcome of the illumination of the mind by the light of the purely spiritual world. This applies to knowledge of the physical realm as well as to that of the metaphysical. The intellect can therefore not function in its true sense without illumination and no true knowledge is possible without the actual intuition (dhawq) of the object of that knowledge on the highest level of understanding.⁷²

THE SCHOOL OF TRANSCENDENT THEOSOPHY

This is the third philosophical school which is associated with Mulla Sadra. The views of both the peripatetics and the illuminationists are accommodated by him along with the doctrine knowledge of the heart, "into a vast methodology of knowledge in which all the diverse faculties of knowing are to be found in hierarchy leading from the sensual to the spiritual."⁷³ The act of knowledge is tied up with the knower's being and the hierarchy of the levels of knowledge corresponds to the hierarchy of existence. Mullah Sadra speaks of the power of imagination (takhayyul) as an instrument of knowledge belonging to the world of imagination ('alam al khayâl), having an objective reality and standing between the physical and spiritual realm of existence. The power of creative imagination (al insân al kâmil) can create forms which

can be ontologically known. The very existence of these forms is itself the knowledge of them.⁷⁴

3.3 THE SŪFĪ SCHOOL

A complete insight of the intellect and its universal function may perhaps be found in ma'rifah (gnosis) which is mostly identified with Sūfism. We have already alluded to verses of the Qur'ân and hadîth which strongly indicate that the heart is the seat of intelligence and knowledge. This is perhaps the reason why the Qur'ân addresses itself more to the heart than the mind. This knowledge which is identified with the heart is principal knowledge which the Sūfîs call the 'eye of the heart' ('ayan al qalb) because it can gain knowledge different from physical perception; yet direct and immediate like physical vision. According to Nasr, man is capable of an 'intellectual knowledge' which transcends the dichotomy between mind and heart. For a full appreciation of what is meant by 'intellectual knowledge' a distinction between presential (ḥudūrî) and attained (ḥusûlî) knowledge should be made. Mental knowledge is attained knowledge but presential knowledge is identified with the heart. In this supreme form of knowing the subject and the object are the same & God and is seen as the supreme Reality.⁷⁵ According to Nasr, therefore,

"one can speak of a hierarchy of knowledge ranging from the sensual, through the imaginary and the rational, to the intellectual which is also identified with the heart."⁷⁶

Islamic epistemology then is able to embrace all modes of knowing into complementary rather than contending stages of the hierarchy of knowledge. We turn now to the views of two Sûfis.

While al Muḥāsibî who is considered to represent the sûfis trend in Islâm would agree with the Mu'tazilah that the intellect is basic for knowledge and responsibility for action, he however, differs with them in his belief that the intellect is a means to have direct knowledge of God when it is bound by faith (îmân) for it is the Jewel (Jawhar) of man. The Mu'tazilah however, state that the basis of knowledge and gratitude for the bounties is a duty that precedes values of good and bad, and that the knowledge of them comes from the 'aql. The Mu'tazilah however, argue for the independence of 'aql though it is preceded by ma'rifah (knowledge of God). The influence of al Muḥasibi can perhaps be seen in al-Ghazâlî who viewed the 'aql as an 'instinct' innately prepared for the perception of the theoretical sciences; this perception, according to al

Ghazâlî, emanates as a nûr (light) from the qalb.⁷⁶ This accords with the view that every person is born a believer (fiṭrah), that is, with an inherent knowledge of reality, inherent, since it is readily disposed to perceive reality. Man is endowed with the faculty of intellect to enable him to perceive the reality. The intellect according to al Ghazâlî is therefore able to perceive God in a direct and immediate way.⁷⁷ The influence of the philosophical trend may also be seen in al Ghazâlî in the way in which he distinguishes between intellect's levels of development.⁷⁸

Thus, in contrast to the Asharite school of theology which generally reduces the intellect to the purely human level, subject to the will of God, and the Mu'tazilites school which views intellect as reason only and as a means to interpret divine revelation, the philosophers and Sûfîs generally view intellect in the broader sense of the word, capable of intuition and the highest level of spiritual perception (ma'rifah). This direct and immediate knowledge of God (ma'rifah) which most philosophers and Sûfîs attributed to the 'aql is attributed by other scholars to the qalb only. This leads us to consider the relationship between the qalb and 'aql.

4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QALB AND 'AQL

Scholars are generally agreed that the heart is capable of

spiritual perception and that the intellect is capable of rational cognition. Philosophers and Sufis generally attribute, however, to the intellect the capacity for spiritual cognition a level of understanding that transcends pure reason, without necessarily competing with the sensual and rational level of experience. It is mainly the Sufis who emphasise Ma'rifah (direct and immediate knowledge of God) as the highest form of knowledge which is associated more with the heart than the mind.

4.1 THE CLASSICAL VIEW

The classical scholars and commentators generally agree that God has made nûr (light) in the heart (qalb) to perceive divine wisdom and knowledge and that this light which is contained in the heart is the light of intellect (nûr al 'aql).

The view is held by al Muḥâsibî, al Ghazâlî and al Râzî. Apart from this ontological unity that exists between the heart and the intellect there also seems to exist an epistemological unity because the intellect is not merely confined to the perception of physical reality, but also of spiritual reality; not only to the perception of particulars but also of universals. This view is also supported by a contemporary

scholar, Sayyid Hussein Nasr, although his epistemological explanation is different.

Al Muhasibî defines 'aql as nûr (light) which God placed in man through which he perceives and expresses himself. The light of the heart (qalb) is like the light of the eye ('ayn) which is sight (başr). The intellect ('aql) is therefore the light in the heart, and sight is the light of the eye ('ayn). Just as we have light in the eye which enables us to perceive all visible things, so too we have light in the heart which makes us perceive divine wisdom which is hidden (bâtin) in the universe.⁷⁹ The heart is the essence of the self, "an immaterial principle which is the predominant centre of the conscious life of men, by which reality is perceived and interpreted".⁸⁰ It represents his whole human personality, as a self-conscious being in relation to this world and the hereafter, including his whole inner nature, intellectual, emotional and rational. The heart is the source of both sin and righteousness. It has access to knowledge of this world (al dunyâ) and the hereafter (al âkhirah).⁸¹

In al Ghazâlî's definition of 'aql (Intellect) we can perhaps see Muhâsibî's influence. Al Ghazâlî views the intellect as a faculty which is innately prepared for the perception of

theoretical science as a nûr (light) that emanates from the heart (qalb).⁸² Al Ghazâli sometimes uses qalb and 'aql synonymously, for both are characteristic of the percipient mind. Qalb is a transcendental entity that knows, representing all the cognitive processes of man, comprising both the lower and higher faculties. 'Aql becomes a part of this wider sense of the qalb. 'Aql is the highest faculty of the qalb; its relation to qalb is as the light of the sun vision of the eye. The aql is therefore the light (nûr) of qalb. We notice here a strong ontological and epistemological unity that exist between 'aql and qalb.⁸³ For the heart and intellect to reach nearness to God depends on the elements of knowledge and will. By knowledge is meant the knowledge of both the world and the hereafter. The lower animal is not able to share in this capacity for knowledge. The knowledge of the universal science is peculiar to the 'aql alone, for only man perceive that a person cannot be in two places at the same time. As for the will (irâda), when a man percieves through his intellect the fruit of a particualr action and the good that it will bring, then it will create in the mind the will to acquire that good and to perform that action. 'Aql seeks knowledge of God and His attributes; its will is such that the individual can attain a level of perfection that lies in his nearness to God.⁸⁴

In al Râzi's (d. 606AH) commentary of verse 35 of Sûrah al Nûr:

"Allah is the light (nûr) of the heaven and the earth. The parable of his light is, as it were, that of a niche containing a lamp; the lamp is enclosed in glass; the glass shining like a radiant star"

(24:35)

He states that God is the Creator of nûr (light) and nûr refers to 'aql for it emanates from the light of the knowledge of God. Man is capable of sensory perception which enables him to, for example, see various objects and colours. He is also capable of insight which is derived from a higher level termed al quwwa al 'âqilah (the intellectual faculty). The visual faculty is not able to perceive itself, nor its own perception and its organs of perception which are the qalb (heart) and dimâg (brain). Imâm al Râzi stresses that nûr al 'aql (light of intellect) is more complete and comprehensive than nûr al basr (light of vision). He further states that the visual faculty is not able to realise or perceive the universals which is the function of qalb. By the particulars as opposed to the universals is meant that which can be perceived in terms of past, present and future.

Thus, the faculty of vision can perceive the exterior of things, whereas the faculty of the intellect can perceive both the external nature of things as well as the inner (bâṭin) nature of things. The intellectual faculty participates in the ability (yusharik) to perceive the essence of things. It is more noble than the visual faculty. It is like the relationship between the prince (intellectual faculty) and the servant (visual faculty); the prince is nobler than the servant.⁸⁵ According to al Râzî, therefore, the nobility of man is due to 'aql and this view is shared by many earlier scholars especially al Muhâsibî and al Ghazâlî, whose influence is clearly seen in al Râzî, even in his definition of 'aql where he states that 'aql is the expression of the intuitive science.⁸⁶ Knowledge is of two kinds according to al Râzî. The outer knowledge which involves a study of the signs of the creation which points to the existence of the Creator and the inner knowledge comes from basîrah (spiritual vision) which is the light (nûr) that is in the qalb.⁸⁷

Al Muhâsibî, al Ghazâlî and al Râzî seem to agree that there are two basic levels of knowledge: the knowledge of the outer reality of all things and the knowledge of the inner reality that underlies the physical reality. Thus, there seems to exist, in the light of these views, an ontological unity that exists within all things in that the physical reality of things constitutes as a part of it a spiritual reality. An epistemological unity is realised

when the heart and the intellect function as an ontological unit by means of which the oneness of the same reality is perceived without any bifurcation between the outer physical reality and the inner spiritual reality. According to Nasr the heart is the seat of knowledge; knowledge that is principal and essential and identified with faith. The intellect ('aql) which enables man to gain knowledge is "rooted in man's primordial nature (al fitrah), its seat being the heart (al qalb) rather than the head, and reason is no more than its reflection on the mental plane."⁸⁸ This intellect is ultimately of Divine nature and all true knowledge and science must refer to it in order that such knowledge may acquire an Islamic legitimacy. Nasr uses the example of man's perception of the gnat; this knowledge is legitimate only if it is not limited to sensory perception, but becomes illuminated by the light of intellect ('aql).⁸⁹ Therefore legitimate knowledge of the gnat will constitute a perception of its role in the order and unity of nature and, hence, an illustration of tawhîd. Legitimate knowledge from an Islamic viewpoint must arise from the intellect (al 'aql) and not from mere reason, so that the inner dimension of the outer reality can be perceived. Islâm therefore recognises a higher reality that is incorporated by the physical world and which is not an independent differentiated order of reality, as is modern science that seeks to explain the

world without having recourse to the Ultimate Cause. Man has been endowed with the intellect (al 'aql) which enables him to recognise and perceive the essence hidden in all physical realities. The seat of this intellect is the heart. Therefore, when scholars speak of qalb they do not exclude 'aql or when they speak of 'aql, they do not exclude qalb, for these are not two mutually exclusive faculties of perception, but are ontologically related.

Nasr asserts that Islam does not exclude the faculty of reason as a means of making the world an increasingly knowable reality otherwise Muslims would not have made such significant contributions to the advancement of science in history. This is because reason was a reflection of the intellect which, "when healthy and balanced leads naturally to tawhîd rather than to a denial of the divine."⁹⁰ It is this reason within the framework of revelation that is "the cause of Islâm's ability to respond to the need for causality and the part of its adherents within the tradition rather than see this need seek the satisfaction of its thirst outside of faith as was to happen to Christendom at the end of the Middle Ages."⁹¹

Thus, principal knowledge is that knowledge which is identified with the heart or the centre of man's being, rather than with his mind which knows only indirectly and which is a projection of the heart. The heart is not simply associated with sentiments which are in contrast with reason. Knowledge of the heart has

the immediacy and directness as sensual knowledge but it concerns the spiritual world. The supreme form of knowledge is attained in this presential knowledge, where ultimately the subject and the object of knowledge are the same. To know God in the highest sense of the word is to know him through a knowledge which is both cognitive and intuitive. Nasr therefore speaks of a hierarchy of knowledge ranging from the sensory to the intuitive.⁹²

The intuitive and cognitive form of knowledge are not opposed either to the rational or to the sensory. The mind is instead a reflection of the heart and the Islamic concept of tawhîd (unity) embraces all modes of knowledge into complementary stages of a hierarchy leading to the highest form of knowledge, namely, ma'rifah (gnosis).

On the question of ma'rifah, al Hujwîrî argues against the Mu'tazilites assertion that Ma'rifah is intellectual and that only a reasonable person ('aql) can have it. He argues that "this doctrine is disproved by the fact that men within Islâm, are deemed to have ma'rifah, and that children who are not reasonable are deemed to have faith. Were the criterion of ma'rifah an intellectual one, such persons must be without ma'rifah, while unbelievers could not be charged with infidelity, provided only that they were

reasonable beings. If reason was the cause of ma'rifah it would follow that every reasonable person must know God, and that all who lack reason must be ignorant of Him, which is manifestly absurd."⁹⁴

It is clear from this argument that ma'rifah is not to be attained through pure reason alone, but is associated with the heart or the intellect in the full sense of its meaning.

4.2 THE MODERN VIEW (IQBÂL AND ALJÛZÛ)

It appears that Muhammad Iqbal draws an epistemological bifurcation between the heart and the intellect. He does not use the word "intellect" in his Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islâm but the word "reason", which he seems to equate with intellect. By reason is meant here discursive reason or analytic thought. According to Iqbal, reason is essentially unlimited. Does this mean that it is even capable of gnosis? Then he would find himself subject to Hujwiri's criticism. It was because of the limitations of human reason and analytic thought that al Ghazali turned to mystical experience. Iqbal, having faith in the infinite potential of thought criticises al Ghazali for his scepticism of the power of

human reason. Iqbâl does not believe in the opposition between thought and intuition; they stem from the same root and complement each other. The one comprehends reality piecemeal and the other comprehends it as a whole. The one focuses upon the eternal and the other on the temporal aspect of Reality.⁹⁶

It is the heart that is capable of intuition and apprehends Reality as a whole. The intellect however, can only provide man with piecemeal reality. Yet Iqbâl speaks of the potential infinitude of thought. It is limited because it can provide only piecemeal reality and yet is unlimited. Its unlimited potential lies in its "progressive participation in the life of the apparently alien that thought demolishes the walls of its finitude and enjoys its potential infinitude."⁹⁷ It seems that Iqbâl draws an ontological bifurcation between the heart and the intellect (reason), for he sees it as two separate faculties perceiving two separate levels of reality. This means that at the heart of this ontological bifurcation is also the epistemological bifurcation between the heart and the intellect. However, this does not mean that there is no contact between thought and intuition; in fact, thought progressively participates in the intuitive experience of the heart and thereby, according to 'Iqbâl, transcending its own limitations and because of thoughts "implicit presence in

its finite individuality of the infinite, which keeps alive within it the flame of aspiration and sustains it in its endless pursuit. It is a mistake to regard thought as inconclusive, for it too, in its own way is a greeting of the finite and the infinite."⁹⁸

Whilst Iqbal does not explicitly develop a relationship between heart and Intellect, al Juzu does so. He disagrees with scholars who incorporate intellect into the heart.⁹⁹ He argues that the opposite is more applicable. Human beings, according to al Jûzû use 'aql to establish the presence and existence of God, and to draw conclusions which lead to imân and yaqîn. Qalb does basically the same thing, but operates, in a different manner; it relies on the deep insight (başîrah) to activate it towards good or evil. There is a difference in the role of 'aql and qalb. 'Aql analyses and organises information and draws conclusions from it that would guide it to knowledge (ma'rifah). Qalb perceives information by means of intuition. 'Aql may serve as supplementary agent to this type of perception, or it may be a complementary part of qalb, being at its service, for all knowledge is of the heart. 'Aql is an agent for the pursuit of knowledge and qalb appears to be distinguished from 'aql because it is an inspired and perceptive type of intellect, rooted

in the depth of human essence, and it perceives the reality or essence of things with the nûr (light) that God has endowed it with. Qalb is the abode of wahy (inspiration), imân (faith), taqwa (God consciousness), and 'ilm (knowledge). It is in fact the greatest faculty in man, analogous to the physical heart; if it is wholesome the whole body is wholesome, and if it is impaired, the whole body is impaired.⁹⁹

Furthermore, al Juzû makes a distinction between the disbelieving heart (al qalb al kâfir) and believing heart (al qalb al mu'min). The believing heart is open and receptive to truth, capable of carrying responsibility and tests. The disbelieving heart however, is closed, dark and ignorant which makes it incapable of carrying out responsibilities and tests. The nûr (light) that is referred to in Surah 24, verse 35, is the light that fills the heart, and this light is 'aql. Thus there is a strong relationship between 'aql and qalb, for this nûr or 'aql cannot be separated from qalb. Many of the classical scholars hold this view and, as a consequence, establish an epistemological unity between the heart and the intellect. Al Jûzû however, although he admits the inseparable relationship between the heart and the intellect, still considers them to be two separable "faculties" and therefore establishes an ontological bifurcation between the two. He also establishes an

epistemological bifurcation between the heart and the intellect for the intellect organises and selectively analyses the information whereas the heart perceives the information through intuition.¹⁰⁰

Al Juzû's view of qalb and 'aql is similar to that of Iqbal because both of them seem to draw an ontological and epistemological bifurcation between 'aql and qalb and view the intellect in its narrow sense of reason. While Iqbâl places no limitation on the intellect, because when it participates in the infinite, then it transcends its own limitations, al Jûzû would limit the intellect to the outer perception of things ('aql al zâhir) and the heart to the inner perception of things ('aql al bâtin). There is no reference to the effect that Iqbal acknowledges 'aql as the light (nûr) that emanates from qalb but al Jûzû acknowledges this, hence the strong relationship between the faculties although they function independently. On the other hand Iqbâl allows for more potential freedom for the intellect, than al Jûzû does.

We have discussed in this chapter, comparatively and analytically, the Sûfi, philosophical and the theological perspectives of qalb and 'aql. We have also briefly given the view of some of the modern scholars. It is clearly evident from this discussion that from an Islâmic point of

view, man has been endowed with the faculties of qalb and 'aql, and whether one believes them to be two separate faculties or one and the same thing, sincere submission to the Divine will should nevertheless illuminate qalb and 'aql to recognise or to perceive God. This consciousness and perception of God brings man back to his essential nature (fiṭrah). God has provided Divine revelation as an objective source of knowledge for qalb and 'aql to be guided, and to reach the highest level of perception in the hierarchy of knowledge. It is this recognition of man's capacity for knowledge and perception of God which makes Islâmic epistemology fundamentally different from the epistemological theories of Western psychology. This study of qalb and 'aql therefore introduces us to the epistemological dimension of Islamic psychology.

5. SUMMARY

- 1) Man is born with the innate disposition to recognise and know his Creator (fiṭrah).
- 2) God has endowed man with the necessary faculties of heart (qalb) and intellect ('aql) through which he may recognise and know his Creator.
- 3) The scholars have all agreed that qalb is capable of spiritual perception.
- 4) Scholars have all agreed that the 'aql is capable of cognition and discursive reasoning.
- (5) Many scholars, especially the philosophers and sufis, agree that 'aql is capable of spiritual perception on the highest level.
- 6) The philosophers and Sūfīs tend to attribute holiness to the 'aql whilst the theologians view 'aql only as a means to be subjected to the Divine will.
- 7) The theologians and some modern scholars, especially

Iqbâl and al Jûzû limit the meaning of 'aql to reason, whereas the philosophers and Sufîs attribute to it a wider meaning, reason being a mere mental function of 'aql.

- 8) The scholars are generally agreed that the nûr (light) that emanates from the heart is 'aql. On the basis of the view of the early classical commentators, they establish an ontological and epistemological unity between the heart and the intellect, except for some modern scholars like Iqbal and al Juzû who draw a distinction between these two faculties of perception, ontologically and epistemologically.

- 9) Finally man has been provided with the heart (qalb) and intellect ('aql), and with the guidance of Divine revelation he is able to attain knowledge from the lowest sensory level to the highest spiritual level. Man is therefore capable of sensory, intellectual and spiritual perception (see table). It is the last form of perception through the faculties of qalb and 'aql which makes Islâmic epistemology fundamentally different from the epistemology conceived in the secular social sciences, and which determines the epistemological dimension of man.

6. NOTES AND REFERENCES (CHAPTER 2)

- 1) The lowest level of the hierarchy of knowledge is the sensory level. We agree with the Greek philosophers in their criticism of the senses as a doubtful medium for the acquisition of knowledge. A higher level of knowledge is acquired through the intellect or reason. But even reason depends on recollections based on sensory impressions. The history of philosophical thought also indicates to us the limitations of reason and relativity of human thought. Al Ghazâli (1059-1111) was one of those scholars who was fully aware of the limitations of the intellect and the very incompetence of philosophy made him turn to the mystical experience from which he derived certitude of knowledge and a direct vision of reality. This he considered to be the highest form of knowledge which

the intellect in the ordinary sense of the word fails to reach. It is this last category of knowledge where one attains a direct cognition of God which modern psychology ignores in their conception of cognition. See Nadvi, Abul Ḥassan Alî, Religion and Civilization, Islamic research and publications, Bucknow, 1970, pp.14-25.

- 2) Al Jûzû, Muḥammad 'Alî, Mafhûm al 'aql wa Qalb, fil Qur'ân wa Sunnah, Dârul 'ilm al Malâyîn, Beirut, 1980, pp.45-51. Jahilliyah poetry is that of the pagans of Arabia at the time when the message of Islâm was brought to them by Muḥammad (SAW). The word "qalb" has many synonyms in the Arabic language, the most important and the most frequently used one being "fu'âd".
- 3) The word qalb is used in 122 verses of the Qur'ân. It takes on different shades of meaning. Sometimes it refers to an aspect of 'aql or to 'aql itself, while at other times it refers to the emotions of man. At times it also conveys both the emotional and intellectual meanings together.

- 4) Ilhâm in the ordinary sense refers to the kind of inspiration experienced by poets and other literary figures, but in terms of the believers (mu'minîn) it refers to a vision and intuition of reality of divine origin and which is bestowed as a grace upon those who are receptive to it. This spiritual inspiration ('ilhâm) is only possible when the believer has attained the required state of inner purification. The attainment of this insight is not dependent on intellectual or rational contemplation or discursive reasoning.

- 5) The expression "the veils are raised" refers to the negative self which has been transformed into the positive self, hence the negative aspect which blinds man to reality and therefore serves as a veil that has been raised.

- 6) al Juzû, op cit, pp. 187-189

- 7) al Muḥâsibî (al Ḥarîth bin Asad) was born in Basrah in 165:781 and died in Baghdâd in 243:857. He was a legist of the Shâfi'î school, a theologian who advocated the use of reason ('aql) using the dialectic vocabulary of

the Mu'tazillah which he, before others, used against them. He finally adopted a life of ascetic renunciation. His most famous work is Al Ri'âyah li Hûqûq Allah wherein he discusses the foundation of the science of Sûfism.

- 8) Al Muḥâsibî, al Hârith bin Asad, Al 'aql wal faham fi al Qur'ân.
- 9) Smith, Margaret, An Early Mystic of Baghdad, Sheldon Press, London, 1977, pp 87-89.
- 10) Abû 'abd Allah Muḥammâd ibn 'Alî al Ḥakîm al Tirmîdhî (d-279:892), author of one of the canonical collections of traditions. His psychological system in the Bayân al Farq is primarily concerned with a description of the heart (qalb) and the self (nafs).
The basic element of the system is based on the Qur'ân and the ḥadîth and their arrangement is a result of al Tirmîdhî's own creative thought.
- 11) These are the breast (ṣadr), the heart proper (qalb), the inner heart (fu'âd) and the intellect (lubb). These are arranged in concentric spheres, the breast being the

outermost sphere followed on the inside by the heart, the inner heart, and finally the intellect.

- 12) Al Tirmîdhî, 'Ali al Hakîm, 'Bayân al Farq bayn al Şadr wa al Qalb, wa al Fu'âd wa al Lubb, Nicholas Heer, The Muslim World, (date unknown) Stanford University, California, pp. 30,83.
- 13) Abû Hâmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al Ghazâlî a well known scholar and Şûfî with the title of Hujjatul Islâm. He was a native of Tûs, and for some time a professor at the college of Naysabur. He was born in 450 AD and died in 505 AH at Tûs. His magnum apos is Ihya 'Ulûm al Dîn.
- 14) Ghazâlî, Abi Hâmid Muhammad bin Muḥammad, Ihya 'Ulûm al Dîn, Sharika wa matba'a mustafa al bâbî al halabî wa awladî hi bi mişr 1358:1939 Cairo, Vol. 3 p. 4.
- 15) al Râzî, Imâm al Fakhrudîn, al Tafsîr al Kabîr, Dâarul Kutub al 'ilmiyyah, Tehran, Vol 24, pp. 166-167 and Vol 23, o. 45.

- 16) Ibid, Vol 3. pp.127-128
- 17) Qur'ân, 3:8
- 18) Qur'ân, 3:8
- 19) Al Jûzû, Op cit, pp. 272-273.
- 20) al Zamakhsharî, al Kashâf, al Nashîr dârul Kuttub al 'Arabî, Beirut, Lebanon, no date, Vol 3, p. 162
Imâm Jad Allah Mahmûd bin 'Umar al Zamakhsharî (d.568 AH). His principal work is his commentary on the Qur'ân, al Kashaf 'an Haqaiq al Tanzîl. The author devotes most attention to exegesis of a philosophical nature.
- 21) (al) Qurtubî, Muhammad al Ansâri, A.A., Al-jâmi 'u al Ahkâm al Qur'ân, al maktabul 'Arabiyyah, Cairo, 1961, Vol 6, p.77
- 22) Bowering, Gerhard, The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam, (The Qur'ânic hermeneutics of the Sûfî Sahl al Tustârî (d283:896). Walter de Gruyter (W. de G),

Berlin, New York, 1980, p. 241

- 23) Farîdi, Shahidullah, The inner aspect of faith, pp 56-59.
- 24) Iqbal, Muḥammad, the The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islâm, Ashraf Press, Lahore, 1960, p.16 .
- 25) al Jûzû, Oḡ cit, pp.275-279.
- 26) Azzam, Salem, (Ed), Islam and Contemporary Society, Longman (in association with Islamic Council of Europe), London:N.Y. 1982 pp.180-181.
- 27) Quoted in Sayings of Muḥammad , ed, and trans. Mirza 'Abdul-Fadl, Allahabad, 1924, p.51
- 28) Sufis distinguish three organs of spiritual communication: the heart (qalb) which knows God, the spirit (rûh) which loves Him, and the inmost ground of the soul (sirr), which contemplates Him.
- 29) Nicholson, Reynold A., The Mystics of Islam, Sind Sagar Academy, Lahore, no date p. 68 .
- 30) *ibid*, p.71

31) The heart is not only capable of spiritual cognition but can also be blinded by disease. The diseased heart is one lacking in sincerity, conviction, certainty and faith. (2:10). The heart is also the abode of both belief and disbelief. The hypocrite is one who claims to believe but has no faith. The Qur'ân speaks of the heart that is tested and which distinguishes the individual as a believer, disbeliever or a hypocrite (49:3). The heart is also held responsible for a man's actions which are judged by what his heart intended. "Allah will not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned. And Allâh is forgiving, forbearing," (2:225)

32) Nasr, S.H., Ideals and Realities of Islam, Unwin paperbacks, London, 1979, p.21.

Nasr discusses here the meaning of intelligence. he states:

"Intelligence is not what has become so often in modern time, a mental acumen and diabolical cleverness which goes on playing with ideas endlessly without ever penetrating them or realising them."

33) Qur'ân, 2:30

God informed the angels that He was going to make man khalîfah on earth. The word khalîfah comes from the root verb Khalîfah, which means, "he came after", as he succeeded another, so the word khalîfah means primarily a successor or vicegerent. This description denotes man's rightful supremacy on earth, preferred above the whole creation to be the vicegerent of God on earth. Other verses that speak of man as khalîfah are 6:165; 27:62; 35:39.

34) al Jüzû, op cit, pp.24-26.

We refer here to the poetry that existed at the time when Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was born in the Arabian Peninsula. The term Jahilliyah means "ignorance". By ignorance is meant that the pagan Arabs were steeped in idol-worshipping; they were ignorant of the message of Islam. The word 'aql' was used in Jahilliyah poetry; Zuhayr bin Abi Salmah, a Jahilliyah poet, for instance used the term 'aql' to mean "al rabt" and "al taqyîd" that is trying and binding. Another Jahilliyah poet, al 'a shâ Maymun bin Qays, used the word 'aql' to mean "al quwwa al 'âqilah", "the intelligent faculty".

In early Islâmic poetry the word 'aql' had the meaning of "that which returns to man after resolution upon matters. It also had the meaning of "al mayyiza" that which enables a person to distinguish and discriminate. "Aql" also had the meaning of "al quwwa al 'âqila" (the intellectual faculty), the function of which is to make the person cautious and to prevent him from committing sin or evil. Their meaning is indicated by a verse by an Islâmic poet, 'Imâr bin Yâsir (al Jûzû, 1980).

- 36) Nasr, S.H. Op cit, p.21.
- 37) al Jûzû, Op cit, p.55.
- 38) Qur'ân, 2:258.
- 39) Qur'ân 21:52-67.
- 40) Qur'ân, 2:4.
- 41) Assad, Muhammad, The message of the Qur'ân, Daral Andalus, Gibraltar, 1980, p.9.

- 42) Qur'ân, 2:34
- 43) Qur'ân, 2:32
- 44) Qur'ân, 2:33
- 45) Qur'ân, 2:34
- 46) Al Juzû, M.A., Op cit, p. 145.
- 47) See also:
Surah, 22:31 ; 40:35 ; 40:56 ; 10:36
- 48) Najâti, Muḥammad 'Uthmân, al Qur'ân wa 'Îlm al Nafs,
Darul Shurûq, Beirut, Cairo, 1982, p.139.
- 49) See also:
Qur'ân: 38:26 ; 45:27 ; 45:135 ; 53:23
- 50) al Ṭabarî (d.310 A.H.) uses the same expression that
al Muḥâsibî uses "al 'aql 'an Allah wa faham 'an Allah"
(knowledge of God and understanding of Him) which
appears in his tafsîr (commentary) of sûrah Baqarah,
verse 164. He says that it is only those who think
of the signs of the Creator and understand Him,

- 44) Qur'ân, 2:33
- 45) Qur'ân, 2:33
- 46) Al Jûzû, M.A. Op cit, p. 145
- 47) See also:
Qur'ân ss:31; 40:35; 40:56; 10:36
- 48) Najâtî, Muḥammad uthmân, al Qur'ân wa 'ilm al nafs,
Darul Shurug, Beirut, Cairo, 1982, p. 139.
- 49) See also:
Qur'ân, 38:26; 45:135; 53:23
- 50) al Ṭabarî (d.310A.H) uses the same expression that al Muhâsibî uses "al 'Aql' 'a'n Allah wa faham 'an Allah" (knowledge of God and understanding of Him) which appears in his tafsîr (commentary) of surah Baqarah, verse 164. He says that it is only those who think of the signs of the Creator and understand Him who (li qawmin ya'qilun) will realise God alone is the Creator.
- 51) al Jûzû, Op cit, pp 177-178.
al Zamakhsharî (467-538 AH) comments on the verse (Âyât li qawmin ya'qilun), "signs for people who think",

as referring to people who contemplate with the eyes of the intellect.

52) Ibid, p. 174.

53) Ibid, pp. 149-150.

54) al Sakhbawî, al Maqâşid al Ḥasana, 1st ed., Darul Kutub al 'ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1979, pp.134-148.

The first two books on the virtue of 'aql were written by Dâwûd bin al Muḥabbar (d.206:821) and ibn Abî al Dunyâ (d.281:894). In ibn al Muḥabbar's book on "Fadl al 'aql" (the virtues of the intellect) he included many ahâdîth which are considered to be false in the orthodox view; for example, "Religion is 'aql, and he who does not have religion does not have 'aql", (narrated by Nâsaî who said that the ḥadîth was false). al Ḥarîth bin Abî Usâmah extracted more than 30 ahâdîth on 'aql from the work of ibn Muḥabbar and according to Hafiz bin Hajar, "they are all fabricated ". According to alJâzû, Mu'ayn ibn was influenced by the Mu'tazilites who exaggerated the importance of 'aql because they had been affected by the Greek philosophers whose work had been translated into Arabic. With respect to ibn abî al Dunyâ, who wrote al 'Aql wa Fadluhu (intellect and its virtue), 12 ahâdîth

were narrated on 'aql. Muḥammad Nâṣir al Albâni noted in the book, al Aḥâdith al Ḍa'iffa wal Maṭbu'â that the aḥâdith that Abû Bakr bin Abi Dunyâ quotes are all inauthentic.

See al Jûzû, Op cit, pp. 136-139).

55) al Jûzû, Op cit, p. 140.

56) ibn Taymiyyah (b.661:1263) in Harran. A famous theologian and jurist of the hanbali school of thought. An enemy of innovation (bid'a), and interpreter of verses relating to God literally. The founder of the Wahâbis made much use of the work of hanbali scholars of Damascus, particularly those of ibn Taymiyyah and his disciplie ibn Qayyim.

57) Muhyi al dîn ibn al 'Arabî al Andalûsî (b. 1165AD) a celebrated mystic who is known for not giving recognition to authority in doctrinal matters and in matters of belief he passed for a bâtinî.

Although conforming to the practice of the Muslim faith, ibn 'Arabi's sole guide was the inner light

light which he himself believed to be illuminated. He held that all Beings were essentially one and all a manifestation of divine substance. The different religions were to him on an esoteric level essentially one. He wrote al Futûhât al Makkiya.

58. Mu'tazilah literally means "the separatists". They were a sect of Muslims founded by Wâsil ibn Ata who separated from the school of Hasan al Basri (110 AH). They believe that all knowledge is acquired through reason, and hold that the cognition of good and evil is within the domain/realm of reason, and that nothing is known to be right or wrong until reason has enlightened us as to its distinction as such and that thankfulness for the blessings of the Benefactor is made obligatory by reason, even before the promulgation of any law on the subject. They also maintain that man has absolute freedom, that he is the author of his actions, good and evil, and that he deserves reward or punishment accordingly in the hereafter.
59. Imâm Abû Aḥmad 'Abdillāh Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, is the founder of the fourth school of Islamic Law, was born in Bagdad in 164 AH/780 AD. His most notable work is entitled the musnād which is said to contain about 30 000 traditions.
60. Ahlil Ḥadīth are the traditionalists who were opposed to philosophy and theology (kalām). They found highest expression in the 8th 14th century in the prolific work of ibn Taymiyyah, especially in the Harmony Between the True Tradition and Evidence of Reason, in which he severely criticised the thesis of both the philosophers and the theologians. The ahlil-ḥadīth interpret hadith text literally.
61. Azzam, S., Islam and Contemporary Society, Op cit, p.38.
62. Ibid, p.38.

63. Al Ash'ariyah or the Asharites are a group formed by Abul Hassan 'Ali ibn Isma'îl al Ash'arî, born 263:873-4. They hold that the attributes of God are distinct from his essence yet in such a way as to forbid any comparison being made between God and His creatures. They also hold that God has external will from which proceed all things good and evil. The destiny of man was written on the eternal tablet before the world was created. To preserve the moral responsibility of man they say that he has the power to convert will into action. However, this power does not diminish God's sovereignty because whenever a man wishes to do something, the fulfillment of his wish is preceded by and runs parallel to God's absolute will to realise its fulfillment. This action is called kasb (acquisition). al 'Asharî was opposed to the Mu'tazilites denying the view that man, by the aid of reason alone, can attain good or evil, but is of the view that man must base his thought and action on revelation. al Ash'ari may be considered to be the founder of orthodox scholasticism (kalâm). His method found acceptance especially with the Shafi'ites. The Hanafites preferred the doctrine of his contemporary, al Mâturîdî, who differed from him in only subordinate controversial matters; the Hanbalites retained their own point of view and remained opponents of the Ash'arite school. The Ash'arites gained much influence, especially through the writings of Imâm al Ghazâlî.

64. Azzam, S., Islâm and Contemporary Society, Op cit. p.38.

65. Ibid, pp. 38-39.

66. Ibid, p.39.

67. Ibid, p.39.

68. Ibid, p.39.

69. Ibid, p.40.

70. Ibid, p. 40.

cf F. Rahmân's Prophecy in Islâm (Midway reprint, Univ. of Chicago, 1979, pp. 14-20).

71. Ibid, p. 40.

72. Ibid, p. 41.

73. Sharif, M.A., p 41.

74. Ibid, p. 41.

75. Ibid, pp 41-43.

76. Ibid, p. 44.

77. al Jûzû, Op cit, pp. 158-165.

78. al Ghazâlî, The Book of Knowledge, (tr. Nabin Amin Faris), Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, p.230.

79. See also (pp. 226-229). Al Ghazâlî distinguishes four levels in the development of 'aql'.

- 1) The first is that quality which distinguishes man from animals because he is receptive to the theoretical sciences ('ulum al nazariyyah) and is able to master the abstract (fikriyah) disciplines. Similarly, al Muḥâsibî describes the intellect as the instinct which is designed and prepared for the perception of the theoretical sciences.
- 2) The second is that which is applied to that knowledge which makes its appearance in the infant who discerns the possibility of impossible things and the impossibility of the impossible things such as the knowledge that the two are greater than the one or that one cannot be present in two different places at the same time.

3) The third is that knowledge which is acquired through experience (empirical knowledge).

For example, he who has been taught by experience and by time is generally called intelligent ('aql) while he who lacks this experience is called ignorant.

4) The fourth is when the intellect is able to predict obstacles and therefore able to subdue his impulsive desires which demand immediate gratification.

When this level is reached, the person is considered to have attained 'aqlan (intelligence). This quality also distinguishes man from the animals. It should be pointed out that in the first level of 'aql (intellect) foundation and origin of the other three is to be found.

79. Al-Muhâsibi, al 'Aql wal Faham al Qur'ân, Op cit, pp.204-139.

80. Smith, M., An Early Mystic of Baghdad, Op cit, p.86

81. Ibid, pp.87-89.

82. Jûzû, Mafhum al 'Aql wal Qalb, Op cit, p.168.

83. Umarruddin, M., The Ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazâlî, Muslim University, Aligarh, 1962, p. 65.
84. al Ghazâlî, Ihya Ulûm al Dîn, Op cit, Vol 3, pp 3-7.
85. al Râzî, F., al Tafsîr al kabîr, Op cit, Vol 33, pp. 226-227.
86. al-Jûzû, Op cit, pp. 170-180.
87. Ibid, p.173.
88. Azzam, Islam and Contemporary Society, Op cit, p.181.
89. Ibid, p. 81.
90. Nasr, S.H., Islamic Cosmological Doctrines, Thames, Hudson Britain, 1978, p.7.
91. Ibid, p.7.
92. Azzam, S., Op cit, p.43.
93. Ibid, p.44.
94. al Hujwîrî Ali 'bin Uthman, The Kashf al Maḥjûb (tr. R.A. Nicholson), Taj Company, Delhi, 1982, p. 268.

95. Iqbal, M., Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islâm, Op cit, p.2.
96. Ibid, p.7.
97. Ibid, p.7.
98. According to al Jûzû, al Ghazâli, al Tirmîdhî and al Muḥâsibî, all agree that what is meant by heart in the Qur'ân is 'aql. They see no epistemological bifurcation between the heart and the intellect. They base their view on what the early classical commentators say. These commentators interpret "liman kana lahu qalb" (50:37) to mean that qalb is 'aql. The early Qur'ânic commentators who hold this view are ibn 'Abbas, al Laythm and Mujâhid.

'Abdullah bin 'Abbas (d.68/687) is considered to be the most knowledgeable to companions (ṣaḥâba) in tafsîr. He has been called "Tarjumân al Qur'ân", the interpreter of the Qur'ân. Abu al Layth (d.97) was a commentator from among the Tabi ûn (Those who were in contact with the companions of the Prophet). Mujâhid (d.104/722) is the best known among the commentators (Mufasssirûn) of the Tâbi ûn. He is reported to have gone through the Qur'ân thrice with ibn 'Abbâs and to have asked him about the "when" and "why" of each verse which had been revealed.

99. al Jûzû, Op cit, pp. 276-277.

100. Ibid, pp. 278-279.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SPIRITUAL AND PSYCHICAL DIMENSION OF MAN -

RUḤ AND NAḤS

In contrast to western psychology which recognises only the material (behaviorists) and psychological (psychoanalysts) dimensions of man, Islâm recognises a third, namely, the spiritual dimension of man. In the sphere of the non-material dimension of human nature, western psychologists like Jung make no distinction between the spiritual and psychic characteristics of human nature. Psychic phenomena have come to replace the spiritual dimension, whereas in Islâm, the spiritual is distinct and separate from the material and psychological elements. The spirit and the soul is therefore fundamentally distinct from the psyche. The soul may thus be referred to as ruh and the psyche as nafs, although these two terms take on various shades of meaning in the Qur'ân. The ruh represents the incorruptible, transcendental human essence and the nafs is the changing aspect of man, capable of rebellion against God, and should therefore be trained and disciplined in order that it may become united with ruh (the spirit).^{1(a)}

At the heart of man's inclination to recognize and worship his Creator (fiṭrah) is the spirit (rûḥ) which God has breathed into man, qualifying him for noble status of khalîfa or the vicegerent of God on earth. This role was entrusted to man because of his potential spiritual superiority over the rest of creation and as such the angels were commanded by God to bow down to Adam.

فاذا سويته و نفخت فيه من روحي فقعوا له ساجدين x

(٢٩ : ١٥)

"And when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit (min rûḥi) then fall down before him prostrate."

(15:29)

It is by virtue of the spirit from God breathed into man which enables him to enjoy a greater affinity to God than the rest of Creation. This is what is meant by man being made in the "image of God", and this is why man is able to imbue himself with the attributes of God in a limited sense. It is man's responsibility to realise his essential spiritual nature, for in this realisation lies the knowledge of God and this is in accordance with the Prophetic tradition,

من عرف نفسه ، قد عرف ربه

"He who knows his self, knows his Lord." 1 (b)

In man's pursuit of self-realization and God-realization, he must utilize fruitfully his two organs of spiritual perception viz. the heart (qalb) and the intellect ('aql).

1. THE PROBLEM OF TERMINOLOGY

Rûh and nafs take on various shades of meaning and are sometimes used interchangeably.

The word "al-nafs" occurs 305 times in the Holy Qurân in more than 40 surahs. In the Quran this word primarily means "the human psyche", encompassing both the spiritual and material dimensions of man. Both the angelic and the satanic elements manifest themselves on the psychic plane of the nafs. Nafs is therefore neither entirely spiritual nor entirely material. It is this nafs which represents the internal force in man which has an influence upon his thinking, his behaviour and his relationships with others. It refers to totality of sentiments, inclinations, emotions, drives, wishes, experiences and hereditary characteristics. Man's personality is formed on account of the nafs by which one individual can be distinguished from another.

The sùfis, more than any other group, associate the nafs, with the lowest principle of man. The rûh and qalb are spiritually purer than the nafs. This tripartition forms the foundation of sùfi psychology.

The word "nafs" takes on various shades of meaning in the Qur'an; we shall mention some of the most important meanings.

i) Nafs as divine essence.

"Your lord has ordained mercy on Himself (Nafsihi)."

(6:45)

ii) Nafs meaning "man".

"For this reason we prescribed to the children of Israel that whoever kills a person (nafs), be it for manslaughter or mischief in the land, it is as though he has killed all men."

(5:32)

iii) Nafs meaning the original creation.

"O mankind, fear your Lord who created you from a single soul!"

(4:1)

iv) Nafs meaning the the influential inner force of man (the lower desires).

"...They follow but conjecture and what their souls desire..."

(79:40)

v) Nafs referring to persons themselves.

"he said: She sought to seduce me (nafsi)."

(12:26)

vi) Nafs meaning ruh (spirit).

"Allah takes men's souls (anfus) at the time of their death, and those that die not, during their sleep." (39:42)

Nafs has commonly been associated with rûh and is often confused with rûh, although, as we have shown, it can take on the same meaning as rûh. It is important that a particular term be understood within the context of the Qur'anic verse, especially if it is not used in its popular sense.

Let's look at the word rûh, which apart from several other verses, is expressed in the following significant verse:

و يسئلونك عن الروح قل الروح
من أمر ربي و ما أوتيتم من
العلم إلا قليلا x

(٨٥ : ١٧)

"They ask thee concerning the Spirit. Say,
'The Spirit cometh by the command of my Lord:
of knowledge it is only little that is commu-
nicated to you." (17:85)

Commentators have differed in their interpretation of this verse. Some commentators say that rûh refers to the Qur'ân. They argue that the subject of the verses preceding and following the verse concerned is the Qur'an. According to them, rûh cannot refer to the soul for which the proper word is nafs. Rûh is understood to mean inspiration and specifically Divine inspiration.² Some commentators say that rûh refers to Gabriel (Jibrîl). Yûsuf Ali holds this view and maintains that inspiration is one of the spiritual mysteries which cannot be explained in terms of ordinary human experiences. The spirit (Gabriel) does not come of his own free will, but by the command of God, and reveals what God commands him to reveal. Ordinary mortals can understand only a minute portion of the sum total of knowledge for guidance is offered through God's wisdom and not through man's worldly knowledge.³ Ibn Kathîr understands rûh to be the source and substance of nafs. Nafs is composed of rûh, and it serves as the link between the body and rûh.⁴ Rûh has two meanings according to al-Ghazâlî. The first meaning is that it is a material thing within the heart which vibrates the whole body like a current of electricity and which runs through the veins of the body. It is called "life". The second meaning of rûh is the immaterial substance which is called soul. Thus, rûh referred to in this verse is the soul which is beyond the understanding of most men.⁵

We note, therefore that nafs adopts several meanings, but we are mainly concerned with nafs as the psychic dimension of man and rûh as the immaterial, transcendental, incorruptible spiritual essence within man. The problem that we have, in addition to the variety of meanings associated with rûh and nafs, is the problem of translation for both nafs and rûh which could be translated as soul, which is unfortunately subject to much disagreement and confusion of terms. For the sake of convenience, clarity and accuracy, it is preferable to translate the rûh as spirit or soul, and nafs as the psyche or the self.

2. THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN SOUL

This section deals with the nature of the human soul and its relationship with the self (nafs). This will be done by referring to various schools in the history of Islâm and by discussing the views of one or two of the most important representatives of each of these. First the views of the philosophers will be examined, focusing on Ibn Sîna and Mullah Sadra after which the Sûfî conception of the soul will be discussed.

2.1 THE NEO-PLATONIC SCHOOL OF ISLÂM (IBN SINA)

The Neo-Platonic tendencies in the philosophy of al Kindî⁶ and al Râzî⁷ became popular in the work of al Fârâbî⁸ and Ibn Sînâ, the first two Muslim philosophers who developed an elaborate metaphysical system.

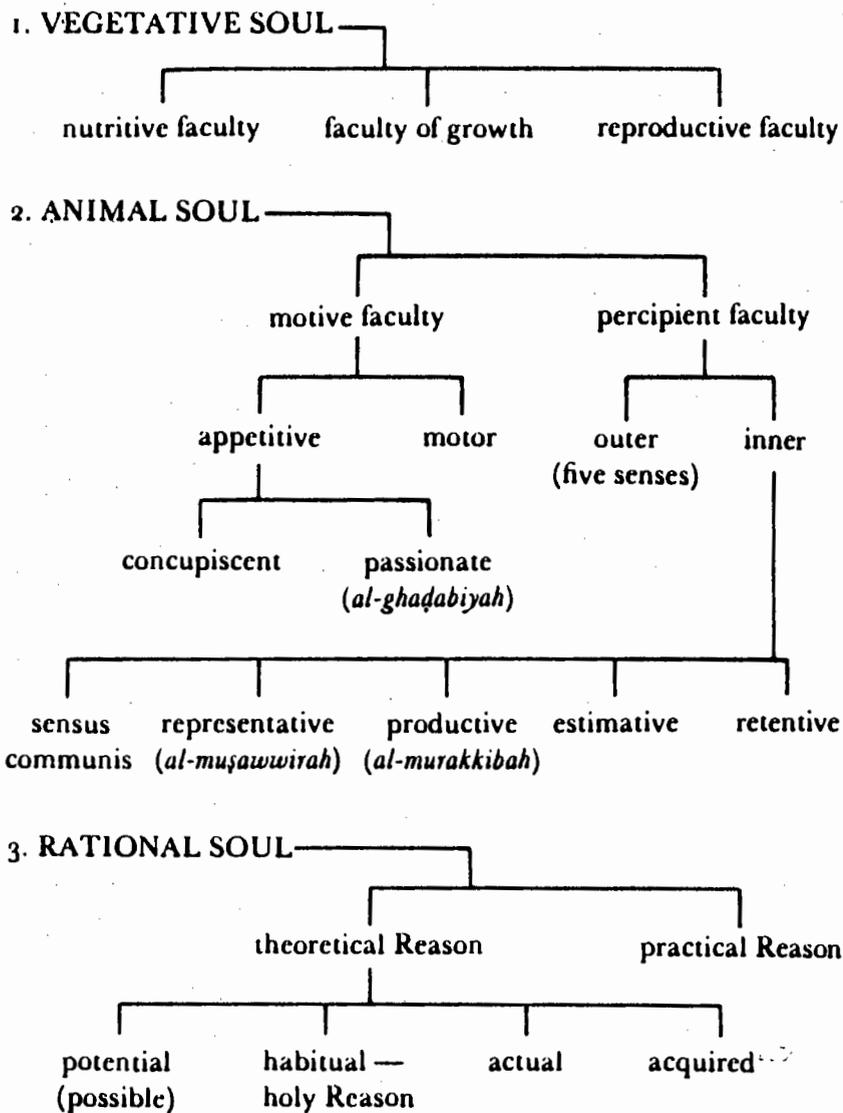
al Fârâbi was the founder of Arab Neo-Platonism in the West. The great exponent of Islamic Neo-Platonism in the East was Abû Ali al Husayn Ibn Sînâ (d.1037AD) known in Latin as Avicenna. His philosophical views may be summed up under the following three headings:

- i) Logic
- ii) Psychology and
- iii) Metaphysics.

An autobiographical tradition reveals Ibn Sînâ's debt to al Fârâbi. His views are essentially refinements of al Fârâbi's doctrines as well as fundamental departures from certain themes. Nevertheless, Ibn Sina's writings were far more lucid and coherent than that of his predecessor, which led to the widespread diffusion of his ideas. Many of the illustrious authors of the 12th and 13th centuries, such as Shahrastânî. (d.1153), Fakhr al Dîn al Râzî (d. 1209), and Nâsir al Tûsî (d.1273) wrote commentaries on Ibn Sînâ's writings. Even in Europe Ibn Sînâ was known as the main expositor of Aristotle, and later Ibn Rushd (Averroes) whose works were translated into Latin. The attack on Muslim Neo-Platonism which culminated in al Ghazâlî's onslaught in his classic Tahâfut, was chiefly levelled against Ibn Sînâ whose name was implicitly identified with that school of thought. It is therefore appropriate to select Ibn Sînâ for this discussion on the Muslim Neo-Platonic view of the human soul.

Ibn Sîna's definition and classification of the soul had a wide influence. Like Aristotle, he defines the soul as maturity of body (entelechy) or form and as substance which is independent of matter. The second definition marks the beginning of the soul as substance independent of matter. He expounds this idea intensively to prove that the soul is independent of matter and advances many rational arguments to substantiate his claim.¹⁰ Ibn Sîna forwards two basic arguments to prove that the soul is a phenomenon that can exist independently of the body. The one appeals to the self-consciousness of man, and the other to the immateriality of the intellect.¹¹ It follows therefore that the soul is independent of the body and is man's transcendental self. Ibn Sîna's arguments for the immortality of the soul are based on the fact that it is a spiritual substance and not a form of the body to which it is intimately linked.¹²

Although the soul is a unity it possesses a series of faculties at each of its three levels. As will be noted from the diagram, Ibn Sîna's theory of the soul and its diverse faculties is not purely psychological. It has a direct bearing on epistemology, cosmology and metaphysics. This is characteristic of the complex role assigned to the soul by Neo-Platonic thought, and in particular to reason or the intellect ('aql).¹³



As can be seen from the diagram the first two levels of the vegetative and animal soul or self, cannot possibly refer to the rûh as understood in its pure transcendental sense but to nafs which represents the changing and dynamic aspect of man. However, in the third level of the soul, the rational soul, the highest level of cognitive and spiritual development is achieved where ~~ely~~ it is in

harmony with rûh, or the soul in its pure spiritual essence. The rational is the culminating stage of the psychic process which begins at the vegetative level, and by degrees proceeds from the sensuous to the imaginative - retentive functions. As a modification of Aristotle's theory Ibn Sîna proposed the close correlation between the *sensus communis* and the imaginative faculty, and the introduction of a separate inner faculty, called the estimate (al wâhima) whereby the animal is able to discriminate instinctively between what is desirable and what is repugnant. These perceptions are 'stored' in the retentive faculty.

On the level of the rational soul there are basically two divisions, the practical is the source of dynamism in those types of action that involve deliberation, and it is connected to the appetitive faculty, the imaginative estimate faculty, and to itself. In the first two cases it co-operates with those faculties in initiating and co-ordinating actions as in the arts or crafts. In the latter case, in conjunction with theoretical reason, it gives rise to general maxims of morality and exercises a moderating influence on bodily functions, ensuring their conformity to virtue.¹⁴

The theoretical faculty on the other hand contains the universal forms which already exist in an immaterial condition or reduced to the level of immateriality by the abstractive powers of Reason. In the first case they are actually intelligible, in the second only potentially so. Similarly, the theoretical faculty might, in relation to them, be either actually or potentially susceptible to apprehension. Potentially, however, is used in three different senses.

- i) It might refer to the agent's ability to learn, eg a child's readiness to learn to write before instructions.
- ii) It might refer to a particular stage in the acquisition of that ability, eg. the child's acquaintance with the alphabet and the tools of writing or
- iii) It may refer to the fulfillment of that ability in a concrete way, eg. the calligrapher who has mastered the art in such a way that he can exercise it at will.

Ibn Sīna designates the first as absolute or 'material' power, the second as possible power and the third as habitus (malahah) or the perfection of power.¹⁵

In line with this three-fold meaning of potentially, reason is designated as material, possible or habitual. Reason can be called 'material', analogous to matter, which in itself is formless but forms the basis for all possible forms, or in so far as it is the bearer of the 'primary intelligibles' that is, the principle of demonstration, intuitively apprehended, and which serves the basis for the 'secondary intelligibles'. Habitual reason, however, may be viewed as partly actual and partly potential. It is actual in the sense that it has the capacity to apprehend the universals, as well as the apprehensions of this very apprehension which in that case is called 'actual Reason'. It is actual in relation to that unconditional stage of actuality whereby the perception of universals is no longer dependent on the natural process but stems from the supernatural which governs the process of generation and degeneration including the process of cognition or the active intellect. This stage is designated as acquired Reason. Man has now attained the perfection for which he was destined, approximating to the high beings of the supra-mundane world. This 'contact' with active Reason is not only the key to human destiny, but also the key to the entire process of cognition. Since active reason contains the repository of all universals it imparts to human reason as it reaches that level of readiness which we call acquired Reason; the acquired forms that make up its stock of

knowledge. This capacity for acquisition varies from one individual to another. For some, this acquisition does not require instruction, for they can perceive the universals immediately by virtue of an inborn capacity. The holy reason which stands at the top of the scale of the rational powers of the soul has important implications for prophecy. In contrast to al Farâbi, who ascribes prophecy to the imaginative faculty, Ibn Sînâ assigns prophecy to this holy reason, which is the highest stage that human reason can attain.¹⁶

When the highest faculty of the soul, the Rational, is perfected, then the soul is liberated from the dependence or attachment to the body. The perfection proper of the soul is identified with the intelligence world in which its rational order and the good overflowing from it are inscribed. This universal world is presided over by the "First principle of all things, beneath which are the immaterial substances, the spiritual substances which have a certain relation to matter, and finally the heavenly bodies."¹⁷ The point at which the soul crosses the borderline "between the earthbound condition of the wretched and the heavenbound condition of the blessed", appears to coincide with the full apprehension of the universal or

intelligible world, with all its order, beauty and dependence upon the sovereign Ruler. The greater the apprehension, the greater the soul's readiness for the soul's other wordly bliss. The condition of the soul's final liberation is the attainment of its final intellectual destination and the ignorant souls that have not attained the level will partake of the miseries that are consequent upon their yearning for the bodies.¹⁸

By virtue of the unitary nature of the soul that was alluded to earlier, we find that in the act of self-awareness, the soul apprehends its existence and its identity at once, without any intermediaries. The soul itself is the basis of all the motive, cognitive, or vital functions we associate with it and in fact is logically prior to all these functions. Hence this quality which remains one and the same is truly you and is diversified through the various functions of the body which attest to its existence.¹⁹

Many scholars have noted a similarity of this concept of the unity of the soul with the Cartesian cogito. What is certain is the Aristotelian and the Neo-Platonic basis of this notion. Aristotle and Plotinus have both insisted

on the unity of identity of the soul, and that its inner and outer functions (motive and cognitive) have been identified purely accidentally. Plurality belongs essentially to the body, and unity to the soul. Whilst man is bound to his earthly existence, the soul is in need of the body, the vehicle of the soul, and has "become diversified through the diversity of the bodily functions or faculties indispensable to its actualization or self-fulfillment.

But it does not on that account lose the essential character of unity which belongs to it."²⁰

The act of self-consciousness alluded to earlier falls within the plane of intuitive knowledge where apprehension is found as an instance. This is a level of knowledge which is not attained by discursive reason ('aql in the lower sense) where the distinction between the subject and the object is perceived, but through an immediate perception attained by the organ of 'aql (in the higher sense of the word), without the aid of any intermediary. This capacity for intuitive perception varies from person to person. The extent of this power is intimately linked up with the ability to apprehend the intelligible forms or universal forms, which are the objects of cognitive pursuit. We see therefore how the knowledge and realization of the soul is bound with the level of one's cognitive functions. Hence the relationship between Islamic epistemology and metaphysics.

2.2 THE SCHOOL OF TRANSCENDANT THEOSOPHY (MULLAH SADRAH)

The three schools of Islamic philosophy have already been referred to in Chapter 2. Although the Neo-Platonic school is not purely discursive in its reasoning, it is in fact the Ishrâqi or illuminative School founded by Shaykh al-Ishrâq Shihâb al-Dîn Suhrawârdî that fully emphasises the intuitive aspect of the Intellect. The Ishrâqi current unleashed by al-Suhrawârdî (d.1191) of Aleppo became particularly popular in Shi'ite circles during the Safavid period in Persia. The most illustrious philosopher produced in this period was Sadr al-Dîn al-Shirâzî (d.1640) of Shirâz, popularly known as Mullah Sadra. In addition to the numerous commentaries that he wrote on Hikmat al-Ishrâqî of Suhrawârdî, and on Ibn Sînâ's al-Shifâ, he wrote many original works, the most important being his monumental Kitâb al-Hikmah al Muta âliyah (Transcendental Wisdom), also called Kitâb al-Asfâr al Arba'ah (Four journeys).²¹

This seventeenth century philosopher and mystic introduced his metaphysical eclecticism wherein he attempted to integrate the three fundamental strains of the Neo-Platonic (Ibn Sînâ), the Ishrâqî (Suhrawardi) and the Sûfî (Ibn Arabi). Mullah Sadra, like al-Suhrawardî, believed in the unity of truth transmitted in an abstract chain from Adam down to Abraham, the Greeks, the Sûfîs and the philosophers. He also considered the Sûfîs to be the genuine

successors of the early Greek sages, with Ibn Arabi as the head, and in the rôle of mysticism in the development of philosophical and religious thought. A distinguishing feature of his thought is the application of philosophical and Sûfî concepts to Imâmite theology. He was inclined to accept the emanationist presupposition of Neo-Platonism but attempted to integrate them into a Sûfî-Ishrâqî framework. In tune with Ibn Arabî's thought; he distinguishes the Supreme Reality (al-Ḥaqq) between the rank of unity or Godhead which the Sûfis call al ghayb (unseen) on the one hand, and the series of subordinate manifestations of this Reality on the other. The first phase of this manifestation corresponds to the order of "fixed entities" or essences that exhibit the supreme reality without being comingled with it. The second degree of diversification corresponds to the universal Soul, and cognitive faculties are manifested. This universal Soul is identified with the "Preserved Tablet" which embodies the eternal decrees of God. A characteristic feature of the soul is that it is a mixture of light and darkness and thereby serves to connect the Intelligible (Universal) and the material realms.²²

Sadr al Dîn Shirâzî views the soul as a single reality which first appears as the body (jism), and then through substantial motion and inner transformation becomes the vegetative soul, then the animal soul and finally the human soul. The soul is brought into being with the body but it has a spiritual substance independent of the body. In the beginning the soul is the body. Through inner transformation it passes through various stages until it becomes absolutely free from matter and change. The soul in each stage acquires a new faculty or set of faculties. When it reaches the level of the animal soul it acquires the five inner faculties: sensus communis (hiss al mush-tarik), apprehension (wahm), fantasy (khayâl), memory (dhâkirah), a double faculty of imagination (mutakhayillah) and thought (mutafakkirah). Through the development it is the same soul which in one case appears as sight, in another as memory and yet another as desire. The faculties are not added to the soul but it is the soul itself. The soul passes through the stream of becoming and the parts of its course are marked by the archetypes of platonic ideas that distinguish one species from another.²³

The inner faculties that Mullah Sadrah enumerates are essentially the same as that made by the Neo-Platonic Muslim authors, borrowed from Aristotle. There is however, one point where Mullah Sadrah departs from the perapatetics completely, and that is, whilst the Neo-Platonists, like

Ibn Sînâ, accorded immortality to the intellectual part of the soul, Mullah Sadrah, in accordance with Sûfî teachings, asserts that the faculty of imagination also enjoys a form of immortality or an existence independent of the body. The faculty of imagination which abides in the soul is able to establish a harmony between intellect and intuition for it is integrally connected to the rational, intellectual and intuitive faculties of the soul.²⁴

There are seven degrees of the existence of the soul which Mullah Sadra enumerates as nature (tabî'ah), soul (nafs), intellect ('aql), spirit (rûh), secret (sirr), hidden secret (khafî) and the most hidden state (akhfa), which is that of perfect union with God.²⁵

According to Mullah Sadra the soul has two faculties, the practical (amali) and the theoretical (nazarî). The latter is first dependent on the former, but later becomes completely independent. The practical faculty consists of four stages: making use of the law (Sharî'ah) of various religions sent to guide mankind, purifying the soul from evil qualities, illuminating the soul with spiritual virtues and finally annihilating the soul in God, beginning its journey to God, then in God and finally with God. The theoretical intellect is also divided into four stages: the potential or material intellect ('aql al hayawâni)

which has only the capability of accepting forms, the habitual intellect ('aql al malaha) which knows only simple and preliminary truths such as the truths that the whole is greater than its parts, the active intellect ('aql bil fi'l) which has no more need of matter and concerns itself solely with intellectual demonstrations and is either acquired or bestowed as a divine gift and finally the acquired intellect ('aql al mustafâd) which is the active intellect united with the divine origin of all existence and is the highest degree attainable by man. 26

So far, the views of two outstanding philosophers were discussed and Mullah Sadra, representing the schools of Muslim Neo-Platonism and transcendental theosophy respectively. We now turn to a discussion on the Sûfî school of thought which emphasised intuition above discursive reasoning in the attainment of ultimate reality.

THE SÛFÎ SCHOOL OF THOUGHT (IBN 'ARABI AND AL-GHAZÂLÎ)

In discussing the Sûfî conception of the soul we shall restrict ourselves mainly to two very important Sûfis in the history of Islâm, Ibn al 'Arabi and Imâm al Ghazâlî.

Al Hallâj was the first Sûfî to regard the soul as a component part of the dual nature of man. It was much later that the Hallâgian soul was identified with the 'rational soul' of the philosophers who had assimilated Neo-Platonic ideas and which had finally appeared in a classical form in the works of men like Ibn Arabî and al Ghazâlî.²⁷

The boldest and the most radical attempt to articulate the mystical version of reality in Neo-Platonic terms was Ibn Arabî. He was born in Spain in 1165, travelled widely in Spain, North Africa, the Near East, and finally settled and died in Damascus in 1240. His two major works are the Futuhât al Makkîyah and Fusûs al Hikam. These works centre around the concept of the Unity of being (wahdat al wujud). A crucial point of this concept is his theory of Logos. To every prophet corresponds a reality which he calls Logos (Kalimah) and which is the manifestation of the Divine Being. God is multiplied only through His attributes. Considered in Himself, He is the Real (al-Ḥaqq), and in relation to His attributes as manifested in the multiplicity of possible entities, He is the creation (al-khalq). The two levels - the one and the many, the first and the last, the eternal and the temporal, the necessary and the contingent are all

essentially one and the same reality. The Creation originally existed in the Divine mind, as the archetypes, which Ibn Arabî called a'yân al thâbitah. God, however, remained hidden and desired to manifest himself and therefore called forth the entire creation into being by His command (Amr). God's intention in creating the world is expressed in the tradition "I was a hidden treasure and I wished to be known". The highest manifestation of the Divine is the human prototype identified with Adam, and called the Adamic logos or the Perfect man. The very existence of the perfect man is the *raison d'être* for the existence of the world. Ibn Arabî does not view divinity and humanity as two distinct natures, but instead, two aspects which find this expression at every level of Creation. Divinity corresponds to the inner (bâtin) and humanity to the outward (zâhir) aspect of reality. The manifestation of reality reaches its consummation in man who is the microcosm of the creation, embodying within himself the perfections of the macrocosm as well as that of the Divine nature itself. This is the reason why man was given the status of God's vicegerent on earth (khalîfah).²⁸

Although Ibn Arabî speaks of Adam's progeny with superlative praise, he reserves for the prophets and saints a position of pre-eminence amongst the rest of mankind and to Muhammad the title of al-Insân al kâmil (The Perfect Man). The perfect man is the highest manifestation of

God and corresponds to the Prophetic logos of which the "reality of Muhammad" is the expression. By this is not meant the historical personality of Muḥammad but his eternal spirit or essence as the bearer of the final Divine Revelation which is identified with the first Intellect or the Universal Reason of Neo-Platonic Cosmology. Only prophets are manifestations of the first Intellect. The reality of Muhammad is the primary logos through which God's will is revealed and also the Creative principle through which the world is created. Man is therefore, to Ibn Arabî the embodiment of Universal Reason and the creature through whom all God's attributes are reflected. Hence, it is the prerogative of man to know God fully. The angels know Him purely as a transcendental entity but man knows Him in His duality as essential reality on the one hand and the manifestation of this reality in the phenomenal world (khalq) on the other hand.²⁹

Ibn Arabî distinguishes the rational (human) soul from the animal soul. In accordance with Aristotle he identifies the latter with the vital principle in the animal, and like Plotinus, he considers it to be part of the universal soul. This soul, however, is material, seated in the heart and permeates the body. The rational soul, on the other hand, is immaterial and indestructible.

In contrast to the Neo-Platonists he does not believe in its eventual reunion with the universal Reason, of which it forms a part. God will instead create a vehicle for the soul similar to the one in this world to which it will go after leaving the body. The rational soul or spirit (rûh) is diametrically opposed to the body which is its temporary abode in the world. The rûh is a substance which dominates all the subordinate powers of the animal soul and exists in the "world of command" (amr) or the spiritual sphere. The rational soul (rûh) comes to know at the highest level of mystical experience the unity of the whole and its own identity with it. Once the soul has reach this level it has lost consciousness of itself as a separate entity and may therefore be said to have attained the mystical stage of annihilation (fana). Such a soul becomes dead to everything else except the reality of God. At this stage the soul has attained the highest goal of human endeavour and realized intuitively and experientially the absolute unity of all things. It may therefore be called the stage of extinction in unity (al-fana fi al-tawhîd).³⁰

In tune with the philosophy of the peripatetics, Ibn al Arabî recognizes three distinct elements in man, which he calls the body (jism), the soul (nafs) and ~~the~~ spirit (rûh). Like Aristotle he speaks of three aspects of the one soul: the vegetative, the animal and the rational soul. He differs from Aristotle in that he does not

identify the rational soul with the intellect (the "organ" of discursive reason). Soul is defined instead as the vital principle in the human organism. This is a particular mode of the Universal soul (al nafs al kulliyah) and spirit (rûh) is defined by him as the rational soul, the purpose of which is to seek true knowledge. This is a "mode" of universal reason (al 'aql al kullî). The main purpose of the animal soul is to seek food and assimilate it into the organism, and the animal soul has its seat in the heart. It is a subtle vapour found in all animals as well. The rational soul (rûh) is pure spirit. It is essentially "cognisant", born pure and free from all sins. It is indestructible, eternal and everlasting. Sins arise out of the conflict between the rational soul (rûh) and the animal soul. Although he believes in the immortality of the soul, he does not assert as Ibn Rushd does in the impersonal immortality of the soul. After death God will fashion a similar vehicle (markab) of the same nature to which the soul will be transferred.³¹

Ibn Arabî asserts that the vegetative and animal souls are the body itself, through which they function and on which their existence depends. The rational soul (rûh) is absolutely independent of the body. The spirit (rûh) is a

substance whose sole activities are remembering, retaining ideas, comprehending, discriminating and reflecting. He does not, however, identify it with the intellect. The spirit or rational soul is capable of receiving all kinds of knowledge and it is the chief of the three souls and the prince of all the powers which are subordinate to it and obey its commands. The rational soul, to Ibn Arabî, occupies an honourable position, it belongs to the world of command (âlam al amr). This is the part of man in which God addresses Himself and which is expected to fulfil moral obligations. ³²

Ibn Arabî maintains that there is a difference between the intellect (al 'aql) and the rational soul (rûh) as well as and between reflective thinking and intuition. He believes, like Plato, that concepts are innate ideas in the soul. The soul is therefore born with these ideas. He speaks of the soul's forgetting its eternal knowledge with being temporarily associated with the body. The so-called acquired knowledge is the knowledge which is remembered by the soul. This idea connects with a view of fitrah which we have discussed in Chapter 2. Ibn Rushd holds the same view, namely, that the universal ideas are a common property of every human soul. However, whilst Ibn Rushd and the other Neo-Platonists believe that the

human intellect perceives the general idea only when it enters into relations with the active Intellect, in which the ideas abide, Ibn Arabî maintains that the universal ideas are innate in the human soul.³³

Whilst Ibn Arabî attempted to articulate the Sûfistic perception of Reality in Neo-Platonic terms, al Ghazâlî (d.1111) on the other hand, sought to refute the Neo-Platonic claims, and in fact, refuted their views in his Tahâfut al Falâsifa (The incoherence of the philosophers).

al Ghazâlî attained certitude through a "light which God had infused into his heart" which to him, is the key to true knowledge. Al-Ghazâlî then realized that this light was not attained through discourse or argument, but through divine grace which comes to those who are receptive to Islâm. Turning away from the world of illusion to the world of reality are the signs of such a light. In his al Munqidh he depicts the state of his soul as it was assailed by the anxiety of doubt, until he recovered faith (îmân) through the outpouring of divine light, and how he consented to publicly champion the cause of orthodoxy against the heretical sectarian groups. He signalled out four groups in the 11th century that might be presumed to be in

possession of the truth. These four groups are the theologians, the Isâ'îlîs (bâtinis), the philosophers and the Sûfîs. The aim of theology (kalâm) was the defence of orthodoxy on rational ground which in fact was based on uncertain premises and therefore not able to lead to that undubitable certainty that he was searching for. The Ismâ'îlî doctrine (talîm) did also not quench his search for certainty. His main argument was against this teaching that the truth can only be attained by adherence to an infallible Imâm. Apart from his vehemence against the Ismâ'îlis, his polemics against the Arab Neo-Platonists are by far the most sustained. The instinctively suppressed reaction against rationalism in general and Greek philosophy in particular which had been characteristic of orthodoxy heretofore, burst forth in al-Ghazâlî's attack on the Muslim Neo-Platonists, particularly al-Fârâbî and Ibn Sînâ. Earlier orthodox writers had been content to challenge rationalism on the grounds of piety but al-Ghazâlî, the only one who had mastered the science of philosophy, was able to refute them. al-Ghazâlî therefore embarked on the task of grappling with the problem, and this deep study culminated in a work called Maqâsid al-Falâsifah (intention of the philosophers) in which he expounded the doctrine of the philosophers as a prelude to a refutation of their doctrine in his Tahâfut al-Ghazâlî's mastery and exposition

was so skilfully written that he was considered by many scholars to have been a Neo-Platonist himself. On the contrary, al Ghazâlî attacked two of the most authoritative and authentic exponents of Aristotelian philosophy in Islâm. A refutation of Aristotle, Ibn Sînâ and al Fârâbî enabled critics of philosophy to dispense with the rebuttal of lesser figures. al Ghazâlî, therefore, judiciously levelled his attack at the two leading Muslim Neo-Platonists directly, and indirectly at Aristotle. He enumerates in his Tahâfut sixteen metaphysical and four physical propositions that obviously pertain to religion and against which the unwary believer should be warned. Of these propositions, three are particularly pernicious from a religious point of view, and those who uphold them must be declared renegades. These propositions are the eternity of the world, God's knowledge of universals only, and the denial of the resurrection of the body. The remaining seventeen propositions in al-Ghazâlî's view do not justify the charge of kufr (disbelief) but only heresy (bid'ah).³⁴

The last three "physical" questions of the Tahâfut deal with the nature of the soul and its immortality, according to Neo-Platonic doctrine. al Ghazâlî presents the philosophers' arguments for the immateriality and simplicity

of the soul and demonstrates that they are simply inconclusive. The same holds for their argument for its immortality which rests on their notion of the simplicity and immateriality of the soul which, as pointed out above, they were unable to establish. Since these arguments are inconclusive, the only resource left was the Scripture or Revelation (al-Shar'), which asserts immortality in no uncertain terms and expatiates on the state of the soul in the after-life. Much of what the philosophers say concerning the non-corporeal or spiritual pleasures reserved for his soul in the after-life conforms to Revelation, but al Ghazâlî argues that their knowledge is based purely on reason and that they regard pain and pleasure as the only types of spiritual sensations that can be experienced after death. al Ghazâlî sees no logical absurdity in positing both spiritual or bodily pleasure or pain, as well as bodily resurrection as laid down in Scripture. Whereas it is logically impossible that God be described in corporeal terms but it is not impossible from the viewpoint of miracles, that the soul could be restored on the day of judgement to the body identical or analogous to the original body and thereby enable it to partake of both bodily and non-bodily pleasure.³⁵

Thus, it seems that al Ghazâlî is essentially in agreement with the philosophers on the nature of the soul. His main argument is that the rational explanation cannot

provide any conclusive proof of the spirituality, substantiality and unity of the human soul. He does not disagree with the basic proposition - only with the method. He then joined the philosophers in his refutation of the scholastic theologians who believe that the soul is a subtle body or accident.³⁶

al Ghazâlî's conception of the human soul is based on Qur'ân and Ḥadîth and it runs parallel to his conception of God. The soul, like God, is a unity and is primarily and essentially a will. God is transcendental and immanent; so too is the soul in relation to the body. Man is made in the image of God and the soul is a mirror illumined by the Divine Spark reflecting the qualities and even the essence of God.³⁷ That is why the knowledge of one self becomes the key to the knowledge of God, for al-Ghazâlî states:

"Not only are man's attributes a reflection of God's attributes, but the mode of existence of Man's soul affords some insight into God's mode of existence. That is to say, both God and soul are invisible, indivisible, unconfined by space and time, override the categories of quantity and quality." ³⁸

The soul is a spiritual principle, with life itself. It vitalises the body and controls it. The body is an instrument and vehicle of the soul. God is primarily a will and man is akin to God in respect of this will. The essential element of man is not thought (which in the final analysis is based on sense perception), but will. Man has infinite spiritual possibilities because of the will. He can even attain to the level of the contented soul (nafs al mutmainnah) by following the mystic path. A further discussion of al Ghazâlî's conception of the soul is contained in Chapter 5.³⁹

Rûmî, another great mystic of Islâm, unlike other scholars, did not seem to have drawn from Plato and Aristotle. In agreement with al Ghazâlî's conception of the soul, Rûmî expounds that the soul is in the realm of the will (amr) as opposed to the realm of nature, and that it is indivisible and unitary. This view seems to have been generally correct because according to Ḥakim, "nearly every philosopher and mystic of Islam refers to it as self-evident and draws from it corollaries about the metaphysical nature of the soul and even about the nature of God."⁴⁰ We see therefore that the philosophers and mystics of Islâm raised the soul out of the realm of nature, freeing it from all limitations. The difference is that the philosophers from

al Fârâbî down to Ibn Rushd identify the soul with the Universal Intellect and the Sûfîs made it transcend even the realm of logos.⁴¹ Rûmî, is therefore in harmony with the philosophical and mystical conception of the soul, viewed it as One, plurality being only a product of time and space, which is to be applied to nature (khalq) and not to the soul, which is in the world of amr (Command), the super-sensory realm. This notion of the unitary conception of the soul is supported by the Qurânic verse (5:28) that mankind is created from "one self" (nafs al wâhidah), which could be translated as "one soul".⁴²

Connected to the conception of the unity of the soul, and of truth and reality, is the idea of the external nature of the soul. The argument goes: because the soul is one and true, it must therefore in its real essence be eternal. The Sûfîs based this view on the Qurânic story of the angels' submission to Adam which is proof of the divine nature of man, and also the verse, "into the form of Adam created out of clay, He breathed His spirit", (25:29), which is evidence that the spirit of God was breathed into Adam and is therefore, uncreated and eternal. The Sûfîs therefore rejected the view that the soul was at all created.⁴³

al Ghazâlî, however, although he was a Sûfî himself, perceived the soul as a created entity and therefore not eternal. He argued that, the fact that the soul (rûh) is of those realities that is not subject to the limitations of space and time in the physical world, it does not mean that it is eternal. The soul is a created substance, for it comes into being when the sperm enters the womb, at which time the new living organism is prepared to receive the soul which becomes its director.⁴⁴ However, a counter-argument ran thus: souls are created, as bodies are, how would one explain the tradition:

"God created souls 2 000 years before the creation of the bodies, and I am the first of prophets in birth and the last of them in my prophethood.

I was a prophet even when Adam was between water and mire."⁴⁵

al Ghazâlî replied that this does not refer to the soul of human beings, but of angels. As for the statement, "I am the first of prophets in birth (khalqan)", the interpretation of khalq is understood to mean "existence in a state of spiritual abstraction and not in the sense of creation in this world, since he had no

formal existence before he was born". All this is possible because of the eternal nature of God's will, which governs the existence of all human beings in a state of "spiritual abstraction" in accordance with true eternal fore-knowledge of God.⁴⁶

In the first two centuries of Islâm there was greater focus on fear of God and moral behaviour. This was due to the Greek influence where the focus of metaphysical problems centred upon the nature of logos. The Muslim Neoplatonic and infinite, and of eternal (qadîm) and contingent (ḥadîth) arose and, according to Hakim, the monotheistic conception of God began to give way to the conception of wujûd and wâjib al wujûd (existence and necessary existence).

Thus we find a period of Islâmîc philosophy ending with Ibn Rushd speaking of the eternity and unity of the Intellect, identifying it with God or the universal spirit. Similarly, sūfism, having transcended the "Universal Intellect" of the philosophers ended up in the belief of the soul as one and uncreated.⁴⁷ On the basis of these premises therefore, according to Ḥakîm, the individual personality of the human soul cannot be saved, and al Ghazâlî "rightly saw that logic necessarily leads to Monism and Pantheism and, therefore refused to discuss the problem logically". Rûmî, too, having been fully aware of the problem, invited the reader to the

"certainty of a super-sensuous experience".⁴⁸

Since al-Ghazâlî (11th century) refuted the philosophers in his Tahâfut, philosophy in Islam did not die, but took on a different character, especially through the influence of Sûfism, as we have noted, for example in the work of the architect of a great philosophical system in Islâm, Mullah Sadra (17th century). Having accepted from al Suhrawârdî the monistic doctrine of the grades of being, he developed his own doctrine of cognition and the nature of the human soul. The soul does not just have different faculties of cognition, but occurs in different levels corresponding to those of the ontological realities. The mind does not only have powers, but is a constituent of reality itself. The soul, therefore, does not merely have knowledge of reality, but participates and identifies with it, and is therefore not merely receptive but also creative. On a higher level of experience, therefore, "the mind experiences and becomes whatever it will and thus attains absolute freedom from the finite existence of the material world."⁴⁹ Raḥmân calls this doctrine "phenomenological idealism" whereby thought and being, mind and reality are completely identifiable.

"Knowing is the ultimate and primordial form of being, and, therefore, that theory of knowledge is completely rejected which declares that cognition is a process whereby the mind conforms itself to reality. Originally a form of Neo-Platonism, this philosophy takes on a new character through the phenomenology of Sûfi intuitionism as developed by Ibn 'Arabî and his followers."⁵⁰

Thus, we see, that al Ghazâlî's refutation of the philosophers helped to bring about a transformation in the method of pursuit of reality; from a purely rational endeavour to understand reality, to a spiritual endeavour to live in harmony with reality. It is precisely these two approaches to the quest of truth, that distinguishes the pure philosophical approach to the understand of the soul, from the Sûfistic approach to understanding the reality of the human soul.

2.4 A MODERN VIEW (MUHAMMAD IQBAL)

The most significant attempt to interpret Islâm in modern philosophical terms is that of an important Indian thinker, Muḥammad Iqbâl (d. 1938).

Unlike Sayyid Ameer 'Ali (d.1928), another noteworthy modern Indian thinker, who drew upon history in expressing the Islâmic world view in modern terms, Iqbâl drew upon the philosophical heritage of the West without reservation. His aim was not to demonstrate the validity of the modern outlook, but rather its essential confirmity with the Qurânic world view. Thus the synthesis which he attempts in his Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islâm) may be analogous to the synthesis attempted by the Neo-Platonists who set out to harmonise the Greek philosophical world view with the religious world view Islâm. The only difference being that whilst the Neo-Platonists employed the philosophical categories of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus, Iqbâl drew on Hegel, Whitehead and Bergson. Their aim was essentially the same - to bridge the gulf between speculative thought and religion.⁵¹

Apart from modern philosophical and scientific theories, Iqbâl found parallels for his dynamic conception of God as Creative will in the "atomistic occasionalism" of Asharite kalâm. To ensure conformity with Islam, Iqbâl reinterprets the atomism of the Asharites in terms of "monadology" or spiritual pluralism in which every particle or element of reality is spiritual, that is, an ego or a self. The higher the self-hood or consciousness the greater the reality of the entity in question, and therefore the closer to God. Iqbâl rejects the Asharite

concept of the self (nafs) as an accident and upholds the concept of the spiritual ego as "simple, indivisible, and an immutable soul substance, serving as the centre of man's mental states and emotions."

According to Muhammad Iqbâl, the unity of human consciousness which constitutes the centre of the personality, never really became a point of interest in the history of Muslim thought. The Mutakallimîn regarded the soul as a subtle form of matter or a mere accident which dies with the extinction of the body. The outlook of the Muslim philosophers was influenced by Greek thought. It was only devotional Sûfism, according to Iqbâl, which alone attempted to understand the nature of "inner experience", which is one of the sources of knowledge apart from nature and history. The development of this type of experience culminated in the famous words of al-Hallâj, "I am the Truth", which to Iqbâl could not have meant a violation of the transcendence of God, but, "the realization and bold affirmation in the undying phase of the reality and permanence of the human ego in a profounder personality."⁵²

The ego, according to Iqbâl, reveals itself as a unity of mental states, which do not exist in isolation, but interact upon one another. They exist as phases of the "mind". The unity of these inter-related states differs fundamentally from the unity of matter, the parts of which can exist in mutual isolation. This is not so much in the case of mental unity, which is not space-bound as the material body, but can think of more than one space order. Another important feature of the unity of ego is the "essential privacy" which reveals the uniqueness of each ego. One's recognition of a person is due to his past experience, and "not the past experience of another ego". This "unique inter-relation of mutual state" is expressed by the word "I". Iqbâl then goes on to discuss the nature of this "I" which, according to him, is a problem of psychology.⁵³

One problem that we have with Iqbâl's writing on the ego is that we do not know whether he is referring to nafs or rûh; only later in the chapter do we realise that he is referring to rûh when he quotes the Quranic verse (17:87) which concerns the ruh proceeding from the "amr" (Command) of God. According to Iqbâl, this serves as evidence for his view that the soul is directive by nature as it "proceeds from the directive energy of God".⁵⁴ Another problem in Iqbâl's writing, apart from not de-

fining his terms clearly, is that he does not substantiate his views by means of accurate references. For example, when Iqbâl writes of al Ghazâlî's view of rûh (soul), he provides no references for the reader to check whether this was in fact al Ghazâlî's view of the soul or his interpretation of al Ghazâlî's view. It appears that Iqbâl expects his reader to accept his views on authoritative validity.

We have discovered that Iqbâl's writing on al Ghazâlî's statement of the soul is after all an accurate representation, but we are not in agreement with Iqbâl's criticism of al Ghazâlî's concept of the soul (rûh). Iqbâl expresses al Ghazâlî's view of the soul as follows:

"...the ego is a simple, indivisible and immutable soul substance, entirely different from the group of our mental states and unaffected by the passage of time. Our conscious experience is a unity, because our mental states are related as so many qualities to this simple substance which persists unchanged during the flux of its qualities. My recognition of you is possible only if I persist unchanged between the original perception and the present act of memory."⁵⁵

According to Iqbâl, this view of the soul had more metaphysical interest than psychological interest. Iqbâl argues that whether we take al-Ghazâlî's view of the soul as an explanation for "the facts of our conscious experience or as a basis for immortality, it serves neither a psychological nor a metaphysical interest." In support of his argument, Iqbâl draws on Kant. According to Kant, the "I think", accompanied by every thought, is only a "formal condition" of thought, and therefore does not prove the existence of consciousness, because the "transition from a purely formal condition of thought to ontological substance is logically illegitimate". We are in disagreement with Kant's argument that the "I think" does not prove the existence of consciousness;⁵⁶ on the contrary, we are of the opinion that the "I think" is not a mere formal condition, but does in fact prove the existence of consciousness. Another argument put forward by Iqbâl is that "the indivisibility of a substance does not prove its indestructibility". Here too, Iqbâl finds support in Kant who stated that the indivisible substance, may "gradually disappear into nothingness like an intensive quality or cease to exist all of a sudden". This static view of the soul as an indivisible entity, according to Iqbâl, does not serve any psychological interest. He argues that it is problematic to regard the element of

conscious experience as qualities of a soul substance, as it would be to regard the weight of a physical body as quality of that body. Observation has shown experience to be "particular acts of reference" and therefore having a "specific being of their own". Iqbâl argues further that if "we regard experience as qualities, we cannot discover how they inhere in the soul substance", and therefore, conscious experience cannot give a clue to the ego considered to be a soul substance, for the soul substance does not reveal itself in experience. Iqbâl further criticises al Ghazâlî's view of the unitary and indivisible nature of the soul for not offering an explanation for the "phenomena of the alternating personality, formally explained by the temporary possession of the body by evil spirits".⁵⁷

In disagreement with William James' view of consciousness as a "stream of thought", Iqbâl argues that, "consciousness is something single, presupposed in all mental life, and not bits of consciousness, mutually reporting to one another. James' view of consciousness does not give us an indication of the nature of the ego, for it ignores totally the "relatively permanent element in experience",

and experience according to Iqbâl is the only path by which the ego can be understood.⁵⁸ Experience is therefore the ego at work, for the ego is to be appreciated through the act of "perceiving, judging and willing". The life of the ego stands midway in the arena of mutual invasion with the environment which is the source of tension for the ego. The ego is present in this arena as a "directive energy and is formed and disciplined by its own experience".⁵⁹ The directive function of the ego is supported by the following verse:

"And they ask thee of the Soul. Say: the soul proceedeth from my Lord's Command (amr): but of knowledge, only a little to you is given".

(17:87)

We have already discussed the various interpretations given by commentators on this verse in the first part of this chapter. Iqbâl understands this verse to mean that the soul has a directive function for it proceeds from the directive energy of God. This verse is meant to suggest that the soul must be taken as "something individual and specific, with all the variations in the range, balance and effectiveness of its unity." This means that

one's real personality is not a thing but an act, and that one's experience is a series of acts, "held together by the unity of a directive purpose". The individual should not be perceived as a "thing", but one that needs to be appreciated in his "judgements, attitude, aims and aspirations". In further support of his view, Iqbâl quotes the following verse:

"Every man acteth after his own manner; but
your Lord knoweth who is best guided in his
path." ⁶⁰ (17:86)

Whilst Iqbâl criticises al Ghazâlî's view of the soul as not having any psychological interest, one may criticise Iqbâl for positing a view of the soul (rûh) which does not provide much metaphysical interest. The view of the soul as the metaphysical, transcendental dimension as a pure essence seems to be ignored by Iqbâl who instead gives a dynamic interpretation of the soul (rûh) which he calls "the ego". He views the soul as an individuality that is understood through concrete experience, and this particular experience of the individual determines his real personality, ego or soul (rûh). This conception of the soul belongs really to nafs (Psyche) which is in fact the

changing, dynamic psychological dimension of man, for nowhere in the Quran is there mention of the changing levels of the rûh, but it does refer to the changing levels of the nafs. Iqbâl's criticism of al Ghazâlî is therefore, from our point of view, based on a mistaken notion of rûh which he mistakes for the nafs. In fact, Iqbâl does not draw any distinction between rûh (soul) and nafs (psyche). This is a problem which, as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, is characteristic of Western psychology. Thus, Iqbâl's criticism of al Ghazâlî's view of the soul is in fact a criticism of the classical understanding of the soul as being a spiritual entity of man, distinct from his psychic dimension, and yet able to reflect the qualities of the soul as the permanent, unchanging, spiritual essence of man. In conclusion of this section, we find that Iqbâl's perception of the soul (rûh) or the ego, as a dynamic reality of one's concrete experience in temporal order, differs radically from the view of the philosophers and the Sûfîs who regarded the soul as an indivisible and invisible spiritual reality, independent of the temporal order of space and time. We now turn to a description of the dynamic aspect of man, the nafs (psyche), which is of particular psychological

interest, without of course excluding its metaphysical value.

3. THE PSYCHOSPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF (PSYCHE)

The spiritually matured person passes through at least three distinct phases of psychospiritual growth. The Qurân uses the term nafs which as we have mentioned, denotes the psychic dimension of man which is dynamic. If the nafs is properly trained through Islamically prescribed ways of submission to the will of God, then it is able to develop to the highest level of spiritual development; and becomes embraced by the permanent, total and sacred dimension of man (rûh). It is therefore precisely because of this permanent and total nature of rûh that the psyche (nafs) will become wedded to it, and indeed, embraced by it. At the highest level of spiritual development (al nafs al mutmainnah) the individual would have total spiritual integration and inner peace and contentment. On the other hand, the dissociation between the rûh and nafs brings forth a kind of tension, disharmony and inner dissonance which explains much of the psychological ailments and spiritual diseases that confront the individual. The manner in which the three psychospiritual levels are attained will be discussed in

Chapter 5; for now, we turn to a description of these levels. In the context of psycho-spiritual development "nafs" may be vaguely translated as "self" to distinguish it from rûh which may be translated as soul or spirit.⁶¹

3.1 AL-NAFS AL AMMÂRAH (THE COMMANDING SELF)

al-Nafs al ammârah is sometimes referred to as the animal self, the evil self or the selfish self. It should preferably be called "the commanding self" because it is a more accurate translation of the original Arabic, and also because there is no connotation of evil associated with the physical dimension of man as such. This is the lowest stage of psycho-spiritual development whereby the individual is bound to his physical existence. In Islâmic terms this bondage constitutes evil. Its level of activity is on the physical as well as the mental plane. Its activity on the physical plane consists of the desire to fulfill one's physical needs, such as hunger, thirst, rest, comfort, sleep and sex. It also consists of man's urge for self-preservation and self-perpetuation and manifests itself through the acquisition drive.

It gives birth to the qualities of greed for the things of this world, to miserliness, cruelty, jealous guardianship over immediate kin and the lust for power and domination. It comprises those compulsions which we share with

the animals. It is this commanding self which the Qurân refers to as, al-nafs al ammârah bisu':⁶²

و ما أبرئ نفسي ان النفس لأمره بالسوء

الا ما رحم ربي ان ربي غفور رحيم *

(٥٣ : ١٢)

"And I call not myself sinless, surely man's self is wont to command evil, except those on whom my Lord has mercy." (12:53)

According to the Sûfi, Sahl al-Tustârî (d. 283:896), who wrote the first mystical commentary on the Qurân, the word nafs, from a lexicographical point of view, denotes both the reflexive pronoun "self" and the human soul. And in its meaning of soul, nafs can denote either the vital principle of life breath within man, or the egoistic principle of self-assertion within man. Thus, nafs is considered as the vital principle that is "carnal" (and associated with the blood), while rûh represents the vital principle that is spiritual (and associated with the air). As "carnal principle" nafs obtains a negative character in the Qurân through the attribution of "al-Ammârah bisu'" (commanding to evil), whereas rûh tends to be viewed as the

Divine Spirit breathed into man.⁶³ While man, according to Tustâri is pre-existentially endowed with heart (qalb), spirit (rûh) and intellect ('aql), he receives the principle of his lower self (nafs), the negative psychic force within man, at the time of creation. The carnal soul therefore is the principle force that counteracts all God-oriented tendencies within man.⁶⁴ Tustâri's view of the nafs al ammarah therefore constitutes the negative psychic force and the adverse principle in man, and is marked by several characteristics, grouped under four main headings:

- i) The selfish desire of the nafs: it desires its own pleasures through its innate tendencies of lust (shahwah) and passion (hawa).
- ii) The autonomous claim of the nafs: it makes claim over its self-centred power (hawl) and strength (quwwah), and following its own planning (tadbir), without regard for God's guidance.
- iii) The antagonistic temper of the nafs: it instigates man to act in accordance with its natural inclination for restless movement (harakah) and listless passivity (sukûn) in opposition to God's command (amr) and prohibition (nahy).

iv) The nafs as man's enemy and satan's companion: it is the worst enemy ('aduw) of man and associates itself with the satan (iblis) by taking heed of the whisperings (waswasah).⁶⁵

The nafs is therefore the seat of egoistic and evil tendencies, the carnal force of his concupiscent drives, and the source of its "anti-religious" self-centredness. In brief, it represents the "earthbound" trends of his selfish nature, in opposition to the heart (qalb) or rûh (spirit) or 'aql (intellect) representing the spiritual dimension of man that is liberated from all egoistic impulse, and is "heaven bound", totally turned to God.⁶⁶

If the individual is at this stage capable of any evil without any consequent regret or conscience, he is dominated by his lower desires and passions. The commanding self insists that it is independent of God, and instead, encourages worship of itself.

"Then do you not see such a one who takes as his God his own vain desire? Allah has, knowing him as such, left him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight. Who,

then will guide him after Allah has withdrawn guidance? Will you then not receive admonition?"

(45:23)

When an individual is enslaved by his baser instincts and his selfish desires he is operating on the level of the commanding self. A child also has characteristics of the commanding self because he is egocentric, thinking only of his own wants and desires. We cannot however categorise him as being evil or on the level of the commanding self for he is still innocent and not responsible for his actions. The commanding self refers more to these sane individuals who have reached a level of discrimination and are therefore in a position to control their lower desires and submit to God, but instead they act contrary to the Divine will and become victims of their lower desire (nafs). One may be tempted to compare the commanding self with the Freudian Id but one will not find a perfect correspondence because the Freudian Id tends to focus on the physiological side of the nafs whereas the commanding self (nafs) constitutes rejection of God and disobedience to Him as well.

The biological character of the commanding self can be controlled. Islâm prescribes ways in which this can be done. For instance, the sexual appetite can be controlled and

channelised through the Shari'ah (Islâmic Law) which pre-scribes marriage, fasting, prayer, lowering of the gaze, and modest dressing, etc. The believer is also constantly urged in the Qur'ân to seek refuge in God from the lower self (nafs), to exercise constant critical self-examination and to humble oneself at all times.⁶⁷

The carnal desires in man which correspond to animal instincts are not inherently evil, but are necessary for man's corporal existence, and in fact can be utilised in a way that constitutes worship ('ibâdah). (This aspect of worship will be further discussed in Chapter 5) Since man occupies a higher status in creation than the animal, his lower nafs, which is rooted in self-love, can be subjected to loftier purposes. This produces in him a strong desire for power and glory to such an extent that he will even abandon the physical comforts of life to satisfy his passion for domination. The commanding self appears to be predominant in society. The majority of people in each society are inclined to follow their lower desires as indicated in the following verse:

"And surely we have made clear for man in this Qur'ân every kind of description, but most men consent to naught save denying."

(17:89)

The fact that most people are dominated by the lower self (nafs) should not be understood to mean that most men are born with an inclination to evil, for this view would contradict the concept of fiṭrah as original goodness, whereby man is born pure, sinless, and naturally inclined to worship his Creator.

The commanding self of man can thus be controlled and disciplined and if properly trained and diverted, it can help man fulfil his noblest destiny, which is to know God and serve Him, in other words, to live in accordance to his fiṭrah, his essential spiritual nature and inclination.

3.2 AL NAFS AL LAWWÂMÂH (The Self-rebuking Self)

al Nafs al lawwâmâh is the first major step in psychospiritual growth. It serves as the inner guide for man and directs him to the truth, and warns him when he goes off course. It stands mid-way between the negative tendency of the nafs al ammârah that pulls away from God and the positive tendency of rûh (spirit) and 'aql (intellect) that turns towards God. It is mentioned in the following verse:

"And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit." (al-nafs al lawwâmah)

(75:12)

When a man is at this stage the slightest departure from the path of rectitude arouses in him the pains of conscience. At this stage the humanity of man is stronger than the animal in him. Man is conscious of evil at this stage, and he attempts to avoid it. He seeks God's grace and pardon for any sin that he may have committed and makes small attempts to make amends and always hopes to attain salvation. As a result of this conscience, which is a faculty and not a stage, the self-rebuking self repents for its actions. If the action was evil then the individual regrets having done it, and will reprimand himself for the wrong; if the action was good then the individual will regret not having done more of the act. A person at this stage will either follow the bad deed by a good deed or increase the doing of good through fasting or by some form of charity, such as, feeding of the orphans. It is usually the Mu'min (true believer) who reproaches himself for his actions. As for the Kâfir (disbeliever), he does not consider himself accountable for his actions or failings to God. 68

Is al-lawwâmah a good quality or a bad quality? Imâm ibn al Qayyim considered nafs al lawwâmah to be neither permanently bad nor permanently good, but looks at it from the view point of what it rebukes. If it rebukes evil then it is praiseworthy, and if it rebukes good then it is blameworthy.⁶⁹ The self may be restless and confused about the purpose of life. The heart may be sincere but the self is still subjected to physical passions. It becomes attached to one appearance and then to another, and wavers inwardly between light and darkness, good and evil.⁷⁰

"Others there are who have acknowledged their wrongdoings; they have mixed an act that was good with another that was evil. Perhaps Allah will turn to them (in mercy). For Allah is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful."

(9:102)

How predominant is al-nafs al lawwâmah in the society? Unlike the commanding self, the self-rebuking self has not totally submitted to physical attachments and passions. The individual still wishes to discover truth. This vacillating self may mix good with evil, not realizing

that it is indulging in evil. After knowledge of its evils it confesses its faults and seeks forgiveness. It is said that when the scale of virtue is higher than that of vice, then this nafs will be in the abyss (108:89). For the nafs to be saved from the abyss, and gain more virtue than vice, it will have to be trained to conform to the Divine Will as expressed in the Sharīah.

3.3 AL-NAFS AL-MUTMAINNAH (The Contented Self)

When the self reaches a state of calmness and is liberated from the blind force of passion, then it is termed al-nafs al mutmainnah (the satisfied soul), as expressed in the Qur'ân:

يا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسَ الْمُطْمَئِنِّةُ
×
ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

(٢٨ - ٢٧ : ٨٩)

"O satisfied (contented) soul, return to your Lord satisfied and satisfying Him."

(89:28)

The effort of the self-rebuking self is crowned with success. The individual acts out of firm conviction purely for the sake of God, without fear of God or in need

of approval. He is totally transformed and he need not struggle against the animal desires which have been totally subdued. His state of vacillation has turned into consistent behaviour and certitude (yaqin), and former bad habits are removed and a true believing Muslim is seen.

Those who inherit this contentment are the righteous servants of God; they are free from pain, sorrow, doubt, passion, etc.⁷¹ They see themselves as ordinary servants possessing nothing. Pleased only with the fact that their Lord is pleased with them, they are firm in faith (imân) and have certainty (yaqin) in God's justice.⁷² They are contented at all times, in happiness or in affliction, and they are liberated from doubt and transgression of God's laws.⁷³

When a person reaches this last stage of spiritual development he has acquired pure and perfect sincerity; his life of truth and righteousness is rewarded by God granting him a life of heavenly contentment on earth. At this stage the individual realizes that the prayers and other modes of worship, which at first seemed to him a burden and a painful effort, are in reality a nourishment on which the development of his soul depends. His Islamic obligations

are therefore performed almost effortlessly, with ease and pleasure. For example, he would look forward to the performance of the five times a day prescribed prayers and not see them merely as a ritual exercise to be done with as soon as he can, but as a necessary gift for the growth of his soul.

"al-Nafs al mutmainnah is the final stage of psychospiritual development. It does, however, take on additional characteristics as al nafs al radiyah when it is happy that God is pleased with it, and nafs al kâmilah (The complete self) which has attained moral perfection free of all carnal desires, resulting in the pure consciousness of God."⁷⁴

At this final stage of psychospiritual development, sincere efforts are made to head the reproachful spirit (inner guiding light), which will bring, according to Ḥāmid, "a deeper understanding of the manifest light of Islam, the Holy Qurân and the life, conduct and personality of Prophet Muḥammad. At last, the impulse towards truth is victorious over evil in the seeker's heart, and he realizes that the love of Allah is the heart's natural sustenance."⁷⁵

It should now be clear what the Islâmic view of the contented individual is. At this stage the individual finds contentment in the pleasure, Oneness and Promise of God. The believer finds contentment in God through remembrance of Him.

"Those who believe and whose hearts (qulûbuhum) find satisfaction (taṭmainn) in the remembrance (zîkr) of Allah, for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts (qulûb) find satisfaction (taṭmainna)." (13:28)

The believer, at this stage of spiritual development, conforms meticulously to the Shariah with ease, and finds contentment in the fact that God is pleased with him. However, it cannot be supposed that the Islâmic view of al-nafs al mutmainnah suggests that the individual is perfect and incapable of sin. On the contrary, the individual at this stage is still capable of sin, but of a minor nature, for which he is continually repentful and seeking God's forgiveness. He is spiritually so strong that no sin can ever degrade him to the level of the lower nafs (carnal self).

Nafs, therefore is the dynamic part of man, which is originally enslaved by the lower desires (nafs al ammarah), but when it reaches the level of nafs al mutmainnah, it takes on the characteristics of the rûh (spirit). The attributes of the rûh which reflect the attributes of God, manifest themselves in the personality of the believer. The individual is then totally liberated from his lower nafs (carnal self) and his psyche (nafs) is finally wedded to his spirit (rûh). The highest level of psychospiritual development is attained where the conflict between nafs and rûh no longer exists, instead the believer has attained psychospiritual equilibrium. The psychospiritual process, therefore, represents the developmental psychology in Islam, and introduces us to the spiritual and psychological dimensions of Islamic psychology.

SUMMARY

1. In contrast to western psychology which recognizes only the material and psychological dimension of man, Islâm recognizes another aspect, namely the spiritual dimension.

2. The spiritual dimension which may be expressed as rûh (soul/Spirit) should be distinguished from the psychical dimension which may be expressed as nafs (self/Psyche). Rûh and nafs take on various shades of meaning in the Qurân. It is preferable to translate them as spirit or psyche respectively in order to draw a distinction between them.

3. The Islâmic Neo-Platonic school, represented by Ibn Sîna, views the soul as a substance independent of the body. Ibn Sîna presents rational arguments to prove this. Although the soul is a unity it possesses a series of faculties at each of its vegetative, animal and rational levels. When the rational faculty of the soul is perfected, then the soul becomes liberated from its dependence on the body. The perfection of the soul is identified with the intelligible world. The soul is able to apprehend itself without any intermediary. This ability to apprehend the intelligible world is the object of cognitive pursuit.

Hence, realization of the soul ties up with the level of one's cognitive function.

4. Although the Neo-Platonic school (Mashshâi) is not purely discursive in its reasoning, it is in fact the Ishrâqi school of Suhrawardî that emphasises more fully the intuitive aspect of the intellect. The school of "transcendent theosophy" represented by Mullah Sadra attempted to integrate the three fundamental strains of the Neo-Platonic (Ibn Sîna), the Ishrâqi (Suhrawardî) and the Sûfî (Ibn Arabî) thought. Mullah Sadra views the soul as a single reality which first appears as the body (jism) and then through substantial motion and inner transformation becomes the vegetative soul, then the animal soul and finally the human soul. The soul is brought into being with the body, but it has a spiritual element independent of the body. At each stage the soul acquires a new set of faculties. The inner faculties are essentially the same as those of the Muslim Neo-Platonists, but Mullah Sadra departs from them in that whereas they accord immortality to the intellectual part of the soul, he asserts that the faculty of imagination also enjoys a form of immortality. The soul has two faculties, the practical and the theoretical; the latter is first dependent on the former, but later becomes completely independent. When the acquired intellect which is

the active intellect united with the divine origin of all existence is attained, then the highest degree is attainable by man.

5. The most radical attempt at articulating the Sufistic perception of reality in Neo-Platonic terms was done by Ibn Arabi. He distinguishes the rational soul from the animal soul. The rational soul is immaterial and indestructible, and unlike the Neo-Platonists, he does not believe in its eventual reunion with Universal Reason. The rational soul (rûh) is diametrically opposed to the body which is its temporary abode in the material world. Rûh is a phenomenon which dominates all the subordinate powers of the animal soul and exists in the realm of command (amr). The rational soul (rûh) comes to know at its highest level the unity of the whole and its identity with it. Once the soul reaches this stage it is said to have attained the mystical stage of annihilation (fanâ), losing consciousness of itself as a separate identity. The soul has attained the highest level of human endeavour, realizing intuitively and experientially the absolute unity of all things. In tune with the philosophy of the Perapatetics, Ibn Arabî recognizes three distinct elements in man, the body (jism),

the soul (nafs) and the spirit (rûh). Like Aristotle, he speaks of three aspects of one soul, the vegetative, the animal and the rational soul. He differs with Aristotle in that he does not identify the rational soul with the intellect (organ of discursive reason) but with the spirit (rûh), a mode of the Universal soul (al-nafs al Kulliyyah), the purpose of which is to seek true knowledge. This rational soul (rûh) is pure and sinless, indestructible, eternal and everlasting. Sins arise out of the conflict between the rational soul and the animal soul. Ibn Arabî maintains that there is a difference between the intellect ('aql) and the rational soul (rûh), and between reflective thinking and intuition. Like Plato, he believes that concepts are innate ideas in the soul. The soul forgets its eternal knowledge whilst being temporarily associated with the body. "Acquired" knowledge is therefore that which the soul has recollected.

6. Whereas Ibn Arabî attempted to articulate the Sûfîstic vision of Reality in Neo-Platonic terms, al Ghazâlî, on the other hand, refuted the Neo-Platonic claims in his Tahâfut. He declared them heretics mainly because of their beliefs in the eternity of the world, their denial of the resurrection of the body, and their denial of God's

knowledge of the particulars. al Ghazâlî is in basic agreement with the philosophers on the nature of the soul, his main argument being that rational explanation cannot give any conclusive proof of the spirituality, substantiality and unity of the human soul. The soul is a spiritual principle having life itself. It utilizes the body and controls it, which is its vehicle. God is primarily a will and man is akin to God in respect of this will. The soul is a mirror illuminated by the Divine Spark, reflecting the qualities and essence of God. Hence, knowledge of one's self becomes the key to the knowledge of God.

7. Jallâladîn Rûmî, another great Sûfî, did not seem to have drawn from Plato and Aristotle. In agreement with al-Ghazâlî's conception of the soul, Rûmî expounds that the soul is in the realm of the Will (amr) as opposed to the realm of nature, and that it is indivisible and unitary. This is the view held by both the philosophers and the Sûfis, the difference being that whereas the Neo-Platonists identified the soul with the Universal Intellect, the Sûfis made it transcend even the realm of the logos. In connection with the philosophical and mystical view of the unitary nature of the soul is the idea of the eternal nature of the soul. al-Ghazâlî, however, although a Sûfî, perceived

the soul as a created entity and therefore not eternal.

8. Since al Ghazâlî, philosophy took on a different turn as noted in the work of Mullah Sadra, who, having accepted the Suhrawardi's monistic doctrine of the grades of being, developed his own doctrine of cognition and the nature of the human soul. al Ghazâlî's refutation of the philosophers therefore, seems to have brought about a transformation in the method of pursuit of reality from a purely rational endeavour to a spiritual endeavour to live in harmony with Reality, and this difference explains the two distinctly different approaches to understanding the reality of the human soul.

9. Muḥammad Iqbâl (d. 1938) made the most significant attempt at interpreting Islâm in modern philosophers' terms. Iqbâl criticises al-Ghazâlî's concept of the unitary nature of the soul on the basis that it does not hold any metaphysical and psychological interest. He draws upon Kant in support of his argument. Iqbâl provides a dynamic interpretation of rûḥ (soul) which in fact belongs to the nafs (psyche). He fails to make a distinction between the nafs and rûḥ, and seems to treat them as one. Iqbâl's view of the soul as a dynamic reality of one's concrete experience in temporal order differs radically from the view of the philosophers and Sûfîs who view the soul as an indivisible,

invisible spiritual reality, independent of the temporal order of space and time.

10. The spiritually mature individual passes through at least three distinct phases of psychospiritual growth. The Qurân uses the term nafs to denote the psychic dimension of man, which is dynamic. If the nafs is properly trained it can develop to the highest stage of spiritual development and is embraced by the totality of the rûh. The lowest level of the psychospiritual development of the nafs (psyche) is called al-nafs al amârah (The commanding self). This stage constitutes the negative psychic force in man, the seat of his egoistic and selfish tendencies; and may be contrasted to the heart (qalb), the rûh (Spirit) or the 'aql (intellect) which represent the spiritual principle in man, always turned to God. al-Nafs al lawwâmah is the first major step towards psychospiritual growth. It is the inner guide that directs him to the truth, and stands mid-way between the negative tendency of nafs al ammârah and the positive tendency of rûh and 'aql. At this stage the slightest departure from the straight path arouses in the believer the pains of conscience. Unlike al-nafs al ammârah, al-nafs al-lawwâmah does not totally submit to the carnal self. The efforts of nafs al lawwâmah are crowned with success when it reaches the final stage of

psycho-spiritual growth, al-nafs al mutmainnah (The contented self). At this stage the individual is totally liberated from the carnal soul and attains a level of spiritual equilibrium. Nafs now takes on the characteristics of rûh, becomes wedded to it, and attains complete psycho-spiritual harmony. This psycho-spiritual growth is a developmental process which introduces us to the spiritual and psychological dimensions of Islamic psychology.

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1. (a) Nasr, S. H., Islâm and the Plight of Modern Man, Longman, London and New York, 1975, pp, 52-54.

(b) This is an oft-quoted saying, its reference being unclear.
2. (a) Asad, M., The Message of the Qur'ân, Op Cit, p.432
(b) Ali, M., The Holy Qur'ân, Op Cit. p.561
(c) Al-Râzi, F., al-Tafsir al Kabir, Op Cit, Vol 21, p.38
3. (a) Ali, Y., Tarjuma ma'âni al Qur'ân al Karîm, Op Cit, part 1, p.719
(b) Al-Râzi, F. Op Cit, Vol 21, p.39
(c) Sâbûni, M.A., Mukhtasar Tafsîr ibn Kathîr, op Cit, Vol 2, p. 398

(Ibn Kathir also makes reference to this view).
4. Sâbûni, M.A. Op Cit, Vol 2, p. 398.
5. Al-Ghazâlî, Abi Hâmid Muḥammad, Ihya Ulûm Din, Op Cit, Vol 3 pp. 3-4.

6. Abû Yûsûf Ya'qûb bin Ishâq al Kindî (d. 866 AD) is unanimously hailed as the first Arab philosopher. In two of his short psychological treatises purporting to serve as an epitome of Aristotle's De Anima, supplemented by the views of Plato and other philosophers, al Kindî states in his Neo-Platonic fashion that the soul is a simple entity whose constitution is analogous to the Creator's own constitution. Since the soul is divine and spiritual in essence, it is distinct from the body and is in opposition to it. The appetitive faculties might move man to act vilely but they are curbed by the soul. This shows that the rational soul that holds them back is distinct from them, after leaving the body it will rejoin "the real world" upon which shines the light of God.
7. Abdul Bakr Muḥammad bin Zakariya al Râzi (d. 925 AD) is considered to be the most celebrated medical authority in the 10th century, and the greatest non-conformist in the history of Islam. The Platonic element in al Razi's thought is more apparent in his metaphysical conception of the five co-eternal principles. al Râzi's belief in the role of philosophy as the only path-way to the soul's purification and release from the fetters of the body, reflects a distinct Platonic-Pythagorean influence, and conflicts with the Islamic concept of revelation and prophecy. This is perhaps the main reason why al Râzi was considered by the orthodox Muslim scholars as an infidel.

8. Muḥammad bin Muḥammad bin Tarkhan al-Fârâbî (d. 950 AD) came from Farâb in Transoxiana. He is considered to be the first systematic expositor of Neo-Platonism in Arabic and the first outstanding logician and metaphysician of Islam. Man's true happiness, for al Fârâbi, consists in partaking of the immaterial nature of active reason, and the greater his share of virtue in this life, the more likely is his soul to attain the condition of immateriality which is the token of ultimate bliss. Like Aristotle, he assigns immortality to the intellectual part of the soul, making it contingent on the soul's intelligence. His concept of the unique survival of active reason as the universal principle of intellectuality common to all men, and his admission of the transmigration of the soul accord more with Plato's view, though at variance with the Islâmic doctrine of bodily resurrection.

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10. Sharif, M.M., A History of Muslim Philosophy, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1963, Vol 2, p. 1377.
An example of his rational argument is the argument of identity and unity.

11. Ibid, pp. 4-7.

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12. Ibid, p. 489.

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(The diagram is taken from this reference).

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20. Ibid, p. 161.

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31. Ibid, p. 254.
32. Ibid, pp. 122-124.
33. Ibid, pp. 126-127.
34. Fakhry, M., Op Cit, pp. 221-230.
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CHAPTER FOUR

THE VOLITIONAL DIMENSION OF MAN -

FREE-WILL AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. INTRODUCTION

The will of man, as with his intellect, represents an aspect of human nature that distinguishes him from animals, for as we have shown in the previous chapter, man is able to liberate himself from the lowest level (al nafs al ammârah) which binds him to his animal instincts and his lower desires, and reach the highest level of spiritual development (al nafs al mutmanniah). Here his true and essential nature (rûh) becomes known to him, and his nafs (psyche) which at one stage had become entangled to his lowest desires, then becomes liberated from his biological and conventional self, and attains harmony with the Soul of man. Peace and tranquility are attained and inward freedom is achieved. All this is made possible because of the free-will with which man is endowed. If man has free-will, therefore, it necessarily implies that he is responsible for his actions. This responsibility, from an Islamic point of view, will depend on the extent to which man, through

the guidance of Intellect and Divine revelation, is able to direct his will to conform to the dictates of his fiṭrah or to conform to the will of God. If man transgresses the Divine Will or the dictates of his fiṭrah his actions are considered to be bad and sinful, and therefore not in accordance with the Islâmic concept of responsibility. The volitional dimension of man, therefore, constitutes an important aspect of human nature from which we may derive a crucial principle of Islâmic psychology. This chapter is an attempt to discuss the various approaches to human freedom and what is relevant to human nature and Islâmic psychology. The question of freedom, responsibility and predestination through reference to Qur'ân, hadîth and the views of classical and modern scholars is then discussed. I intend to point out, that from an Islâmic point of view, man is capable of free-will for which he is accountable to the Omniscient and Omnipotent God.

1.2 THE CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF FREEDOM

The Arabic term for freedom is "Hurriyah". There are other words that express the idea of being free, but the term which is of particular significance is ikhtiyâr which means choice or free-will. In the discussion of free-will the term Irâdah (will) is also frequently used, but ikhtiyâr,

defined as Irâda, is a distinctly higher level. According to Rosenthal, "Ikhtiyâr was never seen together with hurriyah, nor was it felt as one aspect of the complex structure of freedom"¹. In direct contrast to freedom is the concept of "fatalism", which was the most "noticeable metaphysical concept embraced by pre-Islamic Arabs".²

The average Westerner considers Islâm to be too restrictive and fatalistic. This mistaken view is perhaps partly due to the Western world's conception of freedom which emphasises the freedom to "act". From the Islâmic point of view this constitutes only an aspect of freedom. The most important freedom is the freedom "to be", that is, to experience life in harmony with one's true nature (fiṭrah). This inward freedom is acquired through submission to the Divine Will which is not a restriction upon man but a prerequisite for his greater freedom. Through submission to God, man participates in Divine freedom and becomes, as a result, liberated from unjust and stifling external conditions, including the lower self (nafs). Absolute freedom belongs to God alone, and man can only be free in a relative sense, depending on the extent of his submission and conformity to the will of God.³

The various definitions of freedom reflect the different currents in Muslim thought. The lexicographers were inclined to define ḥurr (free) as the opposite of 'abd (slave).⁴ The legal definition of freedom emphasises the freedom of being relieved of "any claims that others might make of him".⁵ The philosophical definition expressed by Fakhru-din al Râzi focuses upon the freedom of the soul. The Sûfî definition of freedom expresses the highest level of freedom that the individual may attain, whereby he is relieved from attachment to all else but God. The individual at the station of freedom is no longer controlled by his lower nafs but he is in control of it. The Sûfî definition of freedom was expressed by Ibn Arabi in his Futuhât:

"Free is the one who controls all created things, and is controlled by neither property nor rank. There is no absolute freedom for human beings. Freedom means that one should be a slave only of God, and freedom is true slavery with God as the master. Freedom from God is not only impossible, but also unsound." ⁶

1.3 FOUR APPROACHES TO HUMAN FREEDOM

Within the Islamic tradition there are basically four different levels of understanding and approaches to the question of human freedom. We shall discuss the concepts of freedom as understood by the philosophers, the theologians (mutakallimun), the jurists (fuqaha) and the Sûfis.

(a) THE PHILOSOPHERS

The philosophers reacted strongly to the determination of the theologians and fully emphasised the reality of human freedom. The early Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina, Abul Hasan al Amin, Ibn Bajjah (Avempace) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) were very interested in political philosophy. They viewed the question of freedom in the light of al-Fârâbî's political philosophy. They all viewed the shariâh as a reality and the need for political rule to be based on divine revelation. They therefore saw the reality of freedom in the context of the "nomocratic" society of Islam. Later Muslim philosophers, such as Mullah Sadrah, reverted to the theological debate concerning free-will and determinism. Although the early philosophers' perspective on the reality of freedom in the light of the Islâmised political philosophy of al-Fârâbî throws an important dimension to the understanding

of freedom, it does not particularly concern the subject of Islamic psychology.⁷

(b) THE THEOLOGIANS

More relevance to the understanding of the problem of human will is found in Islâmic dialectics (kalâm). The Muta - kallimûn have always been concerned with the problem of the relationships of the human will and the Divine will and the extent to which the Divine will has a bearing on the human will. The Jabarites deny human freedom completely despite the clear evidence of man's immediate experience of exercising free choice and also the clear Qurânic verses reminding man of his responsibility to God. The Mu'tazilites and most of the Shi'ite schools assert the reality of human freedom and reject the all-embracing determinism of the Asharites. Muslim theologians were not concerned about "outward material factors" which determine man's behaviour as is the concern of modern philosophers today, but were concerned with the extent to which the Divine Will determines the human will.⁸ We shall return to a discussion of this theological debate in another section of this chapter, and attempt to discuss the various attempts at reconciling the will of man with the will of God.

(c) THE JURISTS

The jurists are mainly concerned with the Shari'ah (Islamic Law) which has a more direct and concrete bearing on the freedom of the individual, for the Shari'ah contains many restrictions and prohibitions. The jurists therefore discuss the question of freedom more from a juridical point of view than from a metaphysical point although the metaphysical basis of the Shari'ah is still present for it is based on Divine Will. Rights and liberty are only the outcome of man's fulfilment of obligations set out in the Shari'ah. Since man is created by God he is ontologically dependent on Him and therefore human freedom must be subjected to the Divine Law which concerns human relations to nature, to fellow men and even within the human being. Man in the Shari'ah is therefore not allowed to commit suicide for he does not have the freedom to usurp the right of God. Man must at all times be conscious of the source and the end of existence. Although the Shari'ah imposes limitations upon human freedom it provides fertile conditions through which man may establish order in the human society and serves as the outward basis for inward freedom through inner purification.

(d) THE SÛFÎS

The Sûfîs, more than any other group, have spoken of freedom. The aim of Sûfism is to attain union with God who is absolutely free. Conformity to this Absolute Divine Freedom leads to a greater inward freedom. This is done through the practice of inward freedom from all material and temporal forms. The revealed forms, as contained in the Shari'ah, form the basis for the Sûfîs' goal. They have been most meticulous in the practice of the Shari'ah and have even transcended the outward forms of the Shari'ah through their penetration into its inner dimension. The transcendental consciousness attained by the Sûfî is not divorced from the Shari'ah but based on it. Shari'ah is in fact the means by which man lives according to the Divine Law and finds his way from and through the path of Shari'ah to a level of transcendental consciousness, inner detachment and freedom, which is not independent of the Shari'ah, but rather, flows from it, rests upon it and is in harmony with it.

Freedom should be viewed from various angles, especially on the level of outward actions and on the level of attaining

inner freedom and deliverance. On the level of external action, the main consideration is political freedom. The freedom that the Sûfis emphasise is the freedom not only from "external factors but also from passionate attachments and needs, whether these be artificial or real".

In Sûfism freedom means ultimate deliverance from all bondage and to experience the inner spiritual dimension of man (rûh) where freedom in its real sense is to be found.

Over the ages Islâm was able to preserve the ways in which freedom in its absolute and unconditional sense could be attained, that is, where complete detachment from all else except God is attained. This is how the Sûfis have defined freedom. The spiritual technique in Sûfism aims at attaining a real and abiding freedom.¹⁰ This emphasises the attainment of permanent freedom which liberates the individual from attachment to his temporal nature and makes him realize his true and essential nature. It is precisely for this reason that the Sûfis more than any other group have contributed towards a better understanding of human nature: They are therefore directly relevant to an understanding of Islamic psychology. In contrast to the theologians who have rationally attempted to explain the nature of freedom, the Sûfis have actively pursued the

path whereby they could attain the reality of freedom through direct and immediate experience. We end this section on freedom with the words of Nasr:

"Any discussion of the concept of and reality of freedom must take into account, besides outward manifestations of freedom on the plane of action, the inner freedom which is related to the experience of being itself, and which transforms us in such a way that outward forms of freedom can hold a completely different meaning for us. In modern times, men have gained many outward forms of freedom but they have also lost that most fundamental freedom which is the freedom to be oneself, not the coagulated cloud of the ego with which we usually identify ourselves, but the immortal soul which resides in the proximity of the self and which enjoys immortality and freedom, because of its very nature." ¹¹

2. FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE QURAN

As we have mentioned earlier, man is a limited free being and therefore responsible for his actions. This has important implications for an Islâmic psychology in that it demands critical self-examination and initiative on the part of the individual to resolve his problem or to improve himself.

There is abundant evidence in the Qurân to suggest that from an Islâmic point of view man is a free being. The freedom of man in the Qurân stands in direct contrast to what is found in the determinism contained in Freudian psycho-analysis and behaviourism. What is implied in the freedom is man's capacity to choose between good and evil as pointed out to him in the Holy Qurân. The following verses in the Qurân bear ample testimony to the recognition of man's free-will in Islam:

اَنَا هَدِينَا السَّبِيلَ اَمَّا شَاكِرًا

و اَمَّا كَفُورًا x

(٢ : ٦٧)

"We have truly shown the way, he may be thankful or unthankful." (76:3)

و قل الحق من ربكم فمن شاء

فليؤمن و من شاء فليكفر
(٢٩ : ١٨)

"The truth is from your Lord, so let him
who will, believe; and let him who will,
disbelieve... " (18:29)

و انى لغفار لمن تاب و آمن و

عمل صالحا ثم اهتدى x

(٨٢ : ٢٠)

"But truly I am forgiving to whomsoever
repents and believes and acts uprightly,
and lets himself be guided." (20:82)

ان هو الا ذكر للعالمين x لمن

شاء منكم ان يستقيم x و ما تشاءون

الا ان يشاء الله رب العالمين x
(٢٩ - ٢٧ : ٨١)

"It is naught but a Reminder for the nations,
for him among you who will go straight. And
you shall not will, except as Allah wills, -
The Cherisher of the worlds." (81:27-29)

The last verse quoted above should not be misconstrued to mean that God leads man on the straight path according to arbitrary will despite the freedom of man. What is meant here is that it is through the Divine Will that the Prophet has been sent to point out the cause of good and evil, and if it was not for this, man would not have followed the straight path. Only after Divine Revelation has reached man is he able to exercise the choice between good and evil. If God had not been pleased to send Revelation to man, He would not have had a free-will. It is consistent with Divine justice that God sends Prophets to guide man because he left man with a free-will. Otherwise there would have been no need for Divine guidance.

Free-will is also implied in verses in which God's guidance and sealing of man's hearts follow the actions resulting from man's free-will.

انّ الذين لا يؤمنون بآيات الله لا

يهدىهم الله و لهم عذاب أليم ×

(١٦ : ١٠٤)

"As for those who believe not in the signs of God, God will not guide them" (16:104)

..... و ما يضلّ به إلا الفاسقين *

(٢ : ٢٦)

"None will He make go astray thereby except the wicked." (2:24)

... كذلك يطعم الله على كل قلب متكبر جبار *

"Thus God sealetth up every heart which is arrogant and haughty." (40;37)

It is man's exercise of 'free choice and initiative that enables him to bring about change in himself or in his conditions for better or for worse, depending on whether he is guided by revelation or not.

و أن ليس للانسان إلا ما سعى * (٥٣ : ٢٩)

"Man shall get nothing but what he strives for."

(53:39)

..... ان الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى

يغيروا ما بأنفسهم

(١٣ : ١١)

"Verily, Allah does not change that which people are (their condition) until they change that which is in themselves." (13:11)

The latter verse means that man must do the choosing; if he chooses correctly, God will help him. Thus it is for man to take the initiative to change himself. God will only change the condition of the people if those people exercise the choice and initiative to change themselves. The reality of human choice therefore, has important implications for Islamic psychology.

This verse can be interpreted in two basic ways. Muhammad Asad interprets this verse as having a positive and a negative connotation. He states that, man has been endowed with blessings which God will not withdraw, unless man's inner self becomes depraved, just as He does not bestow his blessings upon wilful sinners unless they change their own inner disposition and become worthy of His Grace. Yûsuf Ali understands this verse to mean a change from good to evil, that is people change from the original state of fitrah and incur the wrath of God.

This interpretation is also held by a contemporary scholar Sheikh Ja'far Idris who finds support in the classical commentaries of al Tabari, Ibn Kathir, Ibn al Jawzi and al Qurtubi.¹⁴ Sheikh Idris supports this interpretation because bounties are not initially bestowed on men as a result of any good they do, but are given to them as a grace from God. As Rahmân, God does not wait for people to do good and only then extend his bounties. It is man's duty to be grateful. In this way his bounties will be maintained, and if not,¹⁵ God will withhold some of the bounties. It is man's inner state that determines the external condition in which he finds himself and this is the area where he could exercise his freedom. This view may be contrasted with the Marxian emphasis upon the material conditions that determine man's state, which leave man with little freedom to change himself as the basis for change lies in the external conditions.

Since the area of freedom lies within man's inner state he will choose to conform to his true nature (fitrah) or deviate from it. If man conforms to his fitrah, therefore, he will find himself in better circumstances, and if he deviates from his fitrah he will find himself in adverse circumstances. Man is therefore a free being,

capable of exercising his will in a positive way by retaining his original goodness, or, in a negative way by changing himself from a state of good to a state of evil and corruption.

We have established that, in terms of the Qurân, man is a free being, capable of choice and initiative. It logically follows therefore, that he is also a responsible being. To whom is man responsible? In contrast to Sartrean existentialism where man's responsibility is to himself and not to any other being or authority, Islam teaches that man is responsible to God for his actions. Although man is a free being and responsible for his actions, his freedom is not his own property for him to do with as he pleases although he is at liberty to deny even the source of his freedom, which is given to him by God and ultimately belongs to God; Man, therefore, is also accountable to God for his deeds. We now turn to the Quranic verses that support the notion of human responsibility and accountability to God.

"Verily, We proposed to the Heavens and the Earth, and to the mountains to receive the responsibility (amânah), they refused the burden, and they feared to receive it. Men undertook to bear it. Verily, he was unjust, senseless." (33:72)

According to an early classical commentator, Ibn Abbâs, the term "amânah", which is crucial, to this verse, means obedience (al-ṭa'ah). The heavens and the earth refused the offer, but Adam accepted the responsibility after he had asked God what it involves, he was told by Him, "If you do good you will be rewarded, and if you do evil you will be punished." This is why God referred to him as unjust (zulûmân) and sinful (juhulâ). Mujâhid, Dahhak and Hasan al Basri are in agreement with Ibn Abbâs that this amânah involves the compulsory duties (al-farâ'id). This amânah therefore involves, according to the classical commentators the responsibility and acceptance of the commitment and prohibition of God, and whosoever acts upon them will be rewarded, and whosoever violates this amânah will be punished. In short, amânah

therefore means the responsibility of exercising obedience to the Divine Will.

In disagreement with the classical commentators, Muhammad Asad¹⁷ understands amânah to mean "reason" or "intellect" and the "faculty of volition". Sayyid Qutb and Iqbal are also of the view that amânah refers to the free-will of man. Allâmah Tabatabai, another modern scholar, views amânah as referring to man's capacity for knowledge of God and acts of justice. These qualities are essential for man's divinely prescribed role of khalifah (Vicegerent of God) on earth. The Will of God cannot be implemented without them. If knowledge and justice are lacking, ignorance and oppression reign, and this is the reason why man is referred to as "unjust, and senseless". He has betrayed the trust and allowed oppression and ignorance to reign. People can therefore be divided into two camps, those that fulfil the trust and those that betray the trust. Human history bears testimony to the eras of intellectual and political oppression, for man has proved to be senseless in the acceptance of his responsibility of freedom. The heavens and the earth knew that they were not capable of knowledge and justice and were therefore sensible in refusing the trust. This verse therefore strongly indicates that man has

a mission to fulfil on earth as khalîfa (vicegerent) on earth.²⁰

What stands out clearly from both the classical and modern commentaries of amânah is the notion of responsibility. Whether amânah is associated with obedience to God or the exercise of free-will and intellect, or the capacity for knowledge and justice, these all serve as elements that constitute the conditions for human responsibility. By virtue of the divinely endowed elements of intellect (aql) and will (irâdah) man is made responsible for his actions as indicated by the following Qurânic verses:

"If you did well, you did well for yourselves,
if you did evil (you did it) against yourselves."

(17:17)

"Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight
of good see it, and anyone who has done an atom's
weight of evil, shall see it."

(99: 7-8)

What is implied in these verses is the concept of reward and punishment which makes sense only if man had free-will,

for it would have been incompatible with the spirit of Divine justice to reward or punish a person for an act over which he had no control. It should be remembered that Divine justice is meted out with full knowledge of the individual's circumstances and limitations. Man is beset with limitations which make him unable to exercise absolute freedom.

Absolute freedom belongs to God only and man's freedom should be seen in relation to the extent to which he conforms to the Divine Will. Because God is just, man is to be rewarded or punished for every degree of good or evil that he has earned, and man will not be required to be responsible for a burden beyond his capacity.

"On no soul doth God place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns and it suffers every ill that it earns."

(2:286)

Having been granted freedom and responsibility, man naturally deserves respect and honour, and is therefore made the most distinguished creature in the entire universe. He was given the role and mission of khalîfah

of God. However, since man is weak due to his human limitations and not in full control of the powers and his own impulses, he is dependent on God's guidance. This guidance is granted to man in two forms; the form of his inherent capacity to distinguish right from wrong (fitrah), and through Divine Revelation and Prophets.

In the light of man's limitations we need to reflect upon the following considerations:

Firstly, God has endowed man with a free-will. This is a true freedom for, if it were not, man would not have been held responsible for his actions.²¹ Secondly, God's power is absolute and man's freedom does not alter this power.²² Thirdly, God deals with man in accordance with his own actions, that is, he is rewarded for good actions and punished for bad ones.²³ Man has been endowed with discretion and the power to choose. The very first verse in Surah Baqarah states that those who are guided by the Qurân are the ones who are already inclined towards God. In another early part of Surah al Baqarah God speaks of sealing the "hearts of the disbelievers". Therefore, from the standpoint of guidance it is the inclination of man's heart to do good and serve God that makes him worthy of God's mercy. Therefore rejection and disobedience to God's guidance are first borne in the hearts of man, and God "seals" man's

heart because man himself persisted in rejecting the Divine Message. Fourthly, God's mercy extends over everything. It pleases God that his creation benefit from His kindness and it displeases Him if they reject Him and consequently²⁴ deprive themselves of Divine blessing.

In sum, man's freedom is a true freedom and man is accountable to God alone for his actions. Absolute freedom rests with God alone and man is therefore not expected to be arrogant about his gift of free-will. He can be saved from the illusion of his independence by submitting his will to the will of God and by participating in the Absolute freedom of God.

PREDESTINATION IN THE QUR'ÂN AND THE ḤADĪTH

We have established from the Qur'ân that man is a free being and therefore responsible for his actions, but he is also subject to certain limitations, internally and externally, which makes him a limited and relatively free being. These limitations are understood in the light of the concept of predestination. Some of these limitations are unalterable and others are alterable, that is, man is able to triumph over them. A crucial Qur'ânic verse pertaining to predestination is the following statement:

"He has created everything and meted out for it a measure." (2:25)

The operative word in this verse is taqdîr, which literally means to fix for a thing a certain measure or quantity. This fixing of a measure or predestination on the part of God is of several kinds.

The first is that he has endowed every being or thing in His creation with certain qualities and potentialities which are peculiar to it, constituting its basic nature. One can recognize the peculiarities of a particular plant from its shape, smell and size. Some animals have voluntary movement and natural instincts which differ from others. The goat is destined to eat grass and the lion is destined to eat meat. Birds are endowed with the ability to fly and fish are compelled to swim underwater for their survival.²⁵

The second predestination is that God has appointed for everyone of His creatures a certain place, time and environment. The lion, for example, has the characteristic appearance of a lion although one may be distinctly different from any other lion. Furthermore, the existence of this lion at a certain point of time and space is also

determined by God. Hence, his peculiar characteristics as well as his circumstances around him are predetermined. These two predeterminations also apply to man. Man has certain characteristics that make him different from the rest of the creation. A particular individual is born with particular racial and hereditary characteristics. He has no control over the colour of his skin or his eyes or any other biological characteristic. These are his given characteristics and he does not have the power or the freedom to alter them. In addition to this, man is born in a particular age, region and family and is surrounded by a particular historical and social environment. The social environment is crucial in determining his moral and religious values. This is even supported by the [^]hadith on fitrah which strongly indicates the influence of the parents in determining the religion of the child. (Chapter 1). Although man is subject to the limitations of the social environment he nevertheless has a will, which, if properly trained and directed, may be able to overcome the limitations of the social influences, and therefore attain relative liberation from their subjugating influences.

The other aspect of predestination is man's worldly provision and the length of his life. It is divinely designed that man must prove himself in these areas as well.

و ما من دابة فى الأرض الا على

الله رزقها . . .

(١١ : ٦)

"There is no living thing on the earth but its provisions are in Allâh's charge."

و ما كان لنفس ان تموت الا باذن الله

كتابا موجلا . . .

(٣ : ١٤٤)

"No soul can ever die except by Allâh's leave and at a time appointed." (3:144)

This verse indicates that man's life is not in his own control. The boundaries of his life are defined; he will have to strive within these limits and attain defeat or victory.

Another dimension of predestination which places limitations upon the freedom of man is the principle of evil which

is personified through the creation of iblis (Satan) who represents the external enemy of man; and the principle of evil manifesting itself internally through the nafs al ammârah bi su' (The lower self compelled to evil). The metaphysical root of evil is implied in the act of creation which, by contrast to the perfect Creator, must of necessity be perfect. The evil that is found in the imperfect creation cannot be of an absolute character for absoluteness is a quality attributed to God alone. Iblis represents the cosmic personification of separation of the absolute, and man represents the microcosmic personification of that separateness. Man is naturally inclined towards the Divine (fitrah) but acquires the capacity and tendency for evil through the nafs al ammârah. Man as a free being is able to choose between the path of evil and good and he is given the guidance of Revelation to help him distinguish good from evil. Man is therefore responsible for evil, and although the principle of evil in the creation is divinely preordained, man is responsible for the path he chooses, and indeed, he has the power to overcome evil through submission to the Absolute. It may therefore be said that Satan represents a challenge to man which he must overcome so that man may ultimately come to know God.²⁷

The question now arises whether the aforementioned types of predestination apply to man's destiny in heaven and hell. Shahidullah Faridi argues that it does not apply because the freedom of man is a true freedom and not a nominal one. According to him, "If it be accepted that man's misery in the after-life is predetermined in the same way as in the same sense of his genetic properties, the time and place of his birth, his provision and the term of his days, then the question of free-will does not arise, this is pure compulsion."²⁸ Hazrat Shaykh 'Abd al Qâdir Jaylâni (1753-1814), however, is of the view that the aforementioned types of predestination apply to man's destiny in heaven and hell. According to his view, the person on whose favour Jannat is written will go to Jannat even if he committed sins. The amount of sins is of no consequence, he will ultimately be of those whose acts before his death will ultimately lead him to Jannat.²⁹

Both Faridî and Jaylâni accept predestination, but whereas Faridi feels that predestination does not apply to human actions, Jaylâni is of the view that it does to the extent that it affects man's destiny in heaven and hell. The problem of reconciliation between predestination and free-will will be further discussed later on in this chapter. We now turn to the ḥadith text in support of belief in predestination.

"On the authority of 'Umar bin al Khattâb (May Allah be pleased with him), who said: "One day we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (May the blessings of Allah be upon him) when there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black; no signs of journeying were to be seen on him and none of us knew him. He walked up and sat down by the Prophet (May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). He said: Then tell me about imân. He said (replied): It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in destiny, both the good and the evil of it (narrated by Muslim)".³⁰

Hence, predestination is expressed as an article of faith (imân). A Muslim is expected to believe in the destiny of good and evil. Another authentic ḥadith which pertains to preordainment is the following:

"On the authority of Abû 'Abd al Rahmân 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ûd (May Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allâh (May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he is the truthful, the believed, narrated to us : 'Verily, the creation of each one of you is brought together in his mother's belly for forty days in the form of the seed, then he is a clot of blood for a like period, then there is sent to him the angel who blows the breath of life into him and who is commanded about four matters: to write down the means of livelihood, his life-span, his actions and whether happy or unhappy. By Allah, other than whom there is no god, verily one of you behaves like the people of paradise until there is but an arm's length between him and it, and that which has been written overtakes him and so he behaves like the people of hell-fire and one of you behaves like the people of hell-fire until there is but an arm's length between him and it, and that which has been written overtakes him and so he behaves like the people of paradise and thus enters it." (related by al Bukhârî and Muslim).³¹

This hadith does not necessarily propound the doctrine of compulsion as understood by the predestinarian scholars, but the perfection of God's Knowledge and Power. The angels' recording of the four matters is expressive of the all-comprehensive knowledge of God. Thus, God has fore-knowledge of the future, of both the universals and the particulars.

In further support of the concept of predestination we shall quote a few more verses from the Qur'ân.

"No misfortune can happen on earth or in your soul but is recorded in a decree before we bring it into existence." (17:22)

"If God had willed, they would not have fought each other, but God fulfilleth His plans." (2:253)

We have already indicated through substantiation from Qur'ânic verses that man is a truly free being and therefore accountable for his actions to God. It was also shown that man has certain pre-ordained limitations over which he has no control. We indicated through authentic

ahâdith texts that a Muslim believes in the Divine destiny of good and evil and the four matters that have been written by the angels representing the all-comprehensive for-knowledge of God. This introduces us to a problem of the apparent contradiction between the fore-knowledge of God with the freedom of man, a section to which we must now turn.

4. DIVERGENT RESPONSES TO THE PROBLEM OF PREDESTINATION

The problem of predestination concerned mainly the theologians in Islâm.

This problem might appear to be of a purely theoretical nature but it has vital practical consequences, for it has influenced the attitude and behaviour of men. We therefore deem the discussion on predestination important for Islamic psychology. The area of this discussion revolves principally around the relationship between the human will and the Divine Will, and the extent to which God's will has a bearing on man's will. In this connection a crucial question is posed: How can man be responsible for his actions if he is subject to an omniscient God? This argument is affirming a dilemma for belief in an omniscient God, for man's actions cannot contradict the fore-knowledge of God; he must conform to it and hence is left without choice. Yet, according to Islâm,

man is responsible for his actions! Let us now examine the views on the question of freedom and determinism of the divergent schools of thought that arose in Islâmic history. We shall discuss also the classical and modern scholars' attempts to resolve the problem.

4.1 THE EARLY THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARS

The early Muslim community did not have the time nor the inclination to indulge in the controversial problem of free-will and determinism. The controversy over the question of free-will is a late development in Islamic history.

The Muslims started off with two sets of Qur'anic verses, one of a predestinarian nature and the other of a libertarian nature (the verses on free-will). The first attempt to formulate a doctrine of human action was based on the predestination verses. Towards the end of the 7th century the libertarian view began to penetrate the Muslim community which gradually caused a split between those who retained the original predestinarian views and those who adopted the newly arisen libertarian views. The results of this division led to two schools of thought, the Qadariyyah school which affirms the view of man's full control and responsibility for his actions (They adopted the libertarian verses) and the Jabariyyah (pre-

destinarian) school, holding the view that God is the Creator of man's deeds, good or evil, and that man was entirely without choice in the matter. This division continued within Kalâm, which in general retained the original predestinarian views of Islâm whereas the Mu'tazilah succeeded the Qadarites.³²

Let us briefly state the difference between the predestinarians and the libertarians. According to the predestinarians there is no distinction between the actions that occur in the world and the actions that are performed by man. All the actions are created by God. This conception was known by the early exponents as compulsionism which was later rejected by later propounders of predestination. According to the libertarians, there is a clear distinction between the actions which occur to man and the actions which occur in the world. They all believed in the free-will of man but had some difference concerning it. Some libertarians believe that free-will was endowed from the time of birth, while others believed that God endowed man with the power of free-will before the performance of each act. The libertarians considered the acquisition of free-will as a gift of God and therefore referred to human action as "acquisition" (aksâb) apparently bearing in mind the synonymous Qur'ânic image of kasaba, "to acquire", and

'amila, "to do". The assertion of free-will posed some problems for the libertarians, two of which are the problems of free-will and God's fore-knowledge and the problem of free-will and God's power.³³ Some libertarians asserted that God has no knowledge of future events because they see no direct reference to God's knowledge except with reference to five things in the Qur'an. This is one of the impossibilities which God in His wisdom established in the world.

With regard to the antinomy of God's power, there were three solutions. One solution is attributed to most of the Mu'tazilites. They state that "God is not to be described as having power over a thing over which He has endowed man with power". The second solution to the problem was introduced by two Mu'tazilites, Dirâr and Najjâr, who explained that "every human action is created by God but is acquired by man, and it is in the sense that man is the acquirer of the act that he may be called its agent". Thus, every act comes from two agents, from God the Creator and man the acquirer. Dirâr and Najjâr, however differed as far as the origin and meaning of this acquisition was concerned. According to Dirâr, man is endowed with the power to acquire from birth and, therefore, the power to acquire and the act of acquiring, is to be ascribed to man's own free-will; man is therefore a free agent in reality. Najjâr, on the other hand, views the power to act as well

as the act of acquiring as being created in man by God "simultaneously with His creation of the act for man, so that both man's power to acquire and his act of acquiring are for him by God". Man is therefore simply the agent, but not a free agent in reality. A third solution is that of Shahhâm who, unlike "most of the Mu'tazilah" believes that God may deprive man of the free-will with which He has endowed him and in contrast to Dirâr and Najjâr, he is of the opinion that every act of man may come from either God, if He has deprived man of free-will or, from man, in which case man's act is by "acquisition", a free act of man's will.³⁴ The Shahhâm solution was followed by his student "al-Jubbâi and groups of the Mu'tazilah", but most of them have substituted the term "acquisition" for "creation". The Dirâr-Najjâr solution was adopted by many predestinarians. Apparently some of them followed Dirâr's solution and others followed Najjâr's solution.³⁵

The Asharites, who were named after the founder of the school, Abul Hasan al Ash'ari (d.935), reacted strongly to the extreme views of the Jabariyyah and the Mu'tazilites. Ash'ari, however, accepted the Najjârite version of acquisition. In his attempt to prove that acquisition is against both compulsionism and libertarianism, he emphasised that on the one hand, acquisition is a "power" and on the other hand, it is created in man by God and that "God

has the power to force them to it". The Asharites therefore attempted to reconcile freedom and determinism. This metaphysical and doctrinal system which they formulate underlies the views of the majority of Muslims today, constituting the belief of the ahl-Sunnat-wal ja mâ 'at. They denied the belief in the uniformity and causality of the laws of nature, not in order to defend the freedom of man, but to support the arbitrariness of God. They propounded that God cannot be bound by any law for that would be an encroachment upon His Omnipotence. They believed that the agent who produces human action is not man, but God, and that what is good and evil is determined by God's will. The destiny of man was written on the eternal tablet before the creation of the world.³⁶ In answer to the question of why man should be punished for actions of which he has no control, they advanced the doctrine of kasb (acquisition). To preserve the moral responsibilities of man they say that he has the power to convert will into action. But this power does not encroach upon God's sovereignty because He orders that whenever a man desires to do something, the action corresponding to the desire is then created by God. This action is called kasb (acquisition). The Asharite view is representative of orthodox scholasticism (kalâm). The Asharites were asked how acquisition could be called a "power" when it has no in-

fluence upon the object of power. Attempts to reply to this question were made by Bâqillâni, Juwayni, and al-Ghazâli. We turn now to a discussion of al-Ghazâli's explanation in support of the Asharite doctrine of kasb (acquisition).

4.2 THE CLASSICAL SCHOLARS

We shall discuss in this section the views of the classical scholars with regard to the questions of freedom and predestination. We begin our discussion with al-Ghazâli who was a supporter of the Asharite doctrine of kasb.

i) AL-GHAZÂLÎ (d. 1111)

Despite al-Ghazâli's opposition to the Asharite doctrine in certain aspects, he is still one of the strongest supporters and propounders of the doctrine of kasb (Acquisition). The gist of this doctrine is that man is neither absolutely compelled nor absolutely free. This attempt to synthesize determinism with responsibility is closely connected to al-Ghazâli's view of causation and being. In answer to the question as to how power could be referred to as acquisition, al-Ghazâli, like Juwayni, tries to show how power need not have an influence upon its object. al-Ghazâli explains this through "the analogy of man's power to acquire to God's eternal power to create, for prior to the creation of the world God's eternal power to create was a power without an object influenced by it".

Al-Ghazâli explains that what the "people of Truth" call acquisition is a combination of "compulsion" and "choice". Acquisition is a "choice" despite it being also compulsion, for man is the abode (mahal) of the compulsion as well as of choice because the compulsion in the case of acquisition comes from himself and not from anything external to

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man.

To al Ghazâli, existence as well as power belongs only to God; He is the only substance (jawhar) because He only exists by Himself. He is not only the First Cause, but He is really the Only Cause. al Ghazâli believed in a necessary sequence of phenomena in nature, for nothing can happen unless the conditions necessary for it precede it. He would consider the previous phenomena to be the cause of the succeeding ones. There is a necessary sequence in the unfolding of phenomena to the realization of an Eternal Predestined Purpose, the first as well as the final cause being the only cause and the one phenomena cannot be made responsible for another phenomena. There is only one eternal power (al-qudrat al'azaliya) which is the cause of all created things, God. This is the doctrine of tawhid (unity of existence) which means that every cause, every activity, mental or material, begins and terminates in Him, the First Cause, the Knower and the Fashioner of the entire Universe.

Since man is the locus (mahal) for God's actions he is responsible for them, for God realizes some of the purposes through man. Even man's being is an act of God, rather than being due to his own free-choice. God is the central link or the first link from which the iron chain of necessary causation is proved. al Ghazâli classified man's actions into three classes:

The first type of action is natural (tabi'i) action, for instance, when a man stands in water and the water goes away by itself. The second type is volitional action (irâdi), for example, when a man breathes through his lungs; and thirdly, selectional (ikhtiyâri) action, when a man writes with his hands, for instance. The third type of action appears to be an act of choice but depends on knowledge. Through knowledge the various alternatives are being examined and according to the decision the will puts the power into motion. The will therefore has to obey the decision. The question now arises as to whether man is free in the decision of his knowledge. In answer to this question al Ghazâli advances the argument of the doctrine of kasb. Al Ghazâli explains that fire has the strength of burning so it necessarily burns. So the action of fire is guided by an external agent but God's action is the result of absolute will. Man's action lies between these

two. This means that his action is not entirely guided by others nor is it absolute, like the action of God. Man's will and strength are guided by another. Man is the object and the intermediary of God's will and power. God gives birth to power and will within man. For this reason man is not completely guided by another like a tree. Thus the action of man cannot be said to be completely controlled. This is what is called acquisition (kasb) as man is the medium of the flow of God's power or intermediary path. This power flows through man ascending to the law of God. Hence, action is not in opposition to his freedom. God's action is absolutely free but the will and power of God is not subject to human thought and efforts.

Thus, to al Ghazâli, nature's action is by virtue of pure necessity and God's action is through pure free choice, and as for man's action, it is a synthesis of the two, a "necessary or compulsory choice". Thus nature has no choice, God has absolute free choice, and has compulsory choice or is compelled to choose. Perhaps al Ghazâli gave the most convincing rational explanation of the Asha-rite doctrine of kasb, which in Hakîm's opinion amounts to pure determinism. Khalifa 'Abdul Hakîm extols Jallaludin Rûmi's concept of freedom instead, because it stresses the importance of man as the architect of his own fate.

ii) IBN TAYMIYA (d. 728"1328)

Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiya, a dynamic scholar, rejected the Asharite theology, for he considered that the doctrine of Qadar (Divine Will) was one-sidedly developed by them and undermines the religious moral life. This theology needs to be re-orientated, and a clear distinction should be made between the omnipotent will of God and God's function as the Commander. The former is central for religious belief whilst the latter is the basis for religious action. Ibn Taymiya considers it wrong to use "Divine power and will as an argument for anyone over against God and His creation", because Qadar is an object of faith and not a premise for an argument. The one who does not believe in Qadar is like the Magian (dualist) and the one who uses it as a basis for argument in the sphere of human action is like the polytheist who argues against the Prophet (SAW) that if it was God's will they would not have been polythe-
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ists.

Ibn Taymiya praises the Mu'tazilites who "at least kept the idea of good and evil, of Divine Commands and Prohibition as a living religious force". Accordingly he reinstates into Muslim theology "the doctrine of the purposiveness of the Divine behaviour, a doctrine so

strenuously denied by Asharism, Mâturidism and Zahirism as comprising the Omnipotence of God's will and His dissimilarity to His Creation. The purposiveness is God's involvement in the destiny of man and from this he directly deduces the idea of God as his Commander or the Shari'ah-Giver.⁴² Ibn Taymiya attempts to distinguish the planes at which the Will and Wisdom of God are respectively meaningful. The efficient cause being the Will and Power of God, and the final cause being the Command of God or the Shari'ah. The Omnipotence of God must not be denied neither be used as an argument to explain events, for that would be looking backwards; man should look forward for the Shari'ah (the Wisdom and Command of God) focuses on "the end and the purpose".⁴³

Ibn Taymiya, in pointing out the discord that exists between the Asharite theology and the Shari'ah finds that many jurists are self-contradictory because they agree with the theologians who affirm the sole Power of God by saying that the human power and efficacy does not precede the act but is created by God together with the act. However, when thinking of the Law (Shari'ah), they affirm a preceding and free human power which is the basis for Commands and Prohibitions. Ibn Taymiya does not see human and Divine

Power as mutually exclusive rivals in determining the human act, since the Shari'ah to be actualised in the lives of men requires human free-will. If what is possible, is co-extensive with the actual, then the Qur'an would not have stated "fear God as much as is possible for you".⁴⁴

Ibn Taymiya's critique of the Asharite doctrine of God's Omnipotence is a logical and reasonable one. He cleverly distinguishes two separate planes of God's Omnipotence resting upon belief, and the Divine Command resting upon the freedom of man. This argument gives man the free-will to act responsibly in terms of the Shari'ah which is ultimately what is required of a Muslim. This way of looking at the problem is healthy in that it urges man to act in terms of the Shari'ah, to think positively and act positively, but saves the average believer from indulgence in a controversy that does not seem to bear direct relevance to one's immediate, divinely-ordained duties and responsibilities. This approach of Ibn Taymiya also helps to keep the disbeliever's belief in God's omniscience and omnipotence intact because he does not seek to question or explain away the relationship and bearing of God's Will with man's will, for such a rational or apparently rational

explanation may very well lead the believer to compromise on his belief in an Omniscient God for the sake of retaining man's freedom as we have noted with the "majority of the Mu'tazilites." Although Ibn Taymiya has provided us with a practical solution, he does not, however, resolve the theological controversy of whether the Omnipotence and Omniscience of God and the Predestination of good and evil leaves any room for the independence of human action and the responsibility of the individual. In other words, the problem of knowing what action is God's action and who willed it and what action is man's action and who willed it. The problem we therefore face is to reconcile the fore-knowledge of God with the freedom of man. We have already discussed the Asharite attempt to reconcile these apparently contradictory notions and Ibn Taymiya's critique of them and his explanation which attempts to defend the freedom and responsibility of man in relation to the Divine Command.

iii) THE FOUR IMÂMS

It appears that the four Imâms as with Ibn Taymiya did not attempt to reconcile the fore-knowledge of God with the freedom of man, and therefore were saved from the possible

dangers of such a theological debate. In fact, they were strongly condemnatory of the Qadarites who, because of their indulgence in this theological controversy, have encroached upon the Omniscience and Omnipotence of God. A discussion on the views of the four Sunni Imâms who represent the views of the ahlil-fikh are very important because the majority of Muslims adhere to their beliefs. They are of the firm belief that nothing in this universe can happen without the Will, Power and Intention of God.

Imâm Abu Hanifah (d. 150/774) refrained from delving into the question of qadr (predestination) and stopped others from getting embroiled into this type of discussion. He believes in the good and evil of predestination (qadr), which entails the belief in the Omniscience of God and in His Will and His Power. Man cannot exercise his will to act without the will of God. Man's obedience and disobedience could both be attributed to God although man has a choice in this matter which makes him answerable to God, and will therefore be rewarded or punished accordingly without an iota of injustice on the part of God.⁴⁵ Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 241/855) was condemnatory of the Qadarites. When his son, Sâlih, asked him whether one could

pray behind the Qadarites (ahl al qadr), he replied that one cannot because the Qadarites believe that God does not know the actions of the servant until these actions are performed. Although Ahmad bin Hanbal condemned the Qadarites' beliefs and ways he did not attempt to refute their arguments because according to him every action and belief stems from the Qur'ân and Sunnah and therefore is no need for logical argumentation. Since it is established from the authentic traditions of the Sunnah that it is an article of faith to believe in the good and evil that comes from God (predestination), there is no reason to come up with logical proof.⁴⁶ Imâm Mâlik (d. 179/795) was more strongly condemnatory of the Qadarites. He went to the extent of forbidding people from having social and religious contact with them; he used to stop his students from marrying them, following their funeral processions, and even from praying behind them.⁴⁷ Abu Zahrah states that there is certainty that Imâm Mâlik showed contempt of those who held the view that man creates his own actions without Divine assistance but he cannot confirm the view that Imâm Mâlik labelled them as Polytheists (Mushrikûn) or outside the pale of Islâm. He is of the opinion that the Qadarites do not merit such harsh treatment from Imâm Mâlik, for they do in fact recognize that the powers of free-choice is a gift from God and that they

do not reject any clear-cut aspect of the religion.⁴⁸

There is no record that Imâm Mâlik confirmed the view of the Jabarriyah school of thought. He was averse to delving into the matters of predestination because it was an innovative practice in the religion which was discouraged by the Prophet (SAW) himself, and a practice affecting the beliefs (Imân)⁴⁹ of the believer and unnerving the soul of the individual.

The views of these Imâms on predestination are accepted by most Muslims. Predestination is an article of faith not a subject for logical analysis because the limited mind of man is unable to comprehend the Omniscience and Omnipotence of God in relation to his limited free-will and responsibilities. This view retains man's faith in the Absolute Power and knowledge of God as well as man's sense of accountability to his Creator.

iv) IBN ARABÎ AND AL-JÎLÎ

Shaykh Muhiyuddin ibn'Arabi (d. 1241 AD), in his discussion of predestination said that God's knowledge is given on account of the objects which He knows, that is, the immutable essence (a'yân) or the principal possibilities. He

simply granted them their "prayer to be" what their nature (isti'dâd - divine preparedness) expected them to be. If the thing to be known does not exist then the relation of knowledge cannot arise, and the knower, knowledge and the known cannot be. In the essence (dhât) of God all these three factors are hidden. God decreed that everything should be in accordance with what it was prepared for or what its nature required it to be (Kun fayakûn - Be and it is). The command "to be" is not possible unless there is something already there to receive the command. ⁵⁰ Another mystic of Islâm, Shaykh 'Abdul Karîm Jili (d. 1406 AD), however, argued that their nature (a'yân) were the outcome of his knowledge of them before they were created and brought into existence. It was God's knowledge of them and not their inherent natures, that caused them to become objects of His knowledge. After creation, their nature required other than what they knew of them at first, and then He, for the second time, decreed that they should be what their nature required according to that which He ⁵¹ knew.

While Ibn Arabi says that God brought the world from being in His knowledge into actual being, Jili argues that this makes the world co-eternal with God, for the judgement that God exists in Himself is logically prior to the judgement

that things exist in His knowledge, and the former judgement implies the non-existence of things and the existence of God alone. While for Ibn'Arabi fate is unchangeable with Jili it is liable to change, as expressed by one of his disciples, Khwaja Hâfiz:

"On the road to good name, they allowed me not. If thou dost not approve, change my Fate." 52

Ibn'Arabi's concept of taqdîr is fixed, it does not seem to give scope to the freedom of man. al-Jili, however, introduces the concept of a fate that is liable to change and hence makes man a free agent. If there is none else but God to will, then this fate is predetermined for him. ⁵³ Al-Jili's argument can also logically be refuted for it seems to imply that God's knowledge and will is subject to man's free action. Man's freedom remains intact but God's Omnipotence is encroached upon.

v) IBN RUSHD (D. 595/1198)

The famous Spanish philosopher, Ibn Rushd, considers the Asharite doctrine of kasb to be self-contradictory and leading to fatalism. Man is neither predisposed to fatalism

nor to free-will. He is determined by the production of acts according to their appropriate causes. Causes are external or material. Our acts are accompanied both through our will and the compatibility of external happenings. Human will is subject to a definite and harmonic will according to the universal will of God. Not only are acts determined by causes from without, they are also related to causes from within ourselves. The determined regularity in external and internal causes is what Ibn Rushd calls predestination. God's knowledge of these causes and the outcome of it is the reason for their being. This view seems to allow little room for Divine intervention.

4.3. THE MODERN SCHOLARS

The modern scholars' perspectives on the question of free-will and predestination are not essentially new, but reflect with varying degree the view of some philosophers, mystics or jurists of the classical period.

4.3.1 A. TANWI AND S FARIDI (THE PREDESTINARIANS)

We have discussed the views of the classical scholars who adopt the predestinarian perspective. Some modern scholars

have also adopted this view. Moulana Ashraf Ali Tanwi is one such scholar. He states that God created His creation in darkness, then He bestowed them with nur (light); whosoever received this light obtained guidance, and whosoever did not receive His light, went astray. In an authentic Hadith of Muslim, the Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said:

"Allah had written out the destiny of man 50 000 years before creating the heavens and the earth."

The Moulana comments that this obviously took place long before the creation of Adam who came after the heavens and the earth were created. In other words, what can be understood by the hadith is that before man was created, his destiny was written out for him. The darkness applies to the lower self (nafs) of man, which came after the birth of Adam; it therefore cannot be attributed to the actions that came after Adam but should be attributed to predestination (taqdir). Those who are endowed with nur (light) are endowed with the preparedness for guidance (hidâyât) and those created with darkness do not have this preparedness (isti'dad).⁵⁵ God created man first without the preparation for

guidance and then He gave them nûr (light). Some people go astray because they have no guidance, and some are guided because of the light given to them.⁵⁶ Those who do not have this preparedness for guidance are of two types. There are those who received the message and those who did not receive the message of Divine guidance. Those who did not receive the message will go astray but will not be punished. As for those who received the message and went astray, they will be punished. There are also those who were born with the preparedness for Islam, and yet reject the dictates of this preparedness. They are the disbelievers who will be punished.⁵⁷

From Moulana's explanation, we note that the destiny of each soul has been decreed before the creation of man. This is all within the knowledge of God, and beyond the knowledge of man. This explanation appears to be fatalistic but then the Moulana speaks of man's responsibility for his actions. He states that man is responsible for his actions through his own volition and choice. It is man's duty to strive to do good and to avoid sin. The Moulana outlines the method in which the best action can come from man. This action is found when one follows the example of virtuous people, the practice of the Shari'ah and the exercise of spiritual purification.⁵⁸ The Moulana expresses unquestion-

able belief in predestination and at the same time describes man as being responsible to his creator. He does not attempt, however, to reconcile the two apparently contradictory notions. In this respect his approach to the question of predestination is similar to the four Imams and Ibn Taymiya.

In contrast to Moulana Ashraf'Alî Tanwî who does not attempt to logically reconcile the Omniscience of God with the freedom of man, is Shahidullah Farîdî, a contemporary predestinarian, whose rational explanation is perhaps the most convincing attempt to reconcile the Omniscience of God with the freedom of man. He focuses attention upon three main principles:

The first principle is that God's knowledge is unlimited and all-inclusive. It is Absolute; there is nothing outside it, broad or minute, universal or particular.⁵⁹

"He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward; and He knows all things." (Al-Hadîd),3)

The second principle is that his total knowledge is displayed in two degrees. In the first degree it "consists of pure meaning while in the second it is embodied in subtle forms belonging to the supra-physical realm; its

station being at the fountain-head of this formal but subtle world. It is this state which is called the "Guarded Tablet", and it is here that the original of the glorious Qur'ân is to be found. ⁶⁰ This supra-physical realm is beyond time and space; it is the world of non-time having no relation to causality, to growth and to decay, to past, present and future; everything is simultaneously present in the form of permanent and timeless truths. Gods's attributes are eternal and so is His knowledge which encompasses the First and the Last. Hence, when it is said that whatever happens in this world is "previously written" in a guarded tablet, a word which connotes time has been used to express a supra-temporal truth. The world of the Book of God's Knowledge belongs to a kingdom where only permanence and simultaneity reign. Since it is difficult for the concrete mind to perceive this world of non-time, eternal knowledge is inevitably explained in relation to serial time. Thus, supra-temporality may be expressed in temporal terms when we state that everything that happens in this world has been previously written in some former time, but it has been written before the existence of time itself, that is, in the realm beyond time, totally free of continuity and causality. Thus, in the world of non-time, nothing is to happen; everything has already happened. ⁶¹

The third principle involved in the issue of predestination is that the display of God's knowledge (The Guarded Tablet) has a relationship to free-will, not of causality but of "necessary correspondence". One can therefore not say that because it is written there it is the cause of it happening here. Fore-knowledge, according to Faridi, does not interfere with the doer's action. He illustrates this point by an example of a small town that is ruined and the inhabitants of which have all died. An explorer comes one day and finds a book that records the history of this town. One cannot say that all that happened to the people in the town was a result of the events recorded in the book because the people acted out of their own free-will and choice, and the truth inscribed in this book is a relationship of "necessary correspondence" and not of causality. The predetermination expressed here is not one that is beyond man's control but is a result of his free-choice.⁶²

In the light of these three principles Faridî explains the Ḥadith (p224) to mean that the angel is commanded to write what is inscribed in the display of God's knowledge, that is, the "guarded tablet" is present in the all-embracing knowledge of God previous to the emergence of time, in the non-temporal realm. One should, however, maintain a dis-

inction between the predetermination of his provisions and life-time, and that of his felicity and degradation.

In the first there is no free-will involved, it is unalterable, but in the second, the result of one's fortune or misfortune is due to man's free-will.⁶³ This prophetic tradition does not intend to propound the doctrine of compulsion, but that of perfection of God's knowledge and power. Man's fate of fortune or his future belief or disbelief, is acquired through his own effort, but whatever he does will perfectly coincide with the pre-eternal writing, by virtue of the relationship of "necessary correspondence" which exists between them and not because they constitute a cause and effect relationship.⁶⁴

The interpretation of the ḥadīth can be confirmed by another ḥadīth which regards every child as being born with the natural religion, sinless and inclined to worship God (see Chapter 1). No assertion is made in this ḥadīth that everlasting felicity or degradation has been made an innate part of the nature by which he is compelled. On the contrary, the hadith clearly states that it is because of the parents that the child embraces certain beliefs which he must maintain or reject through the exercise of 'aql, his power of discrimination.⁶⁵ Thus we see that, according to Farīdī,

man is a free being, responsible for his own actions. Belief in free-will and in the "Guarded Tablet" are not contradictory beliefs, but are two aspects of the same belief. Shahîdullah Farîdî's attempt at reconciling the Omniscience of God with the freedom of man is perhaps the most logical and convincing in retaining the freedom of man without encroaching upon the Omnipotence of God.

4.3.2 AHMAD KHAN, 'ABDU, MOHAMMAD 'ALI (THE LIBERTARIANS)

The libertarians are those who emphasise the freedom of the human will and the responsibility of human action. Some of them, however, in trying to reconcile human freedom with Divine Freedom, have denied the Divine Knowledge of the "particulars" in accordance with the majority of the Mu'tazilites. As a result they have denied the traditional belief and understanding of Predestination (tagdir). An example of such a scholar is Sir Muhammad Iqbâl. We shall develop a critique of his views.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khân (d. 1817) believes that man's freedom flows from his very nature which is patterned according to the nature of God. This capacity for free spontaneous action does not encroach upon the Omnipotence of God because

God gives the freedom to man on His own accord and not under compulsion. Ahmad Khan sees no incompatibility between the Omniscience of God with the freedom of man. He cites the example of the astronomer who predicts the death of a drowning man, which in fact takes place. This does not mean that the astronomer is responsible for the man's death. Similarly, what is in God's knowledge (taqdir) is inevitable, yet it does not restrict the freedom of man. The necessity of life exists in the knowledge of God not man. In spite of this, man still retains his freedom of action.⁶⁶ Ahmad Khân gives a fairly reasonable explanation, although the example of the astronomer cannot easily be compared to God.

An Egyptian philosopher Muhammad 'Abdu (d. 1905) approaches the problem of free-will from a pragmatic angle. His view is that the theory of predestination results in the negation of the Shari'ah, human responsibility and the spirit of reason, which all form the basis of religion. No morality, according to 'Abdu can follow from the Asharite or the Jabarite view of predestination and freedom. Faced with the contradiction between ethics and ontology, 'Abdu opts for the former. He says that Divine Prescience embraces that which man will accomplish by his own free-will and which is essential for sense to be made of Divine Commands.⁶⁷ 'Abdu does not seem to accept the concept of predestination but

he does acknowledge the Omniscience of God, and stresses the free-will of man as being vital for his ethical behaviour.

In harmony with the attitude of Muhammad 'Abdu, the author of the "Religion of Islam", Muhammad 'Ali, denies predestination (qadr) considering it to be a later development in Muslim belief. He does, however, accept the fore-knowledge of God. He states that knowledge of one's action does not mean control of one's actions and, therefore, the individual is responsible for whatever he does.⁶⁸ This is a logical argument but to deny predestination is tantamount to denial of God's Omniscience, or as stated by Frithjof Schuon, that to "deny predestination would amount to pretending that God does not know events in advance and so is not omniscient".⁶⁹ Muhammad 'Ali attempts to reconcile pre-determinism with free-will by interpreting predestination to mean only the natural physical laws predetermined by God. This, however, does not resolve the apparent contradiction between Divine Knowledge and human free-will. We now turn to a critique of Iqbâl who denied fore-knowledge in order to retain the freedom of man.

5. A CRITIQUE OF IQBAL'S VIEW

Iqbâl, as with Rûmi and the libertarian scholars, was a firm believer in the freedom of man. The difference is that Iqbâl, in his zest for preserving the freedom of man, has denied the fore-knowledge of God. In this respect his view is in agreement with the "majority of the Mu'tazilites".

Iqbâl is opposed to the definition of Divine Omniscience that suggests "a single indivisible act of perception which makes God immediately aware of the entire sway of history, regarded as an order of specific events in an "eternal now".⁷⁰ Iqbâl considers this view to suggest "a closed universe, a fixed futurity, a predetermined unalterable order of specific events which, like a superior fate, has once and for all determined the direction of God's creative activity."⁷¹

In Iqbâl's zest for the defence of human freedom he has overlooked the important verses of the Qur'ân that unambiguously assert the fore-knowledge of God.

"And with him are the keys of the invisible. None but He knoweth them. And He knoweth what is the land and the sea. Not a leaf falleth but He knoweth it, not a grain amid the darkness of the earth, naught if wet or dry but (it is noted) in a clear record."

(6:59)

"Lo! Allah! With him is knowledge of the hours. He sendeth down the rain, and knoweth that which is in the wombs. No soul knoweth what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul knoweth in what land it will die. Lo! Allah is knower, Aware."

(31:34)

There are many more verses of this nature in the Qur'ân that run counter to Iqbâl's denial of fore-knowledge. With reference to God's Omniscience, the Qur'ân uses two words, 'alimun' (knowledge in general) and "khabîrun" (knowledge of the hidden and unknown) which indicates a special emphasis upon God's fore-knowledge.

How does Iqbâl view Divine Prescience? The future pre-exists "in the organic whole of God's creative life, but it exists as an open possibility and not as a fixed order of events with definite outlines"⁷². Iqbâl illustrates this when he says that a fruitful idea may appear in one's consciousness. The idea is immediately perceived as a complex whole, but the mental deliberation of its numerous intricacies is a matter of time. Nevertheless, all the possibilities of the idea are intuitively present in one's mind. If one is not aware of a specific possibility, it is not because of a defect in one's knowledge, but because

"there is not yet a possibility to become known".⁷³ Thus, according to Iqbâl, Divine knowledge perceived as passive Omniscience does not allow room for innovation and initiation. He uses the example of man's knowledge to illustrate God's knowledge of possibilities. He implies that just as man's awareness of a specific possibility is not a defect, so too in the case of God, for that specific possibility has not unfolded itself in the creative will of the finite ego or in the free expression of man. And since God is not aware of the unforeseeable particular actions of man, man's actions are not predetermined and is thus free to act as a creative being, totally responsible for his actions. This view, however, places limitations on God's knowledge and freedom, a limitation which is self-imposed by God Himself.⁷⁴ Iqbâl therefore states:

"The truth is that the whole theological controversy relating to predestination is due to pure speculation with no eye on the spontaneity of life, which is a fact of actual experience. No doubt, the emergence of egos endowed with the power of spontaneous and unforeseeable action, is, in a sense, a limitation on the freedom of the all-inclusive Ego. But this limitation is not externally imposed. It is born out of his own creative freedom whereby He has finite egos to be participators of his life, power and freedom."⁷⁵

God has, therefore, according to Iqbâl placed limitations upon His own freedom so that man can participate in His freedom. However, God is God by virtue of His absolute freedom, He cannot go against His own nature. God cannot be other than God. Hence, He must remain what He is, Absolutely free and Absolutely Just. He cannot be either more, or less than what He already is. If God is just, He cannot be unjust, and if He is free, He cannot be limited, for then He cannot be called God, in the Islâmîc sense of the word.

The same argument may be applied to Iqbâl's concept of Omniscience which does not embrace the particular in the future. God is God because He is all-knowing. We have already indicated that there a multiplicity of verses in the Qur'ân which clearly speak of God's knowledge of everything of both the seen and the unseen world, of the past, present and the future, the Universals as well as the particulars. God is therefore God because of His Omniscience, and to limit His knowledge is to reduce Him to what He is not. It is clear, therefore, that Iqbâl denies the traditional Islâmîc conception of Divine Omniscience.

Tied up with the belief in Divine Omniscience and Absolute Divine freedom is the concept of Predestination (taqdir), which is a logical consequence of this belief. Since Iqbâl

denies the Absolute Omniscience and Freedom of God, he also denies the Islâmic belief of predestination as understood by the authentic classical scholars. Iqbâl's denial of free-will is consistent with the view that man does not know the "particulars in advance". His denial is aimed at retaining man's freedom to determine his own faith without being subject to the free-will of God.

How does Iqbâl perceive destiny? The destiny of a thing is not "an unrelenting fate working from without like a task master; it is the inward reach of a thing, its realizable possibilities which lie within the depths of its own nature, and serially actualize themselves without any feeling of external compulsion".⁷⁶ In other words, concrete events do not lie "in the world of reality, and drop one by one like the grains of sand from the hour-glass".⁷⁷

Iqbâl conceives taqdir to be the total future possibilities of a thing, which it has yet to actualise. If by potentialities is meant the general possibilities pertaining to a particular species to which the individual belongs, then God's knowledge does not extend much beyond man for even man is capable of such knowledge. For instance, it is common

knowledge that when the baby grows up to a certain age, he will be able to speak, walk, and laugh, etc. This concept of taqdir is no different from modern psychology which believes that the destiny of an individual is dependent upon his environment and heredity. This is a belief in what Muhammad Mârûf refers to as "cosmological determinism" where the future events are dependent on the present one as their antecedents.

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Iqbâl, in his zest for freedom, seems to have been misled by the fact that God is not only all-knowing but is also all-creating. Treating them as a single capacity, he asserts that any imputation of fore-knowledge to Him will lead to a predetermined universe, devoid of novelty or originality. According to Ma'rûf, the Holy Qur'ân has verses which "His knowledge and power are talked of together, eg., 'alimun hakim', but the use of the two words indicate that knowledge and creativity are two disparate, though related, attributes".⁷⁹ Iqbâl therefore ignores an important fact in his denial of Divine fore-knowledge which is that God's creation is not blind or capricious, but is guided by God's capacity to foresee and to realize a definite purpose for His creation; this in itself requires fore-knowledge.

"We have not created the Heavens and the Earth and whatever is between them in sport; We have not created them but for a serious end."

(44:38)

Hence, God did not create the universe capriciously, without a theological purpose; an end which reconditions a definite fore-knowledge on the part of God.

Iqbâl, therefore, in his denial of God's Omniscience, Omnipotence and Predestination, as they are traditionally understood by the classical scholars, has placed himself in conflict with the view which has been traditionally accepted by Muslims throughout the ages. Iqbâl's attempt to resolve the apparent conflict between human freedom, and God's knowledge and Absolute Freedom, has lead him to compromise on the Omniscience and Omnipotence of God. Other modernistic individuals who have a similar passion for the freedom of man, may find Iqbâl's philosophical contrivance appealing, but the majority of Muslims cannot, and will not find it convincing. We may therefore say that Iqbâl's attempt at reconciling this theological problem is a logical failure. His view accords with the "majority of the Mu'tazilites" and the Qadarites and therefore falls squarely within the purview of the criticism of the four Imâms and even of al-Ghazâli who condemned the philosophers for denying Divine fore-knowledge of the particulars.

6. CONCLUSION

The attempts of the classical and modern scholars to reconcile the Omniscience and Omnipotence of God with the freedom of man have not all been successful. Some were rationally more convincing than others, and some, in their zest for freedom have even encroached upon the Omniscience and Omnipotence of God. Not a single explanation has convincingly and conclusively resolved the problem of predestination and free-will. This, however, will not be a futile discussion if in the final analysis man learns to realize his own limitations, and knows that his limited mind cannot comprehend the detailed workings of his Creator. God's knowledge encompasseses man's knowledge whereas man's knowledge does not encompass God completely. On these issues man ultimately experiences a recourse to faith. A Muslim has to believe in the Divine book; he has to believe in God's Omniscience and Omnipotence, and in his accountability to God for his actions. As for the controversy of the relationship between God's knowledge and man's freedom, it will forever remain an eternal dilemma and we should not pretend to know the answer to this mystery. Perhaps the individual believer possessing a high level of spiritual realization may have a more acute awareness and a more intuitive appreciation of the extent to which God's Omniscience has a bearing on man's will.

From the point of view of Islamic psychology, it should be realized that man possesses a relative freedom which belongs ultimately to God who possesses Absolute freedom. Man's inward freedom is attained through the extent to which he is in harmony with the Absolute Freedom of God. This inward freedom is achieved through the liberation of the lower desires (nafs) and the attainment of the highest level of psycho-spiritual integration and harmony (al nafs al mutmainnah). All this is attained through man's submission to the Will of God. It is this inward struggle (jihâd al nâfs) to overcome the lower desire (nafs), for the attainment of peace and integration which is of particular significance to Islâmic psychology. The mental and spiritual well being of the individual, therefore, depends on the proper use of the God-given freedom. The volitional dimension of man, then, is the basis for the volitional principle in Islâmic psychology.

SUMMARY

1. The free-will of man represents that aspect of human nature which distinguishes him from the animals.
2. Because of free-will man is made accountable to God; he is required to subject his will to the Will of God. Herein lies his responsibility.
3. Submission to the Will of God, liberates the individual from both unjust external authority and the lower self (nafs). This submission does not constitute a restriction on man but forms the basis for that "inward freedom" which is the freedom "to be".
4. There are basically four approaches to the freedom of God:
 - A) The jurists focus upon the Shari'ah. Right is given to the individual by virtue of his fulfillment of obligations defined by the Shari'ah.
 - B) The Sûfis seek inner freedom through union with God. The Shari'ah is an aid in reaching this goal.
 - C) The early philosophers have asserted the reality of the human will and approached the problem of freedom from the standpoint of al Fârâbî's political philosophy.

- D) The theologians are mainly concerned about the relationship between the human will to the Divine Will and the extent to which the Divine Will limits the freedom of the human will.
5. Man's freedom is a true freedom, but Absolute Freedom belongs to God alone. This freedom makes man a responsible being. There is adequate indication in the Qur'ân to substantiate both the freedom and responsibility of man.
6. The Qur'ân and ḥadīth speak of predestination which is an article of belief for a Muslim. Both the good and evil come from God, but man is responsible for the evil. Tied up with the question of predestination is the fore-knowledge and power of God. The problem that theologians face is to reconcile the Omniscience and Omnipotence of God with the freedom of man.
7. There are three main schools on the question of predestination:
- a) The Jabarite school believes that man has no control over his actions.

- b) The Qadariyah school affirms the belief that man has complete control over his actions and that he is entirely responsible for them. The Mu'tazalites succeeded this school.
- c) The Asharites reacted to these two extreme views and attempted to reconcile determinism with responsibility by introducing the doctrine of kasb (acquisition). This view was held by the majority of Muslims and was supported by al-Ghazâlî.
8. Ibn Taymiya reacted to the Asharite theology and considered the doctrine of Qadr to be one-sidedly developed by them undermining the moral religious life. A clear distinction should be made between the Omnipotent Will of God, and God's function as the Commander. The former is central for religious belief while the latter is the basis of religious action. Ibn Taymiya defends the freedom and responsibility of man in relation to the Divine Command.
9. As with Ibn Taymiya the four Imâms (Jurists) did not attempt to reconcile the fore-knowledge of God with the freedom of man. They were strongly condemnatory of the Qadarites who, because of their theological indulgence, encroached upon the Omnipotence and Omniscience of God.

10. Ibn Arabi's concept of ṭaqdîr is fixed and therefore does not give much scope to the freedom of man, whilst a Jili's concept of fate is liable to change, which makes man clearly a free agent.

11. Ibn Rushd (Averroes) accuses the Asharites of being too fatalistic. He believes that man is determined by the production of acts according to their appropriate causes.

12. Of the modern scholars, Moulana Ashraf 'Ali Tanwi and S. Farîdî take on a predestinarian perspective but at the same time retain the responsibility of man. Unlike Tanwi, Shahîdullah Farîdî provides a convincing rational explanation for the apparent contradiction between the fore-knowledge of God and the freedom of man.

13. Of the modern libertarian scholars are Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khân, Muhammad 'Abdu, Mohammad 'Ali, and Sir Muhammad Iqbâl, who all emphasise the freedom of the human will. Muhammad Iqbâl, however, in attempting to reconcile the Omniscience of God with the freedom of man, in fact limits the Omniscience of God by denying God's fore-knowledge of the particulars. In this respect he conforms to the Qadarite perspective and the "majority of the Mu'tazilites".

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CHAPTER FIVE

AN ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGY - AL GHAZÂLÎ'S MODEL

In the previous chapters we have discussed the main elements in man's constitution by way of reference to various scholars who are considered to be representative Muslim thinkers. We have not, however, shown how these elements of heart, intellect, will and soul interact in human nature, and the effect this interplay of elements has on man's behaviour and character. We propose to do this in the present chapter.

For the sake of convenience and coherence we shall select one scholar who has systematically developed an Islamic psychology; this systematic psychology will enable us to examine the interaction of these elements within the context of man's essential nature and his purpose in life. We select Imâm al Ghazâlî for this purpose because of the availability of material, the systematic and clear presentation of his thought on 'Islamic Psychology', and because he is one of the leading and influential scholars of Islâm who gave expression to his thought through a combination of traditional, philosophical, theological and Sûfistic tendencies. Some of the other great scholars who have made a study of human nature are Sahl-al-Tustarî; ibn Sîna,

al-Muḥâsibî, al-Tirmîdhî and many others to whom we have already made reference in the previous chapters. There are certainly various explanations for the interplay of these various elements of human nature, and it will not be within the scope of this thesis to discuss them all; we are therefore limiting ourselves to al Ghazâlî who may have differed from other scholars in certain respects, but who is nevertheless, in harmony with them as far as the fundamental view of human nature is concerned.

The present chapter will, therefore, discuss al Ghazâlî's attempt at integrating the various elements of human nature into a coherent whole, and the implication this has for man's ethical behaviour and his ultimate goal in life. Hopefully, then, this analysis of al Ghazâlî's work, together with the discussion of the elements of human nature in the previous chapters, will help us introduce the essential features of an Islamic psychology.

1. THE SOUL AND THE BODY

At the root of al Ghazâlî's psychology is the soul, the core of man. The study of the soul includes the study of its nature, its origin, its return after man's death, the purpose of its creation, the reason for its union with the body, its power and the nature of its happiness or misery. A study of human behaviour cannot exclude the study of the soul from which it proceeds. Information on al Ghazâlî's psychology

are derived mainly from his Kimiya-i-Sa'âdat (The alchemy of happiness) and his Iḥya' 'Ulûm al Dîn.

Man, according to al Ghazâlî, is created by God as a being consisting of a soul and a body. The soul is a subtle divine spiritual entity (latîfa rabbanîyya ruhânnîyya) which is the core of man. The soul is expressed in Arabic by four terms, namely qalb (heart), rûh (soul/spirit), nafs (desire/nature) and 'aql (intellect/reason). Each of these terms signifies a spiritual entity for al Ghazâlî. We have already discussed the meanings associated with these terms. Although the soul may be expressed in these terms, al Ghazâlî prefers to use the word qalb for the self or soul in all his writings. In order to avoid confusion we shall simply use the English word 'soul'.¹

Al Ghazâlî condemns the materialists who view man as a highly evolved animal with no permanent spiritual substance. He avoided the discussion of the philosophers on the inmost reality (sirr) of the soul on the grounds that it was not permitted by the Shari'ah and that it was incomprehensible to most people and not important for the practice of morality. The soul, in his view, is a substance (jawhar) and not an accident. The soul belongs to the natural world of spirit while the body belongs to the material world. The view that the soul is a substance is held generally by Sûfîs and orthodox Muslims. In this respect al Ghazâlî is in harmony

with the Muslim philosophers who also held this view but then criticized them for the way in which they attempted to rationally prove the existence of the soul. Al Ghazâlî exposed the weaknesses of rational proofs which are problematic and does not provide certain knowledge of the soul. Pure knowledge of the soul can only be provided by religion and not by reason.²

The soul, al Ghazâlî propounds, is of the same origin as the angels. Its origin and nature are divine. It is created in the realm of spirits ('âlam al arwâh) the moment the male sperm enters the womb; the soul is then connected to the embryonic body. After death the body perishes, but the soul is everlasting. The reason for the soul's coming into the world is not to suffer punishment but to acquire fitness for paradise, or provision for the hereafter. Since the soul is divine in nature it is created in a state of fiṭrah (cf. chapter 1); its inclination to good and its aversion from evil are therefore innate.³

Every soul is given a body for the purpose of helping it acquire spiritual provision for its eternal life. The soul is therefore the core of man and the body is its instrument for acquiring spiritual provision and perfection. Thus, the body is important for the soul and should be taken care of. The soul uses the body as a vehicle; although it is a separate entity it is united with the body through the

physical heart. The heart is the first channel through which the soul uses the body.⁴

The body also serves the soul by containing the means to acquire "provision", consisting of knowledge and action. Everything in the body is an 'assistant' of the soul. Some of these assistants are visible, eg. the hands, the legs and all other limbs and organs. Others are invisible and are three in number.⁵

- i) The propensities of appetite and anger. The former, including hunger, thirst and sexual craving, urge the body to obtain what is good for it. The latter urges the body to avoid or repel what is harmful to it. Anger can take the form of rage, revenge etc.
- ii) That power (qudrah) which moves the limbs towards the object of desire or from the object of aversion. It is resident in muscles, nerves and other tissues which move the organs at the behest of appetite and anger.
- iii) The sensory power (mudrika) is the power of apprehension which perceives and later takes cognizance of what is harmful and what is good for the body. Apprehension includes firstly, the outer five senses, namely sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, and secondly the inner senses, namely common sense (hiss mushtarik), recollection (tadhakkur) and memory (hâfiẓa).⁶

All these powers control and regulate the body, and the soul

rules over them. Spirit is therefore superior to matter. Animals also possess the powers of appetite, anger and apprehension. Man, however, possesses two additional faculties which enable him to attain spiritual perfection and which distinguish him from the animals. They are 'aql' (intellect) and irâdah (will). Intellect is the rational faculty in man which enables him to generalise and form concepts. Intellect is the basis of knowledge ('ilm'), which includes both the knowledge of this world and the next, as well as the knowledge of rational principles. 'Ilm' cannot be acquired through the senses, but only through 'aql'. When a person wishes to acquire a certain object, a yearning is aroused in him and he then takes steps to acquire it. This yearning is irâdah. The will of man differs from that of the animal in that the animal's will is influenced by anger and appetite; man's will is conditioned by the development of knowledge through the intellect.⁷

Although the soul and body are separate entities, they affect each other. Al Ghazâlî maintains that every act produces an effect on the soul, provided that it is done deliberately and repeatedly. As the bodily action influences the soul, so the soul influences the body. This is known as the "traditional interaction theory". An act creates some effect on the soul; this effect causes the body to repeat the same act; which produces some effect on the soul. The resultant effect is added to the previous effect which is

strengthened - this process continues indefinitely. This interaction theory explains the need for devotional acts and avoidance of sin, getting rid of vices by good deeds, acquisition of virtue through habit formation. Thus the interaction theory has implications for man's ethics and acts of devotion. According to this theory all behaviour proceeds from a few basic elements in man's constitution. We now turn to a description of these elements.⁸

2. THE ELEMENTS OF MAN'S CONSTITUTION

There are certain basic elements that make up man's constitution which determine his nature and from which proceed all behaviour, moral and otherwise. These elements form an inextricable part of man's constitution and total freedom from them is impossible. There are four main elements in the constitution of man and each element affects his nature in a separate way; hence these elements become manifest in the basic natures of man. These natures should not be confused with man's original nature (fiṭrah), for fiṭrah refers to the condition of the soul at the time of its creation, whilst the natures which al Ghazali refers to are its condition after birth. The few elements do not develop at once but one after another at different stages of growth.⁹

The element produced first is animality (bahimiyyah) which is appetite (shahwah). Its purpose is to maintain the health

of the body and the preservation of the human species. It is responsible for the pleasure-seeking and self-gratifying tendencies of man, e.g. eating, sleeping and copulating. These second element is bestiality (sabiyya) which is anger (ghadab). Its purpose is to defend the body from any harm. Owing to this element, man possesses the instincts and behaviour typical of wild animals, such as aggression and greed. If these two elements of appetite and anger are not controlled, they will cause moral destruction. In some people these elements are not as dominant as in others; they become manifest in moderation, as a mercy from God. At the age of discrimination (tamyiz), when the child is about seven years old, a satanic element (shaytâniyyah) emerges. It seeks to satisfy appetite and anger through guile and deception. This element causes man to be hateful, mislead others to evil and ostentation, etc. It is repressed in those who were created with a moderate degree of appetite and anger. Apart from this satanic element in man's constitution there is also the external influence of the devil who incites him to do evil through the instigation of anger and appetite, and through evil suggestions. The fourth element in man is the divine element (rabbâniyah), the source of the qualities of love and praise, sovereignty, and knowledge of various sciences. This element is found in the soul from the time of creation, because it is a divine entity, but becomes manifest later. The intellect ('aql) is associated with the divine element and is identical to it

although it appears only at the age of discrimination. Al Ghazali refers to 'aql' as the sixth sense of the soul. It is the essence of the soul, and appetite and anger are its accidental states. The essence of each species is that which is peculiar to it, and the essence which is peculiar to man is 'aql' and is, therefore, his essential nature. Its duty is to know realities outside the senses and the consequences of actions. These four elements, then, are responsible for all man's innate characteristics as well as his behaviour.¹⁰

Since man possesses both satanic and divine elements, he stands midway between the lower animals and the angels. The more one neglects one's angelic nature, the closer one is to the level of the lower animals and the devil, and the more one develops one's divine elements, the more one resembles angels and draws near to God, which is the goal of moral struggle. What can also be concluded from the exposition of these few elements is that the principle of good and evil is present in man's constitution. This view is supported by the exponents of the dualistic view of human nature (chapter 1); but they confuse this with fiṭrah as original goodness, for the satanic aspect of man develops only after the soul has been created. Thus, when the Qur'ân speaks of the good and evil tendencies of the soul, it refers to the soul after its creation and not to its condition at the time of its

creation.

Al Ghazâlî's theory of the faculties of the soul ties up with his concept of the elements of man's constitution. Most Muslim philosophers accepted Plato's view that the soul consisted of three parts or faculties. Al Ghazâlî introduces a fourth faculty, the 'faculty of justice' which is aimed at maintaining a balance among the other three faculties of anger, appetite and reason ('adl bayna hâdhihi al-thalâthah). The first two faculties of appetite and anger are jointly referred to in Qur'an and Hadith as passion (hawa). They are also referred to as nafs (the carnal soul). Al Ghazâlî regards these as the source of evil. However, passion has been created for the benefit of man, but it serves a good purpose only when it is expressed within the prescribed limits which are determined by 'aql and the shariah. However, since nafs tends to exceed the limits because of their irrational nature, they need to be controlled by the faculty of justice. The faculty of justice is referred to by al Ghazâlî as the motive of religion (ba'ith al-dîn). These two motives are at war with each other in the soul of every sane human being."

The introduction of the faculty of justice is important to al Ghazâlî as it has important bearing on his theory of root virtues, mortification and moral responsibilities. This absolves the child from moral responsibilities, because the

forces of appetite and anger and the satanic and divine elements in man. (cf. diagram P).

'Aql and shayṭānniyah are opposing forces of the soul that work through shahwah (appetite) and ghadab (anger) towards constructive and destructive purposes respectively. The animal forces of anger and appetite are instigated by shayṭānniyah to revolt against 'aql and overcome it. 'Aql, on the other hand, because of its divine element, seeks to control these animal forces and divert them to the proper channels in order to make them useful to the soul. If 'aql succeeds in subjugating them, the satan in man is weakened and rendered ineffective, and a state of harmony conducive to the realization of the ideal prevails. The evil tendency is subdued and the animal forces are harmonized, which permits the soul to pursue its goal without interruption. It is this state of peace and harmony in the soul which is referred to in the Qur'an as al-nafs-al-muṭma 'innah (cf. chapter 3). However, if these animal forces are instigated by shayṭānniyah, they rebel against 'aql and overcome it, strengthening the evil tendency in man, until it has complete supremacy over it, weakening the divine element in man. All the other faculties then become subservient to satan; reason becomes the slave of anger, passion and lust. The evil tendency consequently strengthens with a corresponding desire for self-gratification through the physical expression of evil at the expense of the good of the soul; Satan devises

faculty of justice is not yet present in him and hence he is not able to control his passion (hawa) and cannot therefore choose to refrain from evil. Apart from these few faculties, al Ghazâlî refers to a faculty higher than reason, which is the faculty of immediate experience (dhawq). This faculty is mainly concerned with the non-sensuous matters of this world and the next. Through this faculty man experiences direct knowledge of these realities. It is present in all people, but develops and becomes manifest only in Prophets and saints who have completely purified their souls. This faculty is not mentioned together with the other four faculties, for the latter are responsible for the root virtues in man, whereas the faculty of immediate experience is not the basis of any virtue, but develops only after the virtues are acquired and vices eliminated.¹³

3. THE INTERACTION OF THE ELEMENTS AND ITS SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL CONSEQUENCES.

As we have mentioned, the four elements of bahimiyyah, sab'iyah, rabbâniyah and shaytâniyah, determine respectively the natures or forces of appetite, anger, intellect and satan. Individuals possess these powers in different proportions.

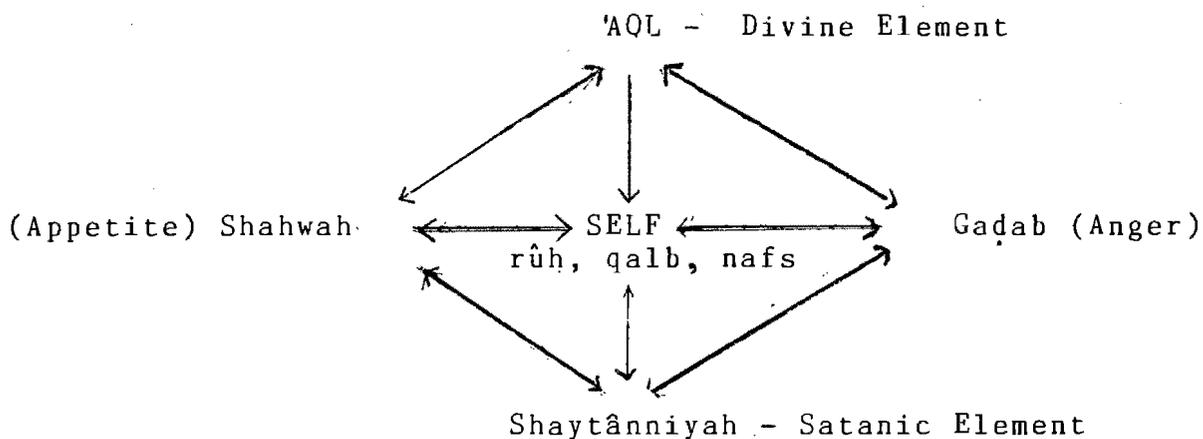
We turn now to an analysis of the dynamic interaction of the

means for the satisfaction of these evil needs. When this tendency reaches maximum potential it become the active principle in the al-nafs-al-ammârah, the lowest level of spiritual development (cf. chapter 3). Nevertheless, the divine element opposes these animal forces and is seldom totally subdued. It is when the divine element of the soul is engaged in this kind of struggle that it is referred to by Qur'ân as the admonishing soul or al nafs al lawwâmah (cf. chapter 3).¹³

These various conditions of the soul represent the spiritual consequences of the interaction between these elements. A balance of power is maintained when anger and appetite are controlled by 'aql'. The equilibrium of the three phases of the soul's development produces ethical consequences that are conducive to the realization of the ideals. If shahwah, for instance, is controlled and kept in moderation, qualities such as chastity, contentment, tranquillity, piety, cheerfulness and modesty emerge; if ghadab is controlled, qualities such as courage, generosity, fortitude, endurance and forgiveness emerge; if both shahwah and ghadab are subordinated to the divine element, qualities such as knowledge, wisdom, faith and certainty develop. However, if shahwah dominates, the progress of the soul towards its goal is affected; bestial characteristics such as greed, gluttony, wickedness, hypocrisy and jealousy then emerge; if ghadab dominates, characteristics of ferocious animals such

as enmity, hatred, contempt, pride and love of self aggrandisement become manifest. When both shahwah and ghadab predominate, then satanic characteristics such as treachery, deceit, cunning, and inciting enmity are acquired. If the divine element transcends its limits then qualities such as overlordship (rubûbbiyah), despotism and claim to special privilege are acquired.¹⁴

AL GHAZĀLĪ'S THEORY OF DYNAMIC INTERACTION



DEGREE OF DOMINANCE AND SUBSERVIENCE OVER THE ANIMAL FORCES
OF ANGER AND APPETITE

| LEVELS OF PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT | DIVINE ELEMENT ('AQL) | SATANIC ELEMENT (SHAYṬĀNNIYAH) |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| al nafs al ammārah | subservient | dominant |
| al nafs al lawwāmah | partial subservience | partial subservience |
| al nafs al muṭmainnah | dominant | subservient |

Man stands midway between animals and angels and his distinguishing characteristic is knowledge. He can rise to the level of the angels with the help of knowledge or stoop to the level of animals by permitting his anger and lust to dominate him. The foregoing psychological analysis makes it clear that all bodily organs and mental faculties have been created to help man realize his ideal, but it is only through the aid of knowledge that the proper use of these qualities is possible for the realization of the ideal. Before we pursue a discussion of knowledge as the key to the ideal, let us first briefly discuss what the ideal, or man's goal in life is.

THE AIM OF MAN

The aim of man, according to al Ghazâlî, is to attain happiness, in which conception two aspects may be identified, viz. negative and positive. The negative aspect of happiness is to seek the fortune of this world as an end in itself and to make it the sole purpose of one's life. In contrast to this hedonistic perception of happiness, al Ghazâlî propounds the greater happiness that is found in the pleasure of the knowledge of God and his wisdom. He approves of the fulfillment of sexual needs (within the prescribed limits) as well as the satisfaction of the basic need for food, clothing and shelter, but condemns the pleasures of this world, physical or intellectual, pursued as

ultimate goals in life. He states in his kimiya:

"Thus the occupation and businesses of the world have become more and more complicated and troublesome, chiefly owing to the fact that men have forgotten that their real necessities are only three - clothing, food and shelter - and that these exist only with the object of making the body a fit vehicle for the soul in its journey towards the next world"¹⁵.

Whilst al Ghazâlî is opposed to the pleasures of this world as ends in themselves, he by no means approves of the view that the world is a place of toil and affliction, and the hereafter the place of happiness for all, and that the right thing for man to do is to oppose his natural desires and to escape from the toil of the world. Al Ghazâlî believes that the aim of man is other worldly happiness (al-sa'âdât al ukhrawiya) which can be achieved through preparation for it in this world. This is done through the control of the sexual (shahwah) and aggressive (ghadab) instincts rather than through uprooting or repressing them.

It follows that happiness and misery are conditions of the soul. It is for this reason that al Ghazâlî lays so much stress on the improvement of the soul, and on the performance

of virtuous actions which are done for the good of the soul.¹⁶

5. THE MEANS OF HAPPINESS

The aim of man, to al Ghazâlî, is therefore happiness; a happiness which is attainable in the hereafter, but for which man must prepare in this life. There are sixteen means through which man may attain happiness. Not all the means are of equal importance; some of them are absolutely necessary and others are only useful. Al Ghazâlî divides them into four categories, each of which contains four forms of good. The four categories of means are:

The "goods" of the soul (al faḍâil al nafsiyyah)

The bodily "goods" (al faḍâil al jismiyyah)

The external goods (al faḍâil al khârijiyyah)

The good of divine grace (al faḍâil al tawfiqqiyyah).¹⁷

The first three categories are the gifts of God because they come ultimately from Him, and the fourth category is a free gift in so far as in three of its four forms it is not in man's control.

The goods of the soul, according to al Ghazâlî, are faith (imân) and good character (ḥusn al khuluq). Faith is divided into the knowledge of revelation and into the knowledge of "practical religion". Faith is therefore synonymous with knowledge. Good character is divided into

temperance and justice. The former involves control over desire and anger when they are neither totally fulfilled nor completely rejected, but where a balance is maintained. Good character possesses the virtuous qualities of the soul, because temperance and justice control the sexual and aggressive instincts in man, a necessary condition for the development of virtues. The four good qualities of the soul may therefore be reduced to knowledge of faith and praiseworthy qualities of the soul. These two constitute the nearest means to happiness. Since the positive development of the soul depends on the good qualities which are achieved through action (amal), the nearest means to happiness emerge as knowledge (or faith) and action.¹⁸

The bodily goods are health, strength, long life and beauty. These are regarded as essential for happiness, for without these, the virtues of the soul cannot be acquired. For instance, knowledge and action, which are vital for the good of the soul, cannot be attained without sound health and adequate physical strength. The external goods such as wealth, influence, family and noble birth, are not essential for happiness, but only useful to it. Wealth, for example, frees one from the struggling to make a living, and enables one to devote more attention to knowledge and action. External goods, for most people, permit freedom only in moderation, otherwise they become more of an impediment than a benefit. The goods of divine grace (tawfiq) are divine

guidance, direction, leadership and strengthening. Grace refers to the accord that exists between God's decree and man's will. Its function is to combine the bodily goods with those of the soul. The goods are essential for happiness, and everyone is dependent on guidance, for without it his path to happiness is not known.¹⁹

In al Ghazâlî's view it is wrong to suppose that devotional acts ('ibâdât) are the indirect means of the three goods of grace; rather, they are themselves dependent on divine grace. The aim of devotional acts is to remember God and purify the soul so that the love for God and the hereafter can be attained. Al Ghazâlî's view seems to accord with that of Isfahani, that the goods of grace are not attained through man's own efforts, but due to God's grace. To al Ghazali these acts become involuntary and man cannot, therefore, be held responsible for them; reward and punishment do not, therefore, apply. It is only to man's involuntary actions (al af 'al al ikhtiyâriya) that reward and punishment become applicable. To defend his concept of voluntary behaviour and moral responsibilities, he proposes the Asharite doctrine of acquisition (kasb) which we explained in chapter 4.²⁰

6. KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION

Knowledge and action are the two primary means to happiness, for they spring from the goods of the soul which are essential for happiness. al Ghazâlî maintained that happiness cannot be attained without knowledge and action. He criticizes the philosophers who believe that knowledge alone is the means to salvation. For al Ghazâlî, the Qur'an's basic teaching is the need for knowledge and action, for most of the verses pertaining to paradise mention both knowledge and action, and even in those verses where only faith (imân) is mentioned, action is implicit. In his Jawâhir he classifies the verses that pertain to knowledge and those that pertain to action. It is through knowledge and action, he believes, that man ascends from the status of the angels to that of those who behold the beauty of God's glory. Good deeds are not, as is commonly understood, the mere performance of acts of devotion ('ibâdât) as prescribed by the sharî'ah, but refer to all man's behaviour, relating both to his outer (zâhir) self or inner (bâtin) self. The latter is more elaborately described for most people are not able to accomplish it, but the former is extremely comprehensive because it includes the devotional acts as well as good deeds that are performed in various levels of human activity, be it domestic, social, political etc. The Muslim jurists, according to al Ghazâlî, emphasised both types of action, except in the sphere of politics. They make more

explicit the development of the inner self and linked it with other worldly happiness. With regard to the outer self, two features can be distinguished; the one pertains to the devotional actions directed towards God ('ibâdat) and the other to the good actions directed towards man and the general social environment. The actions of the inner self (bâtin) also have two distinguishing features; the one focuses on the actions of purifying the soul (tazkiyat-al qalb) from evil traits, and the second aspect is the beautification of the soul (tazqiyat al qalb) with good qualities. These four kinds of actions form the basis for al Ghazâlî's ethics.²¹

We have already mentioned that 'aq1 (intellect) represents the divine element in man; it is often used synonymously with qalb (heart), although qalb in the wider sense stands for the whole mental life of man whereas 'aq1 forms a part of qalb. 'Aq1 is the highest faculty of qalb and its relation to qalb may be compared to the light and the sun, or the vision and the eye. 'Aq1 has to predominate over the satanic element and keep the forces of appetite and anger under control, but this is only possible if it receives the proper knowledge.

There are two aspects to knowledge, formal and existential. Formal knowledge involves the knowledge of

self-evident principles, one of which, for example, posits that one cannot be in two places at the same time. Existential knowledge is the knowledge of objects and events attained through experience and intuition. It comprises the content of knowledge in contradistinction to its form. Such knowledge comprises two elements, viz. phenomenal and spiritual. The former refers to the knowledge of the material world and the latter is concerned with spiritual realities, eg. God, soul and the hereafter. Knowledge of spiritual realities is the highest form of knowledge. An example of this knowledge is imân (faith) through which happiness is attained. imân involves faith in God's unity, power, His unique knowledge, hearing, seeing, will, words and works. Faith in tawhîd is incomplete without the belief that Muḥammad was the last prophet sent to mankind. These beliefs form the basis of good conduct; they remain with man's soul until after his death and bring him happiness. The knowledge of spiritual realities is the highest form of knowledge and depends on intuition (mukhashafah) but occurs in different degrees to different people. To some people it is a slow process involving much self-cultivation (mujâhadah), whilst to a few it is revealed directly.²²

Intellect itself involves potentiality for the development of knowledge. The actualisation of this potentiality can take place only under two conditions. Firstly,

physiological maturity will determine the development of the intellect, and secondly, external conditions must provide the stimulus for the excitation of the intellect. All sciences are potentially apprehensible in the intellect but the external stimulus must bring them into actuality. This view accords with the the Socratic view that the knowing process involves recollection (anamnesis) (cf. chapter 1). Formal knowledge is therefore innate while existential knowledge is acquired. Formal knowledge is implicit in the mind, but becomes more explicit with experience. Existential knowledge is concerned with the experience of material objects and events; once acquired it is stored as dispositions which can be revived and used when needed. The next stage is to acquire foresight, which is the ability to foresee the consequences of events and then to act accordingly, instead of acting on impulse. The highest development of the intellect is when the reality of things is apprehended, from the simplest objects of sense experience to the ultimate spiritual realities such as God, the soul, etc. Man, therefore, does not have a separate faculty for the perception of concrete things and another for the supramundane; he is able to perceive on all levels - sensory, intellectual and spiritual - with one faculty, the intellect ('aql), which is the highest faculty of the heart (qalb). This view of intellect having the capacity for the highest level of perception and not confined to reason in the ordinary sense

of the word was supported by the Ishrâqi and Mashâi school of thought, already discussed in Chapter 2.

There is no limit to the development of intellect and knowledge. The levels of development vary according to the level of experience of the individual. The experience of ordinary men is different from that of saints, which in turn is different from that of Prophets. The development of the intellect may be at rest when the heart is not sound, and this may be due to the following reasons:

- 1) The heart may be undeveloped.
- 2) Sins may have rendered it impure.
- 3) It may be occupied solely with its own purification and therefore does not strive towards the objects.
- 4) Prejudices may stand in its way.
- 5) The individual may be ignorant as to how to arrive at the truth.²³

The purpose of knowledge is two-fold. It is firstly to apprehend the objects and their importance, and secondly as a guide to conduct. Intellect therefore has two aspects, viz., the theoretical and the practical. Theoretical intellect (al 'aql al nazari) is concerned with the understanding of phenomenal and spiritual realities. It is capable of both concrete as well as abstract perception. It is able to receive knowledge from the transcendental world, ie., knowledge of God, His attributes

etc. Intuition (mukhâshafah) is theoretical intellect operating on a high level. Practical intellect (al 'aql al 'amali) is the handmaiden of the theoretical intellect. It is influenced by the theoretical intellect but its function lies in the sphere of human conduct. This is why al Ghazâlî stresses the importance of knowledge of God and the nature of the human soul as important for man's conduct and, indeed, his happiness.²⁴

al Ghazâlî draws a distinction between two types of sciences, 'ulum al shar'iyah (religious) and 'ulum al 'aqliyyah (intellectual). The value of a science must be seen in relation to its goal. It is beneficial if it facilitates the realization of the goal and ineffectual if it does not. Of the sciences that are good, there are those whose acquisition fall in the category of fard kifâya (obligatory on some) like medicine, for example, and those whose acquisition is fard 'ayn (compulsory to all). al Ghazali maintains that knowledge of the religious sciences ('ulûm al shar'iyah) are fard kifâyah for they are the means for self-purification which is a further means towards the realization of God. They only become fard 'ayn when the individual sees not in them the laws of God, but also the true method of attaining eternal happiness. What is truly binding on man is the knowledge of the method of achieving eternal happiness. This knowledge is 'ilm al mu'âmalah, which consists of both knowledge and conduct,

and 'ilm al mukhâshafah (pure knowledge). The latter is acquired only by a few and therefore 'ilm muâmalah is the science that becomes binding on all which renders it a farð 'ayn. This knowledge includes the knowledge of 'ibâdat (man's devotion to God), 'âdat (man's duty to man), and the knowledge of the good and bad characteristics of the soul. In truth, 'adat and 'ibadat become a means to the good qualities of the soul; the knowledge of the good and bad qualities of the soul is in fact of paramount importance and the core aspect of 'ilm al muâmalah. It is a science which deals with the good qualities of the soul, such as shukr (thanks), khawf (fear), raja' (hope), sabr (patience), zuhd (abstention), as well as bad qualities such as hasad (jealousy), kibr (pride) etc. Thus, it also reveals the true nature and limitations of these qualities, the means by which we may acquire or avoid them, as well as their associated symptoms and the training required for avoiding or controlling them. The culmination of a final goal of 'ilm mu'âmalah is 'ilm al mukâshafah. It is the highest that man can hope to aspire. This stage is acquired only when the heart is totally purified and the individual is absorbed in God. The truth will then become absolutely manifest, as clear as a visually perceived object.²⁵

The love of God, which is the highest love, is attained through knowledge, and the soul is perfected; it has

reached the highest level of spiritual development, al nafs al mutmainnah, ensuring the highest state of happiness.

This nearness to, or absorption in, God, should not be viewed as a loss of one's identity, but rather as an affirmation thereof; of what it truly is, implying a state of complete self-realization. Thus, to al Ghazâlî, the concept of knowledge and action as the primary means to happiness is to be associated with the concept of man's moral perfection (which is the purpose of 'ilm al ma'âmalah) and his preparation for the next life.

7. VICES

Vices occur in a character that has developed out of the lowest level of spiritual development (al nafs al ammârah) and, to a lesser extent, in one that is on the level of the self-accusing spirit (al nafs al lawwâmah). When the intellect ('aql) loses control over the animal forces of appetite and anger, the vices become established in the individual. The natural propensities of man become manifest in unethical and sinful ways. They engender love of the world which is the root of all vice. These vices veil man from his aim in life. If man is to attain spiritual perfection his natural instincts need to obey the dictates of intellect, guided by useful knowledge.

There are various kinds of vices:

- i) Those which are connected to the physical organs of the body, eg. eating, sex, speech;
- ii) Those which are not connected to the physical body, such as anger, malice, envy.
- iii) Those which are typically human and practised by man deliberately, eg. pride (kibr), vanity, love of wealth, love of position (ḥubb al jah).
- (iv) Those which may be consciously committed, but of the existence of which one is unconscious at a higher spiritual level; eg. hypocrisy (riya'), wilful deception (ghurûr) etc.²⁶

It is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss all the vices. We will, however, select only two vices for discussion, and show how al Ghazâlî, as a "Muslim psychologist" prescribes treatment for such a vice.

Let's take for instance the vice pertaining to the sexual appetite. The sexual appetite is the strongest of the appetites and passions. We have already discussed that the sexual instincts are not evil in themselves but that they serve an important function. This drive plays a vital role in the perpetuation of the human species and makes possible the existence of a family, which is the basic unit of society. The preservation of the family is of utmost importance in Islam, for its breakdown implies

the breakdown of the Muslim society (ummah) as a whole. Adultery is therefore considered to be a greater crime than murder, for whilst in the case of murder an individual is destroyed, adultery destroys the stability of the family unit. The sexual drive is therefore the basis from which the family is established, where both husband and wife experience a sense of rest, security and tranquility. Out of this relationship grows love, affection and mercy, which are necessary for permanence, harmony and co-operation in married life. This sound atmosphere of love and understanding in turn assists in the rearing of emotionally sound and stable children.

"And among His signs is this, that He created male from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your hearts. Verily in that are signs for those who reflect". (30:21)

Excessive sexual indulgence leads to different kinds of vices, but a deficiency thereof is also blameworthy for abstention is an impediment to procreation. The sexual appetite should be under the control of the intellect ('aql), the divine element in man. The sharî'ah prescribes marriage as the means through which one's sexual drives can be lawfully expressed. al Ghazâlî, however, advises that if the devotee is able to control his appetite, it will be better for him to delay marriage while

he is young and in his earlier stages of searching for the truth lest this love for his wife distract him from the love of God, which is why he also refers to the demerits of marriage in his kimiya.²⁷

If the devotee is not able to naturally control his sexual appetite, then he should subdue his appetite through prescribed fasting and the lowering of the gaze or deliberate control of the eye and the mind. If these means do not work, then he should rather marry lest he waste his energy in controlling his appetite. Once he is married he should conform to the shari'ah in his married life and provide the necessary comfort and peace to his wife. The best man is considered to be he who is kind to his wife and the best wife is she who is obedient to her husband.²⁸ This is all part of Islamic worship, since it is done for the sake of God. People control sexual appetite for various reasons: modesty, fear of society or loss of prestige. These motives are good because they keep the individual from sin, but the real virtue lies in abstaining from indulgence in order to please God, even though one has the appetite and the lawful means to satisfy it.

Al Ghazâlî also stresses that free intermingling of the sexes is dangerous for the lustful glance is the root of evil. Aesthetic appreciation of beauty, however, is harmless.²⁹

Let us examine another vice in man, but one pertaining to emotion. Anger is one of those vitally important emotions which stem from one's aggressive instincts (ghadab). It is also one of those animal forces in man which needs to be controlled by 'aql. Failure to control ghadab, which is translated by 'Umarrudin as "aggressive self assertion" leads to many vices such as anger, envy and pride.

Anger is an important emotion as it serves the function of partly preserving stability and protecting the human being. Anger activates muscles so that the individual may defend himself from harmful obstacles. al Ghazali says that anger functions in such a way that the blood pressure of a person increases, and as a result his eyes and face acquire a ruddy hue. The origin of anger lies in the heart and is sustained by revenge and greed. Anger cannot be appeased without control of the latter two passions. Mankind is divided into three classes according to the degree of anger:

- 1) Those who do not have anger.
- 2) Those who have moderate anger.
- 3) Those who have extreme anger.³⁰

The first class of men are impotent. Imâm Shafii' said that he whose anger cannot be aroused is an ass. God praised the companions of the Prophet who are hard upon the unbelievers but sympathetic towards one another (48:29).

God even instructed the Prophet to fight against the hypocrites and the unbelievers (9:73). The harsh treatment is the result of his anger. Thus, the Qur'ân encourages the channeling of the emotion of anger by fighting in the path of God (jihâd) against the enemies of Islâm.

The second class of men maintains a line of moderation, avoiding the two extremes of no anger and excessive anger. Such anger is good for it is controlled by 'aql and guided by religion.³¹

The third class of men possesses extreme anger which is harmful, for such men are bound to lose self-control and consequently violate religion. They are unable to discriminate between good and evil. The root of excessive anger could be either one's inborn nature or the result of habit and acquisition, or both. Men who are naturally disposed to becoming angry quickly, possess anger that is innate.

According to Imâm al Ghazâlî, anger is engendered by love. There are three kinds of things which a man loves.

- 1) He loves his basic necessities, food, clothing and shelter etc. Take any of these away and he will become angry.
- 2) A man loves things that are not of necessity, such

as fruit, abundant wealth, servants, animals etc.
If anyone steals these he becomes angry.

- 3) The objects of love of the third type are special things for special people, such as books for learned men. If anyone takes away his books he become angry.

With regard to the first type of love the person should learn to control his anger and redirect it within the limitations of the shari'ah (Divine law). Anger is a natural emotion; to root it out from the heart would be impossible and unnatural. With regard to the second type of love, it is possible to avoid it through practice and habit, for it is a love of the unnecessary things; in this way one will not find cause to be angry. If one can see that this world is a temporary abode to walk upon in preparation for the next world, one will learn to lose one's attachment and love for unnecessary things.³²

Anger can be the cause of much anxiety, stress and a lack of responsible action. It leads to verbal and physical abuse and the violation of religion. Islam therefore emphasises the control of anger which is important for sound human relationships. The Qur'ân even encourages man to control his anger, to forgive others and reminds him of the great reward that lies ahead for those who control their anger.

"But (since) good and evil cannot be equal, repel thou evil with something that is better, and lo! he between whom and thyself was enmity, may then become as though he had always been close (unto thee) as a true friend" (51:34).

"Those who spend in ease as well as in adversity and those who restrain their anger and pardon men. And Allah loves the doers of good to others" (3:133).

We have discussed the causes of anger. We now turn to a discussion of those conditions which do not arouse anger in men.

- i) The first condition is when the mind is occupied with basic and essential needs only.
- ii) The second is when the mind is engaged with Tawhîd (oneness of God).
- iii) The third is the love for a God Who does not love anger.

The above posits conditions which do not arouse anger in men. However, for people whose anger has been aroused, al Ghazali proposes the following six measures which involve the application of 'aql:

- i) The first is to think of the rewards and punishment of appeasing anger as stated in the Qur'ân and hadith.
- ii) The second is to think that the punishment of God

is greater on oneself than the anger one displays towards another.

- iii) The third is to be conscious of harmful effects of avenging oneself in order to subdue one's anger.
- iv) The fourth medicine is to think of the ugly face of the angry man, which is like a ferocious beast.
- v) The fifth is to be conscious of the devil who will advise one, saying: "You will be weak if you do not get angry".
- vi) The sixth measure is to think of the reason for getting angry. What occurred was the will of God.

The following measures involve direct action to avert the effects of anger:

- 1) When a person becomes angry, he should say: I seek refuge in God from the accursed devil.
- 2) If this does not help, then he should sit down if he is standing, lie down if he is sitting, and generally come closer to ground level. The cause of wrath is heat and he should therefore lie down on the ground and make himself calm and cool, like the earth.
- 3) If this does not work he should heed the advice of the Prophet, who said: "When anyone of you gets angry, then let him take ablution with water as anger arises out of fire".³³

In terms of anger there are four types of temperament among men. The first type is those who anger is aroused quickly, but who are appeased quickly as well. The second type is those whose anger is not easily aroused, but they are also not easily subdued. The third type is those whose anger is not aroused easily and who, if angry, are readily appeased. This is the best type of man.³⁴ The fourth type is those whose anger is quickly aroused and are not easily subdued. Such are the worst type of men.³⁵

8. VIRTUES

Virtues are acquired through the supremacy of 'aq1 over the satanic element and the control of the animal forces of appetite and anger. This is achieved through complete surrender to the will of God, doing only that which would please Him. The value of a particular virtue is measured in terms of the effect it has on the heart of the believer. There are two kinds of virtues:

- i) Those that are means, such as, repentance, patience, piety, sincerity etc. and,
- ii) those that are means and ends, e.g. absolute reliance on God (tawakkul) and praise of God (shukr).³⁶

Each virtue passes through the phases of knowledge, state and action. Knowledge produces a consciousness which

engenders fear of God, this fear leads to piety, patience and repentance conducive to being conscious of God.

Preoccupation with God instills sincerity and truthfulness which leads to intimate knowledge and love of God. This is the height of man's perfection. al Ghazâlî makes distinction between higher and lower virtues. A higher virtue is one which has become a permanent condition of the self (maqâm) and the lower virtue exists only for a short period, and is termed hâl (state).³⁷

Virtues are classified into five groups:

- i) Virtues which are connected with worldly things, eg. patience, repentance, abstinence and poverty.
- ii) Virtues connected with singleness of purpose, eg. niyyah (intention), ikhlas (sincerity) and sidq (truthfulness).
- iii) Virtues related to one's state of heart, eg., muḥâsabâh (self-examination) fikr (reflection), etc.
- iv) Virtues concerning the relation of man with God, eg. khawf (fear), and raja' (hope).
- v) Virtues which foster love of God, such as shukr, tawakkul (trust in God). These are the highest virtues.³⁸

We shall briefly discuss the first group of virtues only, because most people are confronted with the problem of

materialism, sin and imperfection and therefore require the first step of virtues to overcome their ethico-psychological problems. The virtues connected with worldly things would therefore appear more pertinent to an Islamic psychology that may be primarily and initially concerned with overcoming sins as the first steps towards spiritual progress.

Let us consider, for example, the virtue of repentance, which falls into the category of the type of virtues that serve as means. Repentance may also be seen as a form of treatment for tension, anxiety, depression or guilt arising out of committing sin or transgressing the Divine Commandments.

Repentance (tawbah) is the first essential step towards spiritual progress. It forms the very basis of a virtuous life and spiritual conversion. The individual is alive to the sinful act that he committed and is determined to correct himself by pursuing the right path in future. He is convinced of the false realities of the world and is awakened to true spiritual realities. He therefore surrenders himself to God, is rescued from sin, becomes spiritually a new man. al Ghazâli's view of repentance seems to conform to that of al Muhâsibî.³⁹

Repentance (tawbah), like every other virtue, has to go

through three phases of knowledge, state and action. Knowledge consists in the realization that one has sinned and transgressed. One is grieved by one's transgressions. This grief constitutes the state (ḥâl) aspect of repentance. The sin should be renounced and not repeated in future. This knowledge and realization generate imân (faith) and yaqîn (certainty) which make the heart firm to pursue the right action.⁴⁰

al Ghazâlî considers repentance as essential (wâjib) to the attainment of ultimate happiness. It is binding on all individuals. One should also repent immediately after the sin is committed. Repentance implies the cleansing of the heart so that it may become the abode of God. Repentance is only acceptable if the following conditions are fulfilled:

- i) One should weep over one's sins constantly, that, grief should fill the heart.
- ii) One should abandon the sin and develop a strong aversion towards it.
- iii) One should reflect upon one's sins of the past, one by one, and day by day.
- iv) After recalling them one should consciously renounce each one of them lest one's repentance be imperfect.
- v) If one has neglected a religious duty, one should discharge that duty, repent, and seek God's pardon.

- vi) One should also consider sins committed against one's fellow human beings. If one has injured anybody, one should repent, comfort him and seek his forgiveness. If one has deprived anyone of wealth, one should repent and restore it to that person.⁴¹

After the penitent has abandoned the life of sin, he is protected from the temptations of the world and turns to what is more desirable. This state of turning from one thing to another is called abstinence (zuhd), provided that the desired thing is better than the thing renounced. Zuhd implies that one completely abandons that which is renounced so that even the desire for it is removed from the heart and it is replaced by love of God. To give up the pleasures of this world is part of good character, but it does not make one a zâhid (a person who has attained a state of zuhd). The essential condition of zuhd is the knowledge that the pleasure of God is real and permanent compared to the pleasures of this world, which are transitory and illusive.⁴²

There are three motives of zuhd. The first is love of God, the second hope of reward and the third, fear of punishment. The first motive is the highest grade of zuhd. The second state of zuhd is to give up all the pleasures of this world but not those of the hereafter.

The third grade of zuhd is when a person has only abandoned some pleasure of the world. Such a partial zuhd is accepted as repentance for sin. The difference between repentance and zuhd is that repentance involves a renunciation of that which is forbidden and zuhd involves giving up that which is allowed.⁴³

In attempting to renounce the pleasure of the world one may still be tempted by the satanic element. A partial state of zuhd is to realize that this world is insignificant in comparison to the next. The most advanced stage of zuhd is to abstain to such an extent that one does not become conscious of abstention at all. This constitutes the perfection of zuhd. Such an individual is free from the dangers of worldly temptation.⁴⁴

Salvation is to be achieved by turning away from worldliness. This is attained through the practice of poverty (faqr) or abstinence. In one sense poverty means anything that is needed (in terms of possessions) and in another sense it means that anything without God is poor. The poverty pertaining to worldly possessions are of several types:

- 1) The zâhid (abstinent) who is displeased when he comes by any possessions.
- 2) The raqî' (satisfied with God) who is indifferent to worldly possessions.
- 3) The qani' (contented) who desires to have worldly

possessions but who is not activated by the desire to acquire them.

- 4) The harîs (greedy) who cannot acquire property due to some disability but whose desire is so strong that they would go to any length to obtain it.
- 5) The mudtar (constrained) who has a neurotic greed for wealth. Such a person is not in the desired state of poverty.⁴⁵

The highest type of poverty is the state of zuhd and the highest stage of zuhd is the state of a mustaghni (indifferent). The mustaghni is indifferent to all worldly possessions. He is neither pleased at the gain of material possessions nor grieved at their loss. He is near to God in this quality, for God Himself is Ghani (although in an absolute sense). Attachment to the world is a hindrance and a veil to reaching God and it has to be overcome.⁴⁶

Patience (ṣabr) is another virtue that is classified into the group of virtues which are connected to worldly things. The other qualities are repentance, abstinence and poverty, which cannot be sustained without patience (ṣabr), that is, endurance in the face of suffering. God exalts those who are patient in more than seventy verses of the Quran. Angels are not in need of patience because they lack reason. Man, however, is in need of patience because he possesses both passion and reason ('aql).

Patience therefore implies the persistence of the divine element in man against the satanic element or the enduring struggle of intellect ('aql) over passion (nafs). After long practice in the exercise of patience, the passions are subdued and the religious motive predominates. Man then reaches the stage of irada (satisfaction). The three stages of the soul, viz., nafs al mutmainna, nafs al ammâra and nafs al lawwâma, are the outcome of various degrees of control over passion by patience. There are three stages of patience:

- 1) Subduing of passion, the stage reached by those who repent.
- 2) Satisfaction with one's lot, the stage of the ascetic.
- 3) Loving those who please God, a stage reached by the truthful ones (siddiqûn).

Patience is needed for every trial of life, eg. in want, affliction, loss of life, property and health and the checking of any ignoble motives in the heart - all for the sake of God. However, patience in the form of tolerating harâm (that which is forbidden in Islâm) is undesirable.⁴⁷

9. THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL

Al Ghazali believes that the power of the will to change and improve character is a necessary postulate of ethics.

The will is determined by knowledge which is acquired by 'aql. Freedom, then implies the acceptance or rejection of one or more alternatives. However, this acceptance or rejection is caused by the Divine will. Al Ghazâlî explains this by means of the Asharite doctrine of kasb (cf chapter 4). The fact that human character can change, as we have noted in the discussion of the three stages of spiritual development, viz., the nafs al ammârah, nafs al lawwâma and nafs al mutmainnah, with the consequent ethical characteristics associated with each stage or level of personality, leads al Ghazâlî to believe that man possesses a certain degree of free will.

What stands in the way of man's spiritual goal and remoulding the character is:

- i) the greater inherent strength of the passions in certain individuals, and
- ii) the habitual gratification of passions.⁴⁸

This view of man's limited freedom and passion as the root obstacle in the way to spiritual realization is supported by al Muḥâsibi as well.

"The ascetic which aims at the rectification of desires and will, with a view to the loss of the self; in order that it may find itself again in God, demands a right view of the relation of the soul to God, and of the causes which have

interfered with that relation as it was meant to be. Man was not created to be a dualism, but a unity, in which the lower animal nature must be united with the higher spiritual nature, and both should be united with God, but this ideal relation has remained unrealized. God has not vested man with the freedom of the will which is not the perfect freedom of the infinite will, but does enable him, as distinct from both angels and beasts to choose whether he must love and serve God or to refuse that love and service where they are due, and, by making the sensual desires and the satisfaction of personal ends the chief end of life, become the bondslave of the flesh and the self".⁴⁹ In the light of passions as the obstacle to spiritual realization al Ghazali divides mankind into four classes:

- 1) Persons whose characters are deficiently developed. They are ignorant, lacking in knowledge of right and wrong, conviction and moral strength. They are not wholly slaves to their passions. Such persons can easily improve. Children, especially, need a guide, and a motive to guide them on the right path, but are influenced by their parents in the socialization process. This view accords with the notion of fiṭrah (cf. Ch. 1).
- 2) Some persons are addicted to the gratification of the appetites, but are nevertheless aware of its

evil effects. They have the knowledge of good and evil but they have acquired bad habits. Such men can easily be reformed; they need only the will to abandon bad habits and develop good habits.

3) Some persons are not only addicted to evil ways, but also believe that such ways are good for them and persist in following them. They are blind to the real purpose of life and consequently see that the only end of their lives is the gratification of their passions. Such people are ignorant because their animal self has developed at the expense of their rational self. 'Aql has become completely subordinate to the satanic element. To reform such men is almost impossible.

4) Some men, who have been raised in the latter manner delight in doing evil and leading others astray. For such men to improve is most difficult. A radical conversion can only take place through Divine assistance.⁵⁰

"God has sealed their hearts and their hearing, over their eyes is a covering, and there is a great chastisement for them".

Human character is classified into three main types, and

these are also viewed in the light of the extent to which one has control over nafs (lower self).

- i) The first type of character refers to one who is totally evil. He goes to great lengths to gratify his passions. He makes no distinction between the lower and the higher self, for the lower self has become his ideal. They are referred to in the Qur'ân as al nafs al ammârah (the insinuating self).
- ii) The second type of individual is aware of the distinction between the lower and the higher self but is occasionally overcome by passion. He struggles against his lower self. Such a character is associated with al nafs al lawwâmah (the reproaching self).
- iii) The third type of individual has attained the highest level of consciousness. He is liberated from all evil elements and the state of his soul is conducive to the acquisition of virtues. The distinction between the higher and lower self fades away, for the higher self reigns supreme. The individual has attained perfect freedom and his soul is at peace. The Qur'ân refers to this state as al nafs al mutmainnah (contented self).⁵¹
(Refer to chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion)

The progress that man is able to make from the state of al nafs al ammārah to the state of nafs al mutmainnah is indicative of his free will. Although this freedom is not absolute, it is sufficient to bring about a transformation in human character.

Thus, according to al Ghazâlî, human nature is dualistic; it is composed of both a body and a soul. The soul is the essence of man, and the body is the vehicle of the soul, intended to make provision for the eternal life of the soul. Man is born with the predisposition to believe in God (fiṭrah), and through proper education man is able to return to his primordial divine state. Man's natural yearning is to strive to attain nearness to God. He should therefore pay attention to his soul, without neglecting the fulfillment of basic bodily needs of food, shelter and clothing.

Although man is of divine origin, he is distinct from God, but superior to the animal. He is capable of a knowledge of God which transcends discursive reason through the power of 'aql. 'Aql is able to control the animal forces within man such that he may attain the highest level of psycho-spiritual development (al nafs al mutmainnah).⁵¹ However, if man succumbs to his lower nafs on a

psychological plane and to satan on a cosmological plane, he will find himself on the lowest level of spiritual development (al nafs al ammarah). The ethical behaviour of such a person is a manifestation of vice and unbelief (kufr).

We hope al Ghazâlî's exposition has given the reader some insight into the dynamic interaction of the elements of human nature within the context of man's ethical and spiritual goals. We are now in a position to integrate the study of the elements of human nature into a proposed framework of an "Islamic psychology".

SUMMARY

- 1) The concept of soul is central to al Ghazâlî's psychology.
- 2) Man is composed of a soul and a body.
- 3) The soul is the core of man and is sometimes expressed as nafs, ruh, qalb and 'aql.
- 4) The soul is a substance (jawhar), belonging to the world of spirit. This view accords with that of the philosophers, but al Ghazâlî disagrees with the method by which they justify the existence and *raison d'etre*
- 5) The soul is divine and is created in a state of fitrah. It is therefore naturally inclined to good and averse to evil.

- 6) The body is the vehicle of the soul; its purpose is to acquire provision for the eternal life of the soul.
- 7) Human nature constitutes the elements of appetite, anger, apprehension, intellect, will and the satanic element.
- 8) 'Aql represents the divine element in man, and together with irâda (will), distinguishes him from the animal.
- 9) The satanic element seeks to incite the feelings of appetite and anger and consequently cripple the power of the 'aql. The 'aql, on the other hand, seeks to gain control over appetite and anger.
- 10) If 'aql reigns supreme, then the individual has complete control over the animal drives of appetite and anger. This condition is characterised by a peaceful soul which is termed al nafs al ammârah. If, on the other hand, the satanic element gains control, the individual becomes subservient to the drives of appetite and anger. This condition is referred to in the Qur'ân as al nafs al ammârah (the commanding self). If 'aql has partial control over appetite and anger, and struggles from time to time against these animal drives, he is in a state of al nafs al lawwâmah (the self-reproaching soul).
- 11) Each of these stages is associated with certain ethical qualities of vice and virtue which collectively constitute the character of the individual. The spiritual psychology of Islam is therefore not divorced from ethical issues.

- 12) The aim of man is to attain happiness. True happiness, for al Ghazâlî, lies in knowledge of God and is not associated with the temporal pleasures of the material world.
- 13) Al Ghazâlî does not propound the view of escapism from the world as such, but he does expound, however, on the need for man's liberation from a world without God.
- 14) True happiness is attainable in the hereafter but man must prepare for it in this world.
- 15) Knowledge (faith) and action are the primary means to happiness for they spring from the "goods" of the soul which are essential for happiness.
- 16) Knowledge of spiritual realities is the highest form of knowledge; for example, knowledge about God. This knowledge serves as the basis for action and remains with the soul after the demise of the body. This knowledge brings full happiness. When the intellect ('aql) receives such knowledge, then it gains the power to subdue the animal drives and reign supreme over the satanic elements. 'Aql is able to acquire knowledge from the sensory level to the highest level of spiritual development.

- 17) Knowledge of 'ilm al mu'âmalah is fard 'ayn and hence compulsory for all Muslims, because it is necessary for one's eternal happiness. It includes knowledge of 'ibadat (devotion to God) and 'adat (relation to man) and knowledge of the good and bad characteristics of the soul. 'Âdat and 'ibâdat, in fact, become a means to the acquisition of the good qualities of the soul.
- 18) Ilm al muamalah is the science of the knowledge of the good and bad qualities of the soul. The final goal of Ilm al muamalah is Ilm al mukhashafa when the soul has already been perfected and the individual is absorbed in the love of God, affirming his true identity. The highest grade of happiness is then achieved.
- 19) Sins stemming from the state of nafs al ammârah. Sexual appetite is one of those vices associated with the physical body. Its positive purpose is to increase the Muslim Ummah, but this has to be directed within the prescribed marital limits. Islâm preaches the control of the sexual appetite. There are many vices associated with emotions. Anger is one such vice, for it causes the individual to lose control of his senses and hence violate religion. Anger is necessary in so far as it can serve as a protection from the enemies of Islâm or the individual and society. It could, for instance, be expressed in jihad. Like the sexual appetite, anger cannot be removed,

but it should be controlled so that one can attain a moderate level of anger. The treatment for excessive anger is to engage one's mind in only those things that are necessary, to be immersed in tawhîd, and to know that God does not love anger. The cure for anger is based on knowledge and action. With regard to action it is good for the angry person to sit, or to perform ablution.

- 20) Virtues are acquired when 'aql reigns supreme. Virtues are classified into five groups. The first group involves the virtues which are connected to worldly things. They are the virtues of patience, repentance, abstinence and poverty. These virtues also serve as a treatment for sin. The first thing to be done when a person sins is to repent. He must be conscious of the evil of his act, seek forgiveness and make sure that such an act will not be repeated again. The bad act must be replaced by an opposite good act. Repentance is the first step towards spiritual progress. It brings about spiritual renewal and transformation.
- 21) The individual is capable of free will. This is indicated by man's capacity to transform his character from one state to another; as seen in the three levels of the nafs.
- 22) Passion is the root cause of obstructing the will from attaining spiritual perfection. Once the individual

liberates himself from passion, the lower self becomes united with the higher self and the individual attains maximum freedom.

23) Al Ghazâlî divides mankind into four classes. Each successive class represents a worse state of ignorance and sinfulness.

24) Human character is divided into three main types. The first one is he who is wholly evil. He is at the lowest level of spiritual development. This level is termed in the Qur'ân as al nafs al ammârah. When the individual struggles against his passion, he has attained al nafs al lawwamah. The individual attains the highest level of spiritual development when he is completely liberated from the obstacle of passion. The distinction between the higher and the lower self then fades away. The individual attains perfect freedom and a peaceful soul referred to in the Qur'ân as al nafs al mutmainnah (the contented self).

Having discussed al Ghazâlî are in a better position to understand the dynamic interaction of the various elements of human nature. We are also now able to derive to other dimensions of Islamic psychology, namely the ethical and the therapeutic dimension.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE DIMENSIONS OF ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGY

Having discussed the main elements of human nature, we are now in a position to establish the principles and dimensions of Islamic psychology, which are derived from the Islamic conception of human nature.

'Islamic psychology' never existed in the Islamic intellectual tradition as a separate discipline, but the Islamic conception of human nature always formed an integral part of Islamic teaching. The Qu'rân is full of verses pertaining to the nature of man, his origin and destiny. It is only today that many scholars are speaking of an 'Islamic psychology' which is legitimate in order that the Islamic conception of human nature be made more intelligible to the modern reader, provided that the exposition of 'Islamic psychology' is not divorced from its metaphysical roots.

1. THE METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATION OF ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGY

The starting point for an investigation for an Islamic psychology must be an analysis of the metaphysical understanding of man. We cannot know what an Islamic psychology would contain unless we first know how Islam conceives of the place of man in Creation.

Man is a 'central being' in the world because he has been honoured with the status of vicegerent of God on earth (khalifat-Allah). To qualify him for this position he was taught the names of all things, that is, he was given power and dominion over all things. All creatures reflect some aspects of the Divine, but man, "in his full nature as the theophany of God's names and qualities", is the only being that can reflect all the divine names and qualities in a conscious manner. Man cannot therefore evade the centrality of his being which is intrinsic to the human situation, for man's central being is a given. Man's right to dominate over the earth as khalifah, is only justified on condition that he remains in perfect submission to God, the real master of nature. In addition to the function of khalifah, therefore, man was given the quality of 'abd, the state of being in perfect submission to God.

Man is a theomorphic being because he is 'made in the image God', that is, God has breathed of his spirit into man who is able to reflect fully the names and attributes of God.

Deeply intrinsic to man's nature is his primordial nature (al-fiṭrah) which he possessed before his fall on earth (ḥubūt) and which he still carries deep within himself. In this original state of fiṭrah man is potentially the perfect khalīfah. It is due to his forgetfulness of his fiṭrah that man is prone to exploit the power and privilege afforded to him through his capacity for khalīfah for his own selfish ends. The power of Intellect and will which was given to man on account of his status as khalīfah of God have been employed by man in a destructive and negative way, and this was because man neglected his role as 'abd or servant of God. It is only through submission as servant of God that man will be able to use his power and privilege over nature in a positive and spiritually progressive way. It is for this reason that man is always in need of Divine revelation to remind him of his primordial nature, and although he may deviate from the dictates of his theomorphic nature, he cannot fully escape from what he essentially is, and therefore the central nature of man must manifest itself somehow on the periphery. No matter what man attempts to do in life, be it in a direction removed from the dictates of his fiṭrah or in accordance with it, he cannot escape the

central nature of his being which is spiritual. Man is born with the innate nature to believe and worship God. The central and primary motivating force in man is his yearning for the absolute ideal, God. This central motivating force takes place on an unconscious level. It is man's duty to become conscious of this primary unconscious motivating force that influences his behaviour. So even if man's behaviour is orientated towards worshipping idols, a person or a political system he is still motivated by this inward motivation to know God; the only difference being that while the believer knows it is God, the unbeliever mistakes the object of his devotion for God. It is in this sense that the central nature of man manifests itself on the periphery. The primordial character of man's theomorphic nature is affirmed with reference to a covenant between man and God in man's pre-existential state, that is, before the creation of the world, as stated in the Qur'an:

"And remember when thy Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their reins, their seed, and made them testify of themselves (saying): 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes, verily'." (7:172)

In this affirmation lies the secret of man's destiny, for man, above all creation, accepted the burden of trust (amânah).

"Lo! We offered the trust unto the heavens and earth and the mountains and they shrank from bearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it." (33:72)

This acceptance of trust is precisely the acceptance of the burden of khalîfah of God on earth. This trust also implies the acceptance of the freedom and responsibilities to both God and his Creation. The rights and responsibilities of man are clearly defined by Islâm. This is because Islâm means submission to God. It therefore demands that man lives in submission to God, which will ultimately save him from all deviations and spiritual abnormalities and bring him back to his original state, his state of fitrah or the state of submission to the one God, Allah.

The Islamic conception of man may be best explained by reference to the doctrine of al insân al kâmil, the universal or perfect man. The essence and full manifestation of this doctrine is to be found in the Prophet of Islâm, Muḥammad (SAW). A clear exposition and formulation is to be found in the works of Ibn 'Arabi and Al-Jîlî. The Islamic understanding of man should be seen in the light of the two poles of tawḥîd (unity). The one pole deals with God and His names and qualities, and the other pole deals with al-insân al kâmil, man and the cosmos. The first pole concerns the origins while the second concerns

the manifestation and return of creation to the source. The first pole corresponds to the shahâdah (declaration of Islam, Lâ ilaha ill-Allâh - there is no God but Allah), and the second pole corresponds to the second declaration Muhammadu rasûl Allâh - Muhammad is the messenger of God.

In Nasr's words Muhammad (SAW) is the universal man par excellence and also the quitesence of all creation of all that is positive in cosmic manifestation. The universal man contains all degrees of existence within himself and is the archetype of both the cosmos and man. There is therefore a profound metaphysical correspondence between man and the cosmos. Outwardly man is a microcosm of the cosmos; inwardly, he contains a reality that is the source of the cosmos itself. This is why it is possible even for fallen man, or the man who has deviated from his primordial nature (fitrah) through forgetfulness, to have power over nature. In the light of this understanding Nasr states:

"The spiritual man, although outwardly dominated by nature, inwardly rules over things predominantly because he has conquered his own inner nature. Might one not add that today when man boasts most about conquering nature, the reverse process has taken place, which is an apparent and outward conquest of nature combined with complete lack of asceticism, spiritual discipline and self-negation, which make

man more than ever a prisoner of his own passion to natural inclinations? But the spiritual man who has overcome his passions and who is the reflection of the Universal man, is the pole towards which the Universe itself is attracted."

The Universal man, therefore, contains the sum of all the degrees of existence, a 'total mirror before the Divine presence and at the same time the supreme archetype of creation. This is the prototype of man, a reality potentially contained in every man. The reality may be realized by every man provided that he aspires to it in the spirit of trust and faith (Imân). In Divine assistance man has to realize the potential of his own existence, and then if one has to become fully conscious of his true self in order to gain the happiness and peace that he seeks in this world and in the hereafter.

Man, from the viewpoint of his primordial nature (al-fitrah), is asked to perform the "priestly" function himself, and therefore we find no priesthood in Islam. Islam, as a natural religion (dîn al-fitrah) therefore removes the distinction between the religious and the secular, or the sacred and the profane, "making man a natural being who is yet the most direct symbol of the spiritual world in nature and in direct contact with the world".

The metaphysical dimension of Islamic psychology, then, clarifies for us the origin of man, and his relationship to God and the cosmos. Man is a central being by virtue of his role of khalîfah which he can truly fulfil through submission (Islâm) to Allah as his 'abd (servant). Through a perfect submission, man may come to realize the 'Universal Man' within him, returns to his primordial nature (fiṭrah) and attains happiness and peace in this world and the hereafter. The metaphysical principle therefore, is the very root and basis of Islamic psychology upon which all other dimensions of Islamic psychology rest.

2. EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIMENSION

The basis of Islamic epistemology is revelation. However, this does not mean that man's reason and intellect do not play a role. In contrast to the Mu'tazilah who assigned priority to reason, the author is of the view that the correct Islamic position is to assign priority to revelation. The author does not agree with the view that revelation is equivalent to reason. Revelation is from God and therefore objective and eternal, but reason stems from man and is therefore necessarily subjective and relative. Reason may help to interpret and explicate revelation but because of its limitations must remain subordinate to revelation. Intellect as the faculty of spiritual

perception (cf Chapter 2), however, transcends the limitations of discursive reason when it is guided by the experience based on Divine revelation. The higher capacity of the intellect may therefore enable it to stand on closer footing to Divine revelation to that of reason. Reason being therefore only a reflection of the intellect must find itself subordinate to it as well.

Man's nature (fiṭrah) and his relationship to God, as khalīfah and 'abd, cannot be fully understood without an analysis of the meaning of intellect and reason. In our discussion of the heart and intellect ('aql) we have come to realize that man is capable of the highest level of consciousness, that is, consciousness and perception of God. This direct perception of God is only possible through the understanding of the role of 'aql as capable of transcending the level of discursive reasoning. A clear distinction should therefore be made between reason and intellect. Whereas reason is limited to the function of analysis and logic as indicated by its latin root, "ratio", revealing the activity of analysis and division, intellect ('aql) transcends this limitation, in that its function is to know 'the principle of things', which will lead to the Islamic doctrine of unity (tawḥīd), if of course, it functions normally and is wholesome. The role of revelation is in fact an aid to remove the impediments that prevent the

intellect ('aql) from functioning in a wholesome manner. Reason being only a reflection of intellect should be made subservient to the intellect ('aql) and also to revelation which has its root in the Divine intellect (Logos). Reason, in its subservience to aql and revelation will serve as a positive instrument in guiding man in his journey from multiplicity to unity (tawhid). Although man is a relative being because he is subject to the phenomenal world of multiplicity, he has been endowed with the capacity of intellect to enable him to see beyond the world of multiplicity and to become liberated from that world through his journey to the unity (tawhid) or to the One Absolute God, who stands in contrast to the multiplicity manifested in His Creation. Thus for man to become liberated from the state of multiplicity he will have to come to know God who is the source of his existence. If, however, reason revolts against its own origin, against both the intellect and revelation, then it becomes the source of disharmony and disorientation.

Man, then, is able to use the objective revelation to bring into operation the subjective intellect. The intellect could be operationalized through a wholesome (salim) employment of reason which is submissive both to the intellect and revelation. In this way reason may become the occasional cause for "intellection". (Intellectual intuition; i.e. the

direct and immediate perception of Divine realities). We say occasional for man cannot always produce intellection which does not depend on man's efforts alone; but on Divine grace and favours. Through intellection which is associated with 'heart-knowledge" rather than knowledge through discursive reason the individual is able to see with the eye of the heart ('ayn al qalb), that is, he has direct spiritual perception of God. (cf. Chapter 2) This does not imply that the individual has at this stage attained full integration between the lower and the higher nafs, but this movement towards intellection is preconditioned by a sufficient virtuous intention. The conformity of man's nafs (psyche), will, and reason to Divine revelation or the will of God (as embodied in the Sharf'ah), is essential before the intellect can be fully operationalized or able to reach its full potential.

This, in itself, constitutes the epistemological dimension of Islamic Psychology. Through the organs of heart and intellect and the guidance of Divine revelation, man is able to attain all levels of perception, even the knowledge of God in a direct and immediate way. The epistemological dimension of Islamic psychology, therefore, recognizes the function of spiritual consciousness realized through the organs of the heart and intellect so that man may fully realize his role as khalifah and 'abd on earth.

3. THE BIOLOGICAL DIMENSION

In contrast to the ascetic religions (e.g. Buddhism) which believe in the suppression and elimination of bodily desires and instincts, Islâm recognizes the bodily instincts as natural and important. However, the body is not an end in itself as viewed by the behaviourists, but a means to an end. The body therefore has a purpose, as we have noted in Al-Ghazâlî's psychology (cf. Chapter 5), which is to help the soul 'acquire provision for its eternal life'.

Man is therefore able to use his body to fulfill his role as khalîfah and 'abd (servant) of God. The manner in which he may channel his bodily instincts is taught in the Qur'ân and Sunnah. The satisfaction of bodily instincts, therefore, in an Islamically prescribed manner, is an act of worship. The sexual instinct, for instance, may be channeled in Islamically acceptable ways through marriage. If, however, a person is not able to marry, he may control and channel his sexual instinct through fasting and intense spiritual devotion. The matrimonial institution is an important institution in Islâm, the purpose of which is not confined to the satisfaction of physical needs. It also promotes peace and tranquility in the family and the society.

"And among his signs is this, that He created for you males from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your hearts: Verily, in that are signs for those who reflect."
(30:21)

Islamic psychology, therefore, does not ignore the biological nature of man, but seeks to direct his biological instincts in Islamically prescribed forms so that man may satisfy his biological instincts without impeding his spiritual progress. If man's biological instincts are not directed towards service to God, they become negative, and if they are aimed at pleasing God then they become positive. If practical means for the satisfaction of certain biological instincts are not made possible, the individual is then expected to control those instincts rather than repress them. The concept of sexual repression and suppression arise out of a certain view of the sexual instinct. If sex is considered to be something dirty and evil, and if it is viewed as a necessary evil that man must contend with (as in certain ascetic religions), then the fulfillment of the sexual instinct must lead to guilt, anxiety or neurosis (as demonstrated by Freud). This sexual repression is therefore associated with a negative view of the sexual instincts. In the case of Islâm this problem is not expected to arise because the Islamic view of sex is that it is normal and

natural. The Islamic approach to sex does not therefore lead to sexual repression with the consequent neurosis associated with it, but emphasises the control of the sexual instincts or any other biological instincts. We have already explained how the Sharī'ah (Islamic Law) has placed certain limitations and instructions for the guidance of man, including the guidance as to how he may control, discipline and channel his biological instinct, so that its positive expression may become an act of worship within the framework of the Islamic notion of submission to God.

4. THE AFFECTIVE DIMENSION

The affective dimension, as with the biological dimension, forms an important part of human nature which should be utilized in the service of God. Every emotion has a positive and negative aspect to it. If it is directed in the way of submission to God it becomes positive and if it is cut off from its metaphysical basis then it becomes negative and spiritually destructive.

According to al-Ghazâlî, anger is a natural emotion which cannot be rooted out. Man should, however, learn to control his anger which can be done through detachment from the love of the temporary world. The root cause of the emotion of anger as noted by al-Ghazâlî is attachment to the world.

A person may lose his power, his status or his wealth, and if he is attached to all these things, he will become angry. So in treating the cause of the disease of extreme anger one needs to develop inward detachment from the world.

(cf. Chapter 5)

Another emotion is the emotion of love, and as we have noted, love for the world leads to extreme anger. Love for the world is therefore a negative love which should be transformed into a positive love. Anger, therefore, arises out of the emotion of love for what is unnecessary and temporal. Man should develop towards a higher love, love of God. Where love of God should replace the negative love for the temporal things of the world. Love is an emotion, therefore, has both a positive and negative dimension. If something distracts man from his love of God, that love is negative, but if it enhances the love of God, then it is a positive love. (cf. Chapter 5)

The highest spiritual experience of man is the experience of love for God. The believer has a yearning to grow nearer to God, not only in his prayers, supplication and remembrance (dhikr), but in every act and behaviour of his. Man tirelessly strives to seek God's pleasure and acceptance. His love for God transcends every other love. He turns to God alone who possesses every attribute to the highest

degree.

"Say: If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or your children, the wealth that you have earned, the commerce in which you fear a decline, or the dwellings in which you delight or one dearer to you than God, or His Apostle, or the striving in this cause, then wait until God brings about his decision and God guides not the rebellious." (9:24)

"Yet there are men who take (for worship) others besides God, an equal (with God). They love him as they should love God. But those of faith are overflowing in the love for God." (2:165)

Once the believer becomes purified through his love for God, that love becomes the impelling power that directs his entire life, and every other type of love becomes subordinate to this Divine Love. The individual begins to overflow with love for his fellow man, animals and every other element within the creation, for he sees in every existing being around him the manifestations of God's power, beauty and grace, which increases his intuitional yearning for his Creator. It is this type of love for God which really distinguishes man from the animal.

According to Rafi-udin, man's desire for an ideal is the main motivating factor for his existence. The greater the qualities of this ideal, the greater his love for it. Man is looking for an ideal that is free from defect, possessing the perfection of all attributes. It is possible for him to love an ideal that is imperfect as long as he can attribute to it the qualities of beauty and perfection. He may therefore deceive himself into thinking that these qualities do in fact exist. God is the perfect ideal that man is seeking, and if man makes this ideal the objective of his love, then his love will possess unlimited potential for growth. The qualities of beauty, power, goodness, uniqueness, etc. are what make it possible for man to love, admire, adore and serve Him with his total being. Unlike the biological desires, which are fixed, and which the animals share, the desire for an ideal is free and is peculiar to man alone.¹⁰⁰

Love for the temporal realities of the world and a preoccupation with the satisfaction of physical desire are not the object of Islamic psychology. Islamic Psychology seeks to direct the biological and affective nature to higher ends. The Qur'ân does not deny the satisfaction of one's worldly physical needs, but reminds man in the following verse that fear or love of God is better for man than his absorption in the satisfaction of the desires in

the worldly life; for God-consciousness (taqwah) will make him realize the pleasure of God and the beauty of the hereafter. It is this God-consciousness and man's attempt to gain God's pleasure that helps him mainly in the control of his instincts and emotions.

"Fair in the eyes of men is the life of things they covet, women and sons, heaped-up hoards of gold, horses branded for blood and excellence, and wealth of cattle and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life but nearness to God is the best of goals."

Islamic psychology, then, takes into account the affective dimensions of man. It has greater potential than the biological dimension for leading man to his spiritual goal. Islamic psychology provides the guidance based on Qur'ân and the example of the Holy Prophet (SAW) as to how to fruitfully channel the biological and affective nature of man.

5. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

As noted in Chapter 3 the psychological or psychical dimension in man is associated with the nafs, and since nafs constitutes the emotions and desires of man, the psychological dimension of man is directly connected to his

affective dimension. We have mentioned that the affective dimension of man has both a positive and negative aspect to it, as is the case with the psychological dimension which encompasses both the demonic and angelic tendencies of man. Just as man's emotions need to be controlled and channeled for higher spiritual ends, so too with the psychical nature of man needs itself to be disciplined. Although the biological dimension of man is distinctly different from the psychological dimension, it nevertheless serves as an instrument for the tendencies originating in the psyche. The psyche must therefore be trained so that it may become wedded to the spirit. The psychological dimension of man has both a higher and a lower aspect. The lower level of the nafs must become transmuted and transformed into the positive, spiritually higher aspect of the nafs, so that the individual can become liberated from the bondage of the lower nafs with all the affective and biological tendencies influencing it in a negative direction, a direction away from the service of God. The psychological dimension of Islamic psychology therefore, constitutes the dynamic aspect of Islamic psychology, the area in which change and transformation can take place. It is therefore the psychic (nafs) aspect of man which gives Islamic psychology its truly psychological character.

6. THE ETHICAL DIMENSION

In our discussion of fitrah (cf. Chapter 1) we have concluded that man is innately disposed to virtue because he is born in a state of intrinsic goodness. The environment helps to awaken this inherent virtue in a social context. Morality then is the expression of the innate virtue on a social plane. One may therefore distinguish virtue from morality in that while morality is the expression of virtue on a social plane, virtue is an inherent quality of human nature. The ethical dimension, therefore, from the point of view of virtue is derived from human nature itself; and from the point of view of morality is the outcome of external, moral prescriptions from the environment. The moral prescription which is based on Divine revelation accords with man's fitrah and will consequently bring out the natural virtue within man. Islamic psychology therefore has an ethical dimension and is concerned about ethical prescriptions that will make the individual a virtuous person which when his inner nature conforms to his outer behaviour. It is when the individual is a virtuous person that his inner nature conforms to this outer behaviour. When that happens he will be psychologically healthy.

In our discussion of al Ghazâlî (cf. Chapter 5) we have shown that when 'aql' gains supremacy over nafs, the negative

physical tendency in man, then acquires a variety of virtues. If the forces of appetite and anger or the biological and affective dimensions of man gain supremacy over the 'aql through instigation of satan (iblis), then vices occur. In order for man to strengthen himself against the forces of satan, he needs the right knowledge and action. Right knowledge involves faith in God, the Last Day, the knowledge of man's essential nature and right actions which is based on the religious and ethical commandments of God. Some virtues according to al Ghazâlî, are means such as patience and others are means and ends such as absolute reliance on God. Each virtue passes through the phases of knowledge, state and action. (cf. Chapter 5) We shall return to a discussion of virtues and vices again in the section on the therapeutic dimension of man, for virtues are essential for the psycho-spiritual well-being of man.

The ethical discussion of Islamic psychology is therefore connected with innate virtues and divinely prescribed ethical prescriptions. The ethical dimension is an important aspect which Western Psychology has tended to ignore because of its emphasis on self-actualisation, i.e. its individualistic emphasis.

7. THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

The spiritual dimension of Islamic psychology is derived from the essential spiritual nature (rûh) of man. Man attains the highest level of spiritual development (al nafs al mutmainnah) when he has become totally liberated from the negative tendencies of nafs which are being pulled down by the uncontrolled affective and biological forces of man. The true nafs is then transformed into the higher nafs and as a result becomes wedded to the spirit (rûh). The essential spiritual nature of man is freely manifested and embraces the psychological dimension of man, which is now free from the bondage of the lower nafs. Inward peace, freedom and happiness is attained in this world as well as in the next, for, the spirit survives the destruction of the body at death. The spiritual dimension of man is therefore the essential and permanent nature of man which must be given every opportunity to manifest itself even through the Divinely ordained application of the biological and affective dimension of man as well as the bounties given to man in the physical world. Since the spiritual dimension is central to man's nature it is therefore central to Islâmic psychology which is concerned with the spiritual inclination of man. Because of the Islâmic understanding of the way human beings are placed in creation, the spiritual dimension of Islâmic psychology is a vitally important aspect. In secular

Western psychology it is ignored.

8. THE VOLITIONAL DIMENSION

In Chapter 4 we have concluded that man is a limited free being in relation to the absolute freedom of God. He is beset with the limitations of his lower nafs and the challenges of satan's instigation on a cosmological plane. Man's purpose is to face the challenge of evil until he becomes fully liberated from it. Since he is able to reach the highest level of spiritual development, it indicates that he has a real power and freedom to liberate himself from the lower self (nafs) and attain harmony with his fitrah and with God.

Islamic psychology therefore requires man's freedom and out of this recognition we derive the volitional dimension of Islamic psychology. Since man is a free being he is responsible for his actions. Islamic psychology, therefore, acknowledges that man is responsible to God for his actions. This recognition of man's freedom and responsibility influences the attitude of Islamic psychologists to the patient. We shall elaborate on this aspect in the section of the therapeutic dimension of Islamic psychology.

The control and healthy channelling of the biological, affective and psychological dimensions are all made possible through the exercise of man's will - which in turn, is dependent on the power of man's intellect ('aq1). If the intellect is guided by Divine revelation and able to transcend the level of discursive reason, it will be able to contain the truth and reality of God and the power to control the lower tendencies of the psyche (nafs) which has, of course, the biological and affective tendencies acting upon it. If, on the other hand, the will is dominated by forces of anger and appetite (see al-Ghazâlî) then it becomes subject to the instigation of satan and hence too weak to control the biological, affective and psychological dimension in a positive and spiritually fruitful direction.

9. THE THERAPEUTIC DIMENSION

Muslims believe that Islâm is the natural religion (dîn al fitrah) for mankind which is Divinely designed in accordance with man's fitrah, or predisposition to believe and worship God. The Islamic pattern of life aims at enhancing the spiritual inclination of man without neglecting the material and psychical aspect of his nature. Man's instincts and emotions are controlled and channelled according to the Divine commandments, becoming an act of

worship and thus reinforcing his spiritual and ethical life.

Since the Islamic way of life is best adapted to human nature, it follows that it forms the basis for a psychologically healthy and fulfilling life in all its dimensions. It is therefore inherently designed to be preventative of all social-psychological problems. Deviation from the Islamic pattern of life which is tantamount to deviation from man's original nature (fitrah) would therefore be the main cause of mental and spiritual illness. Since Muslims have in fact deviated from the Islamic pattern of life, perhaps due to their own weakness or due to the foreign influences in the environment, it has led to spiritual, moral and psychological difficulties. The problem is more critical with Muslim minorities who are in direct confrontation with a Western dominated environment.

This conflict with the Western dominated environment is due to the tension that exists between Muslim values and traditions and western cultural norms. The potential problems that arise out of this tension are depression, neurosis and alienation. Muslims respond to the impact of Westernization in various ways. Some of them would become totally absorbed into the western way of life, while

others would struggle to retain their Islamic values and traditions.

The psychological problems that Muslim minorities face is often due to their inclination to hold onto Islamic values which conflict with the western dominated trend of living, and with a simultaneous desire to live in harmony with the non-Muslim society. Some Muslims respond to the problem by rejecting the western society which could lead to the problem of alienation. Others identify with the western way of life and consequently lose their Islamic values. A more balanced approach would be, therefore, to retain one's Islamic values and at the same time interact with the outside environment without a sense of inferiority. This interaction with the environment could become so tense and complicated that it is bound to lead to some individuals experiencing psychological problems.

Mental illness may therefore be the outcome of conflicting cultural values. It is advisable that psychiatrists take into account these cultural differences. Many scholars are beginning to realize the need to see the patient in the context of his own cultural and religious experiences. Eugen Vencovsky is one such scholar who comments on psychiatric practice in Iran:

"Modern western psychiatry was brought to Iran in recent decades by psychiatrists abroad, who applied it according to the training received. Some base themselves on psycho-social aspects of psychiatry, others consider psychiatry from medical and biological angles. However approached, it cannot be applied effectively without an adequate knowledge of Iranian culture and psychology and their impact on psychiatry. Such a knowledge can surely be gained over years of practice, but since it will lack the necessary academic precision, a systematic study of the subject is of prime importance. The result of such studies would, no doubt, give a new orientation to the practice of psychiatry, and can serve as guidelines for psychiatrists wishing to practise in Iran."¹¹

We see, therefore, that psychiatric practice is very much in practice in Muslim countries, Iran being a case in point.¹² Professor Eugen Vencovsky points out further that there are certain psychiatric disturbances with specific underlying causes which originate largely from the social and cultural conditions peculiar in Iran. A psychiatrist trained abroad frequently finds himself confronted with a series of psycho-social and cultural problems which often appear puzzling to him if he attempts to solve them according to the psychological training he acquired. According to Professor Vencovsky, Iranian patients manifest their illness within

a particular context.

"The way in which Iranian patients and their families usually manifest their illness, the words, expressions and symbols they use to show a particular condition or emotional state, and the interpretation of a particular conflict situation or a physical or mental symptom, and also the socio-cultural values, are all subject to serious consideration in the psychiatric evaluation of the patient. Not much work has been done in this field and the need is felt for multi-disciplinary research embracing psychiatry, psychology, sociology and ethnology. On the other hand investigations should be made in the domain of normal psycho-social conditions to open up new vistas upon psycho-biological and social conditions necessary for a normal personality development."¹³

One would expect that the Muslim psychologist would deal more appropriately with the problems of the Muslim patient but Malik Badri laments the fact that they merely imitate western approaches to treating the problem of the patient. He accuses them for their uncritical application of western psycho-therapeutic methods. He points out in his popular work, The Dilemma of the Muslim Psychologist, that the western psychiatrist, although he is aware of the role of culture in shaping behaviour, is nevertheless influenced

by his own culture in perceiving his patients.

"In general, western behaviourists and experimentally minded psychologists are aware of the influence which culture plays in shaping the behaviour of the subjects they study. But very few of them are conscious of the role played by the ideological and attitudinal component of their own culture in colouring their perceptions and observations of those subjects."¹⁴

Islamic psychology recognizes that certain psychological problems may be organically related but is perhaps not ready to handle such problems independently. In such instances it turns to western psychology for guidance. Islamic psychology at this stage is therefore mainly concerned with mental problems that arise out of a conflict of religious values and secular materialistic values. In this connection Islamic psychology is not essentially concerned with "mad" people, or psychotics, who are totally cut off from reality. It would treat people who in the West may be considered to be normally adjusted individuals. This is because the concept of deviation and abnormality is understood differently from what is contained in Western psychology. Deviation and abnormality are relative to how far the individual is removed from his natural state of fitrah. Islamic psychology therefore attaches spiritual and ethical

implications to the concept of abnormality and deviation. It is therefore concerned about "normal" people who are spiritually and morally weak or who are in a state of moral conflict to the extent that the individual has become psychologically disturbed.

Islamic psychology is concerned with both the spiritual and the mental welfare of the individual. It seeks to bring about mental health through spiritual and moral well-being. Mental health is therefore not the ultimate goal, but is incidental to the spiritual and ethical objectives of Islamic psychology. It may therefore even be legitimate to refer to Islamic psychology as a "spiritual psychology" or even a "spiritual anthropology".

Although fitrah is universal, deviation from it can be remedied through Islam. Islamic psychology will therefore be more effective with Muslim patients because of their receptivity to Islamic prescriptions. The basic requirements for the efficacy of Islamic therapy is Imân (faith). The stronger the Iman the more willing the patient is to apply the Islamic prescription. This does not mean that Islamic therapy will not benefit the non-Muslim patient. In the first place it is unlikely that he would have faith in Islamic therapy; and secondly, even if he was willing to apply the Islamic prescription, the

benefit would be limited to a certain measure of mental peace. However, to attain spiritual and ethical value, the basic condition of Imân is required.

9.1 ISLAMIC THERAPY

The primary purpose for the so-called "psychotherapeutic tools" in Islam, is spiritual. This does not mean that they do not have a psychological influence. Indeed, the psycho-spiritual development of man depends on the harmonious interaction between the nafs (psyche) and the rûh (spirit), and if there is a dissociation between these two elements then mental and spiritual problems may result. Islamic psychology, then, seeks to bring about a healthy integration between the nafs and the rûh. As we have shown in Chapter 4, when the lower nafs becomes transformed into the higher nafs then the nafs becomes wedded to the spirit. When this is achieved then the individual has attained the highest level of spiritual development (al-nafs al mutmainnah). At this stage he has attained inner peace, and is free from tension and conflict. If there is a breakdown and conflict between the nafs and the rûh then the individual is bound to end up with severe psychological problems.

The psychotherapeutic tools contained in Islam can help the individual help himself in a distressing situation. It works automatically in the lifestyle of a Muslim. However, sometimes the problem is so serious that the individual may need help from a mental health professional. We have already mentioned one major cause of neurosis amongst Muslims, especially those who are confronted with a Western dominated environment. There are numerous other causes that lead to a variety of problems. The type of treatment provided will therefore depend on the nature of the problem and also the type of patient that comes to the psychologist. If, for instance, the patient has lost a dear one, it would be unwise for the mental health professional to prescribe repentance (tawbah) which is meant for one who has sinned. With such a patient the Islamic mental health professional should resort to counselling. The nature of the treatment will therefore depend on the nature of the problem. If the cause of the neurosis is sin or the transgression of Divine law, the mental health professional may prescribe certain psychotherapeutic tools. However, if the cause of the neurosis is on account of the loss of property or a dear one then he should resort to Islamic counselling.

In the following pages we shall deal with the problem of depression. The first patient experienced depression because he had committed a sin. We shall briefly elaborate on the psychotherapeutic tools that can help the patient rid himself of the root cause of his neurosis. The second patient experienced neurosis because of the loss of a dear one or of some wealth or property. We discuss in this section the nature of Islamic counselling as a means of reducing this neurotic state.

9.2 THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC TOOLS IN ISLÂM

The following psychotherapeutic tools may be prescribed to the patient suffering from neurosis on account of extreme guilt caused by a sin that he had committed. The precise nature of the treatment may vary, depending on the type of sin committed. It is not our intention to discuss specific problems that may require specific remedies but to deal with the general problem of neurosis, caused by the transgression of Divine law. If it is a minor sin it is unlikely that it would lead to severe depression, as would a major sin (eg. adultery) leading to severe psychological consequences. We therefore intend to articulate in broad outline the nature of the Islamic psychotherapeutic tools.

TAWBAH (Repentance)

Repentance may be defined as the patient's realization of the sinful act, and his resolution to correct himself. It is therefore the first essential step towards spiritual progress and ethical conduct. There are three stages involved in the process of repentance:

1. Acknowledgement that he has sinned.
2. Remorse that he has sinned.
3. A firm resolve to renounce the sin, and not repeat it.

Tawbah is done only if one has sinned. A true believer is continuously repenting because he is conscious of his imperfection, and in fact a believer repents even for sins or mistakes that he may have committed unconsciously or that he may still do in the future. Repentance is considered to be an essential condition for ultimate happiness, and implies the cleansing of the heart. (cf. Chapter 5)

ISTIGHFAR (Forgiveness) AND DU'A (Supplication)

Tied up with the concept of repentance is the concept of forgiveness. The mental health professional should remind the patient of God's mercy and forgiveness. The believing patient should pray for God's forgiveness. His repentance and seeking of God's forgiveness should be sufficient to

lift the patient from the guilt of his sin, and therefore the cause of his neurosis. The patient should then at the same time express his supplication (duâ) to God, asking Him for guidance to avoid the sin. The supplication to God itself relieves him of tension and anxiety for the believing patient is aware of the verse,

"And your Lord said, call me and I will answer you."

(Ghâfir:60) And if my servant asks me, then verily I am near, I answer the call of the one who calls." (2:186)

ZUHD (Abstinence)

Zuhd is the state of turning away from sin to what is more desirable. Zuhd does not only involve renunciation of worldly pleasure but also removing from the heart the desire for pleasure. The difference between zuhd and tawbah is that whereas tawbah involves abstention from that which is forbidden (ḥarâm) zuhd involves abstention from even that which is permissible (ḥalâl).

Zuhd can only be attained through the knowledge that the pleasure of God is real and permanent compared to the pleasure of this temporal world. The Shaykh, Imâm or the psychologist needs to have reached a certain level of zuhd so that they may effectively guide the patient on

the path of abstinence. The highest motive of zuhd is the love of God. (cf. chapter 5) The fear of the divine punishment and the hope of divine reward are the lower forms of the practice of abstention. Initially, the lower forms of zuhd need to be instilled in the patient. The higher the level of zuhd the more difficult it would be to revert to the original sin.

ṢALĀH (Prayer)

The aim of the psychiatrist is to liberate the patient completely from the inclination to commit the same sin which was the cause of the guilt. Since the practice of zuhd is a means of causing the patient to abandon sin completely, the psychiatrist needs to provide certain prescriptions that could enhance the quality of zuhd in the patient. Islamic psychology provides these positive therapeutic tools. Perhaps the most important is the daily ritual of ṣalāh. The patient may not have been one who prays regularly, but his repentance, his resolution to change and the suggestion of the psychiatrist may give him the needed encouragement and impetus to perform his prayers regularly.

Through prayer one attains God-consciousness. This consciousness of God causes one to perform good deeds and

avoid sin. This is indicated by the following Qur'anic verse :

"Verily the ṣalâh (prayer) keeps you away from all that is detestable and wrong (sinful)." (29:45)

Since ṣalâh is a compulsory pillar in Islam it will not be difficult to get the co-operation from the Muslim patient. The patient's performance of the salah will therefore reinforce in him the attitude of inward detachment from all that is temporal and focus his attention upon God who is permanent. This attitude will protect him from sin and reinforce good action in him.

The ṣalâh involves the submission of the psychical and biological state of man to God, and therefore causes the nafs (psyche) to become embraced by the rûh (spirit), the divine nature of man. Of course, this process does not take place overnight but involves rigorous spiritual discipline and effort on the part of the patient. However, the more harmonious man's psychological dimension is with his spiritual dimension, the more likely he is able to experience that inward peace and mental stability that he needs. According to Dr. G. Karim, when one operates all the time at the lowest level of psycho-spiritual development (al-nafs al ammârah then

"certain stimulus response actions become programmed and the function of the salâh is to erase these ingrained reactions, which, if not checked, can cause them to become permanent, which results in stress hormones to be secreted excessively, resulting in high blood pressure and other diseases of stress, like heart attacks, and gastric ulcers, amongst other ills and neuroses."¹⁵

According to Dr. Karim, prayer does not only prevent physical illness but through the attainment of "homeostasis" or stability "it also leads to the creation of developing positive attitudes: i.e. one has to depend upon Allah to solve one's problems, to ask Him for assistance. These positivistic attitudes remove most of the negative attitudes of helplessness, isolation, uncertainty and mental confusion, which are the major factors causing neurosis and later depression - the most common of the milder mental illnesses afflicting mankind."¹⁶

Salâh involves withdrawal from study, work or sleep five times a day. This process of withdrawal prevents one from losing oneself in the absorption of one's daily routine. It helps one reflect upon oneself, and hence attain that level of self-consciousness which is an important prerequisite for self-discipline and abstinence.

SAWM (Fasting)

Sawm is one of the five pillars of Islam which is performed during the month of Ramaḍân. The believer is commanded to avoid food, drink and sexual indulgence from morning to sunset. Muslims are also encouraged to fast during the course of the year according to the practice of the Prophet (SAW).

The purpose of the fast is to help the believer to control his lower nafs and to transform the negative elements associated with it into positive qualities so that he may attain psycho-spiritual integration (al-nafs al muṭmainnah).

This control over the lower nafs is made possible through increasing God-consciousness which is the purpose of the fast.

"O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed to you as it has been prescribed to those before you so that you may attain God-consciousness."

The mental health professional should prescribe the prayer and the fast so that the patient may attain God-consciousness; the basis for avoiding sin.

DHIKR (Remembrance of God) and Recitation of Qu'ân

A true Muslim does not only remember God during the prescribed times of prayer but at all times. He makes an attempt to increase his remembrance and consciousness of God through the acts of dhikr which involves repetition of God's names. The practice of supplication (duâ), seeking forgiveness (Istighfâr) and the recitation of the Qu'rân are all ways of attaining the remembrance of God. According to the Qur'ânic verse, the remembrance of God brings about tranquility to the heart of the person.

"Those who believe and whose hearts are at rest (tranquil) through the remembrance of Allah. Surely, by the remembrance of Allah the heart finds peace."

(al-ra'd/28)

There is no harm for the Muslim psychologists to even quote the Qur'ânic verse in order to substantiate his basic principles to the patient. It will lead the patient to have more confidence in the prescription. This confidence is essential for its efficacy.

The remembrance of God (dhikr) brings the patient closer to God and strengthens him spiritually. The recitation

of the Qur'ân (Tilâwat al Qur'ân) which is also a form of remembering God should also be encouraged for it helps the patient attain the necessary purification from his lower desires (nafs) and the liberation from insecurity and fear. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself prescribed two chapters of the Qur'ân (Surah al Falaq and al Nâs) for the treatment of undue fears. The chapter which is recited in one's daily prayer (al-Fâtihah) contains a middle verse: "You alone we worship and you alone we ask for help" which is an anchor in lending security and support to those who feel helpless and insecure. The Qur'ân contains many verses which lead to the development of positive attitudes. eg.

"O My servants who transgress their souls, do not despair of the Mercy of Allah, for Allah forgives all sins. He is oft-forgiving, most merciful." (39:53)

Feelings of inadequacy are removed when the patient becomes conscious of the following verse:

"On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear."

The mental health professional should make it incumbent upon himself to take note of certain relevant verses that would help provide relief to the patient. The Qur'ân substantiated this point that it is a revealed book with parts that serve as a healing and a mercy for the believers.

"And we have revealed of the Qur'ân, what is a cure and a mercy for the believers."

In the mental hospital of Taif (a city in Saudi Arabia) it was found in an experiment that listening to recorded tapes of Qur'ânic verses had a better influence on mental patients than conventional methods of treatment. Research into the chemical actions engendered by these verses needs still to be made.

ZAKAT (Poor due) AND SADAQAH (Charity)

We have shown that the psychotherapeutic tools of ṣalah, ṣawm and dhikr, although they have an ethical and spiritual foundation, are also of therapeutic value. Prayer, fasting and remembrance of God reinforce God-consciousness within the patient and help him acquire an attitude of abstinence, initially from sin, and later from things that are lawful in Islâm. These religious

prescriptions help the individual to abandon sin completely and prepare him for positive action which constitutes good deeds. According to a Sunnatic tradition it is suggested that a bad deed should be followed by a good deed or a good act. The good act will then wipe out the bad act.

Sawm and ṣadaqa are often prescribed in the Sharī'ah as a compensation for a sin committed. One difference between zakât and ṣadaqah is that ṣadaqah is a voluntary act that can be performed at any time, whilst zakât is a divinely ordained compulsory duty, its avoidance being punishable. These acts of charity have great spiritual and psychological benefits. They purify one's wealth and one's soul. The patient feels secure in his obedience to God and is relieved from the despression of the sin committed because he has substituted the bad action with a good one. It is imperative that the mental health professional has a knowledge of the Sharī'ah so that he knows when, how and for what reason he should prescribe the zakat and the sadaqah. Charity awakens one to the needs of the less fortunate and cleanses one's soul as indicated in the following verse :

"(Hence, O Prophet) accept that part of their possessions which is offered for the sake of God, so that thou mayest

cleanse them thereby and cause them to grow in purity, and pray for them: Behold, thy prayer will be a source of comfort to them - for God is all hearing, all knowing." (9:103)

Prayer (ṣalâh), fasting (ṣawm) and the poor due (zakâh) are the fundamental pillars of worship (ibadah). The prerequisite for ibâdah is imân (faith) without which the acts of worship have little meaning. All these acts of submission to God inculcates God-consciousness (taqwâh) which is necessary for the abstention of sin and the carrying out of deeds. Salvation in Islâm does not only depend upon imân faith, but also upon good deeds (amal sâlih). The acts of worship in Islâm strengthens one's faith (imân) and prepares one for good deeds.

After the patient has been released from the burden of guilt and depression through repentance and forgiveness, there is no guarantee that he will not revert back to the original sin. The Islâmic therapy outlined here is therefore aimed at treating the cause of the problem rather than the symptoms. Once the patient has abandoned the sin and the desire to commit the sin, his neurosis is unlikely to reoccur.

ISLAMIC COUNSELLING

As stated earlier, transgression of Divine law is an important cause of depression although not the only cause. Depression can be caused by rejection from others, the loss of wealth, property or a dear one, among other factors. The psycho-therapeutic tools that we apply for overcoming sin are not necessarily all relevant for application to a loss of wealth or a dear one.

Sometimes the Muslim mental health professional only needs to talk to the patient who needs to have his attitude changed. The advice given to the patient can come from an Imâm, Shaykh or a psychologist. They all play the role of the Muslim mental health professional. This advice may be referred to as "Islamic counselling".

TAWAKKUL (Trust in God)

By tawakkul is meant total dependence on God. Although man should make the effort because he is a free and responsible being, he should leave the result of his efforts to God. This concept of tawakkul helps the individual accept his inevitable destiny. It is connected to the belief in predestination. Some patients are more predestinarian in their outlook whilst others are more libertarian in their

attitude. The Muslim mental health professional will have to give advice in accordance to the particular philosophical orientation of the patient. If the patient is more predestinarian in outlook, he would be more receptive to the advice of placing trust in God (tawakkul). Let us assume that the patient lost a dear one. This could lead to depression and the patient may need to talk to someone, a friend, an Imam or even a psychiatrist. Depression on account of the loss of a dear one is common among Muslims. This is understandable because the average Muslim family is very closely knit, and there are strong bonds of attachment amongst members of the family. Sometimes there is an overdependence of the child on the parent, and the high mutual expectations could lead to much disappointment if not fulfilled. How do we then deal with a patient who lost his mother, his father or someone dear to him? Very often the patient is not prepared to accept the inevitable reality of death. In this respect the Muslim mental health professional should remind the patient of the inevitable reality of death, and that he should accept the facts of life which are beyond his control. There is a higher Power over the destinies of men, the wisdom of which cannot be questioned. The patient must learn to put his trust in God's will and resign himself to the reality of his loss. In fact, he should accept his inevitable

circumstances with patience and faith, a test from God.

Counselling the patient to accept the Islamic attitude of tawakkul will help him accept the fact of death as part of Divine decree. This will, hopefully, then, put the patient at ease and lift him from his depression.

SHUKR (Gratitude) AND ŞABR (Patience)

If for instance, the patient is depressed because of a loss of wealth in business, the mental health professional may alleviate him from depression by instilling within him the attitude of tawakkul (trust in God). If the patient can realize that the result of his efforts is not in his hands, but in the hands of God, he will learn to accept his loss of wealth. He should face his loss with patience (sabr) in the knowledge that God is the one who provides and he must continue to express his gratitude (shukr) to God for the bounties that God has already bestowed upon him. The concept of patience (sabr) and gratitude (shukr) is tied up with the attitude of tawakkul and is frequently mentioned in the holy Quran.

"Seek assistance through patience and prayer, for indeed it is difficult, except for humble ones." (2:45)

"O you who believe seek assistance through patience and prayer, for verily Allah is with those who are patient."

A believer ought to be patient in times of adversity. He is not seriously affected by loss but continues to express gratitude (shukr) to God. Ibrâhîm ibn Adham, the Saint from Balkh was asked what his view of patience and gratitude was; he said:

"Verily, if we find anything good which we like for ourselves we prefer it for others, and if we do not, we are still thankful to Allah."¹⁸

It may even be effective for the mental health professional to remind the patient of certain relevant Quaranic verses. For instance, God tests man's imân (faith) and ṣabr (patience in times of loss and adversity).

"And We will certainly test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of property, lives, and fruits. And give glad tidings to the patient ones." (2:155)

In such a case of loss of property or a dear one, the Muslim psychologist could resort to Islâmic counselling in order that the patient may acquire contentment through

the attitudes of tawakkul, ṣabr and shukr. It is expected that the patient will accept his fate, and face the world with new vigour, with trust in God and constant gratitude to Him.

The psychotherapeutic tools and the Islamic attitudes discussed above are not intended to be exhaustive, nor is it intended to provide a blueprint for an Islamic model of therapy. The aim of this section is merely to provide general guidelines for such a model. We submit that it is imperative that the psychiatrist takes into account these psychotherapeutic tools and Islamic attitudes when treating non-organically related psychological problems of Muslim patients.

ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGY CONTRASTED WITH WESTERN PSYCHOLOGY

1. Whereas Western psychology is based on empirical findings, Islamic psychology is based on a metaphysical foundation which is contained in Divine Revelation. Man is expected to fulfill his role as Khalîfa through submission to the will of God.

2. Western psychology recognizes the faculties of heart (qalb) and intellect ('aql) as representing the functions of human consciousness. This consciousness can transcend the limitations of discursive reasoning; capable of direct perception of God. Western psychology tends to ignore the higher levels of consciousness.

3. In addition to the psychological and biological dimension of man recognized by Western psychology, Islamic psychology recognizes the spiritual dimension contained in the rûh (spirit). Whereas Islamic psychology seeks to discipline the psychological and physiological inclinations (nafs) of man for the purpose of high spiritual ends, (nafs al mutmainnah), Western psychology ignores this aspect and focuses on psychological stability. Those Western psychologists who recognize the importance of religion (e.g. Jung) for psychological stability, view religion as a means to an end, that is,

to mental health. By contrast, Islamic psychology does not view religion as a means to mental health, but as a means to spiritual growth, mental health being only the consequence of that growth, not an end in itself.

Islamic psychology is therefore essentially spiritual in its orientation. It would therefore also be legitimate to refer to it as a "spiritual psychology".

4. Although Islamic psychology recognizes the volitional dimension of man, man's freedom is relative in relation to the absolute freedom of God. Since man is free he is also responsible for his actions. By contrast, Western psychology in its deterministic outlook tends to ignore the concept of human responsibility (esp. Behaviourism and Freudian psycho-analysis). However, the humanistic and existentialistic schools of psychology do recognize human responsibility, although responsibility in these schools tends to be the individual's responsibility to himself. By contrast, the Islamic view of human responsibility rests upon the belief of man's accountability to God. This sense of accountability to God is the spiritual dynamic that exercises profound influence on the attitude and behaviour of the individual. Connected to this view of responsibility is the concept of moral responsibility which is determined by the Sharî'ah.

5. The volitional dimension of man introduced us to the Islamic approach to therapy. Whereas Western psychology (esp. Freudian psycho-analysis) is descriptive and past-orientated, Islamic therapy is prescriptive and future orientated. Islamic psychology seeks to change the future behaviour of the patient through definite divinely ordained prescriptions. (See the section of psycho-therapeutic tools in Islâm). Islamic therapy seeks to strengthen the "conscience" of the patient rather than eliminating it. The "conscience" plays a positive role in motivating the patient to conform to certain religious and moral norms. Contemporary psychiatry depends upon anti-depressive drugs, such as lithium. While these may be useful in certain cases, they are certainly inadequate in treating depression that arises, for instance, out of transgression of the Divine Law. In such cases Islamic therapy treats the cause of the problem rather than the symptom. The patient is expected to confess his sin and repent as the first step towards future change of behaviour. Once he has taken responsibility for his actions, he is ready to change. The Muslim mental health professional suggests prescriptions that would increase his sense of God-consciousness and accountability to God. We have already explained how this sense of God-consciousness prevents the committing of sin and encourages the performance of good actions. For the patient to become

worthy of himself, he must live up to certain religious and moral standards. Although the Muslim psychiatrist must empathise with the patient, at no stage should the therapist allow the patient to manipulate him into anything which implies an acceptance of responsibility. This approach, therefore, contrasts with the non-prescriptive tendency found in contemporary psychiatry.

CONCLUSION

Having systematically established the Islamic conception of human nature, and the dimensions of Islamic psychology derived from this conception, we have left open a wide arena to assess the value and validity of the classical, religious and the modern secular tools of therapy. As long as the Islamic religious foundation for Islamic psychology is presented in an authentic and systematic manner, there is no reason to believe that the other psychological approaches cannot also make a contribution. The secular therapeutic techniques may prove useful only once the religious foundation in its orthodox formulation is established. This thesis claims to be a step in the direction of establishing this foundation. It is the conviction of the present author than an attempt at integrating Western therapeutic techniques into an Islamic model of therapy will not prove fruitful unless a systematic Islamic critique of Western psychology's perspective of human nature be undertaken. If the present dissertation serves as a foundation for such a critique, it would have fulfilled its purpose.

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