



Laleh Bakhtiar

Quranic Psychology OF THE Self

A Textbook on Islamic
Moral Psychology
(*ilm al-nafs*)

Introduction by
Seyyed Hossein Nasr

After her pioneering works on moral healing through the Most Beautiful Names and the Psychology of Spiritual Chivalry, in the Quranic Psychology of the Self, Dr. Bakhtiar shows that the Quranic science of the soul explores far deeper layers of the human soul than modern psychology and the different results its application produces. She proves that if the soul is routed in meta-cosmic Reality, then the means to know it would naturally have meta-cosmic roots. As the verbatim Word of God, the Quran provides what this means. This two volume book of Dr. Bakhtiar will remain, in my opinion, the most important source on the science of the soul from the Islamic point of view for many years to come, not only for its depth of theoretical discussion but also for its applicability for all practitioners in the fields of psychology, counseling, and faith based healing. This is a major accomplishment for which Dr. Bakhtiar must be acknowledged and congratulated. —Mohammad H. Faghfoory, Professor & Director, Graduate Program in Islamic Studies, George Washington University

Laleh Bakhtiar's book is a significant addition to philosophical psychology. Through a distinctive intellectual argument, she addresses the most controversial issues concerning the human being, its origin and destiny, soul-body relation and soul's substantial evolution from its bodily origin to its rational state. Despite being a rational investigation into the science of psychology, the author has remarkably integrated her arguments into interpretation of Quranic verses on the human being. —Sayyed Khalil Toussi, editor-in-chief at Isthmus Press in London, and the Author of Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra and Ethical theories in Transcendent Philosophy

Dr. Bakhtiar's textbooks on Quranic Psychology provides a groundbreaking and elaborate presentation of psychology as it is known through the revelation of Islam. This work makes an important case that each of the world's religions provides a corresponding sacred and integral psychology for mental health and well-being, human growth and development in divinis. The psychology, as it is known through Islamic ethics, provides a complete psychology or 'science of the soul' for each human being to realize: 'Surely we belong to God, and to Him we return.'

(Q2:156) This textbook will be a valuable resource for students, professors, educational institutions, and mental health professionals as it offers a powerful return of psychology to its transcendent origins, no longer relying upon the tyranny of modern psychology and its reductionistic science. —Samuel Bendeck Sotillos, editor of Psychology and the Perennial Philosophy and author of Behaviorism: The Quandary of a Psychology without a Soul and Psychology Without Spirit: The Freudian Quandry.

Bakhtiar's work is a clear, concise, and accessible summary and analysis of key concepts and technical terms of Islamic moral psychology. Her work engages important primary and secondary texts in Islamic Studies, and is a welcome contribution to a rich but understudied and underappreciated field of Islamic thought. Yousef Casewit, Chair of Islamic Studies, University of Chicago Divinity School

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Preface

Quranic Psychology is a Science

Quranic Psychology is a science that differs significantly from modern psychology, but, at the same time, meets the same criteria for a science. There are three criteria for a body of knowledge to be called a "science":

First, it has to have a definite subject-matter (that is, the Quranic view of "self" and its components and functions) and the nature and activities of the thinking subject (that is, Muslims); secondly, that it possesses a systematic, organized and effective method (that is, Moral Psychology); thirdly, that it comprehends a systematized body of general truths (that is, the divine word revealed to Prophet Muhammad).¹

Quranic Psychology is the science of the self or *nafs*—when the word *nafs* is used reflexively in the Quran. Our "self" consists of body, soul and spirit or, as described in Part I of this textbook: Soul-body, soul evolving from the animal soul to the human soul and soul-spirit/intellect.

Our spirit (*ruh*, masculine noun) is that which God breathed into us creating the potential for three energies that activate our soul (*nafs*, feminine noun) and give us our ability to reason (*'aql*, masculine noun). It is through our *ruh* that God breathed into the first human being (*Adam*) and the generative organs of all the progeny and our *'aql*, its earthly counterpart, that we reason.

Our soul is that by which we develop consciousness, feel, think, know and will and by which our body is animated, as our body is the instrument governed by our soul. "Soul" differs from both mind (*sadr*) and spirit (*ruh*) as a different term is used for each in the Quran.

The Quran refers to four aspects of our soul, namely: *nafs al-ammarah* (animal or animate soul), *nafs al-mulhamah* (inspired soul that is also referred to as *qalb*, consciousness), *nafs al-lawwamah* (blaming soul that is also referred to as *fu'ad*, conscience) and *nafs al-mutma'innah* (soul at peace that is also called *'aql* or intellect, reason). The Quran does not refer to *nafs al-natiqah* (rational soul) or *nafs al-insaniyyah* (human soul), but these are terms used in traditional philosophy.²

Quranic Psychology is a Sacred Science

Quranic Psychology is a sacred science because it begins and ends with God. Our soul (*nafs*) and its component parts, along with our spirit (*ruh*), make up our inner self, known as the microcosm, connecting us outwardly

through the grades of the macrocosm back to God, the Source of all the signs in the universe as well as within our "self."

Quranic Psychology Draws Upon Multiple Sciences with Quranic Roots

As we will see through the following modules, Quranic Psychology, known as the science of the soul (*'ilm al-nafs*), draws upon many of the sciences that developed from the Quran including, among others, the sciences of metaphysics, medicine, cosmology, theology, ethics, natural philosophy and other branches of philosophy.

Metaphysics

This work indicates the importance of the branch of philosophy known as metaphysics. Here in this Preface,, as well as in the present text, we only have to turn to the work of the great 17th century philosopher, Sadr al-Din Shirazi, about whom a well-known contemporary philosopher, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, says:

(Sadr al-Din Shirazi) removed the discussion of psychology from physics or natural philosophy and made it a branch of metaphysics and a study that is complementary to the science of the origin of things.³

Quranic Psychology deals with metaphysical questions as we search for meaning in life: What thing are you? From where have you come? Where will you go? For what work have you come to this dwelling place? Why were you created? What and where is happiness? What and from where lies your misery? These are questions of profound interest to us now and in the past to those who went before us. Quranic Psychology, incorporating metaphysical principles, can help us answer these and other questions as we explore our purpose in life where the goal is to know our "self" as one of God's signs which each and everyone of us is.

We will cause them to see Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is The Truth. (Q41:53)

Cosmology

The science of cosmology is concerned with the four elements and their qualities in understanding the relationship between the cosmos and our earth.⁴

The sublunar world is where the four classical elemental principles (fire, air, water and earth) and their qualities (hot, cold, moist, dry) exist in what is called the world of generation and corruption or contrast and change.

What was the movement of the cosmic forces of nature in the sublunar region that created the world of contrast and change?

This world was created by the movement of the power of nature. From this motion, a great deal of heat was generated which caused the body of the earth to expand. This expansion caused dryness. Thereby, a substance called fire (hot and dry) came into being. Separated by the expansion, it became cold. The cold caused opaqueness and subsequently, dryness. Out of these qualities of dryness and cold the element earth was formed. Whatever of the body remained was bound by the earth below and fire above. The half near the fire became warm without there being any separation among its parts, since the heat was not excessive. Therefore, a new element comprised of the qualities of heat and moisture, called air, came into being. The other half near the earth became cold, but since this coldness was not excessive it did not condense, so that an element consisting of the qualities of moisture and cold, called water, was formed. In this way the four principles (*arkan*) of all sublunary bodies were generated.

The progressive 'coagulation' of the elements terminates with extreme differentiation, and the process of emanation reaches its terminal point. Henceforth, the movement is no longer a drawing away from the principle but a return to it, not an emanation, but a love, by which all things are attracted to the source of all Being.

The elements in mixing together reach a degree of harmony which permits the descent of the lowest form of soul upon them. This descent brings into being the minerals enlivened by the mineral soul and the power to preserve forms. This is the lowest kingdom of the physical domain. In the mineral kingdom itself, subtleness increases until in the jewels, the highest members of this domain, the 'fire of the soul' is much stronger than in stones or mud.

In the coral, the first stage of the plant kingdom is reached enlivened by the plant or vegetative soul and the powers of self-nourishment, growth and reproduction. The increase in perfection of the mixture of elements permits a new soul, or more precisely a new [power] of the soul to descend upon it. This new power, and not the elements or their manner of combination, is responsible for the characteristics that distinguish the plant world from the mineral. In the plant kingdom, also, there is a hierarchy in which perfection increases, reaching its highest degree in the palm tree, which already possesses certain features of animals.

With increasing perfection in the mixing of the elements, again a new power of the soul—this time called the animal soul and the powers of motivation and sensation/perception—enters the stage of the cosmic play and manifests itself in ever greater degree from the snail to the monkey, which even resembles the human being in certain of his features.

The hierarchy of being rises with the degree of perfection to the stages of the human being.... In each case a new soul or the power of the soul comes into play. There are also stages above that of humanity, including the stage of the spiritual soul through which the Active Intellect is reached, and finally the highest stage, that of the saints and prophets, which itself comprises numerous angelic worlds: *There is not any of us but he has a known station.* (Q37:164)

The end of the whole cosmic process is God from whom all things began. Creation, therefore, comes from God and returns to Him.⁵

Medicine and Medicine of the Prophet

It is interesting to note that traditional medicine is one of the most important sciences that draws upon the Quran as it deals with our human soul-

body, its formation and healing. While we discuss the soul-body in Part I, here it is important to take notice of the parallels between traditional medicine, especially the Medicine of the Prophet, and Quranic Psychology.

We find the concepts developed in this textbook not only have origins in Quranic signs, but in the *sira* concerning the life and Medicine of the Prophet (*Tibb al-nabi*) as well. One of the most important texts on traditional medicine of the Prophet was compiled by al-Suyuti from the Hadith. He begins his discourse by describing seven essential components that are studied and treated in Prophetic Medicine, saying:

The human constitution is concerned with seven components. The first component is the elements which are four in number—fire, which is hot and dry, air which hot and wet, water which is cold and wet, and earth which is cold and dry. The second component is the temperaments which are nine in number.... Next among the seven components come the four humours.... The fourth is the fundamental organs. The fifth is the spirits. The sixth is the faculties and they are three in number—the natural, the vital and the neural. The seventh and last component is the functions and they are two: the function of attraction to pleasure (*quwwat al-shah-waniyyah*) and the function of avoidance of pain (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*).⁶

Some four hundred and forty years later, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya also wrote a well-known *Medicine of the Prophet (Tibb al-nabi)*. Ibn Jawziyya divides traditional medicine into two parts: Sickness of the heart (consciousness, *qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*) and sickness of the body, both mentioned in the Quran. Sickness of hearts is of two kinds: Sickness of uncertainty and doubt (cognitive) and sickness of desire and temptation (affective/emotive). These two types of sickness can be considered as a development of Quranic Psychology which recognizes how the "heart," referred to in the Quran as the *qalb*, relates to that which psychology calls consciousness, the *nafs al-mulhamah*, the inspired soul as is explained further in the text.

In their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) there is a sickness. Then God increased them in sickness.... (Q2:10)

Say those in whose consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) there is a sickness and the ones who are ungrateful: What did God want by this example? (Q74:31)

In regard to those who are called to accept judgment in accord with the Quran and the *sunna*, but who refuse and turn away as they exhibit the sickness of uncertainties and doubts, Ibn Qayyim refers to the following Quranic sign:

When they are called to God and His Messenger to give judgment among them, then a group of people among them are ones who turn aside. But if they would be in the right, they would approach him as ones who are yield-

ing. Is there a sickness in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah)? Or were they in doubt? Or be they fearful that God and His Messenger will be unjust to them? Nay! Those, they are the ones who are unjust. (Q24:48-24:50)

In regard to the second type of sickness, that of the sickness of desires and temptations, he quotes:

Be not soft in your saying so that he should be desirous (nafs al-ammarah), in whose consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is a sickness, but say a saying of one who is moral. (Q33:32)

Ibn al-Jawziyya continues:

As for Medicine of the Prophet, this has been entrusted to the Messengers, God's blessings and peace upon them. There is no means of obtaining this, except through their teaching and at their hands. For the soul at peace (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*) is obtained through recognition of our Lord (*rabb*) and Creator, His Names and Qualities, His actions and judgments. It should prefer what He approves of and loves (through our attraction to pleasure or affect/emotive component (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) of our animal soul or *nafs al-ammarah*), and should avoid what He forbids and dislikes (through our avoidance of pain/harm or behavioral component (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*) of our animal soul or *nafs al-ammarah*). Only thus can true health and life be found, and there is no path to acquire these save through the Messengers (and what was revealed to them). Any idea that health can be achieved except by following them is an error on the part of the one who so thinks unless he only means the life and health of his animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) and its desires, while the life of his "heart," its health and strength, are totally ignored. If anyone does not distinguish between the one and the other, he should weep over the life of his "heart" (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah* or consciousness), as it should be counted among the dead, and over its light, for it is submerged in the seas of darkness.⁷

Similar to al-Suyuti, Ibn Qayyim mentions the importance of the nature given essentials including the four elements, the four humours, the four temperaments, and the three faculties or powers as well as the importance of food and diet in the healing process.⁸

There is a unity in Prophetic Medicine that is equally apparent in Quranic signs which were always incorporated into the Medicine of the Prophet:

... Needless to say, traditional Prophetic Medicine functioned in a world in which unity reigned and spirit, soul and body had not become totally separated with the former two being cast aside as irrelevant, as in the case of much of modern medicine. This medicine saw an integral relationship between the spirit and the soul, on the one hand, and the soul and the body on the other as seen in the classical works of Avicenna. Herein is to be found another dimension of the significance of the Medicine of the Prophet in which the concerns of the spirit and the soul are natu-

rally even more central than those of the body whose health is nevertheless of great importance according to (Prophetic) teachings, bodily health being itself closely linked to the health of the soul as the health of the soul depends upon the degree to which it is able to conform itself to the world of the spirit. The interrelation between the domains of the spirit, the soul and the body is to be seen directly in works devoted to the Medicine of the Prophet themselves.⁹

In regard to our body and its being the subject of *The Canon of Medicine* by Avicenna,¹⁰ it most often includes the Seven Nature-Given Essentials as: Giver of Form or *al-Musawwir*; our Breath; Innate Heat and Radical Moisture from the male and female seminal fluids; Innate Human Nature (*fitrat Allah*); the Elements and their Elemental Qualities; the Humours (*'alaq*); and our Temperament (*mizaj*) followed by the Six Nurture-Giving Essentials including the effects of: Air and the Environment; Exercise, Rest and Massage; Sleep and Wakefulness; Retention and Evacuation; Psychological Emotional Factors; and Dietetics. We have included the Six-Nurture Giving Essentials, but have separated the Seven-Nature-Giving qualities into the three emergent aspects of the soul, namely, soul-body, soul evolving from the animal soul to the human soul and soul-spirit/intellect.

Theology

The spirit God breathed within us as well as the other Quranic mention of spirit and spirits is studied in traditional theology and philosophy and the three powers that it enlivened: the vital (*quwwat al-haywaniyyah*), natural (*quwwat al-tabi'iyyah*) and neural (*quwwat al-nafsaniyyah*). Our spirit (*ruh*, masculine noun) provides us with our vital energy which then awakens our other energies (natural and neural) when God breathed His spirit within us.

Ethics

Our human soul (*nafs al-insaniyyah*) is studied in traditional philosophy as the science of the soul (*'ilm al-nafs*) as well as in the science of ethics (*'ilm al-akhlaq*). It is traditionally a part of what came to be known as practical wisdom or reason (*hikmat al-'amali*). Practical wisdom includes the sciences of economics, politics and ethics, this last being of major concern in this textbook.

Ethics, for example, is considered to be the paramount practical science according to al-Ghazzali.

Ethics is knowledge of the soul, its properties and moral traits.¹¹

While Quranic Psychology studies our emotions, thoughts or mental states and behavior. Quranic Psychology includes our mental states as natural processes whereby it describes them, classifies them, explains their origins and comes to know their modes of action. It studies, for example, how we acquire habits, retain our power of memory and train other aspects of "self" as a subject.

Natural Philosophy

Our human soul is also part of the study of the natural philosophy that includes our human soul's incorporation of the mineral (*nafs al-ma'adaniyyah*), plant (*nafs al-nabatiyyah*) and animate or animal (*nafs al-ammarah*) souls, all of which we share with animals as aspects of nature as an aspect of Quranic Psychology.

Natural philosophy is a branch of philosophy that studies the laws of nature that can be recalled in a particular way as *signs upon the horizons and within ourselves*. (Q41:53) Under the influence of Quranic signs/verses, Muslim scholars "explained natural phenomena by recourse to the four elements, the four qualities, the four humours, the three powers (vital, natural and neural) and their organs, the localization of the soul's parts in different organs of the body, the distinction between the sublunar and the heavenly universe and the circular movement of the heavenly spheres...."¹²

From Philosophy to Theosophy

It was not until the 17th century that Sadr al-Din Shirazi (d 1640 CE), a contemporary of Descartes (d 1650 CE) in the West, includes the science of psychology as a branch of metaphysics and names it *Hikmat* (Theosophy):

(One) of the important changes which Sadr al-Din brought about in the formulation of *Hikmat* (Theosophy) was the emphasis he laid upon the importance of psychology or the science of the soul.¹³

In addition, Sadra's works on psychology are replete with references to Quranic verses which is vital in understanding Quranic moral psychology. Here are some philosophical views propounded by Sadra based on Quranic verses that are important to psychology:¹⁴

Principality of Existence: There is nothing that exists except the divine existence and His actions as forms and manifestations of His Names and Qualities. God is a simple reality possessing all existential perfections which emanate from Him to the creatures. He is the whole of existence and He is nothing but existence.

The first goal in knowing our "self" is to know that we exist and that God is Existence and therefore the source of the world of command and the world of creation.

The soul is physical in its origination and spiritual in its survival: The soul is bodily in origin and spiritual in its subsistence.

Substantial Motion: All material substances, both heavenly and earthly, are essentially in motion, change and renewal.

Our body is constantly in a state of change and motion within its substance itself on its return back to the earth. In no two instants is it the same.

Our soul is also in continuous movement evolving towards the goal of its return to the eternal, spiritual world.

The correspondence of the worlds of form and meaning: God created in the world of form whatever He created in the world of meaning.¹⁵

Hikmat becomes the basis of moral psychology because now, not only psychologists, but philosophers, as well, have to work on themselves in their attempt to morally heal any moral imbalances they may have through purifying their soul.

Sadr synthesized and unified the three paths that lead to the Truth:

... the Quranic revelation, rational demonstration, and purification of the soul. He made purification of the soul a necessary basis and complement of the study of *Hikmat* (Theosophy, Wisdom), thereby bestowing upon philosophy the practice of ritual and spiritual/moral virtues which it had lost in the period of decadence of classical civilization.¹⁶

The fourth book of one of Sadra's most famous works, *al-Asfar*, is devoted totally to psychology:

The fourth book of the *Asfar* deals with the soul, its origin, becoming, and end.... Rational demonstration or philosophy ... becomes closely tied to the Quran and the *sira*.¹⁷

God is the same Reality in everything that exists, but where one commanded or created thing differs from another, it is due to the weakness or intensity of its existence:

Existence is a single reality but with gradations and degrees of intensity. Just as we say the light of the sun, the light of a lamp, or the light of a glowworm, and mean the same subject, i.e., light, but with different predicates, i.e., under different conditions of manifestation, so in the case of Existence, the existence of God, of a man, of a tree, or of a heap of earth are all one Existence or one reality but in various degrees of intensity of manifestation. Moreover, Existence, no matter where it manifests itself, appears always with its attributes or armies, as they are traditionally called, such as knowledge, will, power, etc. A stone, because it exists, is a manifestation of Existence and, therefore, has knowledge, will, power, and intelligence like men or angels. However, since at the level of a stone the manifestation of Existence is very weak, these attributes are hidden and not perceptible.¹⁸

Sadra's concept of substantial motion is "one of the distinguishing features of his moral/spiritual psychology" as he refers to all forms of motion as change resulting in a constant "new creation":

... the world is like a stream of water which is flowing continually. Motion is nothing but the continuous regeneration and re-creation of the world at every instant. It is not only the accidents, but the substance of the universe itself that partakes of motion and becoming, i.e., continuous re-creation and rebirth.¹⁹

When Sadra speaks of knowledge and intellection, he says: The first seed of the universe was the intellect and the last stage is also the intellect which is the fruit of that same tree.²⁰ Sadra is also referring to the spirit-intellect that was breathed into Adam and the generative organs of the progeny of Adam (Q7:172). The final stage of the soul, after its birth with the body as soul-body, and its moving from animal to human is described in this work as soul-spirit/intellect, based in our reaching our cognitive powers through knowledge—intuitive and acquired.

Quranic Psychology

It is the task of this textbook to bring the relevant parts of these various sciences into a new science called Quranic Psychology.

The textbook discusses each of the three—body, spirit, soul—in great detail as they relate to affect, behavior and cognition or the ABC of the self, the three systems with which psychology concerns itself. Affect includes the motivational aspects of our *nafs al-ammarah* or "attraction to pleasure" (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) and our emotions. Behavior includes the motivational aspects of our *nafs al-ammarah* or "avoidance of harm/pain" (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*), our willpower (*iradah*) and free willpower (*ikhti-yar*). Sensation and perception are also part of our motivational system as our human soul takes control of our energies and enlivens our motivational functions.

Our cognitive system includes cognition itself. Our cognitive system works through our rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah* or '*aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*) and includes our mind (*sadr*), consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*), conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*) and reason or intellect ('*aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*).

The major role of our *nafs al-mutma'innah* or rational soul/spirit-intellect, also known as reason, is to attain Unity (*tawhid*) by our returning to or re-activating our *fitrat Allah*. Our mind (*sadr*) controls the whisperings and temptations of our irrational animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*). In addition, we are blessed with our *nafs al-lawwamah* (*fu'ad*, conscience) and our *nafs al-mulhamah* (*qalb*, consciousness). The struggle of our free willpower (*ikhti-yar*), consciousness, conscience and reason with our passions in order to perfect the self is considered to be the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*).

Quranic Psychology and the Science of Signs

He taught Adam (the human being) the names, all of them. (Q2:31)

God taught him the names of everything. By the "names of everything" we infer that it means the knowledge (*al-'ilm*) of everything.

By knowing the names of things, we can recognize signs. The Quran teaches us through its signs, both outer and inner functioning as pointers to the providential

purpose at all levels of creation. Thus the Quran makes frequent references such as 'signs for a people who understand—exercise their intellect'. This evidential role of the divine signs entails an accompanying demand placed upon humans to engage in a rational understanding of the signs and draw conclusions on the discovery of truth and correct guidance.²¹

Signs Upon the Horizons and Within Themselves

The Quran teaches an essential doctrine of the *ayat* (God's signs in the universe) functioning as pointers to the providential purpose at all levels of creation.

The human reception of the signs, thus, depends ultimately upon the integrity of reason, without which humans would be incapable neither of comprehending the signs nor of responding to their message. The more abundant an individual's native endowment of reason, the greater is the possibility for him or her to attain a larger magnitude of understanding and a higher level of response.

The nexus between faith and reason, thus, constitutes the hallmark of intelligent understanding, wherein human intellect and emotions are guided toward harmony with one another. The Quran repeatedly provokes its reciters to think about the signs of God in the universe and within themselves, to understand God's illustrious presence in them, and ultimately to vindicate the truth. The word *ayah* and its plural *ayat* occur in the Quran over 400 times, although the whole of the Quran introduces itself as a collection of signs or *ayat*.²²

On the earth are signs, for the ones that are certain and in yourselves. Will you not, then, perceive? (Q51:20-51:21)

God reveals the truth in a variety of ways, some explicit and others by allusion, the latter mainly through the modality of the signs, in order to provoke and engage the human intellect. The signs of God cannot be readjusted off the face of the signs but require thinking and reflection. This is indicated in the phrase: *We will cause them to see Our signs* ... which suggests that the signs may not be instantaneously visible to the naked eye. The whole concept of signs seeks to forge a dynamic relationship between revelation and reason:

A sign is also a portent and allusion to something other than itself and should not therefore be seen as the final message and purpose of the revelation containing it.²³

It is a blessed Book that We caused to descend to you, so that they meditate on its signs and those imbued with intuition recollect. (Q38:29)

The Covenant Between Our Self and God

Among the Quranic signs is the Covenant we made with God.

Mention when your Lord took from the Children of Adam—from their generative organs—their offspring and called to them to witness of them—

selves: Am I not your Lord? and they bore witness. They said: Yea! We bear witness.... (Q7:172)

As the last creation of the Creator, we occupy a special place in nature because—from all of nature—God breathes His spirit within our "self" alone. It is this infusion of the divine spirit, which allows our self to become conscious of self, an advantage no other aspect of nature has. Therefore, even though all of nature, the universe, and the cosmos are divinely created from the combination of natural elements and their qualities, only our human form has consciousness of self and this, the Quran tells us happened when we accepted the covenant with our Lord (Rabb).

The sign of the covenant (Q7:172) refers to a people who may live at any time in any place, ones who read or know first hand about those who, in spite of having sufficient understanding to lead them to the truth, assume the state of "ignorance" (*jahl*) by rejecting or ignoring a belief that could make their understanding become a guiding light. In terms of description, we see how those who have minds, ears and eyes understand nothing.

At the same time there is an inspirational dimension whereby we use our powers to reflect and think about the signs. When we become aware of the covenant, we contemplate God's creation and how in the distant past we had accepted that God was our Lord. We may ask ourselves how this event occurred and contemplate on how the first Muslims understood it.²⁴

However we imagine it to have been, God gives us the reason for the revelation of the covenant:

... so that you not say on the Day of Resurrection: Truly, we had been ones who were heedless of this. (Q7:172)

There can be no excuse for deviating from this covenant when asked about our intentions on the Day of Judgment.

The Trust Between Our Self and God

In the Quranic perspective, the gift of consciousness (*qalb*) was granted to our potential self when we accepted the covenant and the trust of the heavens and the earth:

We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it, and the human being carried it. (Q33:72)

The human response to the divine call of protecting His trust²⁵ is to become His 'vicegerent' (*khalifah*) on earth and thus submit to God, which is the literal meaning of Islam. In the formal religious language, this submission is called '*ibadah*, wor-

ship, the supreme human act that transcends the limitations of human existence and binds us to the absolute and the infinite.²⁶

Following the commands of God's signs in nature and within our self, we are responsible for carrying out God's will so that all of nature be allowed to "balance" or "center" our self" by completing the perfection of nature in its mode of operation as another sign says:

He gave unto everything its nature, and further, gave it guidance. (Q20:50)

In order for a trustee to perform the trust, and viceregents to rule with justice and complete the perfection of nature, we begin by knowing "self," awakening to the "self" as it really is.

When your Lord said to the angels: Truly I am assigning on the earth a viceregent. They said: Will You be one who makes on it someone who will make corruption in and on it and will shed blood, while we glorify Your praise and sanctify You. He said: Truly I know what you know not. (Q2:30)

As such, the weighty burden of trust (*amanah*) is placed upon us—the trust and responsibility to rule according to God's will and purpose and His pleasure.

The trust implies responsibility to rule with justice. This rule means not simply ruling in the socio-political sense, nor in the controlling of nature in the scientific sense, but more fundamentally in its encompassing of the meaning of nature in ruling, governing, controlling and maintaining our self or our ability to reason in a fair and just way.

Like love, charity, wisdom, spirituality and art, [reasonableness] is a fundamental human response to the call of reality. It enables us to disclose the intelligible structure of the order of existence. It invites us to overcome our [physical] existence and connect with the world of nature in primarily rational and moral terms. It urges us to establish a socio-political order based on virtue, justice and freedom. The Quran presents a view of the human person according to which our humanity is formed by (reasonableness, '*aql*', *nafs al-mutma'innah*) and those other traits that are equally central to our task to give a meaningful response to reality. (In terms of God) this means recognizing the reality of things as they are and to see them as a 'trust' from God.²⁷

Seeking Divine Assistance

Divine grace or assistance is considered to be a free gift from God because the giving was not obligatory on His part.

That is the Grace of God, a free gift which He gives to Whom He Wills. (Q5:54)

Believe none, but one who heeded your way of life. Say: Truly guidance is The Guidance from God and believe not that anyone be given the like of what you were given, so that he argue with you before your Lord. Say: Truly, the grace is in the hand of God. He gives it to whomever He wills. God is One Who is Extensive, Knowing. (Q3:73)

Divine assistance is always available—if sought—as the sign says that God turns to those who turn to Him.

Those who repent and make things right and make things manifest, then those—I will turn in forgiveness to them. (Q2:160)

Seeking divine assistance strengthens our free willpower so that we gain greater conformity to God's willpower.

Through accepting the trust of nature and this covenant, we received two types of guidance: One referring to signs upon the horizons (universal guidance, *takwini*) and the other, signs within themselves (acquired guidance, *tashri'i*).

Universal Guidance (*takwini*)

All of nature receives *takwini* or primordial, universal guidance. Universal guidance regulates whatever is created in nature through a natural, unreflective process in implementing God's will. Al-Ghazzali, the great 12th century theologian, expands on this type of guidance by saying: He guides the young bird to pick up seeds from the time of its hatching; He guides the bee to build its house in a hexagonal form.

Our human nature, in the traditional perspective, holds within itself all that came before it in creation, not in material terms, but in terms of "nature," which is part of *takwini* guidance. Mineral, plant, animal, and our human, rational soul each contribute to a part of the development and perfection of nature's mode of operation. Minerals contribute preservation of the forms of the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water and their properties of cold and dry, hot and wet, hot and dry, and cold and wet, respectively. The plant soul contributes the ability to assimilate food, to grow, and to reproduce and the animal soul contributes perception and motivation.²⁸

Acquired Guidance (*tashri'i*)

In addition to universal guidance, we have received acquired guidance. This second type of both internal and external guidance is *tashri'i* or acquired guidance, referring to guidance that comes through the commands of revelation. It is rational in orientation and therefore the special guidance of the human being alone. It is a particular kind of guidance, in a sense, because it speaks to our human consciousness. It is to elucidate this kind of guidance that God sends Prophets and the divine law as reinforcement against the for-

getful and negligent human beings declaring on the day of judgment: *We were unaware of this.*

Those who were truly guided, He increased them in guidance (tashri'i) and He gave to them their God-consciousness. (Q47:17)

Al-Ghazzali makes an important distinction between the two types of guidance. God's communication through revelation, by which we can acquire guidance, helps us know the positive traits of our divinely bestowed natural disposition, but does not make us actualize them through practices. We are free to make the choice to follow acquired guidance or not to do so. Without acquired guidance, we will live by guidance through creation alone, never achieving our full potential and never knowing our "self" and becoming human, which God so willed when He infused His spirit into our human form. With only universal guidance guiding us, we make choices whereby our mineral, plant, and animal nature strengthen our non-rational willpower (*iradah*) and oppose following the advice of our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*).

The Quran promotes thinking independently as freedom of belief is guaranteed in the Quran. Faith is a question of conviction, not compulsion. In order to arrive at this conviction, the Quran addresses the human being as a totality.²⁹

There is no compulsion in the way of life. Surely, right judgment became clear from error. (Q2:256)

Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 1201) explains how guidance comes either through nature or discipline.

An example of nature is the principle which moves the passage of the sperm, through the degrees of transformations to the point where it reaches the perfection of an animal. An example of discipline is the principle which moves wood, by means of tools and instruments, to the point where it reaches the perfection of a couch. Since the perfection of anything lies in the assimilation of that thing to its own principle, so the perfection of discipline (regulated by *tashri'i* guidance) lies in its assimilation to nature (*takwini* guidance). Its assimilation to nature means that it follows nature in the advancement or the relegation of causes, in putting everything in its place, and in the observance of gradation and classification so that the perfection towards which divine omnipotence has directed nature, by way of subjection, may be realized from discipline by way of regulation.³⁰

Views of Traditional Muslim "Psychologists"

We turn now to the views of traditional Muslim scholars of the past who wrote on aspects of psychology (a tentative list of traditional Muslim "psychologists" up to the 20th century appears in the Appendix), whether they were philosophers, theologians or experts in any of the other sciences. This

gives us the opportunity to realize that there is a history behind the various ideas presented in this textbook, not only in the development of the sciences, but among scholars of various fields, as well. They all spoke about the science of the soul (*ilm al-nafs*) as important to their own area of expertise. They considered the science of Quranic moral psychology, rooted as it is in morality and ethics (ethico-psychology or psychoethics), to be the basis of all sciences, as stated by Ibn Bajjah (d 1138 CE). In his view, and that of many others, without an understanding of psychology one could not succeed in their own field. By psychology, they meant, the science of the soul (*nafs*):

The knowledge of the soul (psychology) precedes all sciences, physical and mathematical, with all the kinds of dignity. Again, every science depends upon the science of the soul (*ilm al-nafs*) because we cannot apprehend the principles of other sciences unless we apprehend our "soul" and know what it is by its definition. Again, it is a generally admitted fact that one who is not trusted in his knowledge of the state of his own soul is even less fit to be trusted in his knowledge of others. If, then, we do not know the state and nature of our soul, and if it has not become clear to us whether what has been said about it has been said correctly or cannot be relied upon, we are even less fit to rely on what appears to us in all other things. The knowledge of the soul also precedes all sciences because it gives the enquirer the capacity to grasp those premises without which the physical sciences cannot be complete. Moreover, political science cannot be treated in an orderly fashion before one knows the nature of the soul.³¹

Emphasis is given in the texts of traditional Muslim scholars on the importance of physicians considering both the soul and the body. There is an interweaving or entangling of them in the view of Sahl al-Balkhi (d 934 CE):

Abu Zayd Ahmed ibn Sahl al-Balkhi introduced the concept of *al-tibb al-ruhani* ("spiritual/moral health") to Islamic medicine in his *Masalih al-Abdan wa al-Anfus* (Sustenance for Body and Soul). He criticized doctors for emphasizing the physical and neglecting moral illnesses and argued that "since the human construction is from both his soul and his body, therefore, human existence cannot be healthy without the *ishtibak* (interweaving or entangling) of soul and body." Al-Balkhi traced his ideas to signs/verses of the Quran, such as: (Q2:10) and Hadiths attributed to the Prophet.

"So if the body gets sick, the *nafs* (soul) loses much of its cognitive and comprehensive ability and fails to enjoy the desirous aspects of life while if the *nafs* (soul) gets sick, the body may also find no joy in life and may eventually develop a physical illness." This holistic view emphasized body-mind unity and psychosomatic medicine, as well as the importance of actions and lifestyle in health.³²

Prolog Section 1: The World of Command and the World of Creation

Seeking Divine Guidance and Assistance

In the Prolog we learn what the world of command and the world of cre-

ation refer to and how they differ. Our spirit (*ruh*) is from the world of command. Our body (*jism*) is from the world of creation. The substance of the soul is from both the world of creation as it comes into being at the same time as the substance of our body. Nature provides both substances with impulses to motion, movement and motivation. Both body and soul evolve gradually from an actually weak existence to the potential for a more intense existence. Our soul is provided with the most intense of existences so while it originates with the body, its subsistence is spiritual.

There is then a discussion of the world of command and the world of creation in detail based on Quranic verses. Here, al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE) explains the world of command:

God sends guidance in many ways including guidance acquired through God's commands. The world of command is guided by the particular guidance of revelation. As it is rational in orientation, it is our special guidance alone as human beings. If accepted as guidance in the perspective of "submission to the Will of God" (*islam*), particular guidance becomes yet another gift to one who actually does "submit to the Will of God" (*muslim*). It is a particular kind of guidance, in a sense, because it speaks to human consciousness. It is to elucidate this kind of guidance that God sends Prophets and the Divine Law as reinforcement against the forgetful and negligent human beings declaring on the Day of Judgment: We were unaware of this.³³

Universal Guidance and Impulses

We again turn to al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE) who speaks of impulses that can help in disciplining our animal soul:

Universal guidance is not sufficient for us to strengthen our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) for if one learns that something causes loss and that one does not possess the power to ward it off, what is the benefit? A sick person knows that the disease is harmful to him, but he is unable to repulse it. Therefore, God has appointed another energy to him to give him strength and power and to support and direct him so that he will refrain from that which he has learned is harmful to him. As it is his need that he control his lusts, something else must appear in him to oppose that in order to escape harm in the future. The compulsion to oppose the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) is what we call the impulses of conscience and willpower and the compulsion to give rein to the animal soul we call the impulses from our sensation function (tasting, touching, smelling, hearing and seeing).³⁴

In order to carry out the duties of the trusteeship, divine assistance is sought. It is always available if sought as the sign says: *God turns to those who turn to Him* (Q2:160). Al-Ghazzali goes so far as to say that without divine assistance—which is always present whether invoked or not—there is no conscious communication between the Creator and the trustee.³⁵

"No Compulsion in Religion"

This verse (Q2:256) means: After all the explanation, clarification and rep-

etition of the Quranic verses, it is now up to each one of us to choose our path.

The sign (2:256) includes the phrase that "*there is no compulsion in religion.*" Immediately after making this statement, the Quran offers a rationale for it: Since the revelation has, through explanation, clarification, and repetition, clearly distinguished the path of guidance from the path of misguidance, it is now up to people to choose the one or the other path. This sign comes right after the Throne Verse.³⁶

Prolog: Section 2: Knowing Our "Self"

We learn that our "self" consists of a living body, soul and spirit. One of the best known statements about the importance of coming to know this "self," the topic of the Prolog, is that of al-Ghazzali:

Know that the key to the knowledge of God, may He be honored and glorified, is knowledge of one's own self. For this it has been said: He who knows himself knows his Lord. It is for this that the Creator Most High said: *We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and within themselves, so that it will become evident to them that it is the Truth.* (Q41:53) He said: We show them Our signs in the universe and in (their) selves so that the true nature of the Truth may become revealed to them. In a word, there is nothing closer you than you. If you do not know yourself, how can you know anything else? Indeed, if you say you know yourself, you are in grievous error! You know nothing more about yourself than your head, face, hands, feet, flesh, and external skin! All you know about your insides is that when you are hungry you must eat; when you are angry, you fight; when sexual appetite overcomes you, you make for the marriage act. In this, you are the equal of the beasts of burden! Therefore, you must seek out the truth about yourself: Why have you come to this stopping place? For what purpose were you created? What is your happiness and in what does it lie? What is your misery and in what does that lie?³⁷

As we will come to know through this study of Quranic psychology, rooted as it is in moral psychology, stress is laid on the development of positive traits replacing negative traits that have become habituated through our nurturing process as clearly expressed by Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE):

In order to achieve good character, the intellect must be trained in deliberate thinking and reflection. Only when this has been accomplished can it realize wisdom. The faculty of desire (*shahwah*), when disciplined, will realize temperance. The faculty of anger (*ghadab*), when trained, will attain courage. When desire and anger are subordinated to intellect, (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*) justice is realized and the mean is then to be achieved by these two bodily faculties after they have been trained and disciplined by reason.³⁸

In one sense, the final goal of Quranic moral psychology is to become balanced as a fair and just person. An example of a vice that affects whether or

not we are fair and just towards our self, is that of injustice according to Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE):

Injustice is the putting a thing in a place not its own. It is to misplace a thing. It is to misuse or to wrong. It is to exceed or fall short of the mean or limit. It is to suffer loss. It is deviation from the right course. It is disbelief of what is true or lying about what is true, knowing it to be true. Thus, when a man does an act of injustice, it means that he has wronged his own soul, for he has put his soul in a place not its own. He has misused it. He has made it to exceed or fall short of its real nature. He has caused it to deviate from what is right and to repudiate the truth and to suffer loss. All that he has thus done—in one way or another—entails a violation of his Covenant with God (Q7:172): *Mention when your Lord took from the Children of Adam—from their generative organs—their offspring and called to them to witness of themselves: Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea! We bore witness, so that you say not on the Day of Resurrection: Truly, we had been ones who were heedless of this.* It is clear from what we say about injustice that justice implies knowledge of the right and proper place for a thing or a being to be; of right as against wrong; of the mean or limit; of spiritual gain as against loss; of truth as against falsehood.³⁹

He, then, adds:

Can one be unjust to one's self? We answer in the affirmative and add further that justice and injustice, indeed, begin and end with the self. The Quran repeatedly stresses the point that the human being, when he does wrong, is being unjust to himself and that injustice is a condition brought by a person upon his self.⁴⁰

Part I. Our Soul

When we move from understanding some aspect of the spirit, more of which will be discussed in the text itself in Module 2, we come to know our soul (*nafs*) in Part I. The soul journeys through three levels as discussed in the text: Soul-body (*nafs-jism*), Module 1 and Modules 4-9; soul moving from the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*, motivational system) to the human or rational soul (*nafs al-insaniyyah* or *natiqah*), Modules 3-9; and our cognitive system through our mind (*sadr*), our conscience (*nafs al-lawwamah*, *fu'ad*) and consciousness (*nafs al-mulhamah*, *qalb*); and then the soul uniting with the rational soul or spirit/intellect (*ruh-aql*, *lubb*) Module 2 and Modules 10-16.

Al-Kindi (d 873 CE) states:

The parts of the soul are the human, rational (*insaniyyah*, *natiq*, cognition), irascible (anger, *quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*, our behavior) and the concupiscent (lust, *quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*, our affect/emotions), the latter two making up the *nafs al-ammarah*'s movement, motivation and impulses. He who gets away from the pleasures of the body (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) and lives most of his life in contemplation to attain to the reality of things (our spirit-intellect or *aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*, *lubb*) is the good person who is very similar to the Creator.⁴¹

Module 1 : Our Soul-Body

According to Sadr al-Din Shirazi (d 1640 CE), as we have mentioned, the soul originates with the body and subsists in the spiritual. The soul is the isthmus between body and spirit.⁴²

Module 1 : Four Major Organs

Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE), and many other traditional scholars, refer to our major organs as heart, liver and brain. Some scholars also include our reproductive organs which begin to function at puberty:

There are four major organs of the body: the heart, the liver, the brain and the reproductive organs.⁴³

Zakariya Razi (d 925 CE) refers to the role of our liver, heart and brain:

The human being is fed and derives his increase and growth from the liver, his heat and pulse-movement from the heart, his sensation, voluntary movement, imagination, thought and memory from the brain.⁴⁴

Module 1 : The Elements and Their Qualities

How is the body-soul formed? There are four causes according to Ibn Sina. He first refers to the Material Cause.

The material cause is the change or movement of the soul determined by the materials being changed. The Material Cause includes the four elements (that is, "the four qualities of universal matter"), the four humours (formed from the four qualities of universal matter), the organs and the temperament (formed from the humours). The four elements, four humours and the organs are considered by Ibn Sina to be the quantitative pattern of organization or structure of the soul and its changes, while temperament is its qualitative pattern.⁴⁵

The four qualities of universal matter, known in the traditional texts as "the elements" consist of earth, air, fire and water. Their qualities are heat, cold, moisture and dryness, elements we relate to every day through the weather reports.

A key to better understanding how the creation of our body connects to the four qualities of universal matter is the way the traditional sources describe the creation of the environment of the world we live in known as the sublunar world. The sublunar world is called "the world of generation and corruption" (*fi l-kawn wa-l-fasad*), that is, the world where existence is generated from non-existence with the potential to exist and is corrupted and dies because it is formed from the four qualities of universal matter or the four elements.

Many Muslim psychologists dismiss the role that what are called "the elements" play in the formation of the embryo. These are not connected to the Table of Elements, but are rather basic qualities of universal matter. In the

traditional Islamic view, as confirmed by Quranic verses described in Module 5, the classical elements of earth, air, fire and water and their elemental qualities are central to all creation. These elemental qualities serve as the basis for dietetic practices, Islamic medicine (*tibb*) as well as medicine of the Prophet (*tibb-i nabî*) gleaned from Hadith literature. The "elements" also create the humours (*'alaq*) which we next discuss.

Ibn Bajjah: A body is composed of the elements.⁴⁶

Ibn Bajjah: The four elements are called "elementary natural bodies."⁴⁷

The aim of the treatise, *Talkhis Kitab al-Nafs*, by Ibn Rushd (d 1198 CE) is to set forth in psychology the commentators' opinions which are more related to natural science. The first simple bodies in which prime matter is actualized are the four elements: fire, air, water and earth. They enter by mixing together. The proximate cause is innate heat.⁴⁸

Jabir ibn Hayyan (d 815 CE), who refers to the four elements, is considered by many to be the father of chemistry.

Max Meyerhoff states the following on Jabir ibn Hayyan: His influence may be traced throughout the whole historic course of European alchemy and chemistry. For Jabir, each element was composed of these qualities: fire was both hot and dry, earth, cold and dry, water cold and moist, and air, hot and moist. This came from the elementary qualities which are in nature.⁴⁹

Knowledge is the soul's prey; the senses are its net as described by al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE).

The physical body is its vehicle and the bearer of its net. As a result, it is for this reason that a person needs a body. His body is a vehicle made from water, earth, heat and air. For this reason he is weak and in danger of destruction from within because of hunger and thirst, and from without because of fire, water, being the prey of enemies and beasts and the like.⁵⁰

The elements possess the natural disposition to ascend, descend and to move in a circular direction. Each element is joined by one of its qualities to that which is below it and above it—water to earth below it by coldness and water to air above by moisture; air to water below it by moisture and fire above it by heat; fire to air below it by heat and to earth, towards which it inclines in a circular motion, by dryness; earth to water above it by coldness and to fire, which declines towards it, by dryness. The elements are continually produced one from the other and their energy is never lost. The movement of the elements produces the humours within by which, in turn, one's natural temperament is determined.⁵¹

Module 1: The Humours (*'alaq*)

The humours have their roots in the appearance of a blood sedimentation

test made in open air which exhibits a dark clot at the bottom (black bile, cold and dry), a layer of white blood cells (phlegm, cold and wet), a layer of clear yellow serum (yellow bile, hot and dry) and blood at the top (hot and wet). (Wikipedia)

Those who doubt the presence of the humours ('*al-āq*) in our own body and the role that they play in maintaining our physical balance or those who consider this to be an idea originated with the ancient Greeks and, therefore, can be eliminated from the Islamic perspective, need to consider the following that al-Ghazzali says in regard to knowledge obtained by early Muslim scholars:

When they read the Arabic translations of Greek texts, nothing of what we have mentioned from the Greek philosophers need to be denied on religious grounds, for all these things are observable facts whose habitual course has been provided by God.⁵²

Secondly, they need to consider that early Muslim scholars were very close to the revelation of the Quran and were, in many cases, more cautious about incorporating "ideas" into the Islamic corpus if they were to find any disagreement with the Quran, or any suggestion that went against the Oneness of God. Therefore, we can rest assured that the ideas of the Greeks were carefully scrutinized before they were adopted as part of the Islamic sciences. The same is true of the Torah and the Gospels or the Psalms of David—all preceded Islam and all confirmed by the Quran.

How is it then, that the humours are called *akhlāt* in Arabic while the Quran refers to them as '*al-āq*? There may be several reasons for this. We want to suggest one possible reason for the discrepancy.

The most prolific translator of the Greek texts into Arabic was Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d 873 CE), an Arab Nestorian Christian. There is no doubt that the world owes a great debt to his scholarship in translating Greek medical texts into Arabic. He was known as "the Shaykh of the translators," later translators following his method. When Hunayn came to the Greek word for "humours," he translated it into Arabic as "mixture," *akhlāt*, as it is a mixture of fluids in the blood.

However, because he was Christian, he was not familiar with the Quran and its use of "*al-āq*" for fluids in the blood. The Lane-Poole Arabic-English Lexicon, translating the Arabic dictionary, *Taj al-arus*, describes one of the meanings of the word "*al-āq*" as "blood clot":

In a general sense ... or clotted, thick blood because of its clinging together or the seminal fluid after its appearance when it becomes thick blood after which it passes another stage becoming flesh (tissue). See Kur [sic.] xxiii, 14.⁵³

Again, We created a blood clot from seminal fluid. Then, We created tissue from the blood clot. Then, We created bones from tissue. Then, We clothed the bones with flesh. Again, We caused another creation to grow. So

blessed be God, the Fairer of the ones who are creators! (Q23:14)

We ask those who doubt that the humours are part of the Islamic tradition to refer to the second verse revealed to the Prophet (Q96:2), as this author did, and discover from it: "*He created the human being from a blood clot*" ('alaq) which is also the title of Chapter 96. This blood-clot is the humours, the word also appearing in several other Quranic verses:

He it is Who created you from earth dust, again, from seminal fluid, again, from a blood clot. (Q40:67)

He had been a blood clot and He created him and shaped him. (Q75:38)

In 1921, a Swedish physician, Robin Fahraeus, suggested the four humours were based upon the observation of blood clotting in a transparent container. When blood is drawn in a glass container and left undisturbed for about an hour, four different layers can be seen. A dark clot forms (the "black bile"); a layer of red blood cells ("blood"); a whitish layer of white blood cells (the "phlegm"); and a clear yellow serum (the "yellow bile").⁵⁴

The humours are produced in our liver according to Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE):

Our liver is the origin of natural power. The most important function of liver is to produce humours for nourishing, growing and developing of our body. The liver is the organ composed of flesh, vessels, and a sensitive membrane. Of course the very liver does not have sense itself, its color is like the color of frozen blood. The reproductive power gives the matter the perfection of the thing; it separates from the parent body a part in which a power derived from its origin inheres. When the matter and the place which are prepared to receive its activity are present, performs its functions.⁵⁵

The Breath infuses the natural energy into the liver where it then activates the soul's powers in the humours once the humours have been generated. The natural energy differentiates as it infuses into the four humours, animating their nutritional functions. The sanguineous humour (blood) is infused with the power of attraction; the bilious (yellow bile) humour with digestion; the atrabilious (black bile) humour with retention; and the serous (phlegmatic) humour with expulsion. The natural power (located in the liver and associated with venous blood) is hot and moist. It relates to nourishment, growth and reproduction.⁵⁶

The importance of the humours being in balance is also stressed by al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE):

The soul, as long as its humors are in balance—a necessary prerequisite—receives delicate images, such as the powers of sensory perception and movement from the lights of the heavenly angels by the command of God Most High.⁵⁷

Should the balance of the humours deteriorate by an excess of heat, cold or for some other reason, it will not be fit to receive impressions: like a mirror, the surface will reflect images so long as its surface is suitable. If it becomes scratched or tarnished, it will not reflect; not because the images have been obliterated or are absent, but because its fitness to reflect them has been nullified.⁵⁸

Humour or body fluid is that fluid, moist, physical substance into which an aliment is transformed. That part of the aliment which has the capacity to be transformed into a body substance, either by itself or in combination with something else, thereby being capable of assimilation by the members or organs and completely integrated into the tissues, is the healthy or good humour. It is what replaces the loss that the body substance undergoes.⁵⁹

Ibn Sina extended the humoral theory to encompass more than just the body:

In *The Canon of Medicine*, Ibn Sina extended the Theory of Humours to encompass emotional aspects, mental capacity, moral attitudes, self-awareness, movements and dreams, a work considered by some to constitute a forerunner of twentieth century psychoanalysis.⁶⁰

al-Farabi compares the body and its humours to a city and its virtuous society:

Al-Farabi compares the philosopher's role in relation to society with a physician in relation to the body; the body's health is affected by the balance of its humours just as the city is determined by the moral habits of its people. The philosopher's duty, he says, is to establish a virtuous society by healing the souls of the people, establishing justice and guiding them towards true happiness.⁶¹

Module 1: Our Temperament (*mizaj*)

Our humours, stemming from the elemental qualities, in turn, develop our temperament (*mizaj*) or constitution. The goal is to maintain a balanced temperament according to al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE):

The discord and equilibrium of temperament comes from the differences in degrees of heat, cold, moisture and dryness. The object of the craft of medicine is to maintain the equilibrium of these four humours in the person to the end that it be fit to function as the vehicle and tool of the other soul, that which we have called the human soul.⁶²

Know that the sick person whose illness is coldness should not eat things that are very hot tempered (not heated hot), for it may be that the heat become an illness. Rather, there is a scale and a standard which must be observed. It must be known that the objective is that the temperament be equable: Neither inclining to heat nor inclining to cold. When it has reached the level of equability, the treatment is withdrawn and the effort becomes maintaining that balanced. The patient eats temperate things.⁶³

Rumi (d 1273 CE) confirms al-Ghazzali's views:

Friends of God are those who assist a person until his temperament returns to its right balance, and his religion and his consciousness (heart) are restored to their original harmony.⁶⁴

Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE) writes:

Temperament is the quality which results from the mutual interaction of the four contrary, primary qualities of elements (heat, coldness, moisture, dryness). The temperament of each person is singular. No two people can be treated in exactly the same way in anticipation of the same reaction to external stimuli. Each one is unique.⁶⁵

Our temperament is actualized at conception in the view of Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE):

The individual temperament of each of the organs was actualized when the male sperm and the female ovum united. There are efficient causes that may affect the quality of the individual temperament such as the semen and ovum's temperament, the womb's temperature and quality of the menstrual blood, the latter being the nutriment for the embryo.⁶⁶

Not only do we humans have a temperament, but according to traditional Islamic medicine, every herb, plant, and animal also has a temperament that affects our physical balance and equilibrium when they are part of our diet or the healing process.

It is worth remembering that when a natural healer (herb, plant, animal) is referred to as being evenly balanced, it does not mean that its temperament is the same as of a human being, or that it is even similar to it, for it would then be like a human being.⁶⁷

Module 1 Reproduction

Al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE) speaks of the reproductive process:

He made earth of your mother's womb and He made a seed from your father's spine. After that, He made the seed of your creation. Then He appointed passion to the male and female so that the seed would be sown in the earth. Then He made the menstrual blood irrigate that seed and created you from a drop of semen and menstrual blood. First, some blood coagulates the humours, then it becomes flesh, that which is called the fetus. Then He breathed life into it.⁶⁸

Another less known concept regarding the reproductive system, according to Ibn Sina following Greek medicine is that of the Radical Moisture (called "dew" in the Quran) which is provided to the embryo by the female seminal fluid.

In the Fourth Digestion, right before the Four Humors are congealed and converted into living tissue, an extremely refined essence of all of them is withheld from this process. The Radical Moisture is very precious, and only a few drops of it are distilled from each digestion. The Radical Moisture is circulated through the bloodstream and is distributed to all the principal and noble organs, which then circulate and distribute a portion of it to their subsidiary organs and attendant vessels. The Radical Moisture is of a pale, creamy color. Basically, the physical properties of the Radical Moisture resemble those of Royal Jelly, which is indeed the Radical Moisture of the queen bee.⁶⁹

Module 1: The Covenant with God

We mentioned the Covenant (Q7:172) whereby the generative organs of all of we children of Adam, having been created with the spirit of God that had been given to Adam, bore witness to God as our Lord:

The rightly guided person realizes that his very self, his soul, has already acknowledged God as his Lord (Q7:172) even before his existence as a human being so that such a person recognizes his Creator and Cherisher and Sustainer. The nature of the debt of creation and existence is so tremendously total that human beings, the moment they are created and given existence, are already in a state of utter loss, for they possess really nothing themselves, seeing that everything about them and in them and from them is what the Creator owns Who owns everything.⁷⁰

Those who repudiate the existence of God may suffer from loneliness and a loss of identity according to Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE):

An experience of utter loneliness, however, assails only the consciousness of the person who denies God or doubts Him or repudiates his soul's Covenant with God. For it is recognition and affirmation of that same Covenant that established for us our identity in order of existence.⁷¹

Module 1: Death

The traveler's provision for death as al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE) points out, refers to a deep consciousness of God (*taqwa*).

God says: Take a provision with you for the journey, but the best of provisions is God-consciousness (*taqwa*). (Q2:197) The cutting of ties means a severing of consciousness (*qalb*, heart, *nafs al-mulhamah*) from the pleasures of this world. This is what was meant by the Prophet's words: Have indifference towards the abode of delusions. The gift to be presented to the King is love, the origin of which is in true intuitive experience knowledge (*ma'rifat*).⁷²

Module 2: *Fitrat* or Innate Human Nature

In trying to know our self, the Quran tells us that God created us with an innate or primordial nature (*fitrat Allah*). Abu Jafar Tahawi (d 933 CE) quotes a famous hadith of the blessed Prophet as it relates to our *fitrat Allah*.

The Prophet laid stress both on *qadar* and human freedom and on the possibility of human action side by side with divine action. This is evident from his famous saying on natural religion (*din al-fitrah*): Every child at birth is born in the *fitrah*, then it is his parents who make of him a Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian.

This is testified by the Quranic sign: The *fitrah* of God in which He has created humanity, there is no change. (Q30:30)⁷³

Module 2: Giver of Form/Active Intellect

This innate nature came to us through the Giver of Form (*al-Musawwir*)/Active Intellect as explained by Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE):

As the Giver of Form is always producing the forms that make up the various kinds of things in the sublunar world, then its influence is constant, and there is no explanation of why a given thing that came to be had not previously existed, giving that the Giver of Form was producing its form even when it was not existing. In short, there has to be this other factor to explain its coming to be after not having existed.⁷⁴

In the view of Ibn Sina, the Giver of Form and the Active Intellect are two names for the same power. The former brings physical form while the latter brings ideas, thinking and understanding (intellection).

All evidence suggests that Ibn Sina saw the Active Intellect and the Giver of Form as two names for a single entity. Thus, it should not be too surprising that the role that Ibn Sina assigns to the Giver of Form is substantial generation has a psychological counterpart in the role of the Active Intellect in intellection (understanding and thinking).⁷⁵

Module 2: Our Breath/Spirit

The link between our psychic-spiritual/moral and physical worlds is that of the Breath, an aspect of the spirit within us:

The Breath, according to Ibn Sina, is the link between the psychic-spiritual and physical worlds. It plays a role in the physiological functions of the soul by preparing it to activate its energies or powers. It is also the Breath that eventually delivers the human or rational soul from the body.⁷⁶

The Breath/Spirit (*ruh*) provides three energies to the embryo: The vital energy (*quwwat al-haywaniyyah*) to the heart; natural energy (*quwwat al-tabiyyah*) to the liver and psychic or neural energy (*quwwat al-nafsanīyyah*) to the brain.

According to Ibn Sina, the Breath arises in the heart, passes through into the principal centers of the body as three kinds of energy, lingering in them long enough to enable them to impart to it their respective temperamental properties beginning with the vital energy located in the heart.⁷⁷

Ibn Sina states that when the vital energy that enters the heart is plentiful (as it is when there is plenty of that material from which it is rapidly and constantly being generated); when it is balanced in temperament; when it has a luminous, beautiful and bright substance, then there is a strong tendency to sense well-being.⁷⁸

The Breath first infuses into the heart where it undergoes combustion as it mixes with the blood and becomes the Breath that actualizes the vital energy (located in the heart and associated with arterial blood). The heart serves as the center of the production of the light and vapory parts of the humours.⁷⁹

According to Ibn Hazm (d 1064 CE), energy should be used in devotion to social causes:

Do not use your energy except for a cause more noble than yourself. Such a cause cannot be found except in Almighty God Himself: To preach the truth, to defend womanhood, to repel humiliation which your creator has not imposed upon you, to help the oppressed. Anyone who uses his energy for the sake of the vanities of the world is like someone who exchanges gemstones for gravel.⁸⁰

Modules 3-9: Our Animal Soul (*nafs al-ammarah*)

Our animal soul or *nafs al-ammarah* consisting of lust (*shahwaniyyah*) and anger (*ghadabiyyah*), also known as the passions or attraction to pleasure and avoidance of harm/pain or preserving the species and preserving the individual, in addition to willpower, sensation and perception. When the human embryo is in the womb, the power of what is called the "mineral soul" gives it geometric precision. What is called the "plant" or "vegetative" soul gives it the powers of nutrition, growth and reproduction. So as an embryo we are connected to the mineral and plant worlds as everything in the universe is alive, exists and is interconnected in this view. At birth, the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) brings us movement, motivation and impulses.

Our soul, then, moves as our motivational system from its being animal-like to becoming human by transforming ignorance into knowledge, negligence and forgetfulness into vigilance and remembrance and our anger into patience and forbearance through evolving into our cognitive spirit-intellect. In terms of evolution, then, it is our soul that evolves as Rumi (d 1273 CE) says:

I died as a mineral and plant became,
Died from the plant and took a sentient frame,
Died from the animal, and donned a human dress.
When by my dying did I ever less?
Another time from humanhood I must die
To soar with angel-wings through the sky.
Midst angels also I must lose my place
Since: *Everything perishes save His Face.* (Q28:88)
Let me be nothing! The harp-strings tell me plain
That unto Him do we return again!

and as Rumi goes on to say.

God has wrought many miracles in His creation. From a single soil He has brought forth multifarious plants and flowers with different shapes, colors, flavors, scents, and beauties. He has transmuted the same soil into different minerals. He has transformed one kind of earth into gold and another into human beings. He can do the same alchemical operation in our consciousness and change our spiritual (moral) darkness into enlightenment. He can transform our ignorance into knowledge, our negligence and forgetfulness into vigilance and remembrance, and our anger and irascibility into patience and forbearance.⁸¹

Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jurjani (d 1414 CE) confirms what Rumi expresses:

The following terms are also found in works by Muslim psychologists: The mineral soul, the plant soul, the animal soul and the human soul....⁸²

Our soul comes into being at the same time as our body in this view, countering Descartes argument of duality. The powers of the soul are added one upon another so that nothing is lost in the process. It is similar to layering clothing as suggested by Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE):

The soul possesses faculties or powers which become manifest in its relation to bodies. In plants, they are the powers of nutrition, growth and generation or reproduction. These powers, in their general—and not their specific—senses exist also in animals. In the human being, whose body belongs to the animal species, there are powers of volition or action at will and perception in addition to those of nutrition, growth and reproduction. All these powers belong to the soul in view of their common inherence generally in the different bodies as well as their separate inherence specifically in accordance with the natures of the different species. The soul is somewhat like a genus (that is, a class of things that have common characteristics and that can be divided into various kinds), in this case divided into different souls respectively: (the mineral), the plant, the animal and the human or the rational.⁸³

Our motivational system or animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) gives us two kinds of motion and impulses according to Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE):

The power for motivation is of two kinds: Either it motivates in so far as it gives an impulse, or in so far it causes motion. Now the motivational power, in so far as it provides the impulse, is of two parts: The concupiscent power of lust (attraction to pleasure, preservation of the species) or the irascible power of anger (avoidance of harm/pain, preservation of the individual). When either a desirable or repugnant image is imprinted on the imagination, it rouses this power to movement.⁸⁴

The view of Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE) is echoed by Suhrawardi (d 1191 CE):

Our animal soul consists of two powers, the power of motion (*muharikah*) and the passions (*nuzaiyyah*). The power of the passions contain the power of lust (*shahwah*) and anger (*ghadab*).⁸⁵

Muhasibi (d 857 CE) gives a clear picture of what happens when our animal soul dominates us:

On the other side of the spirit (*ruh*), ever striving with our higher nature, urging our consciousness (*nafs al-mulhamah*, *qalb*, heart) to enter and pass through the gateway opening on the world of our senses, is our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*), the seat of the lust and anger (which have the potential of tending towards the excessive quantity of too much or too little or depravity in qualitative terms).... It is the animal soul or ego that can oppose goodness. It always strives for its own interests, regardless of what is pleasing to God or due to fellow-creatures. It is the ego, in its unregenerate state, the animal soul, that commands to wrongdoing when it is headstrong, indicating excessiveness.

Place the animal soul where God Almighty placed it and describe it as He has described it. Withstand it according to His command, for it can be a greater enemy to you than Satan. Satan gains power over you only by means of it and your consent to it. You know to what it calls you and that it was created weak, though its nature is strong in greed and dissimulation, for it is self-confident, self-assertive, disobedient to God and untrustworthy. Its sincerity consists in lying. Its claims are based on vanity. All that comes from it is deceitful. Nothing that it does is praiseworthy. Be not deluded by the animal soul and its hopes and its desires. If you leave it alone, you are led astray. If you give it what it desires, you will perish. If you neglect to examine it, you will fall under its control. If you weaken in your struggles against it, you will be overwhelmed. If you follow it in its desires, you will be doomed. The truth is not in it, nor any tendency to good when it becomes excessive. It is the source of affliction, the origin of all wrongdoing and the treasure-house of Satan. When excessive or lacking in moderation, what it displays as fear is really self-confidence. What it displays as sincerity is only falsehood. Its claim to be single-minded in the service of God is pure hypocrisy.⁸⁶

The Satan that Harith Muhasibi (d 857 CE) refers to are explained by the contemporary philosopher and expert on the works of Ibn Arabi, William Chittick, as being:

... temptations or deceptions originated from the mind and desire for wrongdoing. Satan is accordingly also regarded as a cosmic force for separation, despair and spiritual envelopment. But there is still a distinction assumed between the satanic temptations and the murmurings of the lower self (*nafs al-ammarah*). The lower self as such, wants the person to do a specific task or to fulfill a desire, while the inspirations of Satan wants the person to do evil in general and returns with another suggestion, after the person resisted.⁸⁷

Al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE) compares the animal soul to a hunting dog and a horse:

The similitude of the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) is the stubborn beast of burden which we satisfy by first withholding its fodder until it is tamed. Another is that we remove the fodder from it that is before it so that it does not see it. Another is that we give it that amount which calms it down. Each of these three treatments is

the same for lust (*shahwah*) or anger (*ghadab*). It is the weakening of the passions. The similitude of anger (*ghadab*) is that of a hunting dog. The similitude of the *nafs al-ammarah* (our animal soul) is that of a horse and the similitude of reason is that of a rider. A horse is sometimes refractory and sometimes obedient and trained. A dog is sometimes taught and sometimes it reverts to its own nature. Until the one is taught and the other trained, there is no hope for the rider's obtaining any game. Indeed, there is the fear that he will be killed, that the dog may attack him or that the horse may throw him to the ground.⁸⁸

Suhrawardi (d 1234 CE) refers to the animal soul (our motivational system) and its two dominant impulses:

The *nafs al-ammarah* can be the source of all undesirable activities. It has two dominant impulses, pleasure (*shahwah*) and pain (*ghadab*) or miserliness and rage. When in a rage, it is like a circular substance which is by its nature always on the move. When miserly, it is like the moth which, being not satisfied with a little light, throws itself headlong into the flame of the candle and burns itself to death. A person is able to attain true rank of moral reasonableness (*muruwwah*) when he tries to purify his soul of these gross characteristics by bringing into play reason and patience. The self passes through ... different stages of development. The first stage is evil-prompting (*ammarah*); (the next is consciousness, *nafs al-mulhamah*, *qalb*); then is repentance (*lawwamah*) and, finally, satisfied, content (*mutma'in-nah*).⁸⁹

To discipline the animal soul is an act of compassion according to Muhasibi (d 857 CE) because it leads to ultimate salvation:

The rebellious self or the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) can become like a beast of burden or like an animal which is at first wild and untamed. It must be trained by constant discipline. Since this discipline will mean the ultimate salvation of the soul as part of our whole soul, it is an act of compassion towards it. Slowly and reluctantly the soul may be brought under obedience. From time to time it will still be struggling against the compulsion brought to bear upon it. It will still be seeking the accomplishment of its own desires. As a result, it will rest from discipline. Yet, while the higher soul gradually gains the upper hand, it will be subdued by degrees from the constant pressure brought to bear, and it will become the reproachful soul (*nafs al-lawwamah*, *fu'ad*, conscience). Therein the higher nature is waging an ever more successful war against the lower until, at last, the victory is achieved and the struggle is over. Satan and his hosts have been routed and (excessive lust and anger) no longer make any appeal. The soul has become a captive, in complete submission to the will of its Lord. It has become the soul at rest (*'aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*, *lubb*, spirit-intellect. (Q89:27))⁹⁰

As previously stated, our animal soul consists of three powers. The first two are the attraction to pleasure or lust, desire, our affect/emotions. The second is the avoidance of harm/pain or our behavior. The third is willpower.

Module 5: Affect/Emotions

Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE) explains our affect/emotions or attraction to pleasure:

The power of affect/emotions or lust or desire (instinctive preservation of the species (society), offensive stance, concupiscent, attracted to pleasure, *shahwah*) provokes a movement of the organs that brings one near to things imagined to be necessary or useful in the search for pleasure.⁹¹

Module 6: Behavior

In regard to our behavior or avoidance of harm/pain, Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE) states:

Behavior or the irascible power of anger (instinctive preservation of the individual, defensive stance, avoidance of harm/pain, *ghadab*) impels the subject to a movement of the limbs in order to repulse things imagined to be harmful or destructive, and, thus, to overcome them.⁹²

Module 7: Willpower (*iradah*), Free Willpower (*ikhtiyar*)

As will be shown in the text, there are two aspects to willpower, irrational (*iradah*) and rational (*ikhtiyar*). Psychology is concerned with our free willpower or volition and whether or not we actually have free willpower or have our actions been predetermined? The word, *ikhtiyar*, comes from the word, *khayr*, meaning good. Therefore, in the Quranic perspective, we have free will to choose or not choose the good. Otherwise we are following our natural, instinctive, irrational *iradah*.

Hasan al-Basri (d 720 CE) explains why we have free willpower or *ikhtiyar*.

Other verses cited by the advocates of predestination, such as (Q11:105), speak of the segregation of humanity on the Day of Judgment into the happy and the wretched. They mistakenly extract from verses like this the view that this segregation is decreed by God while the creature is in its mother's womb. However, were this the case, God's revealed Books and Prophets would mean nothing and the call of the Messengers to them to be pious and their exhortation to righteousness would equally mean nothing, but would indeed be in vain. Now what this and similar verses mean is that those who have complied with God's commands will be happy on the Last Day while, those who flouted them will be wretched.⁹³

Again, according to Hasan al-Basri (d 720 CE) unlike our physical traits, our moral traits and other voluntary acts of ours result from our free will (*ikhtiyar*):

Hasan al-Basri refutes the notion that the foreknowledge by God of the impiety and wickedness of the creature predestines him to be wicked or impious, just as God's foreknowledge of his color, form and personal traits irrevocably determines that he possesses them. The analogy between the two objects of foreknowledge, i.e. physical traits and moral traits is false; piety and impiety, like other voluntary ac-

tions are the outcome of the free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) of humans, whereas physical traits are the product of God's predetermination, and over these humans have no control.⁹⁴

If we do not habituate our free willpower to choose the good, we will not attain balance as al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE) tells us:

If we suffer from the lack of free willpower (*ikhtiyar*), we are not able to regulate our self (body, spirit, soul, consciousness) in a state of balance and harmony, centered in positive dispositions like temperance, courage and wisdom.⁹⁵

Through good habits, our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) will learn to seek the counsel of cognition before making a decision. Our free willpower would deliberate, come to an understanding of the situation and draw a conclusion. Our free willpower is then free to accept or reject the conclusion. Our free willpower has a choice, it makes the final decision. Our ability to reason, al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE) points out, is only a guide, a counselor because our willpower is naturally disposed to be higher than our ability to reason.

So long as a person is subservient to his free willpower and that which it does is not in accordance to God's Will, he is following his passions (*nafs al-ammarah*). His behavior is not that of a servant of God. His spiritual happiness lies in his servitude.⁹⁶

According to our traditional scholars, we have five external senses that form our sensation functions (tasting, touching, smelling, hearing and seeing). We also have five internal senses (common sense, representation, estimation or apprehension, memory or recall and imagination) that make up our perception. Our concern here is with our internal sense of perception, that of imagination. Imagination, also known as mental imagery, plays a role in the dynamics of our affect/emotions, behavior (our motivational system or *nafs al-ammarah*), our dreams, memory and cognition, that is, in our overall subjective experience of the world around us.

Traditional scholars divide imagination into two types: Sensitive imagination which we share with animals and deliberate or rational imagination which is unique to we humans because it involves the use of cognition.

Our willpower is naturally disposed to "avoid conflict" (also known as ego depletion) and to balance or fairness and justice. In regard to "avoiding conflict," in some cases, we choose not to struggle against our willpower if it is easier to "avoid conflict" within our self. This "avoiding conflict" of our willpower can become so strong in us that it overrides our other natural disposition of maintaining a balance or fairness and justice to our "self" so that our motivational impulses override our cognitive system.

It may be that our impulse activates our sensitive imagination instead of our rational imagination. Our sensitive imagination, then, acting instinctively by-passes our cognitive system. Or, our imagination influences our cognitive system to accept what our impulse wants by rationalizing and legitimizing those desires. It does not consult it because we are exhibiting impulsive behavior instead of reflecting before we act. Or, it may be that our motiva-

tional system is so strong that it is overcome by our natural instincts without engaging our cognitive system to reflect on the choices we make.

Al-Ghazzali further explains the process our willpower goes through:

Our willpower is easily misled. Naturally inclined to avoid conflict, it succumbs to our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*). *Shahwah*, *ghadab* and *ikhtiyar* are part of our system of motivation and so they have an established relationship. Our reason (*'aql*, intellect, *nafs al-mutma'innah*) can control our actions only through our free willpower. Our free willpower frequently chooses to follow our impulses for pleasure or avoidance of harm/pain of our animal soul. Strife within us is most often between our cognition—reason—and our systems arising out of motivation. Our external senses entice our imagination. Our imagination joins with our animal soul and they, in turn, entice our willpower away from following our reason.⁹⁷

If our free willpower has been habituated by morality and virtues, it will seek the advice of our reason. Our reason responds through our imagination, an internal sense of perception that is instinctively connected to our animal soul (motivational affective/behavioral systems, *nafs al-ammarah*) as well as to reason (our cognitive system, *'aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*). The irrational alliance of our free willpower and animal soul combine allowing our reason to rationalize and legitimize desires that are beyond what even an animal would do. In this situation, instead of our free willpower exercising its natural disposition to fairness and justice, our willpower falls under its stronger natural disposition to avoid conflict. In doing so, our willpower loses its own liberty and freedom, allowing unconscious and preconscious forces to dominate it. Since our animal soul is not capable of consciousness, it is not able to regulate us, but can dominate us through our willpower.

Our free willpower often ignores the advice of our reason just to show that it can. The result is for our ego to try to avoid responsibility for our acts. Everything depends on the decision of our free willpower. Our reason is only a guide. Our free willpower, then, is subject to a kind of depravity which extends to all aspects of our self. Our free willpower may be depraved through false reasoning or through choosing unrestrained freedom and an inclination to content our senses. When our free willpower turns from understanding and reason, there is nothing we can do but do what it wants in agreement with the external senses. According to traditional psychology, it is almost impossible to retrieve a perverted will.⁹⁸

In comparison to the willpower in animals, al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE) points out, "animals do not possess a well-developed reflective power" and argues that animals mostly think in terms of mental images in a simple way and are incapable of complex association and dissociation of abstract ideas involved in reflection. He argues that the intellect is the fundamental rational faculty which enables a person to generalize and form concepts and gain knowledge. He also argues that human will and animal will are both different. Human will is conditioned by the intellect while animal willpower is conditioned by the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*)—anger (preserving the individual, *ghadab*) and lust (preserving the species, *shahwah*)—and that all these powers control and regulate the body. He writes:

The self carries two additional qualities, which distinguishes the human being from animals enabling humans to attain moral perfection, which are *'aql* (intellect, *nafs al-mutma'innah*) and *ikhtiyar* (free willpower). The *qalb* (heart, consciousness, *nafs al-mulhamah*) controls and rules over them. It has six powers to turn to and away from: lust, anger, impulse, estimation or apprehension, intellect, and will. Humans have all six of these traits, while animals only have three (lust, anger, and impulse).⁹⁹

The Quran clearly spells out the relation between divine grace and human endeavor according to Hasan al-Basri (d. 728 CE):

God is the author of grace. It is we who turn it into ingratitude (*kufri*) and wrongdoing. (Q4:28-4:29) Now, God is displeased with ingratitude and wrongdoing (Q7:33). It follows that were ingratitude the result of God's decree and preordination (*qada' wa qadar*), He would be pleased with its perpetrator, but God could not issue a decree and then show displeasure at His own decree. Indeed, injustice and wrongdoing are not part of God's decree. His decree consists in commanding the right (*al-ma'ruf*), justice, charity and kindness to kin and in prohibiting wrongdoing (*munkar*) and oppression.¹⁰⁰

Misinterpretation of Quranic verses, according to Hasan al-Basri (d 728 CE), lead some to question the view that guidance is from God and error is from us or from Satan.

We refer to (Q13:27) which states that God leads astray or guides whosoever He pleased, without taking note of what precedes this verse or what follows it, such as the reference in (Q14:27) to God leading the wrongdoers and in (Q2:26-2:27) and (Q10:33) to His leading the wrongdoers astray. Or they refer to such verses as (Q57:22) which speaks of material and personal afflictions as pre-recorded in a Book, interpreting it to imply predestination. In fact, this verse, simply informs us that these afflictions are ways by means of which God tries His servants in this world, so that they may not be grieved at what they miss or rejoice at the allurements of this life.¹⁰¹

With respect to a certain voluntary action such as ingratitude (*kufri*), God simply knows that the human agents have chosen it at will, as He knows that, had they not wished it, they would have quit it. In addition they are capable of overcoming it because of the capacity that He has created in them, in order to test them in the ways of faith and justice. This is borne out by numerous Quranic signs, of which (Q9:42), (Q18:65) and (Q18:84) are examples.¹⁰²

We must take responsibility for whatever we do. The Prophet never blamed others for whatever happened. He never allowed himself to be a victim.¹⁰³

Module 10: Our Cognitive System Defined

We now leave the views of Muslim scholars on knowing our self and our motivational system and turn to their views on our cognitive system. With cognition we are technically entering the world of the spirit (*ruh*)/intellect (*'aql*). Traditional scholars either use the philosophical term of *nafs al-na-*

tiqah (rational soul) or the various Quranic terms indicating cognition, as we have seen. This has caused confusion over the centuries between the Quranic words *nafs* (soul) and *ruh* (spirit) which are often used interchangeably. However, as this study will show, there are important differences between them and they should not be used interchangeably. *Nafs* (soul) is a feminine noun and *ruh* (spirit) is a masculine noun.

Secondly, they differ in origin. The *nafs* (soul) is from both the world of creation as it originates with the body, and the world of command where it subsists in the spiritual world. The *ruh* (spirit), on the other hand, is from the world of command. God created the soul (Q4:1), but breathed His spirit into Adam (Q15:29) and then immediately afterwards, according to the well-known exegete of the Quran, al-Tabari (d 923 CE), called the generative organs of all of the progeny of Adam to bear witness to His Lordship (Q7:172).

Just as our motivational system includes the movement of willpower and the impulses of our affect/emotions and behavior, sensation and perception, our cognitive system consists of: our mind (*sadr*), which is closest to our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) and receives its impulses; our conscience, (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*); our consciousness (heart, *qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) and our intellect or ability to reason (*aqil, nafs al-mutma'innah*). Here we see that another name for the spirit which we study in Part III is intellect (*aqil*) or reason (*natiq*).

Module 11: Our Mind (*sadr*)

We turn to Hakim Tirmidhi (d 869 CE) who shows how our motivational system (*nafs al-ammarah*) relates to our cognitive system (*nafs al-natiqah*) through our mind (*sadr*):

The believer has been put to the test by the animal soul and its desires, for the animal soul has been granted the power and the task of entering into the mind (*sadr*).¹⁰⁴

Know that the expansion and contraction are attributed to the mind (*sadr*) alone and are not attributed to the heart (consciousness).¹⁰⁵

The mind (*sadr*) of the believer is the abode of the light of Islam.¹⁰⁶

Know that the mind (*sadr*) is the place of all knowledge which is acquired only through study, effort and burdening oneself by means of listening and relating, whether it be the Quran or the traditions of the Prophet or something else, and that such knowledge can be characterized by forgetfulness.¹⁰⁷

The mind (*sadr*) is the place into which enters expressible knowledge.¹⁰⁸

Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jurjani (d 1414 CE) echoes the words of Hakim Tirmidhi:

The human soul is that by which is understood the human mind which distinguishes him from the animal and which is given to us by the command of God from

Module 12: Our Consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah, heart*)

One of the most important findings of this work in the area of cognition and the recognition and statement that what the Quran refers to as "heart" is actually mentioned in (Q91:8) as *alhamah* or the *nafs al-mulhamah* (the inspired soul). This recognition comes from the *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb* of Hakim Tirmidhi (d 869 CE).

While many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars—traditional and modern—have explained the Quranic use of "heart" as consciousness, it has not entered the science of Islamic psychology as an actual replacement for the Quranic use of the word "heart" as is done in this text. Over the years of research and study of multiple Islamic sciences, I have often echoed the words of Abul Hasan Ali ibn Sahl al-Isfahan, a friend of al-Junayd, who gives expression to the wide-and vague-sense in which the term "heart" was used, when he says:

From the time of Adam to the resurrection people cry: The heart, the heart. I wish that I might find someone to describe what the heart is or how it is, but I find none. What, then, is this heart, of which I hear only the name? That is to say: If I call intellect the heart, it is not the heart. If I call spirit the heart, it is not the heart. If I call knowledge the heart, it is not the heart. All the evidences of Truth exist in the heart, yet only the name of it is to be found.¹¹⁰

As a psychologist, I wanted to know what "heart" means in terms of psychology so that its role in moral healing becomes clear. The vital role that it plays in knowing self and in seeking moral balance had to be decoded, as it were. It is now clear—and will become clearer to the readers in Module 12 that the Quranic meaning of "heart" is "consciousness." Every moment our consciousness turns here and there, and that is the description of our "heart" as well. According to Ibn Arabi:

In Koranic (sic) terms, the locus of awareness and consciousness is the heart (*qalb*), a word that has the verbal sense of fluctuation and transmutation (*taqallub*). According to Ibn Arabi, the heart has two eyes, reason and imagination (sensitive and deliberative or rational), and the dominance of either distorts perception and awareness.¹¹¹

The heart, which in itself is unitary consciousness, must become attuned to its own fluctuation, at one beat seeing God's incomparability with the eye of reason (deliberate or rational imagination), at the next seeing his similarity with the eye of (sensitive) imagination.¹¹²

However, even knowing that the Quranic use of "heart" refers to consciousness is still not enough. As we are reminded over and over again in the texts, the Quran mentions three levels of the soul: the *nafs al-ammarah*, *nafs al-lawwamah* and the *nafs al-mutma'innah*. Does the Quran not have a term for "heart" as part of our

soul (*nafs*)? The eureka moment came when reading Hakim Tirmidhi (d 869 CE) who mentions the *nafs al-mulhamah*—the inspired soul—as the Quranic reference to “heart” as “consciousness”:

The *nafs al-mulhamah* (*qalb*, heart, consciousness) ... is the abode of that knowledge lying beneath expressible knowledge and that is the knowledge of wisdom and allusion. The meaning of expressible knowledge (acquired knowledge) is that knowledge which the servant expresses with the tongue. The meaning of the knowledge of allusion is that he realizes God's lordship, His oneness, grandeur, majesty, power and all His attributes with his consciousness, as well as the realities of His creation and action.¹¹³

This is echoed by al-Ghazzali (d 111 CE):

The heart (consciousness) has been so created that when an inclination or desire appears in it, when the body rises in agreement with that, that quality becomes more firmly and strongly established in the heart (consciousness). For example, when mercy for an orphan appears in the heart (that is, when one becomes conscious of a sense of mercy for an orphan), if the hand is placed upon the orphan's head, that mercy grows stronger and the awareness of the heart (consciousness) increases. When the reality of humility appears, one acts humbly with the head too, and it approaches the ground. The intention of all acts of worship and the desire for the good is not that one turn to the world, but to the Hereafter.¹¹⁴

When the desire for this world gains mastery over our consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*, heart), it turns to this world, its attachment to his world is its desire and it was so at the beginning of creation. When the will of God and of seeing the Hereafter dominate, the nature changes and it turns toward another direction. Therefore, the aim of all deeds is the turning of consciousness.¹¹⁵

Basing his view on the Quranic teaching (Q26:89), (Q15:12), (Q15:17), (Q67:3), Muhasibi (d 857 CE) regards the heart (consciousness, *qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*, heart) as the essence of the self, an immaterial principle which has the predominant control of our conscious life, by which reality is perceived and interpreted.¹¹⁶

According to Hakim Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), the *nafs al-mulhamah* (*qalb*, heart, consciousness) is the abode of the light of faith.¹¹⁷ He adds: Blindness and sight are attributes of consciousness and not of the mind (*sadr*).¹¹⁸ Muhasibi (d 857 CE) tells us:

It is the heart (consciousness, *qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*) which constitutes the excellency of humans, which distinguishes us from all other created beings. It enables us to know God and to accept or reject His commands. It is the point of union between body and soul (*nafs*) where the spiritual is joined with the temporal. God only desires our consciousness from His servants.

In addition to this which may direct them towards wrongdoing or good, there are also actions of consciousness, including the motives and sources of the outward actions, the cognitive, emotional and volitional processes, the exercise of the

virtues and vices, the reception of the psychological states.¹¹⁹

According to Abd al-Karim al-Jili (d 1428 CE), consciousness is considered to be the eternal light:

Consciousness (the heart, *qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*) is the eternal light which was revealed in the essence of existents so that God may see the human being through it. It is the center of God's consciousness (*taqwa*) and the circumference of the circles of all existents. It symbolizes what which is described in the Quran as the light (Q24:35). It reflects all the divine names and attributes and yet at times it directs its attention to some particular name and then becomes a complete reflection of it.¹²⁰

Hakim Tirmidhi (d 869 CE) also relates consciousness to light:

Of all of God's creation there is nothing better than consciousness which has become virtuous through the light of unity (*tawhid*), intuitive experience knowledge (*ma'rifat*) and faith, nor is there anything purer, cleaner, more pious, more sincere, nor anything more encompassing than a consciousness if God has purified it of impurities and undertaken its revival with the light of truth and care for and guarded it and provided it with benefits. Such is the consciousness of the believer and its lights are without limit.¹²¹

Suhrawardi (d 1234 CE), the founder of the school of illumination, adds:

Consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*) is a subtle, spiritual principle (*latifah*). The Prophet said: There are four kinds of consciousnesses (hearts): The first is like a pure soil free from all kinds of vegetation. It is illumined as if by a shining lamp. It is the consciousness (heart) of a true believer. The second is a dark ... consciousness which belongs to an ingrate. The third belongs to a hypocrite and is enveloped in a veil. The last is a pure but many-faceted consciousness with an inclination towards good as well as evil.¹²²

According to Hakim Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), our consciousness resides in our intellect. That is, our *nafs al-mutma'innah* contains our *nafs al-mulhamah* and then he sums up our beliefs with our cognitive system, describing the various parts of our cognition as mountains:

The *nafs al-mutma'innah* ('*aql*, intellect) is the greatest mountain and the purest station of the *nafs al-mulhamah* (*qalb*, consciousness).¹²³

Islam is a mountain whose land is the mind (*sadr*); faith is a mountain whose place is consciousness (*qalb*, heart, *nafs al-mulhamah*); irfan (gnosis) is a mountain whose abode is our conscience (*nafs al-lawwamah*, *fu'ad*); unity is a mountain and its resting place is our spirit-intellect, reason (*nafs al-mutma'innah*, '*aql*').¹²⁴

Module 13: Our Conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*)

It is our conscience that is part of our innermost self as stated by Harith

Muhasibi (d 857 CE):

The hidden, inmost aspect of the self is our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*). It is the ground of the soul (*nafs*), the secret shrine of God Himself, where He knows us and we can know Him. It is that bottommost depth of the soul (*nafs*) which lies hidden away, ineffable as God Himself.¹²⁵

It is our conscience that keeps us from acting against our better judgment according to al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE):

It is our conscience that keeps us from acting against our better judgment. Conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) is a natural disposition in us and exists to some extent in animals who are naturally disposed to know that their very survival depends on them staying with the mean, on the Straight Path. Our conscience is also naturally predisposed but because of our free willpower, we are free to accept or reject the advice of our conscience.¹²⁶

In Ibrahim ibn Adham we meet with the psychological practice of courting blame (*malamat*) for the purpose of self-discipline. Once he was asked if he was every happy in his life by attaining his heart's desire. He replied: Yes, twice. He related two different events when people not knowing him mocked and jested at his cost.¹²⁷

According to Harith Muhasibi (d 857 CE) God speaks to our reason through our conscience:

Reason is also the means by which God speaks to our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) through promises and warnings whereby we can discriminate also between what is morally good and evil, and know what may be beneficial in the world, but harmful in the next.¹²⁸

Hakim Tirmidhi (d 689 CE) distinguishes between our conscience and our consciousness:

The *nafs al-lawwamah* (*fu'ad*, conscience) sees and beholds whereas consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*, heart) merely knows.¹²⁹

Conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) benefits from perception whereas consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) delights in knowledge. However, as long as conscience does not perceive, consciousness cannot benefit from its knowledge.¹³⁰

Hakim Tirmidhi (d 689 CE) explains the meaning of the word "*fu'ad*": The word *fu'ad* is derived from *fa'idah*, benefit, because our conscience sees the benefits of God's love.¹³¹

According to Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE), our conscience engages in struggle with our animal soul:

The faculties or energies of the soul are like armies engaged in constant battles

of alternative success. Sometimes the soul is drawn towards its intellectual energies and encounters the intelligibles whereby their eternal truths cause it to affirm its loyalty to God; and sometimes its animal powers drag it down to the lowest foothills of the bestial nature. This vacillation in the state of the soul is the state of our conscience (*nafs al-lawwamah*). It is in earnest struggle with our animal powers.¹³²

Module 14: Our Reason, Spirit-Intellect (*nafs al-mutma'innah*, 'aql)

We now turn to the fourth aspect of our cognition, our spirit-intellect or ability to reason beginning with the views of Muhasibi (d 857 CE):

Reason, 'aql, is a natural instinct (*ghariza*) which makes use of experience to acquire knowledge and to comprehend it. It is a gift which God has bestowed on us in order that we may understand the revelation sent down and so may become a believer, God-conscious (*taqwa*), abiding in the divine commands.¹²⁵

Reason, Muhasibi says, enables the believer to understand the Unity of God and His power and sovereignty and also the nature of wrongdoing and its consequences and the sickness which afflicts the soul and how to seek the remedy for it. Our reason is convinced by the presentation of facts and by proof concerning that which is not concrete, but abstract, material for thought. He admits that the intellect, if it is weak, finds it difficult to prefer the service of God to wrongdoing, to choose knowledge rather than ignorance, and to prefer the following of the religious life to the pursuit of the pleasures of this life. If rightly directed, it is one of the greatest gifts of God. Muhasibi regarded reason as something distinct and concerning it he wrote a treatise which became celebrated among those who discussed the subject of the intellect and its nature.

Muhasibi defines reason as: A natural disposition or instinct bestowed by God upon His human creatures. which is invisible to them, both in themselves and in others, and can be neither touched nor tasted. But God has made them to know Him by means of reason, and through it they bear witness to Him, for through the intellect they recognize what is beneficial to them and what is injurious and he who can distinguish between these two in things temporal knows that God has bestowed upon him reason.¹³³

Suhrawardi (d 1234 CE) regards reason as being an inborn human ability:

Some people think that reason develops from the study of sciences, especially those which are necessary and axiomatic. But this is not the case. There are many people who are not versed in any art or science and yet possess abundance of reason and common sense. It is the inborn capacity of humans which helps them in acquiring different kinds of arts and sciences. There is placed in human beings a natural power which promotes them to acquire different kinds of knowledge.¹³⁴

The authority of our reason over us increases and decreases according to Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE):

Reason (intellect, 'aql, *nafs al-mutma'innah*) is one in name. Its authority de-

creases and increases. It is [both] fundamental and [at the same time] derivative since it becomes stronger through the strength of its fundamentals and increases with the increase of its authority.¹³⁵

Reason is the most excellent part of the spirit (*ruh*) and the core of everything as its purest part. Therefore, it was that reason was called the intellect (kernel, *lubb*). *Aql* is used not only of the quality of intelligence, by which we perceive, but of the percipient mind itself. Muhasibi (d 857 CE) himself uses *aql* to cover both senses.¹³⁶

Epilog: Section 1: Quranic Moral Psychology

Moral Imbalance, not Mental Illness

For other than a physical illness, the Quran speaks of illness as "moral" in its emphasis upon moral psychology. While earlier scholars spoke of moral balance and imbalance, it was always in terms of "too much" or "too little" of a positive trait such as courage or wisdom. "Too much" or "too little" refer to quantity. It was not until Nasir al-Din Tusi (d 1274 CE) that another category of diagnosing moral imbalance was found, that of a qualitative imbalance of a positive trait. He referred to this as a depravity of a positive trait:

Moral imbalance is the deviation of the soul from equipoise (*i'tidaʿ*). Aristotle and Miskawayh had thought of this deviation in terms of quantity and, therefore, the excess and defect of a state were for them the only two causes of moral diseases. Tusi for the first time propounded the view that the deviation is not only quantitative, but also qualitative, and to this new type of deviation he gave the name of depravity.¹³⁷

Moral illness often results from a lack of discernment (*furqan*) as stated by Dawwani (d 1502 CE):

The faculty of discernment is like a fire which will not light until the area be free of moisture. Once ignited, however, it grows stronger with every moment and it burns stronger until it fulfills the requirements of its own nature.¹³⁸

Epilog: Section 1: Quranic Moral Psychology

Purification of Our Consciousness

It can be said with certainty that the goal of Quranic moral psychology is the moral purification of our consciousness.¹³⁹

In Haji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari (d 1878 CE)'s final chapter of *Sharh-i manzumah* exploring *Hikmat* or Theosophy, Wisdom, he outlines the degrees of faith from simple acceptance to demonstration and from that to spiritual vision. This last degree can be reached only through the purification of consciousness and the acquisition of moral virtues such as purity, truthfulness, reliance upon God, surrender to the divine will, etc. When the human being acquires all of these virtues, his soul becomes simple and pure. He then becomes the receptor of the divine theophanies which illuminate his being and finally unify him with the center which is at once his own source of being and the origin of cosmic existence.¹⁴⁰

Hasan al-Basri (d 728 CE) was a key figure in the development of moral psychology. He believed that the duty incumbent on the believer is to concern himself with personal moral rectitude and self-examination and to disregard the faults of others. The psychological method he proposed consisted of reflection (*fikr*), self-examination and total submission to God, resulting ultimately in a state of inner contentment or satisfaction (*rida*).

Asked what is the most useful part of the science of morals in this life and the next, Hasan al-Basri replied, thorough religious knowledge (*tafaqquh*), disengagement from the material world and the realization of your debt to God. This realization, he argued, is tantamount to perfect faith. Finally, he regarded temperance and courage as the two foremost virtues.¹⁴¹

Moral discipline is achieved through three stages according to Junayd (d 909 CE): 1) the passing away from one's attributes through the effort of constantly opposing one's ego-self (*nafs al-ammarah*); 2) passing away from one's sense of accomplishment, that is, passing away from one's share of the sweet deserts and pleasures of obedience; and 3) passing away from the vision of the reality of your ecstasies as the sign of the Real overpowers you.¹⁴²

Abu Nasr Mohammad al-Farabi (d 950 CE): It is by choosing what is moral/ethical and contemplating about what constitutes the nature of morality/ethics that the actual intellect can become similar to the active intellect, thereby attaining perfection. It is only by this process that a human soul may survive death and live on in the afterlife.¹⁴³

Al-Kindi (d 873 CE): The Prophets have proclaimed the unique divinity of God, the practice of the virtues accepted by Him, and the avoidance of the vices which are contrary to virtues-in-themselves.¹⁴⁴

Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Sulami (d 1021 CE) wrote in *The Way of Sufi Chivalry on adab*: Respond to cruelty with kindness, and do not punish for error. Bring joy into the lives of your friends and meet their needs. Prefer the well-being and comfort of your brothers over your own, and relieve them of their difficulties. The host should serve everything he has to his brother. Even if he has only a drop of water left, he should serve that. Just to add a little relish, here is Abdul-Husayn ibn Sam'un on the broad meaning of *futuwwah* (spiritual chivalry): [It] means opposing and arguing little, being fair; preventing errors in oneself and not criticizing the errors of others; trying to correct one's faults; accepting accusations; enduring troubles caused by others; lowering one's ego; being pleasant to both the old and the young, doing good deeds, giving good advice, and accepting advice; loving one's friends; and bearing peacefully with one's enemies.¹⁴⁵

Jalal al-Din Rumi (d 1273 CE) tells the story of a callous person who planted a thorn bush in the middle of the road. The people's clothes were torn by the thorns, and their feet were pitifully wounded. Every day that thorn bush gained strength while its digger was aging and in decline. Rumi says: (The thorn bush) is growing younger, you older; be quick and do not waste your time. Know that every single bad habit of yours is a thorn bush; many a time have you been wounded by your own wrongdoing habits.¹⁴⁶

Moral psychology is so connected with psychology that Miskawayh (d 1030 CE) emphasizes the role of the soul in his treatise on ethics, *Refinement of Character*: The soul's desire for its own actions as well as its flight away from the actions proper to the body constitute its virtue. A person's excellence is measured by the extent to which he seeks this virtue and cares for it. It is enhanced as he pays greater attention to his animal soul and strives in all his power and capacity to renounce the things which hinder him from achieving this attribute.¹⁴⁷

Epilog: Section 1: Quranic Moral Psychology The Struggle Combatting the Excesses of the Animal Soul (*nafs al-ammarah*)

Engaging in the moral purification of the animal soul requires a struggle. As Jalal al-Din Dawwani (d 1501 CE) points out:

Moral struggle presupposes that all character traits or dispositions, whether innate or acquired, are capable of modification and change. Constant instruction and discipline and punishment, as evidenced by experience, can change the wicked into the virtuous. By these means wrongdoing is greatly reduced, if not completely eradicated. Since a person does not know beforehand that a particular disposition would resist all attempts to modify and change it, it is in consonance with the dictates of both reason and religion that he should exert his utmost for its modification.¹⁴⁸

Al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE) also emphasizes the *jihad al-akbar*:

Know that the work undertaken to know the Way of Life depends upon the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*). It is a way of choice. However, not everyone who seeks finds; for the more precious a thing is, the more numerous the conditions and the rarer its attainment. These are the more noble of the degrees for a human being at the station of intuitive experience knowledge (*ma'rifah*), pursuing it without strenuous effort is not possible.¹⁴⁹

Or Muhasibi (d 857 CE) who speaks of engaging in spiritual warfare:

So there is warfare being waged continually with the heart (consciousness, *qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*) and that which urges it to enter by the gateway opening on to the spiritual world is the higher soul, our "spirit" (*ruh*) which is the divine gift, one in nature with the Spirit of God, bestowed on us at our creation when God breathed within us and we became a living soul (*nafs*). (Q25:29), (Q17:87) Soul is that which strives towards the higher life, controlled by reason (*'aql*, *nafs al-mutma'inah*), inspired by faith and love (*nafs al-mulhamah*, *qalb*, consciousness), by which the natural disposition (*fitrat Allah*) is subordinated and transformed by which the self is brought into subjection to the overruling claims of God.¹⁵⁰

Epilog: Section 1: Quranic Moral Psychology As Our Soul Morally Heals Itself, It "Becomes" Our Spirit-Intellect

In the *Tahafut*, Ibn Rushd (d 1198 CE) speaks of the soul as a faculty that comes to resemble the focus of its intention, and when its attention focuses more upon eternal and universal knowledge, it becomes more like the eternal and universal. As such, when the soul perfects itself, it becomes like our intellect.¹⁵¹

Rumi (d 1273 CE) points out that the spirit (*ruh*) is knowledge and reason: The spirit endures with knowledge and reason.¹⁵² This is confirmed by Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jurjani (d 1414 CE):

The exalted spirit is that human spirit which is connected with the existence of God, but the essence of which is unknown to all but God. It is a moral faculty in human beings. It is also called the first Intellect; the essence of Muhammad; the single essence; the original spirit of human beings.¹⁵³

Epilog: Section 2: Diagnosis of Moral Imbalance Pay Attention to Moods

In diagnosing a moral imbalance, Ibn Sina recommends to approach the person based on the person's mood.

Approach another according to the latter's personal mood, i.e. the serious in a spirit of serious-mindedness, the frivolous in a spirit of frivolity, while guarding his own inner state concealed from his fellows. He will assist the needy with discretion, honor his pledges and refuse to resort to oathmaking.¹⁵⁴

Diagnosis of a moral imbalance is to look for negative traits such as ingratitude, jealousy, envy, hatred, conceit, hypocrisy, pride and ignorance. Even an illness such as depression is seen as a moral illness of sorrow and grief that we bring upon ourself. Instead of strengthening our "avoidance of harm/pain," our willpower seeks its natural disposition of "avoiding conflict."

The Ingratitude of Hypocrites

Hasan al-Basri (d. 728 CE): The many signs such as (Q4:78-4:79), (Q11:32) and (Q11:34) which appear to imply God's responsibility for the misdeeds of the impious, simply underscore the desire of the hypocrites—whenever they are visited by adversity or misfortune—to impute the responsibility for it to God, as they impute the responsibility for their ingratitude, wrongdoing and vile actions to Him also. God has admonished them in the Quran to keep themselves pure and, therefore, He will not accept their excuses or repentance once His verdict has been pronounced.¹⁵⁵

Jealousy or Envy

Al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE): Jealousy or envy is a great illness of the soul. Its remedy is a compound of theory and practice. As for theory, it is that one knows that envy is injurious to oneself—in this world and the next—while it is beneficial to the

envied person—in this world and the next. As for the practical remedy, it is to strive to root out the causes of jealousy and envy from one's inner being. For the causes of jealousy/envy are pride, vanity, hostility, the love of rank and the like. These roots must be extirpated through earnest striving. This is the purgative so that jealousy/envy itself may definitely not exist.¹⁵⁶

Hatred and Envy

Al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE): Know that hatred arises from anger and envy arises from hatred. Envy is one of the Destroyers. The Messenger said: Envy consumes good deeds as fire consumes dry wood.

Envy is that you dislike something when someone gets it and you desire the disappearance of that blessing from them. This is forbidden on the evidence that this is repugnant for the decree of God. It is an inner malice for the desire for the loss of some blessing for another that will not be yours is nothing other than malice.¹⁵⁷

Hypocrisy and Polytheism

al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE): Know that hypocrisy in acts of devotion to God is among the major sins and close to ascribing partners to God. There is no illness in the souls of the devout more common than this. When they perform an act of worship, they desire that people learn of it and, in short, believe in their devoutness. When the object of an act of worship is the confidence of people, it is not itself worship. It is the worship of people and that is ascribing partners to God.¹⁵⁸

Pride

Al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE): Know that pride and self-importance are blameworthy traits and, in fact, enmity to God. For this reason there are many reproaches for the tyrant and the arrogant in the Quran: (Q40:35), (Q14:15) and (Q40:27). Pride is a trait of character and character is an attribute of the soul, but its effect becomes evident on the exterior.¹⁵⁹

Conceit

Al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE): Know that conceit is one of the reprehensible moral traits. Many calamities are born of conceit. One is the pride of considering oneself better than others. Another is that one does not recall his own wrongdoings, and he does not attend to those that he does recall.¹⁶⁰

Ignorance

Al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE): Misery because of ignorance is a kind of heedlessness, unawareness. An ignorant person is like the person who sleeps on the road while the caravan passes him by. If someone does not awaken him, he will perish.¹⁶¹

Depression

Al-Kindi (d 873 CE): He developed cognitive methods to combat depression and discussed the intellectual operations of people. Al-Kindi dealt with moral psychology in his *First Philosophy and Eradication of Sorrow*. In the latter, he described sorrow as: A grief of the soul caused by loss of loved ones or personal belongings, or by failure in obtaining what one lusts after. If causes of pain are discernible, the cures can be found. He recommended: If we do not tolerate losing or

dislike being deprived of what is dear to us, then we should seek after riches in the world of the intellect. In it we should treasure our precious and cherished gains where they can never be dispossessed while that which is owned by our senses could easily be taken away from us. He also stated: Sorrow is not within us. We bring it upon ourselves.¹⁶²

Anxiety

Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE): In the case of anxiety (contraction of consciousness), in the event of there being a decision to flee, it is because of some contingent circumstance rather than because of an intention to give ground. It is as likely that attack and struggle will be decided upon in place of flight. The desire to escape is voluntary, not instinctive and is often used for offense and resistance.¹⁶³

"Punishment-bringers" vs. "Salvation-bringers"

Afzal Kashani (d 1214 CE): One needs to keep the heart (consciousness) free from unadmirable character traits such as anger, miserliness, envy, arrogance and conceit which are the "punishment-bringers" whereas the "salvation-bringers" are adorning the heart (consciousness) with admirable character traits such as patience, gratitude, love, hope and trust.¹⁶⁴

Epilog: Section 2: Diagnosis of Moral Imbalance

Examples Treatment of Moral Imbalance

Treatments for moral imbalance are many and will be explained in detail in a forthcoming *Quranic Psychotherapy*. However, just to give some examples, both Muhasibi (d 857 CE) and Ibn Khaldun (d 1406 CE) strongly suggest reflection and thinking or cognition and al-Ghazzali recommends seeking refuge in God from the accursed Satan.

Muhasibi considers reflection to be one of the most important works of consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*, heart). It is a form of inward service by which God's servant is strengthened for outward service. In solitary reflection is found the key to wisdom. The servant advances from service to his goal. Reflection leads to all good. Reflection enables us to know whether we are serving God or committing wrongdoing and to know which of two duties comes first and to choose aright between them. Reflection for a single hour, he says, is better than service (by good works) for a whole year because that reflection may turn a person from wrongdoing to obedience.

Reflection brings knowledge both of what is obligatory and what is voluntary (i.e. works of supererogation). It leads to the glorification of God and love of Him. Whichever type of reflection it is, on what is to be avoided, or what is to be undertaken, it is the best means to employ and a more excellent stage in the service of God. But reflection is not an easy thing because reflection upon the world to come turns aside consciousness (heart, *qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) from its pleasure in the things of this world to reflection of the Day or Resurrection which can bring sorrow and grief and fear which are distasteful.

Reflection means, too, that as a result thereof the self will be cut off from what it desires—which is seen in the light of reflection to be abhorrent to God. To the self-seeking—which means seeking the will of God instead—cannot be easy or accept-

able. But reflection becomes possible and easy by the concentration of the thoughts and dependence upon God for His help. Such concentration of the mind is secured by cutting off the physical senses from what would be a cause of distraction from the outer world and, then, by keeping the inner senses from consideration of any worldly affairs except those on which it is desirable to reflect. Then, the thoughts are concentrated and the mind is attentive and it becomes possible to reflect.¹⁶⁵

Ibn Khaldun (d 1406 CE): Things repeat themselves. One thing contains the clue to another. Let yourselves be guided in your future undertakings by your previous experience. Then, choose the method of doing things that is most definite, most accurate, and that promises the best result. You should know that there is something that defeats accomplishment, namely, talking about things. The person who does it is prevented from using his knowledge and his ability to think. Therefore, everyone of you, while he is in his office, should endeavor to talk no more than is sufficient. He should be concise in the matters he brings up and in the answers he gives. He should give thought to all the arguments he advances. His work will profit from that. It will prevent too much preoccupation with other things. He should implore God to grant him success and to support him with His guidance, for he must fear making mistakes that might hurt his body and (cast doubt upon) his intelligence and education. When any one of you says or thinks that the high quality and efficiency of his work is obviously the result of his own cleverness and knowledge of how to do things, he provokes God. God will let him depend upon himself alone. Then he will find that he is not adequate to his task. This is no secret to those who reflect.¹⁶⁶

Ibn Khaldun (d 1406 CE): The ability to think has several degrees. The first degree is man's intellectual understanding of the things that exist in the outside world in a natural or arbitrary order, so that he may try to arrange them with the help of his own power. This kind of thinking mostly consists of perceptions. It is the discerning intellect with the help of which humans obtain the things that are useful for them and their livelihood, and repels the things that are harmful to them. The second degree is the ability to think which provides humans with the ideas and the behavior needed in dealing with their friends and in leading them. It mostly conveys apperceptions, which are obtained one by one through experience, until they have become really useful. This is called the experimental intellect. The third degree is the ability to think which provides the knowledge, or hypothetical knowledge, of an object beyond sense perception without any practical activity (going with it). This is the cognitive or theoretical intellect. It consists of both perceptions and apperceptions (to perceive new experiences in relation to past experiences; conscious of self). They are arranged according to a special order, following special conditions, and thus provide some other knowledge of the same kind, that is, either perceptive or apperceptive. Then, they are again combined with something else, and again provide some other knowledge. The end of the process is to be provided with the perception of existence as it is, with its various genera, differences, reasons, and causes. By thinking about these things, the human being achieves perfection in his reality and becomes pure intellect and perceptive soul. This is the meaning of human reality.¹⁶⁷

Al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE): The practical treatment is that one say aloud: I seek refuge with God from the accursed Satan.¹⁶⁸

Others recommend the use of music, the understanding of dreams, paying attention to diet, good sleeping habits, drinking safe water, choosing good friendships and giving in charity. Obstacles to moral healing include elements within our nurturing environment and emotions or passions uncontrolled by reason, among others.

Music

Al-Kindi (d 873 CE): He promoted music therapy and attempted to cure a quadriplegic boy using this method.¹⁶⁹

Abu Nasr Mohammad al-Farabi (d 950 CE): He was a master of music theory; his *Kitab al-Musiqa al-Kabir* (The Great book on Music), known in the West as a book on Arabic music, is in reality a study of the theory of Persian music of his day as well as presenting certain great philosophical principles about music, its cosmic qualities, and its influence on the soul.¹⁷⁰

Ibn al-Haytham (d 1039 CE): In animal psychology and musicology, Ibn al-Haytham's *Treatise on the Influence of Melodies on the Souls of Animals* was an early treatise dealing with the effects of music on animals. In the treatise, he demonstrates how a camel's pace could be hastened or retarded with the use of music, and shows other examples of how music can affect animal behavior, experimenting with horses, birds and reptiles. Through to the 19th century, a majority of scholars in the Western world continued to believe that music was a distinctly human phenomenon, but experiments since then have vindicated Ibn al-Haytham's view that music does indeed have an effect on animals.¹⁷¹

Dreams

Al-Kindi (d 873 CE): He wrote a treatise on dream interpretation.¹⁷²

Abu Nasr Mohammad al-Farabi (d 950 CE): In consciousness studies, al-Farabi wrote the *On the Cause of Dreams*, which appeared as chapter 24 of his *Book of Opinions* of the people of the Ideal City, was a treatise on dreams, in which he was the first to distinguish between dream interpretation and the nature and causes of dreams.¹⁷³

Abu Nasr Mohammad al-Farabi (d 950 CE): He also wrote on dreams and explained the distinction between dream interpretation and the nature and trigger of dreams.¹⁷⁴

Sleep

Jalal al-Din Rumi (d 1273 CE): Each night You set free the soul (consciousness, qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) from the body's snare and erase the tablets of the mind (*sadr*).¹⁷⁵

Ibn Khaldun (d 1406 CE): Often, we may deduce (the existence of) that high

spiritual world and the essences it contains, from visions and things we had not been aware of while awake but which we find in our sleep and which are brought to our attention in it and which, if they are true (dreams), conform with actuality. We thus know that they are true and come from the world of truth. "Confused dreams," on the other hand, are pictures of the imagination that are stored inside by perception and to which the ability to think is applied, after (man) has retired from sense perception.¹⁷⁶

Diet

Al-Majusi (d 994 CE): He placed more emphasis on preserving health through diet and natural healing than he did on medication or drugs, which he considered a last resort.¹⁷⁷

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d 1350 CE): A filled stomach is damaging to one's body, heart and spirit. This case is more harmful when it becomes a habit, though if one occasionally indulges himself to a delicious meal, it is rather healthy and comforting.¹⁷⁸

Water

Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE): The best type of water comes from the springs located on a soil which is pure and free from contamination and not from the springs over rocky ground. The water from the springs of a pure soil is, however, not always the best unless it is running and is exposed both to the sun and the air.¹⁷⁹

Good Friendships

Harith Muhasibi (d 857 CE): God has distinguished reason by its excellence and has given it great power and has made the intelligent to hold the position which is highest and most honorable in this world and the next. Muhasibi urges his readers to have no companionship except with one who is intelligent and God-conscious, and not to associate with any except a person possessed of insight.¹⁸⁰

Giving Charity

Ibn Miskawayh (d 1030): In *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq (Refinement of Character)* and *Al-Fauz al-Asgar (The Lesser Victory)*, ibn Miskawayh gives advice on the fear of death, self-restraint and morality. He advises Muslims who feel guilt to correct themselves through charity, fasting, etc.¹⁸¹

Epilog: Section 2: Diagnosis of Moral Imbalance

Obstacles to Gaining Moral Balance

Not Knowing "Self"

Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE): When referring to our contemplation of self, every person is like an island set in isolation in a fathomless sea enveloped by darkness, saying that the loneliness one knows is so utterly absolute because one does not know self completely. I must add that such utter loneliness basically springs from our inability to answer our own persistent ageless inner question to our self: Who am I? What is my ultimate destiny?¹⁸²

Emotions

Ibn Khaldun (d 1406 CE): The capability of human empathy may have evolved,

in its cognition-based form, as a by-product of the basic human capability for strategic thought. The latter requires representations of one's own possible future states for assessment of their emotional desirability, but also the representation of possible states of others including their emotional assessments, allowing anticipation of their behavior. This is best achieved if representations of others are connected to one's own emotional centers, similar as self-representations are.¹⁸³

Epilog: Section 2: Diagnosis of Moral Imbalance

Our Nurturing System is a Key to Maintaining Our Original Moral Balance

Maintaining balance or a state of moderation, provided by our *fitrat Allah*, is the key as confirmed by al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE):

How we attribute situations is based on our beliefs. Al-Ghazzali mentions sources for our beliefs: Our environment: how we grow up; models of success or failure we learn from; what is right and what is wrong; what is possible and what is impossible.¹⁸⁴

Any attribute that is not possible for a person to eliminate should be kept at the level of moderation so that in one way it is as though it were eliminated. As water is not devoid of warmth or coldness, that which is tepid and equable resembles that which is devoid of both extremes. Therefore, moderation and the mean in all qualities have been commanded because they are better.¹⁸⁵

Endnotes to the Preface

1 Michael Maher, *Psychology*. Online.

2 Many scholars have conflated *nafs* and *ruh*, using them interchangeably with regard to their very different functions within our "self." As you will learn in this textbook, they are two very different aspects of our self. In addition to *nafs* being a feminine noun in Arabic and *ruh* being a masculine noun, which should have been the first indication to scholars that they are two very distinct and different aspects of our self, the *ruh* relates to the divine command to *Be!* and enlivens our *nafs* (when used non-reflexively in the Quran) while our *nafs* ensouls our body and needs our body to function.

3 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *History of Muslim Philosophy*. Online.

4 The classical elemental principles also represent the four possibilities of matter: plasma, gas, liquid and solid.

5 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Cosmological Doctrines*, p. 240 quoting Avicenna's *Danish-yi Ala al-Dawlah* (Book of Science Dedicated to Ala al-Dawlah).

6 Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Traditional Medicine of the Prophet (Tibb al-nabi)*.

7 Ibn Jawziyya, *The Traditional Medicine of the Prophet*, p. 5.

8 Ibn Jawziyya, *The Traditional Medicine of the Prophet*, p. 5.

9 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Preface, Ibn Jawziyya, *Medicine of the Prophet*.

10 The Latin translation of *The Canon of Medicine* was the only medical textbook taught in Europe for 600 years. The complete 5 volumes in English translation are now available through Kazi Publications (USA), Chicago.

11 Majid Fakhry, *Ethical Theories in Islam*, p 195.

12 *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; also see Preface and *Medicine of the Prophet (Tibb al-nabi)*.

13 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *History of Muslim Philosophy*. Online.

14 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *History of Muslim Philosophy*. Online. Nasr adds: It is of the utmost significance to recall here that *ayah* means both verses of the Quran and phenomena of nature. See S. H. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, p. 5 ff.

15 See

[http://en.wikishia.net/view/Mulla_Sadra%27s_Exegesis_of_the_Qur%27an_\(book\)](http://en.wikishia.net/view/Mulla_Sadra%27s_Exegesis_of_the_Qur%27an_(book))

16 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *History of Muslim Philosophy*. Online.

17 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *History of Muslim Philosophy*. Online.

18 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *History of Muslim Philosophy*. Online. Nasr adds in a footnote, the doctrine of the unity and gradation of Being in Mulla Sadra is not new; it was expressed clearly five centuries before him by Ibn 'Arabi. Mulla Sadra, however, was the first person to give it a logical dress and introduce it as a principle of *Hikmat* as distinct from pure gnosis which does not concern itself with various logical distinctions.

19 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *History of Muslim Philosophy*. Online.

20 Sadr al-Din Shirazi (d 1640 CE), *Shawahid al-rububiyyah*, p. 165. Quoted by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *History of Muslim Philosophy*. Online.

21 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, pp. 24-25.

22 Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs." Online.

23 Ibrahim Kalin, <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.

24 Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs." Online.

25 Trustful interaction serves the interests of those involved. Thus, one could reason that trust itself may be analyzed as part of rational, goal oriented action. In contrast, common sense tells us that trust is an emotion and is, therefore, independent of rational deliberation to some extent. I will argue that we are right in "trusting" our common sense. My argument is conceptual in nature, referring to the common distinction between trust and pure reliance. An emotional attitude may be understood as some general pattern in the way the world or some part of the world is perceived by an individual. Trust may be characterized by such a pattern. I shall focus on two central features of a trusting attitude. First, trust involves a participant attitude toward the person being trusted. Second, a situation of trust is perceived by a trusting person as one in which shared values or norms motivate both his own actions as well as those of the person being trusted. As an emotional attitude, trust is, to some extent, independent of objective information. It determines what a trusting person will believe and how various outcomes are evaluated. Hence, trust is quite different from rational belief and the problem with trust is not adequately met in minimizing risk by supplying extensive information or some mechanism of sanctioning. Trust is an attitude that enables us to cope with risk in a certain way. If we want to promote trustful interaction, we must form our institutions in ways that allow individuals to experience their interest and values as shared and, thus, to develop a trusting attitude. Bernd Lahno, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1011425102875>.

26 Ibrahim Kalin, <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.

27 Ibrahim Kalin, <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.

28 See al-Ghazzali, *Alchemy of Happiness*.

29 See Laleh Bakhtiar, *al-Ghazzali: His Psychology*.

30 See Nasir al-Din Tusi, *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*. Online.

31 Ibn Bajjah (d 1138 CE), *Kitab al-nafs* (Book of the Soul), pp. 18-19.

32 Nurdeen Deuraseh and Mansor Abu Talib (2005), "Mental health in Islamic medical tradition", *The International Medical Journal* 4 (2), pp. 76-79.

33 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. lxxxv.

34 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. li.

35 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. lxxxiii.

36 See William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online. See also Hakim Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 30.

37 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), "Knowing Yourself and God," *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 26.

38 Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE), *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, p. 5.

39 Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE), *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, pp. 26-27.

40 Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE), *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, p. 26.

41 F. Klein-Frank, in O. Leaman and H. Nasr, *History of Islamic Philosophy*.

42 See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr al-Din Shirazi," *History of Muslim Philosophy*. Online.

43 Avicenna (d 1037 CE), *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1.

44 Zakariya Razi (d 925 CE), *Razi's Traditional Psychology*, p. 30.

45 Laleh Bakhtiar, *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. xxvi.

46 Ibn Bajjah (d 1138 CE), *Kitab al-nafs* (Book of the Soul), p. 38.

47 Ibn Bajjah (d 1138 CE), *Kitab al-nafs* (Book of the Soul), p. 38.

48 Ibn Bajjah (d 1138 CE), *Kitab al-nafs* (Book of the Soul), p. 38.

49 To Jabir ibn Hayyan, for example, "lead was cold and dry and gold was hot and moist. According to Jabir's mercury-sulfur theory, metals differ from each other in so far as they contain different proportions of the sulfur and mercury. These are not the elements that we know by those names, but certain principles to which those elements are the closest approximation in nature. Jabir says: The metals are all, in essence, composed of mercury combined and coagulated with sulfur [that has risen to it in earthy, smoke-like vapors]. They differ from one another only because of the difference of their accidental qualities, and this difference is due to the difference of their sulfur, which again is caused by a variation in the soils and in their positions with respect to the heat of the sun. The seeds of the modern classification of elements into metals and non-metals could be seen in Jabir's chemical nomenclature. He proposed three categories: Spirits which vaporize on heating, like arsenic (realgar, orpiment), camphor, mercury, sulfur, sal ammoniac, and ammonium chloride; M=metals, like gold, silver, lead, tin, copper, iron, and khar-sini (Chinese iron); and non-malleable substances, that can be converted into powders, such as stones. The origins of the idea of chemical equivalents might be traced back to Jabir, in whose time it was recognized that: a certain quantity of acid is necessary in order to neutralize a given amount of base." Max Meyerhoff, *Islam's Contribution to Science*, p. 94; Eric John Holm-yard, *Makers of Chemistry*, p. 92.

50 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 11.

51 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 11.

52 al-Ghazzali, *Tahafut al-Falasifa*, p. 303.

53 Lane-Poole, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 'A L Q, p. 2134.

54 Gerald D. Hart, "Descriptions of blood and blood disorders before the advent of laboratory studies," *Br. J. Haematol.* 115 (4): 719-28, December 2001.

55 Avicenna (d 1037 CE), *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1.

56 Laleh Bakhtiar, *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. 40.

57 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 66.

58 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 41.

59 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 41.

60 Peter L. Lutz, *The Rise of Experimental Biology: An Illustrated History*, p. 60.

61 D. Black, "Psychology: Soul and Intellect" in P. Adamson and R. Taylor, *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, p. 313.

62 al-Ghazzali, *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 69.

63 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 69.

64 Gholamreza Aavani, *Rumi: A Philosophical Study*, who quotes Rumi from his *Fihri Ma Fihri*.

65 Avicenna (d 1037 CE), *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, §39-43.

66 Avicenna (d 1037 CE), *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, §39-43.

67 Avicenna (d 1037 CE), *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, §39-43

68 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *The Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 957.

69 Avicenna (d 1037), http://www.greekmedicine.net/b_p/Radical_Moisture.html

70 Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE), *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, p. 6.

71 Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE), *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, p. 39.

72 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), <https://cairocaprices.wordpress.com/my-translations/a-letter-on-preparing-for-death-by-imam-ghazali/>

73 Abu Jafar Tahawi, *al-Aqidah*. Online.

74 Robert Hall, "Intellect, Soul and Body in Ibn Sina," Jon McGinnis, ed. *Interpreting Avicenna's Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam*, p. 66.

75 Avicenna (d 1037 CE), Jon McGinnis, *Avicenna*, p. 88.

- 76 Laleh Bakhtiar, *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. 37.
- 77 Laleh Bakhtiar, *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. 37.
- 78 Laleh Bakhtiar, *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. 39.
- 79 Laleh Bakhtiar, *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. 40.
- 80 Ibn Hazm (d 1064 CE), "In Pursuit of Virtue," in section, "Treatment to be given to Souls, and the Reform of Vicious Characters," #9.
- 81 R. A. Nicholson, *Rumi Anthology*, the *Mathnawi*, Book 3, 3901-3906; Gholamreza Aavani, *Rumi: A Philosophical Study*, *Mathnawi* 5:780.
- 82 Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jurjani (d 1414 CE), *Kitab al-tarifat*, p. 76.
- 83 Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE), *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*, p. 8.
- 84 Avicenna (d 1037 CE), *Kitab al-najat*, p. 26.
- 85 M. M. Sharif, "Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi Maqtul," *History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 393.
- 86 Margaret Smith, *Early Mystic of Baghdad*, p. 93.
- 87 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online. Chittick says: Evil is the furthest limit of distance from the perfect goodness of God. It is not sheer evil because that would mean it does not exist, yet we know that it does exist. However, its lack of good is itself the potential for good. The good in things comes from the fact that they are actual whereas evil stems from what is potential.
- 88 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 452.
- 89 M. M. Sharif, "Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi Maqtul," *History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 363.
- 90 Margaret Smith, *Early Mystic of Baghdad*, p. 101.
- 91 Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE), *Kitab al-najat*, p. 28.
- 92 Ibn Sina (d 1037 CE), *Kitab al-najat*, p. 26.
- 93 Majid Fakhry, *Ethical Theories of Islam*, p. 155.
- 94 M. M. Sharif, "Sufis Before al-Hallaj," *History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 335ff.
- 95 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 453.
- 96 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 195.
- 97 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. lxxxiv.
- 98 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. lxxxv.
- 99 Simon Kemp, K.T. Strongman, "Anger theory and management: A historical analysis," *The American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 108, No. 3, (Autumn, 1995), pp. 397-417.
- 100 Majid Fakhry, *Ethical Theories of Islam*, p. 154.
- 101 Majid Fakhry, *Ethical Theories of Islam*, p. 155.
- 102 Majid Fakhry, *Ethical Theories of Islam*, p. 155.
- 103 Laleh Bakhtiar, *Traditional Psychoethics and Personality Paradigm*, quoting Jalal al-Din al-Dawwani, *Akhlaq-i Jalalayn*, p. 116.
- 104 Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 16. It is most interesting to note that: "Tirmidhi's system of thought is representative of an Islamic theosophy which had not yet consciously assimilated elements from the Aristotelian-Neoplatonic philosophic tradition." Radtke and O'Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism*.
- 105 Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 16.
- 106 Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 16.
- 107 Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 19.
- 108 Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad*

wa-al-lubb, p. 27.

109 Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jurjani (d 1414 CE), *Kitab al-tarifat*, p. 76.

110 Ali Hujwiri, *Kashf al-mahjub*, p. 144.

111 William Chittick, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Ibn Arabi," online.

112 William Chittick, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Ibn Arabi," online.

113 Hakim Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 27.

114 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 461-2.

115 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. 802-3.

116 Margaret Smith, *Early Mystic of Baghdad*, p. 87.

117 Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 24.

118 Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 21.

119 Margaret Smith, *Early Mystic of Baghdad*, p. 87.

120 M. M. Sharif, "Abd al-Karim al-Jili," *History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 853.

121 Hakim Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 25.

122 M. M. Sharif, "Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi Maqtul," *History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 363.

123 Hakim Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 35.

124 Hakim Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 41.

125 Margaret Smith, *Early Mystic of Baghdad*, pp. 89-90.

126 al-Ghazzali (d 1111 CE), *Alchemy of Happiness*, p. lxxxiii.

127 M. M. Sharif, "Ibrahim ibn Adham," *History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 336.

128 Margaret Smith, *Early Mystic of Baghdad*, p. 93.

129 Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 35.

130 Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 33.

131 Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 32.

132 Syed Naquib al-Attas (b 1931 CE), *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, p. 5.

133 Margaret Smith, *Early Mystic of Baghdad*, p. 93.

134 M. M. Sharif, "Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi Maqtul," *History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 364.

135 Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d 869 CE), *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 37.

136 Margaret Smith, *Early Mystic of Baghdad*, p. 93.

137 See Laleh Bakhtiar, *Moral Healer's Handbook*, p. 182ff.

138 Jalal al-Din al-Dawwani, *Akhlaq-i Jalalayn*.

139 Gavin Picken gives an excellent summary of (Q91:7-10) regarding the purification of the soul (*tazkiya nafs*): "The single Quranic verse mentioning both the terms *tazkiya* and *al-nafs* in (Q91:10) ... The significance of these verses cannot be over emphasized due to their mention of not only the nature of the soul and the potentiality ... created in it but also the matter of its purification or defilement. As such this is the only series of Quranic verses that make mention of both the *nafs* and its *tazkiya* in one place and therefore is deserving of particular mention and merits specific attention."

The verses read: *By the sun and its forenoon; and by the moon when it relates to it and by the daytime when it displays it; and by the nighttime when it overcomes it; and by the heaven and the One who built it; and by the earth and the One Who widened it; and [by] the soul (nafs) and the One Who shaped it; then He inspired (the human soul) [to discern between] its immorality and its God-consciousness; indeed, he who purifies it has succeeded; and indeed, he who seduces it is frustrated.* (Q91:7-10)

Picken goes on to say: "... The first characteristic is that the series of verses begins with the swearing of an oath using *waw al-qasm*, which according to the Islamic exegetical tradition implies emphasis to draw the attention of the reader/ listener to the importance of the discourse being presented. Not only this but this particular verse comes at the end of six previous oaths at the beginning of each verse, the objects of the oath being the sun (*al-shams*), the moon (*al-qamar*), the day (*al-nahar*), the night (*al-layl*), the heaven (*al-sama*), the earth (*al-ard*) and finally, the seventh oath concerns the soul (*al-nafs*). Commentators allude to the fact that this style in the Quran is utilized to draw attention to the greatness and perfection of such creations, these ultimately being indications of the Creator Himself."

While the first six oaths are to manifest forms, the last, the soul, is inward or hidden which some commentators say is an indication of the soul being God's greatest creation.

"Similarly," Picken says, "there is a direct reference to the Creator of this soul; the word used in the verse is *ma* in this instance *ma al-mawla* or the relative pronoun, carrying the meaning of *alladhi* and in this specific example meaning ... 'the one who'. Thus, the verse speaks not only of the soul itself but also of the One, meaning God, Who *sawwaha* carrying the meaning of (shaped), proportioned, made equal, made even and balanced, suggesting not only that the soul created was thus in the body but also that the soul has been given 'free will' to choose at a moral level between good and evil, to which the following verse adds further credence.

"The next verse begins by making an important statement, i.e. that the soul is capable of receiving inspiration and insight, indicated to by the use of the verb *alhamaha*, (referring to what is known as the *nafs al-mulhamah*, the heart or consciousness) once again the active participle being God, stating clearly that He is the source of inspiration. The subject of the inspiration is equally significant, however, as it is stated as being the soul's (immorality) and its (God-consciousness) (*tagwa*), i.e. the soul has been inspired and given insight to be able to discern between and choose either right action or sin....

"In addition, this is another indication of the soul's 'free will' and as such some commentators as a result consider this to be an indication of the human being's rational faculty or intellect (*al-aql*), this being the highest form of human capacity. However, it should be noticed that the subject of this inspiration is to choose between (immorality) and (God-consciousness), which is essentially a moral dilemma, in which there can be no doubt that the intellect plays a role, but the influence here of the heart (consciousness, *al-qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*) and/or of the conscience (*al-zamir*, *nafs al-lawwamah*) cannot be underestimated.... (It also) alludes to its responsibility and accountability, in both this life and the next, as it has been endowed with the capacity to discern and the ability to choose the right course of action or alternatively its opposite.

"The results and consequences of such 'informed' choices are the subject of the next two verses, which is also the only time in the Quran where the *nafs* is used in conjunction with a derivative of the term *tazkiya*. In the very next verse we are informed that true success, prosperity and salvation (*falaha*), meaning the acquisition of God's good grace and entry into His paradise, will be attained by a person who 'purifies it (*zakkaha*)'.... As the attached pronoun being used is feminine, i.e. *ha*, (it), as such, refers directly to the term *nafs*....

"Thus, we may conclude that our understanding of *tazkiyat al-nafs* has now developed

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Introduction

In the Name of God, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate

For Muslims throughout the world, the Noble Quran is the verbatim Word of God, source of all principal knowledge, foundation of Islam's Sacred Law (the *Shari'ah*), key to the understanding of the cosmos and the link between God's creation or nature and us, fountainhead of Islamic ethics and aesthetics and the guide for us in this world and to the next. And since it is such a sure guide, it deals in depth with the human soul on all levels of its reality and with what is required of the soul to live in felicity in this world and in a blessed state in the Beyond. There exists, therefore, the profoundest Quranic psychology if we understand "psychology" in its traditional sense or what in Islamic sources is called *'ilm al-nafs* or *ma'rifat al-nafs* not to be equated to or confused with what is called psychology today in modern cultures. Still, it has to be added that gradually the term psychology has also come to be used for traditional sciences of the soul whether they be Islamic, Hindu, Taoist, Buddhist or even traditional Christian and Jewish, not to speak of Greek as when one refers to the psychology of Plato or Aristotle. It is in this latter traditional sense that the author uses the phrase Quranic psychology.

Quranic psychology is based on the principle that only the greater can know fully the lesser. In the case of the Quran, the greater is also the Greatest, being God who revealed His Word as the Quran and has created man's soul or psyche (*al-nafs*). Traditional psychology is based on this universal principle that to understand is to know the foundation of a thing, literally the ontological ground upon which a being stands. To comprehend means etymologically to grasp or encompass as the meaning of the Latin word *comprehendere* reveals. God knows all things because not only He is the infinite Knower (*al-'Alīm*), but also because He encompasses (*comprehendere*) all things (*Huwa 'alā kulli shay'in muḥīt*). Traditional Quranic psychology is a sacred science that is foundational to all later authentic schools of Islamic psychology.

The Noble Quran deals with the states and levels of the soul (*al-nafs*) from its being in the state of the fetus in the womb of the mother to its post-human states and ultimately paradise, what is called traditionally from *janīn* to *janān*. The goal of this sacred psychology, both explicit and implicit in the Quran, is not to enable human beings to reach freedom of the self (*al-nafs*), but to attain freedom from the self in total contrast to modern psychology. To this end the Quran mentions levels of the soul or one might say levels through which the soul must journey on its road to-

wards perfection and the meeting with God, this journey being the real journey of life itself for a life that is well lived.

The Quran speaks of the lowest level of the human soul, *al-nafs al-ammārah bi'l-sū'*, the soul that commands us to evil; then the soul that becomes aware of its evil and blameworthiness and repents, *al-nafs al-lawwāmah*; the inspired soul or heart, *al-nafs al-mulhamah* and the soul that attains certainty and peace, *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*. The goal of human life is to reach God by man's journeying through these levels of the *nafs*. The Quran not only provides the map for this journey but also assists those who accept its teachings and have faith in God to make the journey, the journey that is impossible to make without the help and guidance of God and the revelation that comes from Him.

The Quran provides the means for the soul to become divorced from its passionate and concupiscent aspects and then become wed to the Spirit. Moreover, this transformation has a cosmic aspect and through it the soul realizes its own cosmic dimension and correspondence with the cosmos. As the Persian Sufi poet, Shaykh Maḥmūd Shabistārī, writes concerning this aspect of the perfection of the realized soul: "The cosmos has become man and man, the cosmos. There is no clearer exposition than this (utterance)".

Quranic psychology has many dimensions. It is foundational to Islamic ethics both individual and social. The soul of a Muslim should be impregnated by ethical values and its actions based on ethical considerations. The goal of Quranic ethics is to make the soul healthy and wholesome and Quranic psychology is inseparable from ethics whose practice is necessary for the well-being of the soul. Psychology without ethics has no place in the Islamic universe.

The Quran views man in his wholeness and totality and Quranic psychology plays a very important role in Islamic medicine and the whole issue of health. It is mostly on the basis of the Quranic worldview that Islamic medicine developed by paying special attention to psychic health and its effect upon the health of the body. It is not accidental that such famous physicians as Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā' al-Rāzī and Ibn Sīnā wrote extensively on the psyche or soul and were interested so keenly in psychosomatic medicine. Nor did they separate the question of the health of the soul from its relation to the world of the Spirit.

When we turn to the practice of the religion itself, we see that the Quranic instructions concerning the soul play a central role. The daily prayers involve all levels of the human being from the spirit to the soul to the body. As far as the psychic realm is concerned, one must mention that the *ṣalāh* or *namāz* has a very important role to play in the integration of the psyche and the establishment of harmony between the psyche or soul and the spirit above it and the body below it. The other rites also have a direct salutary effect upon the *nafs* and in fact one could say that religious practices are a kind of medicine for the soul, at their heart residing—

prayer which is a balm for the soul of fallen man and the key to its salvation and integration.

Quranic psychology is of course directly related to the state of soul of pious Muslims and, therefore, the realities of eschatology with which the pious are concerned throughout their lives. In traditional Islamic society Muslims have been over the ages and are still today made constantly aware of the reality of death, the Afterlife, God's Judgment of our earthly life and actions and the transience of this world. The Noble Quran is replete with references to these realities and the psychological as well as spiritual attitudes necessary to live a life with full awareness of its transience of earthly life, the reality of the post-human states and the return to God. As it says: "We come from God and to Him is our return."

The goal of human life is this return to God in a state that is worthy of His Exalted presence and of our own primordial nature (*al-fiṭrah*), immortal soul, created by Him with the purpose of returning to Him, integrated and worthy of the 'form' in which He created us. As the well-known *ḥadīth* states: "God created Adam in His 'form' (*khalāqa'Llāh Ādama 'alā sūratihī*). And this return as willed by God is only possible through the gift of faith (*al-īmān*). Quranic psychology is, therefore, involved throughout with the reality of faith. Faith is what one can call the basis of Quranic psychology and its philosophy, if this term is considered in its traditional sense.

On the basis of these and certain other aspects of Quranic psychology, there developed several schools of psychology over the ages in the Islamic tradition ranging from the legal and medical to the philosophical and mystical. The part of the *Sharī'ah* dealing with *'ibādāt* or worship all concern the whole of man including, of course, his *nafs*, that is his soul and psyche. But even the parts of the *Sharī'ah* concerned with *mu'āmalāt* or transactions affect the soul upon which they can have a positive or negative effect. To live a life according to the *Sharī'ah* results in gaining a wholesome soul and avoiding many psychological as well as physical infirmities and illnesses.

As already alluded to above, Islamic medicine, being holistic, is also always concerned with the psyche of the patient as well as his or her body. In any discussion of the psychosomatic nature of Islamic medicine, the presence of Quranic psychology that is so deeply rooted in the soul of Muslim believers must be kept in mind even for those schools of medicine that drew much of their teachings and practices from Greco-Alexandrian medicine. It should never be forgotten that the vast majority of patients who came to Muslim physicians throughout the centuries never missed their daily prayers or the recitation of the Quran. The soul of a Muslim is like a mosaic of Quranic verses held together by the presence of *īmān*. Even today for those Muslims who say they have lost their faith, their souls still bear the imprint of the Word of God without their often realizing

it. How often did I myself hear Marxists in Iran say that *insha'ā' Llāh* they would take over the country one day!

As Peripatetic (*mashshā'i*) philosophy developed, a philosophical psychology was formulated, one which received its fullest exposition in the hands of Ibn Sīnā in Book VI of his *Kitāb al-shifā'* ("The Book of Healing"). This school of psychology was opposed by both the theologians (*al-mutakallimūn*) and those jurists (*al-fuqahā'*) who were opposed to all as well as *falsafah* by many Sufis. Parallel in time with the rise of Peripatetic philosophy one also witnesses the development of Ismā'īlī philosophy in the hands of such men as Abū Hātam al-Rāzī and Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, a philosophical school that deals in turn extensively with psychology.

In the 6th/12th century the School of Illumination (*al-ishrāq*) founded by Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī was established as a new major intellectual perspective in Islam, one which challenged many of the tenets of Peripatetic philosophy. Suhrawardī established a philosophical psychology based on the central reality of light (*al-nūr*) and its vast hierarchy, the soul being seen by Suhrawardī as being itself light hidden by the darkness (*ghasaq*) of the body in this lowly world.

The Sufi tradition was also concerned from the beginning with the training of the soul and therefore a sacred psychology. Such early texts of Sufism as those of Abū Turāb al-Makkī, al-Hujwīrī and Imām al-Qushayrī are mostly concerned with the infirmities of the soul, their cure and the stages of the path that the soul must traverse in its journey to perfection. Drawing fully from the Quran and *Ḥadīth* as well as the teachings of Sufi authorities themselves, Sufi treatises dealing with the soul's journey upon the spiritual path and the alchemical transmutations that it undergoes provide the profoundest expression of a sacred psychology rooted in the Quran in the whole annals of the Islamic intellectual and spiritual tradition. Nowhere is this truth more evident than in the writings of Ibn 'Arabī, especially his *magnum opus*, that ocean of gnosis, *The Makkan Illuminations* ("*al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyyah*"), where all aspects of the reality of the soul are discussed including its cosmic dimension and its root in the Meta-cosmic Reality.

The greatest synthesis of traditional psychology in Islam is to be found in the fourth book (*safar*) of Mullā Ṣadrā's *The Four Journeys* ("*al-Asfār al-arba'āh*") to which the author of this book is particularly attracted. Drawing mainly from the Quran and *Ḥadīth*, Mullā Ṣadrā quotes copiously from Ibn 'Arabī in depicting the journey of the soul from the fetus to the heavenly states. Relying on the principle of *al-ḥarakat al-jawhariyyah* or trans-substantial motion, he states that the soul is created as 'body' but through trans-substantial motion ends by subsisting as 'spirit' (*rūh*) (*jismāniyyat al-ḥadūth wa rūhaniyyat al-baqā'*). He creates a synthesis on the basis of Quranic teachings, between philosophical and Sufi teachings about the soul or psyche, treating the life of the soul

from its biological beginnings in this world of temporality to its residing in the supernal world beyond time.

This long tradition of Quranic psychology and its exposition and development during the past fourteen centuries since the advent of the Islamic revelation is not only of historical interest. Rather, it is still living and has much to teach us on every level from the solution of everyday psychological problems to the goal towards which we should all be journeying in our earthly sojourn.

In conclusion, a word needs to be said about the author of this book, Laleh Bakhtiar. I have known her since 1962 when I was visiting professor at Harvard University and she and her husband, Nader Ardalan, whom I had known since he was a child, were also there at the School of Architecture. Soon we became friends and they studied with me not only during my stay at Harvard but upon my return to Tehran as I helped to convince them to return to Iran.

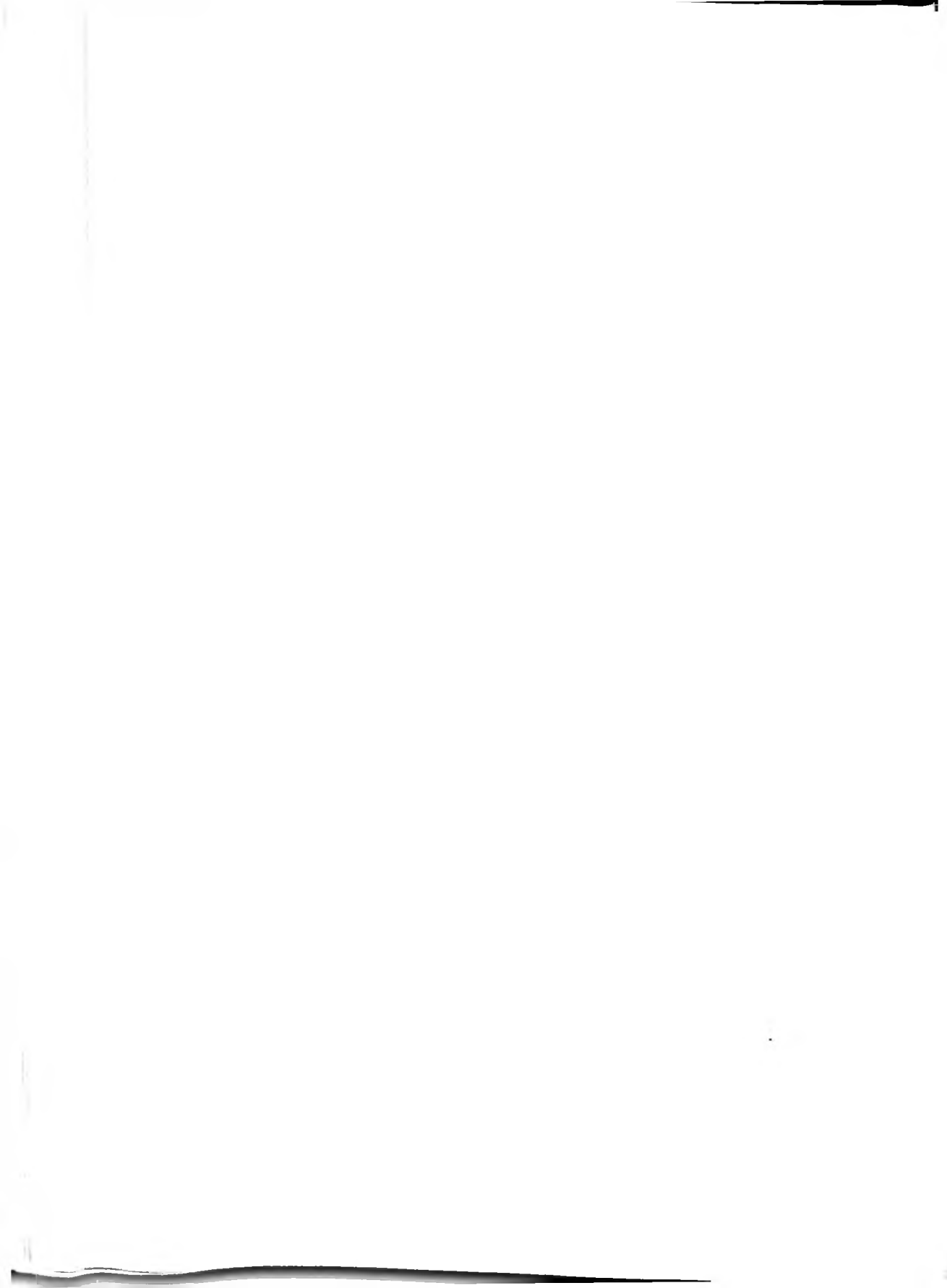
Laleh Bakhtiar is the daughter of a pioneering Persian physician who had married an American Christian woman from whom he had several children. After some years in Persia, she returned to America where Laleh was brought up as a Christian. When I first met her she hardly spoke Persian but became a Muslim.

From the beginning of my acquaintance with Laleh, I realized that she was seriously interested in Islam, Sufism and Islamic art. She studied with me for many years and the well-known book *The Sense of Unity*, which she wrote jointly with Nader Ardalan, was to a large extent based on their studies with me. Years later with three children her marriage broke up but she stayed in Persia through the Islamic Revolution under difficult circumstances and finally returned to America with her children. Her love for knowledge was such that she continued her studies in both Islamic Studies and psychology through the doctorate level. She also helped create Kazi Publications in Chicago, which became one of the major Islamic presses in America.

Laleh Bakhtiar has spent a life time pursuing the spiritual life as well as intellectual and scholarly activities. She has always brought both love and authentic knowledge to her pursuits. The present work displays both qualities and represents an important addition to the literature in the field of Quranic psychology, reflecting genuine knowledge of both Islam and modern sources on this subject as well as dedication. I pray that she can continue to be active in her service to the cause of the truth and hope that the present book finds the widespread readership that it deserves.

wa'Llāhu a'lam bi'l-ṣawāb

Seyyed Hossein Nasr
April 2019 AD; Sha'ban 1440 AH
Washington, D.C.



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Prolog

Section 1: The World of Command and the World of Creation

Introduction

We begin by situating our "self" in the universe. To do this, we need to understand the Quranic concepts of the difference between the existence of the world of command and the world of creation. They both contain signs upon the horizons and within ourselves so that we know the Truth. We witness the world of creation while we recognize the existence of the absent world. Both refer us to the Origin (*mabda*) and the Return (*ma'ad*), recognizing that knowing our "self" is the key to the Return, as we shall study in Section 2 of this Prolog.

We know that God is the Agent of both. The world of command is eternal as is the spiritual world, also known as the intelligible world. It comes into existence when God gives the command: "Be!" It is referred to as the world of unity and it stabilizes the world of creation which depends upon it.

The world of command (*'alam al-amr*): *Say: ... Who manages the command? They will, then, say: God! Say: Will you not be God-conscious (mut-taqin)?* (Q10:31)

On the other hand, the world of creation is temporal because it is created of materiality, has measure and extension. It corresponds to the physical and sensible worlds. It gradually comes into a weak existence because of its physicality in a state of continuous change. It is referred to as the world of multiplicity.

The world of creation (*'alam al-khalq*): *That is God, your Lord. There is no god but He—the One Who is Creator of everything—so worship Him. For He is Trustee over everything.* (Q6:102)

The world of command and the world of creation, then, correspond to the spiritual and physical or intelligible and sensible worlds. The world of command came before the world of creation and nature. As a result of this, the spirit, as the first creation—also known as the intellect—holds the potential for our energy and the source of our moral/spiritual or intellectual/cognitive world:

Truly, His is not but the creation and the command. (Q7:54)

The world of command contains the divine qualities including Knowledge—knowing what to command; Will—having the will to do the command; and Power—the power to actually activate it.

It is God Who created the seven heavens and of the earth, a similar number like them. The command comes forth between them so that perhaps you would know that God is Powerful over everything and that God, truly, enclosed everything in His Knowledge. (Q65:12)

It is the command that stabilizes creation and upon which creation is dependent. As beings inspired by the spirit of God, we go through the same process from knowing to willing to action, all without a noticeable space of time.¹

Whether we refer to the world of command or the world of creation, both exist in the Quranic view and everything is related to everything in the universe because of existence. Everything is alive:

The relation of existence to the divine Being—exalted be He—is analogous to the relation of sensible light, and the rays shining upon bodies in the heavens and the earth, to the sun.²

1. Existence

Again, He shaped him and blew into him His Spirit. He made for you the ability to hear and sight and consciences. But you give little thanks! (Q32:9)

The Quran here in (Q32:9) describes our "self" as body, soul and spirit. While our body comes into existence from the temporal world of nature existing in God's Knowledge—manifested in us as our cognitive system—by His Will and Power, our soul is both part of nature existing in God's Knowledge by His Will and Power—or Willpower manifested in us as our motivational system—as well as His command to "Be!" but our spirit is His command from the eternal world.

When we speak of the existence of "self," we are referring to the existence of three emergent aspects of self: our soul-body (*nafs-jism*), basically our motivational system, our soul (*nafs*)—as a bridge between body and spirit—and soul-spirit/intellect (*nafs-ruh/'aqf*), basically our cognitive system. Our soul, a substance—as are nature and our body—then, is bodily in origination and spiritual in subsistence.

Gradation

The existence of the created world, as noted, gradually moves from its weak existence to its potentially more intensified one. When it actualizes its

potential to complete itself, it intensifies its existence. Take the example, an apple.

When a red apple, for instance, is ripened, it increases in redness rather than merely assuming the quality of 'more redness'. By the same token, when substances actualize their potentialities and become more perfect, they eventually increase in being alive, namely intensify in existence and spirituality. This is predicated upon the idea that actuality implies perfection while potentiality signifies imperfection.... Actuality means full realization and establishment in being alive because such a substance is not deprived of any qualities and attributes it potentially possesses. By contrast, a potential substance is marred by imperfection because it is considered to be 'non-existent' until it realizes its potential from within or by an external agent.³

2. The Witnessed and the Absent

The World of Creation and the World of Command, then, are also referred to as Witnessed and Absent and engendered and originated or nature and the meaning-related world of the soul-spirit/intellect or the practical and universal worlds.

In everything we witness, there is something that is absent. That is, to everything that is manifest, there is something that is hidden. In this way, every physical sign is connected to a spiritual sign. The connection is existence itself.

So, existence is the witnesser, the absent, and it is the knower of the witnessed and the absent:⁴

He is One Who Knows of the absent and the witnessed. (Q6:73)

Truly, He, He is The Hearing, The Seeing. (Q17:1)

As witnesses, we follow the religion of Abraham as he said:

Truly, I turned my face to He Who Originated the heavens and the earth—as a monotheist and I am not of the ones who are polytheists. (Q6:79)

In doing so, we see every power drowned in His power. We see every knowledge and desire drowned in His Knowledge and Desire. Every hearing and every seeing is absorbed in His Hearing and Seeing and when we ask about God, He is Near:

When My servants asked you about Me, then, truly, I am near. I answer the call of one who calls when he will call to Me. (Q 2:186)

The servant never ceases coming near to Me through supererogatory works until I love him. Then, when I love him, I am the hearing through which he hears, his

seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it.⁵

3. The Origin and the Return

The Origin of our existence comes down through what can be described as the arc of descent, from the spiritual to the natural, while the Return is through the arc of ascent, from the natural to the spiritual.

If we look at the two worlds of creation and command in a static sort of way, we can see that they represent an ever-present distinction between the intellectual, spiritual domain and the sensory, bodily domain. If we look at them in terms of the dynamism present in the universe, there is constant movement and change, all governed by a specific directionality. Thus the term, Origin, refers to a process that unfolds in both the spiritual and the physical worlds, but the directionality is that of the descending movement from spirit or intellect to nature, the centrifugal movement away from the center, known as the arc of descent. The term, Return, also refers to a process that occurs in both worlds, but the movement is now ascending from nature to spirit-intellect; it is the centripetal movement of unification and harmonization, known as the arc of ascent.⁶

Say: O God! One Who is Originator of the heavens and the earth!
(Q39:46)

To Him is your return (Q6:60)

He is The First and The Last. (Q57:3)

4. The World of Command is the Spirit

When God wills that something should come into existence, He commands it to "Be!" and it immediately comes into existence. This is how the creative act comes into being according to the Quran. The creative act of God is the command.⁷

The spirit is my Lord's command. (Q17:85)

When God says: *Be! and it is*, this is the world of command.

Not only is there a connection between spirit-intellect, but we should also note that Quranic references to "Be!" is a form of speech. When God issues the command to "Be!" an activity follows. When the word "Be!" is written, composed with letters of the alphabet, it is a form of speech in the world of creation.⁸

His command is such that when he wills something (to be), He says to it 'Be' and lo, there it is. (Q36:82)

When he decides something (addressing it) he says to it be and then it is. (Q2:117).

God's primordial mode of speech in the Quran is that of command so that a study of divine command is, in a sense, co-extensive with the study of revelation. God's very acts of a creation are commands. This will be further discussed in Module 2: Our Spirit/Intellect.

Truly the parable of Jesus with God is like the parable of Adam. He created him from earth dust. Again, He said to him: Be! Then, he is! (Q3:59)

To God all commands are returned. (Q3:54)

We are told in the Quran that among God's commands was when He breathed His spirit into the first human being, Adam, and then immediately afterwards called forth our generative organs as the progeny of the first human being at which time we all bore witness to God as our Lord.

Mention when your Lord took from the offspring of the Children (progeny) of Adam—from their generative organs (zuhurihum)— and called to them to witness of themselves: Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea! We bore witness, so that you say not on the Day of Resurrection: Truly, we had been ones who were heedless of this. (Q7:172)

5. The World of Creation

The Role of Nature

The world of creation refers to the existence of the created world of nature. As stated earlier, it is existence that connects both the world of command and the world of creation together, acting as a principle of energy, similar to the power that causes the rays of the sun to extend from the sun while the rays remain connected to the sun itself.

It is the motion within nature in all creation that causes something to move from place to place or from one state to another state. Therefore, what makes things move is the substantial power nature has given it as the inclination to yield to something external to it. The motion that nature causes within things to yield causes them to constantly flow and change.

God created the existence of nature in a state of potentiality. That is, to gradually actualize its potential. It is motion or, in the case of psychology, motivation, that causes the actualization of coming into existence, "becoming" alive.⁹

Substantial Motion

This motion, inherent in nature, is known as substantial motion or motion

within created substances. Every moment we cease to be what we were before. This motion, which translates as both motion or impulse and motivation, is either involuntary or voluntary. Therefore, as created beings we are invariably liable to gradual change and flux, growth and decay and eventual death and disappearance.

Motion or motivation allows us to realize catharsis, balance, equilibrium, the purification of "self" or freeing the "self" from attachment to the physical and sensible worlds back to our original state of *fitrat Allah*. This is what is meant by returning to God in the same state in which we were created. Our life, then, becomes a process of gradual intensification of our existence as we are constantly in motion. As a result, we are never the same from one instant to the next.

Since nature provides us with motion, soul-body is going to change. It is up to us to motivate ourselves to change towards what is good for us as individuals and good for society. If we choose to "avoid conflict," changes and motion will be in charge as we learn in Module 7: Willpower.

Apparent in the world of creation, this fact has led to the expounding of the doctrine of transcendent substantial motion.

Had there been no such substantial or innate motion, a seed would never become a huge tree in a gradual manner, or the product of our generative organs would never have gradually produced an adult.

It is on account of the existence of motion that from time immemorial, the caravan of creation has been flowing on like waves ceaselessly renewed. Motion, therefore, may be described as the life force in the gradual process of physical creation. It is the dynamic force in the wheel of birth and death and the driving power in the successive procession of creation in varied forms. It is motion which is accountable for the ceaseless march of days and nights, seasons and years, centuries and ages, peoples and cultures through the entire gamut of history.

Motion seems to have gripped us and we are, therefore, drawn through life and death in spite of ourselves by an irresistible and invisible force. It seems difficult to ascertain whether it is a push from within or a pull from without. In fact, the reality of motion tends to elude our mental comprehension. The mystery of motion is self-evident and unquestionable but nonetheless inexplicable.¹⁰

This continuous process of motion means that we are constantly "becoming," whether we are conscious of it or not.

The process of "becoming" means a gradual change and progress from potentiality to actuality, or from immaturity to maturity, or from birth to death—a motion which is natural and ingrained in the very physical existence of an object. This "becoming" process is called substantial motion. Thus motion is the process of gradual change and becoming of a thing from potentiality to actuality.¹¹

Physical creation, then, is continuously in the process of "becoming."¹²

... because its reality consists only in moving and not in being moved.... Creation ... is something that is tinged with 'becoming'; or in other words, it is like a fabric woven of change and becoming.¹²

"Becoming" refers to a gradual change from potentiality to actuality, from birth to death. "Becoming" is a movement that is innate, natural and ingrained in the substance of our body. This "becoming" is gradual, moving from potentiality to actuality:

... This motion is like the waves of the sea that are constantly renewed. Motion is the vital force of life or impulse to live.¹³

In regard to our body, our body exists through movement and becoming. Every moment our body ceases to be what it was before because of substantial motion. Therefore, our body is subject to gradual change and flux, growth and decay, and eventual death. In fact, our body is transitory, passing, fleeting, short-lived rather than unchangeable. Our body, along with all physical bodies—rather than just being—are part of the world of becoming.

Truly to your Lord is the returning. (Q96:8)

Our innate motion or motivation, given to us by nature, indicates to us the inner presence of the Will of God. However, due to the distance of the natural world from the spiritual world and the fact that it undergoes generation and corruption, exists and then dies, existence in the natural world is a weak existence. As it is weak, it is ceaselessly in motion in order to realize catharsis.¹⁴

O human being! Truly you are one who is laboring towards your Lord laboriously and you will be one who encounters Him. (Q84:6)

In the view of traditional Muslim philosophers, any change that is made in our characteristics or essence is also made in our substance. For example, an apple exists when it is sweet and red colored, mature and ripe. When it is green and sour, it still first exists as an apple, but its characteristics imply that it is immature and unripe. That is, any change in characteristics first indicate a change in the existence of the apple itself.

What happens when we change our characteristics? As with the apple, there has to be some effect upon our self—body, soul, spirit. Motivating change in our character—being more like our natural *fitrat Allah*—would affect our self on its arc of ascent to the return because any external change must be preceded by an inner motion in the substance of self.

Motion in the category of existence—known as transcendent substantial motion—is more fundamental and prior to all other motions in the category of our characteristics.¹⁵

The apple has no choice in how it changes. Motion and change are natural and instinctive within each species. It is only humans who have a choice as we will see when we study in Part I: Our Soul.

Substantial motion, therefore, takes pride of place over all motions in ... our characteristics. Thus, motion in our characteristics must be preceded by an anterior motion in our substance. While tracing out the deepest reality of substantial motion ... creation did not mushroom out of nothingness or out of blind evolution. But in reality, it came from God and will return unto Him:¹⁶

Truly, we belong to God and, truly, we are ones who return to Him.
(Q2:156)

The fact that we belong to God and that we return to him reflects that creation is suspended between the physical and the innate summons of God to the return. In order for our soul to evolve away from the physical form of our body, existence keeps it in motion causing it to change in its attempt to achieve balance. This change is an innate struggle and instinctive motion that has been programmed into creation.¹⁷

Truly, to your Lord is the returning. (Q96:8)

However, we need to note that substantial motion is a gradual and natural change, "becoming" from potentiality to actuality and not a sudden change caused by an external agent. This latter is not substantial motion.

For example, a thing has been reduced to ashes by fire or any color painted on a thing from outside cannot be considered the work of substantial motion because the cause for this motion resides in the physical self of a thing and not in any external thing. For example, a seed grows and becomes a huge tree in a gradual natural process and does not require any external agent.

Substantial motion, on the one hand, implies deficiency in the nature of created things. Neither can we prevent the gradual approach of old age and death, nor can we immortalize our object of love and happiness, nor can we transcend time and space—factors that prove the grievous vanity of transient objects and creatures. Viewed from this angle, we are nothing but slaves of the temporal process.

On the other hand, this motion reflects the inborn and instinctive journey of creation towards catharsis, balance, equilibrium and ultimately towards God. Moreover, it indicates to the mysterious presence of the creative knowledge of God in the whole created order:¹⁸

Truly, it is God who is One Who Causes to Break Forth the grain and the pit of a date. He brings out the living from the dead and is One Who Brings Out the dead from the living. (Q6:95)

Certainly, We created the human being from an extraction of clay. Again, We made him into seminal fluid in a stopping place, secure. Again, We cre-

ated a blood clot from seminal fluid. Then, We created tissue from the blood clot. Then, We created bones from tissue. Then, We clothed the bones with flesh. Again, We caused another creation to grow. So blessed be God, the Fairer of the ones who are creators! (Q23:12-23:14)

Every Moment a New Creation

Every moment there is a new creation based on the continuous renewal of nature.

At the same time that God creates the existence of nature to be subservient to us, this also creates a dependence in us for it. We are dependent upon it because creation is constantly being renewed. "No two moments and no two things are exactly the same."¹⁹

Everything exists and within this very existence there is a tendency or inclination or yielding towards motion whether it be potential or in actual.

The identity of the world in its essence and in every moment clearly shows its dependency. It shows that not only in appearance and exterior but also in its existence and identity the world is in a state of flux. Indeed the existence of the world is nothing but dependence.²⁰

Were We wearied by the first creation? Nay, They are perplexed about a new creation. (Q50:15)

It is this moving and incessant changing that makes the physical world transitory, passing, fleeting, short-lived rather than fixed and unchanging.

Every day He is on some matter. (Q55:29)

They are perplexed about a new creation. (Q50:15)

We ordained death among you and We will not be ones who will be out-run in that We will substitute your likeness and We caused you to grow in a way you know not. (Q56:60-61)

You will see the mountains you have assumed to be that which are fixed. But they will pass by as the passing of the clouds. (Q27:88)

These and other verses allude to the ceaseless renewal and passing away of this physical world and indicate its transience and finitude, as in His saying:

All who are in or on it are ones who are being annihilated, yet the Countenance of your Lord will remain forever. (Q55:26-55:27)

The earth altogether will be His handful on the Day of Resurrection when the heavens will be ones that are rolled up in His right hand. (Q39:67)

If He wills, He will cause you to be put away and bring a new creation.
(Q14:19)

Truly, We will inherit the earth and whatever is in and on it and to Us they will be returned. (Q19:40)

Therefore, because everything physical that exists has been endowed by the very nature of existence with gradual substantial motion to move from potentiality to actuality, nothing in the physical universe is the same in two successive moments. Motion is the gradual passage of a substance within itself from potentiality to actuality and time is the measure of it.

The Role of Time

The existence of everything in creation is preceded by its non-existence in time. Thus, everything that exists, exists in time. As a result, physical, chemical or material things and soul or body are renewed at every moment. This indicates that existence and individuality are not permanent, but constantly changing. This change is measured by time.

Time is the quantity of this passage and renewal. As for motion, it is the gradual passage of this substance from potentiality to actuality, and time is the measure of this "becoming."²¹

The whole universe originates in time, since everything in it is preceded in its existence by non-being in time. The world of the next moment does not exist and must be originated. The passage of time means the motion of the universe. The motion of the universe means that it is gradually originated. The gradual origination of existence means its origination takes place in each moment. In each moment there is a renewal of identity. The universe is a series of renewed identities that are continuous.²²

The creation of the world of nature originated in time from God's Knowledge—cognition in us—and the Acts of His Will and Power—our behavior and motivation—and will return to its origin through motion, giving to each thing created its individual identity. That is, God's Acts from His commands created all of nature—be it the universe, the stars, the planets, plants, animals or our human body—with the potential to actualize existence in gradual degrees of intensity or weakness by giving it motion.

The world of creation, that is, all that is created and possesses measure and extensions such as bodies and physical entities are essentially created and come into being gradually. Creation and continuous change constitute the very nature of temporal things due to their material nature being created in time.²³

However, it is not that we lose what we previously had of identity, but that

our soul puts a new identity on top of the previous as if we were to wear clothes, one on top of the other.

It is obvious that this world is a realm of extinction, transience and passing away as so many of the Quranic signs indicate:

The heavens will be ones that are rolled up, (Q39:67)

When the stars will be scattered . (Q82:2) Their movements will cease, and their lights will be extinguished.

When the sun will be darkened and when the stars plunge down ... (Q81:1-81:2) and the planets will cease their revolutions and will arrest their motions.

Truly, the Hour is that which arrives. There is no doubt about it. (Q22:7)

They ask you about the Hour, when will it berth? Say: The knowledge of that is only with my Lord. (Q7:187)

While this may sound ominous, we have to remember that divine mercy encompasses everything:

My mercy encompassed everything. (Q7:156)

Summary

We exist through both the eternal world of the command, the spirit, and the material, temporally created world of nature, our soul-body. While the world of command comes into existence instantaneously, the world of creation exists through a gradual existence based on motion or movement in the substance of our soul-body from potentiality to actuality. Both worlds contain the signs of God upon the horizon and within our "self." Only human beings in creation are witnesses to what is present and what is absent as we journey from our origin to our return. As the world of creation exists in constant motion, it is never the same at any two instants, but there is constantly a new creation within and without the "self."

Now we turn to Section 2. Knowing Our "Self" as a product of both these worlds.

Endnotes to Prolog: Section 1: The World of Command and the World of Creation

- 1 See Gholamreza Aavani, "The Sadrean Theory of the World of Divine Command." Online.
- 2 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-masha'ir* (*The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*). Online.
- 3 Ibrahim Kalin, "Mulla Sadra's Realist Ontology of the Intelligibles and Theory of Knowledge." Online.
- 4 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin* (*Elixir of the Gnostics*). Online.
- 5 See *Sahih al-Bukhari*; quoted by Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin* (*Elixir of the Gnostics*). Online.
- 6 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 7 See Gholamreza Aavani, "The Sadrean Theory of the World of Divine Command." Online.
- 8 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar*, Vol. 7, p 13.
- 9 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar*, 1.3 (65).
- 10 Muhammad 'Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.
- 11 Muhammad 'Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.
- 12 Muhammad 'Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.
- 13 Muhammad 'Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.
- 14 Muhammad 'Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.
- 15 Muhammad 'Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.
- 16 Muhammad 'Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.
- 17 Muhammad 'Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.
- 18 Muhammad 'Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.
- 19 See Reza Akbarian, "The Psychology of Mulla Sadr." Online.
- 20 Muhammad 'Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.
- 21 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-masha'ir* (*The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*). Online.
- 22 Muhammad 'Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.
- 23 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar*, 3.2, 10-18.

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Prolog

Section 2: Knowing Our "Self"

Introduction

Knowing our "self" is the key to Quranic Psychology as the Prophetic Tradition tells us: One who knows one's self, knows one's Lord.

How it is possible to achieve this will be the ongoing theme as the journey is expressed through the psychology of Quranic signs/verses (*ayat*).

Knowing our "self" is also the key to knowing God. If we do not know our "self", how can we know anything else? We have to ask: What sort of a thing am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? For what purpose was I created? What brings me happiness? What brings me misery? We have to know that we were created with the unity of a body (*jism*), a soul (*nafs*) and a spirit (*ruh*).

The Quran refers to "self" when it uses the word, *nafs*, reflexively. Knowing our "self" occurs through stages as it travels through the realms of soul-body, soul—evolving from our animal soul to our human soul—and soul-spirit/intellect. While all three stages are possible to attain, they are first in a state of potentiality whereby we need to "find" (*wujud*) and actualize our consciousness of them.

We come to know "self" through reading, reciting and, most importantly, understanding the meaning behind the signs of God:

We will cause them to see Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is The Truth. (Q41:53)

1. Oneness, Unity

Knowledge of self begins with a sense of unity. That is, we first need to recognize that we are related to everything that exists, that there is an inter-connection among all of creation which is existence itself as we continue our search to find self and bear witness to our relationships, contemplating the oneness of us all.

Then, through the light of contemplative *tawhid*, we will gaze upon the worlds of creation and command and the horizons and within ourselves thereby verifying His words:¹

We will cause them to see Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is The Truth. Suffices not your Lord that, truly, He is Witness over all things? (Q41:53)

Our finding our "self" by making the existence of our "self" one with the existence of the "worlds" or universe, we come to recognize through the "signs" that our very existence and subsistence comes from the existence and presence of God.

2. Our Quranic Self

The Quranic word for self is the word *nafs* when the word *nafs* is used reflexively. The reflexive *nafs* refers to: My-self, thy-self, him or her-self (one's-self), our-selves, your-selves, their-selves. The self in Quranic terminology is both "I", the subjective knower, and the possessive pronoun—my, thy, his, hers, ours, yours, theirs—the object that is known.²

In the Quran, the reflexive word *nafs* is used in the singular:

Whatever of benevolence lit on thee is from God. Whatever evil deeds lit on thee, then, is from thyself (nafsika). (Q4:79)

and in the plural:

They both said: Our Lord! We did wrong to ourselves (nafsina). (Q7:23)

indicating that—while we are united in possessing the qualities of self—we are individually responsible for exercising the agencies of our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*). For example:

Let us call ourselves and yourselves. (Q3:61) (Q51:20-51:21)

Self used reflexively refers to God in six verses: For instance when Jesus says:

Thou (Allah) knows what is in my-self, but I do not know what is in Thy-self (nafsika). (Q5:116)

In one case, it refers to gods:

They neither possess for themselves (anfusihi) hurt nor profit nor have they dominion over death, nor this life, nor rising up! (Q25:3)

The plural (*anfusina*) is used twice in reference to a company of men and jinn:

We have witnessed against ourselves (anfusina). (Q6:30)

There is nothing firmer and stronger than our knowing our self because knowing our self is what our reality is. Nothing can be established for us

more firmly than for our self. Therefore, our knowledge of the source of our self goes back to God.³

He knows what is in advance of them and what is behind them and they will not comprehend Him in knowledge. Faces will be humbled before The Living, The Eternal while, surely, will be frustrated whoever was burdened by doing injustice. (Q20:110-20:111)

3. Signs Upon the Horizon and Within Our "Self"

Signs are either from the world of creation or the world of command and are here for our sake. We come to know "self" through reading, reciting and, most importantly, understanding the meaning behind the signs of God, whether they be the 6000+ signs of the Quran or the infinite signs of God in nature.

Being able to read the signs upon the horizon and within our 'self' indicates that we have dominion over other creatures. The Quran places much emphasis upon this as we human beings are the final end of creation. The cosmos exists for us. In a sacred tradition (in which the speaker is God), God addressing David says: O David, I have created the universe for your sake, but I have created you for Myself.⁴

As everything in the universe was created for us, everything is subservient to us:

We will cause them to see Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is The Truth. (Q41:53)

Suffices not your Lord that, truly, He is Witness over all things? (Q41:53)

He caused to be subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in and on the earth. All is from Him. Truly, in that are signs for a folk who reflect. (Q45:13)

He caused to be subservient to (us) what is in the earth:

Have you not considered that God caused to be subservient to you what is in and on the earth? (Q22:65)

the mountains and the minerals:

... made for you the mountains as a refuges in the time of need. (Q16:81)

the seas:

He it is Who caused the sea to be subservient to you so that you eat from

it succulent flesh and pull out of it glitter to wear. (Q16:14)

of ships:

He caused ships to be subservient to you. (Q14:32)

to run upon the sea by the blessing of God

Have you not considered that the ships run through the sea by the divine blessing of God that He causes you to see His signs? (Q31:31)

planting and taking fruits and other things:

Eat of its fruit. (Q6:141)

and His words:

Eat and give attention to your flocks. Truly, in this are signs for the people imbued with sense. [(Q20:54)

the beasts and the cattle for riding, ornaments, and carrying loads:

He created the flocks, for you in which there is warmth and profits and of them you eat. (Q16:5)

Consider they not how We created for them—out of what Our hands did—flocks, so they were of them ones who are owners? We subdued them for them so that of them, some are riding animals and some of them, they eat. (Q36:71-36:72)

... and in them is a beauty for you when you give them rest and when you drive forth flocks to pasture. They carry your lading to a land, being that which reaches you not but under adverse circumstances to yourselves. (Q16:6-16:7)

In addition to what God caused of nature to be subservient to us such as plants for nourishment, growth, procreation and so forth, are our neural energies. Subservient to our soul are our five external senses and their organs as we will study in Module 8.

Four Types of Existence

We can speak of four levels of existence—possible, living or found, finder and the one who is aware of self through self:

The possible thing is hidden both from itself and from the world, as the animal is hidden in the egg, or the shirt in cloth.

The existent thing is apparent to the finders, but not to itself, like every sort of inanimate object.

The finders find the existent and manifest things, but they do not find the finder of the existent things. They are represented by all the degrees of the soul, from (mineral to) plant, to animal, to human.

Finally, the finder of self (soul-spirit/intellect) looks back and sees the self gazing upon self, thus achieving the unification of self and self's object.⁵

The key to "knowing," is not the same as feeling or willing. The "finder of self," knows meaning, understands, thinks, is wise, discerning and perceptive.

4. How does the Quran teach us to know our "self"?

How do we think about, evaluate or perceive our self? How do we each define "self"? Do we approve of or accept our "self"? How much do we value our "self"? How do we come to know our "self"?

To know "self," we first have to recognize that each of us is a living being—a body, a soul (*nafs* used non-reflexively in the Quran)⁶ and a spirit/intellect (*ruh/'aql*), that we exist as a blessing, a creation and a sign from God since God is the sole Real Existence without whom nothing would exist. Knowing the "self" in Quranic terms is the way to known God. Al-Ghazzali says:

Know that the key to knowledge of one's self is knowledge of one's Lord. That is why it has been said: One who knows one's own 'self,' knows one's Lord. In short, nothing is closer to you than you. If you do not know your self, how will you know others? Moreover, you may think that you know your 'self' and be mistaken, for this kind of knowing is not the key to the knowledge of the Real. The beasts know this much—since of your self, you know no more than the outward head, face, hands, feet, flesh, and skin. Of the inward dimension you know that when you are hungry, you eat bread, and when you are angry, you fall on another person, and when attraction to pleasure (lust) dominates, you make for the marriage act. All the beasts know that much.

Therefore, you must seek your own reality. What thing are you? From where have you come? Where will you go? For what work have you come to this dwelling place? Why were you created? What and where is your happiness? What and from where lies your misery?

If you want to know your self, you should know that when you were created, two things were created: one is this outward frame, which is called the body. It can be seen with the outward eye. The second is the inward substance ... that can only be recognized through inward insight, but cannot be seen with the outward eye. Your reality is what is inward. Everything else follows upon it.⁷

Our self, as al-Ghazzali tells us, is our outward body and our inward soul and spirit. A Quranic sign speaks of the three parts of our outer and inner self:

He shaped (his body) and breathed into him His Spirit. He made for you

the ability to hear and sight and mind (his soul). But you give little thanks! (Q32:9) where having the ability to hear and sight and mind (*sadr*) refer to a function of our soul-spirit/intellect (*nafs-ruh/'aq*).

Knowing our self, then, is not just about what is "out there", but also about what is "in here". That is: To know oneself is to know the everlasting reality that is consciousness, and to know it is to be it. Unless one is able to see clearly the difference between spirit and body, high and low, intelligible and sensory, one will never be able to actualize one's intelligence and know oneself. Unless one is striving to know oneself or has achieved the goal, one's every endeavor will be wrongheaded, inane, and fruitless.⁸

Knowing about what is "in here" comes through consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*):⁹

Each one of us knows by consciousness before taking recourse to the demonstration that his essence and reality are one entity and not many. Together with that he knows that he is intelligent, perceiver, sensitive, that he is the one who is concupiscent, irascible, sedentary, moving, quiescent, is attributed by the combination of Names and Qualities, some are from the aspect of intellect and its states, some from sensation and imagination and their states, some from the aspect of body, its accidents and passive faculties. Although this is some kind of consciousness, but for the majority of people it is not possible to know it from the discipline of knowledge. Rather, they deny this unity if they enter into discussion and investigation except the one whom God assists by the light from Him. So he who is unable to know the unity of his self, how can it be possible for him to know the unity of his Lord!¹⁰

How does the Quranic revelation help us to know both our outward body or physical form as well as our inward soul and spirit? The Quran gives us a light that shows us the direction to knowing our self:

Quranic Revelation is the light that causes one to see. In order for the phenomenon of vision to be produced, there must be light, but it is necessary to be willing to see. If you suppress this light, you will not see anything. If you obstinately close your eyes, as do the literalists, you will not see anything either. In both cases there is a triumph of shadows.¹¹

Our existence may be self-evident to us. When we say: Flowers exist or trees exist or planets exist, we understand intuitively what this means. Our understanding is based on what we have seen or smelled or touched, and so forth and can be verified as can the reality that we exist, but we also cannot define it. Even if we try to explain the reality of our existence—not the concept of it—it does not become more clear than it actually was before we tried to explain it. We can only know it by experiencing it and bearing witness to it. Our mental concept of what it is to be alive does not change from subject to subject, while the reality of being alive is unique to each person.

5. Am I? What am I?

We ask our "self" two basic questions: *Am I? What am I?* situating our "self" in a series of relations and coming to know "self" through consciousness, tasting and finding or experiencing and by bringing the presence of what we know to our "self."

We can only know the reality that we exist by experiencing it and bearing witness to it. Our mental concept of what it is to be alive does not change from subject to subject. The reality of being alive is unique to each person.

We ask two basic questions about our existence and our particular qualities or characteristics. *Am I?* and: *What am I?* The first concerns our being alive, existing. When I think of my "self", I may confirm: I am alive!

Even though we may have a mental concept of what existence means, this is still different from the reality of existence. Our thoughts of what it is to be alive may not change from one of us to another, yet the reality of our existence is unique to each person.

Everything in the material world is in motion, including both our self and our particular characteristics, gradually coming into existence. As a result, nothing in the material world is the same at two different instants. The foundation of the material world is motion. Its gradual change is within its existence.

The second question, on the other hand, concerns *What am I?* Having established that I exist, I then want to know more about my "self," my characteristics and attributes or essence, that is, who in particular I am. I know that I am not two things: alive and with certain characteristics, yet my rational mind puts them together.

This is just a question of the order of my thoughts and has nothing to do with my "self." My characteristics are nothing but various ways of expressing that I am alive.

Our being, our existence is first and then comes the characteristics of our self. We are a living being and then perhaps male or female, blue-eyed or brown-eyed, engineer or doctor, and so forth.¹²

Our "self" (soul-body, soul—moving from our animal soul to our human soul-spirit/intellect) is existence. What our "self" is develops through our essence. Our essence is our core reality that makes us "what" each of us is as an individual, but this only comes into being if we exist. That is, without existence, our essence does not exist in the physical world nor any particular personality of specific qualities or characteristics we may have or develop. They all depend first on our existence.¹³

Relations

As a result, prioritizing existence over other considerations leads us to a concept of our "self" that is situated in a framework of relations.

Everything is related to everything else. Everything is also in a state of change and renewal. This change unfolds in the infinite number of relations, modes, states and colors. It is known as the "self-unfolding" and "expansion of existence."

6. What does it mean to know something?

I know I am alive, but what does this mean? What am I? How can I come to know what I am?

The word 'knowledge' just as the word 'existence' is difficult to define without referring it through itself yet, being alive is the first knowledge that we have of our self. This knowledge that we are alive saturates us with meaning. To know something is to grasp meaning.¹⁴

The meaning of something we know comes from our cognitive experiences. The fact that our soul is able to evolve from the potential to the actuality of soul-spirit/intellect—also known as "meaning"—is to develop our moral/spiritual aspects.¹⁵

Our cognitive experiences come from our soul-spirit/intellect. While our soul-body motivates us, it is our soul-spirit/intellect that gives us cognition and knowledge of the meaning of things.

Our (soul-)spirit is alive. It is where the realities and truth reside. As it is non-physical, it is higher than the world of our body and our sensation functions of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching because it is what enlightens us (based on the degree of the gradual intensity of existence we have).

To give an example, light is predicated of the candle, the moon and the sun ... in that they all participate in the quality of light, luminosity and brightness. Each of these objects, however, displays different degrees of intensity in sharing the quality of light. Light is the most intense and brightest in the sun and weakest in the reflection of the moonlight on the pool.¹⁶

This gradation of more or less intensity includes the state of our being alive as well. We each have different degrees of "livingness" in terms of being more or less intense, being weak or strong, complete or incomplete.

If this is what the different degrees of being alive means to our self, the same is true of how we think. To know something is to know its meaning, its spirit, which we seek in order for each of us to fully know our self.

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When we see an apple, the apple transforms into a mental concept and leaves its properties of sensation behind. When we look at Mt. Everest, our soul does not become a mountain. Our soul does not become hot by thinking of fire. By doing away with the qualities of sensation, our soul does not become less knowledgeable about an apple or Mt. Everest or fire, but we come closer to understanding their spirit and their meaning.

This indicates to us that the further removed we are from our body and

sensation, the closer we get to understanding more meanings:

The experience of a hot or cold temperament in physical entities, for instance, is bound by time and space and its being alive depends on the presence of hot or cold tempered objects. The particularity of sensible objects makes their experience a limited one in that they can be sensed only as individual objects, under specific circumstances, in definite time and space coordinates. The meaning of hotness and coldness of temperament, however, does not require the presence or absence of any such object, and their application to an infinite number of objects is not enhanced or hampered by the quantity of hot and cold tempered objects. Things of such a nature are more real in the sense that they have a higher share of the spiritual meaning.

The language of our being alive is saturated with qualitative and ethical terms. Things such as honor, truth, wisdom are not only more in terms of their living properties but also more perfect, real, reliable, worthier of consideration, have more light and luminosity.

Being alive signifies pure light and light is goodness as opposed to shadows that represents wrongdoing. Being alive is goodness par excellence because being alive is not only the physical ground of things but also the source of such moral qualities as reality, meaning, truth, intelligibility, goodness, beauty, plenitude, perfection, etc.¹⁷

When we apply this spiritual meaning of things to our concept of knowledge, we become aware of the qualities that are present in the world we live in. We begin to recognize that the world is grounded in morality.

When we attach our cognitive functions to the spiritual world of meaning, this leads us beyond our self as the Quran places the process of understanding:

... within the larger context of being alive. [Our] 'non-self' is essential for the knowledge of [our] self. 'Going out of' [our] self and uniting with the meaning-related world is ... a standing condition of knowledge. This renders the theory of knowledge a thoroughly non-[me] enterprise.¹⁸

Once we realize that the knowledge we want to gain of self involves our understanding the meaning of things, then we can begin to know our particular characteristics. We know that we are intelligent, that we perceive, that we are sensitive, that we are attracted to pleasure and avoid pain.

We know that some of our functions are psychological such as fear, hope, shame, sorrow, etc. Some are purely intellectual or cognitive and some are functions of our physical body. What we may not know, however, is that all these functions work through the intermediary of our soul (*nafs*)—that which is physical in the beginning and spiritual in its survival—and how it is the source of our motivation as we will learn through this work.

While our living body, our "being" is outward or manifest proof that we exist, it is through the evolution of the various stages of our inward or hidden soul that we "become" complete, perfected into a Quranic self that we

can identify with as long as we are willing to undertake the struggle that this personal process entails—the struggle towards *becoming* alive.

Our life is like a circle which revolves around itself, its end joining the beginning—from the Origin to the Return—as the Quran says:

Truly, we belong to God and, truly, we are ones who return to Him.
(Q2:256)

He it is Who begins the creation. Again, He causes it to return ... (Q30:27)

Our soul is the life of our body and our spirit is the life of our soul. If we understand our self as a unity of soul whereby it is born as soul-body, moves from the animal soul to the human soul and finally achieves soul-spirit/intellect, then a spiritual energy permeates in whatever we think, feel or do.

The word, *wujud*, existence, being alive, means both "to be (alive)" and "to find", that is to find out what it means to not just "be" alive but rather to "become" alive. Once we recognize that we exist, then we undertake the journey through personal experience, witnessing the presence of God in our search for meaning.

Kinds of Knowledge

There are various kinds of knowledge. Some of which are low in degree such as sense-perception (since) it is impossible to sense multiple sensibles through a single organ. [But] some kinds of knowledge higher in rank, such as understanding, in that a single understanding (as opposed to imagination) is sufficient to understand an infinite number of intelligibles.¹⁹

Knowing Through Consciousness

To know oneself is to know the everlasting reality that is consciousness, and to know it is to be it.²⁰

God is The Protector of those who believed. He brings them out from the shadows into the light. (Q2:257)

Knowledge of our self acts as an elixir to transmute our souls into mirrors reflecting God and the cosmos. This knowledge makes us the possessor of a great kingdom, because it is the most magnificent elixir. It necessitates universal unneedingness, the greatest happiness, becoming similar to the Furthest Good, and assuming the character traits of God as one's own.²¹

Obstacles to Consciousness

Consciousness is like a mirror that is able to reflect the divine light. In some people, this nature is enhanced through good works, moral healing and proper beliefs, while in others the potential remains undeveloped, and

in yet others it is destroyed by obstacles such as wrongdoing and ignoble beliefs.

Five kinds of obstacles can prevent a mirror from reflecting properly: (1) essential defects, such as a stone in the glass prior to construction, (2) taint, dirt and filth which exist in it after construction, (3) the mirror may be pointed in the wrong direction, (4) there may be something between the mirror and what it is to reflect, (5) the object to be reflected may not be in a position facing the mirror.

The same is true of the mirror of consciousness, which is capable of manifesting the reality of God and the reality of all things as they are, as the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be with him, has requested of God, for himself and those especially close to him: O Lord! Show us the things as they really are!

Our consciousness is only without knowledge, that is, in the shadows, because of one of these five obstacles.²²

For the essential defects, God sends messengers who use various techniques that enable the emergence of the rational soul which is the substance of consciousness from the obstacles or defects that conceal it.

The salvation given through the prophets is not by means of some knowledge of an external spiritual reality or moral facts and properties, but by instruction of how to find out who we are. The method or procedure here is that of the discipline of the spiritual path toward self-understanding. What we are presented with is ... a process of formation leading to the ability to make wise judgments.

The second obstacle is darkness and rust that can reach to such an extent that it destroys the potential for self-knowledge.

The third obstacle is the misdirection of the mirror of one's consciousness, as when one's resolution is focused exclusively on the external aspects of worship and one does not attend to the interior. Of course, the situation is much worse if one's aims are entirely worldly and one neglects the cultivation of one's spirit.

The fourth type of obstacle is something that gets in the way of the mirror and what it is supposed to reflect. The example is fanaticism. The fanatic is one who clings fast to some truth and makes that clinging an obstacle to reaching any further or more profound truth. This kind of obstacle is found among those whose religion is merely a matter of imitation (*taqlid*), which is compared to shackles and chains that bind our consciousness preventing it from achieving freedom.

The fifth obstacle is compared to a mirror that is not in the proper position to face the object it would reflect. This is the situation of one who does not know where to turn or how to make one's way toward the successive levels of the path toward God. To address this problem, it is as if one needs to survey the area behind him, for which purpose multiple mirrors or complex reflection are needed. In the course of this complex reflection, the soul is finally united and the object of its intellection reflected in various ways is also united.

But this is not the end. The path proceeds dialectically, through the use of a further complex set of mirrors. It is only as a result of this dialectical reflection that one is finally able to dispense with reflecting "mirrors" and enter into direct concourse with the heavenly domain. All of this has been the course of traveling toward God. After this comes the journeying in God, from God, and by God.²³

Of whom We created there is a community that guides with The Truth, and with it, it is just. (Q7:181)

Knowing by Tasting and Finding

The importance of self-knowledge focuses on the Prophet's hadith as we have mentioned: One who knows one's self, knows one's Lord. In Quranic psychology, knowledge of our self is linked with knowledge of God. As we will see, the only way of finding true and certain knowledge is through what is called "tasting and finding" or "unveiling" (*kashf*).

Knowledge of self and knowledge of God are inextricably linked, and the only way to find true and certain knowledge is by means of 'unveiling', that is, the 'tasting and finding'.²⁴

Knowing by Presence

When I say: I am in pain or: I feel hot, there is no difference between myself and what I feel. That is, the subject and object are present to each other. In short: knowledge of the self is nothing but self itself which is the case for both sensual and intellectual knowledge.

One has to start with the self in order to know that which is other than the self. (This is) knowledge of the self through 'knowledge by presence' because, in this special kind of knowledge, the object of knowledge is 'present' in the subject.

It is clear that sense perception does not permit any schism or vacuum between the subject and the object. Because ... to say: I know that I am in pain, is essentially the same as saying: I am in pain. The existential unity between the knower and the known marks the very nature of sensual knowledge.... In other words, the sensual knowledge represents the prime example of knowledge by presence. Knowledge by presence is not confined to sensual knowledge but in fact informs also the intellectual knowledge. Since the intellectual knowledge is essentially a vision, taste/experience and realization ... the intelligibilia are also known through knowledge by presence.²⁵

But how do we know this? In other words, how are we able to know the intelligible with the same degree of certainty and precision with which we know the sensible?

... it is not difficult to see that our 'ordinary' or natural encounter with the world is ... mediated through ... first-order experiences. In perceiving the tree in front of me, my knowledge experience is a direct act of 'seeing'... Understanding 'self' is nothing but the presence of the self to itself, an understanding which is called knowledge by presence. In other words, presential knowledge begins with self-knowledge. It refers to the presence of something for something else, i.e. the presence of the psychic existence of what is intelligible to the human self. As long as a person does not truly know or recognize his real self—or soul by spiritual practice to morally heal—he is essentially in a state of ignorance. Therefore, he will be

unaware of both his spiritual station in relation to his Creator, and the destination towards which he is traveling (i.e., the state of completion and perfection in morality or soul-spirit/intellect). Thus, knowledge of the self is the foundation of all the forms of higher knowledge ... that (we are) able to acquire.²⁶

7. Obstacles to Knowing "Self"

Three of the possible states that prevent us from knowing our self are:

Ignorance of Our "Self"

Nothing causes the soul's misery in the next world but ignorance of self.²⁷

Our ignorance of the existence of our self as a human being leads necessarily to our ignorance of the foundations of knowledge and of principles because it is through existence that all things are known.

If one is ignorant of self, one is ignorant of all that follows. But knowing our self is only obtained through inner inspiration and direct experience.²⁸

Worldliness

Worldliness includes the domination of anger (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*), ambition, and lust (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*). It is not that these qualities or drives are inherently evil, but that they should not dominate one. We are encouraged to overcome the powers of our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) in order to achieve moral healing.. This is not gentle encouragement. Those who are unable to make the intellect (*nafs al-natiqah*) dominate over the lower desires (attraction to pleasure; avoidance of harm/pain) are condemned to being drunk with desires and anger, and as having a mad dog in their hearts. Worldliness is setting inappropriate aims for oneself and results from the mistaken belief that worldly aims are more valuable than transcendent ones.²⁹

Self-Deception

The work of the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*), like that of Satan, is to mislead us through illusion and deceit. Yet these temptations (impulses, inclinations or yieldings) are of a nature that only the imbeciles and the infantile should be deceived by them. Falling for them results in the loss of this world and the next. One who is dominated by the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) is like those who engage in controversy to satisfy their ambitions rather than to find the truth. They deceive themselves when they think they have succeeded by winning arguments.

Another instance of self-deception is found in those who imagine themselves to be spiritually advanced merely because of their performance of acts of worship: You will not become the master of your nature with prayers and fasts, because as you continue to do this you will grow every day darker by these two. Moral/spiritual

advancement is achieved through self-mastery (self-knowledge, knowing self), not by asceticism and superficial piety.³⁰

Self-deception includes the practice of remembering God (*dhikr*) with the wrong intentions:

Divine remembrance (*dhikr*) is not to be understood merely as a verbal practice, an empty ritual. Furthermore, a clear mark that *dhikr* is not a true turning of one's attention to God is if it is to earn favor with the unjust, and turn to the doors of the rulers for the sake of personal gains, seeking to construct their palaces in this world instead of constructing their own selves. This means that those who are truly capable of responsible action, those who are truly alive, having consciousness, and as having light and vision, are those who recognize that they are not merely animals, but are destined for an immaterial world. Those who gain knowledge of the self will know that they are not merely physical bodies, for they make for themselves a life in the hereafter: The edifice of belief in the other world is based on knowing self.

One who sees only the surface will not be able to form intentions that are not superficial. One who does not know the immortality of one's own soul will limit his aims to worldly pleasures.³¹

The deceit of hypocrisy is another type of self-deception as quoted from Jesus in the Hadith:

It has been narrated from Jesus, peace be with him, that he said: How can one be knowledgeable when his way is toward the other world while he is facing this world, and how can one be knowledgeable who seeks words only to relate to others without putting them into practice himself.³²

8. The Process of Moral Healing Knowing Our "Self"

Whoever knows himself, knows his Lord. This is the contrapositive of a verse of the Quran: *They forgot God and God made them forget themselves*, (Q59:19), for if forgetting God causes one to forget oneself, then, remembering oneself causes one to remember God, and remembering the Lord is itself conducive to one's remembering the self.³³

Knowing "self" becomes the mother of all wisdom, the *umm al-hikmat*.³⁴

Knowing our self is not a kind of conceptual knowledge of the powers of the soul or psychology. It is a practical knowledge of (our) own personal identity, (our) strengths and weaknesses, of where (we have) been and where (we are) headed.

Of course, knowledge of psychology is needed to fully understand our "self," but the understanding gained is not simply the discovery of facts. It is not knowledge of the head, but (conscious knowledge). It is a recognition of who we are and how to navigate ourselves through life.

In the Quranic view, this is the basis of faith in the afterlife. It is not that we simply confirm the doctrine. A consciousness and awareness of who we are is not just being part of the sensible world. It is to recognize the transcendent aspect of self that is only partially determined by our actions here in the physical-sensible world.³⁵

While at the lowest level of the potential to know "self," there is the description in the Quran of:

Certainly, We made numerous for hell many of the jinn and humankind. They have hearts with which they understand not. They have eyes with which they perceive not. They have ears with which they hear not. Those are like flocks. Nay! They are ones who go astray. Those, they are the ones who are heedless. (Q7:179)

... ones whose balance was made light from bad deeds. Those are those who have lost their souls because they had been doing wrong with Our signs. (Q7:9)

They forgot God and God made them forget themselves. (Q59:19)

The only way to overcome this forgetfulness is to begin to 'intuit' the nature of the 'self'. A proper understanding of the 'self' occurs through moral/spiritual practice and the 'knowledge of the presence of the soul', by which one can realize one's existence in relation to the Creator and one's situation in the universe. Through understanding the 'self' and the gradational nature of the human soul, one can realize that its existence is a spectrum of a dynamic existence, firstly manifesting in bodily mode and surviving as spiritual by a substantial transformation. This understanding not only removes the conception of 'duality' between soul and body, material and immaterial essence, but also can explain the substantial development of the soul and its essential perfection in and from worldly affairs and involvement to the highest intellectual goal.³⁶

Disengagement From the Material World

(Disengagement) does not mean that our soul will no longer have any connection to the things of the world. Rather, it means that it gradually comes to see things clearly. It no longer falls into the nearsightedness of seeing realities as in physical form only which is temporary and constantly changing.³⁷

The first priority of the traveler (towards disengagement) is to emigrate from his natural desires (in a direction) away from the preoccupations of the lower-world.³⁸

Disciplining Our Animal Soul With Our Sense of Reason

Our animal soul (*nafs al-ammara*) is our motivational system. The strug-

gle (*jihad al-akbar*) is to discipline it through our cognition or sense of reason (*nafs al-natiqah*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*) held in moderation.

Our motivational system, as we will learn in Part I, and our soul in this work and extensively in Part III, consists of two powers of movement or motivation. Either a power involuntarily motivates us to movement or it is capable of inducing or persuading impulse in us to some movement. The aspect of our motivational system that acts as the "persuader" has been programmed by nature to return to its origin, thereby creating a yearning in our soul for this end. This power of yearning is connected to our imagination. When a desired or repugnant impulse is imprinted in us, it arouses the power of motion or movement to attain it or avoid it.

The "persuader" has two sub-divisions so it either motivates us to attain some pleasure or it motivates us to avoid some harm/pain. Persuading our soul to being attracted to some pleasure is known as lust or concupiscence (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*). This power persuades or induces the movement of our organs and limbs to move towards what is imagined to be pleasurable or necessary or useful for our subsistence. Our attraction to some pleasure—whether it be towards something we need to preserve our species or society such as food or sex—is also known in Quranic terms as "commanding to good" (*amr bil ma'ruf*).

Persuading our soul to move by avoiding some harm/pain is known as anger or irascibility (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*). This power persuades or induces the movement of our organs or limbs to move away from or overcome what is imagined to be harmful or destructive in preserving the subsistence of our individual self. It is known in Quranic terms as "prohibiting what is wrong" (*nahy an al-munkar*).

As long as our self is attached to these instinctive motivations, we remain an "animal" as these are the qualities we share with them, known as our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarh*).³⁹

9. Other Quranic References to Our Human "Self"

In addition to Quranic references to *nafs*, both reflexively and as a word by itself, the Quran calls to us by other names, indicates to us by other signs including: human being (*insan*), as part of humanity (*nas*) and as humankind (*ins*).

Our "Self" as Human Being

As we move forward in this textbook, we will learn about various Quranic concepts that prioritize the motivational qualities of our affect—our inner needs, desires, goals, values, plans—and our behavior—fears and avoidance of pain/harm or aversions—that give direction and purpose to our emotions, behavior and cognition.

To know the self is to act with direction and purpose. It is to know my-self,

my intentions and conscious force as a living person who moves forward in life towards eternal salvation with the belief in the Oneness of God and messengership of Muhammad, peace and the mercy of God be upon him, a belief chosen by my free will (*ikhtiyar*).

We charged the human being with goodness.... (Q29:8)

Certainly, We created the human being. We know what evil his soul whispers to him. We are nearer to him than the jugular vein. (Q50:16)

When We were gracious to the human being, he turned aside, withdrew aside. But when the worst afflicted him, then, he is full of supplication. (Q41:51)

Our "Self" as Part of Humanity, Humankind

Knowing our self as a social being, as part of humanity, comes through reflection and knowing that it is difficult to change our habits and traits that tend to be stubborn and resistant to change. We also recognize that others may only see us as through our outward behavior as no one else has complete access to another's inner self.

You command humanity to virtuous conduct and forget yourselves while you relate the Book? Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q2:44)

To see our self as a part of humanity is to be part of a community that follows the middle way.

Thus, We made you a middle community that you be witnesses to humanity, and that the Messenger be a witness to you. (Q2:143)

As humankind, the Quran refers to us and the jinn, both being created to worship God.

I created not jinn and humankind but that they worship Me. (Q51:56)

Even with the jinn, we are weak in comparison to the powers of God:

Say: If humankind were gathered together and jinn to bring the like of this Quran, they would not approach the like of it even if some of them had been sustainers of some others. (Q17:88)

As part of humankind, one of our purposes is to strive to be continually conscious of the presence of God in our lives:

Certainly, We made numerous for hell many of the jinn and humankind. They have consciousness (qalb) with which they understand not. They have

eyes with which they perceive not. They have ears with which they hear not. Those are like flocks. Nay! They are ones who go astray. Those, they are the ones who are heedless. (Q7:179)

We will be studying each part of our human self in the following modules: body, spirit, soul as aspects of creation and the command of God to "Be!"

Endnotes to the Prolog: Section 2: Knowing Our "Self"

- 1 Gholamreza Aavani, "The Sadrean Theory of the World of Divine Command." Online.
- 2 "Self" in Greek is also a reflexive word as it is in the Quran.
- 3 The soul is born from the meeting between a relatively fixed body and the divine breath, which is pure, unchanging luminosity. Therefore, the two sides of the soul are relatively constant. But the soul itself is a flux, a continual flow of impressions, a running stream of consciousness and awareness. The soul is an ocean without shore. The soul is like the ocean because the ocean has hidden depths and moves constantly, as the waves on its surface make clear. However, unlike the ocean, the soul has no boundaries, no fixed limits. The nonfixity of the soul has important consequences for human being. It means that because human beings are not this or that, they can be anything and what they become in this world determines the form they take in the next world. The attributes of our souls are neither those of our bodies nor those of our spirits. They are a combination of the attributes of the two sides. William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *Vision of Islam*. Online.
- 4 Ibrahim Kalin, "Realist Ontology". Online.
- 5 See William Chittick, *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 6 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Risalah Seh Asl*, 1376/1997, 3/5.
- 7 al-Ghazzali, *On Knowing Yourself and God*, p. 7.
- 8 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 9 See the Module 12: Consciousness where it is explained through Quranic terms.
- 10 Sadr al-din Shirazi, *al-Asfar*, pp. 390-391.
- 11 Sadr al-Din Shirazi quoted by H. Corbin, *En islam iranien*, vol. 4, p. 74.
- 12 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.
- 13 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar*, I, 3, pp. 400-403. Quoted by Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Philosophy: Mulla Sadra on Existence, Intellect and Intuition*. Online.
- 14 Reza Akbarian, "The Psychology of Mulla Sadra." Online.
- 15 Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Philosophy: Mulla Sadra on Existence, Intellect and Intuition*. Online.
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- 20 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 21 Afzalsadat Hosseini, Nuredin Mahmoodi, "Creativity of Spirit in Philosophical System of Mulla Sadra." Online.
- 22 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Risalat Seh Asl*, 1376/1997, 11/4.
- 23 Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, "Constructivist Elements of the Ethical Philosophy of Mulla Sadra." Online.
- 24 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 25 Ibrahim Kalin, "Knowledge as Light." Online.
- 26 Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*.
- 27 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Shawahid al-rububiyah*, 13/14, partial translation by Caner Dagli. Unpublished. Commissioned by Kazi Publications.
- 28 Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, "Constructivist Elements of the Ethical Philosophy of Mulla Sadra." Online.
- 29 Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, "Constructivist Elements of the Ethical Philosophy of Mulla Sadra." Online.
- 30 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Risalat Seh Asl*, 1376/1997, 1/14.
- 31 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Risalah Seh Asl*, 1376/1997, 14/2.
- 32 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Risalat Seh Asl*, 1376/1997, 1/1.
- 33 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Risalah Seh Asl*, 1376/1997, 1/1.

- 34 Sadr al-Din Shirazi , *Risalat Seh Asl*, 2003, xxi-xxiii; 91 n. 16.
- 35 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Risalat Seh Asl*, 1376/1997, 11/4.
- 36 Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*.
- 37 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.
- 38 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Shawahid al-rububiyyah*..
- 39 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar (Spiritual Psychology: The Fourth Intellectual Journey in Transcendent Philosophy)*, Volumes VIII and IX, pp 43-44; 121.

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Part 1: Our Soul

Module 1: Our Soul-Body

Introduction

What is our soul-body?

The existence of our soul originates with our body and subsists with our spirit. It begins as soul-body (our motivational system, see Part II) with a weak existence as we learn in this module.

Both soul and body are different levels of our self. Soul and body are of the same nature, but only in the sense of the weakness or intensity of their existence.¹

Due to motion in the substances of body and soul, they are in a state of constant change, never the same for any two instants. It is because of this substantial motion that our soul is able to gradually detach itself from the body and evolve towards the spirit. This state is called "the soul evolving from animal to human" and it is this stage that we develop our moral character through the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*) (see Module 3).

The spirit that our evolving soul eventually attains to is called soul-spirit/intellect, our cognitive system (see Module 2 and Part III).

In Quranic terms, our soul—in the stage of soul-body—is called the *nafs al-ammarah* or animal soul. Our animal soul regulates our movements and impulses of attraction to pleasure (*shahwah*) and avoidance of harm/pain (*ghadab*) as well as our willpower, sensation and perception.

This entire motivational system (studied in detail in Part II) consists of: attraction to pleasure or affect/emotions, avoidance of harm/pain or behavior; willpower—the irrational called *iradah* while the rational is our free willpower or *ikhtiyar*; our five external senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling forming our sensation functions; and our five internal senses which form our functions of perception: common sense, retention, estimation, memory and imagination—our imagination being two-fold, sensitive and rational. We share the sensitive imagination with animals but only we humans have rational imagination. Rational imagination serves as a link between our motivational and cognitive systems.

Our soul is the isthmus (*barzakh*) between the body and the spirit, between the physical and the spiritual-intellectual-morally healed.²

He has set forth the two seas to meet one another. Between them is an isthmus that they wrong not. (Q55:20)

It is He Who let forth the two seas—this, agreeable and water of the sweetest kind and this, salty, bitter. (Q25:53)

If we ignore our connection with our soul, we lose our connection with our spirit and our cognitive system originating from God's command (see Module 2). This means that we would no longer be the connecting link between the world of creation and the world of command (see Prolog: Section 1).

In regard to the role of our soul-body, our soul animates our body (*jism*) and governs it.

The existence of the soul is inferred from the fact that we observe bodies that perform certain acts with some degree of free willpower. These acts are exemplified in taking nourishment, growing, reproducing, moving and perceiving. They do not belong to the nature of bodies, therefore their origin must be elsewhere, that origin being precisely the soul.³

Our soul has specific attributes:

The attributes specific to the soul are that it is potentially knowing, acting through nature, receptive to teachings, active in bodies while putting them to use and completing the mineral, plant (animal and human) bodies until a known moment, death. Then it abandons the body and becomes separate from it. It returns to its origin, as it used to be, either with profit and joy or with regret and sadness and loss—just as God has said:⁴

Say: ... As He began you, you will revert to Him. (Q7:29-7:30)

Our soul is also weak in existence at its beginning as part of nature and is attached to and dependent upon our body at this initial stage.

The human being was created weak (Q4:28) ... in a receptacle, secure. (Q23:13)

As stated above, the energizing governor of our body is our soul (*nafs*) that comes into being with the intensifying change of our body and attains completion or perfection as a result of change.

Although the body dies, while the soul and spirit are eternal, and it is continually in a state of regeneration without any disjunction, it essentially remains the same because of the presence of the soul.

Our body has life and subsistence only through our soul, from which aid and outpouring flow reach it. Were the flow to be severed from it for an instant, our body would quickly go to ruin, its building would be destroyed, its organs would become ineffectual, and its form would disintegrate. So, when you seek the origin of your self and scrutinize it, you should seek and scrutinize the origin of all your substantiality, both your body and your soul.⁵

Our soul exists as a unity that has multiple functions through which it evolves due to its substantial motion provided to it by nature. Substantial motion provides the potential to gradually actualize its various functions. For example.

Our soul is acted upon by sense objects and undergoes gradual transitions in varying locations in our body. It is, then, an 'animal body. Once our soul begins employing our body's organs as tools for sensation and motivation or movement through desire, it becomes actually an 'animal soul' (*nafs al-ammarah*). Our animal soul is actually a substance of impulses, sensations, perceptions and potentially human, the highest, most eminent of animals.⁶

Another way of saying it is that our body is a compound and, therefore, a multiplicity. Our soul is single, a unity. They differ in potential and realization, deficiency and perfection, light and its absence.

The body and soul together are the body. The soul and body together are the soul. When you see the body with the eye of reality, it is the soul and when you see the soul with the eye of correlation, it is the body. Know that in all sensibles, intelligibles, and contraries, it is the same.⁷

The body as a multiplicity of types brings multiplicity into existence while the sense of unity comes from the existence of our soul.

The decisive point in (our) body's remaining this particular body (despite the constant transformation of its physical properties) is only the unity of the soul. As long as our particular individual soul remains, our body is also this same particular body. This is why when it is said: This old man was once a child. It indicates that even though with age he has lost all the particular physical parts and organs that he had as a child. ... that nothing remains of his body as it was when he was a child ... he is still the same person because of the persistence of his soul. Hence, this present body is precisely the same as that earlier one in relation to the same soul, while in another respect—that is, as to the physical—the two are not at all the same. Both of these aspects are true without any contradiction.⁸

However, even if the soul is able by regulating our motivational system with a balanced cognitive system to reach the goal of returning to God in its state of *fītrat*, it does not separate from the body in this world nor does the soul-spirit/intellect separate from the soul-body. They remain three realms throughout our lifetime.⁹

We will be learning about our soul throughout this textbook. Here we have understood its basic role in relation to our body when it is in the stage of soul-body. We turn now to the body and its creation in the physical world.

1. Quranic Signs Describe the Creation of Our Physical Body

The Quran refers to the creation of our body (*jism*) out of the material or physical:

Certainly We have created the human being from an extraction of clay. Moreover, We made him into a seminal fluid in a stopping place, secure. Moreover, We created a clot of congealed blood ('alaq, humours)¹ from seminal fluid. Then We created tissue from the clot of congealed blood. Then We created bones from tissue. Then We clothed the bones with flesh (lahm)² Moreover, We caused another creation to grow. So blessed be God, the Fairest of the ones who are creators! (Q23:12-23:14)

The Quran uses two words for body: *jism* and *jasad*. *Jism* refers to that which has life, soul and movement while *jasad* refers to that which is dead, whether it be the human body or that of an idol or statue.

When you see them, their physique (jism) impresses you. (Q63:4)

Then he brought out for them a calf, a lifeless body (jasad)... (Q20:88)

We are created for an appointed term:

It was He Who created you from clay, and, again, decided a term, a term, that which was determined by Him. Again, you contest. (Q6:2)

as a being growing gradually from the earth:

Who did everything that He created well. He began the creation of the human being from clay. (Q32:7)

He created the human being from earth mud like potter's clay. (Q55:14)

from an extract of certain elements of the earth:

O humanity! If you had been in doubt about the upraising, truly, We created you from earth dust and, again, from seminal fluid and, again, from a congealed blood clot ('alaq, humours) and, again, from tissue (mudghah)³ that was formed and that was not formed so that we make it manifest to you. We establish in the wombs whom We will for a term, that which is determined. Again, We bring you out as infant children and, again, you may reach the coming of age. Among you there is he whom death will call to itself. Among you there is he who is returned to the most wretched lifetime so that

he knows not anything after some knowledge. You have seen the earth as that which is lifeless. Yet when We caused water to descend on it, it quivered and it swelled and put forth every lovely pair. (Q22:5)

Then our body receives nourishment provided by God:

Certainly, We held the Children of Adam in esteem. We carried them on dry land and on the sea and provided them with what is good. We gave them advantage over many of whomever We created with excellence. (Q17:70)

endowed with life, like all other living beings:

Consider not those who were ungrateful that the heavens and the earth had been interwoven and We unstitched them? We made every living thing of water. Will they, then, not believe? (Q21:30)

taking the form of water or watery clay or mud:

Truly, We created them of clinging clay. (Q37:11)

molded into shape in due proportions:

Certainly, We created the human being out of earth-mud of soft wet earth. (Q15:26)

In reality, we are the highest of all that is created, for God has created us in the most beautiful of molds:

We have created the human being of the fairer symmetry. (Q95:4)

as a life-germ from the humours, a congealed clot:

He created the human being from a congealed blood clot ('alaq, humours). (Q96:2)

growing into a lump of flesh, further developing into bones clothed with flesh, and finally emerging as a new creation:

Again, We caused another creation to grow. (Q23:14)

created a human being in two sexes:

Assumes the human being that he will be left aimless? Was he not a sperm-drop to be emitted in seminal fluid? Again, he had been a clot of congealed blood ('alaq, humours) and He created him and shaped him.

Then, He made of him two pairs, the male and the female. (Q75:36-75:39)

Glory be to Him Who created pairs, all of them, of what the earth causes to develop as well as of themselves and of what they know not! (Q36:36)

Of everything We created pairs so that perhaps you will recollect. (Q51:49)

As we have learned, our body exists at the same time as our soul exists. It is our soul through the gradual development of its substantial motion that gifts us with hearing and sight, mind, and consciousness:

God brought you out from the wombs of your mothers and you know nothing. He assigned to you the ability to hear and sight and mind (sadr) so that perhaps you will give thanks. (Q16:78)

destined to become God's viceregent on earth:

When your Lord said to the angels: Truly, I am assigning on the earth a viceregent. They said: Will You be One Who Makes on it someone who makes corruption on it and sheds blood, while we glorify Your praise and sanctify You? He said: Truly, I know what you know not! (Q2:30)

The whole of humanity is one family, because it is the progeny of a single pair:

O humanity! Be God-conscious of your Lord Who created you from a single soul and, from it, created its spouse and from them both disseminated many men and women. Be God-conscious through Whom you demand rights of one another and the wombs, the rights of blood relations. Truly, God had been watching over you. (Q4:1)

He creates you from one soul. ... He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in threefold shadows. Such is God your Lord. His is the dominion. There is no god but He. Why, then, turn you away? (Q39:6)

O humanity! Truly, We created you from a male and a female and made you into peoples and types that you recognize one another. Truly, the most generous of you with God is the most devout. Truly, God is Knowing, Aware. (Q49:13)

As whatever is created is made of matter and materiality is weak, it cannot help moving ceaselessly in order to realize catharsis.

2. The Elements and the Elemental Qualities

The Elements

According to Quranic Psychology—as understood through the multiple Quranic signs as well as the *sunna* and Prophetic Medicine—the four elements or principles are the basic components of the creation of all physical matter including our human body, humours and temperament and they are with us in order to receive life.¹

The four classical principles are part of God's creation of nature. As with the rest of nature, these elements have physical properties. How nature has determined our elemental composition determines our particular nature and characteristics.

Having physical properties—that is alternating between solid and liquid, gas and plasma—means the elements not only have the potential to change, but are in a constant state of changing. They do this through their natural motion. Therefore, they are never in a final state, but constantly joining together and becoming.

The four classical elements or principles are fire, air, earth and water which exhibit the four basic states of matter: Fire releases heat and light and is a state of plasma. Air is of the gaseous state; water, liquid; and earth, solid.²

The elements referred to in this section are created in the sublunar world of contrast and change, part of the macrocosm reflected in our microcosmic human body.

They are principles that we hear of every day in the weather reports: Cold and rainy; cold and dry; hot and humid; hot and dry. Weather is the state of the atmosphere or sublunar region, to the degree that it is hot or cold, wet or dry, calm or stormy, clear or cloudy. Weather, seen from an anthropological perspective, is something all humans in the world constantly experience through their senses. They are socially and scientifically constructed understandings of what weather is, what makes it change, what effects it has on humans in different situations.

As for complete natural compounded things, which cannot be brought forth without the Power of God, since their existence is not complete except through active qualities, they must of necessity possess heat, which dissolves and dissipates; coldness, which accumulates and calms; humidity, the very compliance with the act of creation and the giving of shape; and dryness, to preserve the formation and alteration it acquires. The protective power of God through nature thus generously gives existence to the four elements, which are contrary to each other in their attributes and qualifications, and reside in nature in different places, some above others, in accordance with what is appropriate for them, arrayed in an amazing way, and arranged wondrously, in that each two that participate in a single active quality are adjacent to each other:

The elements were created only to receive life. When isolated, however, they

are unable to receive it, due to the contrariness of their forms as concerns primary qualities. On the other hand, a physical body, through its physicality, is a recipient of life and does not refuse it; in order for it to receive life there must needs be a balancing that necessitates the realization of the mixture's true nature, this mixture standing intermediate between two contraries and far away from the extremes that would necessarily bring about death and corruption. A compounded thing acquires some life or other in the measure of its balance, which is its distance from the extremes.³

The Quran speaks of the elemental qualities as building blocks of our body.

Certainly, We created the human being from earth-mud (clay) (salsal)⁴ of soft, wet earth (hama' masnun)⁵. We created the ones who are spirits (al-jann)⁶ before from the fire (nar) of a burning wind (samum). Mention when your Lord said to the angels: Truly, I am One Who is Creator of the mortals (basha) out of earth-mud (salsal) of soft wet earth (hama' masnun). That is when I shaped (sawwa) him and blew (nafakht)⁷ into him of My spirit (ruh).⁸ (Q15:26-15:29)

In these signs (Q15:26-15:29), we see that the Quran has made reference to all four elemental principles⁹ in one sign: earth and water (earth-mud, clay, molded mud), fire and wind (air). Those who were familiar with the Quran had to be aware of the fact that these four classical principles were confirmed by the Quran in the same way that the Quran confirmed the existence of the Torah and Gospel which preceded the revelation of the Quran.

Fire

Fire—which appears 145 times in the Quran—is a simple substance whose natural position is above all the other elements. Thus, in nature it is located in that region of the sublunary world. Hence, its absolute lightness. In terms of elemental qualities, fire is hot and dry. It matures, rarefies, refines, and intermingles with all things. Its penetrative power enables it to traverse the substance of the air. With this power it subsumes the coldness of the two heavy cold elements. By this power it brings the elementary properties into harmony.

Air

Air—which appears 29 times in the Quran as wind—is a simple substance which lies above water and beneath fire. This is due to its relative lightness. As to its elemental qualities, air is hot and moist. Its effect and value in the world of creation is to rarefy and render things finer, lighter, more delicate, softer, and consequently better able to move to the higher spheres. The Quran refers to potter's clay which is hot and wet as it is transformed or hot (warming) and dry as it is beaten by the wind:

Earth

Earth—which appears 462 times in the Quran—is a simple substance whose normal location is in the center of existence. In this position it remains stationary but when away from the center it tends to return to its normal position. This is the reason for its intrinsic weight. Qualitatively speaking, earth is naturally cold and dry. These qualities of the earth can be easily appreciated by our senses as long as there is no interference by extraneous agents and it obeys its particular nature. It is by means of the element of earth that the parts of our body are fixed and held together into a compacted form. This is how our outward form is maintained. The Quran says we were created from earth which is cold and dry:

He created him from earth dust. (Q3:59)

The "earth dust" is subjected to the four elemental qualities of hot, cold, wet and dry.

Water

Water—which appear 63 times in the Quran—is a simple substance which in its natural state surrounds the earth and is, in its turn, surrounded by the air, subject of course, to the other elements being also present in their own natural positions. This positing is because of its relative density. It appears to our senses as long as there are no influences to counteract it. It lends itself readily to dispersion and therefore assumes any shape without permanency.

God describes the human being in the Quran as being created from water which is cold and wet:

The parable of this present life is but like water ... (Q10:24)

That is, moving, flowing, in flux just as the substantial motion of the soul.

Moreover, He made human progeny from the extraction of discarded water. (Q32:8)

Have you considered the water that you drink? Is it you who sent it forth from the cloud vapor or are We the ones who send forth? (Q56:68-56:69)

Moisture allows things to be molded and spread out and attuned in their construction because, quite unlike the earth, it easily parts with its old shape and readily accepts a new one. The nature of water is cold and moist whereas air is hot and moist.

Being moist, shapes can be readily made with it and as easily lost and resolved. Dryness, on the other hand, as with fire which is hot and dry and

earth which is cold and dry, permits forms to be assumed only with difficulty and they are resolved with similar difficulty.

When dryness and moisture alternate, dryness is overruled by the moisture, and thus the object is easily susceptible of being molded into a form whereas if the moisture were overruled by dryness, the form and features of the body would become firm and constant. Moisture serves to protect dryness from easily crumbling. Dryness prevents moisture from dispersing.

The Elemental Qualities Compared

Fire and air are light, subtle and energetic with heat as their main quality. These two light elements enter more into the formation of our breaths and contribute to their movement as well as to the movement of the organs while earth and water are heavy and dense having cold as their primary quality. Earth and water, the two heavy elements, enter more into the construction of the organs and fluids of the body and contribute to its stability. Air and water contain moisture and are fluid. They take the shape of whatever container they are placed in and fill empty spaces. Air is hot and wet and flows upwards. Water is cold and wet and flows downwards. Fire and earth have dryness as their secondary quality. Both tend to separate.

Fire is hot, active and dynamic, refining, distilling and transforming while earth is passive, condensing, coagulating and solidifying a form.

We said: O fire! (Q21:69)

The earth is cold:

Be coolness and peace for Abraham! (21:69)

The elemental qualities are primary because they cause change and tend to produce the secondary qualities of moisture:

... created the human being out of earth-mud of soft wet earth. (Q15:26)

and dryness:

... aim at getting wholesome, dry earth. (4:43)

Hot and dry are connected in the sense that the quality of heat creates dryness. Cold and moisture are connected because cold condenses moisture. Hot and cold refer to the level of energy that is present. Heat suggests a high level of energy that activates, excites, expands, disperses, moves and circulates while cold suggests a low level of energy. It slows down, sedates, contracts, congeals and obstructs. Dryness and moisture suggest a relative level of moisture.

O humanity! We created you from earth (cold and dry) dust and, again,

from seminal fluid (nutfah, hot and dry and cold and wet that provides Innate Heat and Radical Moisture) and, again, from a clot of congealed blood ('alaq: humours: cold and dry, cold and wet, hot and dry, hot and wet) and, again, from tissue that was formed and that was not formed so that we make it manifest to you. We establish in the wombs whom We will for a term, that which is determined. You have seen the earth (cold and dry) as that which is lifeless. Yet when We caused water (cold and wet) to descend on it, it quivered and it swelled and put forth every lovely pair. (Q22:5)

The Elemental Qualities and Our Physical Functions

These four qualities (hot, cold, moist and dry) serve our digestion, retention, assimilation and so forth with cold being subservient to heat because either it prepares our physical matter for heat or retains what the heat has dispersed, while dryness and moisture serve both of them.

3. Our Humours

Our Humours Begin Undifferentiated in the Blood Clot of Congealed Blood

The elements and their qualities are the humours in our body. They are the blood clot that begins the formation of an embryo in a woman's womb which contains the humours. When first formed, the humours are undifferentiated until activated upon by the motion of our natural energy and then it is the liver that differentiates the humours into four types. All four of these humours¹ arise at the site of the liver in quantity or predominance according to the natural temperament of the foods we eat and the degree of completeness of our digestion.

The Nature of Our Humours

The life and health of our body is determined by the humours containing the elemental qualities of cold, hot, wet and dry in various proportions. The humours maintain a balance in our body as they are its metabolic agents found in our bloodstream and are known as the vital fluids.

The second Quranic verse revealed to the Prophet in the year 610 CE refers to the humours: (Q96:2):

He created the human being from a clot of congealed blood ('alaq, humours). (Q96:1-96:2)²

The word 'alaq (humours) appears another five times in the Quran:

Again, he had been a clot of congealed blood ('alaq, humours) and He created him and shaped him. (Q75:38)

He it is Who created you from earth (cosmic) dust, again, from seminal

fluid, again, from a clot of congealed blood ('alaq, humours). (Q40:67)

Certainly, We created the human being from an extraction of clay. Again, We made him into seminal fluid in a stopping place, secure. Again, We created a clot of congealed blood ('alaq, humours) from seminal fluid. Then, We created tissue from the clot of congealed blood ('alaq, humours). (Q23:12-23:14) (Q22:5)

The humors have a normal state as well as abnormal varieties. The worst abnormal humour is black bile which is believed to be responsible for cancerous growth. It is a toxin if not properly eliminated.

Every person is supposed to have a unique humoral constitution which represents his healthy state. To maintain the correct humoral balance there is a power of self-preservation or adjustment called innate heat in the body. If this power weakens, imbalance in the humoral composition is bound to occur and this causes disease. Great reliance is placed in this power in the traditional world. The natural healers (hakims) used in this system, in fact, help the body to regain this power to an optimum level and thereby restore humoral balance, thus retaining health. Also, correct diet and digestion are considered to maintain humoral balance.³

Our Four Types of Humours

The humours are of four types:⁴

The Blood Humour

The nature and dynamic aspect of the sanguineous humour—the elemental quality of Air—is hot and moist. It may be normal or abnormal, conforming to its nature or not. Normal blood is red in color, sweet in taste and free from smell.

The blood humour, when balanced, is said to be in a normal state of health. It is the very essence of vitality and health, nutrition and growth. Blood is perfect nourishment perfectly digested. Its receptacle or home is in the arteries and blood vessels. Blood carries the vital force and innate heat (*hararat al-gharizat*), which power cellular metabolism. The essence of blood is exchange and contact, as it is the basic nutritional and metabolic currency of the organism. Blood has an attractive power or force, since all cells, organs and tissues have an absolute need for it, and are, therefore, attracted to it.⁵

The Yellow Bile Humour

The yellow bile humour—the elemental quality of Fire—when balanced is also known as being in a normal state of health or a state of physical well-being, is the foam of blood. It is bright in color. It is light and pungent. It is present in our bloodstream as a residue with a slight yellow tint. It is formed in the liver and then follows one of two courses: either it circulates with the

blood or it passes on to the gall-bladder. The part which passes into the blood stream assists in two purposes. First of all, the portion which goes to the blood is essential for nutrition of organs like the lungs. It makes the blood light and thin for easy passage through the narrow channels of the body. The portion which goes into the gallbladder is thus prevented from vitiating the body and providing nutrition to the gallbladder. Its subsidiary functions are the cleansing of the intestine from the thick and viscid mucus and stimulation of the musculature of the intestine and rectum for proper defecation. That is why stasis or obstruction in the bile duct may produce colic. Yellow bile is produced by the liver and stored in the gall bladder.

Bile has a hot, caustic nature and a digestive power or force which gives it a strong affinity with the other digestive secretions of the middle GI tract. Fire and bile digest and consume, metabolize and transform. Digestively, bile powers digestion; digests, assimilates and excretes fats and cholesterol; and acts as a natural laxative to stimulate intestinal peristalsis and defecation. It also colors the stool brown. Systemically, the bilious or yellow bile humour residues in the bloodstream and thins the blood, enabling it to penetrate through the finest capillaries; empowers the inflammatory response and opens up the lungs and respiratory passages as a surfactant.⁶

The Phlegmatic Humour

The nature of the phlegmatic (or serous) humour—the elemental quality of Water—is cold and moist. When balanced it is considered to be in a normal state of health. Normal (sweet) phlegmatic humour can be transformed into blood at any time as it is an imperfectly matured blood. It is a kind of sweet fluid which is only slightly colder than the body, but it is much colder than the bilious and blood humours. Sweet phlegmatic humour has a variety which is abnormal. This variety is tasteless unless it is mixed with blood, when it becomes somewhat sweet. This happens frequently with sputum and catarrhal excretions.

The normal variety of the sweet phlegmatic humour has no special place in the body, as is also the case with the bilious (yellow bile) and atrabilious (black bile) humours. The reason is that like blood, the phlegmatic humour is required by nearly every organ in the body, hence, it always circulates with the blood.

There are two special reasons why it has no special place. The first reason is essential and the second is accessory. The essential function is two-fold: the phlegmatic humour has necessarily to remain in close contact with the tissues as an easily available material for emergencies, such as a temporary failure of the food supply from the stomach and liver as in starvation. This material is normally acted upon by the natural energies which change and digest it and are themselves maintained thereby.

It includes not just phlegm, but all the other clear fluids of the body: mucus, saliva, plasma, lymph, and serous and interstitial fluids. Together, these fluids cool, moisten, nourish, lubricate, protect, and purify the organism. The phlegmatic humor has an expulsive power or force, which flushes out impurities, transports

vital nutrients, and helps eliminate wastes. The phlegmatic humor function through the veins and lymphatics. It nourishes the body on a deep and fundamental level.⁷

The Black Bile Humour

Black bile humour—the elemental quality of Earth—is cold and dry in nature. When balanced, it is in a normal state of health. Normal atrabilious humour is a sediment of the normal blood. It has a taste between sweetness and bitterness. After being formed in the liver, a part goes to the blood and another part to the spleen.

The part which goes with the blood is essential for two purposes: the nutrition of organs such as the bones which have an appreciable quantity of the atrabilious bile in their composition, and to make the blood properly thick and heavy. It is a brownish-gray sediment that contains platelets and clotting abilities.

The portion which is in excess of these requirements is taken up by the spleen essentially for its own nutrition but also to save the blood from being damaged. The portion which goes from the spleen into the stomach serves the purpose of making the stomach strong and firm. It also stimulates the appetite by its sour taste.

This action of atrabilious humour is somewhat similar to that of the bilious humour. Just as the surplus of bile in the blood goes to the gallbladder, and the surplus from the gallbladder passes into the intestine, the excess of atrabilious humour from the blood goes to the spleen, what is left over from the spleen goes to the stomach to induce appetite. The surplus of bilious humour excites peristaltic movements and thus assists evacuation, but the surplus of atrabilious humour encourages the intake of food.

Healthy black bile is a normal sediment of blood or the sanguine humor. Black bile has a retentive force, and a cooling, drying, astringing, precipitating, condensing, coagulating, solidifying effect on metabolism necessary for building the bones, teeth, and all dense, solid structural connective tissues of the body. Digestively, black bile awakens the stomach and appetite, solidifies the stool, and enables the digestive organs to hold on to their contents long enough to process them properly. Systemically, black bile residues in the bloodstream to thicken the blood, enabling it to clot; this is vitally important in wound granulation, scar tissue formation, and all structural repair of the body. Black bile also governs the metabolism of the mineral soul and bone formation.⁸

Our Humours Form Our Temperament

The blood humour is the "salt principle" of the body, the phlegmatic humor the "sweet principle," the yellow bile humor the "bitter principle," and the black bile humor the "sour principle" of the body. According as one or other of these is predominant in a person, so is his constitution or temperament (*mizaj*) which we look at in the next section. In a sense, body fluids are the meeting-places between various opposed forces or elements and their chemical composition is the mode in which such forces or elements are expressed.

Nutrition

Humour (*akhlat*) or body-fluid is that fluid, moist, physical substance into which our aliment is transformed. That part of the nourishment that has the capacity to be transformed into body substance, either by itself or in combination with something else thereby being capable of assimilation by the members or organs, and completely integrated into the tissues, is the healthy or good humour. It is what replaces the loss which our body undergoes. The residue from this process, the "superfluity," is called unhealthy or abnormal humour. It is the fluid which, in the absence of proper digestion or conversion, is unsuitable for assimilation and is therefore eliminated from the body.

Nutrition alters the temperament of food in such a way that it becomes temperamentally akin to the body and is thus rendered suitable for the repair of daily wear and tear of the tissues. The power of growth develops the organs in their appropriate spatial relationships and integrates the nutritive material according to the requirements of the individual growth. Nutrition serves the natural power of growth by providing the necessary nutriment. Sometimes the quantity of nutriment may be sufficient only for the day to day needs of repair, but at times it may be more or less than the daily requirements.⁹

Digestion: The Origin and Metabolism of the Four Humors

The blood humor comes into being first and is formed of the choicest parts of nutrients. Second, the phlegm humor arises and accompanies the second-level digestion nutrients. The yellow bile is composed of the third stage of digestion nutrients which are the coarser and less refined parts, and the black bile is composed of the least digestible and usable parts of nutrients.

Each of the four humors has its own characteristic temperament in accord with the system it regulates. One humor predominates in each individual and encompasses our emotional aspects, mental capacity, moral attitudes, self-awareness, movements and dreams.

Food and drink are transformed by innate heat in the digestive process. The humours arise in the second stage of digestion in the liver. This process produces four humours which sustain and nourish the body and move through the channels or meridians.

Illness results from either a quantitative or qualitative change of humour. In a "normal" state, the humours are assimilated by the organs and completely integrated into the tissues. In an "abnormal" state, due to improper digestion, the material is unsuitable for assimilation and therefore eliminated by the body. Surpluses may be eliminated by exercise, bathing, coition, purges and laxatives.

Four Humours Assisting Our Digestion

There are four other functions that assist the nutritive energies in the di-

gestive process. These four functions are served in their turn by the essential qualities of the humours, namely, heat and cold, dryness and humidity. The blood humour (hot and moist) is infused with the power of attraction (*jaziba*); the yellow bile humour (hot and dry) is infused with the power of digestion (*hadma*); the black bile humour (cold and dry) is infused with power of retention (*masika*); and the phlegmatic humour (cold and moist) is infused with the ability of evacuation or expulsion (*dafi'a*).

The Power of Attraction

The attractive power, aided by blood humour, needs more heat than dryness because the main feature of attraction is movement and movement needs heat. The organs concerned must move (rather than be at rest) and contract which requires dryness. This power, however, does not require much movement, although at times violent activity becomes necessary. Attraction is brought about by an attractive power—as when a magnet attracts iron; and by heat as when oil is drawn up in a lamp. Heat increases the power of attraction exerted by the attractive power.¹⁰

The Power of Digestion

The digestive process, aided by the yellow bile or bilious humour, is that which alters the material attracted and held by the soul's attractive and retentive secondary powers. It transmutes the material from its former state until it works up into a temperament such as enables it to become efficient nutrient material. This process is 'digestion' in the strict sense.

At the same time, it produces a change in the superfluities so that they can be easily discharged from the organ containing them. This process is called 'maturation', that is, the liquefaction of the waste products for proper evacuation. It is a mistake to use the terms 'digestion' and 'maturation' as synonymous.

The digestive power requires more heat than the other three. It does not need dryness, but moisture, for by moisture the nutrients are rendered fluid and so become able to enter the pores and become molded into the conformation of the channels to be traversed. delete.¹¹

The Power of Retention

The soul's nutritive power is aided by the black bile or atrabilious humour and secondary power of retention. Retention retains the food while the digestive power is engaged in preparing sound nutritive substances from it.

If one compares the degree of active—heat, cold—and passive—dry, wet—quality needed for the various powers, one finds that the retentive power needs more dryness than heat. This is because more time is required for a movement to come to rest than is needed to start the transverse fibers to move in contraction.

Heat is necessary for movement and it takes only a short time to produce its effect so that the remainder of the time is occupied in holding the material and com-

ing to a state of rest. This explains why the temperament of children tends to moistness for their digestive power is weaker.¹²

The Power of Evacuation

The evacuation process, aided by the phlegmatic or serous humour, is concerned with the evacuation of the non-nutritive excremental matters left over from the digestion of food, the nutritive material taken in excess of nutritional requirements and the material which, having served its purpose, is no longer required like water which is eliminated in the urine.

The waste matter is expelled through the natural channels of excretion, that is, the urinary tract for the excretion of urine and large intestine for the evacuation of feces. When, however, these routes are not available, waste matter is diverted either from a superior to an inferior organ or from a hard organ to a soft one.¹³

4. Our Temperament

The Temperament of Living Beings

The Creator has bestowed upon every animal and every one of its organs the most appropriate and the best adapted temperament (*miza*)¹ for its various functions and passive states. We have been bestowed with a most befitting temperament and most appropriate faculty or drives for the various active and passive states in our body. Similarly, every organ and member is endowed with the proper temperament appropriate to its own functional requirement. Some He has made some of us more hot tempered, others more cold tempered, others more dry and others more moist tempered.

As we have seen the elements are "primary matter" which when mixed together give rise to all of nature including the signs upon the horizons and within ourselves. They are constantly in a state of change which is either cyclical or progressive. Our taking in and the elimination of food that we eat is an example of cyclical change while the growth of cancerous cells is an example of progressive change. In terms of Quranic Psychology, it is important to be able to analyze and evaluate these changes within our body. They came to be classified in the digestive system as the humours and in other systems, including the psychological, through the temperaments.

Our Temperament and the Four Humours

If a person has a particular humoral balance for many years, that person's physiology and psyche will eventually become that humour, which is then called temperament. Temperament is characterized by the humour that predominates.

There are four basic temperaments that are the same as the four elemental qualities and four humours, namely hot and moist (the element air, blood or sanguine humour/temperament), hot and dry (the element fire, bilious or yellow bile humour or choleric temperament), cold and wet (the

element water, phlegmatic humour/temperament) and cold and dry (the element earth or atrabilious humour or pensive temperament).

By dividing up into minute particles, the elemental qualities of the humours are able to secure an intimate contact among themselves. These qualities are so minutely intermingled as each to lie in very intimate relationship to one another. Their opposite powers alternately conquer and become conquered until a state of equilibrium is reached which is uniform throughout the whole. It is this outcome that is called the temperament.

Since the primary elemental qualities of the humours are four in number (namely: heat, cold, moisture, dryness), it is evident that the temperaments in bodies undergoing generation and destruction accord with these powers.

Whatever has existence, including plants and animals, also has some level of consciousness. So every thing in existence is unified though there is a difference in the extent and the quality of their consciousness and to the gradation of the intensity and weakness of their existence.

The Quran states that everything glorifies God:

Whatever is in the heavens glorifies God and whatever is in and on the earth. (Q64:1) This itself is indicative of the existence of knowledge in all living beings.

Truly, His command when He wanted a thing is but to say to it: Be! Then, it is! (Q36:82).

This verse indicates that all creatures are wise, know their Creator, and hear Him since obedience to a command depends on two things: hearing and subsequently understanding the command to exist. Since all creatures are obedient to the command of being created, it is clear that they possess a possibility of consciousness.

Again, He turned His attention to the heaven while it was smoke and He said to it and to the earth: Approach both of you willing or unwilling. They both said: We approached as ones who are obedient. (Q41:11).

As part of this existence, living beings have an innate temperament.

Each animal, individual and bodily organ has a unique temperament and in addition to its proportion of elemental qualities, it is determined by season of the year and geographic location of a person. There is a close relationship between human beings as the microcosm in relation to the cosmic macrocosm. As Avicenna says: God, The Merciful, has furnished every animal and each of its organs with a temperament that is entirely the most appropriate and best adapted for the performance of its functions and passive states. In the case of the human being, God has given him the most befitting temperament possible of all in the world as well as the powers or energies corresponding to all the active and passive human states.²

No two living species have the exact same temperament so no two living creatures of the same species can be treated in exactly the same way in anticipation of the same reaction to external stimuli. Each one is unique.

The normal temperament of one species is supposed to be the most befitting for that species, while it would definitely be unsuitable for other species. However, even the 'normal' temperament of one species is not a straight line or a rigid point, rather, it has a range (limits) in which the normalcy is defined. This range of temperament defines the diversity in psychological make-up and, in our case, of human behavior. Deviations beyond the maximum and minimum limits of the range for that species will (theoretically) expel the subject out of that species, at least in terms of temperament.³

If we know our temperament and the temperament of the food we consume, we will know how to eat, live and medicate our self through natural healers for maintaining a healthy self. Each temperament is distinguished by certain basic traits based on their humoral system.

However, it is important to note here that that which changes and moves our temperament is not our temperament itself. Our temperament may move from a gradual intensity to becoming weak in intensity and imbalanced. It is not that the temperament moves itself to either balance or imbalance, but the presence of our soul's substantial motion. Our soul is a substance that differs from our temperament, and as a substance, it contains substantial motion. If there were no substantial motion how would a seed become a tree or a drop of sperm become a human being?

The Uniqueness of Our Temperament

Our temperament is an important aspect of the science of the soul as well as to the practice of traditional medicine. Temperament is determined by the nature and proportions of the humours and their interaction in our bodies.

Temperament is the result of an integrative system that keeps all organs and their functions linked with each other and allows the body to function in a homeostatic manner. This maintenance of homeostasis is not only the basis of our health but also our survival.⁴

The Quran uses the word *mizaj* to refer to a "mixture".

Truly, the pious will drink from a cup that had been a mixture (mizaj) of camphor.... (Q76:5)

They are given to drink in it a cup that had been with a mixture (mizaj) of ginger. (Q76:17)

The mixture (mizaj) will be of Tasnim. (Q83:27)

We know that our "self" consists of a physical body—that is used as an instrument for our soul—a soul and a spirit. Our goal is to establish a balance between the physical, psychic and spiritual aspects of our self, a middle way and justice:

Thus have We made you a middle community that you may be witnesses to humanity and that the Messenger be a witness to you. (Q2:143)

Justice is the result of following the middle way, the straight path, the balance and is one of its main characteristics. It is both a means and goal of self-purification and development and evolution of the "becoming" of our "self."

Balanced and Imbalanced Temperaments

An equable or balanced temperament is where the contrary qualities are present to exact as possible equal degrees of potency. This temperament has a quality which is the mean as exact as possible between the two extremes of excess or deficiency when it becomes inequable or unbalanced.

A temperament or "mixture" (*mizaj*), as understood by psychologists, is never strictly equable or strictly inequable. The practitioner should be aware that the really 'equable' temperament does not actually exist in the human being any more than it exists in any 'member' or 'organ'. The term 'equable,' does not refer to weight but to an equity of distribution. It is this distribution which is the primary consideration—whether one is referring to the soul or body as a whole, or only to some individual organ; and the average measure of the elemental properties in it, as to quantity and quality, is that which standard human nature ought to have—both in best proportion and in equity of distribution. As a matter of fact, the mean between excess and deficiency of qualities, such as is characteristic of the human being, actually is very close to the theoretical ideal.⁵

The four simple conditions of temperament each involve only one of the four basic elemental qualities of hot, cold, moist or dry. The other twelve compound temperaments are a combination of them where there is an imbalance in either heat, cold, dryness or moisture. Throughout our lifetime, we should try to create a balance in our temperament. The goal is to maintain a balance and not to go to the extreme of heat, for example, at the expense of cold.

The Four Main Types of Temperaments

Our temperament, which remains throughout our life, is made up of certain characteristic patterns such as our behavior, feelings, and thoughts.

From the natural predominance of a particular temperament in us may also definite characteristics of physique and conduct.⁶

Descriptions of the various personality qualities of each temperament abound in the literature.

The Sanguineous Temperament

The sanguineous temperament, which is an equal temper, exceeds the others in proportion to quantity, is hot and moist (the Air element), sweet and red. It imparts strength and color to the body and serves for the engendering of the energies. Located in the heart, it relates to the constellations of Leo, Aries and Sagittarius in the Zodiacal constellations, important in Quranic Psychology as God swore an oath to the constellations.⁷

By the heaven possessing the constellations ... (Q85:1)

Persons with a balanced sanguineous temperament are described as being adaptable and adventurous, communicative and cooperative. They are curious and love to experience life. They are flexible and freedom loving who are able to link ideas and places in their innate originality. Relationship-oriented, they are good storytellers, tolerant and versatile with a wide range of friends.

Persons with a weak sanguineous temperament are considered by others to be aloof, lacking in feelings towards others, but emotional within themselves, detached, disorganized and dispassionate. They may be dreamers, eccentric, indecisive and insensitive procrastinators. They may talk too much or be too abstract and theoretical and often become unfocused.

The Choleric Temperament

The choleric temperament, least in quantity in our body, is hot and dry, yellow and bitter (the Fire element). A part of it passes from the liver to the gallbladder and a part, flowing there with other humours, moderates moisture and makes the blood subtle so that it may pass easily through straight ways. The bilious humour prevents the body from becoming heavy, sleepy and dull. It penetrates and opens passages and feeds members of the body in which the fiery element predominates. Zodiacal signs are Gemini, Aquarius, and Libra.⁸

Blessed be He Who made constellations in the heaven (Q25:61)

Persons with a balanced choleric or fiery temperament are described as being active, adventurous and assertive. They are often charismatic, even dramatic, but enthusiastic and fun-loving. They often make gut-instinct decisions which shows them to be individualistic, independent thinkers who inspire others. Optimistic and passionate, they are risk-takers, self-confident, self-expressive, self-motivated and spontaneous.

Persons with a weak choleric temperament are argumentative, blunt, brash and even may be boisterous at times. They are careless and dislike being ignored. Domineering, foolish, gullible and naive, they are head-strong, impatient, impulsive, insensitive and intolerant. They need to be admired by others. They are willful, unaffectionate, stubborn and proud.

The Phlegmatic Temperament

The phlegmatic temperament, next to blood in quantity, is watery, cold, moist and white (the Water element). It moderates the strength, heat and thickness of blood, nourishes the brain, and moistens and nourishes such parts of the body as are concerned in motion. If blood fails, heat dissolves the phlegmatic humour into blood. Cancer, Pisces and Scorpio, as Zodiacal signs, relate to serous humour.⁹

Persons with a balanced phlegmatic temperament are artistic, benevolent and compassionate. They tend to bring people together and creative, imaginative and intuitive. They like what feels right, perceive life emotionally and are often able to read the moods of others. They are receptive, romantic and sensitive.

Persons with a weak phlegmatic temperament tend to be brooding, callous and clingy. They are often compulsive, impractical and irrational. Moody and often manipulative, they are secretive, self-protective and too sensitive to their feelings, unrealistic and vulnerable.

The Pensive Temperament

Within the Zodiac this pensive personality (the Earth element) is related to the three Zodiacal signs Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn.¹⁰

And, certainly, We made constellations in the heavens and We made them appear pleasing to the ones who look. (Q15:16)

Persons with a balanced pensive temperament are ambitious, analytical, dependable and disciplined. Such people are also hardworking and love the tangible. Pensive tempered people are also described as being methodical, organized, persistent and practical. Realistic and reliable, they take responsibility for the decisions that they make which are usually sensible, stable, steady and thoughtful.

Persons with a weak pensive temperament have the following characteristics: they are cautious, conservative, critical, hard to please, may hoard things, indecisive, lack imagination, may be lazy loners who are moody or overly materialistic. They may have a rigid or reserved personality, be pessimistic and stubborn or suspicious and withdrawn. They are fixed on rules and may be considered to be workaholics.

Indications of a Balanced Temperament

People with a balanced temperament are equally inclined to regular sleep and wakefulness. They have agreeable dreams arousing hopefulness, with fragrant perfumes and alluring voices, visions and agreeable companionship. Their mental faculties include: vigor of imagination, intellectual power, and memory. Emotions are balanced between excess and defi-

ciency, for example, between courage and timidity, between appropriate anger and patience, between sternness and compassion, between vacillation and perseverance.

People with such a temperament will have a happy expression, will be lovable and contented, moderate in desire for food and drink, possessing a good gastric digestion, and good alternative and assimilative flow all through their tissues. The waste matters will be moderate in amount and will be discharged through the proper channels. deleted.¹¹

The Diagnostic Signs of Temperament from Our Body

The signs from which the variety of the temperament is discernible can be arranged under ten groups: (1) the feel of the patient; (2) the state of the muscles, flesh and fat; (3) the hair; (4) the color of the body; (5) the form of the members; (6) the rapidity with which members respond to heat and cold; (7) signs derived from sleep and wakefulness; (8) signs derived from the state of the functions; (9) signs derived from the expulsive drive and from the quality of discharges; and (10) signs derived from the states of the mind during action and passion.

The Function of Innate Heat on Our Temperament

Innate heat functions in different ways in our body in regard to our appetite and digestion depending upon our temperament. Our innate heat tends to produce too much humour for each temperament type when we eat the wrong foods or overeat, straying from the straight path. In addition, we each have foods that are problematic for us, often foods that we crave, tending to further imbalance and aggravate our innate heat. Understanding the ways that innate heat functions in our digestive system also helps determine any humoral imbalance.

Contemporary Commentary on Temperaments: Our Temperament, the Elemental Qualities and Energy-Mass

All compounds have different physical characteristics and properties than the attributes of their original components. Likewise, constituents in a human body are transformed into specialized tissues, organs and systems. Our human body is not simply a collection of carbohydrates, proteins, lipids, vitamins, electrolytes, trace elements and water, etc. or their elemental constituents. These constituents, in isolation, are only chemical elements with certain physico-chemical properties but have no resemblance to the human body. We cannot reverse engineer and mix these constituents in the exact proportions that are part of human body and create a human. Combining carbon, hydrogen and oxygen would not even create the likes of a simple sugar found in nature. However, when the same elements are part of human body their meaningfulness increases exponentially, the resultant combi-

nation compounds impart a certain characteristic and temperament to individual cells, tissues and the body as a whole. Any unusual qualitative or quantitative increase or decrease in anyone of these may and does cause imbalances and often serious problems (diseases) and even death.¹²

Another way of understanding what our temperament is and how it relates to the four elemental qualities is to see the connection in terms of mass and energy:

The concept of temperament symbolizes various physical as well as psychological tendencies of individuals in terms of mass and energy, i.e. activity as heat and cold; reactivity as dryness and moisture. Temperament is determined by the nature and proportions of humours and their interactions in the body. The heat and cold in it may be identified with the dispersive and aggressive aspects of energy, while moisture and dryness are related to receptive and resistance aspects of mass, respectively.

Temperament is physiologically defined as the pattern of qualities that results from actions and reactions of mass and energy in the structures and functions of the human body. It is the final outcome of chemical combinations and interactions amongst various constituents of differing qualities.

To understand the concept of temperament a simple analogy is the example of one molecule of water, which is composed of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen. When these two elements are present in their natural states neither of them even remotely looks like, behaves like or have properties like that of water. Oxygen in its normal form at standard temperature and pressure exists in a molecular form (of two atoms) as a tasteless, odorless, pale-blue gas, whereas a single atom of oxygen (singlet oxygen) is a highly reactive element and interacts to form compounds with almost anything. This chemical reaction is referred to as oxidation that also constantly occurs inside our bodies and has the potential to cause cellular (oxidative) damage. Our body's defensive (anti-oxidative) mechanisms are capable of preventing most of such potential damage.

Hydrogen, on the other hand is the lightest of all natural elements. However, as a result of covalent bonding between two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen (2:1) a completely different new entity, called water is produced.

Water is a new physical state, with new set of properties as well as a temperament, i.e. cold and moist, that has no resemblance whatsoever to its initial individual constituents. Combination of any other two natural elements in the same ratio or combining hydrogen and oxygen in any other ratio does not produce water or any other substance with the qualities of water.¹³

The Temperament of Our Organs¹⁴

Our Hot Tempered Organs

There are simple members of the body such as flesh, bones, and nerves. Compound members include the hands and face. These organs are the instruments whereby the passions and actions of the soul are achieved as they act as what Avicenna calls: the servants of the soul.

The breath of life (*nafas*) and heart are hottest in the body. Next is blood which, although produced in the liver, due to its contact with the heart, is

hotter than the liver. The next is the liver which is really a mass of almost solidified blood. After this is the flesh which is colder than the liver due to the cold neural tissue in it. The next is the muscle which due to its cold ligaments and tendons is not as hot as the flesh. After this comes the spleen which, due to its high content of the residue from broken up blood, is not as hot. The kidneys are less hot because they have only a little blood. Then there are the breasts, testicles and muscular coats of the arteries which, in spite of being neural energy in origin, are warm as they contain hot blood and other vital fluids. The next in order are the veins, which are slightly warmer because of blood in them. Last is skin of the palm, which is evenly balanced.

Our Cold Tempered Organs

The coldest thing in the body is phlegm. Then in order of coldness are hair, bones, cartilage, ligaments, serous membranes, nerves, spinal cord, brain, solid and liquid fats, and lastly the skin.

Our Moist Tempered Organs

Phlegm is the most moist. Next in order are blood, solid and liquid fats, brain, spinal cord, breast, testicles, lungs, liver, spleen, kidneys, muscles and the skin. It should be noted that the lungs are not really so moist in structure and temperament as is implied here. The primary temperament of an organ is always similar to that of its nutriment, while its secondary temperament is determined by its excrement. The lungs are nourished by the hot blood which contains an appreciable quantity of the bilious humour. If the lungs are moist it is because of the vapors from below and the inflammation secretions from above. The liver is more moist than the lungs due to the intrinsic moisture while lungs appear to be moist because of the extrinsic moisture. As they are constantly soaked in the extrinsic moisture or secretions, this makes them even structurally moist in the end. Similar is the case with phlegm and blood. The moisture in the phlegm is of a kind which merely moistens the tissues, while the moisture in the blood is of such a type that it is integrated into the very structure of the organs. Although normally there is more moisture in the phlegm than in the blood, in the maturation of phlegm into blood, it becomes dispersed because normal phlegm is nothing but imperfectly digested blood.

Our Dry Tempered Organs

Hair is the driest of the tissues. It is, as it were, solid residue from the evaporation of moisture from the ethereal element. Next in order are the bones, which due to dryness, are the hardest of organs. Bones are however, a little more moist than hair, because they are formed from blood and are constantly absorbing moisture from attached muscles so that its fume is dry and it dries up the humours naturally located in bones. This is the reason why they are a source of nutrition for many animals. Next in order of dry-

ness are cartilage, ligaments, tendons, membranes, arteries, veins, motor nerves, heart, sensory nerves and the skin. Motor nerves are colder and drier at the same time and are therefore in equipoise. The sensory nerves are colder but not drier in proportion and are probably very nearly in equipoise since their coldness is not very far distant from that of the motor nerves.

The Temperament of Natural Healers¹⁵

Hot Tempered Natural Healers

Absorbing (assimilative)	Itch-producing (pruritic)
Caustic	Opening (deobstruent)
Cauterizing	Oxidating (coctive)
Cleansing (detergent)	Relaxing
Corrosive	Roughening
Decay-producing (putrefactive)	Skin-peeling (peeler)
Digestive	Skin-redness producing
Diluting (rarefying/attenuant)	
Stone-dissolving (lithontriptic)	
Dissolving (solvent)	Ulcer-producing (ulcerative)
Erosive	Warming
Gas-relieving (carminative)	Irritating

Cold Tempered Natural Healers

Cooling	Sleep-producing
Immature	Thickening (inspissant)
Repellent	Tonic

Moist Tempered Natural Healers

Gas-producing (flatulent)	Smoothing
Lubricant	Washing (abluent)
Moistening	Wound polluting

Dry Tempered Natural Healers

Adhesive (agglutinant)	Flesh-producing
Astringent	Healing
Constricting	Obstruction producing
Drying (desiccant)	Scar producing (cicatrizing)

Useful or Harmful Tempered Natural Healers

Antidote	Perspiration producing (diaphoretic)
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5. Our Three Major Sources of Energy

When God breathed His spirit within us, it enlivens or animates our soul and its substantial motion, motion being the life force, energy or impulse of life. This motion, then, moves energy to our physical heart that is served by the arteries known as vital energy; to our brain by the nerves and neural energy; and our liver and reproductive organs by the veins and natural energy.

Our Physical Heart and Our Vital Energy

Our physical heart is the source or starting point of the vital energy of our body.

Our breath of life is initially extracted from the air we breathe by the lungs, which then send this raw breath of life to the heart. There, it is combusted and infused into the blood through our arteries causing them to dilate, assuming a very potent and concentrated form. This is the vital energy which is the basic, primal form of the breath of life in the organism. The vital force is the breath of the vital faculty, where its main functions are to power the circulation of blood and cellular metabolism. This vital force is then changed into other forms of breath by the principal organs of the other faculties.¹

In terms of our physical self and our four major organs and the properties of the organs themselves in terms of elemental qualities and temperament do not involve the substantial motion of our soul which moves the energies, powers or faculties (*quwwat*) once our soul is animated by God's Spirit. Here we learn more about how substantial motion affects our energies.

The heart is the seat of life, of heat, of pulse and of nature in its mode of operation. It is the organ which lives first and dies last. The vital power in our heart activates the function of circulating our blood and metabolizing the smallest living organisms or cells.

Vital energy has six functions, four of which concern us here: (1) It is a product of the energy from the breath of life. (2) It first undergoes combustion in the heart along with the energy from the breath of life. There it takes on its form as vital energy. This vital energy initiates the mineral soul as the "holding together" of the parts. Vital energy is the basic body heat emitted by all the organs and tissues as a result of the metabolizing of the smallest living organisms or the cells. (3) It is carried with the energy of the breath of life by the blood to all organs and tissues in order to activate the metabolism of the cells. (4) In the generative or reproductive power, vital energy brings new life.²

Our innate motion, the original energy that gave us life, regulates our vital energy:

The vital energy is centered around the heart and lungs and includes our respiratory, circulatory and immune systems. Besides giving life to us and empowering our cellular metabolism, the vital power also activates and coordinates our re-

sponses as a whole to our environment. The vital power, then, acts as a central nexus for our entire self.

The subject of vital energy is ... closely linked with "vitality" (popular sense of the word like i.e., "enfeebled vitality," "has very little vitality"; "full of vim"). The close relation to breath is expressed by saying that as the breath wanes (*nasul* phase), the vital energy lessens; as the vital energy is restored in the course of nutritive processes, so the breath "waxes" (*uruj* phase). The rate of waxing and waning of the vital energy varies with the individual and shows a relation with the similar phases of activity of the breath.³

Our Brain and Our Neural Energy

When the vital energy reaches the brain from the heart, it activates the neural energy of our nerves. Our neural energy is the closest to our human soul in its nature and activates the qualities of intelligence, awareness and consciousness. Neural energy, the coldest in temperament, has a more subtle heat and is the source for sensation, perception, cognition (thought, reason, imagination) and motivation. The power of motivation comprises, on the one hand, the function that responds to stimuli by inciting movement with the function of desiring—which may be positive or negative, that is, attraction to or avoidance of something.⁴

Our Liver and Our Natural Energy

Our liver is the seat of our natural power or energy that energizes our nutritive faculties and our generative organs for propagation of the human race.

The natural energy differentiates the humours as it infuses into the four humours, animating their functions. The humours move by the natural energy through our veins carrying sustenance to our body.

The natural energy, through innate motion, regulates the functions of the preservation of the species (*quwwat shahwaniyyah*) and the generative or reproductive power (*quwwat al-muwallida*) and that of the preservation of the individual (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*), the function of providing nutrition and growth.

6. Our Generative Organs

The Covenant with Our Generative Organs

As we have learned, our body as an embryo is formed from the existence of the natural principles of fire, air, water and earth and their qualities of hot, cold, moist and dry. Once these elemental qualities reach the right proportion in our potential male or female generative organs and conception takes place, they form the congealed blood clot (*alaq*, Q96:2) of the humours: blood, yellow bile, phlegm and black bile. Fed by what the embryo receives from the nurturing of the mother's blood in the womb, the humours form our temperament (*mizaj*): sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic or pensive.

The fact that we are part of the human species comes from the nature of

our generative organs. When God breathed His spirit into Adam (the first human being) immediately afterwards¹ He gathered the generative organs (*zuhurihim*) of all of the children of Adam, male and female, and formed a Covenant with them whereby, as potential human forms, they bore witness to God as their Lord.

Mention when your Lord took from the Children of Adam—from their generative organs (zuhurihim)—their offspring and called to them to witness of themselves—Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea! We bear witness— so that you say not on the day of resurrection: Truly, we had been ones who were heedless of this. (Q7:172)

Innate Heat from the Male Seminal Fluid/

Radical Moisture from the Female

Innate Heat from the Male Seminal Fluid

Innate Heat (*hararat al-gharizat*) is actualized from the male seminal fluid (*nutfah*):

... from seminal fluid (nutfah) when it is emitted.... (Q53:46)²

Was he not a sperm-drop to be emitted in seminal fluid (nutfah)? (Q75:37)

He created him from seminal fluid then, ordained that he be. (Q80:19)

God created you from earth dust: Again, from seminal fluid.

Consider not the human being that We created him from seminal fluid (nutfah)? That is when he is a clear adversary. (Q36:77)

He it is Who created you from earth dust, again, from seminal fluid (nutfah), again, from a clot ('alaq, humours). Again, He brings you out as infant children. Again, you come of age and are fully grown. Again, you be an old man. Of you is he whom death calls to itself before, and that you reach a term, that which is determined so that perhaps you will be reasonable. (Q40:67)

His companion said to him while he converses with him: Were you ungrateful to Him Who created you out of earth dust, again, out of seminal fluid (nutfah) and, again, shaped you into a man? (Q18:37)

Truly, We made the human being of a mingling of seminal fluid (nutfah) that We may test him. So We made him hearing, seeing. (Q76:2)

Considered you what you spill of human seed? Is it you who create it or are We the ones who create? (Q56:58)

The male seminal fluid gives the innate heat to our body. By its means, our breath expels it, disperses it, and oxidizes its material basis. Innate heat also protects the radical moistures from abnormal heat. If the innate heat is strong, it will enable nature to mediate its action on moistures by maturation, digestion, and preservation of health. Therefore, the moistures act in the proper functions and do not follow the influence of abnormal heat, thus producing no decay or putrefaction. However, if the innate heat is weak, nature cannot act on moistures due to the weakness of the instrument between it and the moistures. Thus, the moistures are taken over by abnormal activity that produce putrefaction. Innate heat is an instrument for all faculties, whereas coldness is its antithesis, which is only indirectly beneficial.³

Radical Moisture from the Female

And even if lights not on it a heavy downpour, then a dew (tall). (Q2:265)

Radical Moisture, that which permeates the tissues like a dew and is capable of being transformed into nutriment if it becomes necessary, is actualized in a human embryo through the female menstrual blood and her seminal fluid. It works with our long-term functioning and nutrition. It is the water element in the embryo and the fluid, which is present in the tissues as "dew drops". It is capable of being utilized as a nutriment in times of dire necessity. It also moistens the organs which have been dried up by excessive activity. Therefore, it nourishes an organism on a deep and fundamental level. It guides the growth, development and maturation of the organism over the long term giving nutritive finish, polish, completion and integrity to the organs and tissues. It is the hormonal essence of the organism. Its quality is responsible for our basic mental and spiritual traits as the anchor that gives the functions of the other vital principles stability, focus, grounding and persistence. It is part of what forms the genetic code that is passed on from mother to offspring. It determines the overall quality, character and longevity of our life. We can replenish it in our lifetime but only in a partial and imperfect way.⁴

God created every moving creature from water. (Q24:45)

It is He Who created a mortal from water and made for him kindred by blood and kin by marriage. (Q25:54)

The Interaction of Innate Heat and Radical Moisture

It has been said that life is sustained by heat, and grows because of moisture. The human embryo develops from two things: the male seminal fluid (innate heat), and the female seminal discharge (radical moisture) and menstrual blood, which provides the matter. Both of these are fluid and moist, but differ in that there is more water and earth substances in the female blood and female seminal fluid,

whereas air and fire are predominant in the male seminal fluid. It is essential that at the outset of the congelation of the two components there should be moisture, even though earth and fire are found in the product. The element of earth provides the firmness and rigidity; the element of fire provides the maturative power. These give the clot of congealed blood ('*alaq*, humour) a certain firmness.⁵

Radical Moisture and the Humours

Radical Moisture nourishes our self on a deep level by giving nutritive energy to the humours, particularly the sanguine and phlegmatic humours which are hot and moist and cold and moist.

The Reproductive Life Cycle

A tree grows to maturity from a little seedling or sapling. When it has reached a certain level of maturity, it begins to flower and produce fruit. So it is with the human being. The action of the innate heat of metabolism working upon the radical moisture as we grow to maturity will eventually produce an unfoldment or flowering of our reproductive potential. The point at which this flowering happens is called puberty, which begins the reproductive phase of the human life cycle.

The radical moisture inherent in us that flowers at puberty was mostly inherited from our mother at the moment of conception. Each parent contributed an equal portion of their reproductive seed, generated from their own inherent innate heat and radical moisture, to form the new life.

For the male, the onset of puberty happens with the first ejaculation, or seminal emission. With the female, it happens with menarche, or the onset of her first monthly menstrual period. Other signs presage and announce the onset of puberty as well. These concern the development of secondary sexual characteristics in both sexes. These secondary sexual characteristics also become a potent source of attraction between the sexes.

The reproductive phase of the life cycle continues as long as we have a sufficient abundance of the innate heat and radical moisture to pass on to our offspring. But, the inherent supply of innate heat and radical moisture eventually dwindles to the point where there is not enough to spare. When this happens, the female undergoes menopause, and the male's semen becomes sterile and unable to conceive.

Since the fertility and reproductive capacity of both sexes is intimately tied to the quality and quantity of the radical moisture, following the principles of moderation and balance, sensible living in one's sexual relations helps conserve and preserve the innate heat and radical moisture. Since the male loses most of his radical moisture in ejaculation, sexual overindulgence and profligacy are most harmful and depleting for the male. Learning to control or withhold ejaculation during sexual relations helps preserve youthful vitality and virility and extends the lifespan. Since females lose most of their innate heat and radical moisture during gestation and childbirth, optimal nutrition during pregnancy and nursing, as well as family planning, are important.

There is considerable individual variation constitutionally regarding native endowment of radical moisture in both sexes. The greater the endowment, the greater the sexual and reproductive capacity, and the greater the overall level of

fertility. The lesser the endowment, the more diminished and feeble this capacity will be. So, there are no hard and fast rules as to exactly what, or how much, constitutes sensible sexual relations and what constitutes overindulgence. Each man or woman must listen to his or her own body and its needs.⁶

The Reproductive Process

Semen acts like a catalyst or enzyme that interacts with menstrual blood to form the nascent features of the developing embryo. Over the course of the gestational period, the female saves the blood she would have excreted in her monthly periods and uses it to feed the rapidly growing foetus.

Moisture was seen to provide the embryo/foetus with the potential and capacity for growth. The innate heat sparked into the new life at conception activates this moisture and growth potential, and the more moisture there is to be consumed, the quicker the growth.

The growing foetus inside the womb does not yet have his/her own immune system, since their needs are totally supplied through the mother's blood. Only when the newborn takes his/her first breath at birth do they start to generate the animal soul, and hence their own independent selfhood.⁷

The Reproductive or Generative Power

The generative power or drive is twofold: Reproductive—this serves the species and is responsible for the formation of male and female seminal fluids; and the formative power which separates from one another the various powers in the seminal fluids and rearranges them in such a way that each organ and tissue receives the temperament appropriate to it. That is, to the nerve, its distinctive temperament and to the bone, its distinctive temperament. This is called the primary transformative power.

The reproductive power gives the matter the perfection of the thing. It separates from the parent body a part in which a power derived from its origin inheres and which, when the matter and the place which are prepared to receive its activity are present, performs its functions. It will be evident from the foregoing that all vegetable, animal, and human functions are due to powers over and above bodily functions, and even over and above the nature of the mixture itself.⁸

It is He Who made you numerous on the earth.... (Q23:78-23:79)

By the first of these operations, the body receives actual existence. The reproductive power takes from the body in which it resides a part which is potentially similar to it and acts upon it with the help of other similar bodies, generating and mixing them so as to render that part actually similar to the body—to which it had been only potentially similar.⁹

Sexuality and Reproduction

The generative function rules the male and female reproductive systems and governs sexual relations and procreation. Unlike the three primary faculties (vital,

natural and neural), the generative faculty is not absolutely necessary on a day-to-day basis, but comes into play only during sexual relations, procreation, and the gestational phase of the life cycle. Therefore, it is the most specialized of all the faculties.¹⁰

The Gonads

The gonads are the principal organs of the generative faculty. The male gonads are the testes, and the female gonads are the ovaries. In both sexes, the gonads produce the embryonic seed. In the male, the testes produce sperm and in the female, the ovaries produce the ovum, or egg that carries God's spirit from the time of the Covenant (Q7:172). When the procreative seed of both sexes unite during the sexual act, there is conception.

The procreative seed of both sexes is made from the radical moisture, which is drawn from the endocrine glands, which are rich in radical moisture, or hormonal essence. The gonads are themselves endocrine glands, and are also the center or focal point of the generative center.

Ultimately, all the other organs and vessels of the generative faculty, in both the male and female reproductive systems, exist to guide the procreative seed of both sexes to the point of union or conception, which is the female uterus, or womb. All the subsidiary organs and vessels of the male reproductive system serve to channel and condition the sperm and spermatic fluid into the female.¹¹

The Uterus or Womb

A woman is distinguished from a male because she has a womb.

The uterus' product is the embryo, which grows into the foetus, and finally into the newborn. It is the organ of conception, gestation and childbirth, which are the dominion and responsibility of the female.

Archetypally, the womb is the essence of the female principle: the sacred space, vessel, or chalice; human life's first home, a protective cocoon in which the foetus grows until it is ready to be released out into the world at birth. It is also the special psychic function of the woman to draw souls into embodiment during gestation, and to remain very nurturing and receptive to the child's needs, particularly during infancy and early childhood.¹²

7. The Inevitability of Death

It is decreed to end one day as everything on earth dies: A sign for them is the dead body of the earth. (Q36:33)

Every soul will be one that experiences death. (Q21:35)

Death means a disintegration of the body, but for the immaterial and immortal human soul, it implies an entry into eternal life and a freedom from the bondages of matter and potentiality.

Death is like birth. So, after this-worldly being, when our human soul is in the *barzakh* (that is, the isthmus or bridge between the physical and spiritual worlds—body and spirit) it is related to the greater resurrection (of the day of judgment) just as coming forth from the tightness of the loins into the space of the womb is related to birth, which is coming forth from the womb's tightness into the space of this world. The days of pregnancy are like the time in the grave and the *barzakh*. The time and location of the afterworld are related to the time and location of this world just as these are related to the time of pregnancy and the location of the womb. So gauge the afterworld by the first world, for your creation and your uprising are as but one soul. (Q31:28)¹

Again, truly, after that, you will die. (Q23:15)

A sign for them is the dead body of the earth. (Q36:33)

Every soul will be one that experiences death. (Q21:35)

Death is natural for the physical body and it occurs when our soul separates from our body, a disposition that is innate in order for our soul to make the return to where it came from.

When our body—which is our earth, specific to each of us—is destroyed through death, then:

... the earth will be shaken with a mighty shaking ... (Q99:1)

When your bones (which are the mountains of your earth) decay, then (the earth and the mountains will have been lifted up) and will be grounded to powder in one grinding. (Q69:14)

so your mountains will be scattered like ashes (Q20:105);

When your consciousness (which is the sun of your world) is darkened at the (soul's) extraction, then your sun will have been folded up (Q81:1);

- when your senses are nullified, then your stars will have become opaque (Q81:2);

- when your brain is split apart, then your heaven will have been split apart (Q55:37);

- when your eyes burst from the terror of death, then your seas will have been made to burst open (Q82:3);

- when your potencies are dispersed and your troops are scattered, then your wild animals will have been mustered (Q81:5);

- and when your spirit and your potencies depart from the body, then your earth will have been stretched, and it will cast forth what is within it and become empty. (Q84:3-4)

Our soul, then, is destined to be raised again on the day of resurrection:

Again, truly, you will be raised up on the day of resurrection. (Q23:16)

The dryness that leads to the inevitability of death results from moistures first becoming malignant and then their nature and quality becoming unsuitable for our bodies. Then, ultimately, they are dispersed as a result of putrefaction. Putrefaction first corrupts the moistures and then disperses them, and leaves behind only a dry and ashy thing.

This drying process going on in our bodies is essential and unavoidable because in the early stages of development we are excessively moist and it is necessary that the innate heat of our bodies should overcome the moistures. Otherwise it would itself be smothered by them. Therefore, the innate heat continues to act upon the radical moisture, steadily drying it. At first this drying effect is moderate. Then our body acquires the moderate limit of dryness. But the heat remains constant. Therefore, the dryness is now greater than before because the radical moisture is less and so it is more yielding to dryness. Consequently, dryness goes beyond the moderate limit and goes on increasing until the whole of the moisture of the body is consumed. Thus, the innate heat, by consuming its matter (formed with radical moisture), becomes indirectly the cause of its own extinction. As the dryness increases, the innate heat goes on increasing and so does its ability to replenish the lost radical moisture.

Therefore we see that these two sources of destruction of the living product of conception are different from those arising from other causes—such as, freezing cold, torrid heat, grave forms of loss of continuity, various maladies. But it is in regard to the first two named sources of destruction that we find the more important factors relative to the question of the preservation of health. Each of them takes its origin from extrinsic and intrinsic agents. The extrinsic agents are for example, the atmosphere, which is a solvent and putrefacient. The intrinsic agents are, for example, the innate heat, which is the agent within us through which radical moisture is dispersed: the extraneous heat generated within us from the aliments, and through other agents which cause putrefactive changes in the natural moistures. All these agents mutually aid one another in rendering the body dry. Yet it is true that our perfection and soundness and the power to perform our various actions depend on a degree of dryness of the blood. But the degree of dryness becomes relatively greater and greater until we die. Therefore, this dryness is inevitable.

The dryness (of the body) is increased in two ways: by lessening of the power of receiving matter; by lessening of the radical moisture resulting from dispersal of the innate heat. The heat becomes more feeble because dryness predominates in the substance of the members and because the radical moisture becomes relatively less. The radical moisture is to the innate heat as the oil of a lamp is to the flame. For there are two forms of moisture in the flame: the flame, which holds its

own, and oil, which is used up. So, in a corresponding manner, the innate heat holds its own in respect of the radical moisture, but is used up hand-in-hand with the increase of extraneous heat, due, for example, to defective digestion, which is comparable with the aqueous moisture of the flame and the result is natural death.

The reason why the human body does not live any longer than it does lies in the fact that the initial radical moisture holds out against being dispersed both by the alien heat and by the heat in the body itself (both that which is innate heat and that derived from bodily movement). And this resistance is maintained as long as the one is weaker than the other and as long as something is provided to replace that which has been thus dispersed, to wit, from the aliment. Furthermore, as we have already stated, the power or drive which operates upon the aliment in order to render it useful in this way only does so up to the end of life.

Again it should be remembered that the duration of life does not depend upon the ability of primary radical moisture to resist permanently the dispersive effect of heat of all types, i.e. the extrinsic heat, the innate heat of the body and the heat generated by bodily movement. It is because the radical moisture is weaker in resisting these effects. The radical moisture continues to last because something is provided to replace that which has been thus dispersed—and that is food.

Moreover, every person has his own term of life, during which the drying process is inevitable based on his temperament and the degree of innate heat and of radical moisture that can be withstood.²

8. The Six Nurture-Giving Essentials¹

Now we turn to some essentials that our environment and nurturing system should provide.

The Necessity for Clean Air

Air is an elementary constituent of our physical body and its innate heat. Through its constant supply, the innate heat is kept actively conditioned. It is the agent which modifies the breath, not simply as element, but by virtue of its constructive and attempering nature. As long as the air is pure and has no substances admixed which would be contrary to the temperament of the breath, health will come and remain. Otherwise the contrary occurs. The air is liable to natural as well as non-natural changes and may even be changes beyond which is normal or natural. The natural changes are those of the seasons. At every season the air changes to a new temperament.

The Necessity for Exercise, Rest and Massage

The effect of exercise on the human body varies according to its degree—mild or severe, the amount of rest taken, and the movement of the associated humours. All forms of exercise, whether moderate or excessive, slow or vigorous, increase the innate heat. It makes little difference whether the exercise is vigorous or weak and associated with much rest or not, because it makes the body very hot; but even if exercise should entail a loss of innate heat, it does so only to a small amount. The dissipation of heat is only gradual, whereas the amount of heat produced is greater than the loss. If

there be much of both exercise and repose, the effect is to cool the body because the natural heat is now greatly dispersed and consequently the body becomes dry. Rest always has a cooling effect because the invigorating, life-giving heat passes away and the innate heat is confined. It also has a choking and moistening effect because of the lack of dispersal of waste matters.

The diet for maintaining health consists essentially in the regulation of exercise, food and sleep. We define exercise as voluntary movement entailing deep and hurried respiration. Once we direct the attention towards regulating exercise to amount and time, we shall find there is no need for such natural healers as are ordinarily required for remedying diseases dependent on abnormal matters, or diseases of temperament. This is true provided the rest of the diet is appropriate and proper.

The value of exercise includes the following: it hardens the organs and renders them fit for their functions; it results in a better absorption of food, aids assimilation, and, by increasing the innate heat, improves nutrition; it clears the pores of the skin; it removes effete substances through the lungs; it strengthens the physique. Vigorous exercise invigorates the muscular and neural system.

In regard to massages, there are several types: hard massage stretches and contracts and braces the body; soft massage has a relaxing effect; repeated massage diminishes the fat of the body; moderately hard massage; rough massage is done with rough towels. It draws the blood rapidly to the surface; and gentle massage is done with the palm or with soft towels. It draws the blood together and retains it in one member. The object of friction is to render thin persons heavier, and heavy persons thinner; to brace flabby persons, and to modify those who are not pliable enough (giving tone to the body).

The Necessity for Sleep and Wakefulness

Sleep strengthens the natural energies such as digestion of food and elaboration of the digestive products into good blood by enclosing the innate heat within the body and relaxing the powers of sensation which are asleep. It does so because it makes the channels of the vital energy moist and relaxed.

Wakefulness has quite the opposite effect. When the wakefulness is unduly prolonged, it produces disturbance of the brain such as dryness, weakness and impairment of the intellectual faculties or drives. Wakefulness is, however, the contrary way in all these respects. Excessive wakefulness, by oxidizing the humours, produces hot types of diseases. Excess of sleep, on the other, hand dulls the neural and mental faculty or drives and makes the head heavy. Due to lack of dispersion, cold type of diseases also follow. Wakefulness increases the desire for food and stimulates the appetite by dispersing the wastes. It, however, impairs the digestion by dissipating the natural energies.

A restless and disturbed sleep or insomnia, being in a state between wakefulness and sleep, is bad for all the bodily states. Undue insomnia entails an imprisonment of the innate heat and makes the body become cold exteriorly.

The Necessity for Retention/ Evacuation Retention (Repletion)

The following are the causes of retention of waste matters: weak expulsive drive; and unduly strong retentive drive. The latter occurs in: weakness of the digestive power so that aliments remain too long in the stomach, the natural retentive drive holding them back until they are sufficiently digested; narrowness of the channels; their obstruction; and coarseness or viscosity of the waste matter.

Evacuation (Depletion)

The possible effects of evacuation of this type are that the temperament becomes cold because the matter is lost which would otherwise increase that which maintains the innate heat; the temperament becomes hot if the evacuated material is cold in temperament like serous humor or mucus; the temperament becomes equable to blood if there is undue accumulation of the heating bilious humor so that the heat becomes superabundant; or the temperament becomes dry (this is always intrinsic in origin).

When retention and evacuation are equally matched, and occur at the proper times, they are beneficial, and maintain health.

Psychological-Emotional Factors

Cognitive changes and the associated "motions" of the breath or emotions are either interior or exterior, sudden or gradual. Where there is coldness inwardly it moves outward with the breath. Therefore, if the breath were suddenly dispersed, the coldness becomes excessive and both exterior and interior cooling occur which may be followed by syncope or even death. When there is coldness exteriorly, and heat interiorly, the coldness moves inward with the breath.

The outward movement of the innate heat or expansion of the breath may be sudden and forcible, as in anger, or gradual as in delight and joy. Similarly, the inward movement or contraction may be sudden, as in acute fear and terror or gradual as in sorrow or depression. When the movement is sudden, there is a severe shrinkage or dispersal of the innate heat, but when it is slow or gradual, there is only a mild contraction or expansion of the innate heat.

If two emotions occur simultaneously, the breath may move in two directions—contraction within itself, and expansion—at once. This happens when there is fear, dread, and anxiety about the future or when anger and gloom occur simultaneously. The two opposite movements may produce a sense

of shame, because there is first the confinement of the breath in the interior parts, and after that the power of reason returns, and resolution appears, allowing the contracted breath to expand again, and bring heat to the surface.

Dietetics

The Effects of the Temperaments of Food and Drink

As the four basic elemental qualities are not static, but rather always changing, we can work with them. Here are a few simple, basic rules for working with them: *Like increases like*. If we wish to increase a certain quality in our body, we use natural healers and treatments that have that the necessary temperament. *Opposites balance*: If we wish to bring an excessive or aggravated quality back into balance, we use natural healers and treatments that have its opposite yet complementary quality. *Heat produces dryness*: Moderate amounts of heat, applied over a short period of time will only increase heat and dissipate excessive cold. Intense levels of heat applied over a long period of time will also evaporate moisture, producing dryness. *Cold condenses moisture*. Moderate amounts of cold applied over a short period of time will only cool down the body and disperse excessive heat. Intense cold applied over a long period of time will also condense moisture, producing wetness.

Drinking Water

Water is the only one of the elements which has the special property of entering into the composition of food and drink—not that it is itself nutriment (although it will by itself prolong life for some time), but rather that it enables the chyme to penetrate into the human body and permeate and purify its substance. Water is really a "substance" which helps to make chyme fluid and attenuated so that it can flow easily into the blood-vessels and out of the excretory channels. Nutrition cannot be effective without it. It is the handmaid of nutrition.

Endnotes to Part 1: Our Soul: Module 1: Our Soul-Body

1 Hossein Kohandel, "The Mind and Body in Mulla Sadra's Philosophy: A Psychological Relationship." Online.

2 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Hikmat al-arshiya (The Wisdom of the Throne)*. Online. He adds: This locality of soul is the same as that isthmus (*barzakh*) between the material and spiritual realms ... the Quranic mention of God's placing a *barzakh* between the two seas of corporeal and spiritual things; its being the last of the corporeal realities is a sign of its being the first of the spiritual ones. If you consider its substance in this world, you will find it the principle of all the bodily powers, employing all the animal and vegetal forms in its service. But if you consider its substance in the world of the Intellect, you will find that at the beginning of its innate nature (*fitra*) it is pure potential without any form in that world but it has the capability of moving from potency to actuality with regard to the Intellect and the intelligible. Its relation to the form of that world (of the Intellect) is that of the seed to its fruit, or of the embryo to the animal: just as the embryo is in actuality an embryo, and an animal only potentially, so (at first) the soul is in actuality a mere mortal man, but potentially (realized Intellect. It is to this that His saying—may He be exalted!—alludes.

4 Ibn Sina (1959, 10-11); Shahram Pāzoukī (2007, ALSW, vol. 5: 163-171) quoted by Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*. Routledge. Forthcoming.

5 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, Iksir al-'arifin (*Elixir of the Gnostics*). Online.

6 Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*. Routledge. Forthcoming.

7 Mohamad Fanaei Eshkevari, "Mulla Sadra's Theory of Substantial Motion." Online.

8 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Hikmat al-'arshiya (Wisdom of the Throne)*, pp. 120-122.

9 Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, *Taliqat 'ala hikmat al-ishraq*, Mulla Sadra's commentary on the margins of Suhrawardi's *Kitab hikmat al-ishraq*, 7 p. 479. Quoted by Maria Dakake, "The Origin of Man in Pre-Eternity and His Origination in Time." Online.

Endnotes to Quranic Signs Describe the Creation of Our Physical Body

1 Definition of clot ('*alaq* 96:2): A clot is a thick mass of coagulated liquid, especially blood, or of material stuck together or the seminal fluid, after its appearance, when it becomes thick, clotted; blood after which it passes to another stage becoming flesh. Embryonic lump; clot: a clinging substance or drop of fluid; a clot contains the humours or bodily fluids. Edward Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*.

2 Definition of *lahm*: Flesh. Various scholars, writers and religious figures throughout Islamic history made reference to the humoral theory, including: Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (765-818) *al-Risalah al-Dhahabiah* (The Golden Treatise) who said: According to the treatise, one's health is determined by four humors of blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm, the suitable proportion of which maintains the health. The liver plays an important role in producing and maintaining the required proportions in the body. Wikipedia.

The famous theologian, al-Ghazzali tells the story of a physician who had been treating his depression as this system: resembled a holistic approach to medicine as the link between mental and physical processes were emphasized by this framework. *Bynum*, edited by W.F.; Porter, Roy (1997). *Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine* (1st pbk. ed. ed.). London: Routledge.

... the physicians lost hope of treating me and said: This is something which has settled in his heart and crept from it into his humors; there is no way to treat it unless his heart be eased of the anxiety which has visited it. al-Ghazzali, *On the Deliverance from Error*, #88, p. 20.

The best known integrator of the humoral theory was Avicenna whose famous five volume work, *The Canon of Medicine*, became the only medical textbook in Europe for 600 years. The English translation of the complete five volumes is now available through

3 Definition of *mudghah* (23:14): Tissue. Tissue refers to matter, material, substance; any of the distinct types of material of which animals or plants are made consisting of specialized cells and their products. Edward Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*.
<http://www.tyndalearchive.com/tabs/lane/>

Endnotes to Elements and Elemental Qualities

1 It is important to note that the four classical principles are not found in their pure state in earth.

2 Matter is anything that has mass and volume and is made up of atoms, which are the smallest particles of matter. Bonding occurs among atoms to make larger molecules. Mass is how much matter is in an object whereas volume is how much space the object takes up. How atoms are arranged in an object determines whether it is a solid, liquid, gas, or plasma.

In a solid, the atoms are packed closely together in an ordered pattern and cannot move, giving a solid a definite volume and shape. Examples of solids include rocks, wood, metal, and ice.

In a liquid, the atoms are close together but can move around each other. This allows a liquid to take the shape of whatever container it is placed in. Examples of liquids include room temperature water, room temperature mercury, and hot lava (molten rock).

In a gas, there is more space between atoms. The atoms can move so freely that if the gas is not trapped in a container, the atoms will diffuse and spread throughout the atmosphere. Examples of gases are oxygen and nitrogen (in the air we breathe), helium, and steam (water vapor).

In a plasma, the atoms are spaced similarly to gas except there is so much energy in a plasma, the atoms actually split into smaller pieces. Plasmas are able to carry an electrical current and generate magnetic fields. Examples of plasmas include lightning, solar wind, the sun, fluorescent lights, and neon signs. Wikipedia.

3 See www.unani.com/humours.htm.

4 Definition of (salsal) earth-mud (clay): Masculine noun. Appears 4 times in the Quran: (Q15:26), (Q15:28) (Q15:33) and (Q55:14).

5 Definition of (*hama*) soft: Masculine noun. Appears 3 times in the Quran: (Q15:26), (Q15:28) and (Q15:33) Definition of (*masnun*): Appears 3 times in the Quran: (Q15:26), (Q15:28) and (Q15:33). Verb I passive participle, that which is wet earth.

6 Definition of (*jann*): Appears 17 times in the Quran: Verb I perfect (*janna*) meaning "to outspread"; Verb I active participle (*jann*), one(s) who is a spirit; Verb I passive participle (*majnun*), one who is possessed.

7 Definition of (*nafakha*): To blow. Appears 19 times in the Quran: Verb I perfect "to blow", Verb I imperfect; Verb I perfect passive; Verb I imperfect passive.

8 Definition of (*ruh*): Spirit. Masculine noun. Appears 21 times. Laleh Bakhtiar, *Concordance of the Sublime Quran*.

9 Regarding the elemental qualities known as hot and cold, hot does not refer to something heated, but rather something that by nature is warming such as spices. Hot means "warming" and cold means "cooling". However, the traditional terms of hot and cold are used throughout this textbook instead of their properties of "warming" and "cooling" which are implied.

Endnotes to Our Humours

1 As previously noted, Fåhræus (1921), a Swedish physician ... states that the four humours can be found in a test tube of blood clotting: suggested that the four humours were based upon the observation of blood clotting in a transparent container. When blood is drawn in a glass container and left undisturbed for about an hour, four different layers can

be seen. A dark clot forms at the bottom (the black bile). Above the clot is a layer of red blood cells (the blood). Above this is a whitish layer of white blood cells (the phlegm). The top layer is clear yellow serum (the yellow bile). See Hart GD (December (2001). "Descriptions of blood and blood disorders before the advent of laboratory studies". Br. J. Haematol. 115 (4): 719–28.doi:10.1046/j.1365-2141.2001.03130.x. PMID 11843802.

2 Definition of blood clot ('*alag* 96:2): A blood clot is a thick mass of coagulated liquid, especially blood, or of material stuck together or the seminal fluid, after its appearance, when it becomes thick, clotted; blood after which it passes to another stage becoming flesh. Embryonic lump; clot: a clinging substance or drop of fluid; a clot contains the humours or bodily fluids. Edward Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*.
<http://www.tyndalearchive.com/tabs/lane/>

3 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Shawahid al-rububiya*, Chapter 8.. Avicenna in *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, points out: The humours are exceedingly variable in quantity and quality. The sanguineous reigns from 3 am to 9 am; bilious from 9 am to 3 pm; serous from 3 pm to 9 pm and atrabilious from 9 pm to 3 am. The sanguineous humour increases in the spring. The heat of summer dissolves superfluities, wastes the humours and opens the pores. The breath escapes from the body with exhalations, moisture and vapors. The bilious humour is in ascendancy. Autumn breeds the serous humour. Winter thickens the humours, constrains the sinews and sends natural heat inward. The atrabilious humour increases and makes people sluggish. The active elemental qualities—cold and heat—form the humours. When heat is equable, the sanguineous humour forms; when heat is in excess, bilious humour forms; when in great excess so that oxidation occurs, atrabilious humour forms. When the cold is equable, serous humour forms; when cold is in excess so that congelation becomes dominant, atrabilious humour forms. Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, The Humours.

4 Shahid Akbar M.D. Ph.D., *Body Constitution, Temperament and Health: What about the Mind?* pp. 63-64. Trafford. Kindle Edition. He adds in regard to the process of the four humours in the body: The invention of the microscope has taken us away from the source and origin of the problems associated with disease. For example, most physicians would attribute an infection to one or more bacteria and will produce actual living specimens of those bacteria which they say caused such and such an infection. From the point of view of traditional Islamic medicine—Avicennian (as it is known in the West) or Unani (as it is known in the East) or Prophetic Medicine—the deviation from the normal state of the humor provided a suitable environment for the bacteria to grow to larger than normal populations. While admitting the existence of the bacteria, the traditional Hakim must look deeper to the cause of the imbalance in the humor and its characteristic temperaments. Thus, the mode of current medical practice that "attacks" the red- and white-cell-forming organs does not take into account the fact that blood itself is living and not simply a conglomerate of chemical components. Thus in traditional medicine, the dictum "health is a harmony of the humors" is the only valid point of view if one desires to cure the cause of the disease. Chemical destruction of the abnormal growth of microscopic life may result in a temporary decline or total eradication of the population of microorganisms, but if the imbalance of the humor is not corrected, the disease will recur or will arise in another place in the body. More importantly, the dramatic effects of the chemical drugs themselves on the humors result in new imbalances, as evidenced by the many so-called side effects of drugs.

5 The blood clot is also mentioned in the Bible, Leviticus 17:11 as the life of the flesh is in the blood.

6 See www.unani.com/humours.htm.

7 See http://pokedowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

8 See http://pokedowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

9 See http://pokedowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

10 See http://pokedowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

11 See http://pokedowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

12 See http://pokedowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

13 See http://pokedowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

Endnotes to Our Temperament

1 Definition of (*miza*): Temperament, constitution. Appears 3 times in the Quran. Masculine noun. [(M Z J *miza*): The aggregate natural constituents with which the body is composed; i.e. the four humours of the body; namely black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood. You say: He is of sound and of unsound constitution or temperament meaning the humours of the body. The word "temperament" comes from the Latin meaning "to mix". The Arabic word Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d. 873 CE) chose to translate the Greek word temperament was *khilt* (verbal noun), the root being *KHL T*. The root word appears six times in the Quran as forms of verbs I, III and VIII meaning "to mix," to "intermix," to "mingle" or as a masculine noun referring to "partners in business." *They mix (khilt) acts that are in accord with morality with others that are bad deeds.* (Q9:102) *And if you intermix with them, then they are your brothers. God knows the one who makes corruption from the one who makes things right.* (Q2:220). Laleh Bakhtiar, *Concordance of the Sublime Quran*.

2 Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1.

3 Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1.

4 Akbar M.D. Ph.D., Shahid. *Body Constitution, Temperament and Health: What about the Mind?* pp. 63-64. Trafford. Kindle Edition.

5 Akbar M.D. Ph.D., Shahid. *Body Constitution, Temperament and Health: What about the Mind?* pp. 63-64. Trafford. Kindle Edition.

6 Akbar M.D. Ph.D., Shahid. *Body Constitution, Temperament and Health: What about the Mind?* pp. 63-64. Trafford. Kindle Edition.

7 See

http://pokedowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

8 See

http://pokedowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

9 See

http://pokedowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

10 See

http://pokedowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

11 al-Ghazzali, *Ihya' ulum al-din*, III. 2. 1441; *Mizan al-'amal*, p. 71. The same definition of character is given by Miskawayh, *Refinement of Character*, p. 31; and by Avicenna, *Fi al-'ahd in tis' rasa'il fi al-hikmah wa al tabi'iyat*. Mohamed Ahmad Sherif, *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue*, p. 29.

12 Akbar M.D. Ph.D., Shahid. *Body Constitution, Temperament and Health: What about the Mind?* pp. 63-64. Trafford. Kindle Edition.

13 Akbar M.D. Ph.D., Shahid. *Body Constitution, Temperament and Health: What about the Mind?* pp. 63-64. Trafford. Kindle Edition.

14 Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1.

15 Avicenna, Author's Introduction to *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 2.

Endnotes to The Three Major Sources of Energy

1 See http://pokesdowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

2 See http://pokesdowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

3 See http://pokesdowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

4 See http://pokesdowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

Endnotes to Our Generative Organs

1 al-Tabari. For a detailed analysis see the module on Soul-Spirit/Intellect.

2 Definition of *nutfah*: Seminal fluid or sperma of a man and woman. Edward Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*.
<http://www.tyndalearchive.com/tabs/lane/>.

3 Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, adapted by Laleh Bakhtiar. The physiological function of the purported liquid (female ejaculation) is unknown. However, the Quranic word for seminal fluid refers to being relevant to both male and female. It is possible in the view of alternative medicine that the male seminal fluid provides the innate heat while the female seminal fluid provides the embryo with the radical moisture as scholars in the past have stated.

4 Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, adapted by Laleh Bakhtiar. Note: It resembles the physical properties of the Royal Jelly of the queen bee.

5 Marc S. Micozzi and Hakima Amri, *Avicenna's Medicine: A New Translation of the 11th-Century Canon with Practical Applications for Integrative Health Care*, p. 190.

6 Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*. The Bible employs the term "dew" in this sense in such verses as Song of Solomon 5:2 and Psalm 110:3, declaring, in the latter verse, for example, that the people should follow only a king who was virile enough to be full of the "dew" of youth. *Rosmarinus officinalis*, commonly known as rosemary, is a woody, perennial herb with fragrant, evergreen, needle-like leaves and white, pink, purple, or blue flowers, native to the Mediterranean region. It is a member of the mint family Lamiaceae, which includes many other herbs. The name "rosemary" derives from the Latin for "dew" (*ros*) and "sea" (*marinus*), or "dew of the sea". The plant is also sometimes called *anthos* meaning "flower". It was later named after the Virgin Mary: The Virgin Mary is said to have spread her blue cloak over a white-blossomed rosemary bush when she was resting, and the flowers turned blue. The shrub then became known as the "Rose (*ros*, dew) of Mary". What is the meaning and force of the passage in Isaiah 26:19, which reads: Your dew is as the dew of herbs? The full text reads: Your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, you that dwell in dust: for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Dewpoint: Temperature at which water vapor condenses. When the word Rosicrucians is broken down, *ros-i-crucis*, *ros* means dew in Greek and *crucis* means vessel like crucible or dew vessel which relates to Holy Grail symbolism as the true hidden significance of the rose-cross symbol used by the Rosicrucians. In the

process of male and female sexual intercourse, dew (ros in Latin) is considered to be a rain that fertilizes the earth or female seminal fluid that waters the embryo. ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee (Qld) Incorporated. 1988. Retrieved 10 November 2011.

The human being is created from water. Female semen gives radical moisture whereas male semen gives innate heat.

7 Marc S. Micozzi and Hakima Amri. *Avicenna's Medicine: A New Translation of the 11th-Century Canon with Practical Applications for Integrative Health Care*, p. 28.

8 Marc S. Micozzi and Hakima Amri. *Avicenna's Medicine: A New Translation of the 11th-Century Canon with Practical Applications for Integrative Health Care*, p. 28.

9 See

http://pokesdowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

10 See

<http://people.uvawise.edu/philosophy/phil205/Avicenna.html>

11 http://pokesdowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

12 http://pokesdowngames.wikia.com/wiki/The_Natural_Philosophy_of_Medicine accessed 4/26/2017.

Endnotes to the Inevitability of Death

1 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.

2 Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*. Notes by Gruner.

Endnote to The Six Nurture-Giving Essentials

1. Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1.



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Part 1: Our Soul

Module 2: Our Soul-Spirit/Intellect

Introduction: What is our soul-spirit/intellect?

As we have learned, our soul is born with our body—bodily in origin—and spiritual in subsistence—spiritual in subsistence because it actualizes our potential to think, reason or cogitate and returns to the spiritual world after death. It is motivated by substantial motion provided by the existence of nature. It gradually evolves our various functions from potential to actual until it reaches our human or rational soul or soul-spirit/intellect.

Upon reaching adulthood, when our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) has gradually actualized its potential for our human soul (*nafs al-insaniyyah*), our soul is a human body in one respect and a human soul in another, (soul-)body in its behavior, but (soul-)spirit/intellect in its process of cognition as the soul's development does not depend upon the body, but on its own nature.¹

Our human soul (*nafs al-insaniyyah*) is discussed in philosophy as our rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah*). It governs our cognitive system. Our cognitive system consists of our mind (*sadr*), consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*), conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*) and our reason or intellect (*'aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*) and our perceptive rational imagination as will be explained in the section on perception.

It is through substantial motion that our soul gradually evolves allowing us the potential to develop and complete or perfect our self by actualizing the highest form of what it means to be human. That is, not only knowing the names of things, but understanding their meaning as well. This comes from our struggle to actualize our human soul or rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah*) or ability to reason when we use our intellect (*'aql*).

Our human soul (*nafs al-insaniyyah*) may be defined as the ultimate internal principle by which we think, feel, and will which animates our body at the time of conception. It is because of our human soul that we are known as the microcosm, incorporating the potential of all existences in the macrocosm.

Our human soul has an aspect of continuance and an aspect of renewal, owing to its connection to the two extremes of soul-spirit/intellect and soul-body or physical matter. Our awareness of self can tell us that our present

self is not our previous self, nor is it the one that will follow. There are many Quranic signs/verses that make reference to the transformation in our human soul such as:

O human being! Truly, you are one who is laboring towards your Lord laboriously and you will be one who encounters Him. (Q84:6)

God created our human soul when we were nothing:

Will the human being not remember that We created him before when he was nothing? (Q19:67)

He created humanity from this single soul. He created a mate of the same kind and from the two produced men and women in large numbers.

O humanity! Be God-conscious of your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its spouse and from them both disseminated many men and women. (Q4:1)

The Quran speaks of our human soul flowing from a single human soul for a people who understand:

It is He Who caused you to grow from a single soul (nafs wahidat) ... for a people who understand. (Q6:98)

Your creation and your upraising are not but like that of a single (human) soul. (Q31:28)

All human souls in their original nature are one species:

Humanity had not been but one community ... (Q10:19)

You would assume them united, but their consciousness is diverse. (Q59:14)

... and of humanity and moving creatures and flocks, thus, they are likewise of hues, ones at variance. (Q35:28)

Once we reach adulthood, our human soul evolves to actualize the energies for cognition and intellection. While all of existence has the potential for sensation, perception and cognition, our human soul—soul-spirit/intellect in subsistence—contains the most intense potential to actualize these functions.

While we are free to choose to maintain the balanced "self" of our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) with which we were created or not, if we do so, we will

come to know our "self" and know that over a lifetime of change and evolving, our existence as soul-spirit/intellect is now preparing for the return.

At the start of its innate nature or *fitrat*, our human soul marks the end of the physical world in terms of the completion of its sensation-perception functions and the beginning of the completion of its intellectual function.

There is a Quranic allusion to this in His Words:

There would be a wall set up between them for which there is a door. That which is inward is mercy and that which is outward is towards the punishment. (Q57:13)

The human soul is God's door through which He commanded the servants to enter the sacred House of God and His sublime Throne, saying:

... approach houses from their front doors ... (Q2:189)

So set your face towards a way of life as a monotheist. It is the nature originated (fitrat Allah) by God in which He originated humanity. There is no substitution for the creation of God. That is the truth-loving way of life, but most of humanity knows not. (Q30:30)

We will be studying our cognitive system in detail in later modules. In this module, we learn what the human soul or soul-spirit/intellect is as the goal and purpose of God's creation of it and His command to *Be!*

Nasir al-Din Tusi describes the subject of psychology and the process whereby our human soul can attain its primordial goal of the completion of the perfection of nature in its mode of operation.

The subject matter of this science [psychology], then, is the human soul in as much as from it can proceed, according to its free willpower (*ikhtiyar*), acts fair and praiseworthy or negative and destructive. This being so, it must be known what the (inspired) soul (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah* or consciousness) is, where its perfection lies, what the functions are by which, if used in moderation, it attains what it seeks, namely perfection of nature in its mode of operation (*fitrat Allah*) and what prevents it from reaching that completion. In other words, one needs to know how to purify the soul and avoid seducing it, thereby bringing about its prosperity rather than its failure. As the Quran says:²

By the soul and that which shaped it and inspired it (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah, consciousness) with its acting immorally and having God-consciousness. Prospered is the one who purifies it and failed is one who seduces it. (Q91:7-91:10)

Knowledge of the human soul is the foundation of all the forms of higher knowledge—most notably—spiritual (moral) awareness. Perfection or completion of our human soul depends upon knowledge of the self by which we may understand our dependence for our existence upon the Giver of Existence.³

1. What is the spirit?

This meaning for us as students of Quranic psychology of the "self" and its philosophy comes from the moral/spiritual/intellectual world as part of our cognitive experiences. While we shall see that our soul is what motivates us, our spirit is that which gives meaning to us.

Our spirit is alive. It is where the realities and truth reside. As it is non-physical, it is higher than the world of our body and our sensation functions of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching because it is what enlightens us.

To give an example, light is predicated of the candle, the moon and the sun ... in that they all participate in the quality of light, luminosity and brightness. Each of these objects, however, displays different degrees of intensity in sharing the quality of light. Light is the most intense and brightest in the sun and weakest in the reflection of the moonlight on the pool.⁴

The spirit (*ruh*) appears in various forms from the eternal world. It is the command given to us when God gave His spirit to Adam and then called forth the generative organs of the progeny of Adam who then bore witness to God. The spirit gives us our innate human nature (*fitrat Allah*), innate heat, the breath to speak and animates our strength and energies when we are in the embryonic states. The spirit is the Giver of Form (*al-Musawwir*)/Active Intellect (*'aql al-fa'al*) that gives meaning to forms. It can teach us all of the divine Names and Qualities (*'asma 'l-husna*) and is also known as the wind, light, meaning, the pen and the intellect. When the word *ruh* appears in the plural, *arwah*, the Quran is often referring to the angels and the jinn.

The Spirit is the Command

The spirit is His command just as His word, *Be!* is His speech by which everything comes into existence.

The human spirit belongs to the world of the divine command and not to the world of creation.⁵ The Quran tells us:

They will ask you about the spirit. Say: The spirit is the command of my Lord, and you were not given the knowledge but a little. (17:85)

The spiritual world is referred to as the world of command. The world of command comes from many Quranic allusions such as:

They precede Him not in saying and they act by His command. (Q21:27)

When God gives a command, he says the word, *Be! (kun)* and it is.

When He decreed a command, then, truly, He says to it: Be! Then, it is! (Q2:117)

The spirit of the divine command also refers to the Active Intellect, as we will study in future modules, as when God says:

The spirit is my Lord's command. (Q17:85)

He sends down the angels with the spirit of His command ... (Q16:2)

The meaning of the spirit is precisely His command in the same way that His word *Be!* is precisely His command by which all things are given existence. Other existents are created by and come from His command. The world of His command issues from His existence, like the issuing of the rays of the sun from the sun and of humidity from the sea.⁶

The Spirit is Existence

The spirit exists from the Divine Act of origination and is not created from matter.

We might say that the primary attribute of spirit is usually said to be life or existence. Our existence is the result of God's command and we, therefore, contain all the possibilities for the Mother of Names: Life, Knowledge, Will, Power, Seeing, Hearing and Speech. Thus, whenever we think about the fact that we are alive, we should apply and be conscious of the seven main attributes as well.⁷

The Spirit is the Active Intellect/Giver of Form The Active Intellect

The Active Intellect, which we will study further in the module on cognition, is the same as that spirit by the divine command which is ascribed to God in His saying:

Say: "The spirit is by my Lord's Command! (Q17: 85)

Merely human effort and labor do not suffice to acquire it, since a certain divine attraction is also necessary for its attainment, as it is mentioned in the Prophetic tradition: A single attraction from God out balances all the efforts of men and jinn.⁸

Exalter of Degrees, Possessor of the Throne, He casts the spirit by His command on whom He wills of His servants to warn of the Day of the Encounter. (Q40:15)

They will ask you about the spirit. Say: The spirit is by the command of my Lord. You were not given the knowledge but a little. (Q17:85)

He sends down the angels with the spirit by His command ... (Q16:2)

By the sacred spirit is meant the first spirit that is with God, without returning upon itself. It is what the philosophers call 'the Active Intellect'.⁹

On the highest level, the Spirit, or the Holy Spirit (*ruh al-quddus*), is none other than the primordial and original spirit which is with God, and which remains with Him. This ... corresponds to the philosophical concept of the Active Intellect. The spirit of faith, on the other hand corresponds, from the philosophical point of view, to the acquired intellect. That is, it represents the intellect which becomes actualized in human beings after having been potential. Thus it represents a level only attained in full by those realized souls who have passed completely from potentiality to actuality during the course of their earthly lives.¹⁰

The Giver of Form

The Quran tells us that once God shaped our form, acting through his Name, The Giver of Form (*al-Musawwir*), He breathed His Spirit within it.

Mention when your Lord said to the angels: Truly, I am One Who is Creator of the mortals (bashar) out of earth-mud (salsal) of soft wet earth (Q15:26-15:29)

By its particular preparedness, our human body calls for a governing form from the Giver of Form which gives forms to receptacles (such as our body) so that it can govern it and thereby its individuality and species is preserved by it.

When the body attains the sound temperament for its soul's reception, then incontrovertibly the administering soul emanates from the spirit of the command to the Giver of Form, without any delay and hesitation at all. It is like the effusion of light from the sun on the receptacle before it.¹¹

Certainly, We created you. Again, We formed (sawwara)¹² you. (Q7:11)

God is He Who made the earth for you as a stopping place and the heaven as a canopy. And He formed (sawwara) you and your forms (suwar)¹³ well. (Q40:64)

It is He Who forms (yusawwir) you in the wombs how He wills. (Q3:6)

He created the heavens and the earth with The Truth and He formed (sawwara) you and formed your forms (suwar) well. (Q64:3)

The Spirit of God Animates Our Soul's Strengths and Energies

God created our human soul to come into life along with our body when we were nothing in the world before time, that is, in pre-eternity:

Will the human being not remember that We created him before when he was nothing? (Q19:67)

and created humanity from this single soul. He created a mate of the same kind and from the two produced men and women in large numbers.

O humanity! Be God-conscious of your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its spouse and from them both disseminated many men and women. (Q4:1)

Our human soul is enlivened when we received the spirit, but we have little knowledge of what the spirit is.

So when I shaped him (Adam, human being) and breathed into him My spirit, then, fall to him, ones who prostrate themselves. (Q38:72)

Again, He shaped him and breathed into him (Adam, human being) His spirit. And He made for you the ability to hear and sight and conscience (fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah). But you give little thanks! (Q32:9)

The Quran speaks of our human soul flowing from a single soul for a people who understand:

It is He Who caused you to grow from a single soul ... for a people who understand. (Q6:98)

It is He Who created you from a single soul (nafs wahidat). (Q7:189)

It is He Who caused you to grow from a single soul. (Q6:98)

He creates you from one soul. Again, He made its mate from it. (Q39:6)

Your creation and your upraising are not but like that of a single soul. (Q31:28)

O humanity! Be God-conscious (taqwa) of your Lord Who created you from a single soul and, from it, created its spouse and from them both disseminated many men and women. (Q4:1)

The spirit activates our strength, energy or potency (*quwwat*) and connects us to the only true Source of strength and light. Our energies are what give us strength. As the Quran tells us:

God is the Possessor of Strength. (Q51:58)

It reminds us to be grateful for the strength that He give us by exhibiting God-consciousness (*taqwa*).

Take with strength what We gave you and remember what is in it so that perhaps you will be God-conscious. (Q 7:171)

He will send abundant rain to you from heaven and increase you, adding strength to your strength. (Q11:52)

This strength/energy came to us when God *strengthened our frame* (Q76:28) by breathing His spirit within us which energized our soul's substantial motion. This substantial motion then, awakened the energies within us.

We created them and We strengthened their frame. When We willed, We will substitute their likes with a substitution. (Q76:28)

There is no strength but with God. (Q18:39)

The three major physiological energies are produced by the spirit/breath of life and arise in the three principal organs that we previously studied in relation to our soul-body: our physical heart—considered to be the point of contact between the body and the soul—it is the center of vital energy (*quwwat al-haywaniyyah*); our brain—the center of the neural power (*quwwat al-nafsaniyyah*)—which energizes our mental faculties, motivation, sensation, perception and cognition; and our liver and its processes is the center of natural power (*quwwat al-tabiiyah*). In addition, our natural power supplies energy to the reproductive organs when we are at an age to be able to reproduce. The transformation of the powers into acts are distributed throughout our body.

In other words, the spirit (*ruh*) was breathed into our generative organs and in the female egg to give our soul the potential of existence, actualized in the embryo as our soul (*nafs*). It provides it three energies through the breath or spirit. As noted above, the foundation of the natural energy is the liver, the furthestest away from balance, which regulates the concupiscent (affect, attraction to pleasure, lust) and irascible (behavior, avoidance of harm/pain) impulses. The vital energy regulates the heart which is average in terms of balance and the neural energy, the brain which receives the most balanced energy.

The Quran makes allusions to the idea that each level of structure in the universe is governed by specific energies. For example, it is clear that the human spirit results from God's breathing His own breath into the human body. This energy gives wholeness and integrity to a collection of cells, organs, and bodily parts. But each of these parts has a certain independence which is maintained by the energies of the individual organs:¹⁴

... on a Day when their tongues bear witness against them and their hands and their feet as to what they had been doing. (Q24:24)

On this Day We will seal over their mouths and their hands will speak to Us and their feet will bear witness to what they had been earning. (Q36:65)

The energies activated by the breath are not separate powers, each acting differently apart from our self. They appear to be so and perform different functions, some of them prior in time to others, not because they are essentially different from each other, but because of the localization of functions through different organs, and whose functions become actualized at different times, and due to the different states in which we are involved. In this respect, our powers are in reality aspects of the breath itself as it manifests itself in accordance with its various modes. Our entire human organism is one, single complete system that activates powers transformed from our nurture-giving essentials such as food, water and air to satisfy our various natural dispositions.

The breath, then, activates our strength (*quwwat*). Known as powers, faculties or physical forces, our God-given strength (*quwwat*), as the spirit of His command, *Be!*, has the ability to activate our soul which then ensouls or animates our body strengthening or empowering us.

Strength gives us the power—force or energy—by which involuntary or voluntary movement occurs. It is a driving force, impulse or stimulation which contains the potential for us to be able to act.¹⁵

The principal organs—heart, liver and brain—are those in which the primary powers of the body arise—when God breathes within us—the strength God gives us to preserve both our life as an individual and the life of our species.

The Spirit is Meaning

It is significant that one of the several words, often employed synonymously for spirit is meaning (*ma'na*).

The spirit is that which gives meaning, coherence, unity, and comprehensibility to a thing.¹⁶

God's spirit gives us the ability to understand the meaning or intent of His command.

He casts the spirit by His command on whom He wills of His servants to warn of the day of the encounter. (40:15)

Thus, We revealed to you (Muhammad) the spirit by Our command. (Q42:52)

The spirit (*al-ruh*), identified with God's active command, is referred to in traditional sources in multiple ways, although always as an eternal, immaterial, invisible part of the spiritual, inner or hidden sign within the universe and our self.

Spirit is the meaning within the form. We speak of the "letter of the law"

and "the spirit of the law" referring to the meaning of what a law says. That something said has a meaning is so important that without it, we fail to hear what is said. As a result, we experience a state of fear:

Whenever you hear speech such that your (soul-spirit/intellect) is not elated from hearing it, and it does not sweetly meet your desire, you should recognize that the cause of this is that the spirit of meaning has vacated the mold of words. Although the form's composition has adorned the words with formal ornament, the listener's (soul-spirit/intellect) does not accept this and does not feel familiar with it because a mold without spirit stirs up dread. You may make up a dead face with a rose's color, but it does not cling to the heart (consciousness) and stir up you.¹⁷

The Spirit is Light

The spirit is made of light. Light and existence are the same thing. The existence of every thing is its manifestation. Accordingly, the existence of physical bodies would also be their degrees of light.

Spirits are made of light, which is a single reality—the radiance of God. The light is one, but the darknesses are many. The many cannot hold together since they do not consist of a unified reality.... The spirit belongs to God, just as light and life belong to God. There is no life but God's life and no light but God's light. So also, all the characteristics of the spirit are divine characteristics. Nevertheless, although it belongs to God, it is not identical with God. The spirit is connected with nearness, mercy, gentleness, beauty and bounty. In contrast, the body is dominated by distance, wrath, severity, majesty and justice.¹⁸

The Quranic Revelation is the light that causes one to see.

The meaning of the 'intellect,' the 'pen,' and 'light' are related because their ultimate referent is the same: they are all pure, spiritual substances.¹⁹

Our consciousness cannot enlighten us without the light that emanates from His spirit as His spirit confirms us as believers. The relationship of the divine command to God can best be understood as a luminous source of light that emanates from God.

The Quran is a light of the spirit by God's command and angels bear witness to it. (Q4:166)

The spirit belongs to God, just as light and life belong to God. There is no life but God's life, and no light but God's light. So also, all the characteristics of the spirit are divine characteristics. Otherwise, God would not have referred to the human spirit as: *My spirit*.²⁰

That is when I shaped him and blew into him of My Spirit. (Q15:29)

.... the spirit is luminous and alive, and of course, invisible, like light and angels.

Light, as a name of God, is usually said to be a name of God's existence, of His very Self. What is God? Light. Once, when the Prophet was asked if he had seen God, he replied: He is a Light. How could I see Him?²¹

Whoever calls upon another god together with God has no proof for that.
(Q23:117)

The proof is a Light that God casts on the consciousness of the person of true faith, a Light that illuminates his inner vision so that he sees things as they really are, as it was stated in the prayer of the Prophet: O my God, cause us to see things as they really are.²²

The divine light has one meaning or is one but it becomes diversified according to different levels of expression. The existence emanating from the Reality called the breath of the compassionate is truly one reality but it has different degrees according to the nearness and distance from the Creator.

Furthermore, these ... spirits are lights differing in the strength and weakness of their luminosity, all of them existing by a single *wujud* (existence, life, light) but possessing different degrees that are actualized gradually in those in whom they are found.²³

The Spirit is Wind

The Arabic word *ruh* (spirit) comes from the same root as the Arabic *rih* which means wind:

A wind is something whose presence is made visible only through its effects. It makes a tree's branches move, or picks up dust, or presses against the face. We know that it is there, but we cannot see it; we only see or feel its effects. So also a spirit cannot be seen, but it makes its presence known by the effects.²⁴

The wind comes from the spirit of God.

The wind brings mercy and it brings chastisement. So when you see it, curse it not, but ask God for its good and seek refuge in Him from its evil.²⁵

Know that the real situation is the existence of the divine command in the world of the spirit/breaths. The command turns toward this created world and brings it into motion, while the cosmos and everything in it accepts the motion through its nature. In the same way, wind turns towards the trees to bring them into motion through its blowing. The observer sees the motion of the branches because of the blowing of the wind. Knowledge sees that if the branches were not free to move in their places, they would not find the wind when it blows. So they have a governing property over the wind in one respect, and no property in another respect. The goal to be realized by the wind bringing the trees into motion is the elimination of the corrupt vapors of the trees, so that there may not be deposited within them that which causes illness and disease in the cosmos when animals feed upon the

trees.... Hence the blowing of the winds is directed toward the best interest of the cosmos....²⁶

The Spirit is the Pen

The pen of God refers to the spirit of the acquired intellect (*'aql al-mustafad*):

... The spirit is an expression for the acquired intellect (*al-'aql al-mustafad*), the one that witnesses the intelligibles at its contact with the Active Intellect—the pen of God—which writes the realities of faith on the tablets of our consciousness, as the Exalted said:²⁷

Recite: Your Lord is the Most Generous, He Who taught by the pen. He taught the human being what he knows not. (Q96:3-96:5)

He is a writer inasmuch as that with the pen of His Power, He reproduces the letters on the tablet of his consciousness (heart) in the stations of his voice and the channels of his breath; while his physical person is that through which the word subsists, and thus he becomes a speaker....²⁸

2. How do we receive the spirit?

Commanded as we have been by God to contain His spirit which He breathed within us, that spirit or energy is our breath, God's own breath.

Spirit is ultimately the breath of God. One of the qualities of the spirit is its oneness. The divine breath is a single, indivisible reality that is luminous, aware, desiring, and powerful.²⁹

Again, He shaped him (Adam) and breathed into him His spirit. (Q32:9)

So when I shaped him (Adam) and breathed into him My spirit. (Q38:72)

Through God's Breath from the World of Command

The divine Breath is ascribed to the Compassionate because God embraces all things in respect of this name. Through the Breath (breathing the word *Be!*) He brings all things into existence. This all-inclusive mercy which becomes manifest through the Breath precedes God's wrath. Since all things originate in this mercy, all return to it in the end.³⁰

With regard to the creation of the human being, the Quran says:

... and breathed into him (Adam, human being) My Spirit. (Q15:29)

A thing should be addressed by the divine word, *Be!* or, in other words, by divine

speech. Now, divine willpower does not make a thing what it is, but only wills it by addressing it to *Be!*, as when by the mere act of willpower and vocal determination of our breath, we human beings bring words into being. That is why calling the pure act of being the Breath of the Compassionate and following the terminology of the Quran in calling all entities 'words of God' ... all beings are determinations of the Infinite divine breath, which is itself the first determination of divine speech.³¹

The Spirit Breathed as Speech, Word

Be! is an Act that is described in the Quran as a "Word":

Say: If the sea had been ink for the Words of my Lord, the sea would come to an end before the Words of my Lord came to an end even if We brought about replenishment the like of it. (Q18:109)

In Quranic terminology, all the entities and beings are called the words of God:

If trees on the earth were only pens and the sea causes to increase after that with seven more seas that were ink, yet the Words of God would not come to an end. (Q31: 27).

The Quran itself was revealed in human language for human beings and provides numerous verses (see Quranic Chapter 55) highlighting the unique status of the human being.³²

The purpose of speech is simply to make something known to someone. His speech belongs to the world of the command and its dwelling is in the consciousness and minds of humanity, as in His saying:

The Trustworthy Spirit brought it down on your consciousness (Q26:193-26:194).

(The Quran) is clear portents, signs in the minds of those who were given the knowledge. (Q29:49)

That is why, calling the breath, life, and following the terminology of the Quran in calling all entities 'words of God' (*kalimatillah*), as words from God, all beings are manifestations of the infinite divine breath, which is itself the first manifestation of divine speech: *Say!* (*qul*, referring to *Say!* or the Quranic signs that begin with: *Say!*).³³

Jesus is referred to in the Quran as both a spirit and a word from God:

*That the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was a Messenger of God and His Word that He cast to Mary and a Spirit (ruh) from Him (Jesus is called *ruhal-lah*, that is, the spirit of God). (Q4:171)*

Referring to these signs we can say that God's words refer to all that is possible to be created and that they are infinite. Whether we are referring to the world of creation or the world of the command, they both exist through the divine mercy of the breath. The breath is the guiding force of the creation of nature and an essential part of our movement from Origin to Return, from First to Last. Each creature is a word of God. As Quranic proof for this point is:

That the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was a Messenger of God and His Word that He cast to Mary and a Spirit from Him. (Q4:171) Meaning: The existent things are the words of God which never run out since the possible things are infinite.³⁴

Our saying to a thing when We wanted it is that We say to it: Be! Then, it is! (Q16:40)

Nay! It is clear portents, signs in the minds of those who were given the knowledge. (Q29:49)

None negate Our signs but ones who are unjust. (Q29:43)

As for the book, because it belongs to the world of creation, it has for its abode the tablets of power or destiny, which everyone perceives; as His word asserts:

We wrote down for him on the Tablets something of all things and an admonishment and a decisive explanation of all things. (Q7:145)

As for the word: *None touches it but the ones who are purified*, (Q56:79), it is the Quran that possesses an exalted grade in the Guarded Tablet:

... a sending down successively from the Lord of the worlds. (Q56:79-56:80).

God's "Speech" is an expression for His establishment of Perfect Words and the sending down of definite Signs:

It is He who caused the Book to descend to you. In it are signs, ones that are definitive. They are the essence of the Book and others, ones that are unspecific (Q3:7), in the clothing of words and expressions.³⁵

His Speech belongs to the world of the command and Its dwelling is the consciousness (hearts, *qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*) and minds (*sadr*, breasts) of humanity, as in His saying:³⁶

Nay! It is clear portents, signs in the minds of those who were given the knowledge. (Q29:49)

Say: This is my way. I call to God. I and whoever followed me are on clear evidence. (Q12:108)

The Divine Names and Qualities

What we call the spirit is nothing other than the divine spirit breathed into us. Our spirit comes from the divine command. It manifests within itself all the Divine Names and Qualities (*'asma al-husna*) including the names of creativity (al-Khaliq), (al-Barr) and (al-Musawwir).

He taught Adam the names, all of them. (Q2:31)

Know that the world of the Divine Names is a world of exceedingly vast extent, containing all the essential Realities in their primordial and fully elaborated form. These are the Keys of the Unseen and the foundation of His detailed Knowledge of all existing things, as in His saying—may He be exalted!³⁷

With Him are the keys of the unseen. None knows them but He. (Q6:59)

The spirit of God breathed into us the Names and Qualities.

He is God, the Creator (al-Khaliq), The One Who Fashions (al-Bari), The One Who is the Giver of Form (al-Musawwir). To Him belongs the Most Beautiful Names. (Q59:24)

Types of Quranic Commands

When God gives a command, he says the word: *Be!* (kun) and it is.

When He decreed a command, then, truly, He says to it: Be! Then, it is! (Q2:117)

It happens instantaneously:

Our command is not but a single command as the twinkling of an eye. (Q54:50)

The divine command: *Be!*, contains God's spirit as the Quran tells us:

They will ask you about the spirit. Say: The spirit is by the command of my Lord. You were not given the knowledge but a little. (Q17:85)

By gaining life or existence through God's command, we are given the potential to contain the Mothers of the Names, as has been mentioned.

Quranic commands help us to believe, act, abstain, choose, judge, and enforce our actions and decisions. When incorporated into morals and used to classify our actions as they relate to the divine law, we are able to both analyze and influence our behavior in that the commands first evaluate the premises underlying an act of moral reasoning, then assess the validity of the reasoning process, and finally judge the result as not just valid or invalid but as right or wrong.³⁸

When God gives Quranic commands to us, He very often mentions His reasons for them. For instance, why does He send Books and Prophets?

Certainly, We gave Moses the Book, after We caused previous generations to perish as clear evidence for humanity and a guidance and a mercy so that they recollect. (Q28:43)

Truly, We caused to descend to you the Book with The Truth so that you will give judgment between humanity by what God caused you to see. (Q4:105)

We caused the Book to descend to you with The Truth, that which establishes as true what was before it of the Book and that which preserves it. (Q5:48)

Here is another example: How can we know that God is both powerful and merciful?

Say: Considered you what if God made the nighttime endless for you until the Day of Resurrection? What god other than God brings you illumination? Will you not, then, hear? Say: Considered you what if God made the daytime endless for you until the Day of Resurrection? What god other than God brings you nighttime wherein you rest? Will you not, then, perceive?. (Q28:71-28:73)

Or we may ask: Why was the Quran revealed a few verses at a time?

Those who were ungrateful said: Why was the Quran not sent down to him all at once? Thus, We will make firm his conscience by it. We chanted a chanting. They bring you (Muhammad) no parable. We brought about The Truth to you and fairer exposition. (Q25:32-25:33)

Quranic commands, accompanied as they are with the spirit, are used:
To challenge: *Or they will say: He devised it. Say: Bring a Chapter of the Quran like it and call to whomever you were able—other than God—if you had been ones who are sincere. (Q10:38);*

To reproach: *Make not entreaties this Day. Truly, you will not be helped from Us. (Q23:65);*

To condemn: *If you would see when those who were ungrateful are called to themselves by the angels, they are striking their faces and their backs saying: Experience the punishment of the burning.* (Q8:50);

To call for help: *... those who took their way of life to themselves as a diversion and as a pastime. This present life deluded them. So today We will forget them as they forgot the meeting of this their Day and because they had been negating Our signs.* (Q7:51);

To pray: *Guide us on the straight path.* (Q1:6);

To create: *Our saying to a thing when We wanted it is that We say to it: Be! Then, it is.* (Q16:40)

Or a command without a commanding verb: *We charged the human being with kindness to ones who are his parents. His mother carried him painfully and she painfully brought him forth. The bearing of him and the weaning of him are thirty months. When he was fully grown, having come of age and reached forty years he said: My Lord! Arouse me that I may give thanks for Your divine blessing, that with which You were gracious to me and to ones who are my parents and that I do as one in accord with morality so that You be well-pleased and make things right for me and my offspring. Truly, I repented to You and, truly, I am of the ones who submit to God.* (Q46:15)

God's commands sometimes have a specific action: *Stand up and warn!* (Q74:2)

Or to realize a certain state: *But when their sight will be astonished.* (Q75:7). As all of these different commands come from God, they have a moral context because of God's spirit that accompanies a command.

God, as our Creator and without whom we would not have life, has the authority to give a command or to try to gain our cooperation and each of the commands has a good reason for it. Still we ask why? and the response: *O those who believed! Ask not about things that if they are shown to you would raise anger in you. Yet if you ask about them at the time when the Quran is being sent down, they will be shown to you. God pardoned that which is past. God is Forgiving, Forbearing. Surely, the folk asked about them before you. Again, they became ones who are ungrateful for it.* (Q5:101-5:102).

In the first twenty words in Arabic in the signs/verses revealed to Prophet Muhammad, there is a command: *Recite in the Name of your Lord Who created. He created the human being from a clot of congealed blood. Recite: Your Lord is the Most Generous, He Who taught by the pen. He taught the human being what he knows not.* (Q96:1-96:5)

Recite: A command; *in the Name of your Lord:* A statement of on whose authority the command is being stated; *Who created:* A definition; *created the human being from a clot of congealed blood* ('*alaq, akhlat, humours*).

An expansion on the previous definition; *Recite:* a repetition of the initial command; *Your Lord is the Most Generous, He Who taught by the pen;*

He taught the human being what he knows not: Three more definitions. (Q96:1-96:5)

Some of the commands refer to all of humanity: *O humanity! Worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you so that perhaps you will be God-conscious.* (Q2:21)

Others refer to a specific person: *O Abraham! Turn aside from this. Truly, the command of your Lord drew near. Truly, that which arrives for them is a punishment, one that is not to be repelled.* (Q11:76)

Then there are the 332 *qul* (Say!) signs/verses which appear throughout the Quran as reminders of His commands.

It was said to a bedouin: What have you memorized from the Quran? He said: I have memorized the chapters of *al-qalaqil*, that is, those signs that begin with *qul*.

We can see that God's commands come with an explanation of "why?" This shows that God does not command us to do meaningless things for arbitrary reasons, a point consistent with the assertion that God has not created us in vain as indeed He does not do anything in vain: *Assumed you that We created you in amusement and that to Us you would not be returned?* (Q23:115).³⁹

The Quranic Command

What are the linguistic properties of a command?

Many of the terms that express the relationship between God and human being—Lord and servant, Creator and creature, King and servant—are extracted metaphorically from contexts in which it is expected and appropriate for one human being to issue commands to another. For God, then, to issue commands to humans is not only correct *a fortiori*, it is right. Any other mode of address is, as it were, a metaphor for the primary mode. In fact, command may be the primary mode of all speech.⁴⁰

Commands are in the form of imperatives:

The imperative is a very remarkable linguistic device for designating the action or event desired in so straightforward and compulsory a way that the mere mention of the action or event in that form is generally sufficient to bring about its immediate realization. Besides, the second person of the imperative consists, in a great many languages of the world, of the bare word-stem or something that approximates it, a fact which speaks strongly in favor of the chronological priority of the form of the imperative to most other linguistic modes of expression.⁴¹

The Spirit by God's Command and Prophet Muhammad

The Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through a spirit by God's command:

Thus, We revealed to you (Muhammad) a spirit by Our command. (Q42:52)

It was revealed in the three ways to Prophet Muhammad that (Q42:51) expresses:

It had not been for a mortal that God speak to him, but by revelation or from behind a partition or that He send a Messenger to reveal by His permission what He wills. (Q42:51)

Through the Potential for Our Generative Organs

The Covenant with Our Generative Organs

Not only did each of us come into existence by God's command, *Be!*, but when we came into existence, our generative organs were the carriers of God's spirit. God breathed His spirit within us giving us a spiritual reality so that we could not deny the Day of Encounter:

He cast the spirit of His command on whom He wills ... that He may warn of the Day of Encounter (Q40:15)

and that we would bear witness to the covenant with God:

The Sign of the Covenant When We Received the Spirit of God

We understand the importance of the covenant in relationship to the connection between the spirit and our body, specifically our generative organs and our development as the human species. We will have cause to give further details in the Module 1.

That is when I shaped him (Adam) and blew into him of My Spirit. (Q15:29)

Mention when your Lord took from the Children of Adam—from their generative organs (zuhurihum)—their offspring and called to them to witness of themselves—Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea! We bear witness— so that you say not on the Day of Resurrection: Truly, we had been ones who were heedless of this. (Q7:172)

There are those commentators who describe the event of the covenant with God, which was a pretemporal event:

.... in which God brought forth all the progeny of Adam from his generative organs, specifically; some argue that this was done immediately after God had blown His Spirit into Adam (Q15:29) (Q32:9) (Q38:72)⁴²

The words, *the Children of Adam (banu Adam)* in (Q7:172) above, according to most commentators, includes them and their progeny—male and

female. Generative organs (*zuhur*) is the plural form of *zuhr*. The word *zuhr* appears several times in the Quran, but the signs of interest to us here are (Q33:4), (Q58:1-58:2).

God made not your spouses (as your mothers), those whom you divorced saying: Be as the back of my mother! (Q33:4)

Those who say to their wives: Be as my mother's back, they (f) are not their mothers. Their mothers are only those (f) who gave them birth. And, truly, they say that which is unlawful among their sayings and an untruth. ... Those who say: Be as my mother's back, to their wives and again, retract what they said, then, the letting go of a bondsperson before they both touch one another. That is of what you are admonished. God is Aware of what you do. (Q58:2-58:3)

In pre-Islamic times, it was common practice when a man wanted to divorce his wife, he would say: *Be as my mother's back* (*zihar*). When a husband said this to his wife, he was free and no longer had any duties towards her, but she was still married to him and could not marry anyone else.

Clearly the husband was referring to his mother's generative organs which were forbidden to him. Therefore, the use of the same word—*zuhur*—in the context of the reproductive organs shows that in 7:172, God took the generative organs (*zuhur*) from both the males and females who bore witness to Him as their Lord.

As an embryo, our body is formed from the existence of the natural principles of fire, air, water and earth and their qualities of hot, cold, moist and dry (as mentioned in Module 1). Once these elemental qualities reach the right proportion in our potential male or female generative organs and conception takes place, they form the congealed blood clot (*'alaq*, Q96:2) of the humours: blood, yellow bile, phlegm and black bile. Fed by what the embryo receives from the nurturing of the blood in the womb, the humours form our temperament: sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic or pensive.

When God breathed His Spirit into Adam and then immediately afterwards called forth the generative organs of Adam's progeny, it established us as human species connecting God's spirit with the potential of our body to actualize its generative organs and preserve our species:

The fact that we are part of the human species comes from the nature of our generative organs. When God breathed His spirit into the first human being (Adam), immediately afterwards He gathered the generative organs of all of the children of Adam and formed a covenant with them whereby, as potential human forms, they bore witness to God as their Lord.⁴³

He cast the spirit of His command on whom He wills ... that He may warn of the Day of Encounter (Q40:15)

and that we would bear witness to the covenant with God (Q7:172):

This Covenant, then, took place just after God breathed His spirit into Adam thereby indicating that both males and females are endowed with God's spirit.

God breathes His spirit into Adam and then gathers the offspring of Adam. He takes a promise from the generative organs of the Children of Adam—including each one of us—so that His spirit becomes part of our generative organs.

Our generative organs are passive organs in our body. Their functions are actualized at puberty by substantial motion about which we learned in Module 1.

In regard to the potential of human reproduction through our generative organs, a male embryo is not created with semen, but rather with the generative organs to create semen once puberty is reached.⁴⁴ The female generative organs, on the other hand, are created with whatever potential human eggs she may have during her lifetime. Both the male and female generative organs, including as they do the female potential embryonic eggs, have received the spirit of God that was breathed into Adam and from Adam to his progeny.

Therefore, while the male semen was not present at that time, the female actual potential human eggs were present confirming that both the male and female generative organs and the female potential human eggs contain God's spirit that will be passed on to all future human generations. These two unite in intercourse when male temporal semen, from his pre-temporal generative organs, is formed to join with the female pre-temporal generative organs and eggs to produce an embryo.

How does semen develop?

The power of reproduction separates a part from the excessive food reached at the final stage of digestion for the feeder, changes it into semen and deposits in it a power from its kind.⁴⁵

Our Innate Nature

This verse (Q7:172)—a covenant between God and all of humanity—is also connected with the Quranic notion of the *fitrat Allah*, the innate nature (Q30:30) and innate heat with which the generative organs of all human beings were originally endowed, indicating that the innate recognition of God's Oneness constitutes the essence of being human.

Set your face towards the way of life (din) of a monotheist (hanifan). It is the nature originated by God (fitrat Allah) in which He originated humanity. There is no substituting the creation of God. That is the truth-loving way of life, except most of humanity knows not. (Q30:30)

Even though human beings do not remember the pretemporal covenant, their testimony to God's Lordship is understood to have left an indelible imprint upon their souls and to have established moral responsibility for them. When these souls are engendered in earthly bodies and reach the age of moral understanding and accountability, the innate knowledge is reawakened in those who believe by their encounter with prophetic teachings, scriptures, and divine laws, which serve as a reminder and renewal of their initial covenant with God. Therefore, if a child dies before reaching the age of moral and religious responsibility, he or she is considered to have died according to the first covenant and the original *fitrat* and so in a state of moral purity. However, for those who fail to affirm the original covenant by rejecting the later covenant—that is, by denying the messages brought to them by their prophets and scriptures—their initial covenant will not benefit them.⁴⁶

Among all the Quranic commands, the one that is of most importance to us here as we come to know the existence of the spirit as an integral part of self, is the command: *Be!* (*kun*) as it was through God's command that we have our innate nature. It reminds us of our innate recognition of God's Oneness or *tawhid*. Those who respond to the reminder remember God. They have faith in Him and His messenger, and they submit to His command.

Innate nature here translates the important Quranic term *fitrat* (30:30; etc.), which originally referred to the primordial "Adamic" purity of the human soul and its capacity for realizing its innate (spiritual) perfection. In this regard, note the famous Prophetic tradition that: every child is born according to the *fitrat*, and it is only his parents who make him into a Jew or a Zoroastrian or a Christian.⁴⁷

Each member of humanity contains this innate nature that was originated by God (*fitrat Allah*):

This sign tells us that our original nature was created by God when He breathed His spirit within us. It resulted in our natural disposition of consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) and the belief in monotheism or the existence of One God. When we are conscious of this disposition, we turn away from all that is false. It protects us from going astray and following our own desires and subjecting ourselves to our own whims and passions.

The nature originated by God in which He originated humanity ... (Q30:30) links all of humanity. All of humanity comes from God and returns to God.

*There is no substitution for the creation of God (Q30:30), that is, do not try to substitute our desires and passions for our innate nature by which we were originated, but, rather, maintain our *fitrat Allah* or change our self if we have strayed from it.*

But most of humanity knows not (Q30:30), tells us that unfortunately most of humanity is unaware of or, due to irrational willpower or unconsciousness, puts obstacles in the way of following the truth-loving way of life (*din*).

Our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) sets boundaries for us to help us attain balance and moderation.

He has set in place the balance: that you be not defiant in the balance. (Q55:7-55:8)

Boundaries that are determined by our Creator are not just ways to limit our self, but provide parameters within which balance and justice can take place. When we go beyond the parameters or limits set by our innate nature, we commit an injustice against our self:

O humanity! Your insolence is only against yourself. (Q10:23)

According to (Q30:30), human beings are born with an innate inclination to *tawhid* (Oneness of God), which is encapsulated in our *fitrat* along with compassion, intelligence, altruism (*ihsan*) and all other attributes that embody what it is to be a human who consciously submits to the will of God (muslim).⁴⁸

*Fitrat*⁴⁹ informs our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) as well. As our *fitrat Allah* or natural inclination/disposition that God created within each of us as members of humanity, it is the source of all the possibilities of the evolving of our self.

Fitrat is the pattern according to which God has created humanity. It is God's manner of creating, *sunnat Allah*, and each person fits each into its pattern created for it and set in its proper place. It is the Law of God. Submission to it brings harmony, for it means realization of what is inherent in one's true nature; opposition to it brings discord, for it means realization of what is extraneous to one's true nature.... it is justice as opposed to injustice.... submission means conscious, willing submission and this submission does not entail loss of 'freedom' for the human being, since freedom, in fact, means *to act as one's true nature demands*.... Submission refers to conscious and willing submission for were it neither conscious nor willing it cannot then mean real submission.... Neither by submission is meant the kind that is momentary or erratic, for real submission is a continuous act lived throughout the entire span of one's life; nor is it the kind that operates only within the realm of consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) without manifesting itself outwardly in the action of the body as works performed in obedience to God's Law. Submission to God's will means also obedience to His law.⁵⁰

The Arabic word, *fitra*, comes from *fatara*, to originate.

Truly, I (Abraham) turned my face to He Who Originated (fatara) the heavens and the earth—as a monotheist and I am not of the ones who are polytheists. (Q6:79)

O my folk! I (Hud) ask not of you any compensation. My compensation is but with Who originated (fatara) me. Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q11:51)

Then, they will say: Who will cause us to return? Say (Muhammad): He Who originated (fatara) you the first time. (Q17:51)

They (Pharaoh's Council) said: We will never hold you (Pharaoh) in greater favor over the clear portents that drew near us nor over Who originated (fatara) us. So decide whatever you will as one who decides. You will decide not but about this present life. (Q20:71)

He (Abraham) said: Nay! Your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth Who originated (fatara) them. I am of the ones who bear witness to this. (Q21:56)

(A man who drew near from the farther part of the city said): What is it for me that I worship not Him Who originated me (fatara) and to Whom you will be returned? Will I take gods to myself other than He when, if The Merciful wants any harm for me, their intercession will not avail me at all nor will they save me. (Q36:22)

Mention when Abraham said to his father and his folk: Truly, I am released from obligation to what you worship other than He Who originated (fatara) me and, truly, He will guide me. (Q43:26-43:27)

The divine command: *Be!*, is God's spirit as the Quran tells us:

They will ask you about the spirit. Say: The spirit is by the command of my Lord. You were not given the knowledge but a little. (Q17:85)

Behind all the stress on practice is the recognition that the Quran must become flesh and blood. It is not enough for people to read the Quran or learn what it says. They have to embody the Book. It must become the determining reality of what they do (*islam*), what they think (*iman*), and what they intend (*ihsan*).⁵¹

For every being there is substantial motion and innately disposed direction to the Cause of causes. As for [us human beings], besides that general substantial motion, there is another essential movement, whose origin is accidental movement in the psychological mode due to religious inducement. This is the walking on the way of divine Unity and is the wayfaring of

monotheists from the prophets, the friends of God and their followers, peace be upon them. The intention behind the saying of God:⁵²

Guide us on the straight path, (Q1:6), is the invitation to the one who prays that in every prayer. The indication to it is the saying of God:

Say: This is my way. I call to God. I and whoever followed me are on clear evidence. And glory be to God! I am not among the ones who are polytheists. (Q12:108)

Thus, We revealed to you the spirit of Our command. You have not been informed what the Book is nor what is belief, but We made it a light by which We guide whomever We will of Our servants. Truly, you, you have guided to a straight path—the path of God, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in and on the earth. Truly, will not all affairs come home to God? (Q42:52-42:53)

... of a monotheist (hanifan) ... (Q30:30)

A monotheist is one who believes in monotheism, *tawhid*, the One God, the belief that there is no god but God. The word *tawhid* comes from the same root as the word *wahid*, "one" or "unity." However, *ahad*, used in the verse (Q112:1), is more precise because it includes the notions of "absolute and continuous unity" as well as "the absence of any equal".

We affirm the Oneness of God with the first bearing witness or *shahadah*: *There is no god, but God*. By affirming this, we confirm that we submit to God (*islam*). God states this clearly in the Quran:

We sent not before you any Messenger, but We reveal to him that there is no god but I, so worship Me. (Q21:25)

To state this is considered to be pure belief with which humanity was created: the natural predisposition (*fitrat*) to which God-predisposed (*fatara*) humanity.⁵³

This is the message revealed to all Prophets, Messengers and Ones Who Are Sent. The Oneness of God is the basic element of the monotheistic faith. Nothing has changed in this message since it was first delivered.

It is in God that we seek refuge at times of need and fear or when we are in states of happiness or despair, ease or hardship. Why would we turn instead to something that is powerless and passing, non-eternal?

To assume this belief in the Oneness of God leads us to awareness of this life on earth and that whatever enjoyment and wealth we may have that are fleeting. It is not to suggest that we live a life of seclusion and isolation from the world, but rather that we fully immerse ourselves in it for the short time that we have in order to fulfill our obligation to ourselves—to perfect and complete our nature by which God predisposed us—and our obligation to society as vicereagents on earth.

Just as Chapter 112 of the Quran and its four signs confirm our belief in the Oneness of God, Chapter 109 confirms the existence of those who reject God's signs thereby being ungrateful for them. The Prophet used to begin his day reciting these two chapters in the *sunna* prayer before the obligatory dawn prayer and again Chapter 112 in the first cycle of every formal prayer.⁵⁴

Say: He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge. He procreated not nor was He procreated and there be not anything comparable with Him. (Q112:1-112:4)

Say: O ones who are ungrateful! I worship not what you worship; and you are not ones who worship what I worship. I am not one who worships what you worshipped. And you are not ones who worship what I worship. For you is your way of life (din), and for me is my way of life (din). (Q109:1-109:6)

... set your face towards the way of life (din) ... (Q30:30)

Din has diverse meanings among the signs of the Quran as seen in the following examples:

Din has a range of meanings: obedience, abasement, submission, religion, that is, the means whereby one serves God; belief in the unity of God; the religion of Islam; a particular law, statute or ordinance; a system of usages, rites, ceremonies, inherited from the past; custom, habit; way, course, mode of activity; management of affairs.

Din is close to the sense of *dayn*. It can signify repayment, requital, recompense, retaliation, a reckoning and the Day of Reckoning, the final judgment so that *din* may mean a debt owed to God.

The Quran uses it for a set of rules and regulations, or a collection of norms for correct activity. In this broad sense, we do not know if the religion in question is right or wrong, true or false until we look at the context. (Q12:76)⁵⁵

These sign below defines the word "way of life" or *din* with worship:

Say: God alone I worship as one sincere and devoted in the way of life (din) to Him. (Q39:14)

Din is the message brought by all the Prophets and Messengers:

He laid down the law of the way of life (din) for you, that with which He charged Noah and what We revealed to you and that with which We charged Abraham and Moses and Jesus. (Q42:13)

The word *din* is equivalent to creed (*millah*) in (Q6:161):

Say: Truly, my Lord guided me to a straight path, a truth-loving way of life

(din), the creed (millah) of Abraham, the monotheist. (Q6:161)

The concept of *din* changes to *millah* (creed) which is religion as an objective thing, a formal system of creed and rituals that constitute the principle of unity for a particular religious community and works as the basis of its psychological and social life. Unlike the word *din* that still retains the original connotation of personal belief—however far we may go in the direction of making something that may be more abstract than real—*millah* connotes something objective, formal and reminds us always of the existence of a society based on a common religion. *Din* originates from a purely personal obedience. It goes on being reified. In the last stages of this development, approaching more and more the concept of *millah*, *din* becomes almost synonymous with *millah*.⁵⁶

Submission (*islam*)

Whether *din* is limited to beliefs and rituals of worship or extended to include laws, sovereignty and system of government, what was confirmed by the Quran in regard to previous faiths is submission to the will of God.

The word *islam* (submission) comes from the root word *aslama*, an inceptive or inchoative verb, one that shows the process of a "beginning" or a "becoming." It means to submit or to "become" sincere in this way of life. It stands for something new, something that comes into being for the first time, the birth of a new evolution, a new situation, a new historic moment. The verbal noun, *islam*, derived from *aslama* means submission (to the One and Only Sovereign, King, Lord). The word denoting this sense of submission is *aslama*, the verbal noun of which is *islam*, as is evident in the Quran:

He guides him. He expands his mind (sadr) for submission (islam). Whomever He wants to cause to go astray, He makes his mind (sadr) tight, troubling, as if he had been climbing up a difficult ascent. (Q6:125)

Who is fairer in the way of life than he who submits (aslama) his face to God.... (Q4:125)

Whoever be looking for a way of life other than submission (islam), it will never be accepted from him. (Q3:85)

Truly the way of life with God is submission (islam) to the One God. (Q3:19):

Desire they other than the way of life (din) of God while to Him submit (aslama) whatever is in the heavens and the earth willingly or unwillingly and they will be returned to Him? (Q3:83)

Our innate nature was created by God's spirit to meet both our physiological and psychological needs. Our innate nature endows our self and its

body, spirit and soul—and its potential for consciousness—at birth with a balance (*mizan*), a temperament (*mizaj*), as we were created in the fairest symmetry or fairest form.

Truly We created the human being of the fairest symmetry. (Q95:4)

3. What are the spirits?

When the word *ruh* is used in the plural in the Quran, *arwah*, it refers to the world of the spirits including the angels and the jinn.

The belief in angels is one of the pillars of belief for a Muslim. When we perform the formal prayer, at the end, we turn to the right and left saying to the angel: Peace be upon you. As the Prophet indicated, it is necessary to acknowledge the angels along with whoever else is praying as they perform the formal prayer along with us.

It is He who performs the formal prayer over you, and His angels, that He may bring you forth from the darkneses into the light. (Q33:43)

The Arabic word for angel (*malak*), means messenger. When referring to the angel-messengers, who are unseen messengers, the Quran usually uses the word in the plural. The Quran refers to a great variety of angels in terms of their functions: reciters, glorifiers, scarers, dividers, casters, pluckers, severers, ascenders, writers, watchers, envoys, outstrippers, and so on.⁵⁷

According to Ibn 'Arabi: The spirits of the jinn are lower spirits, while the spirits of angels are heavenly spirits.⁵⁸

Endnotes to Part I: Our Soul: Module 2: Our Soul-Spirit/Intellect

- 1 Gholamreza Aavani, "The Sadrean Theory of the World of Divine Command." Online.
- 2 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.
- 3 Khalil Toussi. *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*.
- 4 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-masha'ir (The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations)*. Online.
- 5 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-arshiya (The Wisdom of the Throne)*. Online.
- 6 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-Masha'ir (The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations)*. Online.
- 7 Gholamreza Aavani, "The Sadrean Theory of the World of Divine Command." Online.
- 8 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar (Spiritual Psychology The Fourth Intellectual Journey of Transcendent Philosophy)*, Volumes VIII and IX, i, p. 270.
- 9 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-Masha'ir (The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations)*. Online. As pointed out, at the highest level, the spirit (*ruh*) is none other than the First or Active Intellect, and is therefore the most direct emanation from God, emanating from Him as do the rays of the sun from the sun. To the extent that the spirit is with God, it is uncreated, and it constitutes, in fact, the creative principle itself. That is, the spirit or intellect (in its highest level) is not created by the divine command *Be!* (*kun!*), but is itself the divine command *Be!* Thus, if the spirit is created, it is at least not created "in time", for it is itself the command through which all other beings are originated in time. If the Spirit and the Intellect are one and the same, at their highest levels, they become differentiated at lower levels. Maria Dakake, "The Origin of Man in Pre-Eternity and His Origination in Time." Online.
- 10 Gholamreza Aavani, "The Sadrean Theory of the World of Divine Command." Sadra Islamic Philosophy Research Institute, Tehran. Online.
- 11 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar (Spiritual Psychology: The Fourth Intellectual Journey in Transcendent Philosophy)*, Volumes VIII and IX, pp. 333, 351.
- 12 Definition of *sawwara* (7:11) and (40:64): Meanings of Verb II include: Formed, fashioned, figured, shaped, sculptured or pictured. Meanings of the active participle include: Form, figure, shape; the external side of something; anything that is formed, fashioned, figured or shaped after the likeness of any of God's creatures, animate or inanimate. Verb II perfect; root: *S W R*; *yusawwir*: verb II imperfect *S W R* is the present tense of the same verb. Edward Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*. <http://www.tyndalearchive.com/tabs/lane/>
- 13 Definition of *suwar* (64:3): Meanings of Verb II include: Formed, fashioned, figured, shaped, sculptured or pictured. Meanings of the active participle include: Form, figure, shape; the external side of something; anything that is formed, fashioned, figured or shaped after the likeness of any of God's creatures, animate or inanimate. Verb II perfect; root: *S W R*. Edward Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*. <http://www.tyndalearchive.com/tabs/lane/>.
- 14 William Chittick and Sachiko Murata, *The Vision of Islam*. Online.
- 15 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 16 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 17 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 18 William Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 205.
- 19 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 20 William Chittick and Sachiko Murata, *Vision of Islam*. Online.
- 21 William Chittick and Sachiko Murata, *Vision of Islam*. Online.
- 22 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-arshiya (The Wisdom of the Throne)*. Online.
- 23 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-Masha'ir (The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations)*. Online.
- 24 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.
- 25 See William Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 131.

- 26 Hadith: Ibn Maja, "Adab," 29: Ahmad II 268, 409, 518 Tirmidhi, "Fitān," 65; Abu Dawud, "Adab," 104. Quoted in William Chittick in *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 398 n 8.
- 27 William Chittick and Sachiko Murata, *The Vision of Islam*. Online.
- 28 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar (Spiritual Psychology: The Fourth Intellectual Journey in Transcendent Philosophy)*, Volumes VIII and IX, p. 66.
- 29 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 30 William Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 128.
- 31 William Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 127.
- 32 Hossein Kohandel, "Mind and Body in Mulla Sadra's Philosophy: A Psychological Relationship." Online.
- 33 William Chittick and Sachiko Murata, *Vision of Islam*. Online.
- 34 William Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, pp 127-128. The author adds: It is interesting to note that the thingness of a thing is the object of divine knowledge and not of divine willpower, otherwise divine will could alter the nature of divine knowledge and consequently the nature of things. Divine will is only able to create, that is give things their existence, and without such willpower the existentiating act would be impossible.
- 35 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.
- 36 See William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 37 Gholamreza Aavani, "The Sadrean Theory of the World of Divine Command." Sadra Islamic Philosophy Research Institute, Tehran. Online. The author adds: ... Moreover, in the Holy Quran it is mentioned: God taught us all the Names. This verse is construed to mean that we are the manifestation of all the divine Names and Qualities. It not only gives us a justification for the theomorphic nature of man, but also provides a firm metaphysical foundation for this theory. Naming all things is one of our peculiar characteristics not shared by other creatures.
- 38 Rosalind Ward Gwyon, *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning in the Quran: God's Argument*, p. 82ff.
- 39 Rosalind Ward Gwyon, *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning in the Quran: God's Argument*, p. 82ff.
- 40 Rosalind Ward Gwyon, *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning in the Quran: God's Argument*, p. 82ff.
- 41 Toshiko Izutsu, *Language and Magic*. Quoted by Rosalind Ward Gwyon in *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning in the Quran: God's Argument*, p. 82ff.
- 42 Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310/923), *Jami al-bayan an tawil ay al-quran, The Study Quran*, p. 467.
- 43 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Editor, *The Study Quran*, p. 467, from Jafar al-Tabari, *Jami al-bayan al-tawil ay al-Quran*. See *The Study Quran*, p. 1019 for more of the story.
- 44 Semen are the same as seminal fluid; seminal discharge = ejaculation. A female fetus has 6-7 million eggs. No new eggs are produced. At birth she may have 1 million eggs. At puberty 300,000 eggs while only 300-400 are ovulated in lifetime. The male fetus not born with sperm cells but with sperm factories that generate new fresh sperm at puberty.
- 45 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar (Spiritual Psychology: The Fourth Intellectual Journey in Transcendent Philosophy)*, Volumes VIII and IX, pp. 333, 351.
- 46 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Study Quran*, p. 467.
- 47 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-arshiya (The Wisdom of the Throne)*. Online. It is for this reason that some Muslims prefer to refer to those who embrace Islam as reverts rather than converts, as it is believed they are returning to a perceived pure state. The perfect embodiments of *fitrat* were Abraham and Muhammad. The root verb (*fatara*) means to split or cleave and implies opening up and coming out, to bring forth, to originate. Wikipedia.

48 The root verb (*fatarā*) means to split or cleave and implies opening up and coming out, to bring forth, to originate. Wikipedia.

49 *Fitrat* means "pattern". Al-Tabari said in his Commentary: *Fitrah*: the way or pattern of God. Satan said: *Truly, I will take to myself of Your servants, an apportioned share, and I will cause them to go astray. I will fill them with false desires. I will command them, then they will slit the ears of the flocks. I will command them, and they will alter the creation of God* (that is, indeed I will order them to change the nature or pattern created by God). The Quranic response: *Whoever takes Satan to himself for a protector other than God, then, surely, he lost, a clear loss.* (Q4:118-4:119). Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Editor. *The Study Quran*.

50 The Quran mentions *fitrat* as the creation of God that does not change (30:30). It also talked about the stability of God's laws (Q35:43), (Q48:23) and (Q17:77). Is God's creation stable and unchanging? If it were stable and fixed what then is the role of humans in building civilization that involves changing *fitrat* by cutting down forests, breeding animals, controlling rivers, and cultivating the land? God's creation changes daily as we watch humans and other creations grow old and change and we watch the physical universe undergo changes even without the agency of humans. We can understand from this that changes are part of God's creation. God commanded humans to make changes in the universe as part of human vicegerency and human civilization on earth. Thus the unchanging creation mentioned in (Q30:30) is understood to be constancy of the laws that govern the universe, *sunan*, as expounded in (Q35:43), (Q48:23) and (Q17:77). Thus changes can be made as long as they follow the laws laid down by God. Any changes that do not follow these laws are repudiated. See with changes by this author:

<http://omarkasule.tripod.com/id155.html>

51 William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *Vision of Islam*. Online.

52 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar (Spiritual Psychology: The Fourth Intellectual Journey in Transcendent Philosophy)*, Volumes VIII and IX, p. 605.

53 Toshihiko Izutsu. *God and Man in the Quran*, p. 118.

54 Imam Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, "Prayers of the Prophet."

55 See William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *Vision of Islam*. Online.

56 Syed Naquib al-Attas, *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, pp. 12-15.

57 William Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 195.

58 http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/futuhath_ch009.html

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Part 1: Our Soul

Module 3: Our Soul Evolving from the Animal Soul to the Human Soul

The soul, as 'the greatest sign of God,' is a masterpiece of God's creation—Hadith of the Prophet¹

Introduction

The completion of the soul lies in the actualization of its fullest potential of existence. For we humans, it is to actualize our moral self by gaining knowledge of Quranic psychology and applying it in our actions and behavior to be able to govern our animal nature as ones who are in accord with morality. The process is to move from animal to human.

We begin to know our soul when we recognize our existence, when we struggle to "become" what it means to be human and "find" our moral/spiritual/intellect self as the word "existence" (*wujud*) also means "becoming" and "finding."

The reality of existence unifies all of nature and all the worlds—physical, psychic and moral/spiritual. This, of course, includes the very existence of our "self" as body, soul and spirit. Our existence is from the Existence of God's Knowledge, Will and Power through which He Acts.

Everything in this world exists. There is no non-existence in this world. The whole cosmos is connected, interactive and alive due to existence. From the lowest to the highest levels of existence is one interconnected chain. All creatures partake of this being alive at different levels.²

As part of nature at the beginning of its existence, our soul continuously evolves as long as we are alive through what is known as substantial motion, as we have seen, a gradual emergence of existence of something that moves from potentiality to actualizing what is potential within its nature. Substantial motion is defined as: The first completion of that which is in a state of potentiality.

As a result of the role of substantial motion in the existence of nature, this substantial motion becomes part of the nature of our soul and our body, both as substances (not accidents)—receptive to both weakness and intensity—so that both our body and our soul are in a state of constant change from potentiality to actualizing that potential which is within its nature to achieve.³

So while our body is gradually moving its existence from physical potentiality to actuality, our soul is evolving from the animal soul to the human soul. It is self-generating through gradual substantial motion from its connection to physical potentiality to eventual moral/spiritual/intellect actuality, from a weak existence towards a potentially more intense one, that of the cognition and consciousness of the soul-spirit/intellect.

During infancy and childhood, our body is strengthening its organs that serve our five senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling while our soul is providing the energy for these organs to function:

Take the example of a fetus who is dependent upon the womb for its existence until birth, but then becomes independent of it, and is able to subsist despite the decay or perishing of the womb. If we examine this analogy further, we see that the womb is not simply a refuge—or much less a “prison” for the fetus—but rather an organ through which the fetus is able to reach its maturity and to develop the faculties initially possessed by the womb itself such as the provision of “breath” and nourishment—until the fetus eventually comes to possess these powers independent of its mother and her womb.⁴

That is, at birth the animal soul of the infant is activated as the infant gains movement and sensation. Gradually, over time, as we grow from infancy to childhood to adulthood, our soul actualizes its potential for perception and, finally, cognition.

Nature's substantial motion is active in our soul and body, each with a different purpose. Our body is created with a weak existence, which changes throughout our lifetime, but remains weak throughout its existence because it is physical in nature, created in the temporal world causing it to be distant from the Origin. Our soul, on the other hand, is created with a weak existence along with the body, but it is spiritual in its persistence so it has the potential to gradually actualize its spirit/intellect as we studied in the previous module. In both cases, however, constant, incessant change comes from their substantial motion.

God endows the very existence of nature to be self-renewing and self-generating so that nature's stability is its very change. Change takes place through a special motion(—as we have learned—)that is known as substantial motion. Substantial motion is a gradated motion that connects everything that exists. The extent of the interconnectedness of existence is based on the intensity or weakness of a natural ability to move from potentiality to realizing on some level and, then, actualizing that potential.⁵

Through our human soul we can aspire to evolve in order to complete and perfect our self as part of the human species. Using the light of Quranic revelation helps us to develop our reasoning ability in order to understand our nature, origin, and destiny and, then, how to strengthen our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) to willingly submit to the will of God (*islam*) which is a

state that is constantly "becoming" just as the universe and everything around us is in a state of "becoming," a state of change until we reach that which we were created to be—ones who submit to the will of God (*muslim*)....

Our human soul begins to detach itself away from our physical body and evolve towards our soul-spirit/intellect (*ruh/aql*). Our human soul must pass through all the stages of physical life before it releases itself from the body,⁶ evolving, as it does, through substantive change which is the emerging of the spiritual substance of the soul from the body.⁷ Finally, as we increase detachment from our physical form, our human soul has the potential to reach the point where it becomes soul-spirit/intellect (*nafs-ruh/aql*) or "the spirit of potency" or rational soul (*nafs al-natīqah* or consciousness, *nafs al-mulhamah*) and it completes our cognitive/moral/spiritual functions.

It is not from our body that we search out and explore things and investigate the origin and the return of "self".

If searching and yearning for the meanings of things and reality were from an individual's body, then all individual bodies would be able to do so. This is not the case. The wish does not arise from our body, but from our soul.⁸

Our soul is a bridge between our body and our spirit. In this module we look at it as that bridge. It is crossing this bridge that involves the "greater struggle" (*jihad al-akbar*), that is, the evolution of the soul from animal to human.⁹

The Quran ... repeatedly speaks of heaven, earth, and "*what is between the two*," (*The Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between the two of them if you had been ones who are certain.* (Q26:24)) It is clear to everyone that our experience of self and other is neither purely heavenly nor purely earthly, neither wholly spiritual nor wholly bodily, but somewhere in between.¹⁰

It is as if our soul is midway between two worlds or two passageways.

Just as it passes through all the levels of existence that are below it, so when it becomes perfect in behavior and cognition or knowledge and deed, it begins to disengage from the physical.... Thus the soul that rises up to its Lord through these steps is as it were on a straight path.¹¹

As to the difference between our body and human soul, Naraqī (d 1795 CE) says:

First of all, one of the characteristics of bodies is that whenever any forms and shapes are imposed upon them, they renounce and abandon their previous forms or shapes. With the human soul, however, new forms, whether of sensible or of intellectual nature, enter continuously without wiping out the previously existing

forms. In fact, the more impressions and intellectual forms enter the human soul, the stronger does it become.

Second, when three elements of color, smell, and taste appear in an object, it is transformed. The soul, however, perceives all of these conditions without being materially affected by them.

Third, the pleasures that the human being experiences from intellectual cognition can belong only to the human soul since the body plays no role in it. While we stop eating food when we are full, our human soul is rarely full from tasting knowledge.

Fourth, abstract forms and concepts which are perceived by the human soul are undoubtedly non-material and indivisible. Accordingly, their vehicle, which is the human soul, must also be indivisible and therefore immaterial.

Fifth, the physical faculties of the human being receive their input through the senses, while the human soul perceives certain things without the help of the senses. Among the things that the human soul comprehends without relying on the senses are the law of contradiction, the idea that the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts, and other such universal principles.¹²

In the Quranic view, our body as embryo is created from the four elements and their elemental qualities—discussed in detail in Module 1—so that it begins in an inanimate state known as the "mineral soul." This "mineral soul" has the potential of actualizing what is called the "plant" or "vegetative" soul. This plant soul is actually a growing, self-nourishing and reproducing substance that is potentially an animal soul.

At birth, the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) is actually a substance of sensations and potentially human, capable of intellection. As adults, our soul is actually able to intellectualize and potentially become a knower.

The steps that our soul takes toward completion through the changes in substances are realized in the physical matter that is the human sperm drop and embryo or our generative organs.¹³

1. Our Mineral Soul-Body

At the beginning of our soul-body's existence in the embryonic state, it is part of nature's inanimate minerals and, therefore, first evolves as our mineral soul giving firmness and geometric precision to our mineral body.

On the mineral level, the basic quality is nature, which is an invisible power that keeps the inanimate things in their own specific attributes and characteristics, until they are acted upon by forces outside themselves. When inanimate things are acted upon by other things, such as plants and animals, they may then be assimilated into a higher power that allows for activity within the thing's soul (*nafs*). Nature may be called a power, but it is not a soul in this sense, because inanimate things show no trace of awareness and finding.¹⁴

Our mineral soul, having been animated by the energy or spirit through the

breath of the spirit by God's command, through gradual substantial motion of potentiality to actuality, provides energy to our body's organs forming in the embryo— vital energy to our heart, neural energy to our brain and natural energy to our liver, as we have studied.

Our natural body, composed as it is from the four principle elements and their qualities, is potentially inanimate in the same way that mineral things are actually inanimate, but potentially a plant. At this beginning point in its existence, our soul has no special characteristics other than existence as embodiment.

Cleave firmly to the rope of God altogether and be not split up. (Q3:102)

On the mineral level, the basic quality is 'nature', which is an invisible power that keeps the inanimate things in their own specific attributes and characteristics until they are acted upon by forces outside themselves.¹⁵

When the innate heat and radical moisture from the male and female seminal fluids mix with the qualities of the four elements to a certain proportion, as we have learned, they receive the mineral soul, that aspect of our self that holds things together. The mineral soul has the function of preserving forms. It is attached to the mixture (*mizaj*) of the elemental qualities.

Truly even if it be the weight of a grain of a mustard seed and though it be in a rock or in the heaviness or in or on the earth, God will bring it. (Q31:16)

His parable is like the parable of a smooth rock. Over it is earth (cosmic) dust (hot and dry). A heavy downpour (cold and wet) lights on it and leaves it bare. (Q2:264)

Our mineral soul hold the potential to actualize our plant soul:

Minerals are changed in substance into the bodies of plants. The bodies of plants are changed in substance into the bodies of animals and the highest, most eminent of animals is our human existence.¹⁶

The power of the mineral soul is in-sensibly living.

It can be seen in a magnet that has some aspect of life because of its power of attraction or air and its spontaneous movement. The mineral soul is a living force that in-forms matter, a life force at the most basic level.

Take uranium, for example, that has the potential of radiation.

There are two important aspects of self that can be traced back to the mineral soul. The first is called "geometric precision" in terms of length, height and weight. The second is the ability to emit light, much as uranium emits radiation.

The mineral soul is the beginning of our self's journey to evolve to complete or perfect itself. Through heat and pressure, there is a part of our self that is forced to

conform to the functions of the soul, even while inert. This heat and pressure develop the capacity to change and finally to radiate light through its lower forms.¹⁷

2. Our Plant Soul-Body

From the energies provided by our soul, the embryo begins to grow and feed itself from its mother's blood. Her blood has been temporarily redirected from her menstrual cycle to reach its eternal purpose—nourishing the human embryo and developing its potential for future reproduction.

Our body, then, becomes a plant body while our soul becomes a plant soul. As plant soul, the embryo shares what plants can do: grow, provide themselves with nutrition and reproduce, although in our case, actual reproduction is a potential that actualizes at puberty.

When we are in the womb, our body is mainly relying on our plant soul. The umbilical cord is nourishing us. The mineral soul transmits its power and the plant soul transforms it to create life. The functions of the plant soul are to regulate the basic operations of the body. If these powers are not present, the plant withers and dies, which is to say that it has no more potential than an inanimate thing.¹⁸

A plant soul is actually a growing, self-nourishing and reproducing substance as evidenced by the "plant state" of an embryo that is potentially an animal. An example explains this process:

As a fetus in the womb, the level of our soul is the level of the plant soul with all its degrees. Our soul obtains these levels after traversing the nature and the levels of the mineral faculties. So the human embryo is an actualized plant while it is still a potential and not an actual animal, because it neither has sensory perception nor movement like an actual animal. It being an intensely potential animal is its difference, making it distinct from the rest of the plants, and making it a different species from the various plant species.¹⁹

In the earth there are strips, that which neighbor one another and gardens of grapevines and plowed lands and date palm trees coming from the same root and not coming from the same root that are watered with one water and We give advantage to some of them over some others in produce. Truly in these things there are signs for a folk who are reasonable. (Q13:9)

It is He Who sends forth water from heaven. Then We brought out from it every kind of bringing forth. Then We brought out herbs from it. We brought out from it thick-clustered grain and from the date palm tree, from the spathe of it, thick clusters of dates, ones that are drawn near and gardens of the grapevines and the olives and the pomegranates like each to each and not resembling one another. Look on its fruit when it bears fruit and its ripening. Truly in this are signs for a folk who believe. (Q6:99)

The parable of this present life is but like water that We caused to descend from heaven. It mingled with the plants of the earth—from which you eat—humanity and flocks—until when the earth took its ornaments and was decorated and its people thought that, truly, they are ones who have power over it! Our command approached it by nighttime or by daytime. Then, We made it stubble as if it flourished not yesterday. Thus, We explain distinctly the signs for a folk who reflect. (Q10:24)

3. Our Animal Soul-Body

Once the embryo reaches its term and is born into this world, our body becomes an animal body and our soul becomes the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*). Our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) governs our motivational system—to be discussed extensively in Modules 4-9—by endowing us with the ability to move. Our voluntary ability to move consists of our affect/emotion or attraction to pleasure and our behavior or avoidance of harm/pain, our willpower which is innately stronger than either our attraction to pleasure or avoidance of harm/pain, our sensation functions through our five external senses and our perceptive powers through the five internal senses²⁰

The Arabic word, *ammarah*, is derived from the word, *amr*, or command. It indicates that we have preferred the temporal commands of our ego over the eternal commands of God. It is basically to be in a state of autopilot where our "self" is driven or commanded by our animal soul that had been provided to us from nature to preserve our species or to defend our self against aggressors and predators.

It is not that we suppress or repress these natural impulses, but that we struggle to bring their true nature into awareness and consciousness, avoiding our mistaken thought that we have made our decisions based on free will. As we will see in future modules, instead of being a free choice, following the commands of our animal soul is actually to follow what our animal instinct is compelling us to do instead of struggling to discipline it. That is, we choose to go against our free will with which our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) had provided us. It is to be an animal out of control instead of a human being out of free choice. We have followed the weaker existence of our body rather than aspiring for our more intense moral/spiritual existence, the very purpose of our substantial motion with which God's creation of nature endowed us.

As we have pointed out, our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) governs our motivational system that rules over our powers of affect and behavior along with willpower, sensation and perception. Our affective aspect or pleasure principle is called lust or concupiscence (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) and provided to us by nature in order to preserve our species. Behavior, on the other hand, or our actions, is known as anger or irascibility (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*) or the avoidance of pain principle through which nature gives

us the ability to be angry when threatened in order to defend our individual self.

When the willpower and motivation of our animal soul chooses this temporal world over the struggle to reach the spirit/intellect and the eternal world in our lifetime, our animal soul remains instinctive, untamed. It rules us with incessant cravings and passions for wealth, fame, power, instant physical gratification and oppressing others. It becomes what we call "an ego" where we exhibit character traits of pride, vanity, greed, envy, impatience, ingratitude, inappropriate anger and lust, and so forth.

What leads to a fall too deep within our animal soul is a culpable straying, a self-imposed exile. It is to take the images of the sensible world too seriously, to become obsessed with them, to try and grasp at and cling to them, and so to become isolated and imprisoned in a petty world of bodily needs and desires.²¹

The base soul called the *nafs al-ammarah* (lit. the animal or commanding self, also translated as the carnal soul) on the basis of these words of a Quranic sign in which the Prophet Joseph says:

I declare my soul not innocent. Truly, the soul is that which incites to evil, but when my Lord had mercy. (Q12:53)

One who is dominated by the commanding self can be compared to those who engage in controversy to satisfy their ambitions rather than to find the truth. They deceive themselves when they think they have succeeded by winning arguments. Another instance of self-deception is found in those who imagine themselves to be spiritually advanced merely because of their performance of acts of worship: You will not become the master of your nature with prayers and fasts, because as you continue to do this you will grow every day darker by these two. Spiritual advancement is achieved through self-mastery, not by asceticism and superficial piety.²²

4. Arc of Descent

By realizing the functions of our body-soul and its evolution from nature to mineral soul, to plant soul, at birth our soul gains sensation, perception, movement and motivation through the animal soul. This basically completes what is known as the arc of descent containing, as we do, the potential for cognition.

Whatever is higher in intensity of existence incorporates the existence of whatever is lower than itself, adding to whatever it already has:

Every higher level of existence embraces all the qualities and potentials of the level or levels below it, and each is distinguished from the lower levels by what it adds to them. Thus all inanimate things belong to the realm of nature, which rules over their inanimate parts. Then plants add certain potential to nature, animals more potential, and human beings add specifically human powers to all these potentials.

Typically, the discussion of increasing levels of potential is carried out in terms of our soul (*nafs*).... Thus we have the mineral, plant, animal, and human souls.... Each level is described in terms of the potential it carries. Each higher level has the potential of the lower levels. A plant has a plant soul, an animal has both plant and animal souls, and a human being has, in addition, the human soul. This is not to say that animals have two souls and human beings three in some quantitative sense. It simply means that the animal soul has the potential of the plant along with those of the animal, and the human soul possesses the potential of the animal soul.²³

5. The Arc of Ascent

Now, with the potential of our human soul, we begin the arc of ascent, as it is now prepared for the great struggle to return to its origin.

When our soul becomes perfect in behavior and cognition or knowledge and deed, it begins to disengage from the physical in order to reach the level of the illuminating, acquired intellection—the Return. It has journeyed through all levels of existence and has become the Active Intellect because the Active Intellect is all existence and all existents below it in levels.²⁴

As we begin "disengagement" from the physical we realize that: All of these subsequent stages lie hidden within the first substance, which through transformation traverses the different stages of existence until it has the capacity to become completely divorced from all matter and potentiality, and even enjoys immortality in the world of pure intelligence in a state of pure spiritual completion.²⁵

6. Our Human Soul-Spirit/Intellect

While we have studied the soul-spirit/intellect in Module 2, here we concentrate on the soul and the role it plays in soul-spirit/intellect. The final stage for our soul is to move, evolving from the animal soul to the human soul. As we mature, our animal soul evolves into our human or rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah*) which contains the mineral, plant and animal souls.

It is a unity (*nafs wahidat*) that governs our body, and, inevitably, our self. It is immaterial and indivisible. It is that which enlivens our body when its powers are activated by the energies of the breath of life to perform its various activities, whether the body be asleep or not sensing or not moving. It cannot be measured in terms of space or time or quantity.²⁶

Our human soul emerges potentially more developed aspects of perception and cognition. In other words, our soul evolves from the motivational system governed by our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) to our cognitive system governed by our balanced reason/intellect.

Philosophers refer to this stage of our soul as our rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah*):

The human being is possessed of an inner power that formulates meaning (*dhu nutq*) and this formulation of meaning, which involves judgment and discrimination and clarification, is what constitutes his 'rationality'. The terms *natiq* and *nutq* are derived from a root that conveys the basic meaning of 'speech' in the sense of human speech, so that they both signify a certain *power* and *capacity* in us to *articulate words in meaningful pattern*. He is, as it were, a 'language animal', and the articulation of linguistic symbols into meaningful patterns is no other than the outward, visible and audible expression of the inner, unseen reality which we call '*aql*'.²⁷

However, in terms of Quranic Psychology, as we will see, it is called our intellect/soul at peace ('*aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*). Both "rational soul" and "soul at peace" refer to our inner power or energy that contains the meaning or spirit of things, through which we gain knowledge and speak:

In regard to our human soul, while all of creation contains the potential of consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*), only the human being has an intense enough existence to actualize it; only we have accepted the covenant:

Mention when thy Lord took from the Children of Adam—from their generative organs—their offspring and called to them to witness of themselves: Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea! We bore witness so that you say not on the Day of Resurrection: Truly, we had been ones who were heedless of this. (Q7:172)

And the trust of nature: Truly, We presented the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were apprehensive of it. But the human being carried it. (Q33:72)

And the vicegerency of God on earth: Remember when He made you viceregents after Aad and placed you on the earth. (Q7:74) Only we have been infused with and breathed upon by the divine spirit when God breathed His spirit into Adam and immediately afterwards called us forth as the progeny of Adam.

As He began you, you will revert to Him. (Q7:29)

If our soul does not undertake the journey of the return on the arc of ascent to its origin to perfect and complete itself—as the innate goal of its substantial motion—unified in the presence of God and bearing witness, it will not have attained the goal of its innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) and substantial motion. In this case, then, our soul is 'hearing, eyesight, potentials, and bodily parts, so that it is identical with our body because of its utmost potential and luminosity, while our body is identical with our soul because of its utmost limpidness and subtlety' and our soul at the beginning will be in the same as its state at the end in dispersion and chastisement.²⁸

He guided a group of people and a group of people realized their fallacy. Truly, they took satans to themselves as protectors instead of God and they assume that they are ones who are truly guided. (Q7:29-7:30)

Everything at the beginning originated from Him and to whom the "going back" is at the end. As has been said: The end is the return to the beginning. Our soul that rises up to its Lord through steps is as it were on a straight path. Its journey is a straight path through its very existence.²⁹

In short, the human soul is the form of every power, energy, potency in this world. It is the point of union of the two seas of physical things and spiritual things. When you look on its essence in this world, you find it to be the origin of all physical powers, putting into service the rest of the animal, plant, and mineral forms. They are among its effects and consequents in this world. When you look on it in the intellectual world, you find it to be pure potentiality, its relation to that moral/spiritual world being that of a seed to a fruit, for indeed the seed is a seed in act, a fruit in potency.³⁰

Whomever He wills, He lays on a straight path. (Q6:39)

Its struggle or journey is a straight path by the very fact that it exists while all other souls are on twisted or inverted paths.

Whoever is able to consider the Reality with their inner eye or insight and verify what has been considered or seen, will recognize that the oneness or unity or our soul is an actualized reality that is unique, individual, original and innate within it, multiplicity being an accident. Once we recognize and verify the realities, the multiplicities disappear and any accidental dispersion disintegrates.

So also when we return to our true reality, come back to the oneness that we possessed with respect to our original innate nature (*fitrat Allah*), and are delivered from opposites—all this through acquiring potential perfection and conjunction with our fully Active Intellect—then our bodily defects and husks disappear from us and the physical bonds are clipped away from us:

Glory be to Him in whose hand is the Kingdom of everything! (Q36:83)

It should be clear to us now that the path of plants is a path inverted towards depth. Our animal soul has passed beyond this plant soul and has been saved from it. The animal soul is a horizontal, lengthened path. Our human soul has passed beyond it. Our human soul is a standing path, raised up between the lowest and the highest with respect to its innate nature (*fitrat Allah*). However, when our soul deviates toward twistedness through cognitive corrupt beliefs and views, or toward bending through ugly deeds or behavior, it is pushed back to the lowest of the low.³¹

Again, We returned him to the lowest of the low. (Q95:5)

When we assure our "self" that we are going to take the straight path, travel on God's road, and take our self on the return through our emotions, behavior and cognition, we are saved. We reach the gate of mercy, the

"place" of the noble angels. So we counsel our self:

Strive, O soul, and think, for you have nearly reached the gate of the Garden. If you make haste before separation from the body and if you gain the preparedness for and provision of God-consciousness, worthy deeds, sound views, beautiful moral character traits, and true sciences, then you will have been saved from the fires of the pit and the painful chastisement. You may hope that you will be in the row of the high ones, those who lodge in the highest sanctity in the Garden of Bliss among the prophets, the truthful, the witnesses and the worthy-good companions they!³²

Whoever obeys God and the Messenger, those are to whom God was gracious among the Prophets, just persons, the witnesses and the ones in accord with morality. Excellent were those as allies! (Q4:69)

7. The Resurrection

Our human soul, then, is destined to be raised again on the day of resurrection:

Again, truly, you will be raised up on the day of resurrection. (Q23:16)

Assumed you that We created you in amusement and that to Us you would not be returned? (Q23:115)

Everything in existence is traveling on a path that ends up at its rightful place with God. Divine mercy is the guiding force of creation and the movement from Origin to Return and from First to Last as a great manifestation of God's wisdom and compassion, all of it leading to a final fruition in which everything in the universe will find permanent happiness.³³

So, everyone should contemplate his own essence (what makes us something and not something else) and its Establisher and Existence-Giver with a contemplation hallowed beyond the bodily parts and the senses:

... but most of humanity knows not. (Q7:187)

rather, they disbelieve in the encounter with their Lord:

Nay! In the meeting with their Lord they are ones who disbelieve. (Q32:10)

... not because some external preventer is realized, but rather because of the lack of inward eyesight, intellective hearing, and a heart dilated by the light of faith. For the veil between the servants and their object of worship is neither heaven nor earth, land nor sea. The veil is only ignorance and incapacity, or appetite, wrath, and caprice.

All those who are delivered and saved from the captivity of nature and the illness of the soul and caprice, whose eyesights and hearings are opened, and whose hearts are dilated by the light of knowledge and guidance will be conjoined with the world of the Absent; and the Higher Plenum and mustered among the ranks of the angels, the prophets. [. . .] the witnesses. and the worthy:

Whoever obeys God and the Messenger, those are to whom God was gracious among the Prophets and just persons and the witnesses and the ones in accord with morality. Excellent were those as allies! (Q4:69)

Those whose insights are opened to reading the divine Book and their ears to hearing God's signs [that is, verses] and understanding the mysteries of the after-world and those whose breasts and hearts are dilated to the remembrance of God, for them are good tidings in the life of this world and ... the afterworld.³⁴

There is no substitution of the Words of God. That, it is the winning the sublime triumph. (Q10:64)

... and will turn about to his people as one who is joyous. (Q84:9)

... the Day of the Encounter. (Q40:15)

... the Day of Amassing. There is no doubt about it. (Q42:7)

Enter them in peace as ones who are safe! (Q15:46)

God accomplishes what He wills. Q3:40)

Truly, God gives judgment how He wants. (Q5:I)

Summary

Our soul begins its existence as part of nature and the mineral soul. It then evolves into the plant soul in a human embryo. It evolves into the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) at birth. The existence of our animal soul then energizes our motivational system including our affect, behavior, willpower, sensation and perception. Finally, as we mature, it evolves and exists as our human or rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah*).

As the existence of our human soul, it energizes the aspects of our cognitive system: our mind (*sadr*), our conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*), our consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*) and our intellect (*'aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*).

When God breathed His spirit into the first human being, Adam's soul was animated and given energies or powers. While the very existence of "soul" regulates or governs energies or powers of motivation, sensation, perception and cognition, it is something flowing with a continuously changing

identity. Yet, while our identity changes, our species, determined when God breathed His spirit into Adam and immediately called forth the generative organs of the progeny of Adam, remains the same as long as we continue to exist. Even after death, our soul-spirit/intellect maintains our species with the continuing existence of our soul-spirit/intellect. Our soul—bodily in origination and spiritual in subsistence and, therefore, as has been mentioned, there is no duality—is also a substance as is nature and our body.³⁵

Our soul begins existence weak as a part of nature's weak existence. We refer to this first stage of our soul's development as soul-body. Once our soul evolves into our animal soul, it is in a constant struggle to overcome or discipline its nature-given, instinctive affect and behavior. Once again, we see that there is a conflict between the temporal creation of our soul-body and the eternal spirit of God's command. God's command endowed us with our innate nature that makes us different from the animal species. It indicates why it is that it is intensely potential human soul. This is its difference, making it distinct from the rest of the animal world.

Once our soul is able to govern the irrational demands of our animal soul, it continues to gradually evolve through our lifetime until it actualizes its potential intellect and cognition. We refer to this final stage of its development as soul-spirit/intellect.

Our soul, then, being spiritual in subsistence, is our connection between the physical—created in time—and the spiritual—that is eternal. It is because our soul is spiritual in subsistence that it has a more intense existence, as we have learned, and, therefore, a greater, stronger potentially to actualize itself as soul-spirit/intellect though gradual substantial motion, reaching the intensity of our soul-spirit/intellect's eternal, spiritual existence.

We now turn to study the last phase of the arc of descent, our motivational system (Part II) and, then, the first and only stage of the arc of ascent, cognition (Part III).

Endnotes to Part I: Our Soul: Module 3: Our Soul Evolving from the Animal Soul to the Human Soul

1 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar (Spiritual Psychology: The Fourth Intellectual Journey of Transcendent Philosophy)*, VI:302, 377; VII:21; VIII:35, p. 306.

2 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Shawahid al-rububiya*, Chapter 3.

3 The difference between substance and accident: Substance is an entity that exists or subsists through its own essence and is not contingent upon anything else, such as any natural body, soul and intellect. Accident is an entity that exists in some substance and, therefore, has no independence of existence, whether it be sensible such as any color or non-sensible such as joy and sadness. Notes from Muhammad Abdul Haq, "Mulla Sadra's Concept of Substantial Motion." Online.

4 Maria Messi Dakake, "The Soul as Barzakh: Substantial Motion in Mulla Sadra."

5 Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*.

6 Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*.

7 Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*.

8 See William Meader, "The Seven Rays of Divine Manifestation," on meader.org.

9 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Breaking the Idol of Ignorance*, Section VII.

10 Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*.

11 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.

12 Muhammad Mahdi ibn Abi Dharr Naraq, *Jami al-Sa'adat*, p. 12. According to Robert Frager: This is related to our anatomy and physiology. This is our 'growing' self, just as plants simply grow. This is us as we just go about the action of any living creature ... self-sustainment and growth (although for humans that also implies emotional/intellectual growth as well because of our nature. The Western idea of Behavioral Psychology starts here. Robert Frager. <https://www.theosophical.org/publications/quest-magazine/42-publications/quest-magazine/1590-your-seven-souls-a-sufi-view>.

13 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.

14 Ibn Sina (1959, 10-11); Shahram Pazouki (2007, ALSW, vol. 5: 163-171). Quoted in Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*.

15 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.

16 See William Meader, "The Seven Rays of Divine Manifestation," on meader.org.

17 See William Meader, "The Seven Rays of Divine Manifestation," on meader.org.

18 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Hikmat al-arshiyah (The Wisdom of the Throne)*. Online.

19 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.

20 Imagination, one of our perceptive functions of our five internal senses, is two fold, sensitive and rational. Animals only have sensitive imagination. Humans have both sensitive and rational imagination. Therefore, when the text mentions the functions of the animal soul including sensation and perception, perception only includes the sensitive imagination.

21 See William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.

22 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Shawahid al-rububiya*, Chapter 8.

23 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Shawahid al-rububiya*, Chapter 8.

24 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Shawahid al-rububiya*, Chapter 3. The Active Intellect is also known the "primordial and original spirit which is with God and which remains with Him." Maria Dakake, "The Origin of Man in Pre-Eternity and His Origination in Time." Online.

25 Jari Kaukua, "A Closed Book: Opacity of the Human Self in Mulla Sadra." Online.

26 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.

27 Naquib al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam*, p. 22ff.

28 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.

29 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.

- 30 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Shawahid al-rububiyah*, Chapter 3.
- 31 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Risalah Seh Asl*, 1376/1997, 3/5 for further description.
- 32 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.
- 33 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.
- 34 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.
- 35 Descartes, a contemporary of Sadr al-Din Shirazi, said: I think, therefore, I am, Quranic Psychology is to say: I am, therefore I think ... feel, will and act.

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Part II: Our Motivational System

Module 4: Our Animal Soul

Motivation

Motivation refers to a process of movement and change. What underlies our motivation or process of gradual change is the fact that we are alive, that we exist. We have to first acknowledge our existence before we can work on any change. Change or "becoming" or "evolving" is a living transformation whereby we gradually become "more" or "less" what we were depending upon the strength or weakness of our motivational system.

Motion or motivation expresses itself through our soul. The tree pushes out its roots and opens its leaves in search of nutriment. The animal, stirred up by feeling, creeps, walks, runs, swims, or flies in pursuit of its food. We, too, are constantly moving one or other of our limbs, or organs, to gratify some need or desire. In later life, the instant our willpower is exerted, the appropriate movement or chain of movements necessary for its satisfaction follows with precision. Yet this has not been always so. We know that our skill in handwriting, cricket, or skating, is the outcome of many unsuccessful efforts; and we have only to watch a child of eighteen months toddling from one chair to another to realize that even our most natural movements have been very gradually acquired.¹

In order to understand our motivational system, we have to first understand the meaning of *quwwah*, our nature-given potentiality, energy, potency or power (or sometimes referred to as faculty). It is the potentialities that our soul has as part of its nature to actualize these potentials. Thus, *quwwah* is our soul itself that operates in and through its potentiality to bring about change.

The cause that makes us yield and induces us to move from one place to another or from one state of being to another is the existence of nature. Nature—created through God's willpower—has been endowed with a substantial power that subsists in us from our very nature because we exist, something flowing with a continuously changing identity. If this foundation were not to be something flowing and ever-changing, it would be impossible for any natural motions of change to emanate from it.²

A potential (*quwwah*), energy, potency or power is not of the nature of a particular part of the soul, or of a member different from it as a limb is distinct from the rest of the body. It is not an independent reality, a separate agent, which originates its states out of itself apart from the soul. Neither is it merely a group of states of a particular kind. It is simply a special mode through which

the soul itself acts. A potential is not a force distinct from and independent of the essence of the soul, but it is the soul itself, which operates in and through its potential.

Potentiality is, in fact, the proximate ground of some special form of activity of which our soul is capable. It is abundantly clear that we are justified in attributing potentialities to our soul. Careful use of our power of introspection reveals to us a number of modes of psychical or neural energy radically distinct from each other, and incapable of further analysis. To see, to hear, to remember, to desire, are essentially different potentialities of our soul to actualize, though all proceed from the same source. Sometimes we are in some action, sometimes in another, but none of them ever exhausts the total energy of our soul. They are partial utterances of the same indivisible subject. This is equivalent to the establishment of certain distinct potentialities in our soul. The fact that our soul possesses different potentialities means nothing else than our soul is a substance which—as active principle—is capable of exerting different types of energies.

If the soul produces within itself acts of sensation, then must it also be endowed with a property corresponding to this effect, and this property must be something actual, objectively real in it. Otherwise a stone may at times be just as capable of sensate acts. To deny that property while we admit its manifestations is to assert that the potential of sensation is nothing else than the sum of its acts. It is equivalent to postulating the development of characteristics without a substance.

The truth is that our soul possesses the power of performing operations beyond the scope of sense. Many of its acts and products are distinct in kind from all modes of sensibility and all forms of sensuous action whether simple or complex. No sensation, whatever stages of evolution or transformation it may pass through can ever be actualized into thought without the presence of the soul-spirit/intellect/cognition function when God endowed the human being with His spirit. It is the existence of the soul that unifies all our various functions.³

Motivation is change itself that has been provided by God to His agent, nature, through its very existence which is directed towards a universal purpose—to return to its Origin. Existence is the first perfection of nature. The second perfection is our potential energy, our *quwwah*. In other words, it is our nature of existence and our innate potentiality that motivates us to move and to change, not randomly, but towards some purpose or goal. This goal or purpose that we are naturally endowed with can be described as a desire or yearning to return to the Origin.

At death, our body returns as a dying plant and then mineral soul, decays and becomes once again part of its earthly origin. While our soul began as something physical and temporal as soul-body, it is spiritual in subsistence—soul-spirit/intellect/cognition. As part of our soul's natural purpose—through substantial change and evolution over our lifetime—it desires and yearns for

its return to God's Knowledge in the eternal, spiritual world. In this process, it evolves from soul-body to soul gradually becoming independent of body through a continuous movement from potentiality to actuality as it undertakes the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*). Its completion as soul-spirit/intellect/cognition depends on the strength of motivation to distance itself from desires unnecessary to its nature as it moves more and more towards its spiritual needs. The immediate cause, then, of our evolution towards "humanness" from "animalness" is the existence of our soul.

In its transformation or evolution from a weak physical, temporal existence to a more intense spiritual one, our soul itself evolves from the potentialities of one species to another—from mineral to plant to animal to human—as we have learned. Our motivation is the intermediary stage between potentiality and actuality as change or evolution is gradual. It is not a rupture and replacement, but a continuous and single process whereby new characteristics are added to the previous ones as if we were to put on new clothes over old ones.

Intensification of our "humanness" persists because of the persistence of existence—the "existence" of our nature-given human species in regard to the gradual perfection of existence in terms of multiplicity-in-unity and unity-in-multiplicity. We persist as humans because our existence is a gradually unfolding process that has a unity, and its intensification through multiplicity, means its progressive completion or perfection.

As an example from the natural world, for an apple to become red does not mean an increase of redness in the apple but an increase in the apple of redness, a redness that it adds to its previous greenness. When we say that redness has only one single continuous identity in terms of "more" or "less", we admit to some degree of intensification.

There is no difference between a qualitative intensification called change and the quantitative intensification called growth, on the one hand, and the substantive intensification called emergence, on the other, in that each one of them is a gradual completion or perfection, i.e., a motivation towards the actuality of a new mode of existence. What is required in the motivational process is not a definite quantity but some quantity by which things become more particularized.⁴

The same holds true for our human self that is constituted by existence capable of growth and perception as well as for everything that exists in the universe whose existence is constituted in relation to a soul and body. Therefore, when existence that is capable of growth changes in quantity, its characteristics or "what-ness" or essence as an individual entity also changes but its self-structure as an individual entity remains the same. While our body is in constant change and flow, our human soul endures because it preserves its identity by the passing of essential or inherent or innate forms in an uninterrupted continuous process. These essential forms are renewed at every instant as far as their physical and temporal existence is concerned, and there is a gradual and steady origination for them. As far as their mental existence

is concerned, however, they are eternal and perpetual in the Knowledge of God.

While change is defined as a process of gradual intensification or diminution in types of existence, it is the all-encompassing reality of existence (*wujud*) that connects together the cosmos from the celestial spheres to humans, animals, plants and minerals. It is also clear that movement is an intrinsic property of things—material and immaterial alike—as well as human motivation. This is to envisage a world-picture that is in constant flux on the one hand, and directed towards a universal goal, on the other. It is both change and permanence, the two interdependent aspects of the order of nature, as modes of existence.⁵

Operating through substantial motion, our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) motivates our affect/emotions-behavior or actions by either giving us impulses or causing movement. Our impulses may begin as thoughts which then influence our behavior as our motivational system in terms of psychology may work in a cyclical manner. Our thoughts may influence our behavior. Our behavior then may drives our actions. Our actions may affect our emotions and thoughts and the cycle begins again. Our motivational system is affected in each of the cycles that we experience by our willpower (*iradah*), free willpower (*ikhtiyar*), attitude, beliefs, actions and lack of action. In terms of Quranic Psychology, motivation exists purely within our individual self as we are only accountable for that, but may be influenced by external socio-cultural activities stemming from our participating in activities within the cultural context of both Muslim and non-Muslim groups.

Awareness arising out of volitional effort and muscular strain has been called the feeling of innervation (supplying an organ or other body part with nerves). Whatever be its physiological accompaniments and the ingredients of which it is composed, it is by controlling and varying this innervation under the guidance of incoming sensations—muscular, tactual, and visual—that the direction, range, and rapidity of the movement is determined. But how is this intelligent control of motivational energy expressed? How does the infant come to be able to select, not the right muscles, of which it may never know anything, but the right muscular feelings to be stirred up in order to accomplish a particular complex operation? This is the question of the development of the power of motivation. In order to answer it we must distinguish several kinds of movements.

Automatic Movements

We find that all living animal organisms perform certain vital actions, independently of stimulation from without. The pulsations of the heart and the circulation of the blood are perhaps the best illustrations of this class of movements. They are called automatic. They are the unconscious outcome of the living mechanism of our soul.⁶

Reflex Action

There is another class of actions which differ from the former in that they are occasioned by peripheral stimulation. These are movements in response to sensory impressions without the intervention of any conscious effort—the involuntary reflexion of an afferent impulse back along an efferent nerve such as winking, sneezing, swallowing. Such movements are called reflex; but they often gradually fade into the other groups, especially in acquired habits. Original reflex actions are unlearned and involuntary, though they may sometimes become subject to the will, as in the act of coughing.⁷

Impulsive Action

Yet another class of movements are apparently common to us as with all the other animals from birth. They differ from automatic movements in their irregularity, and from reflex action in seeming to be occasioned not by external stimulation, but by internal feelings. They are impulsive actions, and chiefly out of these voluntary movements are developed.⁸

Voluntary Movement

If we analyze any complex deliberate action of mature life, such as tying our shoe-laces, reading the Quran, or trying to hit a tennis ball, we shall discover that several distinct elements are involved. First, a visual image of the contemplated act, its extent, direction, and velocity, is formed. Accompanying this, especially if the operation be unusual, there is a motivational representation, a faint imaginary rehearsal of the movement, in which there is an estimate taken of the quantity and quality of muscular effort to be employed. Finally there is, at least in the act of the will, a motivational energy is discharged into the selected channels causing the imagined action to be realized. The will, of course, does not consciously pick out the particular muscles to be exerted. It is only late in life that our soul learns the existence of such muscles.

Voluntary movement or action is freely desired action including connecting voluntarily to our *fitrat Allah* or innate nature discussed in the module on the soul-spirit/intellect. Desire implies a striving towards a kind of good, towards a preconceived end. Voluntary movement, therefore, pre-supposes a representation of the movement or of its separate parts, not merely in terms of visual, but of motor sensation. In order to pronounce a word, or to swim, it is not enough to be able to imagine the sound of the word, or the picture of a man swimming. We must be acquainted with the feelings involved in such actions, and these must necessarily, on their first occurrence, have been not anticipated.

The child, subject to obscure feelings and cravings, seeks relief in movements, some of a purely haphazard, others of a vaguely purposive, or instinctive character. Part of these actions turn out pleasant—resulting from the attraction to pleasure function of our animal soul, whether accidentally or because they satisfy an instinct, matters not; part of them result in pain, stimu-

lating the avoidance of pain function of our animal soul. There is indisputably a tendency in the living soul to prolong and repeat movements which afford satisfaction, and to check those which prove disagreeable. The infant rejoices in reiterating the same sound, and the same movement of its arm or leg again and again. With each successive repetition the force of association between the feeling and the pleasant result increases, and each tends more and more to suggest the other.

The earliest motivational exertions will, of course, be very simple, and the connection between action and the pleasing effect immediate. The child touches a smooth object, and finds the experience agreeable. Or, he utters a cry and rejoices in the discovery of his power of noise. Later on his vague tentative efforts will result in the combination of two or more actions, and, encouraged by his successes, he will gradually come to perform more and more complex operations, to conceive more distant ends, and to be incited by the anticipation of more remote results.

The term, voluntary, lays the emphasis upon the conscious act of choice. This, in turn, implies ideas of various possible forms of bodily motion such as with the formal prayer gained by previous experience with the correlated states of conscious feeling and conditions of the body as giving rise to or modifying these states.

We may, therefore, classify movements according to their origin, their voluntariness, and their conscious character thusly: An action is voluntary where the interior initial state or impulse from which a motion would originate as a result does not merely take place, but is adopted or endorsed by our willpower.⁹

Ideomotor Movement

Not only can movement be initiated by volitional effort, by sensory impressions and by associated movements, it can also be excited by the mere idea of the action itself. We have seen that in the deliberate performance of a movement, we first form a representation of that movement. Now it is a matter of common experience that in proportion as the image—especially an image that motivates an action—becomes more lively, it tends of its own accord, without any effort of will, to pass into reality. Vivid ideas tend to realize themselves. The physiological explanation suggested is that the same nerve-centers which are engaged in the actual sensation or movement are also the seat of the representation, but excited in a feebler manner.

The thought of past sea-sickness awakened by the peculiar smell of the ship's cabin has sometimes realized itself before the ship has left the harbor. The sight of an object on the floor moves an absent-minded man to stoop and pick it up. Most of the movements in day dreaming, sleep dreaming, sleepwalking and the hypnotic state are the outcome of these ideas. The overpowering force of the vivid idea of falling down from a precipice or high building has probably been the cause of many seemingly deliberate suicides. The temptation sometimes awakened by express prohibitions and the fascination

exerted by great crimes and by the horrible or the disgusting is similarly explained by the absorbing force of a vividly suggested idea.¹⁰

Expectant Motivation

Intense anticipation causes us to rehearse in imagination the movements as well as the sensations to which we look forward. Some at least of the phenomena of "thought-reading" are thus explained. The subject endeavoring to "will" or intently realize the word or the action unconsciously guides the hand of the "reader" or in some other way gives external expression to the idea absorbing this person. Monomanias are often due to the "possession" or "obsession" of the person by some "fixed idea" which, arising perhaps out of a morbid condition of the brain, inhibits the corrective influence of other intellectual acts and suspends willpower control. The person is often aware of the folly or the wickedness of the insane impulse, yet feels unable to extinguish the craving to carry out the suggestion.¹¹

Our Animal Soul:

Attraction to Pleasure/Avoiding Harm or Pain

Motivation is a force that energizes, activates and directs our affect/emotions (attraction to pleasure, *quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) and behavior (avoidance of harm/pain, *quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*). Our affective system is an innate or instinctive unconscious system while our behavioral system is an innate or instinctive pre-conscious aspect which is capable of being trained or disciplined. In either case, energy is required to actualize the potential of these systems whether it be to disciple or control our affective/emotive aspect or our behavior. Also, this means that any changes in motivation reflect on an our affect and behavior.¹²

The power of our attraction to pleasure, provided to us by nature to preserve our species, provokes a movement of our organs that brings us near to things imagined to be necessary or useful in the search for pleasure. It may take the form of cravings, longings, yearnings, hunger, thirst, passion, enthusiasm, eagerness, desires, impulses, volitions, emotions and so on. It includes not only yearning for absent pleasures, but also the enjoyment of gratification once attained.

Our power of our avoidance of harm/pain system, on the other hand, provided to us by nature to preserve our individual self, impels us to a movement of the limbs in order to repulse things imagined to be harmful or destructive and, thus, to overcome them.

Our motivational system (*nafs al-ammarah*) in terms of psychology, then, is the system that underlies sensation (and that part of perception that we share with animals), willpower (*iradah*), free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) and our affective attraction to pleasure (lust, emotions, concupiscent, *quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) and avoidance of harm/pain behavioral (anger, irascibility, *quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*) powers.

We begin with coming to understand our animal soul's bi-fold affective and behavioral functions and then each separately as affect or attraction to pleasure and behavior or avoidance of pain. In future modules we learn how our motivational system governs our willpower (*iradah*) and our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*), sensation and that part of perception that we share with animals before we move to our cognitive functions and the emergence of our soul-spirit/intellect/cognition.

Razi describes the relationship of pleasure and pain and how the natural state of the self is one of pleasure:

Pleasure consists simply of the restoration of that condition which was expelled by the element of pain, while passing from one's actual state until one returns to the state formerly experienced. An example is provided by the person who leaves a restful, shady spot to go out into the desert. There he proceeds under the summer sun until he is affected by the heat. Then he returns to his former place. He continues to feel pleasure in that place until his body returns to its original state. Then he loses the sense of pleasure as his body goes back to normal. The intensity of his pleasure on coming home is in proportion to the degree of intensity of the heat and the speed of his cooling-off in that place. Therefore, pleasure is defined as a return to the state of nature. Now since pain and the departure from the state of nature sometimes occurs little by little over a long period of time, and then the return to the state of nature happens all at once, in a brief space, under such circumstances we are not aware of the element of pain, whereas the sharpness of the sense of a return to nature is multiplied. This state we call pleasure. Those who have had no training suppose this has happened without any prior pain. They imagine it is a pure and solitary phenomenon, wholly disassociated from pain. Now this is not really the case at all. There cannot, in fact, be any pleasure except in proportion to a prior pain, that of departing from the state of nature. One takes pleasure in eating and drinking according to the degree to which one has hungered and thirsted. When the hungry and thirsty person returns to his original state, there is no more worse torture than to compel him to go on partaking of food and drink, in spite of the fact that just previously he could think of nothing more pleasurable and desirable than these. It is the same with all other pleasures: the definition is universally valid and all-embracing.¹³

Thus, our natural state is one of pleasure, whether it be in our innate, instinctive attracting the pleasure of food or sexual intercourse to preserve the species or in protecting the pleasure system by our innate, instinctive avoiding of harm/pain to preserve and defend our individual self as well as our ability to reproduce our species. If either of these two systems are regulated by a balanced cognitive system, our self is in balance. If the affective dominates, our self is attracted to unconscious, irrational desires for pleasure. If our behavioral system dominates, we are ruled by the pre-conscious, irrational urges for power, fame, wealth or ambition.

These two systems cooperate in such a way that the actions of the behavioral system unite with or replace those of affect whenever the self is in

difficulty. When an object has been perceived as desirable, affect or appetite responds, and from this, in turn, the desire to possess it. If the object can easily be procured, the affective/attraction to pleasure system supplies sufficient energy and the affective aspect of our animal soul remains balanced in moderation or temperance.

However, if any obstacles get in the way, the behavioral/avoidance of pain system yields hope in support of the affective system, enabling the self to strive with great effort to effect the purpose of the affective system, that is, to avoid the pain of not attaining what is desired. It may deprive our self of contentment until the difficulty has been overcome. Whenever there is an insurmountable problem, the affective system is overwhelmed with loss of hope so that energy is not activated and spent in vain.

The result is far more dangerous to the balance of our self than when they each act alone. Our behavioral system may induce our self to pursue that which is contrary to the affective system. It may risk our very life to seek revenge. Thus, the very means which nature in its mode of operation provided to insure the survival in us as an individual may prove our undoing. The two systems, acting together, fan into a flame that destroys our ability to reason.

The affective-behavioral systems may proceed from a mild state to an extreme one. Desire of a future good kindles hope or despair. The resentment of a future event stirs fear or anxiety. The perception of a present wrongdoing, which at first caused grief, may incite anger.

If these two systems dominate, they blind our understanding. They can cause our reason to judge whatever promotes their needs as good and agreeable to reason. Their domination can be so strong that the energies of the self are exhausted and this perception, then, prevents our self from returning to a normal state.

Other characteristics of response to a situation include contradiction, contrariety, insatiability, importunity, and impossibility. Contradiction and contrariety have to do with reason. When we least expect it, the two systems of affect and behavior may completely undermine our reasoning ability. While it is engaged in thought, a motion so strong may creep into our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) that we are carried beyond all control. The desires of these systems neither keep order or measure because of their inability to reflect. Insatiability is not to be capable of being satisfied. It may be in regard to food or to the seeking of knowledge as examples. Importunity is a plea to the point of begging for a certain pleasure to the point that it cannot be ignored such as an addiction to something. Impossibility is clearly a situation where it is impossible not to have what is desired of a pleasure.¹⁴

Our animal soul's (*nafs al-ammarah*) two powers of affective/emotive-behavioral systems are also known as the passions (*'ahwa*). The definition of passion is: A movement of a natural desire to satisfy a need that arises from the sensation functions of our five senses of hearing, seeing, tasting, touching and smelling, or a perceived need and is accompanied by a bodily

transmutation or a movement to avoid what is perceived as harmful or painful. Passions involve soul-body. The object of the natural desire to satisfy a need or a perceived need or avoid that which is perceived to be harmful or painful is towards a concrete and material good perceived by our internal senses. When they function without cognition and reason, the passions are essentially psychosomatic, and they are the cause of most neuroses.

The potential of our animal soul—which we share with animals, hence, the name animal soul—actualizes itself when a child is born. Its two functions are referred to in multiple ways. We will be studying each individually in the following modules, but as background information it is important to note the various names each function is given.

The passions operate at two levels as stated above: One is called "the pleasure principle",¹⁵ concupiscent power or lust (*quwwat al-shah-waniyyah*) which provokes a movement/impulse of our organs that brings us near to things imagined to be necessary or useful in our search for pleasure. This is also our affective/emotive aspect of self.

It is a passion by which our soul is inclined to seek what is suitable according to our five external senses and to flee from what is harmful. The other is a passion by which we resist the attacks of anything that might hinder what is suitable and inflict harm or pain and this is called avoidance of harm/pain or irascible power or anger (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*) whereby we perceive that its object is something arduous because it tends to overcome and rise above obstacles.

Sometimes our soul busies itself with unpleasant things against what our attraction to pleasure function desires so that in order to avoid harm or pain, it fights against obstacles. In addition, the avoidance of pain is the champion and defender of the concupiscible when it rises up against what is preventing our soul from acquiring what it desires or against what causes harm.

Everything arises from the appetite of the attraction to pleasure. For example, anger arises from sadness once it accomplishes vengeance that, then, ends in a false sense of joy. Sometimes they even oppose each other so that the desires of our irascible appetite pursues activities that our concupiscent or pleasure-seeking appetite is inclined to oppose.

Our attraction to pleasure or lust or concupiscible appetite represents the realm of concrete goals that we wish to attain. Our avoidance of harm/pain or anger or irascible appetite is connected with avoiding that which is bad for us.

A balance between both passions is a sign of a healthy personality. An excessive development of the concupiscible or lustful passion leads to emptiness and egotism. An excessive development of the irascible or angry appetite leads to fear and anxiety.

The passions were endowed to us by nature for our own good. They do not desire wrongdoing, as such, unless a wrongdoing is perceived as an apparent good. A passion is naturally programmed towards the good and to

avoid wrongdoing. Our soul has a double motivation: attraction to pleasure and repulsion from wrongdoing. Our drive mechanisms include hunger, thirst, breathing and sex drives. However, when we become afraid of losing our job or being diagnosed with cancer or being publically humiliated, it is not the drives that heighten or animate affect, but the affects that amplify drives. This explains why one must be excited (affect) to be sexually aroused (drive), but need not to be sexually aroused to be excited. In other words, both affect and drives can lend power to memory, perception, thought and action.

Our attraction to pleasure, pleasure principle, concupiscence or lust, as part of our natural energy which manages our affect/emotive, digestive and reproductive system supplied to our liver has to do with our food and reproduction potential.

Lust is an emotion or feeling of intense desire in the body. Lust can take any form such as the lust for knowledge, the lust for sex or the lust for power. It can take such mundane forms as the lust for food as distinct from the need for food. Lust is a powerful psychological force producing intense wanting for an object, or circumstance fulfilling the emotion. The Quran refers to *shahwah* five times. For example:

God wants that He turn to you in forgiveness while those who follow their lusts want that you turn against God in a serious deviation. (Q4:27)

Lust or concupiscence is a strong tendency or appetite arising in our sensation functions. Concupiscence can be admitted by the will to our intellectual function and thus may sway the judgment of intellect and the decision of will. Therefore, concupiscence can influence reason. Concupiscence is caused by love and it tends to pleasure or joy. It is a passion specifically distinct from its cause (love) and from its end (joy). It is the specific passion called desire. Humans and animals have certain strong and necessary desires—for life, for food, for drink, for propagation. These are forms of natural concupiscence.

Among earthly creatures, only humans may have desire for things beyond natural needs—for fame, wealth, promotion, entertainment, the latest fad or style, etc. Such desires are forms of non-natural concupiscence. This is sometimes called irrational concupiscence since it exists only in a rational animal. Strong or disordered, non-natural concupiscence (especially with reference to wealth) is called greed. Natural concupiscence is finite. Non-natural concupiscence can be indefinite or potentially infinite. Thus, a person may aspire to unlimited fame or power, but no person naturally desires limitless supplies of food and drink. He desires merely ample supplies.¹⁶

The second passion is called "the pain principle", irascibility or anger (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*), our behavioral aspect of self.

Anger or irascibility is a passion that tends to strike back at wrongdoing, to inflict punishment or revenge upon a cause of wrongdoing. Other pas-

sions can arouse anger, even passions that oppose one another as, for example, by sorrow and by hope. Anger, then, is a kind of contrariety within itself. It is the only passion that is not paired with an opposite. Anger wants satisfaction by striking back to what afflicts or disturbs or deters wrongdoing. Thus, anger has what we might call a dual objective, including both good and wrongdoing. As part of the irascible appetite, our soul will tend to turn into anger including despair, depression and fear. Anger may develop at three levels: wrath, ill-will and rancor. Wrath is an angry outburst. Ill-will is the continuing effect of the outburst. Rancor is the determination of the angry person to have revenge or to inflict punishment.

This impels us to a movement of our limbs in order to avoid things imagined to be harmful or destructive and thus to overcome them. They are essentially the unconscious, affective/emotive and the preconscious, behavioral systems.¹⁷

Our motivation, then, is directional—either directed towards a pleasurable stimulus or away from what is perceived as a harmful stimulus. That is, when a desirable image is imprinted on our imagination, our pleasure principle seeks to satisfy it. When a repugnant image is imprinted on our imagination, our avoiding harm/pain principle seeks to avoid it. Our imagination plays a major role in our response as we will discuss in the module on perception.

The Quran refers to our avoidance of harm/pain or anger function, also as part of our natural energy, that manages our behavior provided by nature in order to preserve the individual as *ghadab* twenty-one times. For example:

Have you considered those who turned in friendship to a folk against whom God was angry? They are not of you, nor are you of them and they swear to a lie while they know. (Q58:14)

Our animal soul is driven by impulses based on desires, fears, appetites and egos. Most humans exist at this level. The animal soul at this level seeks to protect its self-interest, which is the basis for habitual and addictive behaviors. The soul will seek out satisfaction and justify its actions to satiate base desires. The self controlled by moods and impulses will even distort reality to ensure the body responds to its demands. This is the lowest level of the soul.¹⁸

This level is what the Quran refers to in the following sign/verses:

Truly the soul is that which incites to evil (al-nafs al-ammarah). (Q12:53)

I declare my soul not innocent. Truly the soul is that which incites to evil (al-nafs al-ammarah) except when my Lord has mercy. (Q12:53)

Your souls (anfusukum) enticed you with a command (amr). (Q12:18)

He (Joseph) said: You were enticed by your souls into an affair. (Q12:83)

He (Samaritan) said: Thus my soul enticed me. (Q20:96)

He (Moses) said: My Lord! Truly I have done wrong to myself so forgive me. (Q28:16)

Our Animal Soul and Its Functions

While it is clear how our pleasure principle drives us to satisfy our desires, our irascible or avoidance of harm/pain-behavioral aspect of self not only responds to any harmful situation we may face, in addition, it serves our pleasure function increasing our concupiscent power. If an object appears to be difficult for our pleasure principle to attain, it strives to remove anything that may interfere with the our inclination to a certain pleasure.

That is, our pre-conscious behavior naturally supports our unconscious or irrational desire or the pleasure we seek. Our avoiding pain principle, then, either avoids pain or challenges anything that denies us pleasure. The irascible is an avoiding or challenging instinct. However, as we have noted, they are not separate energies, but different back-and-forth tendencies of a single power, our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*).

Our Animal Soul and the Humours

In responding to an impulse, the passions alter the humours within us. They stir an emotion within us that is more than an affection as it can be felt within our self and observed in others when it upsets our balance.

During the early stages of the development—before our cognitive system fully functions—the affective/emotive system uses the natural powers—awakened by the vital power from the heart—and the humours for nutrition, growth, and reproduction. They invest strength in objects that appear to fulfill their needs of attracting pleasure and avoiding harm. However, as these two do not function cognitively, when pleasure needs are not met, nature gives them the ability to displace their power towards another object which may satisfy the need with the help of their parent, eventually learning through observation and imitation and the gradual development of cognition, to become selective and choose that which will satisfy their basic needs.

Our Animal Soul and Our Temperament

The kind of passion to which we are subject varies not only in regard to the organs that it affects, but also the temperament of our entire body. As our body is well or ill disposed, so are our affect/emotions and our behavior. There is a general agreement between the qualities and temperament of our body and the affections of our animal soul. As our body is compounded of the qualities of heat, cold, moisture and dryness, so among the emotional affections some are hot, some cold, some moist and others dry. The soul and the

body are so closely connected that whatever affects one, affects the other.

Our Animal Soul and Our Free Willpower (*Ikhtiyar*)

Our animal soul can corrupt our rational system and seduce our free-willpower (*ikhtiyar*). It is activated by our internal sense of sensitive imagination that moves our inner motivational impulses to attain what is pleasurable or avoid what is harmful/painful.

Our Animal Soul and Energies

Our affective system for the preservation of our human species, according to Quranic Psychology, attracts love, for instance, and pleasures while our behavioral system, preservation of the individual, avoids hate, for instance, and pain. The affective system works in our liver through our veins to attract to pleasure. It is the most basic drive of human nature. The behavioral system, on the other hand, receives its energies through our arteries to avoid harm/pain. The two together, therefore, act to "attract pleasure" and "avoid pain/harm".

Our Animal Soul and Imbalances

Diseases of the soul may come from bodily qualities from the sensory system pertaining to concupiscence and irascibility and in regard to what occurs to it from the psychological qualities such as jealousy, lying and struggle against the Truth.... In the first case, the result of these forms of blind following the dominating passivities when they become deeply rooted, prevent the soul from arriving at its goal. They restrain it from perceiving happiness. Together with that, they create a kind of great torture due to the loss of habitual objects of fondness, the existence of the habitude of yearning for them, and the absence of them which occupies the soul from their remembrance. These forms are ugly in themselves, painful for the substance of the soul, damaging for its reality, but the soul's turning to the body keeps it preoccupied from not sensing their baseness, their ugliness, and their contradiction to the substance of the soul. *Certainly, you had been heedless of this so We removed your screen from you so that your sight this Day will be sharp.* (Q50:22)¹⁹

3. Commanding to Good and Preventing Wrong

One of the responses of Quranic Psychology to disciplining our animal soul is to complete the perfection of our *fitrat Allah* by learning to read and put into practice the Quranic signs that command our self to what is good and prohibit our self from wrongdoing (*al-amr bi'l ma'ruf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*).

This involves the development of positive traits and the avoiding of the negative. A positive trait is defined as: feeling the right thing and doing the right thing without any particular need for conscious thought or effort. Repeated right action can lead to right feeling as a matter of habit as we will learn in future modules.

Practicing Commanding to Good and Preventing Wrong as Individual Believers

Each of us is in charge of our own souls:

O those who believed! Upon you is the charge of your souls. He who went astray injures you not if you were truly guided. To God is the return of you all. Then, He will tell you what you had been doing. (Q5:105)

Those who follow the Messenger should know that he is:

... —the unlettered Prophet—... he commands them to that which is good and prevents them from wrongdoing. He permits to them what is good and forbids them from deeds of corruption. He lays down for them severe tests, and the yokes that had been on them. So those who believed in him and supported him and helped him and followed the light that was caused to descend to him, those, they are the ones who prosper. (Q7:157)

Compete with one another in good deeds:

They believe in God and the last day and they command that which is good and prevent wrongdoing and they compete with one another in good deeds. Those are among the ones in accord with morality. (Q3:114)

Practice the formal prayer, command to good and prevent wrongdoing:

O my son (Luqman says to his son)! Perform the formal prayer. Command that which is good. Prevent wrongdoing and have patience with whatever lights on you. Truly, that is the constancy of affairs. (Q31:17)

Practice formal prayer, give in charity and command to good and prevent wrongdoing:

Those who, if We established them firmly on the earth, they performed the formal prayer and they gave the purifying alms and they commanded to that which is good and they prevented wrongdoing. With God is the Ultimate End of the command. (Q22:41)

Believers are ones who are:

... the repentant worshippers, the ones who praise, the ones who are inclined to fasting, the ones who bow down, the ones who prostrate themselves, the ones who command that which is good and the ones who prevent wrongdoing, and the ones who guard the ordinances of God, and give you good tidings to the ones who believe! (Q9:112)

The males, ones who believe, and the females, ones who believe, some are protectors of some other. They command to that which is good and they prevent wrongdoing and they perform the formal prayer and give the purifying alms and obey God and His Messenger. Those, God will have mercy on them. Truly, God is Almighty, Wise. (Q9:71)

Avoiding

Be not like the hypocrites:

The ones who are male hypocrites and the ones who are female hypocrites, some are of some other. They command that which is wrongdoing and prevent that which is good and close their hands. They forgot God so He forgot them. Truly, the ones who are hypocrites, they are the ones who disobey. (Q9:67)

Practicing Commanding to Good and Preventing Wrong as a Community

As a community, the Quran asks us to:

... be a community ... who calls to good and command to the good and prevent wrongdoing. Those, they are the ones who prosper. (Q3:104)

You had been the best community that was brought out for humanity. You command to that which is good and prevent wrongdoing and believe in God. If the People of the Book believed, it would have been better for them. Some of them are the ones who believe, but most of them are the ones who disobey. (Q3:110)

Mention when a community of them said: Why admonish a folk whom God is One Who Causes them to Perish or One Who Punishes them with a severe punishment. They said: To be free from guilt before your Lord and so that perhaps they will be God-conscious. (Q7:164)

Now we will study each of the two aspects of our *nafs al-ammarah* separately, beginning with "the pleasure principle" or affect/emotions.

Endnotes to Part II: Our Motivational System: Module 4: Our Animal Soul

- 1 See Michael Maher, *Psychology*, pp. 208-228.
- 2 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Onlin.
- 3 See Michael Maher, *Psychology*, pp. 208-228.
- 4 See Ibrahim Kalin, "From Physics to Metaphysics." Online.
- 5 <http://people.uvawise.edu/philosophy/phil205/Avicenna.html>; *Shifa*, p. 33; *Najat*, pp. 197-198.
- 6 See Michael Maher, *Psychology*, pp. 208-228.
- 7 See Michael Maher, *Psychology*, pp. 208-228.
- 8 See Michael Maher, *Psychology*, pp. 208-228.
- 9 See Michael Maher, *Psychology*, pp. 208-228.
- 10 See Michael Maher, *Psychology*, pp. 208-228.
- 11 See Michael Maher, *Psychology*, pp. 208-228.
- 12 See <https://explorable.com/motivation-and-emotion>.
- 13 Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi, *Razi's Traditional Psychology*.
- 14 See Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, paras 514-521.
- 15 While often in western scholarship, this principle is attributed to Freud, it has been known to the world of psychology at least since the time of Plato and Aristotle.
- 16 Paul J. Glenn, "A Tour of the Summa." Online.
- 17 Paul J. Glenn, "A Tour of the Summa." Online.
- 18 http://www.ehow.com/info_8687346_3-stages-self-islam.html
- 19 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar, (Spiritual Psychology: The Fourth Intellectual Journey in Transcendent Philosophy)*, Volumes VIII and IX, p. 460.

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Part II: Our Motivational System

Module 5: The Affective-Pleasure Component of Our Animal Soul

Introduction

The affective/emotive or pleasure principle, "attraction to pleasure" system as part of our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) is the most basic of the three systems of affect, behavior and cognition. It developed out of the animal stage of nature.

At birth, our soul potentially contains all of the systems necessary to transform energy in order to preserve the species as we are naturally disposed to be. As life unfolds and we respond to inner impulses and outer stimuli with affect, "attracting pleasure," it is the potential energy of this system which is being used.

What are attraction, affect and appetite?

Attraction is the action or power of evoking interest, pleasure, or liking for someone or something. Affect is have an effect on, make a difference to or to touch the feelings of (someone); to move emotionally. Appetite is the force behind our motivation.

In the broadest sense, appetite means any tendency of a thing to an object. In cosmology, the essential feature of material beings is motion. A certain motion follows every material being. For example, gravity follows the form of heavy bodies. In opposition to natural appetite, there exists the so-called elicited appetite, that is, an inclination called forth by an act of cognition. The form is found to have a more perfect existence in these things which have the potential to actualize cognition than in those things with a weak existence. For in those which have a weak existence, the species is found to determine each thing only to its own existence—that is, to its nature. Therefore, this natural form is followed by a natural inclination, which is called the natural appetite.

But in those things which have the potential to actualize cognition, each one is determined to its own natural being by its natural form, in such a manner that it is nevertheless receptive of the forms or species of other things: for example, sense receives the species of all things sensible, and the intellect, of all things intelligible, so that the soul of a person is, in a way, all things by sense and intellect.

Therefore, as forms exist in those things that have the potential to actualize cognition because of an intensity of existence, so must there be an inclination surpassing the natural inclination or the natural appetite. This superior inclination belongs to the appetitive or attraction to pleasure power (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) of the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*), through which the animal is able to desire what it senses

and not only that to which it is inclined by its natural form. This, therefore, indicates that we have an aspect of soul that differs from the plant and mineral souls. This is called the animal soul

The existence of appetite may be recognized through internal experience or introspection as well as external experience. Through internal experience, we recognize the existence of motivations which are consequent to our knowledge. Through external experience, we see plants, animals and humans as inclined towards objects they know, or as inclined to avoid them. We must remember that knowledge is the acquisition of forms, of perfections. A motivation follows the apprehension of these forms as the cognitive power judges them to be convenient or harmful for the individual. The movement of the appetite towards a particular object or away from it follows immediately upon this judgment.¹

What is pleasure?

Pleasure is a passion of the sensitive order, and comes from the natural desire to possess what is suitable and pleasing. Delight rises from sentient to intellective order if reason permits. Indeed, in reason itself, apart from sense movements, there is joy of fruition in the activity of the intellect and will. There are intellectual or rational pleasures as well as pleasures of sense appropriated or approved by reason. In the sensitive order, pleasures arising from the tactile sense of touch are greater than the pleasures of the other senses. Indeed, the sense of touch must serve the other senses by giving their sense organs contact with their respective objects. However, if we speak of the sense pleasures of knowing, omitting those of using, we find that the sense of sight is the source of the greatest pleasures. There are pleasures in accord with nature, and there are also nonnatural pleasures which exist because of some defect or disorder in the one who experiences them. Pleasures as emotions or passions are sometimes incompatible and are in conflict with one another.²

The Cause of Pleasure

Pleasure is the result of attaining a suitable thing, a thing which satisfies, and is therefore a good. It is the attaining of a good, together with awareness of the fact that the good is attained. Pleasure in itself is not subject to time, and yet it is not incompatible with movement, and, therefore, with time which measures movement. A person enjoying an interesting story takes pleasure in moving on from chapter to chapter in the prospect of finally knowing the whole story. There is pleasure in moving from aspect to aspect of a pleasing thing, and even in going over and over the details of a delightful event which is cherished in memory, or in looking again and again at the Quranic signs/verses. Therefore, movement itself can be a cause of pleasure.

One's own movement locally can cause pleasure, and people enjoy walking, riding, and sailing. Things hoped for can stir pleasure, as can remembered joys. Thus, hope and memory are causes of pleasure. Even sadness or sorrow can be a cause of pleasure. Sorrow over a loss calls to mind the beloved object with which remembered joys are associated. Sorrow over an evil once sustained is accompanied by knowledge of escape or deliverance, and this knowledge is pleasurable.

The actions of others may cause us pleasure, (a) because they are the actions of

one we love; thus parents take keen pleasure in beholding the meaningless movements of their baby; or (b) because these actions confer a benefit on us; or (c) because these actions make us appreciate the good we ourselves possess.

Doing good to others causes us pleasure, for it makes us aware of a pleasing ability in ourselves, and also pleurably aware of an abundance of good that we can share. Further, to do good is in accordance with our nature, and there is pleasure in orderly natural action. Finally, in doing good to others we show our love for them.

People of like interests have pleasure in one another's company and conversation. Yet, accidentally, likeness which should cause pleasure sometimes occasions displeasure. A person may be displeased with another who is in the same line of business, not because of likeness of occupation, but because of something accidental to that likeness in this particular case, such as the fact that the other person is a competitor, a limiting factor in financial gain, and perhaps a challenger for a place of social prominence in a community.

Things that excite wonder are pleasurable. They give pleasing knowledge of striking facts or events, together with a desire for further knowledge (that is, the explanation of the wondrous things), and this desire itself is pleasing. Sometimes there is pleasure in studying and comparing things which, in themselves, are not pleasing. Thus, a medical student may find pleasure in working with specimens of deteriorating tissue.³

The Effects of Pleasure

One of the effects of pleasure is a certain expansion of feeling; thus a person may say that his heart swells with delight. Another effect of pleasure is the thirst or desire for its continuance or its recurrence. Yet sometimes, when a pleasure has been enjoyed too completely, there is no immediate pleasure in the thought of it, and no actual desire for continuance. Thus a person who has over eaten is displeased rather than pleased at the thought of food which recently gave him pleasure.

Pleasures of the intellectual order are less likely to reach an excess than those of the sentient order. Spiritual pleasure is always enjoyed with a thirst for more. In the realm of reason, pleasure lends impetus to the mind. The enjoyment of study or thinking keeps us at the work and makes us do the work better. Bodily pleasures, on the other hand, hinder the use of the mind by distracting it, occasionally conflicting with it, and sometimes (as with addictions) by restraining it. In general, orderly pleasure within the proper field of an operation gives some perfection to the operation itself. What is done with pleasure is usually done with care and attention.⁴

What is love?

There are various Quranic signs/verses that refer to love:

The different kinds of *hubb* mentioned in the Quran include: love (*mahabba*); preference (*istihbab*); mercy (*rahmah*); pity (*ra'fah*); affection (*mawaddah*); to be smitten (*shaghaf*); impulse (*hawa*); infatuation (*istihwa*); to stray (*ghawa*); desire (*hamm*); longing (*raghab*); to draw near (*taqarrub*); anguish (*gharam*); to wander distracted (*huyam*); close friend-

ship (*khullah*); friendship (*sadaqah*); companionship (*suhbah*); preference to another over oneself (*ithar*); going astray (*dalaʿ*); contentment (*rida*); compassion (*hanan*); admiration (*iʿjab*); inclination (*mayl*); lust (*shahwah*); tendency towards (*saba*); seeking (*ibtighaʿ*); favor (*tafdil*); extra-marital sex (*zina*); graciousness (*hafawah*); concern (*shafaqah*); protecting friendship (*wilayah*); inclination (*sagha*) and intimate friendship/'penetrating' friendship (*walijah*).⁵

God is Loving:

Truly, my Lord is Compassionate, Loving. (Q11:90)

He is The Forgiving, The Loving. (Q85:14)

Those that God loves:

Truly, God loves the ones who are God-conscious. (Q3:76) (Q9:4) (Q9:7)

Truly, God loves the ones who are doers of good. (Q2:195) (Q3:134) (Q5:13)

Say: If you had been loving God, then, follow me. God will love you and forgive you your impieties. God is Forgiving, Compassionate. (Q3:31)

Truly, God loves the ones who put their trust in Him. (Q3:159)

God loves the ones who cleanse themselves. (Q9:108)

God loves the ones who remain steadfast. (Q3:146)

God does not love:

... but God loves not corruption. (Q2:205) (Q28:77)

Truly, God loves not the ones who exceed the limits. (Q2:190) (Q5:87) (Q7:55)

Truly, He loves not the ones who are excessive. (Q6:141)

Truly, He loves not the ones who grow arrogant. (Q16:23)

God loves not anyone who had been a sinful betrayer. (Q4:107)

God loves not the open publishing of evil sayings. (Q4:148)

God loves not any sinful ingrate. (Q2:276)

God loves not the ones who are unjust. (Q3:57) (Q3:140) (Q42:40)

God loves not the ones who are ungrateful. (Q3:32) (Q31:18)

The Affective Attraction to Pleasure of Our Animal Soul

It is to be noted that in this module we are analyzing just one aspect of our *nafs al-ammarah*. While our attraction to pleasure may be manifested as a desire or an emotion, the moment we act upon it, it becomes part of our behavioral system, the other aspect of our *nafs al-ammarah* to be discussed in the next module.

As our affective system is naturally disposed to unconsciousness, our cognitive system can only regulate this unconscious, affective system when our cognitive system itself is strong. Otherwise, the affective instinctive system dominates over our self. In terms of Quranic Psychology, completion of the perfection of nature in the affective system is to attain the positive disposition of temperance/ moderation/self-esteem.

Our affective component has various levels of function. At the spiritual/ biological level, it is our innate ability to preserve our species. At the psychological level it is both the attraction to pleasure principle as well as the basis for our desires and emotions. Physiologically its source of energy originates from our vital power that awakens our natural power operating in our liver or gut and reproductive organs. In terms of cognition, it is the unconscious aspect of our self.

1. Our Animal Soul and Our Desires

The Quran uses many terms to refer to our desires, including the following: (that which incites to evil, *ammar*); (desirous, *tami'a*); (desires, *hawa*); (desire, *bagha*); (false desires, *manna*); (desire to hasten, *ista'jala*); (her desire for him; his desire for her, *hamma an-ha* or *an-hu*); (lust, *shahwa*); (to lust, *ishtaha*); and (sexual desires, *irbah*):

Truly, the soul is that which incites to evil (ammar), but when my Lord had mercy. (Q12:53)

Are you desirous (tami'a) that they believe in you? Surely, a group of people among them had been hearing the assertion of God. Yet again, they tamper with it after they were reasonable, and they know? (Q2:75)

If you had followed their desires (hawa, singular) after what drew near you of the knowledge, there is not for you from God either a protector or a helper. (Q2:120)

Say: O People of the Book! Why bar you from the way of God he who be-

lieved, desiring (bagha) crookedness when you are witnesses? God is not One Who is Heedless of what you do. (Q3:99)

I will fill them with false desires (manna). (Q4:119)

... if God is to quicken the worst for humanity, as they would desire to hasten (ista'jala) for the good, their term would be decided. (Q10:11)

She, certainly, was about to act on her desire for him (hamma bi-ha) and he was about to act on his desire for her (hamma an-hu), if it were not that he saw proof of his Lord. (Q12:24)

Made to appear pleasing to humanity was the cherishing of lust (shahwa): From women and children and that which is heaped up heaps of gold and silver and horses, ones that are distinguished, and flocks and cultivation, that is the enjoyment of this present life, while God, with Him is the goodness of the Destination. (Q3:14)

... they, in that for which their souls lusted (ishtaha) will be ones who will dwell in it forever. (Q21:102)

... or the ones who heed, imbued with no sexual desire (irbah) among the men or small male children to whom was not manifest nakedness of women. (Q21:31)

Our attraction to pleasure aspect of our animal soul intrinsically begins with a desire (*hawa*) which aims at altering reality so that reality comes into accord with what is desired. Desires come in many forms: Wishing, craving, urges, longing, impulses, compulsions, and yearnings which suggest feelings that impel us to the attainment or possession of something. Desire is a strong feeling, worthy or unworthy, that impels to the attainment or possession of something that is—in reality or imagination—within reach such as a desire for food or water or sex. The object of desire is not regarded as fact—having been brought about—but rather as *to be* brought about: it is regarded not as true but as *to be made true*.⁶

Are you desirous that they should believe in you?... (Q2:75)

We allotted for them comrades who were made to appear pleasing (that is, to their desires) to them whatever was before them and whatever was behind them. The saying was realized against them in communities that passed away before them of jinn and humankind. Truly, they, they had been ones who are losers. (Q41:25)

Is He, then, One Who Sustains Every Soul for what it earned? Yet they as-

cribe associates with God! Say: Name them! Or will you tell Him of what He knows not in the earth? Or name you only them in the manifest sayings? Nay! Made to appear pleasing (that is, to their desires) to those who were ungrateful was their planning (based on their desires) and they were barred from the way. Whomever God causes to go astray, for him there is no one who guides. (Q13:33)

It is desire that moves us and lends our life shape and meaning. You have a desire to read this material. Motivation, like emotion, means to move. If desire can be harmful, so can its objects. The accumulation of houses, cars and other riches robs us of our time and tranquility, both in their acquiring and in their keeping. Fame is at least as compromising and inconvenient as it is pleasurable, and can quickly turn into infamy. An excess of desire is, of course, called greed. Being insatiable, greed binds us to itself, preventing us from appreciating or enjoying all that we already do have, including existence itself, which is the most wonderful of things.

Desire is ultimately connected with pleasure. As soon as a desire is satisfied, we stop taking pleasure in its object and turn our attention to formulating and meeting other desires. This is just the problem. Our desires were meant to promote our survival and reproduction, not to make us happy or satisfied, to ennoble us, or to give our life any meaning beyond their fulfillment.⁷

It is our irrational desires that may lead us astray. When our desires are based on caprice and our traveling on the path of disquiet, refusal, recalcitrance, and arrogance and wrongdoing towards our nature; when someone is overcome by wrongdoing which is cunning, deception, rebellion against obeying God, seeking egoism, and pride; when tranquility and serenity disappear from him; then he is said to belong to the party of Satan. But when someone is overcome by the seeking of knowledge; when the earth of his soul is free of wrongdoing such as pursuing his own desires, disobedient acts, sophistry in beliefs, disquiet in acts of worship, and cunning in interactions; and when his heart is illumined by faith in God and the Last Day, those are the party of God.

You will not find any folk who believe in God and the Last Day who make friends with whoever opposed God and His Messenger even if they had been their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kinspeople. Those, He prescribed belief in their hearts, and confirmed them with a spirit from Himself. He will cause them to enter Gardens beneath which rivers run as ones who will dwell in them forever. God was well-pleased with them and they were well-pleased with Him. Those are the Party of God. Lo! the Party of God. They are the ones who prosper. (Q58:22)

Disquiet gains access to our soul because we have moved from our original innate nature, just as illness gains access to our body through its being stricken because our temperament deviates from balance and equilibrium.⁸

Desires and Our Intellect ('*aql*') and Willpower (*iradah*)

Our intellect ('*aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*) developed to help us pursue the desirable and avoid the undesirable.

It did not develop to oppose our desires (*hawa*), still less to transcend them. Though we like to pretend otherwise, our intellect is subservient to our desires. It has been argued that beneath the world of appearances lies the world of willpower (*iradah*), a fundamentally blind process of striving for survival and reproduction. The whole world is a manifestation of willpower, including our human body. The genitals are objectified sexual impulse, the mouth and digestive tract are objectified hunger and so forth. Everything about is, including even our cognitive faculties, developed for no other purpose than to help us meet the dictates and exigencies of willpower. Although able to perceive, judge and reason, our intellect is neither designed nor equipped to pierce through the veil of illusion and apprehend the true nature of reality. Thus, there is nothing in us that is able to oppose the demands of willpower, which compels us into a life of inevitable frustration, strife and pain. It is not so much that we form our desires, but that our desires form in us. Thus, our desires can hardly be said to be ours. We merely infer them, if at all, once they are already fully formed.⁹

Terminal and Instrumental Desires

Many, indeed, most of our desires simply exist to satisfy other, more fundamental desires. Getting up to get a glass of water. The desire for water is a terminal desire because it relieves the person of the discomfort of thirst; in contrast, all the other desires in the chain are instrumental desires in so far as they aim at fulfilling this terminal desire.

In general terminal desires are generated by emotions and sensations, instrumental desires by intellect. Being generated by emotions and sensations, terminal desires are strongly motivated, while instrumental desires are merely motivated through the terminal desire at which they are directed. The best desires are those that are both terminal and instrumental, as when we work for a living and also enjoy the work that we do.

As well as a terminal desire, the desire for water is a desire or sensation to attain a pleasure in that it aims at pleasure or the avoidance of pain. Terminal desires are generally a desire or sensation to attain a pleasure, although some, such as when a person does the right thing for the sake of doing the right thing, are motivated by sheer free willpower (*ikhhtiyar*). One could argue that there can be no such thing as a non-desire or sensation to attain a pleasure to be called a terminal desire: even when a person does the right thing for the sake of doing the right thing, that person experience pleasure in doing so, or avoid such pains as the pain of guilt, and so the desire is merely a desire or sensation to attain a pleasure in disguise.

Nonetheless, some terminal desires, such as hunger or thirst, are clearly more biological than others, and these tend to be most strongly motivated. More abstract terminal desires are driven by our emotions, and might be less motivated if our emotions fail to back them, or back them but only feebly. Unfortunately, the extent to which an abstract terminal desire is supported by our emotions is completely out of our control.

It is of course possible to train our intellect to rebel against our desires and emotions or even our sensations and reject a highly motivated terminal desire, but this requires us to know our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) and follow it by listening to our conscience and strengthening our free willpower.¹⁰

Natural and Unnatural Desires

Desires can be divided into natural and unnatural. Natural desires such as those for food or shelter are naturally limited. In contrast, unnatural or vain desires such as those for fame, power, or wealth are potentially unlimited. By following this prescription for the selective elimination of desires, a person can minimize the pain and anxiety of harboring unfulfilled desires and thereby bring himself as near as possible to perfect tranquility.

Unnatural desires, which are unlimited, have their origins not in nature but in society. Fame, power and wealth can all be understood in terms of the desire for social status. Were we the last person on earth, being famous, powerful or wealthy would not only be useless but meaningless. We would desire very differently and, leaving aside our loneliness, would stand a much better chance of satisfaction. As well as unnatural desires, society gives rise to destructive desires such as the desire to make others envy us, and the desire to see others fail or, at least, not succeed as much as us. Other people become the targets and victims of our insecurities and we in turn become those of theirs. It is only by mastering desire that we might at last find peace,¹¹

that is, our soul at peace (*nafs al-mutma'innah*, 'aqf, intellect/reason).

2. Our Animal Soul and Our Emotions

Our "attraction to pleasure" or animal soul, the affective/emotive aspect of self includes our emotions. They aim at being justified, that is, in accord with reality. With this aim, emotions reflect the meaning of their object for us as the subject.

Our emotions also seem to involve our desires or, at time, give rise to them. For instance, an example of our emotions being involved in our desires, we may glare at someone with whom we are angry. On the other hand, if we develop a fear when we are approached by a barking dog and we want to flee. Our emotion of fear has created our desire to flee.

Emotions are complex reactions that of our animal soul that may have an affect on our body, as well. These reactions include: a subjective state, such as anger, anxiety or love; an impulse to act, such as fleeing or attacking, whether or not it is expressed overtly; and profound changes in our body, such as increased heart rate or blood pressure. Some of these bodily changes prepare for and sustain coping actions and others—such as postures, gestures and facial expressions—communicate to others what we are feeling or want others to believe we are feeling.¹²

It is difficult to define what "emotions" are as they can be interpreted in various ways.

For instance, saying I am grateful could be: (1) a brief, episodic emotional experience such as: I am currently feeling grateful for something; (2) or, an emotion or sentiment: I am generally grateful for that thing; (3) or, a variety of emotional experiences as well as thoughts, beliefs, desires and actions: I am a grateful type of person. Love can give rise not only to amorous feelings, but also to joy, grief, rage, longing and jealousy among others.

As part of our "passions" or animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*), our emotions are not in our control, but rather powerful or even compelling feelings and desires that we have. They are subjective ways of how we reflect on our needs and concerns. Emotions can be defined as a natural instinctive state of our self deriving from our circumstances, moods or relationships with others. They are instinctive or intuitive in which joy, sorrow, fear, hate and so forth are experienced as distinguished from cognitive and volitional states. The major function of our emotions is to evaluate, assess, estimate or, if acting in concert with our conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*), to make a value judgment about something.¹³

Our emotions may often be brief and occurring occasionally and at irregular intervals. They can lead us to what is called "an emotional experience" that may include our thoughts, beliefs or desires. Reflecting and revealing our values, emotions help us refine them as well as they play a major role in our search for meaning (our spirit, *ruh*). Whenever our sense of meaning feels threatened, our emotions appear. When what we experience reinforces our sense of meaning, we experience happiness. Therefore, the meaning that we hold for this world and the next are central to our emotional health.

Emotions can be basic, innate, automatic and are open to culture and micro culture. Contempt could blend anger and disgust. Also, emotions may be complex combining several emotions at the same time. Frustration could amount to anger combined with the belief that nothing can be done. In signalling an emotion or evaluation, expressions of emotion aim to inspire the same or a corresponding emotion in others such as admiration, sympathy, curiosity, amusement, guilt or shame.

Emotions may involve physiological responses such as a rise in heart rate, increased muscle tension, perspiration and goose bumps or stiffening of the body, cessation of movement, opening of the eyes and flaring of the nostrils. Emotions, then, may involve bodily modifications, perceptions, cognitions, desires and so forth.¹⁴

How Emotions Help Us to Survive and Flourish

Emotions mobilize us providing added strength and endurance in emergencies. For example, the blood supply is increased to the brain large muscles of the body with anger and fear and, but reduced to the digestive tract whose activity is not needed in an emergency. Heart rate and blood pressure rise in these emotional states, making it easier for us to fight or flee. Powerful hormones are secreted into the bloodstream, which markedly change our metabolic activity, helping us to sus-

tain energy over the period when it is needed.

When we experience an emotion, our mind (*sadr*) evaluates it and concentrates its attention on the emergency and what might be done to cope with it. Our attention becomes riveted on the danger and how to evade or otherwise deal with it. We become inattentive to everything else, including what we had previously been doing in order to concentrate on what is now the most salient concern in the struggle to survive and flourish.¹⁵

Arousing Our Emotions

A noticeable similarity between motivation and arousing our emotions is that they are both linked to energy or intensity instead of information or direction. Another one is that while cognition seems to be wrapped in "coldness", emotion and motivation are often associated to pressure and heat. Yet another similarity is that both psychological constructs rely on the relationship between an individual and his environment.¹⁶

So Solomon smiled as one who laughs at its saying and he said: My Lord! Arouse me that I give thanks for Your divine blessing with which You were gracious to me and ones who are my parents and that I do as one in accord with morality. May You be well-pleased and cause me to enter by Your Mercy among Your servants, ones in accord with morality. (Q27:19)

In order to arouse an emotion, a situation must involve either personal harm or benefit by relating to something we want or do not want to happen. We seek a personal meaning with an event or encounter and it either helps or threatens this. How we evaluate this personal meaning, whether actual or potential, will determine whether the emotion will be a positive or a negative one.

Six psychological aspects of emotion and what motivates them include:

1. Personal Goal
2. Self-identity
3. Appraisal
4. Personal Meaning
5. Provocation
6. Action Tendencies

1. Personal Goal: In emotional situations, we are motivated to gain something or prevent something unwanted from happening, which is not the case in nonemotional situations. Two motivational factors are necessary to arouse an emotion: An event must transform a routine encounter into one that involves personal pleasure (*shahwaniyyah*), something we want or do not want to happen (*ghadabiyyah*). We want something to happen and the other person either helps, threatens or frustrates the attainment. The more we want the goal, the stronger the emotion. The way we judge the fate of the goal, whether actual or potential, determines whether

the emotion will be positive (pleasure) or negative (harm/pain).

2. Self-identity: This relates the other image we have of what we are like, the "me" of our personhood.

3. Appraisal: Appraisal is not just passively receiving information about the environment. It must always actively negotiate between our personal agendas, that is, goals and beliefs, and the characteristics of the environment.

4. Personal Meaning: These are relational. They have to do with how relationships affect our well-being.

5. Provocation: There are four types of provocation: a. A real event results in a particular harm or benefit or the expectation of one of these outcomes. When the harm has not yet happened but is expected, it is called a threat. b. An event fails to remove an existing harm or sustain a benefit that has been hoped for. c. An event forecasts a harmful or beneficial situation in the future and results in a positive or negative emotion. d. A nonevent can also result in emotion if another person fails to say or do something supportive that had been hoped for. That is, the absence of something we expect. Something takes place in the present that serves as a reminder of what happened in the past. Most troubles and triumphs of our lives are not new, but tend to recur. They constitute the basic adaptational themes people have always struggled with—being loved or rejected, powerful or powerless, triumphant or victimized.

6. Action Tendency: This is defined by what it will do for us psychologically—for example, getting away from danger. Coping with the action tendencies generated by an emotion is clearly important in a complex society where we need to be prudent about acting on our impulses.¹⁷

Emotions and Our Breath

Joy and sadness, fear and anger, are emotions peculiarly related to our breath. As emotions expand or contract our heart, control the humours and releases or holds back the powers that are regulated by our breath. Emotions may help us to seek out our reasonable desires or, if extreme, take us beyond all limits and restraints.

It may be said that when our breath residing in our heart is plentiful—as it is when there is plenty of that material from which it is rapidly and constantly being generated; when it is balanced in temperament; when it has a luminous, beautiful and bright substance—then there is a strong tendency to joy.

When our breath is scanty—as occurs in convalescents, in long-standing illnesses, and in elderly persons; when it is not balanced in character (as in morbid states); and when it is: a. very dense and coarse in substance as in depression and elderly people, it cannot arouse joy; b. very delicate in substance as in convalescents, it will not allow of expansion; and c. confused as in depressed people. In all these cases, there is a very strong tendency to depression, sadness and grief.

As far as quantity is concerned, the more substantial the breath of life receiving the pleasure is, the greater is its power. The substance of the breath of life is so great that a large part of it is left in its source while another considerable part flows out during the joy that precedes pleasure. However, in the case of scarcity of substance, the laws of physics reserves it and con-

finer within its source and does not allow it to spread.

In regard to quality, the breath of life should be such that it is consistency is excellent so that the luminosity and radiance innate in it would be abundant to the extent that it might be as that of celestial essence.¹⁸

Emotions, Breath and Vital Energy¹⁹

The reduction of the power of our vital energy is followed by two things: a tendency towards movement and expansion—this is related to the reduction of the power of its substance of our animal soul; and an attraction to itself of its own particular nutriment.

This is due to the movement of expansion towards a place away from the movement of the nutriment. This particular attraction is really the natural physical tendency to avoid emptiness. In its essence, it is the same with any movement which in itself brings it to pass that the latter things shall take the place of the former. It is the outcome of this law that very distant waters are drawn towards their primary source, and that winds follow the course they do.

Another important interaction in regard to our emotions is their interaction with the power of both the breath and its vital energy in our heart as well as our soul's power of sensation/perception. A person who has a hot temperament tends to import heat rapidly. This is how it is that a strong character is formed by repeated practice and repeated experience of emotion. It is in this way that moral character is acquired.

Perhaps the reason underlying this is that when an emotion appears, it often makes the vital energy of our soul become conducive and what is suitable for one thing is unsuitable for its opposite. The more often it is repeated, the less does the tendency to the opposite become, for that which is conducive to the opposite is expelled little by little. It emerges from this that a reiteration of pleasure disposes the vital energy to a pleasing state while a reiteration of being sad disposes it to depression.

Some agents that cause enjoyment are powerful and reduce the power of our vital energy due to the expansion following enjoyment. Others causative agents are weak. Some are known and obvious, other are less known. Among the less known causes are those that have become habits. Things of habit lose their perception.²⁰

Emotions and Our Natural Energy

Natural inquiry shows the source of increase of pleasure to depend on a strengthening of our natural energy from our animal soul. The strengthening of our natural energy is contributed to by three factors, each of which is itself a source of pleasure: the temperament of our vital energy; overproduction of our innate heat beyond that which is lost by dispersal; and prevention of excessive dispersal of our vital energy.²¹

Emotional Personality or Character

The Breath and Temperament

Our breath relates very closely to our temperament and emotional character. For example, moist intemperament occurs when the breath lingers too long in any one of the phases of the elements of earth, air or fire. An imbalance in the fire element would be characterized by a personality that is hot, impetuous, prone to anger, physically strong, courageous in danger, strong in desires and so forth. The whole range of human emotional types can be worked out on this same scale of the breath in relation to the elements.²²

Emotions, Breath and Willpower

A balanced breathing pattern is necessary for stable emotions and intelligent living. This is obvious when one takes the trouble to catch oneself in the midst of anger. The breath is always out of rhythm in anger, fear, or any extreme emotional state. Application of willpower to the intake and expulsion of breath can open a whole new dimension of living whereby we gain control over our animal soul's tendency to anger, fear, desires, etc.²³

Emotions, Breath and the Humours²⁴

Emotional imbalance indicates that our breath is not in harmony with the process of formation of the humours of our body. The presence of the signs of emotional imbalance indicates an abnormal humoral state. It is manifested as either an unbalanced innate heat or a conflict between innate heat and the heat of foreign substances (such as bacterial decomposition).

The four humours are not just gross, physical substances. They also pervade our whole organism—body and soul—as subtle vapors, even affecting our thoughts, and emotions. And so, the four humours also have psychological effects, making them capable of affecting both our body and soul.

Blood promotes a feeling of joy, mirth, optimism, enthusiasm, affection and well being.

Phlegm induces passivity, lethargy, subjectivity, devotion, emotionalism, sensitivity and sentimentality.

Yellow bile provokes, excites and emboldens the passions. Being inflammatory, irritating and caustic, it provokes anger, irritability, boldness, ambition, envy, jealousy and courage.

Black bile makes one pensive, melancholy and withdrawn. It encourages prudence, caution, realism, pragmatism and pessimism.

The four humours tend to have negative effects on our soul and emotions only when they are excessive or aggravated. Otherwise, they can also strengthen positive aspects of personality or character.

Pure and plentiful blood that is moderate in consistency is conducive to joy since it produces an abundant quantity of vital energy that is pure, brilliant, moderate in consistency and in temperament. Pure blood that is ex-

cessive in heat is conducive to anger because of its inflammation and rapid motion. Thin, watery, pure, cold blood tends to produce the weakness of the heart and timidity, because the vital energy which is produced from it becomes sluggish in outward movement and slow to inflame because of its coldness. Thus, its capacity for joy and anger is decreased, and it becomes both easily soluble due to its thinness and difficult to dissolve due to its coldness.

Thick, turbid blood, excessive in heat, predisposes to sadness and fixed and insoluble anger. As regards sadness, it comes from the turbid vital energy generated by the blood. As to anger, it is because the blood, by its heat, becomes highly inflammable. As to enduring anger, it is because the blood is thick. When the object which is thick is heated, it does not quickly cool.

As to the anger born of bilious blood, it is liable to be excited and subsides quickly, since the vital energy produced from such blood is more intense in heat, but at the same time it is not dense. When it is radiant and clear at the same time, it is exceedingly exhilarant.

One who has thick blood, which is not turbid when it has an abundance of heat—which is rare—is far from being sad, and is brave, strong-hearted and less disposed to anger, since cheerfulness is greater than anger. Sadness predisposes to anger when anger is an act of rejection, while cheerfulness is in relation to pleasure which is an act of absorption. Anger in such a person becomes intensified in his dealings and his vital energy becomes sufficiently thick. Consequently he has little fear.

One who has thick blood, which is not turbid and is abundantly cold, is neither cheerful nor sad nor is his anger intense. His timidity is limited, and he is dull in everything, because his vital energy resembles his blood. One who has thick, turbid blood with abundance of coldness is anxious and sad, calm and quiet in anger except in grave situations. His anger is enduring—but of shorter duration than that of the hot-tempered person who resembles him in all characteristics and exceeds that of the person with tender constitution: He becomes a person who wishes to do evil to others.

Emotions, Breath and Change of Quality²⁵

Changes of quality of activity of the breath are simultaneous with its movement from place to place within the body. The two aspects of the activity of the breath must be considered simultaneously, for they are not actually separate. Thus, to sum up, we picture the breath circulating from nutritive organs to those of the sensitive life, awakening as it does so the nutritive-appetite; the reproductive desire; and then the higher emotions, attitude and inspiration. The energies or powers of each organ are activated as the breath traverses them. Their vitality augments, and the breath itself concurrently receives something from each center. The natural breath is the phase, then, when the breath is considered in regard to the natural or vegetative processes of the body. It is located in the liver, and is associated with venous blood. The vital breath is the phase when it is located in the heart,

and is associated with arterial blood. The animal (or sensitive) breath is associated with the nerve-fibers.

Emotions and the Pulse²⁶

The pulse should be felt at a time when a person is not in a state of excitement or anger, or affected by exertion, or under the influence of the emotions, or in a state of satiety (which renders the pulse heavy), or hungry; nor must it be a time when usual habits are neglected or new ones are being formed.

The Pulse in the Various Temperaments

Hot Temperament

The resistance is great. If the vital power and artery correspond, the pulse will be large. But if they do not correspond, the pulse will vary in the manner already described. If the heat is not due to an intemperament, but is natural, the vital power will be very strong, and the heat increases. But one must not suppose that the increase of innate heat, to however great an extent will lessen the vital power. On the contrary, the power of the breath becomes greater and the mental qualities show more boldness. If the heat arises from intemperament, the greater the degree of heat, the greater the weakening of vital power.

Cold Temperament

The pulse is reduced in breadth, and so becomes small, slow and infrequent (sluggish). If the artery is soft, the pulse increases in width, and also becomes slow and infrequent. But if the artery be hard, the breadth will lessen. The weakness produced by a cold intemperament is greater than that produced by a hot intemperament because the heat of the latter, for instance, corresponds more with it (i.e. in slowness or activity) than innate heat.

Moist Temperament

The pulse is here soft and wide.

Dry Temperament

The pulse becomes hard and wiry. If the vital power be strong and the resistance great, the pulse will become dicrotic, or spasmodic, or thrilling.

Dual Temperament

It may happen that a person may have a dual temperament, one side being cold and the other hot. The pulse will then be different on the two sides, according to the heat and cold respectively. In the one case, it will be like the pulse in hot temperament; in the other, like that in cold temperament. From this we learn that the expansion and contraction of the pulse is not merely an effect of the ebb and flow of cardiac action, but there is also an expansion and contraction of the arterial wall itself.

The Effect of Various Emotional States on the Pulse

Anger

Anger stirs up the vital power and causes the breath to expand all at once. Hence the pulse is large, rises high, is swift and brisk. It is not necessarily irregular because the passion does not change—unless there is fear present as well, in which case anger would prevail at one time, and fear at another. Irregularity may also occur if shame is associated for the intellect warns the person to be silent and not yield to the same evil as did the person who has excited one to anger.

Someone who appears to be more angry than his normal natural, irascible faculty provides—and there is no apparent reason for this amount of anger—if he is courageous and quick, it is a sign that his heart has a hot temperament. If a person is not naturally angry and lacks courage and moves heavily and this is not out of habit or thoughts and illusion, it is a sign that his heart has a cold temperament.

Delight, Contentment

Here the movement of the pulse is gradual and outward. It does not become as speedy and brisk as in the case of anger, but its volume is adequate for the resistance, and therefore the pulse is slow and infrequent.

Joy

The pulse is similar to that of delight and contentment because usually large in volume, and soft, it becomes slow and infrequent.

Grief

Here the heat is extinguished, or choked, nearly to obliteration and the vital power is weakened. Hence the pulse is small, weak, sluggish and slow.

Fear

If of sudden origin, the pulse becomes quick, irregular, disorderly. If that state is prolonged, or becomes more or less habitual, having begun insidiously, the pulse varies with the varying shades of anxiety.

Emotions and Physiology

Emotional dilemmas that affect us physiologically include having our status demeaned or put down (anger), experiencing uncertain threat (anxiety), facing a sudden danger to life and limb (fright), having violated the social mores of our social group (guilt), acting like a less ideal person than we aspire to (shame), having undergone an irrevocable loss (sadness) for each of the other emotions.

Emotions and Cognition

With the cognitive element, people can learn how their thinking affects their emotions and change their thinking accordingly. It is not our emotions

that prevent critical thinking. It is the failure to think critically that creates the emotion. Cognitions affect emotions and emotions influence our cognitions. Cognition and emotions are interrelated. Human cognition is not always rational. It involves many biases, including biases due to cognitive dissonance and biases in the construction of memories. Conversely, emotions are not always irrational. They bind people together, regulate relationships and motivate people to achieve their goals. An individual's experience of emotion combines soul and body. Thoughts may influence emotion and emotions may influence thoughts.

Emotions and the Imagination²⁷

The part played by our imagination in emotions—the persistence of an imagination which is disposed towards taking vengeance for a thing—is related to persistence of anger although there is not sufficient propulsive power to execute the vengeance. The anger is neither marked enough nor mild enough. For it must be understood that when anger ceases quickly, the hurtful image does not persist in the imagination, but is quickly destroyed so rancor becomes impossible.

In like manner, too much tendency to secure vengeance is countered by two factors: rancor and hate. The one is due to the mind being wholly impelled to vengeance, but prevented from continually reflecting upon the hurtful conditions by remembering the things which follow upon having hate fixed in the memory. The mind naturally hesitates to face impending hurts.

It must also be remembered that when there is too much tendency to vengeance in a fearless person, the impression results as if the imagination had already become possessed of the thing desired for. In aiming at the realization of a power, and hastening towards it, the imagination of such a person takes it as actually handled. The image is impressed on the imagination as if actually present. Then, the image of the thing in which the purposed action will end is added to the imagination and the desire for it ceases to be maintained. The image is abolished and, therefore, does not linger in memory. That is how it is that rancor is not there.

When the something that exerts a harmful effect on the body is great, then the urgent anxiety to gain vengeance, coupled with the fear, together prevent the image of the desire from staying in our mind (*sadr*). The result is that the picture of the desire and of the something that exerts a harmful effect on the body are both abolished from the imagination, whereas the image of the fear is so much the more dominant to the mind that it evokes a desire to flee and not attack. Here again, the image of rancor cannot persist in the mind.

In the case of persons under puberty, or weakly persons, it is so easy to take vengeance on them, and there is so little fear entertained of them that the vengeful mind pictures the vengeance as if already accomplished. Excessive ease in securing vengeance makes it pictured as if already in one's

hand. The imagination acts not according to what is in the matter at issue, but according to that which it pictures to itself. So, when ease of fulfillment arouses the thought that vengeance is attained, the weak-minded person takes it as actually attained. So the love for it vanishes and is entirely obliterated from the mind.

Moreover, the imagination moves according to that which is represented to it and not according to the outcome of things. This is shown by the fact that people dislike honey when it is served up like bilious matter. They dislike laudable sapid foods should their color be made like repugnant substances: or even when they are served in the appearance of repugnant objects even though such things are not believed to exist at all.

Similarly with this: when a given likeness to the above named thing is portrayed (either because of the intensity of the impulse of the desire, or because of the worthlessness of realizing the desire as though it had actually been attained) it has the same effect as if it had been realized; therefore there is no bitterness or resentfulness.

Vividness of imagination goes with dryness of the breath of life, the movement of which the will has power to correct. This understanding is drawn away from rational actions by the senses and by the imaginings whenever the character of the breath of life is balanced.

What of Culture and Emotion?

Examine how our emotions are influenced by culture. First, it influences appraisal by defining the significance of what is happening for a person's well-being. This significance, in turn, determines the emotion that will be aroused. Second, culture informs us about how the emotion should be controlled and expressed once it has been aroused.²⁸

How Culture Influences the Arousal of Emotions

A culture provides the basis for the appraisal of a provocation. It defines what is a demeaning offense (for anger); an existential threat (for anxiety); a violation of a moral proscription (for guilt); the evidence that one is adored (for love); the events that enhance one's ego-identity (for pride); the ways we have failed to live up to an ego-ideal (for shame); and the nature of an altruistic gift (for gratitude).²⁹

Culture and the Individual

Each of us as individuals experiences formative influences that are distinct from the cultural norms in which we live. The influences depend on the particular parents, relatives, and peers we encounter as we are growing up. We have unique personal experiences that shape our beliefs and goal patterns.³⁰

Coping with Our Emotions

Working with our emotions, we can either evoke them or suppress them. We evoke them to bring up certain feelings. We suppress them to hide unwanted feelings. Emotion work is either done by our self or by others upon our self or we upon others. It is done to reach a certain feeling that we believe we should feel. Emotion work may be cognitive, bodily or expressive. Cognitive emotion work changes our images. Bodily emotion work changes are physical body and expressive emotion work changes our gestures.

If we do not work on our emotions, we tend to repress them or practice self-deception so that they remain unconscious. We might also engage in self-deception if an emotional experience is not tolerable by overlooking its intensity or mis-attributing its cause.

Coping is what we do and think in an effort to manage stress and the emotions associated with it, whether or not these efforts are successful.³¹

3. Concepts Associated with the Affective Component of Our Animal Soul

Not only does the affective aspect of our *nafs al-ammarah* relate to what we call "emotions", but in addition includes our emotional experiences of feelings, sentiments, wishes, drives, urges, impulses, longings, cravings, yearnings, perceptions, traits and moods, self-deception, withdrawal, attitude and temper.

Feelings

Feelings are different from emotions because feelings subjectively represent emotions, which means that feelings are only private to the person. Also, emotion is distinguished from "mood" based on the period of time that they are present; a mood lasts longer than an emotion. Interchangeably used with emotion, "affect" is the experience of emotion, and is associated with how the emotion is expressed (as seen on facial expressions or hand gestures).³²

Feelings are an emotional experience of which we are conscious such as our feeling of hunger or pain because they involve a physical dimension. Feelings may remain unconscious if this is not the case. A belief may be a feeling particularly if it is a vague or irrational one. It is a sensitivity to or intuitive understanding of a situation.

Our feelings are considered to be appropriate if they apply to the situation in which we find our self. Since we have the desire to fit in to this situation, we constantly work on changing our feelings. We base them on how we want to feel or how we want other people to perceive us. Feelings, like emotions, are not necessarily permanent, but come and go as we are constantly in a state of managing, suppressing or bringing up our feelings.

Poor feeling and poor thinking lead to each other. Poor feeling hijacks

thinking for self-deception: to hide harsh truths, avoid action, evade responsibility and flee from freedom. It is a kind of moral failing, the deepest kind whereas virtue principally consists in correcting and refining our emotions and the values that they reflect.

Virtue is to feel the right thing is to do the right thing without any particular need for conscious thought or effort. Repeated right action can lead to right feeling as a matter of habit.

Feelings understood as a group of emotional states are not, the offspring of a third ultimate distinct energy, but complex products resulting from the action of our soul's cognitive and pleasure-seeking faculties. Feeling viewed simply as pleasure and pain, and such is the only sense in which this form of consciousness has even an apparent claim to the position of a separate energy or power, is merely an aspect of the energies of our cognitive (*'aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*) and animal (*nafs al-ammarah*) souls. It exhibits itself as a positive or negative coloring, which marks the operations of these powers. As a quality of knowledge it must be conceived to be dependent on cognitive activity rather than vice versa. But, inasmuch as it is through this quality that cognition determines the character of the consequent emotion or feeling, or rather the cognition as pleasurably or painfully colored, stands in the relation of cause and effect to the subsequent desire.³³

Perceptions

Perceptions are of material objects and involve the object and its physical characteristics. Perceptions are not positive, negative or mixed unlike emotions that are.

Traits

Traits are a type of disposition or lack thereof. Often named for the primary emotion, traits are classified as virtues or vices. For example, patience and gratitude are virtuous traits whereas jealousy and greed are traits of vices. Some traits are not emotions, but are ways in which we control our emotions such as courage or forbearance. Traits that are innate within us are based on our temperament. These cannot be changed or easily altered. Character traits, on the other hand, are more open to change.

Moods

Moods such as anxiety or irritability are general and not related to a specific object or situation. Moods can be defined as nothing more than a passive and more or less temporary disposition for emotions of a particular shade or quality—and it is by virtue of this passivity that moods, unlike traits, can be upheld to excuse our behavior. Moods have no felt quality other than through the emotional experiences to which they predispose. It is also possible to be unconscious of a mood.

In psychology, a mood is an emotional state. In contrast to emotions, feelings, or affects, moods are less specific, less intense and less likely to be triggered by a

particular stimulus or event. Moods are typically described as having either a positive or negative valence. In other words, people usually speak of being in a good mood or a bad mood.

Mood also differs from temperament or personality traits which are even longer-lasting. Nevertheless, personality traits such as optimism and neuroticism predispose certain types of moods. Long term disturbances of mood such as clinical depression and bipolar disorder are considered mood disorders. Mood is an internal, subjective state but it often can be inferred from posture and other behaviors.³⁴

Self-Deception

Then, who is there that was made to appear pleasing to him the direness of his actions so that, then, he saw it as fairer (self-deception). Truly, God causes to go astray whomever He wills (God withdraws from him) and guides whomever He wills. So let not your soul be wasted in regret for them. Truly, God is Knowing of what they craft! (Q35:8)

Withdrawal

Mention when Satan made to appear pleasing their actions to them and said: No one will be ones who are victors against you this day from among all personages. Truly, I will be your neighbor. But when the two factions sighted one another, he withdraw on his two heels and said: Truly, I am free of you (Satan withdraws from them). Truly, I see what you see not. Truly, I fear God. And God is Severe in repayment. (Q8:48)

Attitude

Attitude is a relatively stable opinion containing both a cognitive element (perceptions, beliefs, opinions, knowledge and information which we hold about the topic) and an emotional element (feelings about the topic which can range from negative to hostile to positive and warm). Attitude is the result of conformity, habit, rationalizations and self-interest among other things. Attitudes and behaviors influence each other. Attitudes change because of the need for consistency. They can result in cognitive dissonance: the uncomfortable feeling that occurs when two attitudes or an attitude and a behavior are in conflict. To restore consistency one has to lose desire for one point, rationalize behavior or decide not to believe the other. Our attitude is influenced by other people. Sometimes people persuade us to change our minds using reasoned argument. Sometimes they use subtle manipulation. Sometimes they use outright coercion. Persuasion techniques become coercive when they suppress an individual's ability to reason, think critically and make choices in his or her own best interests.

In cognitive attitudes, a belief is grasped as patterned after the world. The object of our beliefs is truth and the aim of our beliefs is to reflect the meaning of an object for us. A belief is held and not felt and it is either right or wrong whereas emo-

tions are much less contested by others. Our beliefs can give rise to our emotions and vice versa. It is our emotions that catalyze our beliefs into actions. Belief and emotions are, however, both passive insofar as they have a mind-to-world direction of fit.³⁵

Whatever things you were given are enjoyment for this present life and its adornment. What is with God is better for one who endures. Will you not, then, be reasonable (that is, will you not change your attitude)? (Q28:60)

Then, why when drew near them Our might, they lowered not themselves (that is, they did not change their attitude)? Rather, their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) became hard. Satan made appear pleasing to them what they had been doing. (Q6:43)

Iblis said: My Lord! Because You had led me into error (led me to a wrong attitude) I will, certainly, make the earth appear pleasing to them and I will lead them one and all into error, (Q15:39)

He (Noah's son) said: I will take shelter for myself on a mountain (attitude). It will be what saves me from the harm of the water. Noah said: No one saves from the harm this day from the command of God but him on whom He had mercy. And a wave came between them so he had been of the ones who are drowned. (Q11:43)

Then, when harm afflicted the human being, he called to Us. Again, We granted him divine blessing from Us. He would say: I was only given this because of my knowledge (attitude). Nay! It is only a test, but most of them know not. (Q39:49)

Temper

Temper is a combination of a feeling and a judgment about our self or others. The feeling is related to one of the two types of temper, fear or anger. The judgment is that we have been wronged by another, or that we have done something wrong. Fearful temper arises from thoughts that we have made a mistake (have done something wrong) which in turn causes feelings such as fear, shame and inadequacy. Angry temper results from the belief that we have been wronged which in turn creates feelings of indignation and impatience.

There is a two-way relationship between temper and symptoms. Symptoms induce emotions such as fear and anger, which in turn induce temper, which increases the intensity of the symptoms.

The concept of temper describes language related to judgments of our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) in regard to right and wrong, and the use of defeatist language when discussing symptoms. When discussing symptoms, we include the use of adjectives such as intolerable, uncontrollable, unbearable, and

similar language that places an emphasis on the dangerous and fatalistic implications of feelings, impulses, or thoughts.³⁶

4. Expressions and Gestures of Our Affective Component of Our Animal Soul

Expressions of emotions are varied and include smiling, frowning, laughing, crying, wailing, jumping back, jumping up, covering the brow, covering the face, kissing, caressing, dancing. Even actions that are not primarily to do with emotional expression can become suffused with emotion, for instance, closing the door softly or with a slam or pulling out a pen.

All expressions of emotion serve to signal the emotion—and by extension the evaluation to which the emotion corresponds—to others, forming a system of communication.

The most obvious place to look for emotion is on the face where its expression is usually most visible. There are characteristic facial expressions which are observed to accompany anger, fear, erotic excitement and all the other passions. The smile, the frown, the glare. Facial expressions not only express internal states, but also help us communicate to others and evoke a response from them.³⁷

5. Signs of Balanced Affect

Empathy

Empathy is a concept related to our soul: the recognition and understanding of the states of mind of others including their beliefs, desires and particularly emotions.

Empathy can be defined as a person's ability to recognize and share the emotions of another person, fictional character, or sentient being. It involves, first, seeing someone else's situation from his perspective, and second, sharing his emotions, including, if any, his distress.

To share in someone else's perspective, we must do more than merely put ourselves into his position. Instead, we must imagine ourselves as him, and, more than that, imagine ourselves as him in the particular situation in which he finds himself. We cannot empathize with an abstract or detached feeling. To empathize with a particular person, we need to have at least some knowledge of who he is and what he is doing or trying to do.

Empathy is often confused with pity, sympathy, and compassion which are each reactions to the plight of others.

Empathy rests on our soul, which is the ability to understand that other people see things differently from us, and that they have different beliefs, desires, emotions and so on. It develops over time through gradual substantial motion and, for each individual and in general, can be trained in extent and accuracy. It enables us not only to empathize with other people, but also to posit their intentions and predict and explain their behavior.

Empathy promotes parental care, social attachment and prosocial behavior. It also facilitates social interactions, group operations and teaching and learning. Although it does involve a degree of identification, it conserves enough distance and

detachment for the subject to make moral and normative judgments about the object. This independent perspective can enable the subject to assist the object more effectively than he can assist himself.

On the other hand, empathy can bias us towards its object, leading us to place his interests above those of others and even, in some cases, above justice and the law. Moreover, our capacity for empathy is naturally limited, both in accuracy and capacity. Numerous or repeated demands on our empathy can be exhausting, leading to 'compassion fatigue' and burnout. People who are surrounded by human distress naturally restrict their ability to empathize, not out of callousness or unconcern but from a basic instinct for self-preservation. Fortunately, in less pressured circumstances the exercise of empathy is often rewarding and even revitalizing. A doctor who is able to empathize with his patients, although not so much as to lie awake at night, is much more likely to be fulfilled in his job—to say nothing of the benefit to his patients.³⁸

Sympathy

Sympathy (fellow feeling, community of feeling), is a feeling of care and concern for someone, often someone close, accompanied by a wish to see him better off or happier. Compared to pity, sympathy implies a greater sense of shared similarities together with a more profound person engagement. However, sympathy, unlike empathy, does not involve a shared perspective or shared emotions, and while the facial expressions of sympathy do convey caring and concern, they do not convey shared distress. Sympathy and empathy often lead to each other, but not always. It is possible to sympathize with such things as ladybirds, but not to empathize with them. Sympathy should also be distinguished from benevolence which is a much more detached and impartial attitude.³⁹

Compassion

Compassion (suffering with) is more engaging than simple empathy and is associated with an active desire to alleviate the suffering of its object. With empathy, I share your emotions; with compassion I not only share your emotions but also elevate them into a universal and transcending experience. Compassion, which builds upon empathy, is one of the main motivators of altruism.⁴⁰

Conclusion

Through substantial motion, the potential (*quwwah*) of our animal soul activates the energy of our desires and emotions. It is this part of our self that tends to fall out of balance unless held in check by our cognitive system. Maintaining it in balance is the goal of the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*).

Endnotes to Part II: Our Motivational System: Module 5: The Affective-Pleasure Component of Our Animal Soul

- 1 See Michael Maher, *Psychology*, pp. 208-228.
- 2 Paul J. Glenn, "A Tour of the Summa." Online.
- 3 Paul J. Glenn, "A Tour of the Summa." Online.
- 4 Paul J. Glenn, "A Tour of the Summa." Online.
- 5 Ghazi Muhammad, *Love in the Holy Quran*, p. 191.
- 6 Google
- 7 Neel Burton, *Heaven and Hell: The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 156 ff.
- 8 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*, (41) (42).
- 9 Neel Burton, *Heaven and Hell: The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 156 ff.
- 10 Neel Burton, *Heaven and Hell: The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 156 ff.
- 11 Neel Burton, *Heaven and Hell: The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 156 ff.
- 12 Richard S. Lazarus and Bernice N. Lazarus, *Passion and Reason*, p. 151 ff.
- 13 Neel Burton, *Heaven and Hell: The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 156 ff.
- 14 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/hidden-and-seek/201601/what-are-basic-emotions>.
- 15 Richard S. Lazarus and Bernice N. Lazarus, *Passion and Reason*, p. 151 ff.
- 16 <https://explorable.com/motivation-and-emotion>
- 17 Richard S. Lazarus and Bernice N. Lazarus, *Passion and Reason*, p. 151 ff.
- 18 See Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, §503-§513.
- 19 See Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, for more on this topic.
- 20 See Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, for more on this topic.
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- 25 Richard S. Lazarus and Bernice N. Lazarus, *Passion and Reason*, p. 151 ff.
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- 28 See Richard S. Lazarus and Bernice N. Lazarus, *Passion and Reason*, p. 151 ff.
- 29 See Richard S. Lazarus and Bernice N. Lazarus, *Passion and Reason*, p. 151 ff.
- 30 See Richard S. Lazarus and Bernice N. Lazarus, *Passion and Reason*, p. 151 ff.
- 31 See Hakim C. G. Chishti, *The Book of Sufi Healing*, p. 123.
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- 34 Wikipedia.
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- 37 Neel Burton, *Heaven and Hell: The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 156 ff.
- 38 Neel Burton, *Heaven and Hell: The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 156 ff.
- 39 Neel Burton, *Heaven and Hell: The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 156 ff.
- 40 Neel Burton, *Heaven and Hell: The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 156 ff.

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Part II: Our Motivational System

Module 6: The Behavioral-Avoidance of Harm/Pain Component of Our Animal Soul

Introduction

This avoidance of harm/pain or behavioral aspect of our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) is shared with other animals and at birth potentially contains all the systems necessary to transform its power towards its natural disposition to preserve each entity as an individual. As we grow, responding to our inner impulses and outer stimuli which cause impulses to generate from the power source of our behavioral system, we respond in self-defensive actions such as appropriate anger to avoid pain/harm for our self or others.

The behavioral system is considered to be in a preconscious state in the sense that it is capable of learning discipline and modifying itself if regulated by a balanced cognitive system. As regards Quranic Psychology, completion of the perfection of nature in its mode of operation in the behavioral system is the development of the positive disposition of courage.

Just as our affective component has various levels of function, so, too, our behavioral system. At the spiritual/biological level, it is our innate ability to preserve our individual self. At the psychological level, it is both our behavior and our avoidance of harm/pain manifested as appropriate anger (irascibility). Physiologically its source of energy originates from our vital power. At the cognitive level, it is preconscious as we have mentioned.

1. The Avoidance of Harm/Pain

The avoidance of harm/pain (irascible power, *quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*) impels the subject to a movement of the limbs in order to repulse things imagined to be harmful or destructive, and thus to overcome them. As the source for the power of self-preservation, the soul's power to avoid harm/pain is the location of the healing power of nature. The soul has the power to preserve and restore that balance that marks the state of health—the power of self-preservation being traditionally called the healing power of nature (*vis medicatrix naturae*). In many cases, organisms can often heal themselves. That is, an organism itself does not remain passive to a disorder, but re-establishes balance in counteracting a disorder. With this view, it is not that one has a disorder, but that one's balance has been disturbed. It is not that a living matter remains passive to an imbalance in the way that non-living matter does. It is in this sense that nature itself is considered to be the "healer of illness".¹

What is pain?

Avoiding pain is a passion of the animal soul that this soul is burdened by a present lack of pleasure.

Pain, as a synonym for depression or grief, is not merely bodily pain from ache, or sore, or wound. It is rather the pain of distress, of worry, of concern. When pain is in the exterior senses, it passes to the interior sense of imagination. Therefore, it is readily admitted into the intellectual order and becomes truly a passion of the soul. Pain is a passion directly opposed to the passion of pleasure or delight. Pain labors under present wrongdoing while pleasure delights in present good. For, while pleasure has no time limits, it is enjoyed as of the present. Even remembered joys or anticipated pleasures are brought under present consideration in imagination and memory before they are experienced as pleasurable. Not every sorrow or pain is contrary to every pleasure and pleasure and pain may be associated.

Pain stands opposed in a contrary object. Thus, the pain of the loss of a friend is opposed to the pleasure of having him alive. The soul when functioning as soul-spirit/intellect/cognition is at its best in contemplation, in confronting and dwelling with wisdom. Pain cannot enter here. Pain is not contrary to the pleasure of contemplation, except in what is accidental to contemplation. Pleasure is desired for the sake of good, of satisfaction. Pain is shunned because of wrongdoing. Since good is stronger than wrongdoing, the desire for pleasure is stronger than the desire to avoid pain. Accidentally, however, the desire to avoid pain may be the stronger desire. Pain felt in the soul is greater and keener than pain felt in the body.²

Causes of Pain

Present wrongdoing is a cause of sorrow. Wrongdoing, which is the absence of pleasure and, hence, the absence, of good that should be present, is a negative thing. Yet the wrongdoing which causes pain is sensed and understood as a positive thing; it is experienced as something present, not as something absent. Desire and love can be causes of pain inasmuch as these passions are thwarted in their longing for, or grasp of a good that is withheld or removed. The natural craving of a creature for the integrity of its being and nature is the cause of pain when the creature is wounded, diseased, hampered in action, or in any way made deficient.³

The Effects of Pain on the Body

Bodily pain is a hindrance to the cognition of our human soul in its efforts to study, whether to learn new things or to attend to what is already learned. Pain may be so intense as to draw the whole attention of the human soul to itself, and this makes learning impossible. Yet a person deeply devoted to learning may continue to use his cognition despite a considerable degree of bodily pain. As for mental distress, a mild sorrow may actually incline our human soul to study, especially to study the things of God through whom we hope to be freed from pain and sorrow. Pain is a burden upon the soul. It is a cause of depression. Therefore, it weakens the activity of the soul. What is done in sorrow or pain is ordinarily not so well done as it would be done without a burdening influence upon the soul. However, unless it be overwhelming, it may sometimes, indirectly, improve the work of the soul

inasmuch as the soul is determined to shake it off and banish it by strict and careful attention to the work in hand. Of all the passions, not avoiding harm/ pain is the most harmful to our bodily being. It is a depressing and contractive influence, repugnant to the normal movements of life.⁴

Remedies for Pain

The weariness of pain is relieved by pleasure, just as bodily fatigue is relieved by rest. Tears and other outward expressions of sorrow give some relief to the afflicted person; these are natural manifestations; they seem to disperse sorrow, letting it escape outwardly, rather than keeping it pent up in the sufferer. Pain is assuaged and sorrow is abated by the consolation of kindly words and deeds, the sympathy of friends. The contemplation of truth, which is the noblest employment of the soul-spirit/intellect/cognition, gives the greatest pleasure, and therefore is a powerful relief for pain or sorrow. The greater is one's love of wisdom, the more powerfully does contemplation of truth counteract pain. Bodily remedies, such as sleep and baths, are valuable remedies for sorrow or pain in so far as they quiet the disturbance of nature caused by pain.⁵

Sources of Avoidance of Harm/Pain

As avoidance of harm/pain relates to our behavior, it refers to the range of actions and mannerisms we have in conjunction with our self or our environment. It is the response of our self to various stimuli or inputs, whether internal or external, involuntary or voluntary.

Instinctive or innate behavior is the inherent inclination of a living organism towards a particular complex behavior. The simplest example of an instinctive behavior is a pattern in which a very short to medium length sequence of actions, without variation, are carried out in response to a clearly defined stimulus.

Any behavior is instinctive if it is performed without being based upon prior experience (that is, in the absence of learning), and is therefore an expression of innate biological factors.

Instincts are inborn complex patterns of behavior that exist in most members of the species, and should be distinguished from reflexes, which are simple responses of an organism to a specific stimulus, such as the contraction of the pupil in response to bright light or the spasmodic movement of the lower leg when the knee is tapped.

The absence of volitional capacity must not be confused with an inability to modify fixed action patterns. For example, people may be able to modify a stimulated fixed action pattern by consciously recognizing the point of its activation and simply stop doing it, whereas animals without a sufficiently strong volitional capacity may not be able to disengage from their fixed action patterns once activated.⁶

The Quran teaches, among other ways, through direct instruction as it did through the revelation to the Prophet. In addition, it encourages observational learning, learning that occurs through observing the behavior of others, most importantly, that of Prophet Muhammad. It is a form of social learning which takes various forms, based on various processes. In humans, this form of

learning seems to not need reinforcement to occur, but instead, requires a social model such as a parent, sibling, friend, or teacher. Particularly in childhood, a model is someone of authority or higher status is needed.

2. Our Animal Soul and Anger

Anger (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*) belongs to the irascible appetites of our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*). When anger rises from the sensitive part of a person into the intellective part, it becomes an actual passion of the soul. Such a passion is aroused when the intellect judges that something is to be resented or that a person inflicting an injury is to be punished. The will backs up this judgment of intellect. This type of anger is, therefore, said to require an act of reason (intellect and will). Indeed, in humans, anger more consistently follows an act of reason than does desire or attraction to pleasure. Therefore anger may be called pre-conscious. Anger may be more intense than hatred, but it is not so enduring, nor is it so grievous a thing in a person. Anger in us involves some aspect of justice and injustice. The harmful thing which arouses anger is understood as an injustice to the person who suffers it. The person suffering is stirred to mete out justice.⁷

The Cause of Anger

Anger is always caused by something done to oneself. If we are angered by what is done to others, this is because we imaginatively put ourselves in their place and consider what is done to them as done to ourselves. The cause of anger is some slight or insult involved in what is done to us. This insult may be one of three kinds: contempt, frustration of our will, and insolence. Thus anger is provoked by what we deem derogatory to our own excellence. If a person actually excels in something—strength, riches, learning, beauty, grace of speech, etc.—he is "touchy" on these subjects, and is easily angered by what slights or condemns them. If a person is aware of a defect or deficiency in himself, he is already hurt by this realization. His defect is a sore spot in him and he is easily angered by what touches it unkindly. Unmerited contempt, more than any other slight or insult, arouses anger. Hence deficiency or littleness in the author of an insult increases anger, for we feel that a slight from such a source is doubly unmerited. Thus, an accomplished speaker or singer is more quickly and bitterly incensed against an ignoramus offering insult than against an educated and experienced person whose opinion of good speaking or singing has presumably a claim to hearing. But, on the other hand, the littleness of the offender who repents and asks pardon dispels anger more quickly than the formal apology of an offender whose abilities are superior.⁸

The Effects of Anger

One of the effects of anger is certainly pleasure. An angry person has pleasure in thinking of vengeance. The active wreaking of vengeance gives pleasure, for it is judged to be the righting of an injustice. More than other passions, anger affects the body, stirring it to force, impetuosity, and vehemence in action. Anger is, therefore, said to "influence the heart" more than the other passions. As anger is so

markedly upsetting, its effect on reason is the more notable. More than any other passion, anger obstructs sound and sane judgment. Another effect of anger is the enraged silence which is called taciturnity. An angry person may control anger in so far as fiery words are concerned and remain silent although he burns inwardly. This is taciturnity. Again, anger may so suddenly or powerfully overwhelm a person that he cannot say a word. He stands speechless, though seething. This also is a type of reserve, seemingly aloof and uncommunicative.

Effects of pain on the body include: Dissipation of the soul's functions; interference with functions of the organs, i.e., respiration is inhibited or becomes intermittent, rapid or irregular; and the affected organ first becomes hot and, later on with the persistence of pain, becomes cold. This is due to the dispersion of vital force and decrease of innate heat.⁹

3. Pain and Temperament¹⁰

Pain is one of the unnatural states which afflicts the animal body. Pain is sensation produced by something contrary to the course of nature and this sensation is set up by one of two circumstances: either a very sudden change of the temperament (or the bad effect of a contrary temperament) or a loss of continuity.

By "the bad effect of a contrary temperament," we mean the appearance of a quality which is contrary to the original temperament or that the temperament has become hotter or colder than the body to such an extent that it causes pain. Hence, pain is a feeling of imbalance in a temperament. A persistent abnormality of temperament does not produce pain as it gets so integrated in the tissues so that it becomes natural to the person and is thus not felt by him. Therefore, a condition which is of an integral nature and not just a departure from an established state will not give any pain. A state which has already been there would not be perceived unless some change makes it abnormal.

The imbalances of heat and cold act as direct stimuli, while dryness acts indirectly, and the moisture never produces any pain. This is because the former two qualities are of an active nature, while the latter two are just passive and unable to influence other objects, except by making them more responsive. Dryness produces pain indirectly by causing a loss of continuity from the constriction.

Pain increases the heat, and heat by producing congestion increases the pain from tension. Occasionally, the disappearance of pain may be followed by a sensation akin to pain. This is not really pain but a perception of the state of resolution. Some physicians tend to treat it as real pain and thus cause unnecessary harm to the patient.

4. Quranic Signs on Our Behavior/Actions

Believers ask for forgiveness and pray they can avoid the harm of pleasing one who is ungrateful:

Our Lord! Make us not be a cause of their pleasure (by our actions) for

those who were ungrateful and forgive us. (Q60:5)

The actions of the ungrateful are made to appear pleasing to themselves which only increases their denial:

We made their actions appear pleasing to them so that they wander unwilling to see. (Q27:4)

Thus, it was made to appear pleasing to ones who are ungrateful what they had been doing. (Q6:122)

Thus, it was made to appear pleasing to Pharaoh, the wrongdoing of his actions. He was barred from the way. The cunning of Pharaoh was not but in defeat. (Q40:37)

Quranic signs warn of the influence of Satan who makes their wrong actions appear pleasing to them or their actions follow their own desires, supported as they are by their avoiding of pain function.

By God! We, certainly, sent to communities before you. Satan made their actions appear pleasing to them (avoiding pain). So he is their protector on this Day and theirs will be a painful punishment. (Q16:63)

Is he who had been on a clear portent from his Lord like him for whom was made to appear pleasing his dire actions (avoiding pain) and they followed their own desires? (Q47:14)

Made to appear pleasing to them was the wrongdoing of their actions (avoiding pain). God guides not the folk, the ones who are ungrateful. (Q9:37)

For those who earned wrongdoing deeds (actions), the recompense of an wrongdoing deed will be its like and abasement will come over them. They will have none but God as One Who Saves from Harm. (Q10:27)

Only God can remove any actions that cause us harm or provide us with the good:

If God touches you with harm (action), then, no one will remove it but He. If He touches you with good (action), then, He is Powerful over everything. (Q6:17)

God saves the Messenger from the wrong actions of humanity:

O Messenger! State what was caused to descend to you from your Lord,

for if you have not accomplished it, then, you will not have stated His message. God will save you from the harm of humanity (actions). Truly, God guides not the folk, the ones who are ungrateful. (Q5:67)

Who does good actions?

Doers of good spend in charity, choke their rage and forgive humanity:

... those who spend in gladness and tribulation and the ones who choke their rage and the ones who pardon humanity. God loves the ones who are doers of good. (Q3:134)

They do not make corruption on the earth and they call to God with hope and fear:

Make not corruption in the earth after things were made right and call to Him with fear and hope. Truly, the mercy of God is near to the ones who are doers of good. (Q7:56)

They realize that the weak, sick and those who find nothing to give in charity are doers of good if they are true to God and His Messenger:

Not on the weak nor on the sick nor on those who find nothing to spend is there fault if they were true to God and His Messenger. There is no way against the ones who are doers of good. God is Forgiving, Compassionate. (Q9:91)

Those who engage in the struggle to improve their actions are guided by the Quran:

As for those who struggled for Us, We will truly guide them to Our ways. Truly, God is with ones who are doers of good. (Q29:69)

They recognize that the signs of the Quran are a guidance and a mercy for them:

There are the signs of the wise Book, a guidance and a mercy to the ones who are doers of good. (Q31:3)

They act according to the Quranic moral code, are God-conscious, believe in the One God and do good:

There is not for those who believed and did as the ones in accord with morality blame for what they tasted when they were God-conscious and believed and did as the ones in accord with morality and, again, they were God-conscious and believed. Again, they were God-conscious and did good. God loves the ones who are doers of good. (Q5:93)

Practicing patience is graceful:

Having patience is graceful. (Q12:18)

Have you patience (react with patience) with regard to what they say and abandon them with a graceful abandoning. (Q73:10)

At the time of divorce, husbands make provision for their divorced wives:

There is no blame on you if you divorced wives whom you touch not, nor undertake a duty to them (f) of a dowry portion. Make provision for them (f). For the one who is wealthy—according to his means—and for the one who is needy—according to his means—with a sustenance, one that is honorable, an obligation on the ones who are doers of good. (Q2:236)

Performing formal prayer and giving of the purifying alms are good deeds:

We made them leaders, guiding by Our command. We revealed to them the accomplishing of good deeds and the performing of the formal prayer and the giving of the purifying alms. They had been ones who worship Us. (Q21:73)

A good deed is to compete with one another in good deeds and call to God with yearning and reverence:

Truly, they had been competing with one another in good deeds and they would call to Us with yearning and reverence. They had been ones who are humbled before Us. (Q21:90)

Assume they that with the relief We furnish them of wealth and children that We compete for good works for them? Nay! They are not aware. (Q23:56)

The Quran tells us to find our direction to which to turn and to be forward in good deeds:

They believe in God and the Last Day and they command that which is honorable and prohibit that which is unlawful and they compete with one another in good deeds. Those are among the ones in accord with morality. (Q3:114)

Struggling with our wealth and lives are good deeds:

But the Messenger and those who believed with him struggled with their wealth and their lives. Those, for them are good deeds. Those, they are the ones who will prosper. (Q9:88)

Those who believed and did as the ones in accord with morality, there is joy for them and a goodness of destination. (Q13:29)

implying an attitude which is motivated by a complete submission to God's will:

When his Lord said to him: Submit! He said: I submitted to the Lord of the worlds. (Q2:131)

Against love is hatred, harshness or unkindness to others. We are advised not to speak any word of contempt to our parents:

Kindness to the ones who are one's parents. If they reach old age with you—one of them or both of them—then, you will not say to them a word of disrespect nor scold them, but say a generous saying to them. (Q17:23)

to orphans:

So as for the orphan, oppress him not. (Q93:9)

to beggars:

As for one who begs, scold him not. (Q93:10)

Believers are not to revile even those whom the ungrateful call upon besides God:

Offend not those who call to other than God so that they not offend God out of spite without knowledge. (Q6:108)

The Prophet is described as safe from severity and hard-heartedness towards others:

It is by the mercy of God you were gentle with them. If you had been hard, harsh of heart, they would have broken away from around you. So pardon them and ask for forgiveness for them. Take counsel with them in the affair. (Q3:159)

Actions to Avoid

Actions to avoid are actions we perform against our soul:

Whatever evil deeds lit on you, then, is from yourself. (Q4:79)

Our wrongdoing deeds are absolved when we are God-conscious and follow the Criterion (*furqan*), the Quran:

O those who believed! If you are God-conscious, He will assign you a Criterion (furqan) between right and wrong and will absolve you of your wrongdoing deeds and will forgive you. God is Possessor of Sublime Grace. (Q8:29)

That is the command of God which He caused to descend to you. Whoever is God-conscious, He will absolve him of his wrongdoing deeds and will enhance for him a compensation. (Q65:5)

Opposed to the value of life is human weakness to make mischief in the earth and shed blood:

When your Lord said to the angels: Truly, I am assigning on the earth a viceregent. They said: Will You be One Who Makes on it someone who makes corruption on it and sheds blood, while we glorify Your praise and sanctify You? He said: Truly, I know what you know not! (Q2:30)

All life is sacred:

Say: Approach now. I will recount what your Lord forbade you Ascribe nothing as partners with Him. Show kindness to the ones who are your parents. Kill not your children from want. We will provide for you and for them. Come not near any indecencies whether these were manifest or what was inward. Kill not a soul which God forbade, unless rightfully. He charged you with that so that perhaps you will be reasonable. (Q6:151); (Q17:33)

It is forbidden to commit suicide or to kill anybody without a just cause:

That is because your Lord would never be One Who Causes to Perish towns unjustly while their people are ones who are heedless. (Q6:131); (Q6:140)

It is equally sinful to murder one's children for fear of want or poverty:

Kill not your children dreading want. We will provide for them and for you. Truly, the killing of them had been a grave inequity. (Q17:31)]

Killing a person without reason, in the view of the Quran, is tantamount to slaying the human race:

We prescribed for the Children of Israel that whoever killed a person, other than in retribution for another person, or because of corruption in and on the earth, it will be as if he had killed all of humanity. (Q5:32)

Fight for the cause of righteousness is permitted only because tumult

and oppression, which necessitate resort to armed resistance, are worse than killing:

Persecution is more grave than killing. (Q:2191)

All those tendencies which weaken our hold on life are condemned in the Quran. People are warned of falling into fear, grief, and despair:

Be not feeble nor feel remorse. You will be among the lofty, if you had been ones who believe. (Q3:139); (Q9:40); (Q41:30)

or of being unmindful of the ultimate mercy of God:

Say: O My servants who exceeded all bounds against themselves, despair not of the mercy of God. Truly, God forgives all impieties. Truly, He is The Forgiving, The Compassionate. (Q39:53)

Avoid covetousness:

Assume not those who are misers that what God gave them of His grace is better for them. Nay! It is worse for them. To be hung around their necks will be what they were misers with on the Day of Resurrection. (Q3:180); (Q4:32); (Q57: 24)

and miserliness:

Make not thy hand be one that is restricted to your neck as a miser nor extend it to its utmost expansion as a prodigal so that you will sit as one who is reproached, one who is denuded. (Q17:29); (47:38)

or the hoarding of wealth:

Give the orphans their property and take not in exchange the bad of yours for what is good of theirs. Consume not their property with your own property. Truly, this had been criminal, a hateful sin. If you feared that you will not act justly with the orphans, then, marry who seems good to you of the women with orphan children, by twos, in threes or four. But if you feared you will not be just, then, one or what your right hands possessed. That is likelier that you not commit injustice (Q4:2-4:3)

are condemned, for they betray our unjustified clinging to values as means, as if they were ends in themselves.

The Quran forbids slandering. Scandal-mongering and backbiting are hateful deeds.

Woe to every slandering backbiter. (Q104:1)

Those who find fault with ones who are volunteer donors to charities from among the ones who believe and those who find not but their striving to give, so they derided them. God will deride them. They will have a painful punishment. (Q9:79); (Q24:23); (60:12); (Q18:11-12)

throwing fault or sin on somebody who is innocent of it:

Whoever earns a transgression or a sin, and, again, accuses an innocent one, surely, laid a burden on himself of false charges that harm another's reputation and a clear sin. (Q4:112)

and swelling one's cheek out of pride at people:

Turn not your cheek away from humanity nor walk through the earth exultantly. Truly, God loves not any proud boaster. (Q31:18)

The Quran advises men and women not to laugh at, defame, be sarcastic to one another or call one another by offensive nicknames, and not to be suspicious, not to spy on others or speak ill of them behind their backs:

O those who believed! Let not a folk deride another folk. Perhaps they be better than they, nor women deride other women. Perhaps they be better than they. Nor find fault with one another nor insult one another with nicknames. Miserable was the name of disobedience after belief! Whoever repents not, then, those, they are the ones who are unjust. O those who believed! Avoid suspicion much. Truly, some suspicion is a sin. Spy not nor backbite some by some other. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his lifeless brother? You would have disliked it. Be God-conscious. Truly, God is Acceptor of Repentance, Compassionate. (Q49:11-49:12)

It deprecates the person who is ready with oaths, is a slanderer going about with calumnies, is a transgressor beyond bounds, or is deep in sin, violence, and cruelty:

But obey not every worthless swearer, defamer, one who goes about with slander, slandering, who delays good, a sinful, exceeeder of limits, cruel and after that, ignoble. (Q68:10-68:13)

Acts to Absolve Wrongdoing Deeds

Formal prayer as an act of goodwill or benevolence absolves wrongdoing deeds:

Perform the formal prayer at the two ends of the daytime and at nearness

of the nighttime. Truly, benevolence causes wrongdoing deeds to be put away. That is a reminder for the ones who remember. (Q11:114)

To repent and believe and act morally will absolve us of our wrongdoing deeds:

Whoever has repented and believed and whose actions were done as one in accord with morality, for those God will substitute for their wrongdoing deeds benevolence. God had been Forgiving, Compassionate. (Q25:70)

We drive off wrongdoing deeds with goodwill, kindness and benevolence and the giving of charity:

Those will be given their compensation two times because they patiently endured and drive off wrongdoing deeds with benevolence and they spend out of what We provided them. (Q28:54)

God accepts the remorse of His servants for their wrongdoing deeds:

He accepts the remorse of His servants and pardons their wrongdoing deeds. He knows what you accomplish. (Q42:25)

If we are among those who believed in the One God, who act morally and believe in the Quran sent down to Prophet Muhammad, God will absolve us of our wrongdoing deeds and make right our condition:

Those who believed and did as the ones in accord with morality and believed in what was sent down to Muhammad—for it is The Truth from their Lord—He will absolve them of their wrongdoing deeds and will make right their condition. (Q47:2)

If we conceal any charity we give to the poor, God will absolve some of our wrongdoing deeds:

If you show your charity, then, how bountiful it is while if you conceal it and give it to the poor, that would be better for you. This absolves you of some of your wrongdoing deeds. God is Aware of what you do. (Q2:271)

Our Lord! So forgive You our impieties and absolve us of our wrongdoing deeds and gather us to You with the pious. (Q3:193)

They swore by God the most earnest oaths, that if a warner drew near them, they would be better guided than any of the other communities. Yet when a warner drew near to them, it increased nothing in them but aversion, growing arrogant on the earth and planning wrongdoing deeds. The plan of bad deeds

surround none but people themselves. Then, look they on but a custom of the ancient ones? You will never find in a custom of God any substitution. You will never find in a custom of God any revision. (Q35:42-35:43)

If We caused him to experience favor after tribulation afflicted him, he is certain to say: Wrongdoing deeds went from me! Truly, he becomes glad, boastful. (Q11:10)

Truly, when We caused the human being to experience mercy from Us, he was glad in it. But when wrongdoing deeds light on him—because of what his hands sent—then, truly, the human being is ungrateful. (Q42:48)

Assumed those who sought to do wrongdoing deeds that We will make them equal with those who believed and did as the ones in accord with morality? Are their living and dying equal? How wrongdoing is the judgment they give! (Q45:21)

Shown to themselves will be the wrongdoing deeds they did. They will be surrounded by what they had been ridiculing. (Q45:33)

Repel wrongdoing with what is best:

Drive you back wrongdoing deeds with what is fairer (Q23:96) for in so doing we enhance the excellence of our own souls:

If you did good, you would be doing good for yourselves. If you did wrongdoing, then, it is against yourselves. (Q17:7)

Certainly, God absolves them of bad deeds of what they do and gives them recompense in compensation for the fairer of what they had been doing. (Q39:35)

Those are those from whom We will receive the fairer of what they did and we will pass on by their wrongdoing deeds. (Q46:16)

To God belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in and on the earth that He may give recompense to those who did wrongdoing for what they did and give recompense fairer to those who did good. (Q53:31)

After we have satisfied our own needs with moderation, we should spend what is left over of our well-earned wealth in the following ways:

They ask you how much they should spend. Say: The extra. (Q2:219)

Spend for the poor, those who were restrained in the way of God and are

not able to travel on the earth. The one who is ignorant assumes them to be rich because of their having reserve. You will recognize them by their mark. They ask not persistently of humanity. Whatever of good you spend, then, truly, God is Knowing of that. (Q2:273)

In spite of their love for it, they feed with food one who is needy and the orphan and the prisoner of war saying: We feed you only for the Countenance of God. We want no recompense from you nor any thankfulness. (Q76:8-76:9)

Being God-conscious is a good deed:

It is not virtuous conduct that you turn your faces towards the East or the West. Rather, virtuous conduct consists of: Whoever believed in God and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets. Whoever gave wealth out of cherishing Him to the possessors of kinship and to the orphans and to the needy and to the traveler of the way and to the one who begs and the freeing of a bondsman, and whoever performed the formal prayer, and gave the purifying alms, and the ones who live up to their compact when they made a contract, and the ones who remain steadfast in desolation and tribulation and at the time of danger, those are those who were sincere and those, they are the ones who are God-conscious! (Q2:177)

The Quran not only tells us that this kind of *giving of our wealth out of cherishing Him* is the essence of God-consciousness, but also warns that its absence in a society must mean its decay and ruination:

Spend in the way of God, and cast not yourselves by your own hands into deprivation by fighting. (Q2:195)

Stretch not out your eyes (make not efforts) for what We gave of enjoyment in this life to spouses among them as the luster of this present life so that We try them by it. Provision of your Lord is best and that which endures. (20:131)

Offend not those (by your efforts) who call to other than God so that they not offend God out of spite without knowledge. Thus, We made to appear pleasing the actions of every community. Again, to their Lord is their return. Then, He will tell them what they had been doing. (6:108)

5. Seeking God's Help

When harm afflicted the human being, he calls to Us on his side or as one who sits at home or as one who is standing up (for his needs). But when We

removed his harm from him, he passed by as if he had never been calling to Us for the harm that afflicted him. (Q10:12)

Reminders or Triggers

Triggers are reminders that may be explicit or implicit about the performance of a behavior. Examples of triggers can be alarms and text messages. Triggers are usually perceptual in nature but may also be intrinsic. One of the most important aspects of a trigger is timing as only certain times are best for triggering certain behaviors.¹¹

Beauty of Action

The Quran lays the greatest stress on the beauty of action. It encourages us to do the deeds of high value for God loves those who do excellent deeds. God wants us to return greetings with greetings of great excellence:

When you were given greetings with greetings, then, give greetings fairer than that or return the same to them. Truly, God had been over everything a Reckoner. (Q4:86)

6. Learning How to Change Our Behavior

Imitation and reinforcement play important roles in duplicating behaviors we observe in others and that rewards are essential to ensuring the repetition of desirable behavior. As each simple behavior is established through imitation and subsequent reinforcement, the complex behavior develops. Excellence of conduct shall not be wasted:

Truly, those who believed and did as the ones in accord with morality, truly, We will not waste the compensation of him who did good actions. (Q18:30)

You command humanity to virtuous conduct and forget yourselves while you relate the Book? Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q2:44)

It is not virtuous conduct that you approach houses from the back. Rather, virtuous conduct was to be God-conscious Be God-conscious of God so that perhaps you will prosper. (Q2:189)

You will never attain virtuous conduct until you spend of what you love. Whatever thing you spend, truly, God is Knowing of it. (Q3:92)

Cooperate with one another in virtuous conduct and God-consciousness and cooperate not with one another in sin and deep seated dislike. Be God-conscious. (Q5:2)

O those who believed! When you hold secret counsel, hold not secret counsel in sin and deep-seated dislike and in opposition to the Messenger. But

hold secret counsel for virtuous conduct and God-consciousness and be God-conscious before Whom you will be assembled. (Q58:9)

The word motivation itself implies the energy required to produce movement. So, with little introspection we can see that much of our behavior is under the influence of momentum. For example, we clearly fall into patterns of action. It can be stated that much of what we do today is because that is what we did yesterday. Thus, it is easy for us all to fall into a rut or become creatures of habit. Conversely, the law of inertia can also be an issue since "...an object at rest tends to stay at rest unless a force is applied". So the question becomes, how can we increase desirable behaviors and decrease less desirable actions?

We can learn to take advantage of these powerful physical laws. Every task can in reality be viewed as a complex string or chain of behaviors and subtasks. Once we begin to commence any action along this chain, it serves to increase momentum and thus increases the probability of the next behavior or subtask being executed. So for example, let's say you have a paper due at school, an important step may be to simply go to the library. Once you are at the library, the chances are you will do some work. Once you start doing some work (research, reading), the probability grows that you will continue to do work. Momentum builds. At some point of course, you will actually have to start writing. The hardest part is probably the very first word or paragraph. There is no great trick to get over the initial hump. At some point we just have to bite the bullet, dig deep and start. Just write. Once you start, momentum will take over and writing, most probably will have the momentum to continue.

So the trick is, just stay focused on the very next step in the sequence. Just think of the next step. It's all about probability and momentum. Take the first step, and the likelihood grows that the rest will follow! Having stated the above, it is important to keep in mind that other emotional factors can arise to thwart one's efforts and progress on an activity or task. Thus, it is often important to employ emotional mindfulness and exposure techniques to identify and embrace the "dark emotions" that may lead to avoidance and procrastination.¹²

The Prophet's Altruism and Dissent

Dissent and altruism is the willingness to take selfless or dangerous action on behalf of others are in part a matter of personal convictions and conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*). There are situational influences on our decision to speak up for an unpopular opinion, chose conscience over conformity, or help a stranger in trouble.

In the case of Prophet Muhammad, his ally was God. He perceived the need for intervention or help when he saw his people worshipping idols. He realized that such action was necessary. He decided to take responsibility. He decided that the cost of doing nothing outweighed the cost of getting involved.

Differences of Responsibility

Here responsibility for an outcome is diffused or spread among many people. In crowds, individuals often fail to take action because they believe that

someone else will do so as in the following Quranic signs which relate to an incident that involved the Prophet's wife, Ayisha. The Quran reprimands the believers for not supporting her in that situation.

Truly, those who drew near with the false and slanderous statement are many among you. Assume it not worse for you? Nay! It is good for you (either because it was resolved openly or because it resulted in the revelation of these Quranic signs about it). To every man of them is what he deserved of sin. As for those who turned away towards the greater part from among them, there will be a tremendous punishment for him. Why not when you heard about it, thought not the ones who are male believers and the ones who are female believers the better of themselves and have said: This is a clear false and slanderous statement? Why brought they not about four witnesses for it? As they bring not about witnesses, then, with God, those, they are the ones who lie. If it not were for the grace of God on you and His mercy in the present and in the world to come, certainly, would have afflicted you a tremendous punishment for what you said. When you received it on your tongues and said with your mouths of what there is no knowledge, you assume it insignificant while it is serious with God. Why, when you heard it, said you not: It will not be for us to assert this. Glory be to You! This is a serious false charge to harm the reputation of another. God admonishes you that you shall never revert to the like of it, if you had been ones who believe. (Q24:11-24:17)

7. Attribution

Situational Attribution

With what is called situational attribution, we identify the cause of an action as something in the situation or environment as with those who attribute partners with God, attributing the good they receive having come from other than God:

Is He, then, One Who Sustains Every Soul for what it earned? Yet they ascribe associates with God! Say: Name them! Or will you tell Him of what He knows not in the earth? Or name you only them in the manifest sayings? Nay! Made to appear pleasing to those who were ungrateful was their planning and they were barred from the way. Whomever God causes to go astray, for him there is no one who guides. (Q13:33)

For Him is the call of The Truth. Those whom they call to other than Him, they respond not to them at all, but like one who stretches out the palms of his hands for water so that it should reach his mouth, but it is not that which reaches it. Supplication of the ones who are ungrateful is only wandering astray. (Q13:14)

He said: Who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, but the ones who go astray? (Q15:56)

Dispositional Attribution

With dispositional attribution, we identify the cause of an action as something in the person such as a trait or a motive.

To God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows females on whom He wills. He bestows males on whom He wills. (Q42:49)

So is he whose mind (sadr) God has expanded for submission to God, in a light from His Lord? So woe to their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah), ones that harden against the Remembrance of God. Those are clearly going astray. (Q39:22)

The Quran often uses both situational and dispositional attribution in its signs:

Say: O People of the Book! Go not beyond limits in your way of life but with The Truth and follow not the desires of the folk who, surely, went astray before. They caused many to go astray. They themselves went astray from the right way. (Q5:77)

Even if you were to bring to those who were given the Book every sign, they would not heed your direction of formal prayer. Nor are you one who heeds their direction of formal prayer. Nor are some of them ones who heed the direction of the other's formal prayer. (Q2:145)

If you have obeyed most of who are on the earth, they will cause you to go astray from the way of God. They follow nothing but opinion and they only guess. (Q6:116)

Yet, when it comes to explaining our own behavior, we do so with a self-serving bias. We choose attributions that are favorable to us taking credit for our good actions but letting the situation account for their bad or embarrassing actions. Self-serving bias is the tendency, in explaining our own behavior, to take credit for our good actions and rationalize our mistakes.

If We caused him to experience favor after tribulation afflicted him, he is certain to say: Evil deeds went from me! Truly, he becomes glad, boastful. (Q11:10)

Truly, when We caused the human being to experience mercy from Us, he was glad in it. But when wrongdoing deeds light on him—because of what his hands sent—then, truly, the human being is ungrateful. (Q42:48)

8. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation (*fīrat Allah*) is a natural motivational tendency and is a critical element in cognitive, social, and physical development. When we are intrinsically motivated, we are more likely to engage in the task willingly as well as work to improve our skills, which will increase our capabilities. Intrinsic motivation can be long-lasting and self-sustaining reinforcement in Quranic Psychology.¹³

Extrinsic Motivation and Constraints

Extrinsic motivation comes from influences outside of our individual self, i.e. the Quran. In extrinsic motivation, the harder question to answer is where do people get the motivation to carry out and continue to push with persistence? Usually extrinsic motivation is used to attain outcomes that a person would not get from intrinsic motivation.

Common extrinsic motivations are rewards (Paradise) for showing the desired behavior, and the threat of punishment following misbehavior. Competing with one another in good deeds is an extrinsic motivator because it encourages us to do better than another and to beat others, not simply to enjoy the intrinsic rewards of the activity.¹⁴

9. Goal-setting Theory

God created the universe and the human being with a purpose or a goal:

Everyone has a direction to which he turns. (Q2:148)

and that goal is God Himself:

... that towards your Lord is the Utmost Boundary. (Q53:42)

God has not created the world for idle sport:

We created not the heavens and the earth and what is between them as ones in play. (Q21:16)

It is created with a purpose, for an appointed term:

We created not the heavens and the earth and whatever is between the two, but with The Truth and for a term, that which is determined. (Q46:3)

and according to a plan, however hidden it may be from us humans for God is the best of planners:

They planned and God planned. God is Best of the ones who plan.
(Q3:54)

He it is who ordains laws and grants guidance:

... who ordained and, then, guided.... (Q87:3)

creates everything and ordains for it a proportion and measure:

He created everything and ordained it a foreordaining. (Q25:2) Truly, We created all things in measure. (Q54:49)

and gives guidance:

He said: Our Lord is He Who gave everything its creation; again, He guided it. (Q20:50)

There is not a thing, but its treasures are with Us and We send it down not but in a known measure. (Q15:21)

Reasons for Setting Goals

To understand the purpose of this life.

To understand how to fulfill this purpose in thinking, feeling, conduct and behavior.

Embracing the Quran and the Prophet as ultimate sources for guidance and direction in life.

To develop a keen sense of God-consciousness (*taqwa*), an awareness of duties towards God, ourselves and others.

To further a personality that cares about and contributes to the well-being of the community (*umma*), nation and the world.

Goal-setting in Quranic Psychology is based on our striving to reach a clearly defined end state. This end state is a reward in itself. Quranic goals are:

- specific: return to God well-pleased and pleasing
- measurable: taking an account each day
- attainable/achievable: achieved by Prophet Muhammad so available to all
- relevant: relevant to our willpower to find meaning in life
- time-bound: the challenge ends with our death

Learning Goals

The Quran lays the greatest stress on the beauty of action. It exhorts humanity to do the deeds of high value:

Do good. Truly, God loves the ones who are doers of good. (Q2:195)

and repel wrongdoing with what is best:

Drive you back wrongdoing deeds with what is fairer. We are greater in knowledge of what they allege. (Q23:96)

for in so doing we enhance the excellence of our own souls:

If you did good, you would be doing good for yourselves. If you did wrongdoing, then, it is against yourselves. (Q17:7)

Performance Goals

Short term objectives, performance goals set specific duties for us such as turning away from action on or not following our own desires:

She, certainly, was about to act on her desire for him and he was about to act on his desire for her, if it were not that he saw proof of his Lord. Thus, it was that We turn away from him wrongdoing and depravity. Truly, he was among Our servants, ones who are devoted. (Q12:24)

Then, for that, call to this. Go you straight as you were commanded. Follow not their desires. Say: I believed in what God caused to descend from a Book. I was commanded to be just among you. God is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our actions and for you, your actions. There is no disputation between us and between you. God will gather us together. To Him is the Homecoming. (Q42:15)

O those who believed! Truly, intoxicants and gambling and fetishes and divining arrows are of the disgraceful actions of Satan. Then, avoid them so that perhaps you will prosper. (Q5:90)

We know that there is a guard over our soul:

Truly, every soul has one who guards it. (Q86:4)

10. Signs of Balanced Behavior

Patience

Pray for help with patience and formal prayer. (Q2:45)

O those who believed! Excel in patience ... (Q3:200)

Have patience, for, truly, God wastes not the compensation of the ones who are doers of good. (Q11:115)

Have patience and your patience is only from God. (Q16:127)

Forbearance

The servants of The Merciful are those who walk on the earth in meekness. When the ones who are ignorant addressed them, they said: Peace! (Q25:63)

Truly, Abraham was forbearing, sympathetic, one who turns in repentance. (Q11:75)

Self-Control

None will be in receipt of it but those who endured patiently. (Q41:35)

As for him who feared the Station of his Lord and prohibited desire from his soul, truly, the Garden will be the place of shelter! (Q79:40-41)

... follow not your desire for it will cause thee to go astray from the way of God. (Q38:26)

So follow not your desires that you become unbalanced. (Q4:135)

Endnotes to Part II: Our Motivational System: Module 6: The Behavioral-Avoidance of Harm/Pain Component of Our Animal Soul

- 1 Robert Frager. <https://www.theosophical.org/publications/quest-magazine/42-publications/quest-magazine/1590-your-seven-souls-a-sufi-view>.
- 2 Paul J. Glenn, "Tour of the Summa." Online.
- 3 Paul J. Glenn, "Tour of the Summa." Online.
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- 6 Paul J. Glenn, "Tour of the Summa." Online.
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- 9 Paul J. Glenn, "Tour of the Summa." Online.
- 10 Paul J. Glenn, "Tour of the Summa." Online.
- 11 Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, Volume 1, §956.
- 12 See <https://www.isixsigma.com/implementation/change-management-implementation/set-smart-goals-better-manage-time/>.
- 13 Wikipedia.
- 14 <https://www.mindfulexposurebook.com/momentum-and-motivation/>.

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Part II: Our Motivational System

Module 7: Willpower and Free Willpower

Introduction¹

We have learned in previous modules that we first need to acknowledge our existence and that our "self" consists of body, soul and spirit. Our soul comes into existence with our body, and, then, through substantial motion—endowed to it by God through His creation of nature—it moves gradually, continuously and successively from potentiality to actuality through higher and higher forms or evolutionary "modes" of being from body-soul to soul-spirit/intellect/cognition culminating in a person who manifests God's Names and Qualities.

Our willpower is part of our existence as a cognitive-conative process resulting in our behavior. Our willpower is grounded in and naturally accompanies existence. As it is reducible to existence, it is, therefore, present in everything, but in a gradated sense like existence itself. Therefore, willpower "becomes" or evolves through a gradual unfolding.

God's willpower is something basically different from our willpower and our willpower is similarly different from the willpower of animals. This is because existence itself differs fundamentally at different levels of being from weak to intense. Indeed, willpower is in some sense present even in inanimate objects—in the form of a physical tendency or inclination. Thus, in inanimate objects willpower appears as a physical tendency, in animals as pure appetite, in humans as rational appetite, and in God as absolute, rational grace or providence. It is, therefore, clear that what is termed willpower or love or desire or tendency, etc., corresponds to the nature of existence in everything.

As our willpower is grounded in and associated with existence, when we act, we produce our action ourselves in a real sense. Yet the same act is also due to the omnipresence and omnipotence of God. We are literally and truly said to be free in our action, for this is what free willpower in our case means, that is, when we are said to be free. This does not mean or imply, however, that we have no other determinants except our willpower and that our willpower is born without any context.

What this saying: There is neither total determinism of human acts nor total freedom² means is that in our voluntary actions, freedom and determinism are both present. The adage: In everything the golden mean is the best, is truly realized in this view. The mean or balance between extremes is sometimes produced by a compounding of the two extremes in such a way that both sides lose their extremeness. For example, water may achieve

such a balance between hot and cold that it is no longer either hot or cold actually, and yet it cannot go outside these two categories. In such a mean, it is said, the mean cancels out both sides.

However, there is another sense of "mean" or balance. That is, in a simpler and higher level or mode of existence where both sides are actually present and neither of them is removed, but they become identical with one another in such a way that they do not contradict each other nor do they cancel each other out. "Mean" in this sense is better than the "mean" in the earlier sense.

According to this view, when a certain motivation comes to hold sway over us, our willpower and subsequent action become absolutely determined to do or not do something and we no longer are acting solely out of free willpower. The determining motivation is part of what we call free willpower. Indeed, such motivations are our willpower and to demand that our action be free from motivation in order to be "really free" is simply to demand the impossible.

For instance, a feeling of anger arises in us for what someone has said or done to us. Our free willpower, by-passing a consultation with our reason, acts. The act is not out of free willpower, but is determined to be done. So while our free willpower was aroused at the beginning, our putting it into action was a determined act. Our willpower, then, causes us to move towards what we are attracted to (attraction to pleasure, *quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) or away from (avoidance of harm/pain, *quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*) what we want to avoid (animal soul or *nafs al-ammarah*).

Our willpower, as part of our animal soul, is a higher development within us from our mineral and plant souls as our willpower is the primary mover of all the powers of our soul ... and it is also the cause of motion in the body.³

The voluntary motivation of our animal soul is our free willpower in addition to the other properties of our *nafs al-ammarah*. It is the highest form of motivation in nature and is independent of conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*) or reason (*'aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*). Our *nafs al-ammarah* has to be disciplined to follow them.

1. Only God Has Absolute Willpower (*Sha'a*)

It is primarily God's willpower which is the cause of creation. God is an omnipotent and willpowering agent in the view of al-Ghazzali.

He does what He wills, and ordains as He wills and He creates the similar and dissimilar things alike, whenever and in whatever manner He wills. The heavens and the earth are the direct work of God, produced out of sheer nothingness simply as Creator and through His command to "Be!" God has created the universe through His willpower, sustains it through His willpower, and one day will let it pass away by His willpower. God wills the world because He thinks of it. God has cognizance of the world because He wills it and in His willing it.⁴

The world as a process is eternal but since nothing in the world remains the same any two moments—the world ceases to be eternal in its contents and even the world's eternity as a process is not an independent one but derivative from God's being.

Thanks to God's protective care, He acts through determination in the sense that He follows the best course of action which forecloses other less desirable alternatives, but He does not work under constraint and is, therefore, free and it is true of Him: If He so willed, He would act otherwise—which is the hallmark of freedom.⁵

I (God) chose you (Moses) so listen to what is revealed. (Q20:13)

Certainly, We chose them (the Children of Jacob) with knowledge above the worlds. (Q44:32)

Your Lord creates whatever He wills and chooses. Not for them had there been a choice. Glory be to God and exalted is He above partners they ascribe! (that is, the partners they ascribe to God had no choice because they are created by God just as we have no choice in being given existence). (Q28:68)

Proof of Our Belief in God's Absolute Willpower (Sha'a)

As proof of our belief in God's absolute willpower (*sha'a*),⁶ we hear ourselves and our friends often reciting *insha'Allah* and *masha'Allah*, both having to do with God's absolute willpower.

Insha'Allah, God willing, is an expression we often use to indicate that we hope that our actions are those that are willed by God, or that it is, in accordance with God's willpower that some desired event will come to pass, or that some negative event will not come to pass in the future. It expresses the belief that nothing happens unless God wills it and that God's willpower supersedes human willpower.

They make no exception by saying if God wills (insha'Allah). (Q68:18)

Surely, he will not say about something: Truly, I will be one who does that tomorrow, but that you add: If God wills. (Q18:23-18:24)

Masha'Allah, meaning: God has willed! It is a phrase we use that means God, who causes us to exist, has willed, so that we express appreciation, joy, praise, or thankfulness for an event or person that was just mentioned. While *masha'Allah* is used as an expression of respect, it also serves as a reminder that all accomplishments are considered by us to be achieved through the will of God. It is generally said upon hearing good news.⁷

2. Divine Decree (*Qada*) and the Measuring Out, Power (*Qadar*, *Qadr*)

The divine decree (*qada'*) and the measuring out or power (*qadar*), referred to in Islamic texts as *qada' wa qadar*, is an article of belief. It is the belief that all things are in the knowledge of God and He commands through His will according to the measure.

Qada means to decide, to determine, to complete, to accomplish, to decree and refers to the world of God's command that is an absolute command.

Qadar, on the other hand, means "measured out" or "power" and refers to the world of creation. It is not an absolute or eternal decree, but a possibility that might be.

Based on this, some believe that the divine decree and the measuring out is what God wrote down in the Guarded Tablet (*al-lauh al-mahfuz*):

Nay! It is a glorious Recitation inscribed on the Guarded Tablet. (Q85:21-85:22)

They believe that all actions that will come to pass as written. However, the fact that God has written down our actions and kept them in His knowledge, does not mean that God *causes* us to do what is in His knowledge, but that what is in His knowledge is associated with what we chose to do.

Divine Decree (*Qada*)

The creative command *Be!* found in Quranic signs as discussed in the module on spirit (*ruh*), clearly state that all that is necessary to bring a thing into being is for God to say *Be!*

God says *Be!* to the forms in His Knowledge meaning His knowledge of His own Qualities and Attributes. That is to say, God knows what He will create and brings His will and power to bear upon that object of knowledge in order to create it by saying *Be!* Being within God's knowledge, it is something that is not yet created. It does not yet possess existence. Ultimately, these views converge on the unity of God's knowledge, will and power as His inseparable attributes and on God's complete self-sufficiency in relation to what He creates.... This serves to emphasize the fact that the existence of everything comes from God and His will and that human beings do not have the power to bring anything into being out of nothing.⁸

We will assign him as a sign for humanity and as a mercy from Us. It is that which is a decreed command. (Q19:21)

Then, exalted be God, The True King, and hasten not the recitation before its revelation is decreed to you. Say: My Lord! Increase me in knowledge! (Q20:114)

Truly, your Lord will decree between them with His determination.
(Q27:78)

God decrees by The Truth. Those whom they call to other than Him decide not anything. (Q40:20)

It had not been for a male, one who believes, and a female, one who believes, when God and His Messenger decreed an affair that there be any choice for them in their affair. Whoever rebels against God and His Messenger, certainly, he went astray, clearly wandering astray. (Q33:36)

The Measuring Out, Power (*Qadar, Qadr*)

The word *qadar* comes from the same root as *qadir* ... meaning "powerful." The noun *qudra*, which designates the divine attribute of power, is close to *qadar* both in derivation and in meaning. To have power is to have the ability or capacity to do or make something, to perform an act, to achieve a goal. The Quran tells us repeatedly that God, "is powerful over all things," so His power—in contrast to ours—is unlimited.

Qadar is sometimes used synonymously with *qudra*, so it also means "power" and "ability." But the word *qadar* puts stress on the basic meaning of the root, which is to measure or determine the size or quantity of something. This may be done physically, with a scale or a tape measure, or it may be done mentally, through computation and reckoning. The term may mean not only "to take something's measure," but also "to determine its measure." To measure something, in this sense, is to control it and govern it, to have power over it. Hence we come back to power.

God is powerful over all things, while human beings have a certain limited power inasmuch as they reflect God's power. Obviously they have no power over God, any more than a ray of light has power over the sun. Nor are they able to understand God in a true sense without God's guidance, for understanding something gives us a certain power over it.⁹

They comprehend nothing of His knowledge, save such as He wills.
(Q2:255)

They measured not God with His true measure. (Q6:91); (Q22:74);
(39:67)

The Quran uses the term *qadar* in ten verses.... regarding the relationship between God and the cosmos and God and human beings:

Truly, We created all things in measure (qadar). (Q54:49)

There is not a thing, but its treasures are with Us and We send it down not but in a known measure. (Q15:21)

God also measures out freedom, and he gives by far the largest portion of it to human beings.¹⁰

In regard to the distinction between free will (*ikhtiyar*) and fate or determinism, God is the active cause of all that is upon the horizons and within ourselves. In regard to our self, God is the absolute ruler of all human events who assigned us to be His vicereagents (*khalifa*) on earth:

When your Lord said to the angels: Truly, I am assigning on the earth a viceregent. They said: Will You be One Who Makes on it someone who makes corruption on it and sheds blood, while we glorify Your praise and sanctify You? He said: Truly, I know what you know not! (Q2:30)

That is, He knows that by (our) own free choice (we) will, for instance, follow (our) own desires, but His knowledge does not predetermine (our) doing so.... When the Quran speaks of people acting or willing, (we) really do so (ourselves), and (our) acts are not predetermined.¹¹

The Commanding Nature of God (*sunnat Allah*)

The universal scheme is realized through *sunnat Allah*. The occurrence of things and their development from one state to another represents this *sunnah* of God. The transformation becomes possible only when we have the potentiality and capacity (*isti'dad*) for it which we owe to the bounty of God—the Merciful (*al-Rahman*).

There had been no fault with the Prophet in what is undertaken by him as a duty from God. This is a custom (the commanding nature) of God (sunnat Allah) with those who passed away before. The command of God had been a measured measure. (Q33:38)

This sign (Q33:38) means: God's command (*amr*) is a determination determined. God determines human behavior only by commanding certain acts and prohibiting others. In this way, God creates only good. Wrongdoing comes from our self. In addition, God has given us voluntary or free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) as can be seen by the numerous signs that speak of having to choose between two possibilities.

If God afflicts you with harm, there is no one who removes it but He. If He intends good for you, there is no one who repels His grace (rest assured God is present at all times with us depending on what choices we are free to make). It lights on whomever He wills of His servants. (Q10:107)

Good and Evil

The measuring out includes good and evil:

The Arabic word for good is *khayr*, while the word for evil is *sharr*. Good and evil in English are exceedingly broad terms, but typically they involve a moral judgment. In contrast, the Quranic context of *khayr* and *sharr* does not usually imply a statement about right and wrong, but rather about the benefit or loss that something brings.¹²

The human being grows not weary of supplicating for good, but if the worst afflicted him, then, he is hopeless, desperate. (Q41:49)

If God is to quicken the worst for humanity, as they would desire to hasten for the good, their term would be decided. (Q10:11)

The measured out good and evil relate to the things that we wish to have (attraction to pleasure, *quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) or to avoid (avoidance of harm/pain, *quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*).

The issue here is not a moral good and evil, but rather a good and evil relative to the view of the person who is receiving it.... We suffer a loss, so that is evil for us. We receive a benefit, so that is good. The Quran often points out that people may be mistaken in their judgments about good and evil. You might think it is good for you to win the lottery, when in fact it may be an evil. When people judge good and evil by their own standards, they are frequently mistaken.... especially if such things cause (us) to forget (our) human responsibilities.¹³

Assume not those who are misers that what God gave them of His grace is better for them. Nay! It is worse for them. (Q3:180)

Made to appear pleasing to humanity was the cherishing of lust: From women and children and that which is heaped up heaps of gold and silver and horses, ones that are distinguished, and flocks and cultivation. (Q3:14)

The Real is everything that is good and what is unreal is evil or we can say good is light and evil is a weakness of light or darkness.

Just as darkness is nothing but the absence of light, so also evil is nothing but the absence of good.... The Prophet expressed the relationship of good and evil to God with his short prayer of praise: The good, all of it, is in Your hands, but evil does not go back to You. To what then does evil go back? To the lack of good, the lack of light, the lack of reality, the lack of the divine qualities. In other words, evil pertains to everything other than God, while good pertains to God alone.

Notice that on this level of discussion, good and evil have nothing to do with moral considerations, and this, as remarked above, is also true of the basic sense of the terms *khayr* and *sharr*. To say that something is good is to say that it shares in the divine attributes to some degree. To say that something is evil is to say that it lacks the divine attributes to some degree. All things are both good and evil in this sense.... All things are mixtures of good and evil, light and darkness, high and low, knowledge and ignorance, power and weakness....¹⁴

3. Our Willpower

We have two types of willpower (*iradah*): nonrational and rational. Our nonrational or natural willpower is the unconscious action of our animal soul (*nafs al-ammara*) to attain a desire (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) or to avoid harm (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*). These include the strongest desire or need from among the various desires or needs present within our animal soul at a moment of encounter. Our rational or conscious willpower, on the other hand, is known as our choice or free willpower (*ikhtiyar*).

When we use our choice to avoid and deny our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) and chose to act upon our own desires, we are tapping into our nonrational willpower and we are no longer free, but are willfully by-passing our free willpower by choosing to act according to our own desires instead of following the goal of our soul's naturally provided substantial motion to follow God's will and choose the good.

When we choose a certain action, other possible actions are no longer possible and we must, out of necessity, act as a natural cause that produces an effect. Therefore, the difference between a volitional cause and a natural cause is not because one is open and the other is closed (determined, necessary). Rather one is volitional and the other is not. One is a cognitive-conative type and the other is a natural cause-effect type. (Our cognitive functions involve our intellect (*'aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*) while conative relates to how we act based on our thoughts and affect/emotions. Conation is any natural tendency, impulse, stirring or directed effort.) The action of a person who acts through reason is not constrained or involuntary. Rather this is the highest form of volitional action. The necessity to act stemming from our use of reason is the highest form of the will of our free willpower.¹⁵

When we act, doing things without our willpower being involved, our action is neither natural nor volitional:

We often have a strong desire for some things but we do not will them—for instance, such things as are forbidden by law. It is also true that we sometimes do things without any express will (but not involuntarily), as in the case of such habits as cracking our fingers or, for a male, stroking his beard or we may will certain things against our desire as when we take distasteful medicine.¹⁶

According to the Quran, certain people by-pass their free willpower in not choosing the good. Even if God had chosen to guide them to the truth, they themselves would choose to reject the faith while others do good deeds:

Even if He had caused them to be willing to hear, truly, they would have turned away. They are ones who turn aside. (Q8:23)

Whether we grieve over what we did not attain or are glad for what has been given to us, we are to remain neutral and not boast to others.

No affliction lit on the earth nor on yourselves but it is in a Book that We fashion before. Truly, that is easy for God so that you not grieve over what slipped away from you nor be glad because of what was given to you. God loves not any proud, boaster. (Q57:22)

4. Our Free Willpower

In the view of Naquib al-Attas, contrary to the translation by most people of the word *ikhtiyar* as choice, he maintains that *ikhtiyar* does not simply mean choice. We have free willpower to choose the good. This choice for the better is left to us.

The word *khayr*, meaning good, which is bound in meaning with *ikhtiyar* (free willpower) and being derived from the same root, determines that the choice meant is towards what is good. This point is most important when aligned to the question of freedom and free willpower. A so-called choice towards what is bad is therefore not a choice. It is an exercise of nonrational—even willful—willpower as opposed to conscious free willpower. Since we affirm that freedom is to act as our real and our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) demands, only the exercise of that choice which is good can properly be called a free choice. A choice for the better is an exercise of freedom or free willpower. It presupposes knowledge of good and wrongdoing through our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*). A choice for the worse is not a choice. It is nonrational willpower based upon ignorance and on the instigation of our animal soul or *nafs al-ammara* that inclines towards the blameworthy aspects of our animal powers.¹⁷

The fact that our feelings, imaginations and thoughts influence our character is of the greatest practical importance, but by using our willpower to control them all, we become also master of our life and “fate.” Each emotional “note” has its own effect on our body and soul, and can be overruled by our willpower. The influence of our imagination is implied in the phrases “looking on the bright (or dark) side of things”. Cheerful, gloomy, constructive, destructive, upright, deceitful thoughts all affect the sum total of our conduct, the attitude of our mind towards others, and can all be over ruled by our willpower.

5. God Attests to Our Free Willpower

Your wives are a place of cultivation for you, so approach your cultivation whenever you will and put forward for yourselves. (Q2:223)

What you gave in usury in order that it swell the wealth of humanity swells not with God. What you gave in purifying alms, intending the Countenance of God, then, those, they are the ones who will receive manifold. (Q30:39)

All of the signs that relate to commanding to good, positive traits, and preventing

negative traits, wrongdoing, are proof of our free willpower. If we were obliged to do so, doing so would make no sense. All of the signs that speak of blame and reproach against the wrongdoers and praise for the good doers are proof of free willpower because if we were obliged to do whatever we did, blame or praise would make no sense. All of the signs which speak about the questioning on the day of judgment and the judgment in that court and then the rewards and punishments and heaven and hell are proof of free willpower because if we were to assume that everything was predestined, then, questioning, judging, rewards and punishments would all be oppressive. All of the signs that say that we are responsible for our deeds shows our free willpower. Otherwise the system would not be a just one:¹⁸

Every soul is a pledge for what it earned. (Q74:38)

Those who believed and their offspring who followed them in belief, We caused them to join their offspring. We deprived them not of anything of their actions. Every man will be pledged for what he earned. (Q52:21)

Truly, We guided him on the way, whether he be one who is thankful or ungrateful. (Q76:3)

There are two basic modes of freedom, "freedom from" (avoidance of pain, *quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*) and "freedom for" (attraction to pleasure, *quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*). We want freedom from oppression, and we want freedom for speech and for the things that we enjoy. In human affairs, these two kinds of freedom often conflict. When we gain freedom to enjoy a wealth of consumer goods, for example, we may bring about terrible oppression for peoples in other parts of the globe who have to suffer the consequences of exploitation and ecological devastation. The flip side of freedom's coin may well be slavery. What is good for you may be evil for someone else. Your freedom can be another's slavery, or it can even be your own slavery. Look at all the people who, in their desire to be free to have a good time, enslave themselves to demeaning jobs.¹⁹

God Sent Messengers and Prophets

Messengers are ones who give good tidings and ones who warn so that humanity not be in disputation against God after the Messengers. God had been Almighty, Wise. (Q4:165)

Humanity had been of one community. Then, God raised up the Prophets, ones who give good tidings and ones who warn. (Q2:213)

We have practical knowledge that we carry out actions by our own voluntary free willpower and choice. If we were compelled in our actions, God would not have sent the Messengers and Prophets.

We decide what to do and what to abstain from, without any sense of being compelled in our decisions. This applies to even the smallest of our

free willpower actions, like sitting and standing, entering our homes and departing, as well as more substantial decisions like marriage and divorce or deciding to relocate to another city. This is why we feel it most acutely if someone else tries to force us to do something we do not want to do. This is also why God does not hold us legally accountable for what we do under compulsion.

God Commands Us

The fact that God directs commands and prohibitions to us makes sense only if we are free to comply. Otherwise, we would be commanded to do that which is outside of our capacity, since our compliance or non-compliance would be predetermined. Therefore, it makes no sense to make demands of entities that have no ability to comply with those commands. Furthermore, God says:

God places not a burden on a soul beyond its capacity. (Q2:286)

God Praises and Expresses Disapproval

He praises those who do good for the good that they do and disapproves of wrongdoers for the wrong things that they do. He also gives recompense to us on account of our deeds. This only makes sense if we carried out those deeds of our own volition. Otherwise there would be nothing to reward or punish.

Prescribed is that which is appointed. Whoever wants a reward for good deeds in the present, We will give him that. Whoever wants a reward for good deeds in the world to come We will give him that. We will give recompense to the ones who are thankful. (Q3:145)

Divine Willpower and Our Free Willpower Converge

The following sign explains how divine will and our individual free willpower converge, that they could never be in opposition. The "hypocrites" had said that they would fight alongside with the believers—though they actually did not want to fight:

If they wanted to go forth, certainly, they would have prepared for it some preparation, except God disliked arousing them, so He caused them to pause (divine will) and it was said: Sit along with the ones who sit at home (this is what the non-rational willpower of the hypocrites intended to do). If they went forth with you, they would have increased nothing for you, but ruination. They would have rushed to and fro in your midst with insolent dissension (they would have been a hindrance to the Prophet). Among you are ones who would have harkened to them (some may have). God is Knowing of the ones who are unjust. (Q9:46-9:47)

As their real intention was not to fight, God made them stay behind. Divine will coincided with the willfulness of the hypocrites who by-passed their conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) because they wanted to remain at home and not fight as compared to the free willpower of the believers.

This correspondence between divine and human willpower is stated more explicitly in another sign. God is addressing the Prophet:

O Prophet! Say to whom are in your hands of the prisoners of war: If God knows any good in your consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah), He will give you better than what was taken from you and He will forgive you. (Q8:70)

Our free willpower is limited. We are not able—through free willpower—to force others to believe:

If your Lord will, all would have believed who are on the earth altogether. So would you compel humanity against their free willpower until they become ones who believe? (Q10:99)

6. Our Free Willpower Is Innately Disposed

Our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) is the highest developmental form of motivation in our nature and it is naturally disposed to be higher than our reasoning ability. Natural guidance (*takwini*) disposes it to be fair and just as well as to avoid conflict. This latter, avoiding conflict, is the stronger natural disposition as we see with the sign about Adam (human being):

Certainly, We made a compact with Adam before. Then, he forgot (by "avoiding conflict" within himself so he forgot) and We find no constancy in him (in the sense that Adam "avoided conflict" within himself and as a result, forgot). (Q20:115)

When our nurturing process is oriented towards preserving psychic health, our free willpower is gradually trained by our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) and conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) to accept the counsel of reason, thinking, cognition (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*).

Purifying our conscience through practicing good habits, our free willpower learns to seek the counsel of our reason before making a decision. Our rational or cognitive aspect of our self deliberates, comes to an understanding of the situation, and draws a conclusion. Our free willpower is then free to accept or reject the conclusion.

If our free willpower accepts the advice, our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) and conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) are regulated by our cognitive system in a state of the "mean," balance and harmony, centered in the Oneness of God (*tawhid*) and compassionate justice, exhibiting God-consciousness (*taqwa*) and the positive dispositions of temperance,

courage, and wisdom. If another confirms from this centeredness, we have attained the highest of the positive dispositions, that of being fair and just towards the Creator, the self, nature, and others.

To Be Fair and Just

Live up to the full measure when you intended to measure. Weigh with a scale, one that is straight. That is best and fairer in interpretation. (Q17:35)

He said: Truly, I intend to wed you to one of my two daughters if that you will hire yourself to me for eight years. But if you were to fulfill ten years, then, it will be from you, for I intend not to press you hard. You will find me, if God wills, among the ones in accord with morality. (Q28:27)

So give to possessors of kinship rightfully and to the needy and to the traveler of the way. (Q30:38)

Will I take gods to myself other than He when, if The Merciful intends any harm for me, their intercession will not avail me at all nor will they save me. (Q36:23)

Found He you one who wants, then, He enriched you? (Q93:8)

Say: Approach now. I will recount what your Lord forbade you: Ascribe nothing as partners with Him. Show kindness to the ones who are your parents. Kill not your children from want. We will provide for you and for them. Come not near any indecencies whether these were manifest or what was inward. Kill not a soul which God forbade, unless rightfully. (Q6:151)

Whoever endured patiently and forgave, truly, that is, certainly, a sign of constancy of affairs. (Q42:43)

It is not virtuous conduct that you turn your faces towards the East or the West. Rather, virtuous conduct consists of: Whoever believed in God and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets. Whoever gave wealth out of cherishing Him to the possessors of kinship and to the orphans and to the needy and to the traveler of the way and to the one who begs and the freeing of a bondsperson, and whoever performed the formal prayer, and gave the purifying alms, and the ones who live up to their compact when they made a contract, and the ones who remain resolved in desolation and tribulation and at the time of danger, those are those who were sincere and those, they are the ones who are God-conscious! (Q2:177)

It is by the mercy of God you were gentle with them. If you had been hard, harsh of heart, they would have broken away from around you. So pardon

them and ask for forgiveness for them. Take counsel with them in the affair. But when you are resolved, then, put your trust in God. Truly, God loves the ones who put their trust in Him. (Q3:159)

To Avoid Conflict

Truly, God will cause to enter those who have believed (using their voluntary free will to avoid conflict) and did as the ones accord with morality, Gardens beneath which rivers run. Truly, God accomplishes what He intends. (Q22:14)

The women who are to be divorced will await by themselves three menstrual periods. It is not lawful for them (f) that they (f) keep back what God created in their (f) wombs, if they (f) had been believing in God, and the Last Day. Their husbands have better right to come back during that period if they (m) intended to make things right (using their free will to avoid conflict). For the rights of them (f) in regard to their husbands is the like of rights of their (f) husbands in regard to them (f), as one who is honorable. Men have a degree over them (f). God is Almighty, Wise. (Q2:228)

Obey God and His Messenger and contend not with one another (using their free will to avoid conflict). (Q8:46)

Settle down (f) in your (f) houses and flaunt (f) not your (f) finery as those who flaunted their finery in the previous Age of Ignorance. Perform (f) the formal prayer and give (f) the purifying alms and obey (f) God and His Messenger. God only intends to cause disgrace to be put away from you—People of the House—(using your free will to avoid conflict) and purify you with a purification. (Q33:33)

So turn you aside (using their free will to avoid conflict) from him who turns away from Our Remembrance and he intends nothing but this present life. (Q53:29)

Drive not away those who call to their Lord in the morning and the evening, intending His Countenance (through their free choice). Their reckoning is not on you at all. Your reckoning is not on them at all. If you were to drive them away (acting to the benefit of ego or desire for power), then, you would be among the ones who are unjust. (Q6:52)

7. Actions of Our Free Willpower

Our free willpower is our ability to control the impulses and desires arising from our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) and determine our actions.

Whoever wanted the world to come and endeavored for it, endeavoring, while he is one who believes, then, those, their endeavoring had been appreciated. (Q17:19)

Those to whom humanity said: Truly, humanity has gathered against you, so dread them, but it increased them in belief and they said: God is enough for us. How excellent is He, The Trustee. (Q3:173-3:174)

O those who believed! Excel in patience and be steadfast. Be God-conscious so that perhaps you will prosper. (Q3:200)

The Consequences of Our Actions

The consequences of our actions can be seen through the concept of responsibility (*taklif*). It is the responsibility of accepting the trust of God that provides us to choose between various alternatives. This choice is given to us in the phenomenal world where we take one course of action and discard the other. We exercise it because we have appropriation for it which both angels and the other creatures of this world lack.

Truly, We presented the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were apprehensive of it. But the human being carried it. (Q33:72)

Our undertaking the trust clears our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) so that we emerge as a responsible person who answers for our deeds. Through our free willpower we choose things which are agreeable or not agreeable to our nature or consciousness. Being the trustee of nature in its mode of operation leaves a perpetual effect on our thought and conduct and leads either to happiness (*sa'adah*) or unhappiness (*zillah*).

Emphasis is upon the harmony between God's power (*taqdir*) and our responsibility. The latter is realized when possibility and capability have been created in us. It signifies our free willpower within the wider universal scheme of God, encompassing both the eternal and the temporal domains.

God places not a burden on a soul beyond its capacity. For it is what it earned and against it is what it deserved. Our Lord! Take us not to task if we forgot or made a mistake. Our Lord! Burden us not with a severe test like that which You had burdened those who were before us. Our Lord! Load us not such that we have no energy for it and pardon us and forgive us and have mercy on us. (Q2:286)

We have been shown the path of God-consciousness and it is up to us to accept to follow it or reject it:

Truly, We guided him on the way, whether he be one who is thankful or ungrateful. (Q76:3)

Reckoning, judgment and reward are based on our choice of the course we follow. That choice is of our own making, although the ability to choose either has been planted in us by God.

The Quranic signs that indicate a consequence for our actions are indications that we were free to decide, but must realize that our decision has consequences and responsibilities.

Truly, I intend that you will draw the burden of my sin and your sin, then, to be among the Companions of the Fire. That is the recompense of the ones who are unjust. (Q5:29)

They will intend to go forth from the fire, but they will not be ones who go forth from it. For them is an abiding punishment. (Q5:37)

When We intended to cause a town to perish, We commanded ones who are given ease, but they disobeyed therein. So the saying was realized against it. Then, We destroyed it with utter destruction. (Q17:16)

So he intended to hound them in the region, but We drowned him and those who were with him altogether. (Q17:103)

Truly, those who were ungrateful and bar from the way of God and from the Masjid al-Haram that We made for humanity—equal for the ones who give themselves up and the ones who are desert dwellers—and whoever intends to violate it with injustice, We will cause him to experience a painful punishment. (Q22:25)

So have patience as endured patiently those imbued with resolve of the Messengers and let them not seek to hasten the Judgment. As, truly, on a Day they will see what they are promised as if they lingered not in expectation but for an hour of daytime. This is delivering the message! Will any be caused to perish but the folk, the ones who disobey? (Q46:35)

We alone are responsible for what we do:

Say: Is it other than God that I should desire as a lord while He is Lord of everything? Each soul will earn only for itself. No burdened soul will bear another's heavy load. Again, to your Lord will you return. Then, He will tell you about what you had been at variance in it. (Q6:164)

8. Obstacles to the Exercise of Our Free Willpower

Desires

Desire is an affectively charged motivation toward a certain object, person, or activity, but not limited to, that is associated with pleasures that we are attracted to (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) or avoidance of pain/harm (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*). Desires vary in strength and duration. A desire becomes a temptation when it impacts or enters our area of voluntary free willpower, if the behavior resulting from the desire conflicts with our values or other self-regulatory goals.

Temptation

Desires that conflict with overarching goals or values are known as temptations. Our free willpower dilemmas occur when long-term goals and values clash with short-term temptations. A temptation is a desire that becomes a temptation when it impacts our free willpower—if the resulting behavior results from the desire that conflicts with the values of our innate nature.

*Give judgment between them by what God caused to descend and follow not their desires and beware of them so that they tempt you not from some of what God caused to descend to you. If they turned away, then, know that God only intends that He light on them for some of their impieties. Truly, many within humanity are ones who disobey (by allowing their nonrational willpower, based on their desires, to dominate over their actions thereby not consulting their conscience's (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) advice to exercise free willpower. (Q5:49)*

*Certainly, God was sincere to you in His promise when you blasted the enemy with His permission until you lost heart (lost free willpower) and you contended with one another about the command (reverting to your willful *nafs al-ammarah*) and you rebelled after He caused you to see what you longed for in the spoils of war. Among you are some who intend the present and among you are some who intend the world to come. Again, He turned you away from them that He test you and, certainly, He pardoned you. God is Possessor of Grace for the ones who believe. (Q3:152)*

You will find others who intend that they be safe from you and that they be safe from their folk. Whenever they were returned to temptation, they were overthrown in it. (Q4:91)

Jealousy

The Quran says:

Many of the People of the Book wished that after your belief they return

you to being one who is ungrateful out of jealousy within themselves even after The Truth became clear to them. (Q2:109)

God did not inspire them with jealousy; they are jealous because of their own nonrational willpower acting out of their animal soul (*nafs al-am-marah*). There is a confirmation here of that region left entirely free by God within our being.

9. Dilemmas of Our Free Willpower

Our voluntary free willpower dilemmas occur when long-term goals and values (*fitrat Allah*, *nafs al-lawwamah*, conscience) clash with short-term temptations.

Have you not considered those who were given a share of the Book? They exchange fallacy (use their nonrational willpower to overcome their conscience) and they intend for you to go astray from the way. (Q4:44)

Willfully By-passing Our Free Willpower by Being Nonrational

When we willfully by-pass our conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*) and do as we please, we will be held responsible on the day of judgment for the actions that we take.

Our free willpower actions result in blame when we have bypassed our voluntary free willpower. This is the willed pursuit of the innate passions (*nafs al-am-marah*) by means of a sort of "willful obliviousness" to the moral implications, the willing of this obliviousness being necessary in order to drown out or override moral conscience. In other words, it is not that a person necessarily wills substantively wrongdoing acts because they are wrong. He or she simply wills them because they fulfill some desired end—the moral constitution or implications of the act themselves being irrelevant to them.... the whisperings and misrepresentations of Satan also contribute to human vice.²⁰

They said: We broke not what was promised to you from what is within our (voluntary or free will)power, but we were charged with a heavy load of the adornments of the folk. Surely, we hurled them because the Samaritan cast. (Q20:87)

O those who believed! (Ignore not your free willpower and) render ... untrue your charities with reproachful reminders nor injury like he who spends of his wealth to show off to humanity, and believes not in God and the Last Day (ignoring your free willpower). His parable is like the parable of a smooth rock. Over it is earth dust. A heavy downpour lit on it, and left it bare. They have no (free will)power over anything of what they earned (because they forgot their conscience and thereby reverted to using their nonrational

willpower to satisfy their own desires) *and God guides not the ungrateful folk.* (Q2:264)

God has given us free willpower to choose, decide, and resolve to do good or not. He has endowed us with reason and various impulses so that by our own efforts we may strive and explore possibilities. He has also given us a just bias, an undetermined, natural bias towards good when He formed us with our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*):

He composed you in whichever form He wills. (Q82:8)

His plan envisages our free willpower use of the divine attribute of power (The Powerful, al-Muqtaddir) and the freedom of choice in our system of perception:

Surely clear evidence has drawn near to you from your Lord. So whoever perceives, it is for his "self". Whoever is in darkness (because of his choice to bypass his free willpower and oppose his conscience that would have directed his free willpower), *it will be against him.* (Q6:104)

In the providential scheme, our role is not that of being unwilling to see, hear or speak:

Unwilling to hear, unwilling to speak, unwilling to see (because of our using their willfulness in by-passing our conscience directing us to our voluntary free willpower), *so they are not reasonable.* (Q2:171)

They have consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) *with which they understand not and they have eyes with which they perceive not and they have ears with which they hear not.* (Q7:179)

In regard to our motivational system, He has given us the ability to choose to return evil with good, to repel with what is best:

Those who reach out to what God has commanded to be joined (behavior) *and dread their Lord and they fear the dire reckoning, and those who endured patiently, looking for the Countenance of their Lord* (goal) *and those who performed the formal prayers and spent out of what We have provided them in secret and in public, and they drive off the evil deed with benevolence* (goodwill, kindness using their voluntary free willpower)—*those, for them is the Ultimate Abode.* (Q13:21-13:22)

Therefore if we choose to do good, it is because in gifting us with life and our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*), God has programmed us to do so. He never changes the gracious benefits which He has bestowed on a people (*fitrat Allah*) unless/until they change themselves.

God will not cause to alter a divine blessing when He has been gracious to a folk unless/until they alter what is within themselves (that is, their fitrat Allah). (Q8:53)

Truly God alters not a folk unless/until they alter what is within themselves (that is, their fitrat Allah). (Q13:11)

The commentaries differ on their interpretation of these two signs (Q8:53 and Q13:11). Some understand the signs as saying: *God alters not a folk unless they have altered what is within themselves*, meaning, *God does not alter a folk unless they have altered their innate nature (fitrat Allah)* through their nurturing process. In other words, God will not change a folk unless they have turned away from their *fitrat Allah*. As long as they have maintained their *fitrat Allah*, their innate nature, belief in the One God, and have not followed false deities or tyrants, there is no need of God to change them.

Other commentators suggest: *God does not alter a folk until they alter what is within themselves*. This interpretation assumes that a folk are no longer following their *fitrat Allah*. That is, God gives human beings intelligence, strength, free will and good things in life so that they can worship God and do good, but when, through their nurturing process, they turn away from those blessings in favor of sin and lack of faith, they have changed their *fitrat Allah*.... *God alters not what is in a people until they alter what is in themselves* (God will not alter the circumstances of people until they themselves bring about changes in their actions and lives so that they return to their *fitrat Allah*).

Understanding it the first way, *unless they have altered what is within themselves* (that is, their *fitrat Allah*), means unless they have altered their innate nature, God will not intervene.

According to the second view, *until they alter what is within themselves*, they should undertake the greater struggle by going forward and changing themselves and their society to align with their innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) which has been changed by their nurturing system. Once we are conscious of a change in our innate nature, we undertake the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*) and try to go back to it, change ourselves to be as our original, innate nature had been. That is when God will alter what is within us/help us in our struggle.

Either way, this puts a great personal and social responsibility upon us as it is God's willpower that makes what God does with us dependent upon what we intend in relationship to our being monotheists.

So set your face towards a way of life as a monotheist. It is the nature originated by God (fitrat Allah) in which He originated humanity. There is no substitution for the creation of God. That is the truth-loving way of life, but most of humanity knows not. (Q30:30)

Therefore, whatever good comes from us or to us is ultimately from God. Our innate nature has a bias against evil, our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) is opposed to it, and we have been given a warning against it through the revealed books. Whatever wrongdoing comes from us is from our own self.

Say: Truly, I possess not the (free will)power to hurt nor to bring right mindedness for you. (Q72:21)

Whatever of benevolence lit on you is from God. Whatever evil deeds lit on you then is from yourself. (Q4:79)

If God had willed (Q6:107) He would have eliminated wrongdoing or would not have allowed it to exist, and if it were His will, the whole of humanity would have had faith, but that is not His plan.

Say: The Truth is from your Lord. Then let whoever has willed, believe (that is, whoever has used his voluntary free willpower) and let whoever has willed, disbelieve (whoever has willfully by-passed his conscience and free willpower). (Q18:29)

Truly this is an admonition. Whoever (exercises voluntary free) willpower, he may take a way to his Lord. (Q76:29)

Take all judicious and precautionary measures to suit different situations:

O those who have believed! Take your precautions. (Q4:71)

So even our free choice of wrongdoing is a part of the scheme of things and none of us will choose a way unto God, unless it fits into that scheme or is willed by God.

But you will not (exercise voluntary free willpower) unless God wills it. (Q76:30), (Q81:29)

God's guidance is open to all who are motivated to profit by it:

Truly it is not but a Remembrance to the worlds to whoever among you (exercised voluntary free) willpower to go straight. (Q81:27-81:28)

Whosoever exercises voluntary free willpower, let him take the straight path to his Lord.

Truly this is an admonition. And whoever (exercised voluntary free) willpower, he may take a way to his Lord. (Q76:29)

God has equipped us with voluntary free willpower and a conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) that recognizes right vision and understanding, of the taste of truth, of right speech and communication. He has indicated to us the right and the wrong with respect to the course of action we should take so that we might strive to attain our luminous destiny.

Make we not two eyes for him and a tongue and two lips and guided him to the two open highways? (Q90:8-90:10)

*Certainly, We established them securely in what We established you (later generations) firmly not and We made for them the ability to hear and sight and consciences (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*). Yet having the ability to hear availed them not, nor their sight, nor their minds (they preferred to exercise their nonrational willpower and by-pass their conscience instead of engaging their voluntary free willpower) at all since they had been negating the signs of God. Surrounded were they by what they had been ridiculing. (Q46:26)*

*Again, He shaped him and blew into him His spirit. He made for you the ability to hear and sight and consciences (giving you a conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) and the choice of using your voluntary free willpower). But you give little thanks! (Q32:9)*

*Say: It is He who caused you to grow and assigned you the ability to hear, sight, and conscience (giving you a conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) and the choice of using your voluntary free willpower). But you give little thanks! (Q67:23) See also (Q23:78).*

*He it is Who caused you to grow, have the ability to hear and sight and conscience (giving you a conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) and the choice of using your voluntary free willpower). But you give little thanks! (Q23:78)*

Our Free Willpower May Rebel Against Reason

When the nurturing process has not fostered the development of a healthy psychic self, the cognitive system has not been nurtured to operate out of reason. Instead, it operates out of the locus of sensitive imagination.

The process is explained like this: our free willpower seeks the advice of reason. Reason responds through rational imagination, an internal sense of perception as we will study in a future module. It is more firmly connected to the affective/behavioral systems than to the cognitive system. The irrational alliance of our free willpower and our affect-behavior system of our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) combine to force our cognitive system to develop numerous rationalizations and legitimations of desires even beyond what our affective-behavioral system could conceive.

In this situation, instead of our free willpower exercising its natural disposition to fairness and justice, it falls under its stronger natural disposition to avoid conflict. In doing so, it loses its own liberty and freedom, allowing unconscious and preconscious forces to dominate.

Our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) often refuses the advice of reason to choose the good (*khayr*) just to show that it can so that everything depends on the decision of our free willpower. Reason is only a guide. Our free willpower, then, is subject to depravity which extends to all aspects of self. It may be depraved through false reasoning or through its own waywardness as unrestrained freedom and an inclination to content the senses. When our free willpower turns from understanding and reason, there is nothing the self can do but exercise its power in agreement with the external senses. To retrieve a perverted will is considered to be almost impossible.

Our Free Willpower May Ally with Our Sensitive Imagination Against Reason

Sensitive imagination is likely to become an enemy of reason. As it is near the outer senses, it may seduce the self to accept some attachment and then, as an intermediary between the external senses and the affective-behavioral systems, establish a coalition against reason. This could explain how rash judgments are strengthened in our sensitive imagination, arousing the affective-behavioral systems and overthrowing reason. Our sensitive imagination can be a dangerous guide to the self in terms of its centering process.

Our Free Willpower May Ally with Our Sensitive Imagination and External Senses Against Reason

Knowledge, it will be recalled, is dependent upon the external senses because they are the doors through which all impressions from the world pass to higher functions of thought and desire. Reason and imagination can only judge what they receive.

The senses may dominate reason. The ready response of reason to reports from the senses make of conscience a fleeting thing, yielding quickly to a new stimulus. Mention of words like judgment, reward, innocence, arrogance, all suffice to move conscience. The senses are easily moved by the affective-behavioral systems. A picture or mere description is enough to awaken passions of love or grief.

The strength of sense impressions as opposed to reason can be recalled when the self reflects on the parting of two friends. The idea of some particular gesture in a parting friend strikes us more deeply than all the reasoning in the world. The sound of a name repeated, certain words or a sad tone go to our very heart. A present object moves the affective-behavioral system much more vehemently than does perception through recall. In absence, the imagination represents the pleasure as far off and not prepared, but the thing being present, nothing seems to be left but to attain the desire. The desires of the

affective-behavioral system become contagious through their outward manifestations. Inward functions respond quickly to sense impressions.

The external senses are capable of a degree of knowledge and of pleasure and pain. Since they cannot comprehend the full meaning of objects presented to them, they report to the self merely outward images and in their impressions emphasize qualities agreeable to sense rather than to the general welfare of the self. Not knowing all that takes place in sensitive imagination and in reason, they may accept enemies as friends. Through their strength, they may provoke serious disturbances in the self.

They work on sensitive imagination and without waiting for reason to deliberate, they alarm the affective-behavioral systems to the extent that the voice of reason cannot be heard nor the advice of understanding be accepted by our free willpower. Representing pleasures that are most apparent and present, they strongly provoke the affective system. Even though they are the self's first teacher, instead of freeing the self from deceit, they are seen to be able to deceive it themselves.

Our Free Willpower May Ally with Our Sensitive Imagination in Our Affective-Behavioral Animal Soul Against Reason

The affective-behavioral systems are naturally disposed to allow the self to regulate them through the cognitive system. When they join in an alliance with our free willpower, they follow the external senses. The senses respond to an object. Reason deliberates. Our free willpower is naturally disposed towards the positive as is reason. However, when under the influence of the affective-behavioral systems, our free willpower only sees the present which fills the sensitive imagination more readily than does the future and reason is subdued.

Our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) is a superior function to the affective-behavioral system (*nafs al-ammarah*). It is joined with reason (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'inah*) through our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) in the same way the affective-behavioral system (*nafs al-ammarah*) is joined to sensitive imagination (an internal sense of our perceptive system). The self is naturally disposed to guide our free willpower towards action which is for the good of the self to maintain balance. However, the self contains an inferior kind of thought-action and that is of sensitive imagination and the affective-behavioral system. Both of the latter act rashly without the deliberation of reason. They are often too powerful to allow reason to advise and free willpower to accept its advice.

Our willpower is easily misled. Naturally inclined to avoid conflict, it succumbs to the affective-behavioral system. They all grow out of motivation in the self and so have an established relationship. Reason can control action only through our free willpower and our free willpower frequently yields to the affective-behavioral system. Strife in the self is most often between reason and the systems arising out of motivation. The external senses entice the internal sense of sensitive imagination and it joins with the affective-behavioral

system and they, in turn, entice our free willpower away from following reason.

10. Balancing Through Our Free Willpower

Or assumed you that you would enter the Garden without God knowing those who struggled among you and knows the ones who remain resolved? (Q3:142)

As nature was perfected by the Creator in our self with the gift of consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*), by-passing our free willpower causes an imbalance in the natural harmony and equilibrium of our self. This is because within our self the process of our free willpower consciously seeking the counsel of reason is the regulator of nature within our self. When the regulator is by-passed, the system loses its balance and equilibrium. If the nurturing process has not been able to preserve a healthy self, Quranic psychology provides the means to restore health.

If our free willpower accepts the guidance of our reason, our self can become balanced. The ideas upon which our reason deliberates come from our rational imagination. This sense may be functioning according to the divine will, operating through nature (*takwini*) and nurture/revelation (*tashri'i*) guidance. This process becomes strong when good habits are formed in our self from childhood.

Without this, our self becomes prone to negative traits and its free willpower is not inclined towards choosing positive traits. It is motivated by its natural disposition of attraction to pleasure, the original goal of which is to preserve the species, but when it is unregulated, even the species is threatened by over-, under- or un-developed eating, sex, drinking, and so forth. The mirror of self is so encrusted with rust and dust that our self no longer has a vision of itself. It becomes alienated from its natural disposition and loses all sense of identity and direction. Our self readily then forgets its original goal of submission to God's will by completing the perfection of nature, that is, becoming conscious of self. It is no longer able to avoid pain/harm because the natural disposition of even its immunity system breaks down. Free willpower, naturally disposed to be free to choose to submit to God's will, is no longer free but enslaved by the self's affective and behavioral systems (*nafs al-ammarah*) leading to the tyranny of the self in complete opposition to its original natural disposition to being just.

Locus of Control

How much control do we have over the outcome of events in our life as opposed to external forces beyond our control? Locus, the place or location of our control, may be internal: I control my life; or external: My life is controlled by outside factors which I cannot influence; or: Fate controls my life.

Locus of control relates to our future actions and how we attribute or explain something that happened whereas explanation of past outcomes relates to the situation or person.

In terms of Quranic psychology, for those who believe that the measuring out (*qadar*) controls their life and who use that, therefore, as their locus of control, they have misunderstood what *qadar* means:

Many Muslims believe that the actions which they are going to do are caused by what has already been written in the Guarded Tablet. By this notion, they have confused "causation" with "association". In general, what we have here is association, not causation. What we do is not caused by what is written by God. God with His ultimate Knowledge already knows prior to that as to what we are going to do. He could easily place the good-doers into Paradise and the wrongdoers into the Hell-fire, but God is Just. Furthermore, He created us in this life so as to test us on which path we will choose. All that we do in our lives will match that which has already been written, but it is not a matter of causation. What we do is out of our own willingness and ability and we are fully responsible of the choices that we make.

The correct concept of *qadar* is that we are responsible for whatever deeds we perform. For example, if we were to drive recklessly which results in an accident where a person dies or gets injured, we cannot simply blame this on *qadar*. This is in fact abusing the concept of *qadar* to justify our mistakes. That is despite the fact that the incident is indeed taking place due to *qadar* of God. Nevertheless we are still responsible for the death or injury because it is through our reckless actions that this incident happened. That is why we bear the consequences in court when we are found guilty. If *qadar* can be used as an excuse, then many crimes will go unpunished—a thief can simply claim that his stealing was *qadar*!

Those who abuse the concept of *qadar* (and rely on it as an external locus of control) are those who fail to be responsible. They abuse it to justify their failure. The correct way of using *qadar* as an excuse is in situations that someone exerts himself to do his best to fulfill an obligation. But due to an unavoidable circumstance, which was out of his control, he could not achieve that obligation. It is in this case, that he might be excused. We can take an example of a student who studies hard for an exam. On the day of the exam, he falls sick and does poorly, or is absent for the exam. This student can then say that it is *qadar* and the will of God that he was not able to pass the exam.

When it comes to religious obligations, the matter is the same. We cannot blame *qadar* for committing wrongdoing or failing to do an obligatory action as some Muslims do. We have to know that we are responsible. We might get into a weak state of belief when we commit a wrongdoing or delay an obligatory act. Yet, this is not a legitimate excuse because we are responsible. However, Islam is such a practical religion that it gives us room for repentance, to help us get back to the right path.

There are certain situations where we can do something about our *qadar*. The occurrence of illness is *qadar*. But we have signs that say we should look for a cure should we become ill. Therefore from this, finding a cure is also *qadar*. Thus, one *qadar* can be dealt with another *qadar*.

Another example is if something unfortunate happens to us, such as losing our job. We should not react by saying that this is *qadar* and take a defeatist attitude by

doing nothing about it. We should take an optimistic approach to this, and look for another job. The consequence of this will be another *qadar*. Therefore, for any hardship that comes in our path, we must minimize and/or overcome it. Some scholars used the term "overcoming *qadar*" in this regard with another *qadar*. This implies that we must make the effort to do the right thing.²¹

Everything is part of God's knowledge. God wills everything according to His Plan of what is right, what is just, what is good.

Let not those who compete with one another in ingratitude dishearten you. Truly, they will never injure God at all. (Q3:176)

God intends to lighten the burden on you. The human being was created weak. (Q4:28)

If they intend to deceive you, then, truly, God is Enough. It is He Who confirmed you with His help and with the ones who believe. (Q8:62)

Aboulia

Aboulia or abulia meaning "willpower" with the prefix -a, in neurology, refers to a lack of willpower or initiative and can be seen as a disorder of diminished motivation. Aboulia falls in the middle of the spectrum of diminished motivation, with apathy being less extreme and akinetic mutism being more extreme than aboulia.

Akasia

Akasia or lacking command is described as a lack of willpower or the state of acting against one's better judgment or lacking self-control. The following signs refer to those who act excessively, beyond moderation, acting against their better judgment:

On account of that, We prescribed for the Children of Israel that whoever killed a person, other than in retribution for another person, or because of corruption in and on the earth, it will be as if he had killed all of humanity. Whoever gave life to one, it will be as if he gave life to all of humanity. Certainly, our Messengers drew near them with the clear portents. Again, truly, many of them after that were ones who were excessive in and on the earth. (Q5:32)

O Children of Adam! Take your adornment at every place of prostration. Eat and drink, but exceed not all bounds. Truly, He loves not the ones who are excessive. (Q7:31)

When harm afflicted the human being, he calls to Us on his side or as one

who sits at home or as one who is standing up. But when We removed his harm from him, he passed by as if he had never been calling to Us for harm that afflicted him. Thus, made to appear pleasing to the ones who are excessive is what they had been doing. (Q10:12)

Have patience yourself with those who call to their Lord in the morning and the evening, wanting His Countenance. Let not your eyes pass over them wanting the adornment of this present life. Obey not him whose consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) We made neglectful of Our Remembrance and who followed his own desires and whose affair had been excessive. (Q18:28)

Obey not the command of the ones who are excessive. (Q26:151)

They said: Ones who auger ill will be with you! Is it because you were reminded? Nay! You are a folk, ones who are excessive. (Q36:19)

Certainly, Joseph drew near you before with the clear portents, but you ceased not in uncertainty as to what he brought about to you. Until when he perished you said: God will never raise up a Messenger after him. Thus, God causes him to go astray, one who is excessive, one who is a doubter. (Q40:34)

... of Pharaoh. Truly, He had been one who exalts himself and was of the ones who are excessive. (Q44:31)

Endnotes to Part II: Our Motivational System: Module 7: Willpower and Free Willpower

- 1 See Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*. Online.
 - 2 A saying of Ali ibn Abi Talib. See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar* III, p. 373.
 - 3 Thomas Aquinas. www.aquinasonline.com/Topics/freewill.html.
 - 4 Al-Ghazzali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, p. 88.
 - 5 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar* III, p. 147.
 - 6 The root *SH Y* ' means "causing to exist" or willpower according to the Edward Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*. The exact meaning of *masha'Allah* means: "what God has willed, then I have willed". It is used in the past tense to say something good has happened. In some cultures, people may say *masha'Allah* in the belief that it may help protect them from jealousy, the evil eye, or a jinn. However, in matters that are believed with certainty (*aqida*), it is understood that protection comes only from God.
 - 7 Wikipedia
 - 8 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Editor. *The Study Quran*, p. 55.
 - 9 William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *The Vision of Islam*. Online.
 - 10 William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *The Vision of Islam*. Online.
 - 11 Muhammad Abduh, *Theology of Unity*. Online.
 - 12 William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *The Vision of Islam*. Online.
 - 13 William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *The Vision of Islam*. Online.
 - 14 William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *The Vision of Islam*. Online.
 - 15 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar* III, p. 147.
 - 16 Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*. Online.
 - 17 Naquib al-Attas. *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*, p. 3. See also Marcia Colish (2006). "Avicenna's Theory of Efficient Causation," *Studies in Scholasticism* where she says: God has given us the ability to move and to act when He assigned us to be His viceregent (*khalifa*) on the earth. The responsibility of the trust is a gift to us from God which we accepted with our covenant. While we know that God is free of matter and free from potentiality, we viceregents, on the other hand, are created of matter stemming from the four elemental qualities, innate heat and radical moisture, a body and soul into which God breathed His spirit. We are beings who act by motion and since all motion is the act of being in potency, we require our body and soul in order to move.
- God is the cause of Being and not merely the cause of our becoming through motion. His continuous causality is needed to maintain the universe. No effect can endure if that which was its cause is removed in any way. If the divine action ceases, the being of all creatures would also cease, since God is not only the cause of the becoming of things, but also the cause of their existence.
- God does not prevent our actions from being voluntary when He moves voluntary causes. He operates in each thing according to its own properties. The autonomy of a created agent may thus be referred to God as its metaphysical agent without infringing on the divinely bestowed power of creatures to act in a way that is capable of or successful in producing an intended result in their own ways. This applies to both physical motion and to the voluntary action of created beings.
- Our will is the agent of its own moral choices, counseling by conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) and reason (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*) and affected at times by the irrational passions (*nafs al-ammarah*) that influence our mind (*sadr*). The existence of free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) does not undermine God's providence, since providence falls under the heading of metaphysical agency.
- In practice, God's providence moves things according to their own proper natures. Using creatures according to the modes of operation He has established for them, God's

governance of the world and of human events is consistent with His will, His goodness, and the meaningfulness of the natural order. By the same token, it is not God's providence, but the defects in the proximate agent, human free willpower which is the cause of moral wrongdoing.

God has gifted us with the ability to move and to act when He assigned us as His viceregent on earth. We accepted this responsibility when we accepted the trust and participated in the covenant. The Quran tells us that God is free of physical substance. God has created us from the four elemental qualities, seminal fluids, a body and soul into which He breathed His spirit. He gave us our motivational system which includes potentiality of movement. When His spirit is breathed within us as the breath of life and we are given life, our potential to movement is actualized. Therefore, God is the cause of us living and not just being able to move.

God operates in each of us according to our specific properties. As created being, our freedom to act or to move does not change God being our Creator or infringe on our divinely bestowed power to act the way that we are capable of, being successful in producing an intended result in our own ways. This applies both to our physical motion and voluntary acts.

Our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*), then, is a specific instance of a general rule. God's causation is two-fold. He is the Final Cause, the Good, the Object of our willpower, as well as our metaphysical cause, who creates and preserves. Marcia Colish (2006). "Avicenna's Theory of Efficient Causation", *Studies in Scholasticism*.

Note: In email correspondence with Marcia Colish, she did not agree that her essay was an explanation between "measuring out" (*qadar*) and free willpower (*ikhtiyar*). We leave it to the reader to decide. In other words, the fact that God knows that some people will disbelieve is only descriptive, not causative.

18 See <https://www.quora.com/Does-Islam-and-the-Quran-negate-the-idea-of-free-willpower>.

19 William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *The Vision of Islam*. Online.

20 Sherman A. Jackson. *Islam and the Problem of Black Suffering*, ftnt 79, ftnt 80.

21 Jamal Badi (2016). *Commentary on the Forty Hadith of Imam al-Nawawi*.

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Part II: Our Motivational System

Module 8: Sensation

Introduction

Truly, We made the human being of a mingling of seminal fluid that We may test him. So We made him hearing, seeing. (Q76:2)

The term "sensation," in psychology, is defined as: An impression made upon the soul energizing our neural system and usually through one of the five organs of sense, namely, touch, smell, taste, hearing and seeing.¹

The Quran sees the signs of reality in the sun, the moon, the alternation of day and night, the perpetual changes of the winds, the variety of human colors and tongues, and in fact in the whole of nature as revealed to our sense perceptions. Our duty is to reflect on these signs through knowledge of the presence of God and not to pass by them as if we are deaf and blind:

They have consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) with which they understand not and they have eyes with which they perceive not and they have ears with which they hear not. (Q7:179)

We knew nothing when we were born:

God brought you out from the wombs of your mothers and you knew nothing. He assigned to you the ability to hear and sight and mind so that perhaps you would give thanks. (Q16:78)

It is our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) that senses things that attract us (*quwwah al-shahwaniyyah*) and that we avoid (*quwwah al-ghadabiyyah*) and not our sense organs themselves. Sensation itself refers to the energizing of our five senses by our animal soul. It is a function that we share with other animals. It refers to any of the powers of the five external senses by which our animal soul perceives or senses either an internal or external stimuli as an attraction to pleasure or as an avoidance of harm/pain.

Our animal soul is pure potential. Its actuality comes about through sensation. When our animal soul senses something, the thing comes to exist within the soul

in the appropriate mode of existence and our animal soul itself comes to actualize the corresponding mode of existence in itself.²

Sensation is our first level of perception. The things that we and other animals perceive externally exists in physical matter—an apple, a horse, a person. These things at this level are based on categories of quality, quantity, time, place and situation. What we sense externally through our five external senses cannot be separated from these categories. It is because they fall into one or more of these categories that we are actually able to sense them.

When a substance is completely immersed in physicality, it is called the sensible or what can be sensed and forms the basis of the power (*quwwah*) of sense perception. This level represents the minimal definition of existence and knowledge. Sense perception is not only the weakest form of perception, but also corresponds to the lowest level of existence.³

In the Quranic view, sense perception is obtained from the Giver of Form (al-Musawwir) through the existence of an effusion of another luminous sensate form. That is, we actually sense something through the effusion of the light provided from the Giver of Form.

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth ... Light on light, God guides to His Light whom He wills! (Q24:35)

In the world of our experience, one of the best analogies for the soul-spirit/intellect as embodied (that is, soul-body) soul-spirit/intellect is visible light, which is a single reality.

As soon as the single reality of light strikes bodily things, it takes on colors. Those colors are present as potentialities within the light from the beginning, but they cannot become actualized without surfaces to strike or some other physical manipulation, such as a prism. In the same way, life, knowledge, and power are present within the soul-(spirit/intellect), but they cannot become actualized without the soul(-body). Hence, in this analogy, light corresponds to the soul(-spirit/intellect), colors to the soul as it gradually evolves away from the body and the soul(-body) where light strikes a physical body.⁴

If the soul-spirit can be compared to light, the soul-body to surfaces upon which light shines and the soul to colors, then we can extend the analogy to explain what happens when the human soul develops in harmony with the divine model.

In infancy, the darkness of the soul-body dominates and the light of the soul-spirit is as yet hidden and undifferentiated. Gradually, colors start to appear. At first, the primary colors appear, corresponding to life, awareness, desire, and power, but they are very dark, since the light is weak. Gradually, the light intensifies and the

colors brighten, but along with the primary colors, other colors appear. Eventually, there is no limit to the number of colors that may become manifest, just as there is no limit to the number of divine attributes that can appear. Light has infinite possibilities of display, and so also does the soul(-spirit/intellect), which is the invisible light of God.

Each unique color that appears from light is latent within light itself. Once manifest, it is an image of light, which is to say that it is both light and not light. It is light because there is nothing else that appears. It is not light because each of the colors represents only a minuscule proportion of light's possibilities. Moreover, when the colors appear, they do so only because the light has become dim. If the light were to shine in its full brilliance, no one would be able to see anything. The veil that prevents us from seeing God is the brilliance of the light itself. As the Prophet said: God's veil is light.⁵

This is similar to what our animal soul senses. However, what our animal soul senses through the energy it provided to the sense organs (touching, smelling, tasting, hearing and seeing) does not perceive what is a part of the sense organs themselves.

The power (*quwwah*) of sight, for instance, perceives colors but not its own color. Therefore, the instrument in which this power is found and by which perception takes place does not have a particular color. The instrument of smelling, by which smelling objects are perceived, does not have a smell. In the same way, touching, through which the elementary forms of that which is sensed are perceived, has to be in balance in such a way that it is not conjoined with any of what is to be sensed in an excessive and complete way so that everything can be perceived by it. It has been said that whatever is in balance between opposites (the elemental qualities of cold, hot, wet, dry) is the same as being free from them. These instruments, however, do not perceive things that are similar to them in hotness or coldness, moisture or dryness, softness or roughness. This is due to the fact that nothing can be a body, especially an elemental body, unless it has a share in the opposites.⁶

The knowledge that the eye sees, the ear hears, the feet walk, and the hand seizes is not identical with seeing, hearing, walking and seizing, any more than our knowledge that someone else is hungry or feels pleasure or pain is identical with our feeling hungry, pleasure or pain.

Our sense perception requires physical organs because we live in a physical world. However, they not necessarily needed as in dreams, for instance, where our five senses operate without the presence of any physical object.

In animals, sensation is an instinct as part of the animal soul we share with them. Even though animals may be stronger than us in relation to what they sense, their animal soul is considered to be weak in potentiality to actualize consciousness. It is through the evolution of our animal soul to human soul that our power of sensation is greater than just instinct—has more intense light than just that provided by instincts.

On the other hand, one might object that the human soul is not in fact a

"pure potentiality," because it is born with instincts or innate knowledge.

What we call 'instincts' do not pertain to the human soul, but rather to the plant and animal souls. It is true that there can be no human soul without a plant and animal soul, but the discussion of unlimited potential pertains strictly to the human soul, not to other dimensions of human existence. The 'humanness' of the human soul is precisely that point where human beings are indefinable and unfixed (see below) and, by that very fact, capable of becoming all things.⁷

The Level of Sensation

The level of sensation is defined by the intensity of sensation's disengagement from physical matter.

Sense perception can be understood in terms of three conditions that determine its nature: First, the object or person is present at the instrument of sensation, which is to say that the animal soul perceives the thing externally in its physical form. Second, the thing's form (the principle that gives structure, order and meaning to forms and that which makes a thing "what" it is) is concealed by the sensed qualities and characteristics. Third, the sensed thing is a particular, not a universal.

What we sense in terms of form—that which makes us "what" we are—in its passage from potentiality to actuality—is a new thing, not in an instant, but in terms of time and motion as time measures the change that takes place through motion.

This is so for two reasons. The first reason: the sensible has a weak existence containing the opposites of the elemental qualities. A sensible object cannot be a horse, tree and stone at the same time because its existence cannot contain two realities simultaneously and cannot accept the unity of two forms, let alone accepting all realities and forms. Rather, it takes on only one form because of its being a measured thing, each measured part of which is separate from its other measured part. The second reason: sensible natures are in constant renewal, passage and cessation from one being to another. If it were possible for them to be all things in one single substance, they would not remain moving, could not have had the expected perfection in them, and would have had the intellective rather than the bodily form.⁸

Look at the soul. It is of a bodily nature with the body, a sense with the senses, and so on.

When the soul is united with nature, it becomes the organs. When it is united with the senses in actuality, it becomes the very thing that is sensed in actuality.⁹ That is, we relate to what we sense through our five senses so that we become one with what we sense and our sense perception.¹⁰

No soul knows where it shall die. (Q31:34)

Sense perception necessarily disengages from what it is sensing because the external object or person does not enter into our soul physically. That is, when we see a pear or a tree, they do not enter into us.

Disengagement does not imply a rejection of the body. The more the soul is strengthened, the more the body's form is intensified and the more its existence is consolidated: Among the things that are necessary to know is that here in this world the human is the totality of soul and body. These two, despite their diversity, are two existent things that exist through one existence. It is as if the two are one thing possessing two sides. One of the sides is altering and extinguishing, and it is like the branch. The other side is fixed and subsistent, and it is like the root. The more the soul becomes perfect in its existence, the more the body becomes limpid and subtle. It becomes more intense in conjunction with the soul, and the unification between the two becomes stronger and more intense. Finally, when intellectual existence comes about, they become one thing without difference.¹¹

Notice how, through our sensation, we take things that exist in the external world and transfer them into our own souls. We see a tree or a house or a person, and that seeing is itself an activity of the soul. What was a bodily thing—the tree, the house, the person—becomes a spiritualized thing when we sense its meaning.

That is, a thing that is now present within the luminosity of our awareness. That thing is now part of ourselves. It is alive with our life. What had been dead—inasmuch as it was simply clay—is now alive through us. Hence, it has been spiritualized in relation to what it was.¹²

There is no doubt that sense perceptions necessitate the act of sense organs and the acquisition of sensible forms either in the sense organs themselves as it is unanimously accepted or in the soul through their manifestation. This takes place thanks to the capacity of sensation.

With the touching of our hands, for instance, we feel the heat and are affected by it because of the capacity in sensation. Sensation takes place in seeing through the form of what is seen thanks to the capacity in it. Likewise, sound comes about in the ear thanks to the capacity in it. Sense organs have nothing but sensation and it is due to the occurrence of the sensible form in them or in the soul because of their effect. Sense organs or the sensate soul, insofar as they are sense organs, cannot know that the sensible has an existence of its own in the external world. This can only be known through experience. Thus it is the function of the intellect or the thinking self and not that of sensation or imagination to know the independent existence of things outside the soul.¹³

The Level of Existence

Existence is pure light. Existence and light are one and the same thing. Existence in itself, as we have learned—Arabic *wujud*—is the ultimate reality of all things, and, as such, it lies beyond the worlds and beyond the levels.

Existence deploys itself gradually in degrees of strength and weakness. We come to know it indirectly by perceiving it in various conditioned modalities. The higher the realm of existence, the more it is disengaged from the physical and from the conditions and characteristics of things. Correspondingly, the perception that pertains to the higher levels is more intense and more direct.¹⁴

The first of these realms is existence without consciousness and awareness. The second is existing along with "finding," not only as a synonym for *wujud* in its higher sense, but also as a synonym for perception.

Whatever good you put forward for yourselves, you will find (that it exists) with God. (Q2:110)

A Day when every soul will find (that which exists as) that which is brought forward of good and what it did of evil. (Q3:30)

Again, they find (what exists) within themselves no impediment to what thou hadst decided, resigning themselves to submission, full submission. (Q4:65)

Again, you would find (that exists) for yourself no helper against Us. (Q17:75)

You will never find (exists) a haven other than Him. (Q18:27)

They will not find (exists) a protector or a helper for themselves other than God. (Q33:17)

You will never find (exists) in a custom of God (sunnat Allah) any substitution. (Q33:62)

Be God-conscious so that perhaps you will find mercy (exists). (Q49:10)

So God would protect them from worse on that day, and would make them find (that) radiancy and joyfulness (exist). (Q76:11)

—our soul is that which finds what is there—the more intensity something has, the more intensity it finds.

Existence in the full sense is not only that which is there, but also that which finds what is there. The fullest degree of existence is found in the fullest degree of presence, perception, and consciousness.¹⁵

There is only one single Reality in existence but it has multiple levels. To prove the eventual unity of being, the argument is used from simplicity. Philosophers define God, saying: a simple existence is all things.

(Our soul) travels through the entire 'circle of existence', leaving a different mark at every level. Existence remains the single immutable reality at the root of all things. But it also displays an infinite number of shades, colors, modes, and modalities called unity in multiplicity. This leads to (saying): It is in the nature of the intellect to unite what is multiple, and it is in the nature of the senses to multiply what is one.¹⁶

Existence is a single reality appearing as physicality and form, substance and accident, actor and action, knower and known. All cognition is eventually an exercise in existence.

All chains of causation return to the self-regulating and self-generating reality of existence. Since existence is nothing but an effusion from the infinite reality of God (one may say): whoever has perceived something of concrete beings, he has perceived God.¹⁷

The knowledge of existence is attained not in cognition, which perceives only whatever the thing or things we see have in common, but in our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*), knowledge as unveiling (*kashf*) and witnessing (*shuhud*).

Meditate they not on the Quran or are there locks on their consciousness? (Q47:24)

Knowledge by Presence

Knowledge by presence or consciousness is the best possible way to perceive the reality of existence (*wujud*).

Knowledge by presence is a sort of knowledge which has all relations within its paradigm. In this kind of knowledge there is a self-object relation without the interference of a connection with an external object. In this kind of knowledge, the sense of knowledge is equal with the self. In the sphere of the self, both to exist and to know are identical. The fact of knowledge by presence is not identical with conceptualism and representation.... Knowledge by presence has characters such as being personal, non-transferable, admitting different levels and development. In knowledge by presence, the object is *present* to the subject.¹⁸

God knows things through their presence in His all-inclusive knowledge. God's knowledge of things is their very existence and presence. God creates things by knowing them. His knowledge is a generative act towards creatures.¹⁹

Knowledge by presence means that it is the presence of a known thing itself for the knower. In this kind of knowledge, the perceiving one perceives the perceived thing immediately and without the mediation of any mental form, through the presence of the reality of that thing. Our knowledge of the other states of his soul such as desires, sentiments, emotions, feelings, aspirations, sorrows, and joys,

pleasures, pain is of this kind.²⁰

Knowledge by presence is a primary mode of knowing that can account for both sense perception and conceptual knowledge.

In the case of pain, the 'I' that is in pain and the 'I' that says 'I know that I am in pain' are one and the same person. We cannot possibly claim to have a representation of pain to ourselves in the way we represent the form of a tree in our minds. This we can do only by reflecting about the fact that 'I am in pain'.²¹

The Goal of Sensation

The goal of the human soul in its existence is to move from potential knowing to actually knowing and by actually knowing, to be able to see things as they really are. Our human soul has many powers and faculties and many corresponding levels of actualization, beginning with the plant and animal levels. Our soul actualizes itself by perceiving what it has the potential to perceive. However, as long as our animal soul remains our animal soul and has not become our soul-spirit/intellect, our soul's mode of perception and existence is weak, and everything that is perceived and exists within the soul is even weaker.²²

Whomever God has not assigned light for him, there is no light for him.
(Q24:40)

The goal of human existence is to bring the soul's full potentiality into actuality. At the beginning of its creation, the human self is empty of the knowledge of things. In contrast, other things are created with actualized knowledge of things and this fixes them in their specific identities. Since the human soul is created knowing no-thing, it has the potential to know everything. It is this characteristic alone that allows it to be transmuted into the soul-spirit/intellect.

God created the human soul empty of the realization of things within it and empty of the knowledge of things.... Had He not created the human soul for the sake of the knowledge of things as they are, the soul would necessarily be, at the first of its innate nature (*fitrat*), one of those things fixed in actuality.... Although at first ... the human soul is a sheer potency, empty of the ability to be understood only by our reason, not by our senses. Nonetheless, it is proper for it to know the realities and become conjoined with all of them. It follows that true knowledge of God, of His spiritual realm, and of His signs is the final goal.... Knowledge is the first and the last, the origin and the final goal.

Existence is primary and 'what' we are is secondary. 'What' we are, are 'fixed entities'. They are 'fixed' because they never change. What changes is that which undergoes intensification and weakening. The levels of perception are differentiated by the weakness or strength of the existence to which they correspond. Only when existence reaches the level of the simple intellect, which is entirely disengaged

from the world of bodies and quantities, does it all become understood by our reason and all the things, in a manner more excellent and more eminent than the things are in themselves.

Every time the soul actualizes its own potential through knowing, it gains in the strength of its existence, and when it becomes soul(-spirit/intellect), it has gained full and everlasting existence.²³

The Five External Senses

Our sensate power, as we have learned, comprises the five external senses in the possible developmental order of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing respectively. These perform the function of perception of particulars in the external world.

The divine signs are observed through sense perception using mainly the soul's powers of hearing, sight, and intellect (a discussion on perception and intellect to follow):

Have they not consciousness to be reasonable or ears to hear with them? Truly it is not their sight that is in darkness, but their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah, heart) that is in darkness which is within their minds (sadr). (Q22:46)

The emphasis in this sign is on the power of reason and understanding, suggesting that not all of our information about nature comes directly from sensation, for if that were the case we would be no different from animals.²⁴

Knowledge of the signs is therefore acquired through the use of these powers-to-act (*quwwah*). In another sign, the Quran praises those who listen to the word and follow the best of it (or make the best possible interpretation thereof):

...those who listen to the saying of the Quran and follow the fairest of it. They are they whom God has guided. Those, they are imbued with intuition. (Q39:18)

This sign apparently subjects the data of sense perception to the exercise of intellectual selection. The text also teaches that sense perception does not perceive all reality:

So I swear an oath by what you perceive and what you perceive not. (Q69:38)

Sensation signifies solely an act of one of the senses, without that which is added to sensation by perception such as memory, intellect, and other senses. Perception includes everything which is added to a sensation. For example, if I hear a noise, I may interpret it as the sound of two cats. Two

cats indicates my perception; the noise, my sensation.

The senses constitute the doors to the outside world, which when opened permit the entrance of messages from that world, but which, closed, bar the entrance of anything from without. Few of us ever stop to think how completely we are dependent upon these doors of the senses for our knowledge, our experience and our objects of thought. We take it all for granted and fail to perceive the importance of these senses. Only when one or more of the senses fail us do we begin to realize their importance and the importance of sensations as a whole. It is only when we stop to think how completely shut in and shut out we would be if all of our senses were destroyed, that we begin to realize just how dependent we are upon the senses and sensation for our knowledge, our thoughts, our feelings, and our general mental life and being.²⁵

The Sense of Touch

The first and most deficient degree of sensation is the sense of touch, of which no animal is empty, even worms in the soil.

For when they are poked with a pin, they contract and through this they are distinguished from plants. In an animate being, the first of the powers of the soul to develop is the power of touch. This power is common to all animals and travels through the limbs by means of the energies. The forms it perceives are the initial forms of the four primary qualities and their like.²⁶

The sense of touch, having no single elemental quality, humour or temperament as it contains them all, operates by means of certain nerves which have their endings in the outer covering or skin of the body, and also in the internal organism of the body. These nerves report to the mind their contact with outside objects; and, in some cases, certain changes of state or condition in the body itself. By means of this sense we are able to become aware of the size, form, shape and delight of material objects; of their degree of hardness, roughness, elasticity, etc.; of their temperature; and of other physical characteristics by which we distinguish one material object from another by means of respective reaction to our sense of touch. By means of this sense we also become aware of changes of state or condition in our bodies, such as thirst, hunger, sexual-feeling, and other internal sensations.²⁷

It may be that the sense of touch is sub-divided into four (pain, temperature, smoothness or roughness, softness or hardness) even though these may all be perceived by common sense, that is, taste and touch from the tongue and touch and vision from the eyes.

None touches it but the ones who are purified. (Q56:79)

We can know nothing of the exact nature of God. However, in order to apprehend what we cannot comprehend, God uses similitudes from our experience:

She said: My Lord! How is it I will be with child when no mortal touches me? He said: Thus, God creates whatever He wills. When He decreed a command, then, He only says to it: Be! Then, it is! (Q3:47)

Truly, those who were God-conscious when they were touched by a visitation from Satan, they recollected. That is when they were ones who perceive. (Q7:201)

The Sense of Smell

The power of smell perceives the forms of odors; it is more subtle than touch or taste.

The sense of smell manifests by means of delicate nerves terminating in the mucus membrane of the nostrils, hot and dry and with a choleric temperament; the latter registering contact with minute particles of material objects entering the nostrils, and also registering differences in the chemical composition of such particles; and the message of the nerve ends being transmitted to the brain. The particles of the 'smelled' object must have actually entered the nostrils and have come in contact with these nerve ends in order to have been sensed. Mere nearness to the organ of smell is not sufficient—actual contact must be had, or we will smell nothing. We 'smell' the rose only because minute particles of its substance are carried into our nostrils. We smell gas because some of its particles enter our nostrils.²⁸

Its seal will have the lingering smell of musk. So for that, then, the ones who strive, strive. (Q83:26)

The Sense of Taste

The power of taste is for perceiving the forms of the nine primary tastes and their compounds.

The sense of taste manifests by means of certain nerves terminating in tiny cells of the tongue, hot and moist and of sanguine temperament, known as 'taste buds'; the latter are stimulated chemically by objects brought in contact with them, the impulse being conveyed to the nerves, and by them transmitted to the brain. Physiologists classify the sensations of taste into five classes, viz., sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and 'hot' (as in the case of pepper, etc.).²⁹

The sense of taste detects soluble nutrients in those objects which come in contact with the tongue, discriminating between the various types of taste. The sense of touch is distributed throughout our skin and flesh, the nerves thereby perceiving and discerning anything which comes in contact with them—such as the four primary qualities: dryness, moisture, heat and cold; and the secondary qualities of roughness, smoothness, harshness, softness.³⁰

Say: I find not in what was revealed to me to taste that which is forbidden to taste, but that it be carrion or blood, that which is shed or the flesh of swine

for that, truly, is a disgrace or was hallowed—contrary to moral law—to other than God on it. Then, whoever was driven by necessity other than being one who is willfully disobedient or one who turns away. Then, truly, your Lord is Forgiving, Compassionate. (Q6:145)

This is the parable of the Garden which was promised the ones who are God-conscious: In it are rivers of unpolluted water and rivers of milk, the taste of which is not modified and rivers of intoxicants delightful to ones who drink and rivers of clarified honey, and in it for them all kinds of fruits and forgiveness from their Lord. Is this like ones who will dwell forever in the fire and they were given scalding water to drink so that it cuts off their bowels? (Q47:15)

The Sense of Sight

How does vision take place?

Vision takes place through the configuring of a form similar to the thing, by God's power, from the soul-spiritual realm. The form comes to be disengaged from the external matter and present to the perceiving soul. The form endures through the soul just as an act endures through its agent, not as something received endures through its receptacle.³¹

Seeing is the power to act:

The power to act is possessed by creatures whereby they perceive external objects by means of impressions made upon certain organs of the body, or whereby they receive impressions concerning changes in the condition of the body. The sense of sight, cold and wet and with a phlegmatic temperament, operates by means of registering the sensations of the intensity of the light waves, and the color vibrations thereof. The eye does not touch or feel the outside objects in order to 'see' them; instead, it 'touches' or 'feels' the vibrations of the light waves coming in contact with the neural matter of the organ of sight.³²

Cause us to see our devotional acts, and turn to us in forgiveness. Truly, You, You alone are The Acceptor of Repentance, The Compassionate. (Q2:128)

Mention when Abraham said: My Lord! Cause me to see how You will give life to the dead. He said: Will you not believe? He said: Yea, but so my heart be at rest. (Q2:260)

The Sense of Hearing

With the sense of hearing, it is not that the external sound produces a movement in the air which is exactly transmitted through successive air-waves to the interior of the ear and thus hearing takes place. The movement

of the air and its air-waves are preparatory conditions for the sound to be heard, but they do not transmit the sound.³³

The sense of hearing manifest by means of delicate nerve terminating in the inner part of the ear, cold and dry and with a melancholic temperament. The eardrum, or 'tympanum', vibrates in response to the air-vibrations or sound-waves reaching it from the outside; these vibrations are intensified, and the auditory nerve-ends take up the impression and pass it on to the brain. Sound-waves are sensed according to their characteristics of pitch, intensity, quality, and harmony, respectively.³⁴

Truly, in that is a reminder for him, for whoever had consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) or, having the ability to hear, gave listen. He is a witness. (Q50:37)

Among them are some who listen to you. So have you caused someone unwilling to hear, to hear if they had not been reasonable? (Q10:42)

Endnotes to Part II: Our Motivational System: Module 8: Sensation

- 1 <http://www.psitek.net/pages/PsiTek-the-master-mind5.html> #gsc.tab=0.
 - 2 William Chittick, "On the Teleology of Perception." Online.
 - 3 Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
 - 4 William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *Vision of Islam*. Online.
 - 5 William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *Vision of Islam*. Online.
 - 6 Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
 - 7 William Chittick, "On the Teleology of Perception." Online.
 - 8 Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
 - 9 Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
 - 10 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.
 - 11 William Chittick, "On the Teleology of Perception." Online.
 - 12 William Chittick and Sacheko Murata, *Vision of Islam*. Online.
 - 13 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar*, I, 3, p. 498, quoted by Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*.
 - 14 William Chittick, "On the Teleology of Perception." Online. Ibrahim Kalin, <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran> explains further in the following way pointing out how the Quranic signs show that reason is as important as sense perception in understanding something: *Say: God is greater in knowledge of how long they lingered in expectation. And to Him belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth. How well He perceives and how well He hears! Other than him, they have no protector and He ascribes no one partners in His determination.* (Q18:26) Reason functions within a larger context of life allowing us to understand something and to engage in moral thinking by showing us the reality of things to enable us 'to see things as they really are'.
- Frequent references to sense-perception as the principal mode of receiving the signs show the scientific/experimental import of the Quran. The Quran goes even further to suggest sense perception as the only avenue of knowledge, as the text already reviewed provides: *God brought you out from the wombs of your mothers and you know nothing. He assigned to you the ability to hear and sight and mind so that perhaps you will give thanks.* (Q16:78)
- Knowledge of the signs is therefore acquired through the use of these faculties. In another sign, the Quran praises those who listen to the word and follow the best of it: *Those who listen to the saying of the Quran and follow the fairer of it. Those are those whom God guided. And those, they are imbued with intuition* (or make the best possible interpretation thereof). (Q39:18) This sign apparently subjects the data of sense-perception to the exercise of intellectual selection. The text also teaches that sense-perception does not perceive all reality: *So I swear an oath by what you perceive and what you perceive not.* (Q69:37-69:38)
- Certainty (*yaqin*) may also be beyond the reach of human intellect, as the human mind may be blurred by the variables of time and space. What is deemed certain today may be uncertain tomorrow. We also note that according to the teachings of the Quran, the universe is dynamic in its origin, finite, and capable of increase. It is important to grasp the Quranic emphasis on inductive reasoning and experimentation. The Quran says: *O those who believed! If one who disobeys drew near to you with a tiding, then, be clear so that you not light on a folk out of ignorance.* (Q49:6).
- 15 William Chittick, "On the Teleology of Perception." Online.
 - 16 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-masha'ir (The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations)*. Online.
 - 17 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar*, I, 1, 116-17 *The Political Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*.
 - 18 Ibrahim Kalin, "Knowledge is Light". Online. He adds: The primacy of being over

knowing suggests that one has to start with existence (*wujud*) in order to be able to say something about knowledge, its possibility, its conditions, its structure, its validity, and so on.... Now, this is obviously the position of the ultimate primacy of existence (*wujud*) over essence ("whatness", *mahiyyah*) and, by derivation, over knowing (*'ilm*), which has been expounded by a great majority of Muslim metaphysicians.

Despite its central importance, however, the close relationship between existence and knowledge has been absent in modern Western philosophy thanks to the subjectivist philosophies of knowledge which give a resolute priority to the deliberations of discursive thought over against our pre-discursive existence. The catastrophic effects of the modern notion of human agency which is based on the different forms of subjectivist epistemology such as rationalism and empiricism are now all familiar to us in various segments of modern society in which we live. Positivism, humanism, individualism, scientism, imperialism, orientalism, capitalism, environmental crisis, etc. cannot be understood properly without realizing their deep roots in the 17th and 18th century conceptions of existence, knowledge and human agency.

With a few, though, notable exceptions, contemporary Islamic world too suffers from the lack of a serious treatment of the question of knowledge in its relation to being and human agency. Despite all the rhetoric on the importance and indispensability of knowledge in Islam, there are only a few works of philosophical nature to which we can turn for a veritable analysis of the subject. The contemporary Islamic world has not only abstained from an earnest encounter with the challenge of the Western theories of knowledge but it has also failed to bring out the immense wealth of traditional Islamic philosophy for the construction of a serious philosophical discourse.

19 See Ibrahim Kalin, "Knowledge is Light." Online.

20 See Ibrahim Kalin, "Knowledge is Light." Online.

21 Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*. Online.

22 William Chittick, "On the Teleology of Perception." Online.

23 William Chittick, "On the Teleology of Perception." Online.

24 <http://www.psitek.net/pages/PsiTek-the-master-mind5.html#gsc.tab=0>.

25 <http://www.psitek.net/pages/PsiTek-the-master-mind5.html#gsc.tab=0>.

26 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.

27 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.

28 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.

29 See Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Iksir al-'arifin (Elixir of the Gnostics)*. Online.

30 Ahmad ibn Umar ibn Ali, known as Nizami-i Aruzi-i Samarqandi and also Arudi ("The Prosodist"), was a Persian poet and prose writer who flourished between 1110 and 1161 CE. He is particularly famous for his *Chahar Maqala* ("Four Discourses"), his only work to fully survive.

31 William Chittick, "On the Teleology of Perception." Online.

32 <http://www.psitek.net/pages/PsiTek-the-master-mind5.html#gsc.tab=0>.

33 <http://www.psitek.net/pages/PsiTek-the-master-mind5.html#gsc.tab=0>.

34 Nizam-i Aruzi-i Samarqandi, *Chahar Maqala*. See note 8 above.



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Part II: Our Motivational System

Module 9: Perception

Introduction

We now know that all of existence is in constant motion by its very nature through substantial motion without the need of a stimulus bestowed from the heavenly spheres. Through this motion all things in the world "become". That is, their existence is continuously intensified and weakened. This affects our perception.

It is because we exist that we have perception. As we have learned, the Arabic word, *wujud*, means being alive, existing as well as "finding". Our existence is not only that we are alive, but that we also find what is within and around us and it is through our power of perception that we do this.

A Day when every soul will find that which is brought forward of good and what it did of evil. It will wish that there be between this and between that a long space of time. God cautions you of Himself. God is Gentle to the servants. (Q3:30)

Obey God and the Messenger so that perhaps you will find mercy. (Q3:132)

Whoever does evil or does wrong to himself, again, asks for forgiveness from God will, truly, find God Forgiving, Compassionate. (Q4:110)

The more intensely something is there, such as a feeling of pleasure (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) or pain (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*), for instance, the more intensely we "find" it.

It is through perception that we gain knowledge of the essence of a thing or 'what it is' whether it be an object, person, feeling or thought. When perception takes place, we come to know 'what' the object of perception is. Perception is the existing, finding, witnessing and/or presence of what is to be perceived by us perceiving it.¹

Surely, clear evidence drew near you from your Lord. So whoever perceived, it will be for his own soul. Whoever was in darkness will be against his own soul. Say: I am not a guardian over you. (Q6:104)

Their parable is like a parable of those who started a fire. Then, when it illuminated what was around it, God took away their light and left them in shadows where they perceive not. (Q2:17)

Say: Considered you what if God made the daytime endless for you until the Day of Resurrection? What god other than God brings you nighttime wherein you rest? Will you not, then, perceive? (Q28:72)

1. Awareness

The fact that perception entails knowing "what a thing is", is emphasized by our awareness and focus. Awareness is to pay more attention to what is around us at any one moment. None of the signals transmitted by the senses can be regarded as perception unless the person be aware of what his senses are sensing. We see that, while crossing a street, a person does not perceive all of what his eyes see or what his ears hear unless he is aware and focuses on them.

While awareness and focus are similar in some ways, awareness, is like those announcements we hear on television. For instance, a tornado is headed towards the city. While we know what is out there and we are factually aware that it exists, there is little we can do to explain where it is, whether it'll strike us or not, how much damage it will cause, and so forth.

Awareness is essentially a tangible, physically-related expression. We are aware of the fact that consuming too much sugar/carbohydrates can lead to obesity, diabetes and other diseases. We are aware that anything we do might have an impact on our loved one's life. We are aware of our realities, primarily because of the powers of our soul like sensations, perceptions, cognitive abilities and knowledge. We know what is, but we do not know how it may or may not be related to our life.

Awareness does not necessarily equate with being conscious. Awareness is considered a prerequisite for consciousness. We cannot be conscious about something if we are unaware of it in the first place. When we are aware of a situation, we blur out our perception of anything that does not relate to that so that we are aware of only what we are certain of. Through awareness, we become more present to perceiving, to feeling, to being cognizant of events.²

Awareness means the "presence" of "what something is" in its totality. Perception by presence directly comes to our inner self:

Perception by presence is a kind of 'intuitive' perception. Through a union with the object (or feeling or thought), our human soul penetrates this kind of perception and becomes aware of the depth of its existence. Our perception by presence is manifested in different ways: For example, our perception of self is intuitive and by presence. Even if our five senses are paralyzed, we will still be able to perceive our essence. This is consistent with the fact that we can sometimes know self through acquired knowledge (for example, through seeing, touching, or the like). We perceive all our inner faculties, motivations, desires, emotions, thoughts, actions and mental principles through perception by presence. The perception of all

the input given to the five external senses, which are our informants, is completed through perception by presence through our five internal senses. The analysis and understanding of all the input is thoroughly done in our understanding and through the soul's perception by presence. The unusual methods of perception acquisition, which are mainly based on intuition, include perceptions obtained through religious practice, during sleep or in dreams. These are perfect examples of perception by presence. In the process of perception, the sensible forms and the impressions of the senses merely play the role of tools and auxiliary causes responsible for preparing the soul for understanding, for creating the acquired knowledge or 'what it is' corresponding to what exists in our internal and external world.³

The Quran uses two terms that express awareness. First, The Aware (al-Khabir) is one of the Names and Qualities of God. There are forty-five signs/verses that refer to God as The Aware. For example:

God will exalt those among you who believed and those who were given the knowledge in degrees. God is Aware of what you do. (Q58:11)

So believe in God and His Messenger, and in the Light which We caused to descend. God is Aware of what you do. (Q64:8)

Mention when the Prophet confided to one of his spouses a discourse, she, then, told it to another. God disclosed to him of it. He acquainted her with some of it and turned aside some of it. When he told her about it, she said: Who communicated this to you? He said: The Knowing, The Aware told me. (Q66:3)

The word *sha'ara*, meaning "to be aware" appears in twenty-five signs/verses and, in each case, referring to different instances, the Quran refers to the fact that many are unaware, saying: *they (or you) are not aware*.

Say not about those who are slain in the way of God: They are lifeless. Nay! They are living, except you are not aware. (2:154)

They cause none to go astray but themselves, and they are not aware. (Q3:69)

Yet they plan not but against themselves although they are not aware. (Q6:123)

There are three basic levels through which perception occurs depending on the detachment or disengagement our human soul has achieved from the physical world: the senses, imagination and intellect.

The levels of perception are defined by the intensity of perception's detachment

from the physical. The human soul comes into existence empty of knowledge and actuality, so it has the potential to perceive all things. Perception actualizes and activates our soul. The more intensely our soul perceives, the more intensely it exists. The more intensely it exists, the more it takes on the attribute of the simple reality of existence that gives rise to all things.⁴

All of nature is in a state of change. As the saying goes: We can never smell the same flower twice. According to substantial motion, our soul is always in motion, its movement measured by time. While physical matter is unaware or unconscious of itself, awareness is basically an existential and positive thing.

He it is Who sets you in motion through dry land and the sea until when you had been in boats and they ran them with the good wind and they were glad in it. (Q10:22)

The components of perception are three: The perceiving one, which is we ourselves; the perceived thing, which is in either or both from the internal or external world; and the form or what we understand the thing is. These three are one and the same thing because they share in one existence. That is, perception, the perceived and the perceiver are united as one thing since they possess only one existence.

After witnessing the product of its senses and gaining awareness of the forms presented to them, the soul reconstructs 'what the external object is' through its creative acts. This is the most important stage of perception.

In addition to possessing the ability to become aware of what goes on in the senses and other inner faculties, the soul has the power of creativity. It is through this essential creativity that it can construct a form and grant it a kind of existence which is called mental existence.⁵

However, as long as our animal soul remains our animal soul and has not become soul-spirit/intellect, our animal soul's mode of perception and existence is weak, and everything that is perceived and exists within the soul is even weaker.

Presence, a synonym for witnessing, is the opposite of absence. The Quran refers many times to the presence of God.

Our Lord! ... Bestow on us mercy from that which proceeds from Your Presence. Truly, You, You alone are The Giver. (Q3:8)

A Book, the signs in it were set clear. Again, they were explained distinctly from that which proceeds from the Presence of the Wise, Aware. (Q11:1)

Then, they found a servant among Our servants to whom We gave mercy

from Us and We taught him knowledge which proceeds from Our Presence.
(Q18:65)

What is absent is everything that we do not ordinarily perceive. If someone were to ask if it was possible to perceive and witness the absent world, the answer is: Yes, it is. We do this by perceiving those things that our senses are unable to grasp.

Not is that which is absent in the heaven and the earth, but that it is in the clear Book. (Q27:75)

When our external powers and our physical senses are deactivated by sleep or by loss of external consciousness or by other acts of this nature, then, in most cases, the person finds in himself that he hears, sees, smells, can touch, strike with hands, can walk, etc. So he has these powers of awareness, internal powers and organs which remain perfect without anything diminished or lost in them due to sleep, etc. But these powers cannot be affirmed in this world, that is, in the world of senses or the manifest world of the body. Otherwise anyone with sound external senses would see them. But that is not the case. So it is the absent world, the internal world.⁶

However, in order to perceive the world of absent things, we need to strengthen our perceptual faculties. We need to learn how to see through the darkness of the physical and sensory worlds into the domain that lies beyond it. The absent world must "become", that is, come to exist for us and to be found by us. In other words, it must come to be present in us and we witness it.

Perception, then, is existence itself, which is precisely present—being here and being found. Perception is the existence of the perceived object, thought or feeling within the perceiver. It follows that in perceiving both the external and the internal worlds, the degree of perception coincides with the degree of existence. To perceive something more directly is to participate in existence more fully.

The final goal of our perception is for us to see things as they really are. In terms of external forms or objects or persons that we perceive (or thoughts and feelings), this can only occur when our soul actualizes its unlimited potential to know. This potential is the ability to perceive all things dwelling on all levels of existence. The potential in regard to external objects or persons can be turned into actuality through a gradual disengagement and separation from all physicality and materiality and a return to the soul-spirit/intellect that perceives all things as they actually are in existence itself. This does not mean that our soul will no longer have any connection with the things of the external world. Rather, it means that it will have come to perceive things clearly, wherever they may be the levels of existence. It will no longer fall into the nearsightedness of perceiving the forms as anchored to the various locations in which they become manifest to the perceiver, locations in which the forms appear through the dark glass of sense-perception and imagina-

tion. Having perceived self and all things for what they are and having found itself to be one with all things, our soul attains to its final goal.⁷

Or, put another way:

At each level of perception, the soul disengages perceptible things from physical matter and the other conditions of the levels of the nature of existence. Even sense perception necessarily disengages from the recognizable, because the external physical matter does not enter into the soul. But, when the soul disengages the recognizable, simultaneously it becomes disengaged from the conditions of the lower worlds. The movement from sense perception to imagination and then to intellection is a movement from frail existence and weak perception to strong existence and intense finding. Every time the soul actualizes its own potential through perception, it gains in the strength of its existence, and when it becomes a soul-spirit/intellect, it has gained full and everlasting existence.⁸

2. Perception and Our Five Internal Senses

Common Sense

The first internal sense is common sense. It is the storehouse for all impressions from our external senses so touching, tasting, smelling, hearing and seeing. It directly receives the contents of the five external senses. For instance, when an apple is perceived through common sense, our common sense distinguishes the different states of the apple and realizes that every part of the apple possesses taste, smell, color, heat or cold.

There are four functions connected to common sense: to receive an impression; to act on it as arbiter of reports from the five external senses; to transmit the results to a more inward sense; to reduce contrary images to a unity of perception thereby destroying false impressions which may arise from several impressions received at the same time from different senses. It is the most basic sense of internal perception that perceives but does not retain what it perceives.

These powers develop in different degrees. They are not present in their totality in all species of the animal kingdom. By virtue of these powers added to those of the plant and mineral kingdoms, animals are able to perform the various biological functions that belong to their nature. They constitute a degree in the scale of being between the plant world and the human being, and through their physical and psychic qualities form a bridge between the human being and the rest of the external environment.

The three kingdoms on earth that lead in an ascending order to the human being all consist of the same four elements that act as the ground or substance of manifestation and of the powers of the soul that manifests a different power at each level of existence. The union of a particular power of the soul to a combination of the elements is not as a compound but *ad extra* and by way of a connection. It is brought about when the correct proportion of the elements, reaching a new degree of perfection and approaching closer to perfect equilibrium and harmony, attracts a power of the soul to themselves.

The Quran refers to those who have common sense:

Eat and give attention to your flocks. Truly, in this are signs for the people imbued with sense (Q20:54), that is, to cause (someone or something to be deeply affected by a feeling or to have a certain quality. If someone or something is imbued with an idea, feeling, or quality, they become filled with it.

Guide He not them? How many generations We caused to perish before them amidst whose dwellings they walk. Truly, in this are signs for the people imbued with sense. (Q20:128)

and those who sense awe or fear:

So Moses sensed awe in himself. (Q20:67)

Then, when he saw their hands reach not out towards it, he became suspicious and sensed awe of them. They said: Fear not. We were sent to the folk of Lot. (Q11:70)

Then, he sensed a fear of them; they said: Be not in awe. They gave him good tidings of a knowing boy. (Q 51:28)

Retaining of Forms or Representation

The power of retaining of images of physical shapes preserves the sensations of common sense even after the physical form disappears. Its function is to record and retain images or forms of external things received by common sense and to preserve their images and their individual and collective meanings:

The power of representation preserves in our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) what common sense has received from the individual five senses even in the absence of the sensed objects. It should be remembered that receptivity and preservation are functions of different ability or powers. For instance, water has the power of receiving an imprint, but lacks that of retaining it.⁹

What common sense receives is retained by the retentive power.

Estimation

The estimative power perceives meanings that are not perceptible to the external senses even though they are within particular sensible objects. This is the animal's highest function and the highest level our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) reaches as it transform gradually from potentiality to the actuality of our human soul (*nafs al-insaniyyah*).

In regard to human beings, it is this power that is used in most of our daily relationships and interactions with the world outside of our "self." It is this

power that perceives goodness or harmfulness of an object. It is this power that recognizes, for instance, that a fruit is ripe and should be eaten or that so-and-so would make a good partner. This perception is then given to the concupiscent power (attraction to pleasure, *quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) that is then motivated to move forward or to the irascible power (avoidance of harm/pain, *nafs al-ghadabiyyah*) that is then motivated to avoid the perceived harm or pain of it. This is the most important function for animals.

It is through this power that time and space are understood, helping an animal move towards or away from an image. While the animal sees the image through this power, it interprets a two-dimensionality as three-dimensional space which is the real situation for the animal and the space through which it has to move.

In other words, it is the estimative power that perceives the individual, non-sensible meaning of sensible particulars, for example, things like lust (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) or anger (*nafs al-ghadabiyyah*). It is this power that judges concerning right and wrong or good and bad as if the meaning were a sensible object of the world external to "self" or our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) that we will study in future modules.

It is this power that perceives intentions (an aspect of our conscience that we will be studying). However, unless these judgments and opinions are governed by reason and the powers of imagination, this power becomes the source of error in judgment.

It is through this power that our human soul is able to deny intellectual images that are not bounded or located. Through it, our human soul affirms the existence of a void that encompasses the universe. It is also through it that our human soul is able to accept the validity or invalidity of syllogisms that are based on sophistical premises and to differ in the conclusion at which it arrives.

The estimative faculty presides over judgments not in the analytical way that characterizes intellectual judgments, but in the imaginative way determined by memory images through a process of association from past experience, or not by memory images, but by an instinctive interpretation of the image perceived by the soul without going through any process of association from past experience.¹⁰

Memory and/or Recall

It is memory that retains meanings and saves them for the estimative power through which the meanings had been perceived. While the retentive power attains particular meanings and stores them for the person who perceives them for close inspection and appraisal, this only occurs as long as that representative power retains them. When they are no longer available with the retentive power, then they are found in the power of memory. While the retentive power stores sensible images and representations, memory stores meanings and intelligibles.

Memory is, as it were, a treasury or repository for those supra-sensuous

ideas discovered by the instinctive ability or power just as the imagination is the treasury or repository for the sense impressions of forms and sensible images (formed by common sense).¹¹

Speaking of the revelation of the Quran to the Prophet, it tells us:

They are to be related from memory to him at early morning dawn and even-tide. (25:5)

Imagination

Imagination is divided into two parts: sensitive imagination (*al-mu-takhayyal*) and rational imagination (*al-mufakkirah*). This is another place where the powers of our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) end while the human or rational power (*nafs al-natiqah*) continues. In comparing the power of sensitive and rational imagination, sensitive relates to one single act while rational does not make a judgment, but opens the way to a series of discursive processes and decisions. We contain both aspects of imagination while animals only have that of the sensitive. The power is taken in two senses. It is regarded sometimes as sensitive, that is, shared by all animals including the human animal and sometimes as 'rational', that is, we humans alone.

The power of sensitive imagination is different than the power of rational imagination where the rational controls or decides that a given action is advantageous. There is also the difference that the sensitive imagination deals with the senses as well as percepts whereas rational imagination uses the percepts that have been stored in the sensitive imagination and then proceeds to combine and analyze them and construct quite different images, for example, a flying person or an emerald mountain. The imagination does not present to a person anything but what it has already received through the sense-organs.¹²

The Power of Sensitive Imagination

This power receives sensible forms, then combines and separates them through a system of classification. It adds to them or subtracts from them so that the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) can perceive their meanings. In this way, this power connects them with the images. It is naturally disposed to appraise so that the soul can use it to create any order it pleases. It combines and separates objects, adds or subtracts them either through the practical or theoretical intellects. Its main function is to combine and separate rather than to actually perceive something. It is this power that produces technical and artistic skills.

The Power of Rational Imagination

The soul's rational imagination is the rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah*), that which separates human beings from animals. It is the cogitative power that

manages the data of its two divisions: theoretical and practical intellects, combining and arranging them as premises from which informing knowledge is deducted. From this knowledge, the rational soul derives conclusions. From one conclusion, it derives and combines conclusions and so on.

The Power of Spiritual Imagination

There are a few instances of imagination (*khayal*) in the Quran.¹³ The concept of *khayal* is used to refer both to the mental faculty of imagination and to the world as it manifests itself, as a kind of "imagination. For example, when we look at our self in a mirror, we see our self and we know that this is our self, but, at the same time, we know that the form in the mirror is not our self, but our imagination that so imagines.

So Moses sensed awe in himself (as he was made to imagine, by their sorcery, that their ropes and staffs were sliding.) (Q20:67)

The example of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, when her throne disappeared from one place and appeared in Solomon's palace. Then she recognized the impossibility of a physical object being transferred and exclaimed:

It is as though it was it. (Q27:42)

The word *tamaththala*, for example which appears once in the Quran, means to imagine something to be so, which is not used for the imaginative power itself, but only for the objective world, as it presents itself to us. As a synonym to "imagination": *tamaththala* is to resemble, to look like, to imitate, to appear in the likeness of. It is repeatedly used in the Quran. For example:

Then, she took to herself a partition away from them, so We sent Our Spirit to her and he presented himself (he became imaginalized) before her as a mortal without fault. (Q19:17)

Another example in the prophetic Gabriel hadith where it is said to know God as if you see him:

Had the Lawgiver not known that you have a reality known as "imagination" which possesses this property, he would not have said to you "as if you see Him" with your eyes... As for sight, it would perceive nothing but a wall ...¹⁴

Imagination does not have the capacity to accept any affair, whether sensory, suprasensory (*ma'nawi*), relations, attributions, the majesty of God, or His Essence, except through form... (and) imagination can never disengage meanings from substrata. Hence sense perception is the nearest thing to imagination, since imagination takes forms from sense perception, then it discloses meanings through those sensory forms:¹⁵

Truly, your Lord is Achiever of what He wants. (Q11:07)

except God alone, about whom it is said:

There is not like Him anything. (Q42:11)

Our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*), which we will study in future modules, alone is able to perceive God's self-disclosures through the power of our imagination. A sacred tradition or *hadith qudsi* reminds us:

My heavens and My earth cannot contain Me, but (*it is as though it were* as in 27:42) the consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) of My believing servant contains Me.

Many kinds of knowledge (which actually are the most important ones) are normally hidden from our rational minds, but spiritual imagination is able to transcend the rigid mental barriers built up by our rationality. Imagination is, then, able to combine apparent opposites and contradictions. This is why understanding imagination is so essential for soul-spirit/intellect as the seeker of divine truth, and it is one of the pillars of true knowledge. Imagination governs every state whether it be sensory or rational, that which is originated in time and the eternal, the possible and the presence of God. Then there is an exposition of how imagination proceeds to use forms to interpret anything. Imagination gives form to anything which, according to rational demonstration, cannot possibly have form or assume forms (*tasawwur*).¹⁶

These are five, but consist of three subdivisions: perceiving, preserving, and disposing.¹⁷

Perceiving

We either perceive forms or perceive meaning. Common sense perceives forms. Without common sense, we would not be able to make a judgment about diverse sensibles simultaneously, such as: This sugar is white and sweet, by way of witnessing, nor would one be able to witness a rapidly rotating point as a circle, or a falling drop as a straight line, because the witnessing through sight pertains only to what it encounters, and of these two all it encounters is a point and a drop.

Another internal sense we have is the power of estimation or apperception that perceives meanings and the properties of particular things that we sense. The power of estimation (*wahm*) is the goal to our system of perception in the same way that yearning, as we learned, is the goal of our motivational system.

Preserving

Through our perceptive system of the power of our five internal senses, we either preserve forms or preserve meanings. It is our internal sense and power

of imagination that preserves what our common sense perceives.

Our imagination also functions as the form-making power (*al-musawwirah*) which gathers together what is similar in what our five external senses, sense. They remain within our imagination even if they are no longer physically present to our senses as is the case with Prophet Muhammad.

Our common sense has the power to receive or perceive forms, but not to preserve them. To receive or perceive is a passive state while preserving something is active. Therefore, our power of common sense is different from our power of imagination.

Memory/recall preserves what our power of estimation perceives or our power of imagination will concede its relationship with memory to our power of common sense.

Disposal

As for the power of disposal, what it does is to combine forms with each other, or combine meanings, or combine one of the two kinds with the other. It possesses both the power to perceive and the power to preserve. When reference is given to the power of disposal to perceive something through the five external senses, it is called the imaginal power. When reference is given to the power of disposal to perceive intellectual things, it is called the power of thought.

Know that the oneness of the power of memory exists only in theory or as a suggestion or idea, since "remembering" is composed of the act of two powers: a perception that perceives and a preservation that follows. The same is true for recall, due to its being composed of perception, preservation, and disposal.

It is as though the power of estimation (apprehension) is itself the power of thought, imagination, and memory, and is itself the decision-maker. Thus, in its essence it is a decision-making-power by its motions. It is the imaginal and memory powers in its activities and is a power of thought in what it does regarding forms and meanings, and a power of memory through that at which its act comes to an end. What this means is that estimation (apprehension) has command over these powers which are its soldiers and servants.

Imagination and Depression

There are causes beyond numbering that incline a person to grief or depression. When this occurs, the imagination of the depressed person heightens and produces images and incidents that increase the sense of desolation and sorrow. In the depressed person, imagination becomes stronger producing dryness in the constituent temperament of the breath, slackening its movement and removing the power of reason so that the powers of sensation and imagination prevail because of the disturbance in the temperament of the breath and its particular movement.

Moreover, in depressed persons, the vividness of the imagination of depressing things itself causes them to appear, because the thing whose image is represented to our human soul is already there in actuality. There-

fore, depression persists. Two things follow great depression: weakening of natural power; and concentration of the innate heat. The explanation of this is that violent condensation and aggregation of the vital power obliterates the innate heat and results in coldness.¹⁸

Imagination and Psychic Perception

While being referred to as sensible imagination in animals, imagination forms the basis of psychical perception as well. Whereas sensible perception is particular, imagination is general and it culminates in cognitive or rational perception (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*) so that it is the intermediary between the sensible and the rational. It is active while the self is both awake and asleep and is the cause of dreams. It can operate out of either the immediate experience of intuition or out of the deliberations of reason.

Look into the wonders that lie between the intellect and imagination through your penetrative human soul. You can see with certainty that the intellect derives the objects of knowledge, called the intelligibles, from the imaginative sense and offers to the imaginative sense a number of other objects of knowledge.

Take, for example, the moral and artistic ideals, or those objects of knowledge which are either the events that might take place and are available in the imaginative sense before their occurrence or the events that have not occurred but have found their way into the imaginative sense not through the sense-organs, but rather through the intellect as in the case of true dreams.

The most astonishing thing concerning the imaginative sense is that which relates to revelation. It is clear in these cases that what the intellect offers to the human imagination does not proceed from reason itself, nor is acted upon by reason, but arises in imagination through an agent who has known it beforehand, and is able to create it. It is God Who causes by His Will the mover of the active spheres to act upon the passive spheres as He likes. When, for example, He intends to make manifest what will occur in the universe, He first of all sends the knowledge to spiritual energies and through them to the human intellect. This knowledge comes to the human being in accordance with his capacity for receiving it. This is evident in most cases of God's virtuous servants whom He has shown the right path and who are sincere to Him, particularly the Prophets to whom He makes manifest through His angels in waking life or dream the wonderful events that are going to happen in the universe.

God, the Almighty, makes manifest to His existing beings and creatures through both knowledge and deed. Every being receives these from Him according to its rank in the perfection of nature in its mode of operation.¹⁹

Ibn Bajjah (d. 1138 CE) describes the internal sense of imagination and its relation to the rational system:

It is also said that there are various grades of knowledge, the first of which is knowledge of a specific, particular object. This comes into being by the perception of the particular in the imaginative sense. This is the weakest type of knowledge of

an object and resembles the imagination of an animal. When, on the other hand, the state of the particular is possible in the imaginative sense, the self advances to this particular with its detailed characteristics which help it to recognize it to be the same at different times. It distinguishes so-and-so to be, for example, tall, dark, and handsome and considers all of these qualities to be related numerically to one individual.²⁰

Ibn Bajjah says that some people think that these words introduce multiplicity where there is only unity as with tall, dark, and handsome to describe so-and-so. But, Ibn Bajjah adds, this is the way the self achieves the knowledge of individual objects in so far as they are definite and particular.

When the imaginative sense obtains objects of imagination, the internal rational sense or cognition (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*) looks at them through its insight and realizes the universal meanings or characteristics of all or the whole. Through these universal meanings, the rational sense imagines and distinguishes the nature of every imagined object. When the words indicating the universal meanings are referred to, the rational sense distinguishes them, presents them to reason, and apprehends them. This can happen in two basic ways: the rational sense presents the universal meanings to reason and apprehends them as true of the imagined objects or individuals signified by them. Through insight, the rational sense sees the universal meanings.

The second basic way of interaction between imagination and the rational sense is when the rational sense distinguishes these universal meanings perfectly but when it sees them through its insight and presents them to the self in a well-ordered manner, it sees them through its insight in the imaginative sense which also acts upon them and makes them resemble the universal meaning. It gives to them forms which are common to more than one, but not to all objects to which this meaning is applicable. The soul's rational imagination is often described as the rational soul, that which separates human beings from animals.²¹

Ibn Bajjah gives the example of a sculptor who represents the form of a horse in stone or a painter who draws the form of a horse on a canvas. This representation is imperfect because it represents and reproduces the form of a horse that is fully grown. The drawing is not common to all horses. The imaginative sense represents things which are limited in respect of age, size, and so forth. The image of a horse does not represent the full-grown horse, the young horse, and the colt. Its image is common only to the horses of that particular size or age which the imaginative sense represents.

As soon as the rational soul (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*) makes distinctions of universal meanings and presents them to reason to look more closely into them through its insight, the rational sense looks at them through the image which the imaginative sense represents. The rational sense distinguishes whether the image is perfect or not perfect, common or not common. It thinks immediately of the intelligible meanings.

This is the way that universal meanings are understood by artists and scientists.

When the artist, for example, thinks about how to make an object, he presents the image of the particular article to his imagination and prepares his plan to make it. Similarly, when a scientist looks into the object of knowledge to know its nature and gives its description, he presents its image to his imagination.

Whoever exerts the rational sense to act on the objects obtained in the imagination sees the confirmation of the above description of process. This is like a person who sees the light of the sun through the light of the sun with the external sense of sight. This ability is a gift which is like the light of the sun through which the self realizes and sees the creation of God so clearly that the self becomes a believer in Him, His angels, books, prophets, and the next world. It is this self that enjoys certain belief and remembers God while standing, sitting, and lying down.

Imagination writes in memory impressions of things received by the external senses as well as by reason in addition to things it composes itself. It is like a person who writes himself a note to remind himself of something and later reads the note and mentally adds something from his mind at that moment to the note. Later imagination may return to the forms and activate them without the intervention of the external senses. In this case, it is activated by the affective or behavioral systems (*nafs al-ammarah*) attracting the self to pleasure or avoiding harm from the self. It is quite possible for imagination to oppose reason. Since it is closer to the external senses than it is to reason, it may allure the self to the affective or behavioral systems to establish a coalition against reason. Rash judgments are strengthened in this way and often leads the self to confusion.

Imagination plays a crucial role in our self. It evolves ideals and is naturally disposed to pass those that are of sufficient magnitude onto reason for deliberation.

Our imagination also communicates with our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*). It has to do with both thought and action. It receives sense impressions before the self can respond. Imagination has considerable authority in the self. Because of its freedom and its dual relation to reason and the affective-behavioral systems (*nafs al-ammarah*), it exercises an important influence on our behavior which may not be to the best advantage of our self in its completing and perfecting itself as it is considered that right conduct comes from reason.

The mineral, plant and animal aspects of soul on earth lead in an ascending order to the human being all consist of the same four elements that act as the ground or substance of manifestation and of the powers of our human soul that manifests a different power at each level of existence. The union of a particular power of our soul to a combination of the elements is not as a compound but *ad extra* and by way of a connection. It is brought about when the correct proportion of the elements, reaching a new degree of perfection and approaching closer to perfect equilibrium and harmony, attracts to itself a power of our soul.²²

Quranic signs/verses show us that reason (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*) is as important as perception in understanding something as we move further away in the study of our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) towards our human and cognitive soul (*nafs al-insaniyyah* and *nafs al-natiqah*).

Say: God is greater in knowledge of how long they lingered in expectation. To Him belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth. How well He perceives and how well He hears! Other than him, they have no protector

and He ascribes no one partners in His determination. (Q18:26)

Reason functions within a larger context of life allowing us to understand something and to engage in moral thinking by showing us the reality of things to enable us "to see things as they really are".

Frequent references to sense-perception as the principal mode of receiving the signs show the scientific/experimental import of the Quran. The Quran goes even further to suggest sense perception as the only avenue of knowledge, as the text already reviewed provides:²³

God brought you out from the wombs of your mothers and you know nothing. And He assigned to you the ability to hear and sight and mind so that perhaps you will give thanks. (Q16:78)

Knowledge of the signs is therefore acquired through the use of these powers. In another sign, the Quran praises those who listen to the word and follow the best of it:²⁴

Those who listen to the saying of the Quran and follow the fairer of it. Those are those whom God guided. And those, they are imbued with intuition (or make the best possible interpretation thereof). (Q39:18)

This sign apparently subjects the data of sense-perception to the exercise of intellectual selection. The text also teaches that sense-perception does not perceive all reality:²⁵

So I swear an oath by what you perceive and what you perceive not. (Q69:37-69:38)

Certainty (*yaqin*) may also be beyond the reach of human intellect, as the human mind may be blurred by the variables of time and space. What is deemed certain today may be uncertain tomorrow. We also note that according to the teachings of the Quran, the universe is dynamic in its origin, finite, and capable of increase. It is important to grasp the Quranic emphasis on inductive reasoning and experimentation.²⁶

The Quran says:

O those who believed! If one who disobeys drew near to you with a tidings, then, be clear so that you not light on a folk out of ignorance. (Q49:6).

Endnotes to Part II: Our Motivational System: Module 9: Perception

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Part III: Our Cognitive System

Module 10: Our Cognitive System Defined

Introduction

In both the Western and Islamic worlds, the science of psychology began as a branch of philosophy. In the Islamic world, it was known as the science of the soul (*ilm al-nafs*). That science centered upon the cognitive process ruling over or disciplining our motivational system, specifically our animal soul, in order for the self to maintain balance.

However, even the cognitive system, called the rational soul (*nafs al-na-tiqah*) by the traditional philosophers, could also lose its centeredness when it went to extremes. Too much cognition revealed itself in hypocrisy; too little, in ignorance; and a qualitative lack of it, as disbelief or ingratitude towards God. Thus, cognitive balance was as important as a balanced animal soul.

Both our practical and theoretical intellect, reason or wisdom are part of our cognitive system that is governed by our human soul.

Our Practical Intellect or Reason

If our behavior in adulthood gradually results from deliberation with our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*)—and not impulsivity—our soul, moving from potentiality to actuality, is then practical reason or "the writing soul" or our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) moving towards its own completion of morally healing because of the intensity of existence it has reached.

Practical reason is the capacity for moral insight to dictate what moral choice or course of action is most conducive to the good of an individual or the activity in which a person is involved, doing what is required in the right manner, at the right time and the right place.¹

Our Theoretical Intellect or Reason

When our soul considers the knowledge of things and gradually cogitates the various intellectual guideposts, it is our theoretical reason, soul-spirit/intellect.

Theoretical reason is the knowledge of reality and knowing what is true or false and also the balance and integration of thinking and understanding, synthesizing

various points of view pulling together knowledge and given directives to practical wisdom. People that possess theoretical wisdom have a well-developed personality, respecting the individuality of others and do not necessarily conform to general social expectation. They have a set of values guiding them to what is correct and accurate which include wholeness, honesty, truth, justice and goodness based on our own experiences of the Quran and the Sunnah.²

In terms of psychology, what was called practical reason basically related to our motivational system and our animal soul. The important addition for Quranic Psychology, however, is that practical reason also included ethics or morality.

Theoretical reason, intellect or wisdom basically includes our cognitive system consisting of our mind (*sadr*) and its encounter with our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*), our consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*), our conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*) and our reason/intellect/spirit (*'aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*, *ruh*, *lubb*)..

1. Our Cognitive System Defined

Our cognitive system, defined as acquiring understanding through gaining knowledge, thinking, reasoning, intuition and wisdom, in addition to experiences that we gain from our external (sensation) and internal senses (perception), is a primary function belonging to a living human being.

The locus of Islam is the center of one's existence and called mind (*sadr*):

a kind of spiritual pericardium, which requires one to overcome the ego (*nafs al-ammarah*). Enclosed within is consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*), the locus of faith (*iman*), with its requirements of self-denial. At the next level inward, our conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*) which requires self-scrutiny. In the innermost center of the heart is the intellect or reason (*lubb*, *'aql*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*, kernel, marrow, pith), home of acknowledgment of the divine transcendent unity which requires absolute fidelity to God.³

Hakim Tirmidhi developed a four-part model of our cognitive system from our soul-body (animal soul) to our soul-spirit/intellect further identifying each of the four elements with one of the four aspects of the soul:

The mind (*sadr*), which bears the whispering of the soul that commands to evil (*nafs al-ammarah*), the inspiring soul (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*), the blaming soul (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*) and the soul resting in tranquility (*lubb*, *nafs al-mutma'innah*). Most important, consciousness (*qalb*) is the seat not only of ethical virtue but of knowledge. Terms used to describe spiritually advanced individuals include *ulu'l-albab*, those imbued with intuition.⁴

Our Mind (*sadr*)

In his commentary on the Quran, al-Nisaburi also mentions *al-sadr* as being another word for "mind" in the Quran:

In the same way as when we say the "breasts of humanity", we mean their minds on the most external and shallow level. The Quran often uses *sadr* when speaking about "expanding the breast," that is, expanding the minds of His prophets such as Moses and the Prophet Muhammad, because *sadr* is the broadest, most general term, and so it is understood that the other layers of the heart will also be expanded. However, for the rest of humanity, it is also the place where secrets are kept, where Satan whispers, and where the ego of the animal soul takes hold of a person, but it should be noted that these influential forces, at least linguistically, have access only to the outermost aspect of the heart, that is, the mind, not its inner layers, for which the individual alone is accountable to keep pure or to corrupt.⁵

Our Consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*)

Al-qalb has been called the inspired soul (*al-nafs al-mulhamah*) and referred to by traditional philosophers as consciousness. Thus, a future module is about consciousness as the Quranic words, *qalb* and *nafs al-mulhamah*.⁶

The Quranic word, *qalb* does not refer to our physical heart. It has been interpreted in multiple ways by philosophers, theologians, Sufis and Arifs. In order for the multiple references to it in the Quran to be useful to psychologists, the word is translated as consciousness that is part of our cognitive system, namely, our inspired soul-spirit/intellect and its fluctuation between immorality and God-consciousness mentioned in the Quranic signs/verses (Q91:8-91:10).

By the soul and what shaped it and, then, inspired it to its acting immorally and God-consciousness, he who made it pure prospered. Surely, is frustrated whoever seduced it. (Q91:7-91:10)

When the Quran speaks of the consciousness, it is speaking of the reality of the human being. Al-Ghazzali says:

We do not mean that piece of flesh which lies in the left side of the chest; that organ is not worthy, for the cattle possess it and so do the dead. It can be seen by the ordinary eyes, and whatever could be seen by the eyes belongs to this world which is called the visible (*shahadah*) world. Our "heart" is not of this world. It has come to this world as a stranger or passer-by while that visible piece of meat is its vehicle and means. All of the bodily features are its army. It is the king of the whole body. Its function is the realization of God and the perception of His beauty.⁷

Truly, in that is a reminder for him, for whoever had consciousness (Q50:37)

This example makes it obvious that the connoted meaning of consciousness is quite different from the bodily organ heart. That is, the Quranic consciousness is constantly turning between awareness of the presence of God in our lives and forget-

fulness of the spiritual world as it tries to steady our self in understanding the transient nature of the material world.⁸

What is implied by the Quranic use of consciousness is the sublime and distinguishing faculty of the self known in Quranic terms as the inspired soul or the heart. (Q91:8)

Much the same way our consciousness functions, the Arabic root for the word *qalb* means to turn or rotate (i.e., fluctuate or vacillate) because the heart is susceptible to the attractions of the soul-body (ego)—animal soul—as well as the soul-spirit (*ruh*)/intellect (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*). This is also how our consciousness is explained in the traditional texts.

The greater jihad is analogous to a kind of tug-of-war between soul-body (ego) and soul-spirit/intellect to win the attentiveness of our consciousness.... (Our) inspired soul-spirit/intellect or consciousness (*nafs al-mulhamah*), or spiritual heart, turns this way and that, fluctuates, is inspired in our actions to act either immorally or with God-consciousness (*taqwa*), inspired to be conscious of our actions.

Imam al-Raghib in his *Mufradat* says that *qalb* literally means to turn something around on its face, or to flip something over, such as the turning over of a cloth, or, the turning of a person when they turn away from the direction they were going in to another direction. Hence, its derivatives all express some form of action such as this flipping or turning over, so *inqilab* as a verb can be used in the Quran for turning on their heels, or changing direction to retreat and flee from battle, or as a noun to mean the act of overthrowing someone, where a sense of a flip in power or revolution literally is expressed. It is also used in its passive sense to express being turned, rather re-turned, to God after death.

Then, al-Raghib says that this term is applied to the human heart (physically as well), it is said, because of its frequent turning over, or going through what we call 'changes of heart' or consciousness, where emotions, decisions and opinions often flip and switch.

He points out, however, that the heart (*qalb*) is not the same as the intellect/spirit (*'aql, ruh*), but that the heart is often generalized as the intellect the same way that a river does not literally run, but rather its water runs, but the running is generalized to the river because it contains the water.

The *qalb* is a heart or consciousness that can either be sick or sound, dead or alive, due to the beliefs and certainty inside it. Al-Jurjani refers to it as the 'true essence of a human being', while al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi, who dedicated an entire book to the difference between the words for 'heart', said the *qalb* contains all levels of inner being.⁹

In the intellectual tradition, consciousness was considered an aid in the process of coming to know oneself.

The ancient maxim: Know thyself—often in the version attributed to the Prophet or Ali: He who knows himself knows his Lord—was taken seriously. The soul that is fully aware of itself is the soul that has perfected its potentiality as a knowing subject. In other words, through being fully conscious of its own reality, such a soul has become fully conscious of what God created it to be.¹⁰

Our Conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*)

Al-Fu'ad or *nafs al-lawwamah* refers to our conscience. In psychology, consciousness is occasionally confused with our conscience.

It is important to note that while consciousness involves the action of awareness of God, our self and the world, our conscience is related to our knowing and yearning for morality and a sense of right or wrong. Imam Al-Raghib says *fu'ad* basically means *qalb* (i.e. heart), with the distinction that a heart is called a *fu'ad* when there is a sense of kindling or burning, so its derivative is used to refer to roasting meat under flame, after which the meat is called *fa'id*. *Fu'ad* (or its plural *af'ida*) is specifically used to highlight how much the burning heart has an ability to effect things. When a flame burns brightly, it is akin to a heart that is excited with eagerness, and there is a sense of commotion and pulsation. *Fu'ad* is actually deeper than the *qalb* in the sense that it is the place where witnessing takes place and the light of knowing God is kindled.¹¹

Our Reason/Intellect (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*)

Al-Lubb: The *lubb* (pl. *albab*) signifies the pure intellect, free from inner blemishes and suspicion (note this is deeper than simply "the mind" or "brain").

The word itself means the marrow, pith or innermost core of something—a tree, a fruit or the breast of humanity, the heart. It is also said to represent the most discerning type of reason, so that every *lubb* is an intellect, or reason but not every intellect or reasoning reaches the level of a *lubb*.

It is because of this that the Quran constantly uses *ulu'l-albab*, those imbued with intuition, to refer to those discerning believers (critical thinkers, those who have *furqan*) who are in touch with their innermost core that recognizes the signs of God and understand the Truth, free from tumultuous emotions and beyond the hesitating fickleness of the human consciousness. This is truly the heart of hearts.¹²

The philosophers frequently called the soul-spirit/intellect, *'aql bi'l f'il*:

That is, an actual intellect, or a fully actualized intellect. Such an intellect is nothing other than the (soul-spirit/intellect) that has perfected both its theoretical and its practical powers, both its vision and its virtue. Having become an actual intellect, the (soul-spirit/intellect) lives in harmony with God (*lubb* or *nafs al-mutma'innah*), the universe and other human beings.¹³

2. Transforming Our Soul into Our Soul-Spirit/Intellect

As we will see, our soul (*nafs*, feminine noun, *anima*) has various meanings associated with it. It is like God saying:

Ask the people (soul) of the town (self) ... (Q12:82)

meaning 'had the people of a town'. In other words, when the word *nafs* is used

non-reflexively in the Quran, it refers to a general concept called 'soul', that, like a town, has many different characteristics but is one single substance. By the word *nafs* (soul) what is meant is what is within us and that which is created with our body.¹⁴

When we morally heal, we know and act as monotheists through the light of unity (*nur al-tawhid*) and our soul transforms into our spirit or intellect (*ruh*, '*aq*', *lubb*). Transforming our *nafs*, soul (feminine noun, *anima*), into our spirit, *ruh* (masculine noun, *animus*), is a process that takes place within our self (body, soul, spirit, *nafs* used reflexively in the Quran) depending on how we engage with our soul-spirit/intellect or '*aq*' (also known in Quranic terms), as we have seen, as reason and *ruh*, spirit by God's command or *amr*.

The process begins with our animal soul that continuously whispers needs, desires and temptations to our mind. It is in our mind that we manifest the spirit/light of Islam. This is the stage where those who have submitted to the will of God (*muslims*) differ from the rest of humanity who have not submitted to the will of God (*islam*). They also have also been gifted with a mind that receives needs, desires and temptations from their animal soul, but have not, as yet, morally healed.

Then, we engage our consciousness or inspired soul (*nafs al-mulhamah*) that manifests the spirit/light of belief. That is, those who have submitted to the will of God become "believers", conscious of self as well as, in Quranic terminology, being God-conscious (having *taqwa*).

As God-conscious "*muttaqin*," we have habituated our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) so that it follows our consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*), listens to our conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*), or inner critic, resulting in the manifestation of the spirit/light of intuitive experience knowledge (*ma'rifat*), knowledge we gain through actual experience.¹⁵

Finally, our soul-spirit/intellect—known by many different names such as our soul at peace (*nafs al-mutma'innah*) or our intellect or our reason ('*aq*') or the spirit (*ruh*) by God's command (*amr*) or kernel (*lubb*) or rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah*) or rational intellect ('*aq*' *al-natiqah*)—manifests the spirit/light of unity because we have morally healed by transforming our soul (f) into our intellect or spirit (m), giving birth to the final stage of our soul's evolution, that of our moral soul-spirit/intellect.

In the traditional view, our mind is connected to our soul-body and our motivational system (movement, motion, free willpower, sensation, perception and affective/behavioral component of our animal soul or *nafs al-ammarah* and its natural energy) while our consciousness, conscience and reason are energized by our vital energy and operate through our human soul or soul-spirit/intellect (*nafs- ruh/'aq*).

In addition, as we have pointed out before, in the following Quranic sign, God uses *fu'ad* and *qalb* in one sentence making it clear that they are in reference to two separate aspects of self and that *fu'ad* refers to "conscience" and *qalb* refers to "consciousness."

It came to be in the morning that the conscience of the mother of Moses was anxious. Truly, she was about to show him, if We had not invigorated her consciousness. (Q28:10)

Conclusion

To sum up and to use al-Hakim Tirmidhi's example:

The mind, *sadr*, is where one's Islam rests, a general term. Consciousness, *qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*, is the place where certainty and faith (*al-iman*) rests, and it is like the eye, which is a term applied to all of its component parts that see. Our conscience, *fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*, is the place of witnessing and seeing, like the pupil to the eye, and finally, our intellect, *lubb*, '*aql*', *nafs al-mutma'innah*, is the innermost place where the Oneness of God, *tawhid*, rests, the light in the vision of the eye. Those people of true intuition (*ulu'l-albab*) peel away the skin of a metaphorical existence and subsist in the core (*lubb*) of the true existence, which is only through the belief in the Oneness of God.¹⁶

Each aspect will be discussed in detail as part of our human soul.

Endnotes to Part III: Our Cognitive System: Module 10: Our Cognitive System Defined

- 1 Naquib al-Attas. *The Concept of Education in Islam*, p. 22ff.
- 2 See William Chittick. *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.
- 3 See John Renard, *A to Z of Sufism*. Online.
- 4 See John Renard, *A to Z of Sufism*. Online.
- 5 See John Renard, *A to Z of Sufism*. Online.
- 6 See (Q91:1-10) See also William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online; Naquib al-Attas, *The Experience and Meaning of Happiness*, p. 22; William Chittick, *Science of the Soul, Science of the Cosmos*. Online.
- 7 al-Ghazzali, *Knowing Yourself and God*, p. 3.
- 8 William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 107. Our *nafs al-mulhamah* is called consciousness because of the rapidity of its turning over.
- 9 See <http://seekershush.org/ansblog/2009>.
- 10 William Chittick, *Science of the Soul, Science of the Cosmos*. Online.
- 11 See <http://seekershush.org/ans-blog/2009>.
- 12 See <http://seekershush.org/ans-blog/2009>.
- 13 See William Chittick, *Science of the Soul, Science of the Cosmos*. Online.
- 14 The word *nafs* is a generic or inclusive term, some of its substance being better than the rest, and some of it worse, grossly unfair and morally wrong, and more wrong than the other aspects.
- 15 The word most frequently employed for light in Quran is "*nur*" (generally translated as "light"). For darkness, generally "*zulumat*" is used (translated as "darkness/darknesses") which is the plural of "*zulma*". Its root is "z-l-m" which is also that for "*zulm*" i.e. "wrong-doing" and "injustice". The Quran always uses the plural for darkness i.e. "*zulumat*" and singular for light i.e. "*nur*". *The Encyclopaedic Index of the Quran* defines "*zulumat*" i.e. darkness as: opposite of light and the opposite of Guidance.
<http://quranalhakeem.com/light-and-darkness-in-quran/>
- 16 See <http://seekershush.org/ans-blog/2009/11/04/what-is-the-difference-between-the-heart-qalb-kindling-heart-fuaad-and-the-pure-intellect-lubb/>.

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Part III: Our Cognitive System

Module 11: Our Mind

Introduction

Our mind was named *sadr* because it is the first part of cognition or thinking. It connects our motivational and cognitive systems. As our animal soul is the governor of our motivational system that whispers its demands, wants and needs in our mind, it is our mind that contains and protects our cognitive system as the first stage of cognition, just as the *sadr* of the day is its beginning.

1. Our Mind and the Light/Spirit of Islam

Our mind is the seat of the light of Islam which is 'the most firm handhold', that is, submission to the will of God (*islam*).¹

So whoever disbelieves in false deities and believes in God, then, surely, he has held fast to the most firm handhold. It is not breakable. (Q2:256)

Whoever submits his face to God, while he is one who is a doer of good, then, surely, he has held fast to the most firm handhold. (Q31:22)

If we do not train our mind to this process of submitting to God's will (*islam*), tempting desires, inappropriate behavior and distracting thoughts will become a habit over a long period of time.

We will remain egocentric, self-centered—that is, thinking only of what we want without regard for what is best for us or the feelings or desires of others. We will become inflated with our animal soul—as it ignores our sense of reason—to feel or do as we want to do leading to self-pride or exceeding self-regard with an excessive or exaggerated sense of self-importance.²

Both light and darkness increase and decrease in our mind due to influences from our animal soul on it. If the light of our consciousness (faith) and the light of intuitive experience knowledge or the light of unity (*tawhid*) are overtaken by the darkness of our mind under the influence of our animal soul ignoring them, the result is forgetfulness and disobedience. Our mind becomes filled with the passions and wrongdoings of our animal soul. It will

give up hope for the spirit of God. The luminosity of these lights will decrease in our animal soul. It will remain in darkness.

However, if our mind is able to overcome these obstacles through God's grace and assistance, and if our repentance to God is genuine, then the coverings will be removed and the blessings will become apparent to our mind in disciplining our animal soul.

As for the lights of the Quran and the Sunnah, which are the lights of Islam in our mind, they increase through correctness of conduct and sincerity of endeavor. However, their lights decrease when we turn away from them and through our failure to make use of them. Their likeness is as the likeness of the moon, for it increases and decreases.³

Practicing Islam is to turn our mind towards servanthood and persevering in what brings us closer to God, that is, being grateful to God. We can only practice Islam through our animal soul—to declare our faith with our tongue and carry out our actions with our limbs—even though we know that our animal soul is not capable of distinguishing between truth and falsehood, between good and wrongdoing.

When our mind is under the influence of our animal soul, it is not obligated to understand reality. Its only obligation is to practice the Quran and *sunnah* and to surrender to our cognitive powers.

Islam has both an outward and an inward aspect. As for the outward aspect, it is sometimes assumed by the hypocrite, who appears outwardly as one of the people of Islam although inwardly he is ungrateful. God said:

Lo, behold! You are those imbued with love for them, but they love you not. You believed in the Book, all of it. When they met you, they said: We believe. But when they went privately, they bit the tips of their fingers at you in rage. Say: Die in your rage. Truly God is Knowing of what is within the minds. (Q3:119)

The nomads said: We believed. Say to them: You believe not. But say: We submitted to God, for belief enters not yet into your consciousness. But if you obey God and His Messenger, He will not withhold your actions at all. Truly, God is Forgiving, Compassionate. (Q49:14)

Thus God made clear that they did not yet believe, but that they had only become Muslims with their mouths, for they were not conscious of their belief.

In regard to the inward aspect of Islam, it is for our mind to train our animal soul to obedience to God and for it to surrender to God's decrees. God said:

Yea! Whoever submitted his face to God, and he is one who is a doer of good, then, for him his compensation is with his Lord. (Q2:112)

This is the Muslim, truly, whose light of Islam resembles the light of *iman* or faith and the light of altruism or *ihsan*, so that all three act in concert, are interconnected, and resemble one another.⁴

Of humanity is he who says: We believed in God, but, when he was malign for the sake of God, he mistook the persecution by humanity for a punishment by God. If help drew near from your Lord, they would, surely, say: We had been with you. Is not God greater in knowledge of what is in the minds of beings? (Q29:10)

Truly, you are a more severe fright in their minds than God. That is because they are a folk who understand not. (Q59:13)

... will be shown forth what is in the minds ... (Q100:10)

2. Our Mind Contracts and Expands

When whisperings (*waswas*) of desires, wants and needs enter our mind from the affective/emotive aspect of our animal soul, our mind expands and activates our willpower to seek that pleasure. When whisperings of our animal soul in our mind cause us to behave or act in such a way as to avoid something that will cause us harm or pain, our mind contracts our willpower in two ways: either avoiding the harm/pain or removing an impediment or barrier that would prevent us from some pleasure. In other words, the behavioral component of our animal soul either works for itself or it assists our pleasure-seeking component by removing any impediment our pleasure-seeking component may face.

So would you perhaps be one who leaves some of what is revealed to you? Or is your mind that which is constricted by it? (Q11:12)

Certainly, We know that your mind (Muhammad) became constricted, distressed, because of what they say. (Q15:97)

He (Moses) said: My Lord! Truly, I fear that they will deny me and my mind be constricted (Q26:12-26:13)

Our mind has no limit to its contraction and expansion.

Thus, if it contracts to the truth, it expands to falsehood and if it contracts to falsehood, it expands to the truth.⁵

As God asked the Prophet:

Expand We not your mind? (Q94:1)

Or as Moses said:

Expand my mind for me and make my affair easy for me. (Q20:26)

Sometimes our mind contracts from too many demands placed on it by our animal soul including sorrow, depression, distraction, desires or from accidents that happen to us. All of these act as barriers or obstacles to our mind's ability to overcome them:

It is a Book that was caused to descend to you (Muhammad). So let there be no impediment in your mind about it so that you (Muhammad) will warn with it and as a reminder to the ones who believe. (Q7:2)

Even though God has expanded our mind with the light of Islam, sometimes it contracts because it cannot bear hearing false statements:

So is he whose mind God has expanded for submission to God (Islam) in a light (guidance) from His Lord? (Q39:22)

Whomever God wants, He guides him. He expands his mind for The Submission to One God. (Q6:125)

As for the minds of the ungrateful (*kafir*) and the hypocrite (*munafiq*), they have expanded with the darkness of ingratitude, associating partners with God (*shirk*) and doubt (*shakk*) so that no place remains in their minds for the light of Islam. It has contracted to any capacity for the light of the truth within it.⁶

God said:

Whoever's mind is expanded to disbelief (kufr), on them is the anger of God. (Q16:106)

Whomever He wants to cause to go astray, He makes his mind tight, troubling as if he had been climbing up a difficult ascent. (Q6:125)

Say: Should you be rocks or iron or any creation that is more troublesome in your minds to raise up? Then, they will say: Who will cause us to return?

Say: He Who originated you the first time. Then, they will nod their heads at you and say: When will it be? Say: Perhaps it is near. (Q17:50-51)

Thus, when our mind is expanded with the darkness of, for instance, ingratitude, disbelief or doubt, it contracts for it moves away from the light.

Our mind is also the place in which our animal soul exerts its self-appointed authority over our mind, for our animal soul enters into our mind

where it burdens our mind with matters, becomes proud and manifests power on its own.

... but those who reach out to a folk who between you and between them is a solemn promise or when they drew near to you, their minds were reluctant that they fight you or they fight their folk? If God willed, He would have given them authority over you and they would have fought you. So if they withdrew from you and fight not against you and gave a proposal of surrender to you, then, God has not assigned any way for you against them. (Q4:90)

God is He Who has made for you flocks among which you may ride on them and among which you eat of them. You have what profits from them and that with them you reach the satisfaction of a need that is in your minds and you are carried on them and on boats. (Q40:80)

Those who took their abodes as dwellings and had belief before them, love them who emigrated to them and they find not in their minds any need for what the emigrants were given and hold them in greater favor over themselves even though they themselves had been in destitution. Whoever is protected from his own stinginess, then, those, they are the ones who prosper. (Q59:9)

3. Our Mind's Struggle With Our Animal Soul

Our mind is put to the test by our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) and its desires.

The abode of the animal soul is in the stomach and the area of the waist. It becomes excited by the blood and by the power of impurity. The stomach, thus, becomes filled with the darkness of its vapors and the heat of its fire. Our animal soul thereupon enters into our mind with its evil whispering and base desires as a test by God of His servant, so that he seeks help of his Lord in his true destitution and lasting humility and God answers him and averts from him its evil.⁷

We have learned in a previous modules that the affective aspect of our animal soul is unconscious while the behavioral aspect is preconscious, capable of training and being disciplined. When our affective/emotive aspect first enters our mind and expands it, we are at first unaware of its whisperings. When we sincerely seek God's assistance to learn to develop the other aspects of our self that include consciousness or we awaken our conscience and our ability to reason with our self, God answers us, if God wills.

Our animal soul is in active contact with our mind. If we engage our mind in a struggle with our animal soul, we become free of wrongdoing in our actions or behavior by activating our rational free willpower through following

the light or spirit of Islam. We may be able to discipline it by sincerely striving, if accompanied by God's assistance.

Our animal soul may lead our mind to decide to act in ways against our self, in ways harmful to our self by activating our non-rational willpower and avoiding our free willpower, but the light and spirit of Islam is, in principle, luminous. Once our mind has engaged in struggle against our animal soul and has been habituated to our free willpower, this indicates that we have reached the boundary of it. The control of our animal soul over our mind eases with our striving against it and improves our actions to be more in accord with God's will.

Our mind is also the place of malice from the animal soul:

We will draw out what was in their minds of malice. (Q7:43)

We will tear out any malice from their minds. (Q15:47)

He has not, however, guaranteed to protect our mind from evil whispering, that we might recognize the grace of God upon us. God said:

He will heal the minds of a folk, ones who believe. (Q9:14)

Thus, God made clear that the cure is in the mind. He also said:

O humanity! Surely, drew near you from your Lord ... a healing for what is in the minds and a guidance and mercy for ones who believe. (Q10:57)

Our mind is the place where we are tested.

....so that God tests what is in your minds. (Q3:154)

Truly, God is Knowing of what is in the minds. (Q5:7) (Q8:43) (Q31:23) (Q39:7) (Q42:24) (Q57:6) (Q64:4) (Q67:13) (Q11:5)

But they fold up their minds that they conceal themselves from Him. No doubt at the time when they cover themselves with their garments, He knows what they keep secret and what they speak openly. Truly, He is Knowing of what is in their minds. (Q11:5)

Truly, your Lord knows what their minds hide and what they speak openly. (Q27:74) (Q28:69) (Q35:38)

He knows that which is the treachery of the eyes and whatever the minds conceal. (Q40:19)

4. Knowledge Gained Through Our Mind

Our mind is the place of knowledge that is acquired through study, memorization, effort and burdening our self by means of listening and relating, whether it be the Quran or something else.

This includes the knowledge that we hear and learn from a teacher as well as whatever knowledge we have that can be expressed with our tongue. God, through His mercy, protects His servant as a friend and tests us by allowing the whisperings of unhealthy emotions and thoughts to enter into our mind in order that He may teach us a little of the insignificance of our worth and show us our complete need for God.

Our mind is the place for the retention of knowledge that is heard and must be learned and all that which can be expressed with the tongue, for the first cause of attaining to it is study and listening to a teacher.⁸

It is clear portents, signs in the minds of those who were given the knowledge. (Q29:49)

This refers to knowledge whose expression, reading, transmission or explanation is possible. Such knowledge can be characterized by forgetfulness. The possessor of such knowledge may forget it, since it is the mind that carries it and preserves it, and the mind is by nature forgetful. We may forget it even after memorization and expending much effort to acquire it.⁹

According to the Quran, the major impediment or barrier to our mind's remembering is unconsciousness or where our mind goes blank which is when we are not "conscious" of God, that is, we have forgotten Him.

Be not like those who forgot God and He caused them to forget their self. (Q9:67)

If we forget God, we will also forget the divine names and qualities to which our essential qualities are directly connected. If we do not seek self-consciousness by moving forward from our mind to our consciousness and we do not revive it in our self, we will forget God and will be ready to commit any possible sin as well as to derail from the path of servitude to God.¹⁰

With every knowledge that our mind holds, our animal soul increases in pride and arrogance and refuses to accept The Truth. Thus, our mind, as it increases in this kind of knowledge, if it is under the influence of our animal soul, it may increase in hatred towards its brothers/sisters and persist in pride, vanity and insolence.

Truly, those who dispute about the signs of God without any authority having approached them, there is nothing but having pride in their minds. (Q40:56)

The type of knowledge we learn of the Prophets and the divine law does not become permanent in our mind or become firmly established in it because our mind is open to and the place of entry for distractions and desires. Our mind is like a passageway, especially for that knowledge which is heard and which enters it from the outside.

This knowledge increases in value only if God inspires in us the knowledge of its inward aspect, the knowledge of God-consciousness (*taqwa*), which is the truly useful knowledge. Knowledge which develops in our mind inwardly through effort and prayer, knowledge such as wisdom and attestations of grace, is permanently established in our mind when we activate our consciousness with knowledge gained inward after repetition, deep reflection and perseverance. The light of our mind, as well as darkness, increases and decreases, since it is a derivative similar to the light of the moon which waxes and wanes within us.¹¹

5. Our Mind and Our Consciousness Compared

From our mind—when under the influence of our animal soul—emerges tempting desires and distracting thoughts that enter either into our consciousness instantaneously or over a long period of time.

God proves what is in our consciousness:

He proves what is in your consciousness ... (Q3:154)

meaning that God is quite aware of the whisperings of unhealthy emotions and thoughts in our mind from our animal soul:

... so that God tests what is in your mind. (Q3:154)

... God is Knowing of what is in the mind. (Q3:154)

which refers to the purity of the consciousness through the light of faith. God also said:

who whispers evil in the mind of humanity, (Q114:5)

The proof that our mind and the light of Islam and our consciousness and the light of faith are similar in meaning so that consciousness is sometimes signified by the word "mind". God said:

Your Lord knows what their minds (or consciousness) hide and what they speak openly. (28:69)

Say: Whether you conceal what is in your minds (or consciousness) or show it, God knows it and He knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in and on the earth. God is Powerful over everything. (3:29)

O those who believed! Take not to yourselves as close friends other than yourselves. They stop at nothing to ruin you. They wished that misfortune would fall on you. Surely, their hatred showed itself from their mouths and what their minds (or consciousness) conceal is greater. (3:118)
even though they have different names is God's saying regarding the people of the past:

So if you had been in uncertainty about what We caused to descend to you, then, ask those who recited the Book before you. Certainly, The Truth drew near you from your Lord so you have not been among the ones who contest. (Q10:94)

When it is recounted to them, they say: We believed in it. Truly, it is The Truth from our Lord. Truly, even before it we had been ones who submit to God. (Q28:53)

So We brought out whoever had been in it of the ones who believe. But We found in it nothing but a house of ones who submit to God. (Q51:35-51:36)

If the consciousness of the believer is sound, his mind is sound, but the consciousness of the unbeliever and the hypocrite is dead and sick, and in his mind is a great wrong. God said:

In their consciousness is a sickness. Then, God increased them in sickness, and for them is a painful punishment because they had been lying against themselves. (Q2:10)

You have seen those who in their consciousness is a sickness. They compete with one another. They say: We dread that a turn of fortune should light on us. Then, perhaps God brings a victory or a command from Him? Then, they will become —from what they kept secret within themselves—ones who are remorseful. (Q5:52)

When Luqman said to his son as he admonishes him: O my son! Ascribe not partners with God. Truly, association with God is, certainly, a tremendous injustice. (Q31:13)

Truly, those who dispute about the signs of God without any authority having approached them, there is nothing but having pride in their minds. They will never be ones who reach its satisfaction. So seek refuge in God. Truly, He, He is The Hearing, The Seeing. (Q40:56)

Being unwilling to see and inner sight are attributes of consciousness, that is within our minds, and not our mind itself. God said:

Truly, it is not their sight that is in darkness, but their consciousness that is within their minds that are in darkness! (Q22:46)

In these signs/verses, the Quran is referring to the consciousness of the unbelievers, because their mind and consciousness are obstructed and closed, being empty of the light of guidance.

Another difference between our consciousness and our mind is that the light of our mind is finite, whereas the light of our consciousness is infinite and limitless. It is not extinguished even when we die, for if we die in a state of belief, our light remains with us, leaving us neither in the grave nor on the day of resurrection, but remaining with us always. God said:

God confirms those who believed with the saying, one that is firm, in this present life and in the world to come. (Q14:27)

Our mind under the influence of our animal soul exhibits doubt, hypocrisy, and so forth. God, however, has had mercy on His friends and has protected them from its evil. Our consciousness seeks God-consciousness at times and in wrongdoing at other times. God said:

... then, inspired it to its acting immorally and God-consciousness ... (Q91:8)

Our light of consciousness is more firmly anchored and more deeply rooted than the light of our mind.

This is because the mind has the power and the burden of safeguarding Islam and putting into practice its laws, but does not have the burden of safeguarding the consciousness. What confirms the consciousness is the light of the Lord.¹²

6. Our Mind and Our Conscience Compared

Whenever a person benefits, his conscience benefits first, then his consciousness. The conscience is in the middle of consciousness which, in turn, is in the middle of our mind, just as the pearl is within the oyster shell.¹³

Know that reason is possessed only by those who turn away from the influences of the animal soul on our mind:

God has clothed them in the dress of God-consciousness and has averted from them all manner of affliction. He has called them the possessors of reason, and

has favored them with His address. He has admonished them in various ways and praised them in much of the Book.¹⁴

7. Our Mind and Our Reason Compared

It has been said that reason binds the animal soul from pursuing passions, just as the hobble keeps a riding animal from its pasture and grazing land. The word reason is a general term and is interchangeable with these other terms, but it is the only one of that can be used in inflection. One says: I reason, he reasons, you reason, we reason, that is reasonable and so forth.¹⁵

Endnotes to Part III: Our Cognitive System: Module 11: Our Mind

- 1 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 2 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 3 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 4 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 5 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 6 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 7 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 8 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 9 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 10 <http://www.islamquest.net/en/archive/question/fa14340>.
- 11 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 12 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 13 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 14 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa'l qalb wa'l fu'ad wal'l lubb*, translated by Nicholas Heer, *A Sufi Psychological Treatise*. Online.
- 15 See (Q5:100) (Q2:197) (Q6:90) (Q2:269) (Q14:52) and (Q38:29).

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Part III: Our Cognitive System

Module 12: Our Consciousness

Introduction

As we have learned, knowledge by presence or consciousness is the best possible way to know the reality of existence (*wujud*). The Quran uses the words *qalb* and *nafs al-mulhamah* to refer to consciousness because of the rapidity of our consciousness "turning over." It is doing what is beautiful (*ihsan*) without intermediary. When morally healed, this refers to those who serve God as if they see Him, for if they do not see Him, He sees them.

The Quranic derivatives of *Q L B*, *qalb*, in ... psychological terms as consciousness, include *qallaba*: to turn something around and around (Q9:48); *taqallaba*: to go to and fro (Q24:37); *inqalaba*: to turn about (Q3:144); *mutaqallab*: place of turmoil (Q47:19); and *munqalab*: overturning (Q18:36). The word *qalb* when used as a verbal noun, *taqallub*, means fluctuation. *Qalb* is defined as: reversal, overturn, transformation, change and *taqallub*: alteration, transformation, change, fluctuation, variableness, inconstancy. Thus the *qalb* becomes a place of constant change and fluctuation.... The infinite capacity of the *qalb* places it beyond delimitation or limit or boundary by anything whatsoever. It is free and absolved from all limitations and constraints. To the extent a person verifies the nature of things by means of his consciousness, he can understand God and the cosmos. But to the extent that he follows the way of his mind (*sadr*), he will remain in constant constriction and binding (by his sense of reason, *'aql*, when he has not morally healed and attained a more intense existence or unity, *tawhid*).¹

1. Our Consciousness and the Light/Spirit of Belief

Our consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*) (Q91:8) is the state of being present to something external to our self or within our self. It is the ability to experience or to feel wakefulness that controls our mind (*sadr*) which receives "whisperings" from our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*). It is to be conscious of the existence of self and, then, recognize that we think. It is as if to say: I am, therefore I think.

Whereas our mind indicates the light/spirit of Islam, our consciousness indicates the light/spirit of belief (*iman*).

God confirms those who believed with the saying, one that is firm, in this present life and in the world to come. (Q14:27)

As the place of the light/spirit of belief (*iman*):

He prescribed belief in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). (Q58:22)

God endeared belief to you and made it appear pleasing to your consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). (Q49:7)

... while his consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is one that is at peace in belief ... (Q16:106)

Believers (*mu'minun*) are equal with respect to the source or root of belief, but some are better than others with respect to their contemplation and in the fruits and branches of belief which are generated in us by the light or spirit of faith or belief (*iman*).

We try to be patient through our belief. God has opened our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) to understanding the Quran. Our consciousness has become refined and our spirit has been elevated. We subsist through God rather than through our own power with our inner secret exposed, preoccupied with our Lord, having preferred Him above all else.

Our Consciousness Differs from Our Mind

The difference between our mind (*sadr*) and Islam and our consciousness (*qalb*) and belief (*iman*) is that the light of our mind is finite whereas the light of our consciousness is infinite and limitless. It is not extinguished even when we die, for if we die in a state of belief, our light remains with us, leaving us neither in the grave nor on the day of resurrection, but remaining with us always. Believers ask God:

Our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers/sisters who preceded us in belief and make not in our consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) any grudge against those who believed. (Q59:10)

Comparing Our Mind with Our Consciousness

Quranic signs show that Islam and belief are similar in meaning:

Moses said: O my folk! If you had been believing (iman) in God, then, put your trust in Him if you had been ones who submit to God (muslim). (Q10:84)

So We brought out whoever had been in it of the ones who believe (mu'minun). But We found in it nothing but a house of ones who submit to God (muslim). (Q51:35-51:36)

The Quranic Use of Mind for Consciousness

However, sometimes the Quran uses the word "mind" (*sadr*) and is referring to consciousness (*qalb*).

He will heal the minds (sadr) of a folk, ones who believe. He causes to be put away the rage in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). (Q9:14-9:15)

O humanity! Surely, an admonishment drew near you from your Lord and a healing for what is in the minds (sadr) and a guidance and mercy for ones who believe. (Q10:57)

This is particularly in the case of the ungrateful because both their mind (*sadr*) and their consciousness (*qalb*) are sealed and closed, being empty of the light of guidance:

Say: Whether you conceal what is in your minds (sadr) or show it, God knows it. (Q3:29)

Surely, their hatred showed itself from their mouths and what their minds (sadr) conceal is greater. (Q3:118)

Your Lord knows what their minds (sadr) hide and what they speak openly. (Q28:69)

The Quranic Use of My-self, Your-self for Consciousness

Sometimes the word *nafs*, used reflexively, refers to consciousness (*qalb*).

You have known what is in my self and I know not what is in Your Self. (Q5:116)

Expanding Our Consciousness: *al-Khabir* (The Aware)

We take on the color of God to expand our consciousness:

The color of God! Who is fairer at coloring than God? (Q2:138)

as God is ultimately conscious, *al-Khabir*, The Aware, a Name of God that appears forty-five times in the Quran, meaning: "He who knows what has been and what will be; He who well knows the internal qualities of things".²

He is The One Who is Omniscient over His servants. He is The Wise, The Aware (al-Khabir). (Q6:18) (See also (Q6:73), (Q6:103), (Q34:1), (Q42:27), (Q66:3), (Q67:14)

We are His vicegerent on earth, carrier of the innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) that He gifted us with and as such should endeavor to expand our consciousness.

(Noah said): *Truly, their reckoning is but with my Lord if you be aware.* (Q26:113)

(Khidr says:) *How will you (Moses) endure a thing patiently when you have not comprehended any awareness of it?* (Q18:68)

Thus, We, surely, enclosed whatever was near him (Dhu'l Qarnayn) through awareness. (18:91)

Follow what is revealed to you from your Lord. Truly, God is Aware of what you had been doing. (Q33:2)

A Book, the signs in it were set clear. Again, they were explained distinctly from that which proceeds from the Presence of the Wise, Aware. (Q11:1)

2. Our Consciousness is the Center of Our Self

When the Quran speaks of the consciousness, it is speaking of the reality of the human being. Al-Ghazzali says:

We do not mean that piece of flesh which lies in the left side of the chest; that organ is not worthy, for the cattle possess it and so do the dead. It can be seen by the ordinary eyes, and whatever could be seen by the eyes belongs to this world which is called the visible (*shahadah*) world. (Our consciousness) is not of this world. It has come to this world as a stranger or passer-by while that visible piece of meat is its vehicle and means. All of the bodily features are its army. It is the king of the whole body. Its function is the realization of God and the perception of His beauty.³

Truly, in that is a reminder for him, for whoever had consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah).... (Q50:37)

This example makes it obvious that the connoted meaning of consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) is quite different from the bodily organ heart. That is, the Quranic consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) is constantly turning between consciousness and forgetfulness of the spiritual world as it tries to steady our self in understanding the transient nature of the material worlds.⁴

What is implied by the Quranic use of consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) is the sublime and distinguishing faculty of the self known in Quranic terms as the *nafs al-mulhamah* (the inspired soul or heart) (Q91:8)

The Quran swears seven oaths before mentioning the inspired soul (*qalb,*

nafs al-mulhamah), as can be readily understood from the following example from the Quran:

By the sun and its forenoon and by the moon when it related to it and by the daytime when it displayed it and by the nighttime when it overcomes it and by the heaven and what built it and by the earth and what widened it and by the soul and what shaped it and, then, inspired it (Q91:1-8)

The consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) of the Prophet was the first recipient of the Quranic message:

This, truly, is the sending down successively of the Lord of the worlds that the trustworthy spirit brought down on your consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) that you be among the one who warn. (Q26:192-26:194)

Consciousness is the center of all our feelings, emotions, motives, drives, aspirations, remembrance and attention. It is the consciousness which softens us:

Their skins and their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) become gentle with the Remembrance of God. (Q39:23)

and it is our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) that receives the reminder:

Truly, in that is a reminder for him, for whoever had consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) or, having the ability to hear, gave listen. (Q50:37)

Our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) is the abode of belief:

O Messenger! Let them not dishearten you—those who compete with one another in ingratitude among those who said: We believed with their mouths while their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) believes not. (Q5:41)

and our strength to face afflictions:

No affliction lit but with the permission of God. Whoever believes in God, He guides his consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). God is Knowing of everything. (Q64:11)

Mercy is part of our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*):

And We assigned in the consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of those who followed him, tenderness and mercy. (Q57:27)

and brotherly/sisterly love:

He brought their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) together. If you had spent all that is in and on the earth, you would not have brought together their consciousness, except God brought them together. (Q8:63)

God causes us to put away our rage through our consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah):

... and He causes to be put away the rage in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). (Q9:15)

It is, in reality, the way of our consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) for which we shall be accountable, and only the one who brings before his God a sound and sincere consciousness will deserve to be saved:

God will not take you to task for what is unintentional in your sworn oaths. Rather, He will take you to task for what your consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) earned. (Q2:225)

On a Day neither wealth will profit nor children but he who approached God with a sound consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). (Q26:88-26:89)

You must therefore ensure that so long as you are with the Quran, you are conscious of what you are doing.

God sent down the fairer discourse, a Book, one that is consistent in its often repeated parts of the Quran by which shiver the skins of those who dread their Lord. Again, their skins and their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) become gentle with the Remembrance of God. That is the guidance of God. With it He guides whom He wills. Whomever God causes to go astray, there is not for him any one who guides. (Q39:23)

God desired that we fervently seek His help and fear Him so that we might awaken our consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). He has not, however, guaranteed to protect our mind (sadr) from evil whisperings, as noted above, that we might recognize the grace of God upon us. He does, however, protect our consciousness so that we may seek of Him deliverance from the evil whisperings in our mind (sadr) and that we increase in honor and nobility through God, should we awaken our consciousness and increase in humility.

They are those whom God knows what is in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). (Q4:63)

Our cognitive system is naturally disposed to perception.³ We were gifted with consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) with our cognitive system. Our consciousness is highest form of development of nature (*fitrat Allah*). It is the center where knowledge is stored and actions initiate.

Our natural cognitive disposition in the self is served by the neural energy. It has greater needs than that of other animals because of the human abilities to become conscious of self, conscious of the difference between positive and negative dispositions, and to develop conscious free willpower. Consciousness is developed through reminders, triggers or signs that remind our self of its origin and of the nobility it gained when it received the infusion of the divine spirit, signified by human values. They include the knowledge that God is One, that truth, beauty, goodness, and love exist and are expressed in the original creation which we try to imitate in response to a natural disposition to creativity, imitating the original creation.

In the Quranic perspective, this process is to bring about consciousness. That is, we become aware of the reality of our self when reminded by some sign without there being a need for reason. This is one of the methods used by the Quran.

The Quranic perspective is that the self is created with a natural disposition towards following the natural way of life (*din, religion*) of nature (*fitrat*). The self at birth, however, knows nothing.

God brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers—you knew not anything and He gave you hearing and sight and hearts that you may give thanks. (Q16:78)

It only needs to remember, to be reminded to remember. Several times the Quran says to Prophet Muhammad:

So you go on reminding; you are only a Reminder. (Q88:21)

So remember Me and I will remember you. Give thanks to Me, and be not ungrateful! (Q2:152)

Even one of the names of the Quran is "Reminder".

Truly We, We have sent down the Reminder and truly We are ones who guard it. (Q15:9)

This shows there is something in our self that requires no reasoning. A reminder of it is sufficient. The method used is that of the rhetorical question, whereby another sign answers. It is a method which can help us break through blockages in the mind or cognitive dissonance caused by paradoxes and contradictions and this leads to consciousness of self. The Quran, as pointed out, uses this method when it says:

What! Can those who know be equal to those who know not? (Q39:9)

Shall We treat those who believe and do good deeds like those who corrupt the earth? Or shall We treat the pious ones like the wicked ones? (Q38:28)

and sometimes answer the rhetorical question in the same sign:

Then, is he who knows what was caused to descend to you from your Lord to be The Truth like he who is unwilling to see? It is only those imbued with intuition who recollect. (Q13:19)

When Jesus became conscious of their ingratitude, he said: Who are my helpers for God? The disciples said: We will be helpers for God. We believed in God and bear you witness that we are ones who submit to God. (Q3:52)

Then, when they were conscious of Our might, that is when they make haste from it! (Q21:12)

How many a generation caused We to perish before them? Are you conscious of anyone of them or hear you so much as a whisper from them? (Q19:98)

Innate Self-Consciousness

We have been gifted with an innate self-consciousness. It is an awareness of a knowledge of the "presence" of our self, that is: I am and I am conscious of my existence and my inner potential.

Referring to the stages of our creation and our formation in the uterus of our mother as the last stage, the Quran says:

Again, We created a clot from seminal fluids. Then, We created tissue from the clot. Then, We created bones from tissue. Then, We clothed the bones with flesh. Again, We caused another creation to grow. So blessed be God, the Fairer of the ones who are creators! (Q23:14)

Acquired Self-Consciousness

Consciousness of self is to awaken to the fact that God has caused us to see His signs:

We will cause them to see Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is The Truth. Suffices not thy Lord that, truly, He is Witness over all things? (Q41:53)

Consciousness of self means the knowledge of self in its relation to the world as well—the knowledge of the answer to such questions as: Where have I come from? Where am I going to? In this kind of consciousness of

self, we discover that we are part of a whole called the world. We know that we are not independent. That is, we have not come into this world independently of others. We do not live independently. We want to determine our own situation in the entirety of this universe. The Quran calls on us to understand where we came from and to whom we will return.

Those who, when an affliction lit on them, they said: Truly, we belong to God and, truly, we are ones who return to Him. (Q2:156)

O those who believed! Whoever of you goes back on his way of life, God will bring the folk whom He loves and whom love Him, humble-spirited towards the ones who believe, disdainful towards the ones who are ungrateful. They struggle in the way of God and they fear not the reproach of one who is reproached. (Q5:54)

Be not like those who forgot God and He caused them to forget themselves. Those, they are the ones who disobey. (Q59:19)

Everything in the world is created with truth says the Quran and we can cover up the truth momentarily with our illusion and go on feeding our delusions, but ultimately we must face truth, and no other truth is more immanent than the truth about our self and finding that truth.⁵

In regard to purity:

That is purer for your consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) and their(f) consciousness. (Q33:53)

God tests what is in our mind when it receives the whisperings from our *nafs al-ammarah*, but God proves what is in our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*):

... so that God tests what is in your minds (sadr) and He proves what is in your consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). (Q3:154)

The Quran addresses the believers and their *nafs al-mulhamah* or consciousness (*qalb*):

... those who give what they gave consciously ... (Q23:60)

... ones who believe are only those whose consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) took notice ... (Q8:2)

... so that they believe in it and humble their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) to Him. (Q22:54)

Again, their skins and their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) become gentle with the Remembrance of God. (Q39:23)

Is it not time for those who believed that their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) be humbled by the Remembrance of God and to The Truth? (Q57:16)

However, the Quran cautions that such resolve on the part of the believers is not possible without the support of His spirit, but that with it, they become the Party of God:

You will not find any folk who believe in God and the Last Day who make friends with whoever opposed God and His Messenger even if they had been their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kinspeople. Those, He prescribed belief in their consciousness (qalb), and confirmed them with a spirit (ruh) from Himself.... Those are the Party of God. Lo! the Party of God. They are the ones who prosper. (Q58:22)

That is, Our consciousness (*qalb*) cannot enlighten us without the light that emanates from His spirit. It gives us our strength (*quwwat*) and connects us to the only true Source of strength and light.

Proof of Being Conscious of "Self"

At the lowest level, the powers of our mineral, plant and animal soul reach the highest level of our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) separating us from animals. Here, our human soul, incorporating the lower souls, awakens our cognition (*nafs al-mutma'innah*) or reason ('*aql*) or rational intellect (*al-'aql al-natiqah*) as our rational soul is also called '*aql* or intellect, reason or spirit by God's command.

We know this through introspection and a kind of focusing or awakening of attention. Avicenna asks us to perform a thought experiment which anyone can perform. This famous argument proves the existence of consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*). It is known as that of the flying person where he proves consciousness of self.

One of us must suppose that he was just created at a stroke, fully developed and perfectly formed but with his vision shrouded from perceiving all external objects—created floating in the air or in space, not buffeted by any perceptible current of the air that supports him, his limbs separated and kept out of contact with one another, so that they do not feel each other. Then let the subject consider whether he would affirm the existence of his self.

There is no doubt that he would affirm his own existence, although not affirming the reality of any of his limbs or inner organs, his bowels, or heart or brain, or any external thing. Indeed he would affirm the existence of this self of his while not affirming that it had any length, breadth or depth. If it were possible for him in such a state to imagine a hand or any other organ, he would not imagine it to be a part of himself or a conditions of his existence.

If our self and our identity are conceivable without our body, if consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) can be affirmed while not affirming the existence of our body or of any external object, then clearly we are beings who are conscious of self. The unity of consciousness of self provides the answer to the question why our consciousness does not need a body:

But you know that what is affirmed is distinct from what is not affirmed, and what is implied is distinct from what is not implied. Thus your self, whose existence you affirmed, is your distinctive identity, although not identical with your body and your organs, whose existence you did not affirm.

Accordingly, one who directs his thoughts to this consideration has a means of affirming the existence of the self as something distinct from the body, indeed, as something quite other than the body, something which he knows through his own consciousness of self, even if he had overlooked it and needs to be alerted to it.⁶

This experience of a person "suspended in air in total isolation from any physical or sensory experience" shows our ability to deduce the existence of our self intellectually without any assistance from our sensory or imaginative or material faculties. This proves that our self is an independent intelligent substance both before any involvement with the world and afterwards when our physical body and its organs that are used as instruments by the self, perish.

In another of his works, Avicenna describes his "Floating Person" argument this way:

Reflect upon your self and consider, if you were in good health, that is of sound intellect, but differently situated than you are, could you be unaware of your own existence? Could you fail to affirm the reality of your self? I do not think that any rational person could deny such a fact. Even if he were asleep, self-awareness would not be completely absent, even though one would not be consciously representing his own existence continually to himself.

Suppose your being to have been just begun. You are of sound and capable intelligence, but your bodily parts are so disposed that you cannot see them or touch your limbs or organs; they are separated from one another and suspended for the moment in thin air. You would find that you were conscious of nothing but your own reality.

By what means would you be conscious of your self at that moment, or at the moment just before or after it? What would it be in you that had such awareness? Do you find any of your sensory faculties that could play this role? Or would it be your consciousness of self, a power quite other than the senses or anything connected to them? If it is your consciousness of self, and it is a power distinct from the senses, is its awareness mediated or unmediated?

I don't see how, in this particular moment, you would need anything to mediate your awareness. Rather, your consciousness at this moment is unmediated, and it follows that you can be conscious of your self without reliance upon any other power or the intervention of any other power.... Does it occur to you to ask whether the vehicle of your awareness is not the skin that you can see with your own eyes? It is not. Even if you shed your skin and acquired another, you would still be you....

You might say: I affirm my own reality only through awareness of my own ac-

tions. But, if so, you must have some action that you affirm in our illustration, some motion or some other act. But we excluded that, by hypothesis. Even though you speak of an action in the most general terms, this action of yours, if you posit and action categorically, must have a subject categorically. That precisely is your self.⁷

Consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) determines the states of our self when, for example, we discover or develop an idea or come to a decision, and consciousness itself determines the resultant operations, say, in committing the relevant words, images, or symbols to memory, or effectuating an overt action.

The peculiar nature of being conscious of self is that it is self-constituting. It is not the consciousness of the brain, or of the body, or of anything but itself (*nafs al-mulhamah*) and the objects put before itself. It is unique, non-transferable, indivisible, non-combinable. It need not conceive itself as occupying space or taking up place. It can readily put anything before itself as an object, but is present only to itself as a subject.... What cannot be denied is that bodies are not thought. Nothing but consciousness (*nafs al-mulhamah*) itself is conscious of self.... Once constituted, consciousness is not an accident, not a function of any other thing, as a dependent variable would be. It acts, construes, conceives the world and itself, creates the world conceptually and categorially, as vision projects its own miniature and manageable image of the world. Consciousness seizes autonomy for itself, and by acting and projecting makes itself a subject and neither an object nor any sort of mere reflection of or reaction to its surroundings. Consciousness is invariably active, engaged, participatory, reflexive, and self-transparent (containing no referential opacity save what insincerity or bad faith erect).

In short, the human self per se dwells in a realm of being that transcends its own instruments. With even more reason, the Source of the *nafs al-mulhamah*, which is God, is inaccessible to the instruments of the *nafs al-mulhamah* and even to the *nafs al-mulhamah* itself.... Any real knowledge of God is simply the omnipresent God knowing himself through the human *nafs al-mulhamah*.... All knowledge in the intellectual tradition was considered an aid in the process of coming to know one's self. The ancient maxim: Know your self—He who knows his self knows his Lord—was taken seriously. The *nafs al-mulhamah* that is fully aware of itself is the *nafs al-mulhamah* that has perfected its potentiality as a knowing subject. In other words, through being fully conscious of its own reality, our *nafs al-mulhamah* has become fully conscious of what God created it to be.⁸

The "quest for knowledge" that the Prophet made incumbent upon all believers is not, however, a quest for information or a "better life.

Rather, it is a quest to understand the Quran ... and then, on the basis of that understanding, it is a search for self-knowledge, self-awareness, and the recognition of God's signs in the universe and the soul. It is a quest for wisdom and mastery of self, not for control and manipulation of the world and society⁹

Say: Are those who know on the same level as those who know not? Only those imbued with intuition recollect. (Q39:9)

But the ones who are firmly rooted in knowledge among them and the ones who believe, they believe in what was caused to descend to you and what was caused to descend before you. They are the ones who perform the formal prayer. And they are the ones who give the purifying alms. They are the ones who believe in God and the Last Day. It is those to whom We will give a sublime compensation. (Q4:162)

3. Our Consciousness is Also the Center of Our God-consciousness

O those who believed! Be staunch in equity as witnesses to God and let not that you detest a folk drive you into not dealing justly. Be just. That is nearer to God-consciousness (taqwa). Be God-conscious. Truly, God is Aware of what you do. (Q5:8)

In the Quran ... the word *taqwa*, translated as God-consciousness, literally means to protect and guard oneself against danger. In the Tradition, it refers to protecting the soul from what afflicts it. ... *Taqwa* means having the majestic presence of God in one's heart by which to protect oneself against everything false, evil and ugly. In this sense, the conceptual meanings of *'aqf* and *taqwa* converge: They both refer to our conscious effort to protect ourselves against the inhuman and immoral consequences of evildoing, injustice and oppression. Thus the intelligent person is the one who has consciousness (*taqwa*) of his Lord and who reckons with his soul. This principle underlies the rational basis of choosing goodness over evil and virtue over vice. Reason has no problem with accepting God-consciousness (*taqwa*) as a moral and spiritual principle because it guides our moral choices. It is only by combining intelligibility, meaning and will that we fulfill our humanity as rational animals. Moral choices make sense not because simply they are our free choices but because they let us participate in the intelligible order of existence and thus enable us to go beyond ourselves and reach out to a larger reality.¹⁰

Some of the signs of our having attained belief are that we have understood God's purpose and have fled from all temptation to The Opener (*al-Fattah*). The abiding light of our consciousness (*nafs al-mulhamah*) has transcended all that is perishing. Our consciousness has become free from regard for anything other than God. We are aware and conscious of God (*taqwa*). Our consciousness has become accustomed to remaining close to our Protector. Living through our consciousness (*nafs al-mulhamah*) we try to see everything just as God created it.

The proof of its existence of the light of belief (*iman*) is when we manifest *taqwa*. *Taqwa*, God-consciousness, means to protect our self from the consequences of our own actions. It implies self-restraint and guarding our self from all wrongdoing.

Then, truly, the best ration is God-consciousness (taqwa). (Q2:197)

Our consciousness (*qalb*) increases in God-consciousness (*taqwa*) through God's assistance, through good behavior and true humility. It does not, however, increase in God-consciousness except by our using our consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*), conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*) and free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) to dominate over our desires, wants and needs and our weakening of our animal soul's (*nafs al-ammara*'s) influence on our mind through hunger, fasting and hardships.

Taqwa is to be conscious of God, *muttaqin*. It is a high state of consciousness of self which maintains our being conscious of God's presence and His knowledge. It motivates us to perform good deeds and to avoid that which has been forbidden. Characteristics that cultivate *taqwa* include:

The keeping of trusts: *Let who was trusted give back his trust and let him be God-conscious (taqwa).* (Q2:283)

Faithfulness: *Yea! Whoever lived up to his compact and was God-conscious (taqwa).* (Q3:76)

Patience: *If you endure patiently and are God-conscious (taqwa), then, truly, that is of the commands to constancy.* (Q3:186) (see also (Q7:96); (Q10-63-10:64))

God-consciousness (*taqwa*) to the good life on this earth besides reward in the hereafter: *Say: O My servants who believed! Be God-conscious of your Lord. For those who did good in the present, there is benevolence, and the earth of God is One Who is Extensive. Only ones who remain steadfast will have their compensation without reckoning.* (Q39:10)

Material ease in this life even where the believer does not expect it: *He will provide him with where he not anticipate.* (Q65:3)

God-consciousness is full trust in God with respect to what has not been given to us; full satisfaction with what has been granted to us; full patience with respect to what has eluded us.¹¹

Consciousness is the place of *taqwa* as it includes: Tranquility (*sakinah*), fear, humility, softness, trust, submission, refinement and purity.

Then, truly, the best ration is God-consciousness. So be God-conscious, O those imbued with intuition! (Q 2:197)

Neither their flesh nor their blood attains to God, rather, God-consciousness from you attains Him. (Q22:37)

God-consciousness or *taqwa* refers to right conduct, guarding of oneself or guarding against evil:

Those who were truly guided, He increased them in guidance and He gave to them their God-consciousness. (Q 47:17)

God is the ultimate source of the believer's *taqwa* which is not simply the product of individual willpower but requires inspiration from God:

By the soul and what shaped it and, then, inspired it to its acting immorally and with God-consciousness. (Q91:7-91:8)

God caused to descend His tranquility on His Messenger and on the ones who believe and fastened on them the Word of God-consciousness (taqwa). (Q48:26)

He it is Who caused the tranquility to descend into the consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of the ones who believe. (Q48:4)

He knew what was in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) and He caused the tranquility to descend on them. (Q48:18)

Yea, but so my consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) be at rest. (Q2:260)

We want that we eat of it so that our consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) be at rest. (Q5:113)

Those are those who are ones God put to test their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) for God-consciousness (taqwa). (Q49:3)

Truly, God receives only from the ones who are God-conscious (taqwa). (Q5:27)

God talks about how He has perfected our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) with God-consciousness (*taqwa*) and has taught it the wrong (*fujur*) and right (*taqwa*). Therefore, the awareness of negative and positive traits is inherent in the soul, allowing it to be tested fairly in the life of this world and tried, held accountable on the day of judgment for responsibilities to God and all humans.

O humanity! Truly, We created you from a male and a female and made you into peoples and types that you recognize one another. Truly, the most honored of you with God is the most God-conscious. Truly, God is Knowing, Aware. (Q49:13)

Our Consciousness Seeks God-Consciousness Through Intuition

For you in reciprocation there is the saving of life, O those imbued with intuition, so that perhaps you will be God-conscious. (Q2:179)

So be God-conscious, O those imbued with intuition! (Q2:197)

God prepared for them a severe punishment. So be God-conscious, O those imbued with intuition, those who believed! Surely, God caused to descend to you a Remembrance ... (Q65:10)

Say: Not on the same level are the bad and what is good even if the prevalence of the bad impressed you. So be God-conscious, O those imbued with intuition, so that perhaps you will prosper. (Q5:100)

4. Our Consciousness is the Center of the Consciousness of Humanity

Signs point to the fact that the Quran recommends a sublime, spiritual atmosphere for humanity, and deems it necessary for every individual to strive to keep it pure.

Recount to them the tiding of him to whom We gave Our signs. (7:175)

There are the parables that We propound for humanity so that perhaps they will reflect. (59:21)

Truly, in that are certainly signs for a folk who reflect. (30:21)

In addition, since an unsound social atmosphere renders fruitless the efforts of most individuals to keep pure and wholesome, the Quran recommends that we should employ all our endeavor in the direction of purification of the social environment. The Quran unequivocally propounds the view that the continued existence of all those sublime values, beliefs and ideas, and continued social receptivity to all its moral advice and counsels, depends upon individual and collective struggle to eradicate all types of meanness, sensuality, and lewdness. That is why the Quran gives ample importance to the idea of exaltation, edification, and purity of the consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) of society. In one of its signs, it says:

Cooperate with one another in virtuous conduct and God-consciousness and cooperate not with one another in sin and deep seated dislike. (Q5:2)

We are, firstly, enjoined to pursue God-consciousness and are warned against wrongdoing; secondly, we are asked to perform righteous deeds collectively, not individually.

... ones who believe are only those whose consciousness (qalb) took notice.... (Q8:2)

5. Characteristics of Our Consciousness

The Quran regards our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*), also, as an instrument of understanding. In fact, the greater part of the Quranic message is addressed to human consciousness—a message which is audible to the ears of our consciousness alone, and is inscrutable to other receptive faculties. Accordingly, it attaches great importance to the care, protection, and development of this instrument. In the Quran, we recurrently come across such notions as purification of our consciousness and enlightenment of it:

You will recognize on their faces the radiancy of bliss. (Q83:24)

About the salvation and enlightening of consciousness, the Quran says:

As for those who struggled for Us, We will truly guide them to Our ways. (Q29:69)

Contrarily, the Quran recurrently reminds that indecencies infect and darken our consciousness and deprive it of sublime inclinations and virtuous tendencies. At one place, speaking on behalf of the believers, it says:

Our Lord! Cause our consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) not to swerve after You had guided us. (Q3:8)

Truly, in that is a reminder for him, for whoever had consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) or, having the ability to hear, gave listen. He is a witness. (Q50:37)

Stating Disbelief Through Coercion is Forgiven

Judgment is made according to what is in consciousness and it is forgiven if there has been coercion:

Whoever disbelieved in God after his belief—other than whoever was compelled to do it against his will while his consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is one that is at peace in belief—but whoever's mind (sadr) is expanded to disbelief, on them is the anger of God ... (Q16:106)

Only We Can Open Our Consciousness to Satan

Truly, as for My servants there is no authority for you over them, but ones who are in error followed you. (Q15:42)

This means that Satan cannot have access to our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) unless we allow it. Satan cannot force his way through. Our consciousness is protected by our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*), that is, by God's will; but if a person chooses to open his consciousness to Satan's temptations, it will be his willpower dominated by his animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) that leads him to wrongdoing.

No indeed! Nay! Their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) will be overcome with rust from what they had been earning. (83:14)

By contrast, those whose consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) and conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) have been illuminated with the light of faith find peace and repose in the remembrance of God. This 'finding' is not something sentimental or imaginative. It touches the core of our existence and links us to God on the one hand and to the reality of things on the other. It guides our thinking and acting in the world and saturates our lives with meaning.¹²

Thus the Quran says:

... those who believed and their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is at rest in the remembrance of God, no doubt in the remembrance of God consciousness is at rest. (Q13:28)

He it is Who caused the tranquility to descend into the consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of the ones who believe that they add belief to their belief. To God belongs the armies of the heavens and the earth. God had been Knowing, Wise. (Q 48:4).

God Comes Between Us and Consciousness

If our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) is sound and pure, everything in life will follow. The Quran explains in another place how we can start to work on our consciousness:

This is what is promised you, for every penitent and guardian who dreaded The Merciful in the unseen and drew near with the consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of one who turns in repentance. (Q50:33)

God brings forth whatever is hidden in our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) so that each of us would have our own intentions materialized. Each would bear responsibility for our actions insofar as it is based on free

choice. A decisive sign settles the question once and for all:

O those who believed! Respond to God and to the Messenger when He called you to what gives you life. Know, truly, that God comes between a man and his consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) and that to Him you will assemble. (Q8:24)

This means that God leaves our consciousness free so that each of us will have a free inner self. God only exercises His power between us and our consciousness. In other words, God sometimes prevents us from wrongdoing even though our *nafs al-ammarah* desires it. God never intervenes at the level of thought or feeling, but He may intervene at a later stage and then only at the level of action.¹³

Other than with our acts of worship where making our intention known is obligatory, when we act upon our intention, we see proof of the presence of God in our life trying to teach us God-consciousness (*taqwa*).

Proof of the Changing the Presence of God

God continues to be present to us throughout our lives. If we develop a "sickness" in our consciousness or behavior and our sickness increases; or if we become conscious of having gone astray and we recognize that we are going even farther astray; or we become conscious of being a person who doubts the presence of God in our lives; or are excessive in our choices and we find that we are going astray, this is God's presence—which we may or may not be conscious of—causing this awareness and giving us the opportunity to change.

The fact that the sickness in our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) increases; the fact that we are going even further astray; the fact that our doubts are increasing; the fact that we are becoming more excessive in our behavior are all signs of the ongoing presence of God in our life. In these cases, God is telling us to become conscious of our actions and thoughts in order to restore us to the balance of our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*).

On the other hand, if we become conscious of the fact that we are truly guided, that God is present in our life and is giving us further consciousness of Him.

In their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is a sickness. Then, God increased them in sickness, and for them is a painful punishment because they had been lying against themselves. (Q2:10)

God causes him to go astray, one who is excessive, one who is a doubter. (Q40:34)

Those who were truly guided, He increased them in guidance and He gave to them their God-consciousness. (Q47:17)

The darkness of sin and injustice has engulfed their consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*):

So when they swerved, God caused their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) to swerve. God guides not the folk, the ones who disobey. (Q61:5)

Consciousness and Light

But the light and darkness of that special world is not similar to the light and darkness of this world. Rather the belief in God, day of judgment, prophethood, and the Quran is the light for our world.

So those who believed in him (Muhammad) and supported him and helped him and followed the light that was caused to descend to him, those, they are the ones who prosper. (Q7:157)

Surely, from God drew near you a light and a clear Book. (Q5:15)

So is he whose mind (sadr) God has expanded for submission to God, in a light from His Lord? So woe to their hearts, ones that harden against the Remembrance of God. Those are clearly going astray. (Q39: 22)

God has informed us that Islam, Quran, faith, and divine obligations are all light and following them enlightens our consciousness. The Prophets were sent by God with the mission of leading human beings out of darkness of impiety towards the light and belief.

This is a Book We caused to descend to you so that you have brought humanity out from the shadows into the light with the permission of their Lord to the path of The Almighty, The Worthy of Praise. (Q14:1)

The believers, by means of the light of belief, self-purification, good moral conduct, remembrance, of God and righteous deeds enlightens their heart and souls. They bear witness to the sublime realities through their esoteric eyes and ears. They ascend toward nearness to God through the various stages of perfection.

Consciousness and Affection

Cleave firmly to the rope of God altogether and be not split up. Remember the divine blessing of God on you when you had been enemies. Then,

He brought your consciousness (qalb) of each other together. You became brothers/sisters by His divine blessing. You had been on the brink of an abyss of the fire and He saved you from it. Thus, God makes manifest to you His signs so that perhaps you will be truly guided. (Q3:103)

Consciousness to Be Reconciled

Charities are only for the poor and the needy and the ones who work to collect it and the ones whose consciousness (qalb) is brought together and to free the bondsperson and the ones who are in debt and in the way of God and for the traveler of the way. This is a duty to God. And God is Knowing, Wise. (Q9:60)

A healthy, balanced self is lit with the light of faith, self-purification, good moral conduct, remembrance of God, good deeds:

Truly, in that is a reminder for him, for whoever had consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) or, having the ability to hear, gave listen. He is a witness. (Q50:37)

Therefore, the above verses make it explicit that our health is related to our consciousness and our eternal salvation depends upon our return to God-Almighty with a pure and humble heart.

Consciously Thinking Alike

Those who know not said: Why does God not speak to us or a sign approach us? Thus, said those who were before them like their saying. Their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) resembled one another. Surely, We made manifest the signs for a folk who are certain. (Q2:118)

Consciously Believing

Those, He prescribed belief in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah), and confirmed them with a spirit from Himself. (Q58:22)

Prophet Abraham asks God for a sound consciousness:

Cover me not with shame on a Day they will be raised up, on a Day neither wealth will profit nor children but he who approached God with a sound consciousness (qalb). (Q26:87-26:89).

God revealed this powerful supplication about the Day of Resurrection, for the judgment on the eternal fate of each of us is decided by God on that

day, rendering a sound consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) necessary for entering Paradise.¹⁴

Consciously Bearing Witness

When they heard what was caused to descend to the Messenger, you have seen their eyes overflow with tears because they recognized The Truth. They say: Our Lord! We believed so write us down with the ones who bear witness. (Q5:83)

They said: We want that we eat of it so that our consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) be at rest and we know that you, surely, was sincere to us and that we be the ones who bear witness to that. (Q5:113)

6. Our Consciousness Fluctuates Between Soundness and Sickness

Soundness of consciousness refers to having God-consciousness whereas sickness refers to our forgetfulness of God.

Our living depends upon our soul and consciousness because, they are the ones who manage our body. All the parts of the body obey their command and all deeds and action initiate from our consciousness. Therefore, the salvation and cruelty of a person depends upon the condition of his consciousness. It has been inferred from the Quran and narrations that like the human bodies which are healthy and sick at different times, the condition of his consciousness may also follow the same cycle (i.e. sometimes it is healthy while at other times it is sick).¹⁵

Understanding vs. Not Understanding

Journey they not through the earth? Have they not consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) with which to be reasonable or ears with which to hear? Truly, it is not their sight that is in darkness, but their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) that is within their mind (sadr) that is in darkness! (Q22:46)

They have consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) with which they understand not. (Q7:179)

Guidance vs. Dissension

No affliction lit but with the permission of God. Whoever believes in God, He guides his consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). (Q64:11)

Truly, in that is a reminder for him, for whoever had a consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) or, having the ability to hear, gave listen. He is a witness. (Q50: 37)

Certainty vs. Rejection

Those who believed and their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) are at rest in the remembrance of God, no doubt in the remembrance of God, consciousness is at rest. (Q13:28)

He it is Who caused the tranquility to descend into the consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of the ones who believe that they add belief to their belief. (Q48:4)

Obey not him whose consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) We made neglectful of Our Remembrance and who followed his own desires and whose affair had been excess. (Q18:28)

Mercy vs. Anxiety and Doubt

We assigned tenderness and mercy in the consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of those who followed him. (Q57:27)

He brought their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) together. (Q8:62-8:63)

It is only those who ask permission of you who believe not in God and the Last Day and whose consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) was in doubt, so they go this way and that in their doubts. (Q9:45)

7. Fluctuation of Our Consciousness Causes Its Sickness

A Sick Consciousness

In their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is a sickness. Then, God increased them in sickness, and for them is a painful punishment because they had been lying against themselves. (Q2:10)

Our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) lies the root of all internal sicknesses:

You have seen those who in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mul-

hamah) is a sickness. They compete with one another. They say: We dread that a turn of fortune should light on us. Then, perhaps God brings a victory or a command from Him? Then, they will become—from what they kept secret within themselves—ones who are remorseful. (Q5:52)

Conscious Skepticism

The structure they built will cease not the skepticism in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) until their consciousness is cut asunder. (Q9:110)

Conscious Deviation

Our Lord! Cause our consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) not to swerve after You had guided us. (Q3:8)

Certainly, God turned towards the Prophet and the ones who emigrate and the helpers who followed him in the hour of adversity after the consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of a group of people were about to swerve among them. Again, He turned towards them. (Q9:117)

Conscious Refusal

How? And if they get the better of you, they regard not ties of relationship with you nor a pact? They please you with their mouths, but their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) refuses compliance and many of them are ones who disobey. (Q9:8)

Conscious Rejection

The nomads said: We believed. Say to them: You believe not. But say: We submitted to God, for belief enters not yet into your consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). But if you obey God and His Messenger, He will not withhold your actions at all. Truly, God is Forgiving, Compassionate. (Q49:14)

8. A Sick Consciousness Will Not Return At Peace

On a day neither wealth will profit nor children but he who approached God with a pure consciousness. (Q26:88-26:89)

But as for those who, in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is a sickness, it increased disgrace to their disgrace and they died while they are the ones who are ungrateful. (Q9:125)

The Consciousness of a Hypocrite

He made the consequence hypocrisy in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) until a Day they will meet Him because they broke with God what they promised Him, because they had been lying against Him. (Q9:77)

They (the hypocrites) will swear to you by God when you turned about to them so that you renounce them. So renounce them. Truly, they are a disgrace. (Q9:95)

When the ones who are hypocrites say, as well as those who in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is a sickness: What God and His Messenger promised is nothing but delusion. (Q33:12)

The Consciousness of a Kafir

As for Thamud, We guided them, but they embraced blindness of consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) instead of guidance. Then, a thunderbolt took them with a humiliating punishment because of what they had been earning. (Q41:17)

If We made this a non-Arabic Recitation, they would have said: Why were His signs not explained distinctly: A non-Arab tongue and an Arab! ... As for those who believed not, there is a heaviness in their ears and blindness in their consciousness (qalb). Those are given notice from a far place. (Q41:44)

Consciousness in Darkness

Being unwilling to see and seeing are attributes of our consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) and not of our mind (sadr).

Journey they not through the earth? Have they not consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) with which to be reasonable or ears with which to hear? Truly, it is not their sight that is in darkness, but their consciousness (qalb) [which is] within their minds (sadr) that is in darkness! (Q22:46)

Assign not another god with God for, then, you will be put as one who is condemned, one who is damned. (Q17:22)

Consciousness Knows Not

But for those who believe not in the world to come, their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) knows not and they are ones who grow arrogant. (Q16:22)

Consciously Ungrateful

They were steeped with love for the calf in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) because of their ingratitude. (Q2:93)

Consciousness Cast With Alarm

We will cast into the consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of those who were ungrateful, alarm, because they ascribed partners with God. (Q3:151)

Those who compete with one another in ingratitude among those who said: 'We believed' with their mouths while they do not consciously (with their qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) believe. (Q5:41)

Consciousness Filled with Disgust and Horror

When God alone was remembered, the consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of those who believe not in the world to come shuddered. (Q39:45)

Consciousness Filled With Deep Regret

O those who believed! Be not like those who were ungrateful and said about their brothers when they traveled through the earth or had been ones who are combatants: If they had been with us, neither would they have died, nor would they have been slain, so that God makes this a cause of regret in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). God gives life and causes to die. God is Seeing of what you do. (Q3:156)

Consciously Lying

They say with their mouths what is not in their consciousness (qalb). (Q3:167)

Consciously Keeping Secrets

They are those whom God knows what is in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). So turn aside from them and admonish them and say to them concerning themselves penetrating sayings. (Q4:63)

The consciousness of the believer is sound and his mind is sound, but the consciousness of the ungrateful and the hypocrite is dead and sick:

9. Obstacles to Consciousness

Hardening of Consciousness

The root of all sin is the hardening of consciousness of God because, should it harden, our self is no longer concerned if we do harm.

If, however, consciousness is illumined with the light of God and the light of belief, God assumes its care and fills it with love and fear. He closes it with the lock of His power and places the key of our willpower (*ikhtiyar*) in the treasury of His unseen world, of which no one becomes cognizant except during the agony of death, for at that time is revealed to one what is in His unseen world.

On the other hand, if our consciousness becomes filled with the darkness of ingratitude, doubt and hypocrisy, God appoints for its owner a satan who assumes his care and abandons his consciousness, for God knows his final state and what his end will be. This, however, is not apparent to anyone until he is on his/her death bed for it is the secret of God of which no one else is cognizant. How many an ungrateful far from God is granted belief and dies in bliss and how many a believer, close to God, is abandoned by his Lord and dies in misery?¹⁶

Again, after that, your consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) became hard, so that they were as rocks or harder in hardness. (Q2:74)

Then, for their breaking their solemn promise, We cursed them and We made their consciousness (hearts) ones that harden. (5:13)

Rather, their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) became hard. Satan made appear pleasing to them what they had been doing. (Q6:43)

So is he whose mind (sadr) God has expanded for submission to God, in a light from His Lord? So woe to their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah), ones that harden against the Remembrance of God. Those are clearly going astray. (Q39:22)

Is it not time for those who believed that their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) be humbled by the Remembrance of God and to The Truth that came down to them and that they not be like those who were given the Book before? Then, the space of time was long for them so their consciousness became hard. Many of them were ones who disobey. (Q57:16)

For He makes what Satan casts a test for those who in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is a sickness and their consciousness,, ones that harden. Truly, the ones who are unjust are in a wide breach. (Q22:53)

Consciousness Veiled

Another characteristic of the *kafir* consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mul-*

hamah) is that it is sheathed, veiled, that there is a veil or partition curtain between it and revelation.

[This is] a Book in which its signs were explained distinctly, an Arabic Recitation for a folk who know, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner, but most of them turned aside so they hear not. They said: Our consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is sheathed from that to which you have called us and in our ears is a heaviness and between us and between you is a partition. (Q41:3-41:5)

Consciousness Sealed

A seal was set on their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) so they understand not. (Q9:87)

Those are those who God set a seal upon their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) and upon their ability to hear and their sight. Those, they are the ones who are heedless. (Q16:108)

These are the towns. Their tidings We relate to you. Certainly, their Messengers drew near them with the clear portents. But they had not been believing in what they denied before. Thus, God set a seal on the consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of the ones who are ungrateful. (Q7:101)

So a seal was set on their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) so they understand not.... (Q63:3)

God set a seal on the consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of the ones who are ungrateful. (Q7:101)

Nay! God set a seal on their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) for their ingratitude—so they believe not but a few— (Q4:155)

Meditate they not, then, on the Quran or are there locks on their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah)? (Q47:24)

Guides not those who inherit the earth after its previous people that if We will, We would light on them for their impieties, and We set a seal on their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) so they hear not? (Q7:100)

God sealed over their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) and over their inner hearing and a blindfold over their inner sight. There is a tremendous punishment for them. (Q2:7)

Thus, God sets a seal on every consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) of one who increases in pride, haughtiness. (Q40:35)

The above signs reveal an important reality: Belief is something related to the sensitivity of our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*). If we do not have a hardened or sealed consciousness, we already have a tendency to know God and obey Him. When the message of the Quran is communicated to us, consciousness comprehends it and we see the truth. We immediately believe.

Our Lord! Truly, we heard one who calls out, cries out for belief: Believe in your Lord! So we believed. (Q3:193)

However, one who is ungrateful is of a different nature. His consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) is dead and sealed and he opposes believers and even feels enmity towards them.

Truly those who are ungrateful, it is the same to them whether you have warned them or you have not warned them. They believe not. God sealed over their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) and over their inner hearing and a blindfold over their inner sight. And there is a tremendous punishment for them. (Q2:6-7)

Consciousness Sheathed

We laid sheathes on their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) so that they not understand it and in their ears is a heaviness. (Q6:25)

Consciousness Rusted

Describing the qualities of the ungrateful, the Quran says:

No indeed! Nay! Their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) will be overcome with rust from what they had been earning. (Q83:14)

Unwilling to See, Unwilling to Speak

Certainly, We established them firmly in what We established you firmly not and We made for them the ability to hear and sight and minds. Yet having the ability to hear availed them not, nor their sight, nor their minds (sadr) at all since they had been negating the signs of God. And surrounded were they by what they had been ridiculing. (Q46:26)

Unwilling to Hear

Only God can cause someone who is unwilling to hear, to hear:

Among them are some who listen to you. So have you caused someone unwilling to hear, to hear if they had not been reasonable? (Q10:42)

Gone Astray

Or assume you that most of them hear or are reasonable? They are not but as flocks. Nay! They are ones who go astray from a way. (Q25:44)

In their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is a sickness. Then, God increased them in sickness, and for them is a painful punishment because they had been lying against themselves. (Q2:10)

You have seen those who in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is a sickness. (Q5:52)

Ascribe not partners with God. Truly, association with God is, certainly, a tremendous injustice. (Q31:13)

We assigned none but angels to be wardens of the fire and We made the amount of them not but as a test for those who were ungrateful. So those who were given the book are reassured and those who believed, add to their belief. Those who were given the book will not doubt and the ones who believe. Say to those who in their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is a sickness and the ones who are ungrateful: What had God wanted by this example? Thus, God causes to go astray whom He wills, and He guides whom He wills. None knows the armies of your Lord but He. And it is not other than a reminder for the mortals. (Q74:31)

Certainly, We made numerous for hell many of the jinn and humankind. They have consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) with which they understand not. They have eyes with which they perceive not. They have ears with which they hear not. Those are like flocks. Nay! They are ones who go astray. Those, they are the ones who are heedless. (Q7:179)

After identifying these symptoms, namely: infidelity, dissension, unacceptance of truth, arrogance, revenge, anger, criticizing, slander, treason, self-conceit, fear, malevolence, defamation, ill-speaking, back-biting, harshness, oppression, misery, avarice, fault-finding, lying, ambitiousness, hypocrisy, deceit, suspicion, cruelty, self-weakness and many other indecent characteristics, the Quran has introduced them as the sickness of our consciousness.

Our consciousness which remained completely ignorant of God's existence without witnessing His signs by spending a life of disbelief, deviation, and sins in reality is blind and dark, which will be raised on the day of judgment with similar condition:¹⁷

Whoever turned aside from My Remembrance, then, truly, for him is a livelihood of narrowness. And We will assemble him on the day of resurrection unseeing. He would say: My Lord! Why have you assembled me with the unseeing when, surely, I had been seeing? He would say: It is thus: Our signs approached you, but you had forgotten them and, thus, this day you will be forgotten. (Q20:124-20:126)

10. Our Cognition and Our Consciousness Are Connected

It is He who caused the Book to descend to you. In it are signs, ones that are definitive. They are the essence of the Book and others, ones that are unspecific. Then, those whose consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is swerving, they follow what was unspecific in it, looking for dissent and looking for an interpretation, but none knows its interpretation but God. And the ones who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: We believed in it as all is from our Lord. None recollects, but those imbued with intuition. (Q3:7)

For you in reciprocation there is the saving of life, O those imbued with intuition, so that perhaps you will be God-conscious (an aspect of our nafs al-mulhamah or consciousness (qalb)). (Q2:179)

Say: Not on the same level are the bad and what is good even if the prevalence of the bad impressed you. So be God-conscious, O those imbued with intuition, so that perhaps you will prosper. (Q5:100)

Our Consciousness at Peace in Our Cognition

Those who believed and their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) is at rest in the remembrance of God, no doubt in the remembrance of God their consciousness is at rest. (Q13:28)

The disciples of Jesus said: We want that we eat of it so that our consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) be at rest and we know that you (Jesus), surely, were sincere to us and that we be the ones who bear witness to that. (Q5:113)

Those who were given the knowledge know that it is The Truth from your Lord, so that they believe in it and humble their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) to Him. (Q22:54)

God made it but as good tidings to you so that with it your consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) will be at rest. (Q3:126)

11. Knowledge Gained Through Our Consciousness

The servant of God is rewarded for the performance of religious obligations if his intention is pure through the light of belief.

While our mind (*sadr*) is the place into which expressible knowledge enters, consciousness is the place of that knowledge which is beyond expressible knowledge and which is known as the knowledge of wisdom and symbolic allusion. Expressible knowledge is the evidence of God to His creatures. God says to them: What have you accomplished with what you have learned?

The knowledge of symbolic allusion, however, is the path of the servant to God by means of God's guidance of him, for God opens his consciousness to the contemplation of His mystery and to the vision of what is behind His veils. It is as if he were seeing all that with his own eyes, so that even if all were revealed to him, that is, even if the screen were removed for him, he would hardly be better off.¹⁸

We removed your screen from you so that your sight this Day will be sharp. (Q50:22)

The Pen is that which God created to enable our consciousness to be inscribed with knowledge.

He Who taught by the Pen. He taught the human being what he knows not. (Q96:4-96:5)

Our consciousness, then, is the seat of the knowledge of an indirect reference or allusion (*isharah*). Expressible knowledge is that knowledge which can be expressed with the tongue, whereas knowledge of allusion means that one alludes with one's consciousness to God's lordship, His unity, greatness, majesty, power, and all His attributes, as well as the realities of His works and act.¹⁹

The place of the light of belief and of the light of the Quran is the same, and it is our consciousness, for both of these lights are similar:

Thus, We revealed to you the spirit of Our command. You had not been informed what the Book is nor what is belief, but We made it a light by which We guide whomever We will of Our servants. (Q42:52)

Thus God combined the two lights "the Book" and "belief" by using the pronoun "it" as a figure of speech that consists of the use of the name of one object or concept for that of another to which it is related for "one". The meaning of allusion is that from the time the servant alluded to the Lordship of his Lord, he has not disbelieved in Him, nor has he given thanks to anyone else nor called upon anyone but Him.

Know then that the light of consciousness, when considered as a whole, cannot be divided or partitioned for it is a fundamental entity all of which comes if it comes

and all of which goes if it goes. The darkness of ingratitude is similar, for it is the root of every misfortune until it goes. Sometimes, however, the authority of the light of consciousness weakens or wears out or is divided.

The light of consciousness is fundamentally whole. Its likeness is as the likeness of the sun, which is also whole. However, if there is any defect in the atmosphere, such as clouds, fog, or extreme heat or cold, these things veil the sun's light and the power of its rays decreases and the strength of its heat diminishes. If these defects are removed, however, the power of its light breaks through, its rays extend far and its strength intensifies. The sun is never deficient in itself, but its benefits are blocked because of these defects which have been described.²⁰

12. The Quran Heals Our Mind and Our Consciousness

O humanity! Surely, an admonishment drew near you from your Lord and a healing for what is in the minds (sadr) and a guidance and mercy for ones who believe. (Q10:57)

We send down in the Quran what is a healing and a mercy for the ones who believe. And it increases not the ones who are unjust, but in a loss. (Q17:82)

Say: It is a guidance for those who believe and a healing. (Q41:44)

Endnotes to Part III: Our Cognitive System: Module 12: Our Consciousness

1 William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 107.

2 see Lane Poole, *Arabic-English Lexicon*. Online.

3 See <http://www.techofheart.co/2014/06/12-ways-to-expand-your-consciousness.html>.

4 See <http://www.techofheart.co/2014/06/12-ways-to-expand-your-consciousness.html>.

5 See <http://www.techofheart.co/2014/06/12-ways-to-expand-your-consciousness.html>.

6 Ibn Sina (2006). *Kitab al-Shifa*, "Psychology", li. Lenn E. Goodman, *Avicenna*, (LG) p. 155. Dr Goodman uses "self" in this quote referring to the rational soul. This is an argument for the existence of the means of consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*) that makes its case by awakening our self and calling attention squarely to the point, for one who has the capacity to mark the truth itself without needing elaborate instruction, rattling of his cage or protection from captious notions. Once we know what the word "consciousness (*qalb*)" means, is to tell us what sort of thing can provide the functions assigned to it, here specifically, that of consciousness (*qalb*). Since consciousness (*qalb*) does not depend on a body, the subject of consciousness (*qalb*), our human rational intellect, does not depend for its existence on the existence of a body." This experiment was proposed and undertaken in the 12th century by the polymath Ibn Ali Sina known in the West as Avicenna. Goodman, *Avicenna* p. 156.

7 Avicenna describes the experiment a bit differently in another of his texts. (2006). *Kitab I-isharat wal tanbihat* III 1, 2:319-24. Lenn E. Goodman, (LG), pp. 157-158.

8 Lenn Goodman, *Avicenna*, p. 162.

9 See William Chittick, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*.

10 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>

11 See al-Qushayri, *Risala*.

12 See Kalin. Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.

13 See Kalin. Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.

14 See <http://www.islamicity.org/6557/look-for-your-heart-in-three-places/>.

15 See <https://www.al-islam.org/self-building-ayatullah-ibrahim-amini/heart-quran>.

16 Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 11 ff.

17 See Harun Yahya. www.harunyahya.com/en/Books/3931/consciousness-in-the-cell.

18 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 11 ff.

19 al-Ghazzali, *Ihya ulum al-din*, volume 3, p. 14.

20 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayan al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al-fu'ad wa-al-lubb*, p. 11.

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Part III: Our Cognitive System

Module 13: Our Conscience and Intuitive Experience Knowledge

Introduction

We begin the study of our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*):

I swear an oath by the reproachful soul (nafs al-lawwamah). (Q75:2)

with a comparison of it and our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*).

Whereas our consciousness has knowledge of reality, our conscience perceives reality. In other words, our conscience benefits from perception, whereas our consciousness receives knowledge. However, as long as our conscience does not perceive, our consciousness cannot benefit from knowledge. Our conscience is the abode of passing or stray thoughts as well.

Conscience has a more precise meaning than consciousness. However, their meanings are close, just as are the meanings of the words merciful (*rahman*) and compassionate (*rahim*). The guardian of our consciousness is The Merciful for our consciousness is the abode of belief and the believer has put his trust in The Merciful through the soundness of his belief whereas the guardian of our conscience is The Compassionate for it is the Light/Spirit of intuitive experience knowledge.

My compassion encompassed everything. (Q7:156)

... We will make firm your conscience by it. (Q25:32)

Our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) perceives and, therefore, falls into a state of restlessness or unease, troubled, disturbed, anxious, empty or blank from fear. It has no need of being invigorated or reassured or strengthened or given courage as our consciousness does, in some cases, but requires instead supportive help through God's guidance.

We invigorated their consciousness when they stood up and said: Our Lord is Lord of the heavens and the earth. We will never call to any god other than He. Certainly, we would have said an outrageous thing. (Q18:14)

Or when God invigorated the consciousness of the mother of Moses when her conscience had become restless:

It came to be in the morning that the conscience of the mother of Moses was restless (uneasy, troubled, disturbed, anxious, blank from fear for the baby Moses). Truly, she was about to show him, if We had not invigorated her consciousness so that she became among the ones who believe. (Q28:10)

Here, (Q28:10), God ascribed restlessness to our conscience and favored it over our consciousness since our consciousness requires invigoration.

In other examples, the Quran also makes our conscience firm:

Those who were ungrateful said: Why was the Quran not sent down to him all at once? Thus, We will make firm your conscience by it. (Q25:32)

All that We relate to you of the tidings of the Messengers is so that We make your conscience firm by it. (Q11:120)

Our conscience is responsible for executing reward or punishment while our consciousness assures us the necessity for one or the other.

He will take you to task for what your consciousness earned. (Q2:225)

1. Our Conscience

Conscience may be defined as the practical reason employed when applying moral convictions to a situation ("critical conscience").²

Our conscience is a natural disposition of our self, our inner critic. Our conscience experiences, the inner jihad or struggle. Even though our conscience is closer to the truth, but it nevertheless can become deceitful and beguiling.

Our conscience may be either what is known as "traditional" or "critical."

Conscience is not necessarily the product of a process of rational consideration of the moral features of a situation and can arise from parental, peer group, religious, state or corporate indoctrination, which may or may not be presently consciously acceptable to the person ("traditional conscience"). Conscience may be defined as practical reason employed when applying moral convictions to a situation ("critical conscience").³

Another Quranic word referring to our conscience is *fu'ad* (plural *af'idah*). The Arabic word comes from *fa'idah*, benefit, because our conscience per-

ceives the benefits of God's love. *Fu'ad* also means "motion", "to set in motion."

Our conscience (*fu'ad*) is part of our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) that was gifted to us as part of the spirit of God's command. It is close to the truth, but as another term for conscience, can nevertheless be corrupted.

Conscience is an aptitude, faculty, intuition or judgment that assists in distinguishing right from wrong. Moral judgment may derive from values or norms (principles and rules). In psychological terms, conscience is often described as leading to feelings of remorse when a human commits actions that go against his/her moral values and to feelings of rectitude or integrity when actions conform to such norms.⁴

Truly, those who went back (went astray from the direction of their conscience)—turn their back— after the guidance became clear to them, it was Satan who enticed them and He granted them indulgence. (Q47:25)

Our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) is also known as "the blaming self", our inner voice reminding us of right and wrong.⁵

According to the Quran, one is questioned and held accountable for that which has become permanent in our conscience:

Truly, having the ability to hear and sight and conscience, each of those will have been that which is asked. (Q17:36)

The boundary of our conscience ends with trust in God and commitment to Him as well as contemplation which is more sublime than what our self perceives—reflection on what one has perceived and consideration by means of the light of belief of what is not present to our eyes. Our conscience drowns in the contemplation of His majesty for we are in the sea of God's bounties which are limitless in their succor and to the depths of which sea no one reaches.⁶

Say: He is The Merciful. We believed in Him and in Him we put our trust. (Q67:29)

In contrast to this calm, peaceful state of the conscience of a believer, the consciences of the ungrateful are very often described as being hardened like stones.

2. Our Conscience and Intuitive Experience Knowledge

Our conscience (*nafs al-lawwamah*) is the abode of the light of intuitive experience knowledge (*nur al-ma'rifat*). It is associated with the vision of reality, to see things as they really are.

Our conscience is based on intuitive experiential knowledge-by-presence through unveiling and witnessing. It flies at times in the valleys of pride, might, contemplation of God's blessings, and exultation and joy in the favors of God. At other times it flies in the valleys of destitution, humility, scorn of itself, and the vision of humbleness, misery, and poverty. Nevertheless, it remains a blamer of its owner in all its various states. God said:

I swear an oath by (your) conscience. (Q75:2)

In purportedly morally mature mystical people who have developed the capacity for intuitive experience through daily contemplation or meditation combined with selfless service to others, critical conscience can be aided by a "spark" of intuitive experience insight or revelation (called *ma'rifat* in Islamic Sufi philosophy and *synderesis* in medieval Christian scholastic moral philosophy). Conscience is accompanied in each case by an internal awareness of "inner light" and approbation or "inner darkness" and condemnation as well as a resulting conviction of right or duty either followed or declined.⁷

Truly, having the ability to hear and sight and conscience, each of those will have been that which is asked. (Q17:36)

Say: It is He who caused you to grow and assigned you the ability to hear, sight, and conscience. (Q67:23)

He it is Who caused you to grow, have the ability to hear and sight and conscience. (Q23:78)

Again, He shaped him and breathed into him His spirit. He made for you the ability to hear and sight and conscience. (Q32:9)

Since our conscience is the abode of our intuitive experience knowledge, it is only our conscience that perceives whereas our consciousness knows. However, intuitive knowledge experience is also attributed to consciousness, although consciousness sees only with the light that is within it.

3. Our Conscience and Our Animal Soul and Willpower

Recognizing a higher reality, acting through that aspect of self we call our soul-spirit/intellect, we seek to strengthen our conscience to help our mind control the impulses from our animal soul and our willpower.

Truly, those who went back (went astray from the direction of their conscience by following their animal soul)—turn their back— after the guidance became clear to them, it was Satan who enticed them and He granted them indulgence. (Q47:25)

The Quran tells us of those who used their free willpower to reject what their conscience advised them:

They (the followers of Moses) said: We broke not what was promised to you from what is within our (free will)power, but we were charged with a heavy load of the adornments of the folk (our desires). Surely, we hurled them because the Samaritan cast. (Q20:87)

... until when the earth took its ornaments and was decorated and its people thought that, truly, they are ones who have power over it (showing signs of a strong non-rational willpower that deviates from their conscience!) Our command approached it by nighttime or by daytime. Then, We made it stubble as if it flourished not yesterday. Thus, We explain distinctly the signs for a folk who reflect (who follow their conscience). (Q10:24)

But if they want treachery against you (following their non-rational willpower and imagination), they, surely, betrayed God before, so He gave you power (of conscience) over them. God is Knowing, Wise. (Q8:71)

They set forth in the early morning, designing, assuming they were ones who have the power (strong non-rational willpower). (Q68:25)

Or, the Prophet or others used their willpower to accept what their conscience told them:

Say: Truly, I possess not the power (example of an awakened and aware conscience that is in accord with our innate nature) to hurt nor to bring right mindedness for you. (Q72:21)

Or, others used their willpower to accept what their conscience told them and were, therefore, not like those who reject what their conscience told them:

O those who believed! Render not untrue your charities with reproachful reminders nor injury (allowing your conscience to control your free willpower) like he who spends of his wealth to show off to humanity and believes not in God and the Last Day. His parable is like the parable of a smooth rock. Over it is earth dust. A heavy downpour lit on it, and left it bare. They have no power (their free willpower has overcome their conscience) over anything of what they earned and God guides not the ungrateful folk (those who allow their free willpower to dominate their conscience). (Q2:264)

The Quran mentions those who strengthen their conscience to dominate their free willpower:

...but for those who repented before you have power over them (had exercised their conscience over their free willpower). So know you that God is Forgiving, Compassionate. (Q5:34)

In facing choices we are governed by conscience, our animal soul and its passions and willpower. Choice falls into five stages:

1. Our conscience considers whether an objective is pleasurable or harmful.
2. Our conscience considers the means of attaining or avoiding the objective.
3. Our willpower arrives at an intention to pursue the objective.
4. Our willpower and conscience jointly decide upon the choice of means.
5. Our willpower (*ikhtiyar*) elects to act by doing or avoiding.

Through our conscience, we become aware of our own imperfections and seek to improve our self by returning to our nature originated by God. This often lifetime jihad increasing our perceptions through exercising our conscience has to struggle with our free willpower during the process. Our willpower either accepts or rejects the advice of our conscience.

In places where the Quran speaks of revelation, it does not make any mention of reason; rather it is merely concerned with the consciousness of the Prophet. This does not mean an absence of rational and demonstrative reception of the Quran on the part of the Prophet, but it was his conscience which, in a state that we cannot imagine, obtained the direct experience and awareness of those transcendental realities.⁸

Nor speaks he for himself out of his passions. It is but a revelation that is revealed, taught to him by The One Stronger in Strength, Possessor of Forcefulness. Then, he stood poised while he was on the loftiest horizon. Again, he came to pass near and hung suspended until he had been at a distance of two bow lengths or closer. Then, He revealed to His servant what He revealed. His conscience lied not against what it saw. (Q53:3-53:11)

4. Our Conscience and the Criterion

Furqan, the name of the 25th Chapter of the Quran, refers to the Criterion, a principle or standard by which we learn to separate and make clear the difference between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, in the absence of judgment, in order to develop direction and understanding. Our conscience perceives realities through the Criterion (*furqan*):

Blessed be He Who sent down the Criterion between right and wrong to His servant so that he be a warner to the worlds ... (Q25:1)

The Quran refers to the Torah as the Criterion as well:

Certainly, We gave Moses and Aaron the Criterion between right and wrong and an illumination and a Remembrance for the ones who are God-conscious ... (Q21:48)

The Quran, the Criterion, was revealed during the month of Ramadan:

The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was caused to descend—a guidance for humanity—and clear portents of the guidance, and the Criterion between right and wrong. (Q2:185)

God assigns the Criterion to those who are God-conscious:

O those who believed! If you are God-conscious, He will assign you a Criterion between right and wrong (give support to your conscience) and will absolve you of your evil deeds and will forgive you. (Q8:29)

He caused to descend the Criterion between right and wrong. (Q3:4)

The Battle of Badr is known as the Day of the Criterion (*yaum al-furqan*):

... We caused to descend to Our servant on the Day of the Criterion between right and wrong, the day when the two multitudes met one another. God is Powerful over everything. (Q8:41)

In addition to the above examples, the Quran uses the word "conscience" several other times among its signs.

The conscience lied not against what it saw. (Q53:11)

Endnotes to Part III: Our Cognitive System: Module 13: Our Conscience and Intuitive Experience Knowledge

- 1 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 2 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 3 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 4 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayn al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al fu'ad wa-al lubb*. On-line.
- 5 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayn al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al fu'ad wa-al lubb*. On-line.
- 6 Wikipedia.
- 7 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>
- 8 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran..>

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Part III: Our Cognitive System

Module 14: Our Reason

1. Clarifying What Reason Means

Al-Ghazzali mentions the various names for our soul-spirit/intellect/reason ('*aqil*, *nafs al-mutma'innah* or *nafs al-natiqah*):

The *nafs* is a substance (*jawhar*), simple, enlightened, comprehending, acting, moving, giving completion to instruments and bodies.... The substance of the *nafs* was made manifest as the spirit by His command. Now by the word "soul" (*nafs*), I do not mean the force which seeks sustenance and which stirs up to lust and passion (*nafs al-ammarah*), nor the vital energy which resides in the heart producing life which issues in sensibility and activity proceeding from the heart to all the members....

By the soul, I mean the rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah*) or *nafs al-mutma'innah*, the only perfect, simple substance which is concerned solely with remembering, studying, reflection, discrimination and careful consideration. It is receptive of all types of knowledge and does not grow weary of receiving images which are abstract and non-material. This substance is the ruler of the powers (vital, natural and neural powers provided when God breathed His spirit within us). All serve it and comply with its command.

Now, the *nafs al-mutma'innah* has a special name with every group of people: the philosophers call this substance "the rational soul" (*nafs al-natiqah*). The Quran calls it *nafs al-mutma'innah* or soul at peace and spirit (*ruh*) by the command of God.... Although the names differ, the meaning is one and the same. In our opinion, intellect or reason ('*aqil*), spirit or soul at peace (*nafs al-mutma'innah*) are all names for the rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah*). The rational soul is the living substance which lives and acts and comprehends.¹

To wisely regulate our self, our cognitive system must keep both itself and our sensate, perceptive and motivational systems in balance. These include the external senses of our sensation system; the internal senses of our system of perception; and our motivational system consisting of our willpower, free willpower and our animate or animal soul. If our reason, mind, conscience and consciousness, working together are not strong enough to do this, the result will be imbalance with an overdevelopment or underdevelopment in terms of quantity or undevelopment in terms of quality or a combination of these of affect/emotive, behavior and even cognition itself.

When both our motivational system (affect, behavior, willpower, sensation and perception) and our cognitive system (mind, consciousness, conscience and reason) are held in balance, we are able to be fair and just

people if someone else confirms our sense of justice. According to al-Ghazzali, this is what the Quran tells us:

The ones who believe are not but those who believed in God and His Messenger and they were not in doubt (showing wisdom, hikmah) and they struggled with their wealth (temperance, iffat) and themselves in the way of God (courage, shuja'at). Those, they are the ones who are sincere ('adl). (Q49:15)

Wisdom leads to certainty in the belief of the One God, monotheism, so that we live through our innate nature.

Thus, We cause Abraham to see the kingdom of the heavens and the earth so that he would be of the ones who are certain in belief. (Q6:75)
(See also Q102:5–102:7)

In Quranic terms, cognition is the process of thinking (*fakkara*) in order to acquire knowledge (*'ilm*), gain wisdom (*hikmah*) and awaken understanding (*faqiha*) through our ability to think or cognition (*nafs al-mutma'innah*) which receives the light/spirit of *tawhid*.²

2. Our Soul-Spirit/Intellect/Reason and the Light/Spirit of Unity

Living through the light /spirit of unity (*tawhid*), our reason-intellect-spirit or soul-spirit/intellect as we have been calling it, is confirmed indicating the station of our cognitive system. It is through our ability to think and reason that our belief is sustained, for all the lights depend upon it and encircle it and it secures our place in the hereafter. Our intellect is a balanced, simple light. When we have disciplined our animal soul, attraction to pleasure/avoidance of harm/pain (or concupiscent and irascible or lust and anger) and awoken our conscience and consciousness to serve our soul-spirit/intellect, the light of unity (*tawhid*) embraces us. Our soul-spirit/intellect is the source of all good things. It is all good and that to which all good returns.

Our soul-spirit/intellect is the place of the spirit/light of unity (*tawhid*) as well as the light of uniqueness, and this is the most perfect light and the greatest power.... The soul-spirit/intellect is the greatest mountain and the purest station of cognition. It is like an axis, which is permanent and does not move. It is through the soul-spirit/intellect that religion is sustained, for all the lights depend upon it and encircle it. These lights are not perfected nor is their power effective save through the soundness of the soul-spirit/intellect and its support, nor are they made firm except by its firmness, nor do they exist except by its existence. The soul-spirit/intellect is the abode of the light of unity (*tawhid*) and the light of the contemplation of the uniqueness of God, for through it, the reality of detachment from this world, as well as the light of glorification of God become proper for the servant of God.

Our soul-spirit/intellect is planted in the ground of unity (*tawhid*), and its soil is the light of uniqueness. It has been irrigated with the water of God's kindness from the sea of glorification until its roots have been filled with the lights of certainty, for God undertook its cultivation and with His power attended to that directly without any intermediary. He planted it in the garden of contentment and then protected it with the wall of preservation. He anchored our soul-spirit/intellect in His eternity, in His everlastingness and in His primordially, so that the beast of the animal soul with its passions and ignorance could hardly approach it, nor the predatory animals of the deserts of error, nor any of the animals which are the characteristics of the animal soul, such as its arrogance, foolishness, or faults.³

3. Our Soul-Spirit/Intellect/Reason by God's Command

The very Arabic word, *al-'aql*—reason, thinking or soul-spirit/intellect—basically means:

... 'restraining' and 'binding', that is, of holding one's self back from blameworthy conduct, to protect and to guard—being an interior self-imposed limit. *'Aql* in its Quranic conception is also that which thinks and conceives the truth and it is always in search of it. This conception of *'aql* precludes one that is rigid, arrogant, and misleading. Some have also drawn the conclusion from the pervasive Quranic emphasis on thinking that all Muslims must strive to be thinking individuals.

This meaning of knowing through our intellect or reason is reflected in one of the root meanings of the word *'aql*, which, as we have said, is to bind, to tie, to link, to relate. Reason ties us to the truth and thus opens up a new horizon beyond the ordinary chain of causes.

We will cause them to see Our signs on the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is The Truth. (Q41:53)

In a horizontal way, *signs upon the horizons* (Q41:53), our human reason moves between and across facts and concepts and links them to one another. In a vertical way, *and within themselves* (Q41:53), reason links what is below to what is higher, we who are lower to God who is higher. The Quran insists on the convergence of the two axes of causality: horizontal, which regulates the world of physical causes, and vertical, which introduces the divine command (*amr*) into the natural realm. There is no contradiction between the two, but they follow different rules. The day and night follow each other as part of the natural order in which we live and there is no breaking of this rule:

Reason (*'aql*) used as a verb is that by which we protect ourselves from falsehood, error and wrongdoing. This basic meaning of reason is not to be taken lightly, for it underlies the essential component of thinking and contemplation as the proper human response to the call of reality. Reason as a principle of truth and as an instrument of knowledge represents an encounter with the reality of things.

Thinking is not simply to enumerate the physical properties of things or the logical relations of concepts. It is more than a mere mental representation of things because ... mental (detachment from the physical) gives us only a picture of reality.

Like all mental (detachments), this picture is frozen and can never fully measure up to the reality itself.

(Disengaged) concepts are essential for rational thinking and the formation of ideas. Thinking, however, requires more than (detachment) and use of concepts. It takes place in a context of encounter with reality and puts us in a relationship with something larger than us. It means seeing, observing, listening, hearing, reflecting, contemplating, and drawing the appropriate practical and moral conclusions. It means responding to what we encounter. It involves rational analysis but also moral commitment. In its deepest sense, thinking prevents us from seeing things as a means to an end ... if the world has been created by God, then it cannot be reduced to utility. It has a substantive meaning and value independent of us. *'Aql* used as a noun means both reason and intellect....⁴

Our soul-spirit/intellect is the spirit by God's command. When God introduces His divine command:

That is when I breathed My spirit into him. (Q15:29)

Truly, His command when He wanted a thing is but to say to it: Be! Then, it is! (Q36:82).

4. Knowledge

Knowledge (*'ilm*) is the presentation to our self by our soul-spirit/intellect of the real meaning of things and their outward forms, when divested of physical matter, in themselves, and their modes, their quantities, their substances and their essences. The knower is one who comprehends, perceives and understands. That which is known is the nature of the thing, the knowledge of which is engraved upon our soul-spirit/intellect. The nobility of the knowledge is in accordance with the nobility of the thing known. The rank of the knower corresponds to the rank of the knowledge. There is no doubt in (Quranic psychology) that the most excellent of things known, the most glorious and the highest of them ... is knowledge of unity (*tawhid*).⁵

God bore witness that there is no god but He, as do the angels and those imbued with the knowledge, the ones who uphold equity. (Q3:18)

Real knowledge takes as its object God and the doings of God (knowledge of reality as it is in itself), and God's guidance and instructions (knowledge of how human beings should act and be). Knowledge of both of these realms comes by way of the "signs", which the Quran locates in three broad domains: scripture and prophetic activity, natural phenomena, and our human self. The Quran's repeated use of this word sign, *ayah*, announces that even though the significance of things and events is hidden, what we perceive gives hints and intimations of their meanings. Until it is recognized that the only dependable and real knowledge is awareness of God, there will be no escape from our unconscious, non-rational self.

However, this knowledge ... does not do away with the other types of knowl-

edge. It is not attained except by means of many antecedents, and those antecedents cannot be ordered aright except through (the knowledge of) various sciences....

Knowledge is excellent in itself.... That is because knowledge is the contrary of ignorance and ignorance is one of the accompaniments of darkness, and darkness belongs to the sphere of immobility and immobility is near to non-existence and what is false and misleading is to be classed with this. For the sphere of knowledge is the sphere of what is existent, and existence is better than non-existence for guidance, truth, activity and light are all linked up with existence. Since existence is better than non-existence, then knowledge is more excellent than ignorance, for ignorance is like blindness and darkness, and knowledge is like sight and light.⁶

Not on the same level are ... darkness and light. (Q35:19-35:20)

Then, since knowledge is better than ignorance and ignorance is one of the accompaniments of the soul-body and knowledge is one of the attributes of our soul-spirit/intellect, our soul is more honorable than our body.⁷

The quest for knowledge is a Quranic divine command:

Say: My Lord! Increase me in knowledge! (Q20:114)

Thinking, soul-spirit/intellect or rationality emanates from the abilities of our soul-spirit/intellect to gain knowledge and then explore how the Quran teaches us how to gain wisdom and how to understand.

Thus in gaining knowledge of our self and its relation to our soul-spirit/intellect, part of our nature originated by God (*fitrat Allah*) ... our soul (f) is now referred to as soul-spirit/intellect, a natural progress in knowing our self as we learn to think.

The Process of Thinking

The process of thinking (*fakkara*) which we find in the Quran is not comprised of assembling of facts; nor is it a pietistic enumeration of commands and prohibitions. Rather, it is a wholesome undertaking that requires setting upon an intellectual, moral and spiritual journey. It encompasses all of our being and overcomes such dualities as the sensate versus the rational, the material versus the spiritual, the individual versus the universe, nature versus culture, and so on. The integrated mode of thinking which the Quran embodies in its unique style reflects the nature of reality, which is interdependent and multi-layered. It urges us to see the interconnectedness of things and how one thing leads to the other in the great chain of being.

The Quranic way of thinking is then primarily not descriptive but directional, that is, goal-oriented. The Quran does not simply describe things as facts or information. It offers suggestive stories, striking metaphors and vivid descriptions of God's creation. Interventions in history are meant to change the way we see things and

our place in the world. The Quranic usage of these terms ... establishes a context of integrated thinking in which our encounter with reality unveils different aspects of the all-inclusive reality of existence. More importantly, it leads to a process of thinking that combines empirical observation, rational analysis, moral judgment and spiritual refinement.⁸

Empirical Observation is knowledge gained by observation and depending on the results that can be observed by our senses:

O those who believed! Remember the divine blessing of God to you when armies drew near you and We sent the winds against them and armies you see not And God had been Seeing of what you do. When they drew near you from above you and from below you and when the sight swerved and (you became conscious of the situation) and you assumed assumptions about God, there the ones who believe were tested and shaken with a severe shaking. (Q33:9-33:11)

Rational Analysis is applied to memory, categorization, causal inferences and reasoning:

But no! They meditate not (are not engaged in goal-oriented thinking) on the Recitation. And if it had been from other than God, certainly, they would have found in it many contradictions. (Q4:82)

Moral Judgment is the proof by which we define what is wrong, good, bad, ethical vs. unethical, contradiction-logical, based on facts, based on sound or defensible moral principles.⁹

The Council of those who were ungrateful said among his folk: Truly, we see foolishness in you. Truly, we suppose that you are among the ones who lie. (Q7:66)

Spiritual Refinement is knowing self and nature and having good manners. Our perspective on the world changes. We grow in the place of our connection to God and accept the world and everyone in it as exactly the way it should be. We see that God did not make a mistake in creating us or anyone else:¹⁰

When they set forward with the caravan their father said: Truly, I find the scent of Joseph if you suppose me not weak of mind. (Q12:94)

5. The Quran Teaches Rational People How to Engage with Critical Thinking

The Quran does not stop here in teaching those who are rational HOW to think through the abilities of our soul-spirit/intellect.

Is there not in that an oath to be sworn for a rational person? (Q89:5)

The Quran teaches us critical thinking, critical judgment, to bring proof of what we allege, to explain what we learn with clear explanation, clear por-

tents, clear evidence and even overwhelming evidence or authority.

Critical Thinking

The purpose of critical thinking (*furqan*) is to achieve understanding, evaluate viewpoints, and solve problems. In general, one's thinking is likely to become critical when concrete learning experiences precede abstract thought. This strikes a parallel note, in its Islamic idiom, with thinking that is espoused with wisdom (*hikmah*).

What is the critical or creative thinking the Quran taught the Prophet and continues to teach us? Critical or creative thinking is: the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth and fairness.

Thinking becomes critical when it evaluates the reasoning behind a decision. Such evaluation must, however, be carried forth in a constructive manner. The purpose of critical thinking is to achieve understanding, evaluate viewpoints and solve problems. In general, our thinking is likely to become critical when concrete learning experiences precede abstract thought, that is, thinking wedded with wisdom (*hikmah*).¹¹

From this perspective, Quranic Psychology, for instance, is based on: Reading the signs through the use of the power of reason united with belief or faith that is also aware of the metaphysical aspect of Reality.

Critical Judgment

Those are those to whom We gave the Book and critical judgment (hukm) and prophethood. (Q6:89)

It had not been for a mortal that God should give him the Book and critical judgment (hukm) and the prophethood and, again, he say to humanity: Be you servants of me instead of God! (Q3:79)

When he had fully grown and come of age, We gave him critical judgment (hukm) and knowledge. (Q12:22)

O Yahya! Take the Book with strength. We gave him critical judgment (hukm) while a lad. (Q19:12)

(Abraham prayed): My Lord! Bestow on me critical judgment (hukm) and cause me to join with the ones in accord with morality. (Q26:83)

Of asking for proof of what we believe that opposes the Quranic message:

Proof

That is their own fantasies. Say: Prepare your proof (burhan) if you had been ones who are sincere. (Q2:111)

Say: Prepare your proof. This is a Remembrance for him who is with me and a Remembrance of him before me. (Q 21:24)

Is there a god besides God? Say: Prepare your proof if you had been ones who are sincere! (Q27:64)

It offers clear explanation, clear portents, clear evidence and even overwhelming evidence and authority to possessors of intelligence.

Clear Explanation

This is a clear explanation (abana) for humanity, a guidance and an admonishment for the ones who are God-conscious. (Q3:138)

He taught him the clear explanation. (Q55:4)

Clear Portents

Truly, those who keep back what We caused to descend of the clear portents (bayyinah) and the guidance. (Q2:159)

Thus, We caused signs to descend, clear portents and God guides whom He wants. (Q22:16)

Clear Evidence

Surely, clear evidence (basirah) drew near you from your Lord. So whoever perceived, it will be for his own soul. Whoever was in darkness will be against his own soul. Say: I am not a guardian over you. (Q6:104)

Overwhelming Evidence, Authority

Certainly, We sent Moses with Our signs and a clear authority (overwhelming evidence). (Q11:96)

6. How to Problem Solve

How to solve a problem (*tadabbara*) means concentrated and goal-ori-

ented thinking provoked by the challenge to find something new or to solve a difficult problem.

Meditate they not, then, on the Quran or are there locks on their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah)? (Q47:24)

Meditate they not on the saying or drew not near them anything that approaches not their fathers, the ancient ones? (Q23:68)

It is a blessed Book that We caused to descend to you, so that they meditate on its signs and those imbued with intuition recollect. (Q38:29)

Exercising Our Reason

Being reasonable (exercising our power of reason) is to recognize the signs of God:

... the alternation of the nighttime and the daytime and what God caused to descend from the heaven of provision. He gave life with it to the earth after its death and the diversifying of the winds—signs for a folk who are reasonable. (Q45:5)

He caused to be subservient to you the nighttime and the daytime and the sun and the moon, and the stars, ones caused to be subservient by His command. Truly, in that are signs for a folk who are reasonable. (Q16:12)

Certainly, We left in it a sign, clear portents for a folk who be reasonable. (Q29:35)

If you had asked them: Who sent down water from heaven and gave life by it to the earth after its death, certainly, they would say: God! Say: The Praise belongs to God! Nay! Most of them are not reasonable. (Q29:63)

Among His signs are that He causes you to see the lightning in fear and in hope. He sends water down from heaven and gives life by it to the earth after its death. Truly, in that are, certainly, signs for a folk who are reasonable. (Q30:24)

Thus, God makes manifest His signs to you so that perhaps you will be reasonable. (Q2:242)

Know you that God gives life to the earth after its death. Surely, We made manifest the signs to you so that perhaps you will be reasonable. (Q57:17)

Being reasonable is to recognize that desiring things in this present life is to desire that which will not endure:

Whatever things you were given are enjoyment for this present life and its adornment. What is with God is better for one who endures. Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q28:60)

This present life is nothing but a pastime and diversion. The Last Abode is better for those who are God-conscious. Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q6:32)

In order to be reasonable, we have to "know", that is, we have to have soul-spirit/intellect :

We propound these parables for humanity. No one is reasonable among them but the ones who know. (Q29:43)

Be reasonable! The Prophet did not ask for any compensation for delivering the message.

O my folk! I ask not of you any compensation. My compensation is but with Who originated me. Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q11:51)

Be reasonable in regard to what God has forbidden:

Say: Approach now. I will recount what your Lord forbade you: Ascribe nothing as partners with Him. Show kindness to the ones who are your parents. Kill not your children from want. We will provide for you and for them. Come not near any indecencies whether these were manifest or what was inward. Kill not a soul which God forbade, unless rightfully. He charged you with that so that perhaps you will be reasonable. (Q6:151)

Then, after that succeeded successors who inherited the Book. They take advantage of this nearer world, and they say: We will be forgiven. If an advantage approaches them like it, they will take it. Is not a solemn promise taken from them with the Book that they would say about God only The Truth? Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q7:169)

Our reason is able to project coherent and non-conflicting thoughts:

O People of the Book! Why argue with one another about Abraham while neither was the Torah caused to descend nor the Gospel until after him. Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q3:65)

Our reason is able to understand proof and evidence of truth:

Say: If God willed, I would not have related it to you nor would He have caused you to recognize it. Surely, I lingered in expectation among you a lifetime before this. Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q10:16)

Our actions must correspond to our words:

You command humanity to virtuous conduct and forget yourselves while you relate the Book? Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q2:44)

Our reason enables us to make intelligent choices about what is good or harmful:

Surely, We caused a Book to descend to you in which is your Remembrance. Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q21:10)

Our reason enables us to understand and appreciate the signs of the Creator while we are here on earth:

Truly, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alteration of the nighttime and the daytime and the boats that run on the sea with what profits humanity, and what God caused to descend from heaven of water, and gave life to the earth after its death, and disseminated on it all moving creatures, and diversified the winds and the clouds, ones caused to be subservient between heaven and earth, are the signs for a folk who are reasonable. (Q2:164)

Bearing Witness

There are many ways that we can bear witness. Examples are: Seeing the light, touching on wood, smelling a rose, tasting a cherry, thinking of the Infinite, having consciousness of the nearness of water, discerning between a thing and its shadow, understanding a command, responding to a call, submitting to the truth, accepting the evidence and contemplating the meaning of life.

Innate Intuition

Reason is also our instrument of intuition (*albab*). With intuition, soul-spirit/intellect is innate and attained without learning or making an effort to acquire it.¹²

God calls to those innately *imbued with intuition*.

O those imbued with intuition ... (Q5:100)

So be God-conscious, O those imbued with intuition! (Q2:197)

This is the delivering of the message to humanity so that they be warned

by it and that they know that He is One God so that those imbued with intuition recollect. (Q14:52)

The Quran uses the phrase *ulu'-l-albab*, that is, those who have deep understanding of things to distinguish them from those who are merely interested in being smart. *Albab*, plural of *lubb* meaning kernel, the essence and core of something, refers to a deeper perception of the reality of things which we understand through our reason.

Once reason is put to proper use, it obtains new degrees of understanding and the distinctions between reasoning, contemplating and praying evaporate. This is when one begins to obtain certainty (*al-yaqin*), which leaves no doubt about the truth of something standing before us.

Given such a scale of intensified perception understanding, through the hierarchy of the five perceptive-cognitive functions ... the Quran propounds the notion of *ulu'-l-albab*, the thoughtful individuals who are possessed of proper understanding and response.¹³

The Quran says:

Have you not considered that God caused to descend water from heaven and threaded fountains in the earth, again, brings out crops by it of hues, ones that are at variance? Again, they wither so you see them as ones that are growing yellow. Again, He makes them chaff. Truly, in this is a reminder for those imbued with intuition. (Q39:21)

Truly, in the creation of the heavens and of the earth and the alteration of nighttime and daytime there are signs for those imbued with intuition ... (Q3:190)

We bestowed on him, his people, and the like of them along with them as a mercy from Us, a reminder for those imbued with intuition. (Q38:43)

Is he one who is morally obligated during the night watch, one who prostrates himself or one who is standing up in prayer being fearful of the world to come and hoping for the mercy of his Lord? Say: Are those who know on the same level as those who know not? Only those imbued with intuition recollect. (Q39:9)

... those who listen to the saying of the Quran and follow the fairer of it. Those are those whom God guided. Those, they are imbued with intuition. (Q39:18)

... as a guidance and a reminder for those imbued with intuition. (Q40:54)

Then, is he who knows what was caused to descend to you from your

Lord to be The Truth like he who is unwilling to see? It is only those imbued with intuition who recollect. (Q13:19)

Certainly, there had been in their narratives a lesson for those imbued with intuition. (Q12:111)

7. Gaining Wisdom and the Quranic Purpose of Life

The boundary of our soul-spirit/intellect ends with the understanding of the knowledge of our weakness and God's strength as well as the contemplation of the bounty of God and His favors, that is, our having gained wisdom.

He gives wisdom to whom He wills. Whomever is given wisdom, then, surely, was given much good and none recollects no doubt but those imbued with intuition. (Q2:269)

The boundary of our cognition reaches to the Quranic vision of thinking as indicated in its emphasis on wisdom and good judgment (*hikmah*) which signifies the quality of thinking, its regard for values, and its outcome. Wisdom and good judgment can easily be said to be more important than technical know-how and expertise as it can guide expert knowledge as to its proper application and the attainment of excellence.

The Quran mentions *hikmah* twenty times, and in about ten of these it is immediately preceded by the word Book or *kitab*, which is a reference to primarily the Quran, but also other divinely revealed scriptures. The text, thus, says with reference to Jesus:¹⁴

He teaches him the Book and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel. (Q3:48)

The juxtaposition of *kitab* and *hikmah* is often contextualized by a reference to the sending of Prophets who teach the people and guide them with scripture and wisdom as it is said of the Prophet Muhammad:¹⁵

... teaches you the Book and wisdom. (Q2:159)

the descendants of Prophet Abraham:

We gave the people of Abraham the Book and wisdom. (Q4:54);

and of Luqman:

We gave Luqman wisdom. (Q31:12).

The holistic, superior, and indivisible value of *hikmah* in the Quran is under-

scored in one of its signs to the effect that when God bestows wisdom on someone, that person is indeed granted an immense source of goodness:

To mention *hikmah* together with the Book evidently means that the Quran should be read with wisdom and divorcing the one from the other by taking a totally dogmatic approach to the Quran goes against the divine purpose and intention of its revelation. To read the Quran in the light of *hikmah* thus means a comprehensive reading that reaches beyond the obvious meaning of its words to encapsulate the goal and purpose of its message and then also reflection on the ways and means of how its benefits can be realized for the individual and society.¹⁶

God creates with wisdom (*hikmah*), purpose and providence (*'inayah*).

As the ultimate source of all existence and intelligibility, God bestows these qualities on His creation and saturates the order of creation with meaning and purpose. The celebrated saying that 'the first thing God has created is intellect (*al-'aql*)' should be understood in this context. The intellect here refers to the universal principles of truth, order and intelligibility which God has built into the nature of things. The intellect is the first thing God has created because God creates things according to a certain order and principle. Thus the intellect is the closest thing to the Divine.... Meaning is not simply a property of the mind. Knowledge cannot be reduced to the internal workings of the mind.... Since meaning is not created but articulated and appropriated by the mind, its essence lies outside my mental constructions of it.

The moral import of this premise is clear: having a meaning and purpose in a non-subjective manner entails a tremendous sense of responsibility. Admitting that we, like the universe, have been created for a purpose means accepting a moral responsibility beyond ourselves. The Quran addresses the human person directly to make this point:¹⁷

Assumed you that We created you in amusement and that to Us you would not be returned? (Q23:15)

Assumes the human being that he will be left aimless? (Q75:36)

The 'language of the universe' is revealed to human reason in the form of strict orders, laws, principles, patterns but also powerful symbols, parables and metaphors. The Quran sees no contradiction between strict rules of logic, which come from nothing but God's own Nature, and the symbolism of creation. The Quran invites us to discover the perfect order God has created in the universe. The order and regularity that come with this is a proof for the existence of an intelligent Creator. But we are also expected to grasp the symbolic language of the universe and how it praises God at every moment.¹⁸

The seven heavens glorify Him and the earth and whatever is in and on them. There is not a thing but it glorifies His praise, except you understand not their glorification. (Q17:44)

Endnotes to Part III: Our Cognitive System: Module 14: Reason

1 al-Ghazzali, *al-Risalat al-laduni*, p. 194-195. Our *nafs al-mutma'innah* is both the goal when we "purify" our consciousness as well as the soul that reaches the ultimate peace when it returns to God with a sound and purified consciousness (*qalb*). The root of *mutma'inna*, T M ' N, is to at rest, to be secure (*itma'anna*) in perfect form verb quad IV (Q4:103); (Q10:7); (Q22:11); imperfect form verb quad IV (Q2:260); (Q3:126); (Q5:113); (Q8:10); (Q13:28); active participle, one who is at peace (Q16:106); (16:112); (Q17:95) and (Q89:27).

2 Our *'aql* is innately capable of performing both functions of logical analysis and intuitive knowing without a contradiction. Furthermore, it is the same *'aql* that guides our free willpower in our moral choices.... [Reason] has been used for logical analysis, abstraction, deduction, drawing conclusions, and other logical functions of [it]. In this broad sense, [reason] primarily constituted the basis of scientific knowledge and claimed precision and certainty [by the West]. Ibrahim Kalin.

<http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.

3 As a principle of 'tying together', 'gathering' and 'protecting', reason always reaches out beyond itself and connects us with the larger reality of existence and human language. A humanity so deeply enclosed upon itself to be the master of the universe while not taking the moral responsibility that comes with such a claim has created a world in which the principle of reason has disappeared, subjective consciousness has been absolutized, and a profound alienation between the human person and his work has set in. The more we reduce everything to utility and maximize the use-value of whatever happens to be around us, the more we lose the chance to retain the meaning of logos as connecting different orders of reality and protecting ourselves from error. A new concept of reason is thus needed to recover the meaning of the human person as a being who thinks, i.e., who sees, hears, listens, encounters, responds, reacts, contemplates, and engages in other acts of human intelligence and will and never loses sight of the larger reality of which he/she is a part.... Reason as tying together, connecting and protecting will re-emerge only when we remember that reason is not about the human person or his interests or even his reasoning but rather about existence and beings, their meaning, relations and connections, and about the ways in which we respond to the call of reality: *Say: Know then, that the final evidence of all truth rests with God alone.* (Q 6:149). Ibrahim Kalin, <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.

"These elements seek to transform [our] reason so that we can live a life based on justified faith and virtue." Fazlur Rahman. *Major Themes of the Quran*. Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1944, p. 22. Once our ability to reason is awoken and brought up to reckon with the reality of things, everything falls in place: our thinking, sense organs, seeing, hearing, perceiving and moral judgments begin to come together. Ibrahim Kalin, <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.

The word most frequently employed for light in Quran is "*nur*" (generally translated as "light"). For darkness, generally "*zulumat*" is used (translated as "darkness/darknesses") which is the plural of "*zulmat*". Its root is "z-l-m" which is also that for "*zulm*" i.e. "wrong-doing" and "injustice." The Quran always uses the plural for darkness i.e. "*zulumat*" and singular for light i.e. "*nur*." *The Encyclopaedic Index of the Quran* defines "*zulumat*" i.e. darkness as: opposite of light and opposite of Guidance. <http://quranalhakeem.com/light-and-darkness-in-quran/>.

4 By contrast, [the intellect] came to designate (intuitive experience knowledge), which was now fully decoupled from rational investigation and logical analysis. By implication, it was seen as lacking a solid foundation because it spoke of such subjective terms as intuition, imagination, illumination but not proofs, evidence, and demonstration. Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.

- 5 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 6 al-Ghazzali, *al-Risalat al-laduni*, p. 194.
- 7 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 8 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 9 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 10 Ibrahim Kalin <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 11 Ibrahim Kalin <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 12 Ibrahim Kalin <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 13 The famous yet controversial hadith: The first (being) God created is the intelligence (*awwalu ma khalaqa Allahu al-'aqla*), sparked prolonged discussions among Muslim thinkers over many centuries over the implications of this statement. Among the issues debated was the priority of reason over revelation and the respective role of each in their mutual inter-dependence. Another issue was whether the disparity among humans in respect of reason also affected the modalities of moral obligation. Some prominent thinkers including Abu Bakr al-Razi (d. 313/925) apparently advocated the primacy of reason over the revelation. This would be properly known as "rationalism," which deems the primacy of reason over revelation. This is different from "rationality" which means treating any issue by using reason without giving reason priority. Hashim Kamali, <http://www.hashimkamali.com/index.php/publications/item/114-reading-the-signs-a-quranic-perspective-on-thinking>.
- 14 Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs." Online.
- 15 Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs." Online.
- 16 The repeated juxtaposition of the "Book and *hikmah*" in the Quran led some commentators, such as the Successor, Qatadah ibn Diama al-Sadusi (d. 118 H), Ibn Wahhab, the disciple of Imam Malik (d. 179/795), and Imam al-Shafii (d. 205/820) himself to the somewhat unusual observation that "*hikmah*" is a reference to the Sunna of the Prophet. Many have taken and followed this view; but since the text does not specify such a meaning for *hikmah*, the word should convey its natural and unqualified meaning as I have depicted in this presentation. Besides, when the Quran declares that God Most High endowed the Prophets David and Solomon and also the renowned sage Luqman with *hikmah*, it could not have referred to the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, as Sunna as such did not exist in those times. Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs." Online.
- 17 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 18 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.

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Part III: Our Cognitive System

Module 15: Ways of Acquiring Knowledge

Introduction

How do we process and retain Quranic knowledge? Knowledge in the Quranic perspective includes faith informed by ethics and morality. Cognitive, emotional and environmental influences as well as prior experience all play a part in how understanding and knowledge and skills are retained in our behavior. Is it just a question of conditioning that advocates a system of rewards and punishments? Or is learning more than just a change in behavior? Is it more important to place emphasis on the memory of the student or learner or the environment in which he or she developed?

Quranic learning of moral theory takes a different perspective. Everything we know innately or instinctively has been provided to us by God when He endowed our self with our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*). Our innate nature was activated when He blew His spirit within us, endowing us with cognition—nature's highest form of operation and that which distinguishes us from all other creatures.

According to Quranic Psychology, we learn in two major ways. The first is that which is taught to us by God through divine guidance that come to creatures in the first instance from this Source.

He Who taught by the pen. He taught the human being what he knows not. (Q96:4-96:5).

He taught the Quran. He created the human being. He taught him the clear explanation. (Q55:2-55:4).

Whenever guidance approaches you from Me, then, whoever heeded My guidance, then, there will be neither fear in them nor will they feel remorse. (Q 2:38)

The forms of knowledge that come through this source are:

Divinely determined movement—movement determined by natural causes, as in the earth:

On the earth are signs, for the ones that are certain. (Q51:20)

and the heavens:

Then, foreordaining seven heavens in two days, He revealed in each heaven its command. (Q41:12)

Instinct, i.e., in the bee to build its cell:

Your Lord revealed to you the bee: Take to yourself houses from the mountains and in the trees and in what they construct. (Q16:68)

Intuition or knowledge through consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*):

Know they not that God knows what they keep secret, and what they speak openly. (Q2:77)

Inspiration as in the case of Moses mother when she cast her tenderly suckled child into the river,

We revealed to the mother of Moses: Breast feed him. But if you had feared for him, then, cast him into the water of the sea and neither fear nor feel remorse. Truly, We will be ones who restore him to you, ones who make him among the ones who are sent. (Q28:7)

Revelation as in the case of all true prophets, God's Messengers:

Truly, We revealed to you, as We revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him. We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Tribes and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon. We gave David the Psalms. Messengers We related to you before and Messengers We relate to you not. God spoke directly to Moses, speaking directly. (Q4:163-4:164)

This way of learning can only be received by us through our acts of worship and devotion, our acts of service to God which, depending upon God's grace and our own latent spiritual power and capacity created by God to receive it. We receive by direct insight or spiritual tasting (*dhawq*) and unveiling to our spiritual vision (*kashf*). This intuitive experience knowledge (*ma'rifat*) pertains to our self or soul, and such knowledge gives insight into knowledge of God and, for that reason, it is the highest knowledge.

Since such knowledge ultimately depends upon God's grace and because it entails deeds and works of service to God as prerequisites to its possible attainment, it follows that for it knowledge of the prerequisites becomes necessary and this includes knowledge of the essentials of Islam, their meanings and purpose and correct understanding and implementation in everyday life and practice. Every Muslim

should have knowledge of these prerequisites, should understand the basic essentials of Islam and the Unity of God (*tawhid*) and practice the knowledge (*al-'ilm*) in deeds and works of service to God so that every Muslim is in fact already in the initial stage of that first knowledge. He is set ready on the straight path leading to God. His further progress on his life journey depends upon his own performance and sincerity of purpose, so that some serve God as though they see Him, and others serve Him as though He sees them; and his progress to the former way from the latter is what constitutes the highest virtue (*ihsan*).¹

The second source for learning is that acquired by us by means of our own effort of rational inquiry based upon our experiences and observations including learning from Prophet Muhammad as our model:

Surely, in the Messenger of God there is for you a fairer, good example for those whose hope had been in God and the Last Day and remembered God frequently. (Q33:21).

It is discursive and deductive.... in order to produce a good person. The concept of a good person connotes not only that he must be 'good' in the general social sense understood, but that he must also first be good to his 'self' and not be unjust to his 'self'. If he were unjust to his 'self', how can he really be just to others? ... It is a person's value as a real person, as spirit, that is stressed, rather than his value as a physical entity measured in terms of the pragmatic or utilitarian sense of his usefulness to state and society and the world.

Can one be unjust to one's self? Justice means basically a condition and situation whereby we are in our right and proper place. 'Place' here refers not only to our total situation in relation to others, but also to our condition in relation to our self. So the [Quranic] concept of justice does not only refer to relational situations of harmony and [balance] existing between one person and another, or between the society and the state, or between the ruler and the ruled, or between the king and his subjects, but far more profoundly and fundamentally so it refers in a primary way to the harmonious and rightly-balanced relationship existing between a person and his self, and in a secondary way only to such as exists between him and another or others, between him and his fellow human being and ruler and king and state and society. Thus to the questions: Can one be unjust to one's self? we answer in the affirmative and add further that justice and injustice indeed *begins* and *ends* with knowing the 'self'.²

The Quran repeatedly stresses the point that when we do wrong, we are being unjust to our self and that injustice (*zulm*) is a condition brought by our self upon our self.³

Truly, God does not wrong humanity at all, but humanity does wrong itself. (Q10:44)

If in our existence we allow our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) to get the better of us and consequently commit acts prohibited by God and displeasing

to Him, or if we deny belief in God altogether, then we have thereby repudiated our own affirmation of God's Lordship which our rational soul (*nafs al-mutma'innah*) has covenanted with God. (Q7:1 72)

Given the driving force of human emotions, even the correct use of reason alone cannot be sufficient to always make the right moral choices. The reason is that we have to combine reason [intellect] and willpower, the two distinguishing features of being human, in order to act on what we believe. In addition to being 'ones who think,' we are also 'ones who will'. Here 'willpower' does not simply designate choosing one option or the other. It refers to our ability to make a choice from among available possibilities. But in an [ethical] sense, it means choosing truth over falsehood and good over evil.⁴

1. Thought-based Knowledge and Transmitted Knowledge

We note the distinction between thought-based knowledge (*'ilm al-diraya*) and transmitted or received knowledge (*'ilm al-riwaya*) reflected in the twin juristic and hadith-related expressions of knowledge based on understanding (*'ilm al-diraya*), and report-based and transmitted knowledge (*'ilm al-riwaya*). The former is based on understanding and insight (*diraya wa tafaqquh*) and takes priority over the latter. Whereas *'ilm al-riwaya* relies mainly on memory and retention, *'ilm al-diraya* is based on cognition, understanding, and analysis.⁵

2. Human Teaching and Learning and Divine Teaching

In an effort to train the individual to enhance his or her quality of thinking, al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111) discusses the two sources of knowledge that Muslim tradition has recognized. One of these is through human teaching and learning (*al-ta'allum al-in-sani*) and the other through divine teaching (*al-ta'lim al-rabbani*).

Al-Ghazali subscribes to the view that the essence of all knowledge is centered in the inner self of the human person in much the same way as growth potential that is vested in the soil and seed, and it is through teaching that the individual's potential is developed. These two aspects of knowledge, that is, the external and the internal, are complementary to one another. This is because no one can possibly teach or learn from any teacher all the sciences, some of which are learned through teaching but the rest inferred by the reflective thought of the individual. It is therefore important that the avenues of learning remain open both through teaching and through inner reflection, thinking, and illumination. This is another way of saying that all knowledge is acquired and developed through the senses, inner reflection and thinking, both of which partake in natural endowment and development through external transmission and teaching.⁶

3. Imitation and Realized Knowledge

The difference between transmitted knowledge and intellectual knowledge is that of "following authority" or "imitation" (*taqlid*) and "verification"

or "realization" (*tahqiq*). These are two basic ways of gaining knowledge. Someone who knows innately knows.

In the *Mathnawi*, Rumi compares the human self to a house with a courtyard, in the midst of which is a pool, the heart (consciousness). Imitative knowledge (*taqlid*), which is acquired through upbringing, environment, and study, is like water piped into the courtyard from outside; realized knowledge (*tahqiq*) gushes up from the center of the pool. Piped water turns stale and burdens the soul, but the inner water is in fact the fountain of life, forever fresh. The human tasks to seek the water from within. Those who find the water join the ranks of 'the folk of the heart' (*ahl-i dil*), (those) who have achieved realization and see everything with the light of the universal intellect. It is they who are living witness to the hadith qudsi: Neither My heavens nor My earth embraces Me, but the (consciousness) heart of My believing servant does embrace Me.

This is not to deny that imitative knowledge plays an essential role in human affairs, not least in the specifically religious sciences. There is no other way to learn language, grammar, Quran, hadith, jurisprudence, dogmatics, and so on.

The second testimony of faith, for example: Muhammad is the messenger of God, depends utterly on *taqlid*. Rumi's accomplishments in imitative knowledge prepared him for the coming of Shams and the achievement of realization, which is real understanding of the first testimony of faith: There is no god but God. This cannot be achieved from catechisms and creeds, both only by discovering it (consciously) in the heart. Thus the Quran speaks of this formula as a universal truth, known to all prophets and pertaining to the original human nature (*fitrat*). The partial intellect is ignorant of *tawhid*, so it needs the guidance of prophets ... those who have joined the partial intellect to the Universal Intellect. Rumi contrasts the two sorts of knowledge in numerous passages and with various images, such as hearsay and vision, letter-writing and encounter, debt and ready cash, traveling and arrival. He is especially critical of scholars who study their disciplines simply to gain students, livelihood, and prestige. As for himself, he says: My knowledge is substance, not accident.... //I am a mine of candy, a plantation of sugar cane—it grows up within me and I eat of it myself. //Only imitative and instructional knowledge laments at the aversion of the audience'.⁷³

Realized Knowledge: To Reflect (*Tafakkara*)

If We willed, We would have exalted him with them, but he inclined towards the earth, and followed his own desires. His parable is like the parable of a dog. If you will attack it, it pants. Or if you will leave it, it pants. That is the parable of the folk, those who denied Our signs. Then, relate these narratives so that perhaps they will reflect. (Q7:176)

Reflect they not? There is no madness in their companion. He is but a clear warner. (Q7:184)

Say: I say not to you: With me are treasures of God nor that I know the unseen nor say I to you that I am an angel. I follow only what is revealed to me.

Say: Are they on the same level— the unwilling to see and the seeing? Will you, then, not reflect? (Q6:50)

The parable of this present life is but like water that We caused to descend from heaven. It mingled with the plants of the earth—from which you eat—humanity and flocks—until when the earth took its ornaments and was decorated and its people thought that, truly, they are ones who have power over it! Our command approached it by nighttime or by daytime. Then, We made it stubble as if it flourished not yesterday. Thus, We explain distinctly the signs for a folk who reflect. (Q10:24)

Say: I admonish you in but one thing: That you stand up for God by twos and one by one. Again, reflect. There is not in your companion any madness. He is only a warner to you of a severe punishment in advance of you. (Q34:46)

God calls the souls to Himself at the time of their death and those that die not during their slumbering. He holds back those for whom He decreed death and sends the others back for a term, that which is determined. Truly, in that are signs for a folk who reflect. (Q39:42)

And He caused to be subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in and on the earth. All is from Him. Truly, in that are signs for a folk who reflect. (Q45:13)

He caused crops to develop for you with it, and the olives and the date palms and the grapevines, and all kinds of fruits. Truly, in that is a sign for a folk who reflect. (Q16:11)

With the clear portents and the ancient scrolls, We caused to descend the Remembrance to you that you will make manifest to humanity what was sent down to them and so that perhaps they will reflect. (Q16:44)

Again, eat of all the fruits and insert yourself submissively into the ways of your Lord.... Truly, in this is, certainly, a sign for a folk who reflect. (Q16:69)

Among His signs are that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, that you rest in them. And He made affection and mercy among you. Truly, in that are certainly signs for a folk who reflect. (Q30:21)

They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say: In both of them there is deplorable sin and profits for humanity. And their sin is more deplorable than what is profitable. And they ask you how much they should spend. Say: The extra. Thus, God makes manifest His signs to you so that perhaps you will reflect. (Q2:219)

Would anyone of you wish that he have a garden of date palm trees and grapevines beneath which rivers run with all kinds of fruits in it for him? Then, old age lit on him, and he had weak offspring. Then, a whirlwind lit on it in which there is a fire. Then, it was consumed. Thus, God makes manifest His signs for you so that perhaps you will reflect. (Q2:266)

... those who remember God while upright and sitting and on their sides and they reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! You had not created this in vain. Glory be to You! Then, protect us from the punishment of the fire. (Q3:191)

It is He Who stretched out the earth and made on it firm mountains and rivers. And with all kinds of fruits, he made in it two, a pair. He covers the nighttime with the daytime. Truly, in that are signs for a folk who reflect. (Q13:3)

If We had caused this, the Quran, to descend on a mountain, you would have seen it as that which is humbled, one that is split open from dreading God. And there are the parables that We propound for humanity so that perhaps they will reflect. (Q59:21)

Good judgment, insight, balance and avoidance of extremes, the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood, and procedural accuracy are commonly associated with *hikmah* and *hikmah* as such becomes a dimension of evaluative thinking in its Quranic idiom.⁸

To Develop Insight (*Basar*)

Remember Our servants Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, all imbued with dynamic energy and insight. (Q38:45)

God confirms with His help whom He wills. Truly, in this is a lesson for those imbued with insight. (Q3:13)

God turns around and around the nighttime and the daytime. Truly, in this is a lesson for those imbued with insight. (Q24:44)

It is He Who drove out those who were ungrateful—among the People of the Book—from their abodes at the first assembling. You thought that they would not go forth. They thought that they are ones who are secure in their fortresses from God. But God approached them from where they anticipate not. He hurled alarm into their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah). They devastate their own houses with their own hands and the hands of the ones who believe. Then, take warning, O those imbued with insight! (Q59:2)

The Quranic message, in other words, advises analytical knowledge and understanding that generates insight rather than a purely dogmatic approach. The two approaches are reflected in the familiar expressions: Belief based on detailed analysis (*al-iman al-tafsili*) as opposed to undigested and uncomprehended faith (*al-iman al-ijmali*). The former is preferred by common acknowledgment of the religious scholars of all the leading schools of thought. Thus it is declared in a sign:⁹

But a section of people only that they become learned in the way of life and that they warn their folk. (9:122).

To Understand (*Faqiha*)

The Quranic vision of knowledge may be characterized as knowledge that is founded in understanding (*fahm*) and insight (*tafaqquh*). This is indicated in the numerous references in the text which encourage rational observation, thought, and reflection on the observable world and the universe beyond. It is knowledge espoused with insight that the Quran has visualized in its expression *al-tafaqquh fi'l-din*, that is, understands the religion, signifying a rational and inquisitive approach to constructing a Quranic worldview.¹⁰

The seven heavens glorify Him and the earth and whatever is in and on them. There is not a thing but it glorifies His praise, except you understand not their glorification. (Q17:44)

And it is He Who caused you to grow from a single soul, then, a temporary stay and a repository. Surely, We explained distinctly the signs for a folk who understand. (Q6:98)

And whenever there was caused to descend a Chapter of the Quran, some looked at some others saying: Is anyone seeing you? Again, they took flight. God turned away from their consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) because they are a folk who understand not. (Q9:127)

He found behind them a folk who would almost not understand any saying. (Q18:93)

To Contemplate (*Basara*)

And the earth, We stretched it out and cast on it firm mountains and caused in it to develop every lovely, diverse pair for contemplation and as a reminder to every servant, one who turns in repentance. (Q50:7-50:8)

Endnotes to Part III: Our Cognitive System: Module 15: Ways of Acquiring Knowledge

1 Naquib al-Attas. *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, p. 28 ff.

2 Naquib al-Attas. *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, p. 28 ff.

3 See Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs". Online.

4 Ibrahim Kalin. <http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>

5 See Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs". Online. The author says: Indiscriminate imitation of others is widely held to be the single most damaging cause of the decline of creative thinking among Muslims.

6 See Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs". Online.

7 *Mathnawi* IV, ll. 1960-68; William Chittick (1983), pp. 125-35; *Mathnawi*, ll. 2427-29. *Mathnawi* I, ll. 2653-55; VI, ll. 3071-73; Divan, l. 30224). William Chittick, "Rumi, Jalal al-Din, vii, Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

8 Naquib al-Attas. *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, p. 28 ff.

9 See Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs." Online.

10 See Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs." Online.

Epilog: Synthesis

Section 1: Quranic Moral Psychology

Quranic moral psychology requires a fundamental self-transformation in how we relate to self, others and God, a transformation that reflects our interconnectedness with all that exists.

As Muslims, we can remain with the status quo or we can undertake a moral transformation of our "self." Remaining as we are is to see existence as a resource to fulfill our desires. It is to be exploited based on our underlying motives that are inherent in the most fundamental ways of thinking about our "self" and the world. Changing this is to undertake a moral transformation to come to know "self," who we are, why we are here and how we are connected to all of existence.

This transformation is called "moral healing" and it involves our return to our innate human nature (*fitrat Allah*). We return to it by "purifying our consciousness" (*tazkiyat al-qalb*). Undertaking the purification of our consciousness is known as the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*). Once we undertake the greater struggle, purify our consciousness and exist through our innate nature, we have morally healed. Once we are morally healed, we live out our existence being God-conscious (*muttaqin*). (Q49:13) We have returned to our innate nature when we manifest positive traits by transforming our negative ones. The positive traits are indicated in our reasoning, feelings, behavior and impulses.

Moral healing, then, is to transform the motivational system of our animal soul's affect/emotions and behavior, as well as our cognitive system's reasoning and thinking so that we manifest our innate nature. (Q30:30)

Positive traits (virtues) are related to negative ones (vices). They provide guidelines for our moral healing. We usually consider negative traits to be the opposite of positive ones. However, traditional psychology sees them differently. Rather than negative traits being the opposite of positive traits, they are described as too much, too little or not present at all of a positive trait. Too much or too little signifies a quantitative, measurable amount while "not present at all" or "a lack of" signifies a qualitative amount. For instance, if we say that wisdom is a positive trait, too much wisdom results in hypocrisy, too little in ignorance and the lack of the quality of wisdom as ingratitude. The positive trait of wisdom, then, can be called "the golden mean" between three negative vices. However, it is always noted that a positive trait is not necessarily exactly in the center between the quantitative or qualitative extremes.

The Light

Moral healing cannot be achieved without actualizing our God-given potential for positive moral traits by returning to our innate human nature (*fitrat Allah*).

Our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*), as we learned in Module 2, is described as

an inner light located at the center of self where our soul, and spirit meet within our body. When this Light illuminates our consciousness, our consciousness turns towards the moral/spiritual. Without the inner Light of this nature originated by God, our consciousness is in a state of ignorance of Reality. Through the nurturing process, this inner Light becomes veiled. The veiling of the Light of the nature originated by God, in turn, veils the moral potential of our consciousness.

Two major factors which cause the inner Light to dim are the domination of the self by our soul-body's idol/ego within and the tendency of our consciousness to forget Reality. Our idol/ego is our animal self attached to the material world, making the same demands on our "self" as God does, but here it is to worship our "self" and there, to worship God. Attachment to our ego—desires for the material world—as opposed to the Light which opens onto the moral/spiritual world—little by little, bit by bit, veils the possibility of our consciousness turning towards moral healing. This veiling of our consciousness continues to thicken if we continue to forget Reality. This is why we need reminders and reminderers such as the Quran and the Prophet who bring us out of a state of forgetfulness into a state of remembrance.

This nature originated by God is veiled by anything that takes us away from the remembrance of God. The biological state in which we find ourselves may be the veil where the natural elements combine in an imbalanced way, or it may be the society or culture in which we grow up which veils us from this inner Light.

A person who seeks to morally heal spends no time looking for the reason for the veiling, instead realizing that consciousness of Reality or God-consciousness (*taqwa*) has been veiled and recognizes that the only way out is to engage in struggle with the soul-body's idol/ego within.

Grace

The grace of God's loving mercy is to turn towards Him. The recognition of the beginning of the greater struggle, the struggle to morally heal, is itself the Call of God. This is one of the greatest Gifts of God to us as it enables us to return to Him.

Wrongdoing, self-centeredness, egotism and/or self-worship, pride, arrogance, haughtiness, attachment to worldly things, extravagance, miserliness, envy, greed and so forth restrain the self from moral healing. Only when these negative traits have been overcome do we exercise our free willpower and our free willpower chooses its natural way to surrender or submit to a higher Will. Those who hear the Call and respond attempting to morally heal through constant self-examination have "opened their consciousness" to His Grace. God then freely gives that which He is always ready to give.

A Divine Tradition or *hadith qudsi* confirms this view:

Oh son of Adam, if you draw near to Me by half a span, I will approach you by a span and if you approach Me by a span, I will approach you by a cubit,

and if you approach Me by a cubit, I will approach you by a fathom, and if you do come to Me walking, I will come to you in haste.

Every Way emphasizes an aspect of the Truth. For Islam the emphasis is upon this inner Light in its aspect of knowledge. Knowledge is integrated into the principle of Unity or the Oneness of God which runs as the Vertical Axis of existence itself through every mode of knowledge and existence. The source for knowledge and its development in traditional Islamic sciences, including Quranic psychology as its name suggests, is the Quran and the customs and sayings of God's Messenger Muhammad, peace and the mercy of God be upon him. The Quran is Itself the Logos or Word of God revealed to the Messenger over a period of twenty-three years and some months. It is the natural unfolding of creation containing the archetypes of all things within it. Each of the 6000+ verses are called "Signs" (*ayat*) as is everything in the universe including the human self within according to the Sign:

We shall show them Our Signs upon the horizons and within themselves until it is clear to them that it is the Real (the Truth). (Q41:53)

With these concepts of the Quran and the *sunnah* as extensions of nature where the cosmic and natural order overflow with Divine Grace or *barakah*—one as the Word of God and the other as the most perfect model in following the Word of God—our relation with nature is one of a sense of unity and oneness. Through knowledge gained in contemplating nature in all its facets, we learn to read the Signs and act upon them thus becoming the channel of Divine Grace.

The Light of nature originated by God (*fitrat Allah*) is also seen as knowledge of Reality. The seeker of moral healing, seeing the real self by the Light originated by God within, perceives that all human individuality is nothing but appearance, illusion. This knowledge, unlike knowledge gained through sense perception, remains as an everlasting gift with this person.

The Greater Struggle

The greater struggle for our moral development takes place in the second level of our soul's substantial motion from animal to human as it seeks to complete its nature-bestowed goal of moral healing in order to then join with our soul-spirit/intellect as a return to our innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) with which we were created.

The greater struggle takes place for our consciousness as it fluctuates this way and that. When devoted to the idol within, it follows the "passions," the animal aspect consisting of an over use or misuse of feelings/affect/emotion (to preserve the species) and behavior/actions (to preserve the individual). While these two functions are a necessary part of our life as members of the human species, their overuse or misuse result in the unconscious, irrational animal aspect ruling the self. It is then that they are referred to as the passions. The domination of the self by the passions results in the desires of

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the passions becoming an idol within. It makes endless demands upon the self including the demand to obedience and constant admiration.

The process of the greater struggle is to discipline the idol/ego within, realizing that it is a false god. The inappropriate desires of the passions have to be controlled by our consciousness. It is a painful struggle within the soul-body to strengthen our sense of humility before God and His creatures, to subdue the passions to serve God's purposes and not the desires of the self. It is to lose the false aspect of self in order to find the true self as it was created to be. It is dying before you die, dying in order to live. As Rumi asks: Can bread give strength unless it be broken?

Consciousness

In terms of psychology, the Quranic word, *qalb*, or "heart," not the physical organ, refers to consciousness (*nafs al-mulhamah*, *qalb*). Our inspired soul (*nafs al-mulhamah*) is constantly altering, fluctuating, exhibiting inconstancy, overturning, transforming, changing, reversing.

As for the reality of consciousness—what is it and what is its specific attribute? Only the self can reach this, when the preconditions of being conscious are obtained and when, because of clarity, our self no longer pays attention to the enjoyments and states of this world. For consciousness is from the World of Command, not the World of Creation. When something has no quantity, it does not accept division, which is to say that it has no portions and parts. Since it has no measure, it is not a body. Nor is it an accident, for accidents stand through bodies and substances, but consciousness does not stand through the body, nor does it live and move through it.

Know that the substance of consciousness is like a bright mirror, while negative character traits are like smoke and rust that it so veils the mirror of consciousness that it does not see the Presence of God and remains veiled. Good character traits are like a light that polishes the rust of nature, the world and vain desires from our consciousness.¹

... and none will be saved except him who comes to God with an unblemished consciousness ...

... but he who approached God with a pure-hearted consciousness
(Q26:89)

Thus, the Real says:

No indeed! Nay! Their consciousness will be overcome with rust from what they had been earning. (Q83:14)

Seekers of morality regard consciousness as the essence of the self, an

immaterial principle which controls our conscious life by which Reality is perceived and interpreted. It symbolizes the whole human personality or personality in its wholeness. It is consciousness which makes us human. It is that which separates us from all other creatures. It is that which enables us to have knowledge of God, to accept or reject His counseling to the positive and prevention of the negative. It is the point of union where the physical meets the moral/spiritual. It is the only thing that God wants from His servants: God only desires their consciousness from His servants and their physical members will follow their consciousness.

While the actions of our physical members are under control of our consciousness in terms of directing us to the positive or the negative, the actions of our consciousness include our motivation for outward conduct. Motivation, as we have learned, includes the processes of feeling, behaving, willing, sensing and perceiving. These include the use of negative as well as positive traits.

Consciousness, as the potential source for moral healing, then, needs to be purified at three levels: Between the animal and human/spiritual self within (psychoethics), between the self and others (socioethics) and between the self and God (theoethics). At the level of psychoethics, it means to be centered, balanced in fairness and justice with our consciousness ruling over our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*)'s ego and its passions. At the level of socioethics it means to deal with others in a fair and just manner, putting others and their needs before self. In regard to the seeker of morality's relationship with God, it means "to put things in their proper place," "to accept Reality as Trust-Giver and self as trustee and viceregent." When the seeker operates on these three levels in the manner described, the person is morally healed.

Our consciousness symbolizes our human reality. When it turns towards and fluctuates towards desires of the idol/ego, it uses its power to serve our motivational system, our passions or *nafs ammarah*. When it turns towards moral healing, it uses its power to serve our cognitive system, the spirit or reason (*nafs al-mutma'innah*). It is in this capacity that it is then the place for the knowledge of Reality. It is then the quality of knowing God and witnessing the beauty of His Presence.

The struggle within, the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*), between turning to the idol/ego or the soul-spirit/intellect, both aspects of human nature, is more easily won if the nurturing process is a positive one. A positive nurturing process is one that reinforces morality as opposed to one that over or under or even totally undevelops one's natural ability to morality.

However, according to Quranic psychology, no matter what the nurturing process has been, the awareness of the need to morally heal is itself God's Calling of the person and the time to begin.

We know that the process of purifying our consciousness is a gradual one. It takes us time to develop our character, to actualize the potential of our consciousness by purifying it through various means. The most important means for us here as students of Quranic Psychology is the Quran itself as this is what

reinforced the blessed Prophet's beautiful character traits as the Quran tells us:

Truly, you (Muhammad) are of sublime morals (Q68:4); and

Surely in the Messenger of God there is for you a good, fair example for those whose hope has been in God and the Last Day and remember God frequently. (Q33:21)

God-consciousness (*taqwa*)

Consciousness is a faculty of the soul by which we are aware of and respond to the moral character of our own actions. In Quranic terms, it is to have continuous awareness of God or God consciousness (*taqwa*).

God-consciousness is the whole pursuit of a Muslim's principles of behavior, judgment of what is important in life, moral code, code of behavior and avoidance of the unethical in general. It is designated by the Quran as *taqwa*. It is dependent on and is the result of faith in God:

O humanity! Worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you so that perhaps you will be God-conscious. (Q2:21)

The Quran is revealed to produce this attitude of God-consciousness among people:

An Arabic Recitation without any crookedness so that perhaps they would be God-conscious. (Q39:28)

It is the presence of this moral attitude which saves us from destruction (Q27:53; 41:18) and it is this which helps us maintain God's commands in our conjugal life (Q2:24; 4:129) in sacrifice (Q5:30; 22:37) in different aspects of social life (Q2:177) and in fulfilling faithfully our social obligations. (Q25:63-25:74)

To be God-conscious (*muttaqi*)—to guard against wrongdoing—is to exhibit virtuous conduct:

It is not virtuous conduct that you turn your faces towards the East or the West. Rather virtuous conduct consists of: Whoever believes in God and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Book, and the Prophets.

Moral Goodness

A Quranic definition of moral goodness, indicating being morally healed, includes:

The better and more lasting reward of the Lord is for those who believe and put their trust in Him; those who avoid the greater crimes and shameful deeds, and, even when they are angry, they forgive; those who hearken to

their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation; who spend out of what God bestows on them for sustenance; who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them (are not cowed but) help and defend themselves; and those who recompense injury with injury in degree equal thereto and, better still, forgive and make reconciliation. But indeed if any do help and defend themselves after a wrong is done to them, against such there is no cause of blame. The blame is only against those who oppress people with wrongdoing and insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right and justice; for such there will be a grievous penalty. But indeed showing patience and forgiveness is an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs.

To attain moral goodness is to become a morally reasonable, religiously cultured monotheist (*halim*). In order to attain this, the seeker develops the traits which describe a monotheist (*hanif*), one who submits to God's Will (*muslim*), one who is a servant (*'abd*) of God and one who is a believer (*mu'min*). It is then that the seeker manifests *hilm*, the moral reasonableness of a religiously cultured monotheist.

What are Moral Traits?

Moral traits are described as having the traits of character necessary for: right action and thinking; the traits of character essential for fair-minded rationality; and the traits that distinguish the narrow-minded, self-serving seekers of morality from the open-minded, truth-seeking one.

Moral traits cannot be imposed from without. They must be cultivated by encouragement and example. People can come to deeply understand and accept these principles by analyzing their experiences of them: Learning from an unfamiliar perspective, discovering they don't know as much as they thought, and so on.

To teach moral traits, one must recognize the significant differences between the higher order moral thinking of a fair-minded moral thinker (believer) and that of a self-serving moral thinker (ungrateful, hypocrite and so forth). Though both share a certain command of the skills of moral healing, they are not equally good at tasks which presuppose moral traits. The self-serving (weak sense) moral thinker would lack the insights that underlie and support these traits.

Insight refers to the ability to see and clearly and deeply understand the inner nature of things. In the Islamic perspective, this is something that extremists might disagree with whereas instruction for Quranic moral thinking fosters insight—understanding the meaning of something—rather than just performance. It cultivates the achievement of deeper knowledge and understanding through insight. Thinking one's way into and through a sign (*ayah*) leads to insights as one synthesizes what one is learning, relating one sign to other signs and all signs to personal experience.

Only when one gains analyzed experiences of working and reasoning one's way out of prejudice can one gain the higher order abilities of a fair-

mindful Quranic moral thinker. What one gains is somewhat procedural or sequential in that there is a process one must go through. This process depends on principles. The somewhat abstract articulation of the moral traits will take on concrete meaning in the light of analyzed experiences. Their true meaning to us will be given in and by these experiences. We will often return to them to recapture and rekindle the insights upon which the moral traits depend.

Generally, to develop moral traits, we must create a collection of analyzed experiences that represent intuitive models to us, not only of the pitfalls of our own previous thinking and experiencing but also processes for reasoning our way out of or around them. These model experiences must be charged with meaning for us. We cannot be indifferent to them. We must sustain them in our mind by the sense of their importance as they sustain and guide us in our thinking.

It is a blessed Book that We caused to descend to you (Muhammad), so that they meditate on its signs and those imbued with intuition recollect. (Q38:29)

How do I experience the seven Quranic Moral Traits

Inspiration can be defined as the direct receiving of something without the use of reasoning. We sometimes seem to know or learn things without recognizing how we came to that knowledge. When this occurs, we experience an inner sense that what we believe is true. The problem is that sometimes we are correct (and have genuinely experienced an inspiration) and sometimes we are incorrect (having fallen victim to one of our prejudices or our sensitive imagination). Moral thinkers do not blindly accept that what they think or believe, but cannot account for, is necessarily true. Moral thinkers realize how easily they confuse inspirations and prejudices. Moral thinkers may follow their inner sense that something is so, but only with a healthy sense of humility.

What does this imply? It implies a somewhat different content or material focus. Our own minds and experiences must become the subject of our study and learning. Indeed, only to the extent that the content of our own experiences becomes an essential part of study will the usual subject matter truly be learned. By the same token, the experiences of others must become part of what we study. However, experiences of any kind should always be critically analyzed. We must do our own analyses and clearly recognize what we are doing.

The motivation to patience, including willpower, renders us capable of action. Motivation is of two types: the first gives an impulse requiring a voluntary response and the second involuntarily causes the body to react on its own accord. When a pleasurable or painful image is imprinted on the internal sense called sensible imagination in the animal, it rouses it to movement.

As previously stated, these two naturally disposed, unconscious/ precon-

scious functions within our animal soul makes up the two basic systems of our animal soul. Known as the concupiscible or attraction to pleasure and irascible or repulsion of harm drives, in psychological terms they are referred to as "attraction to pleasure" or "the pleasure principle" and "avoidance of pain" or "the pain principle." They are essentially the unconscious, affective/emotive and the preconscious, behavioral systems.

Our voluntary motivation contains, in addition to the properties of animal motivation, free-will. It is the highest form of motivation in nature's mode of operation and is independent of conscience or reason. It may do as it pleases, but our "self" will be held responsible on the Day of Judgment for the decisions that we make.

Moral Traits in the Quran

There are many positive traits as well as negative traits mentioned in the Quran. Here we explore some of them in relation to the soul-body: attraction to pleasure, affect/emotions, behavior, avoidance of harm/pain of our animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*), and the indication of having morally healed or the presence of our soul-spirit/intellect (*ruh, nafs al-mutma'innah, aql*) when we are conscious of our self, others and our Creator. Moral healing takes place through the greater struggle, as noted, purifying our consciousness, training it to be able to overcome our irrational willpower (*iradah*) and irrational or sensitive imagination and focus on our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) and rational imagination to choose the morally good. It involves our consciousness listening to our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*), helping our mind (*sadr*) to turn away from our ego—excessive desires and pleasures or ambitions and power-seeking.

In general terms we can speak of seven Quranic moral traits: Those relating to our animal soul's affective or attraction to pleasure such as love, mercy, compassion and goodness; those relating to our behavior or avoidance of harm/pain including empowering courage and persevering towards becoming fair and just; those relating to cognition including belief in the One God and Messengership of Prophet Muhammad, and God-consciousness and those relating to justice as the goal of *taqwa* is to become a fair and just person. It is then that we place our "self," others and our relationship with God in their proper place.

Positive traits can be divided into the intellectual positive traits (specifically to do with our cognitive system or reasoning and thinking, understanding the meaning or "spirit" of moral traits) such as wisdom and the moral positive traits (activities other than reasoning including our impulses to pleasure and to the avoidance of harm/pain) such as temperance or courage.

For those who wish to measure their moral status, the Quran offers hundreds of positive traits to develop as well as many negative traits. Both of these relate to the Quranic usage of "ones who are or do" (active participles)

The following are examples of them.

1. Positive Affective Quranic Moral Traits
 - a. Empathic Altruism (love, mercy, compassion: *ihsan*)
 - Principles
 - Action
 - b. Quranic Example of a Positive Affective Moral Trait
 - Ones Who Ask Questions
 - c. Persevering in Goodness (steadfast: *sabara*)
 - Principles
 - Action
 - d. Quranic Examples of Positive Affective Moral Trait
 - Ones Who Listen
2. Negative Affective Quranic Moral Trait
 - Ones Who Are Tyrants and False Deities
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 - Principles
 - Action
 - b. Quranic Examples of Positive Behavioral Moral Traits
 - Ones Who Have Courage
 - Ones Who Show Patience
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 - Ones Who Are Oppressors, Persecutors
 - Ones Who Disobey God
 - Ones Who Act Immorally
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5. Positive Cognitive Quranic Moral Traits
 - a. Belief in One God (*tawhid*)
 - Principles
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 - Ones Who Are Monotheists
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 - Ones Who Submit
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 - Principles
 - Action

- d. Quranic Examples of Positive Cognitive Moral Traits
 - Ones Who Have Humility and Suspend Judgment
 - Ones Who Question Assumptions
 - Ones With Discernment, Criteria (*furqan*)
- 6. Negative Cognitive Quranic Moral Traits
 - Ones Who Are Ungrateful
 - Ones Who Disbelieve
 - Ones Who Are Hypocrites
- 7. Positive Quranic Moral Trait of Justice
 - a. Being Fair and Just (adl, right-minded: *rashad*)
 - Principles
 - Action
 - b. Quranic Example of a Positive Moral Trait of Justice
 - Ones Who Give Just Balance
- 8. Negative Quranic Moral Trait of Lacking Justice
 - Ones Who Are Unjust

1. Positive Affective Quranic Moral Traits

- a. Empathic Altruism (love, mercy, compassion: doing what is beautiful, *ihsan*)

There is a high stage of moral achievement described as selfless concern for the welfare of others or altruism (*ihsan*) which signifies performance of moral action in conformity with the moral ideal with the added sense of deep loyalty to the cause of God, done in the most graceful way that is motivated by a unique love for God. Performance of God-conscious actions accompanied by a true faith is only a stage in the moral life of a person which, after several stages, gradually matures into altruism (*ihsan*). Altruism is based on having a deep love for God. Love as a human ideal demands that the human being should love God as the complete embodiment of all moral values above everything else.

Principles

Empathic altruism is understanding the need to imaginatively put our "self" in the place of others in order to genuinely understand them. We should recognize that our egocentric tendency identifies truth with our immediate perceptions or longstanding beliefs. Empathic altruism correlates with the ability to accurately reconstruct the viewpoints and reasoning of others and to reason from premises, assumptions, and ideas other than our own. This trait also requires that we remember occasions when we were wrong, despite an intense conviction that we were right, and consider that we might be similarly deceived in a case at hand.

Action

We live in a world, both personal and social, in which every situation is de-

defined, that is, given a meaning. How a situation is defined determines not only how we feel about it, but also how we act on it, and what implications it has for us. However, virtually every situation can be defined in more than one way. This fact carries with it tremendous opportunities. In principle, it lies within our power to make our lives happier and more fulfilling than they are. Many of the negative definitions that we give to situations in our lives could in principle be transformed into positive ones. We can be happy when otherwise we would have been sad. We can be fulfilled when otherwise we would have been frustrated. In this strategy, we practice redefining the way we see things, turning negatives into positives, dead-ends into new beginnings, mistakes into opportunities to learn. To make this strategy practical, we should create some specific guidelines for ourselves. For example, we might make ourselves a list of five to ten recurrent negative contexts in which we feel frustrated, angry, unhappy, or worried. We could then identify the definition in each case that is at the root of the negative emotion. We would then choose a plausible alternative definition for each and then plan for their new responses as well as new emotions.

b. Quranic Example of Positive Affective Moral Trait Ones Who Ask Questions

Remember Abraham . . . when he asked his father: O father! Why will you worship what hears not and perceives not and avails you not anything? O my father! Truly I, there has drawn near to me of the knowledge of what approaches you not. So follow me and I will guide you to a path without fault. O my father! Worship not Satan. Truly Satan has been rebellious towards the Merciful! O my father! Truly I fear that a punishment should afflict you from the Merciful so that you would become a protector of Satan in hell. (Q19:43-47)

When Abraham's father was insulted by Abraham's question and explanations of how his father was serving idol/egos, his father refused to listen and even threatened Abraham with stoning him. Abraham's answer to his father shows his sense of altruism when he said to his father: *Peace be unto you. I will ask for forgiveness from my Lord for you. (Q19:43-47)*

c. Persevering in Goodness* (steadfast: *sabara*)

Perseverance is being willing and conscious of the need to pursue insights and truths despite difficulties, obstacles, and frustrations; a firm adherence to rational principles despite irrational opposition of others; a sense of the need to struggle with confusion and unsettled questions over an extended period of time in order to achieve deeper understanding or insight. This trait is undermined when others continually provide the answers, do our thinking for us or substitute easy tricks and short cuts for careful, independent thought.

Principles

Perseverance in goodness is an attribute of God: *Whatever you have of divine blessing is from God.* (Q16:53) and, therefore, it becomes the duty of each one of us to obey our own impulse to good (*ikhtiyar*): *Whoever volunteered good, then, truly, God is One Who is Responsive, Knowing.* (Q2:158) We should do good as God has been good to all: *Do good even as God did good to you* (Q28:77) and love those who do good: *Do good. Truly, God loves the ones who are doers of good.* (Q2:195) Believers hasten in every good work. As all prophets were quick in emulating good works, (21:90) so all people are advised to strive together (as in a race) towards all that is good: *Be forward, then, in good deeds.* (Q2:148) All good things are for the believers; goodly reward in the hereafter and highest grace of God awaits those who are foremost in good deeds:

Some of them are ones who take the lead with good deeds by permission of God. That is the greater grace. (Q35:32)

Believers are advised to repel wrongdoing with what is better, for thereby enmity will change into warm friendship: Drive back with what is fairer.

Then, behold he who between you and between him was enmity as if he had been a protector, a loyal friend. (Q41:34)

It is often reflective in the sense that we have to go back and think about similar problems that we had faced before and re-analyze them. We do not let difficulties, obstacles and frustrations stop us from pursuing truths with our insight, that is, the capacity to gain an accurate and deep intuitive understanding of a person or thing.

Action

Perseverance can be developed by reviewing and discussing the kinds of difficulties that were inherent in previous problems worked on, exploring why it is necessary to struggle with them over an extended period. We should come to see moral struggle as crucial to Quranic learning by discovering its reward through attaining positive moral traits.

d. Quranic Example of Positive Affective Moral Traits Ones Who Listen

How many We caused to perish before them of generations who were stronger than they in courage so that they searched about on the land. Was there any asylum? (Q50:36)

Again, a reminder for those who listen, to hear about the fate of earlier communities. What consciousness would not be awakened by this sign? In

order to understand the warning, we need to listen attentively. Our souls are sensitive to the fate of others and listening carefully means that we listen so well that we are prepared to ask questions like the sign asks: Was there any asylum for them?

2. Negative Affective Quranic Moral Traits

In the continuing struggle between reason and our passions, Quranic signs speak of character traits to avoid.

Ones Who Are Tyrants or False Deities

There is no compulsion in the way of life. Surely, right judgment became clear from error. So whoever disbelieves in tyrants or false deities and believes in God, then, surely, he held fast to the most firm handhold. It is not breakable. God is Hearing, Knowing. (Q2:256)

The Arabic word for tyrant or false deity is *taghut*. The word carries the meaning of anything or anyone that takes hold of our mind, conceals the truth, or transgresses the laws of God. Creating a system of tyranny, they are forces that disregard the religious, moral, social and legal order. They rule on positive traits and principles that oppose the positive traits and principles sanctioned by God or that come from His guidance and teachings. The way to resist such power is to believe in the One God as the most firm handhold.

3. Positive Behavioral Quranic Moral Traits

a. Empowering Courage (*batasha*)

Courage is the virtue of the perfection of the passion or animal quality of the self called the irascible soul (avoidance of pain, the instinct to preserve the individual). Reason teaches the irascible soul to use good judgment when confronting dangerous situations, that is, situations in which we should not fear if to do the act is good or if to withstand and resist is praiseworthy. Proof of the irascible soul being balanced is when it is not aroused at the wrong time nor does it become unduly excited.

Principles

To be independent Quranic thinkers who are fair, we often have to deal with unpopular ideas, beliefs and points of view. This requires courage on our part not to fear the reproach that others may use against us. Courage as a human ideal implies that we have the potentiality of assuming responsibility undertaken by us of our own accord. We have all the faculties that are necessary for our physical and spiritual development. We are given the power of courage to distinguish between good and evil: *Truly, We guided him on the way, whether he be one who is thankful or ungrateful. (Q76:3)* and, therefore, we alone are responsible for what we do. *No burdened soul will bear another's heavy load. (Q6:164)*

We are endowed with freedom of action, but our freedom is limited by the free causality of God. *No indeed! Truly, it is an admonition. So let whoever willed, remember it. But they will not remember unless God wills. He is Worthy of God-consciousness and He is Worthy of granting The Forgiveness.* (Q74:54-56)

Our responsibility is proportionate to our powers: *He has been shown the path of God-consciousness and it is up to him to accept its lead or reject it. Truly, We guided him on the way, whether he be one who is thankful or ungrateful.* (Q76:3)

Action

In order to develop courage, we need to question what we learn. It takes courage on our part to admit that some ideas are dangerous and lack truth and to be true to our own thinking, questioning beliefs that we hold deeply. Courage is required to not conform to ideas that we know to be false.

It is the primary duty of the believers to participate actively in the struggle for the establishment of a social order based on peace, harmony and justice: *Fight them until there be no persecution, and the way of life be for God. Then, if they refrained themselves, then, there is to be no deep seated dislike, but against the ones who are unjust. Fight aggression* (Q2:193) in which everybody is equal before the law, and people in authority work out their policies after ascertaining the views of the people: *Those who responded to their Lord and performed their formal prayer and their affairs are by counsel among themselves, and who spend of what We provided them.* (Q42:38)

Courage is having a consciousness of the need to face and fairly address ideas, beliefs, or viewpoints toward which we have strong negative emotions and to which we have not given a serious hearing. This courage is connected with the recognition that ideas considered dangerous or absurd are sometimes rationally justified (in whole or in part) and that conclusions and beliefs inculcated in us are sometimes false or misleading.

In this endeavor to realize morality in our individual and social life, we often have to contend against wrongdoing forces represented by negative traits. (Q15:35-15:40) But it is within our power to resist and overcome them. (Q6:99) Though the human being is always prone to weakness and susceptible to seduction by the forces of wrongdoing, yet his weakness is rectifiable under the guidance of revelation, (Q2:36) and such people as follow God-consciousness shall be immune from these lapses (Q3:175) or else they will be cowardly in their behavior. (Q3:122)

The struggle against the negative forces and oppression demands that its participants must be characterized by perseverance, courage, fearlessness, and trust in God—the moral qualities which are described by the Quran as characteristic of those in accord with morality in the social context. *Have you patience, for, truly, God wastes not the compensation of the ones who are doers of good.* (Q11:115); *those who are firm and steadfast will never lose heart, nor weaken in will, nor give in before the enemy. How many a Prophet*

whom, along with him, many thousands fought, but none lost confidence with what lit on them in the way of God, nor were they weakened nor were they to give in. God loves the ones who remain steadfast. (Q3:146)

To determine for ourself which is which, we must not passively and uncritically "accept" what we have "learned." Courage comes into play here, because inevitably we will come to see some truth in some ideas considered dangerous and absurd, and distortion or falsity in some ideas strongly held in our social group. We need courage to be true to our own thinking in such circumstances. The penalties for non-conformity can be severe.

Similarly, trust in God is the moral quality of all believers. *The ones who believe are only those whose consciousness took notice when God was remembered. When His signs were recounted to them, their belief increased and they put their trust in the Lord. (Q8:2)* After you have taken all possibilities into consideration and made a decision, put your trust in God. ... *when you are resolved, then, put your trust in God. Truly, God loves the ones who put their trust in Him. (Q3:159)*

Courage is fostered through a consistently open-minded atmosphere and patience. We should be encouraged to honestly consider or doubt any belief. We who disagree with or doubt our peers should be given support to raise probing questions regarding unpopular ideas which we have hitherto been discouraged from considering. Model courage by playing devil's advocate. Why does this idea bother me?

b. Quranic Examples of Positive Behavioral Moral Traits **Ones Who Have Courage**

When your Lord proclaimed to Moses saying that: Approach the unjust folk, a folk of Pharaoh saying: Will they not be God-conscious? He said: My Lord! Truly, I fear that they will deny me and my breast be narrowed and my tongue will not be loosened. So send for Aaron. They charge an impiety against me. I fear that they will kill me. He said: No indeed! Both of you go with Our signs. Truly, We will be with you, ones who are listening. Both of you approach Pharaoh and say: We are the Messengers of the Lord of the worlds, so send the Children of Jacob with us. (Q26:10-26:17)

In spite of the fact that Moses felt that Pharaoh would deny him and, therefore, asked that his brother, Aaron, accompany him, he was inspired with the intellectual courage to face Pharaoh, the worst tyrant of his day and ask that the despot to free the Children of Jacob from their slavery.

Ones Who Show Patience

O those who believed! Pray for help with patience and formal prayer. Truly God is with the ones who remain steadfast. (Q2:153)

As seekers of morality who are struggling with confusion and questions that have remained unsettled over time, we require patience and perseverance. In addition to thinking back to previous problems in order to analyze them once again, the Quranic perspective suggests prayer.

Patience is required to remain always on the alert, ready to give whatever sacrifice may be needed. When those who are hostile to God's cause seem to wield power, when falsehood seems too strong, when help seems to be endlessly delayed and the destination too far away, patience is one of the most important moral qualities to have. It is also needed to face those who are deviant, erring, harsh and persistent in their opposition to the truth.

The signs in the Quran frequently mention patience. It is mentioned as being essential in continuing to maintain a balance when faced with difficulties that inevitably occur over a lifetime. Patience is important in order to observe one's duties, to resist temptation, poverty, injustice and oppression.

c. Integrity through Moral Discipline (morally obligated: *qanata*)

Integrity or moral uprightness, the state of being whole and undivided or a sense of inner and outer unity, develops through moral discipline. It produces the attitude of God-consciousness (*taqwa*) when the discipline of prayer, fasting, giving the purifying alms, and pilgrimage is practiced. People are commanded to guard strictly their habit of formal prayers and stand before God in a devout frame of mind, (Q2:28) to pay the purifying alms, (Q98:5) to spend in charity secretly and openly (Q25:29)—giving a beautiful loan to God (Q72:20)—a bargain that will never fail, (Q25:29) involving a glad tidings for the believers (Q22:34) and a cause of prosperity (Q31:5) and spiritual joy. (Q20:139) Those people who follow these principles are on the right path towards the moral trait of integrity under the true guidance of the Lord. (Q31:5; 97:5) They remove the stain of evil from the people (Q11:114) and help them refrain from shameful and unjust deeds. (Q29:45) It is the practice of all believing people that when God grants them power in the land, they enjoin what is honorable and prohibit the unlawful.

Those who, if We established them firmly on the earth, they performed the formal prayer and they gave the purifying alms and they commanded to that which is honorable and they prohibited that which is unlawful. And with God is the Ultimate End of the command. (Q22:41)

Principles

Moral discipline or integrity involves the recognition of the need to be true to our own thinking, to be consistent in the standards we apply, to hold our "self" to the same rigorous standards of evidence and proof to which we hold our antagonists, to practice what we advocate for others, and to honestly admit discrepancies and inconsistencies in our own thought and action. This trait develops best in a supportive atmosphere in which people feel secure and free enough to honestly acknowledge their inconsistencies, and can de-

velop and share realistic ways of ameliorating them. It requires honest acknowledgment of the difficulties of achieving greater consistency.

Seekers of morality learn to consistently apply standards of evidence and proof to ourselves as well as to others. We learn to practice what we advocate for others. We are able to readily admit any discrepancies and inconsistencies in our own thought and behavior. We are fervent believers in what has been justified by our own thought and experience. We bring together the person we want to be with the person that we are.

However, it is not uncommon for many people to be inconsistent in applying their standards, once their ego is involved. We cannot become ego-centric and overrate the positive traits of people who like us and underate those who do not. If our ego dominates us, we become blind to their understanding. We promote whatever serves our needs and disregard whatever does not support what we want.

Action

Sometimes parents say: Do as I say, not as I do. There is often a lack of integrity in human life. Hypocrisy and inconsistency are common. We need to have the courage to be sensitive to our own inconsistencies in the application of rules and standards, and we need to help others explore their own.

d. Quranic Example of a Positive Behavioral Moral Trait Ones Who Observe

Faces on that day will be ones that beam, ones that look toward their Lord. Faces on that day will be ones that scowl. (Q75:22-24)

Observing the similarities and differences of how the Quranic signs describe the faces, outwardly similar, but to develop far different expressions.

Certainly, We made constellations in the heavens and We made them appear pleasing to the ones who look. (Q15:16)

This Quranic sign tells us, as seekers of morality, that not only does God create the constellations in the heavens through His creative power, but He gives the reasons so that we can evaluate the evidence and the facts. He made them appear pleasing to the ones who look and observe.

4. Negative Behavioral Quranic Moral Traits Ones Who Are Oppressors, Persecutors

So as for the orphan, oppress not. (Q93:9)

Quranic signs speak out against those who oppress the weak and helpless. Oppressors and persecutors have drowned themselves in the material world and ignore the final accounting for their actions. Quranic signs protect

those who cannot defend themselves and their rights. In speaking out against oppressors and persecutors, the Quranic signs encourage the reform of society by following God's laws in order to establish equity, justice and goodwill.

Ones Who Disobey God

Be not like those who forgot God and He caused them to forget themselves. Those, they are the ones who disobey. (Q59:19)

The sign informs us that whoever forgets God will then forget their "self" as ones who have disobeyed God.

Ones Who Act Immorally

Or will We make those who believed and did as the ones in accord with morality like the ones who make corruption in and on the earth? Or will We make the ones who are God-conscious as the ones who acted immorally? (Q38:28)

Or shall We treat those who believe and perform righteous deeds like those who cause corruption in the earth; or shall We treat the God-conscious like the profligate?

Ones Who Are Excessive, Aggressors

O Children of Adam! Take your adornment at every place of prostration. Eat and drink, but exceed not all bounds. Truly, He loves not the ones who are excessive. (Q7:31)

(Lo! He loves not the prodigals) those who transgress by leaving the lawful and going after the unlawful.

Ones Who Are Wrongdoers

O Prophet! When you divorced your wives, then, divorce them (f) after their (f) waiting periods and count their (f) waiting periods. Be God-conscious, your Lord. Drive them (f) not out from their (f) houses nor let them (f) go forth unless they approach a manifest indecency. These are the ordinances of God. Whoever violates the ordinances of God, then, truly, he did wrong to himself. You are not informed so that perhaps God will cause to evoke something after that affair. (Q65:1)

Husbands who violate the rules set down in this Quranic sign become ones who are wrongdoers. They expose themselves to the anger of God and they wrong not only themselves, but their wives when they had both been

created from a single soul. Therefore, any wrong that is done to wives rebounds on the husbands.

5. Positive Cognitive Quranic Moral Traits

The cognitive system or reason (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*) is the control center for thought and actions of our self's conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*), free-will (*ikhtiyar*), and ability to gain consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) of self. The norm is for the cognitive system to regulate the pre-conscious (not to the extent that it can come to know, but to the extent that it can be disciplined) behavioral and unconscious affective, natural dispositions by keeping them in a state of equilibrium or moderation in terms of the Straight Path.

The cognitive—human rational/ consciousness—system of self is divisible into a practical and a theoretical (cognitive) function, both of which are equivocally called the intellect or wisdom.

Principles

The cognitive system contains both the practical intellect and the theoretical or cognitive intellect. It is through the cognitive intellect that we understand things that we cannot bring into being. It is through our cognitive intellect that we understand and bring them into being in accordance with our own intention.

You command humanity to virtuous conduct and forget yourselves while you relate the Book? Will you not, then, be reasonable? (Q2:44)

Action

This sign speaks directly to whether or not one has good faith and integrity when teaching others to exhibit the virtuous conduct to which the Quranic signs refer.

Good faith and integrity come from matching our words with our actions. When teaching, particularly religious teaching, becomes a profession, we tend to lose both good faith and integrity. Words are then said that we ourselves no longer believe so that our actions divorce themselves from what we say. This situation leads very rapidly to the twisting of facts, compromising ideas and principles in order to serve the interests of the powerful who actually pay them to say what we say. Opinions are put forward that are divorced from the spirit and letter of the faith because of the double standard. People hear good expressions of faith that they then see are contradicted by immoral deeds. This confuses them and their faith begins to dim, finally losing trust in religious preachers, people now lose trust in the faith itself.

Our beliefs are expressed through our behavior and actions. When our behavior reflects our words, whether we are eloquent or not, people who hear our words begin to trust us where there is no dissonance between our beliefs

and behavior. The good faith and integrity behind our words gives them a power that assumes a force of its own.

a. Belief in One God (*tawhid*)

The greatest emphasis in the Quran is on the Oneness or Unity of God (*tawhid*, monotheism) which implies belief in the divine causality and the presence of moral order in the universe where people are judged according to the merit of their deeds:

Whoever does the weight of an atom of good will see it. Whoever does the weight of an atom of the worst will see it. (Q99:7-99:8)

They are not judged arbitrarily: Know that God will never be One Who Causes to Alter a divine blessing when He was gracious to a folk unless they first alter what is within themselves. Truly, God is Hearing, Knowing. (Q8:53)

This moral order works without any favor, not only in the case of individuals, but also in the case of societies and peoples: Mention when Moses said to his folk:

O my folk! Remember the divine blessing of God on you when He assigned Prophets among you and assigned kings and gives you what He gave not to anyone of the worlds. (Q5:20)

God has entered into covenant with human beings within the limits of this moral order with people as such and not with particular nations or races:

O those who believed! Be staunch in justice as witnesses to God and let not that you detest a folk drive you into not dealing justly. Be just. That is nearer to God-consciousness. Be God-conscious. Truly, God is Aware of what you do. (Q5:8)

Proof of Belief in the One God is Through Our Actions

Proof of belief in the One God is in our actions, behavior or practicing of this belief which includes, among other practices:

The practice of good deeds: to spend out of one's substance, out of love for God, for kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, for the ransom of prisoners-of-war; to be steadfast in prayers, and to pay the purifying alms (zakat); to fulfil the contracts which have been made; and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering), adversity, and times of danger. Such people as follow these are possessed of true God-consciousness. (Q2:177-2:178)

Unity, as one of the human ideals, implies unity in our internal self. That is, a coordination of our reason, feelings, will, and actions. It requires disciplin-

ing our passions. It also stands for the unity of profession and practice. Belief in God is the necessary prerequisite of moral life, but it should not be mere verbal acceptance:

Truly, We caused the Torah to descend wherein is guidance and light. The Prophets give judgment with it, those who submitted to God, for those who became Jews and the rabbis and learned Jewish scholars who committed to memory the Book of God and they had been witnesses to it. (Q5:44)

It must be accompanied by good deeds:

But for those who believed and did as the ones in accord with morality, We place no burden on any soul beyond its capacity. Those will be the Companions of the Garden. They are ones who will dwell in it forever. (Q7:42)

Performing good deeds implies an attitude of mind which is motivated by a complete submission to God's will:

When his Lord said to him: Submit! He said: I submitted to the Lord of the worlds. (Q2:131)

Ones Who Are Monotheists

Truly, I turned my face to He Who Originated the heavens and the earth—as a monotheist and I am not of the ones who are polytheists. (6:79)

When they asked him: Who do you worship? He said: I have made my religion and works sincere to (He Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright), a Muslim, (and I am not of the idolaters) who follows their religion.

We turn to God alone. How could we do otherwise when, like Abraham, we have found complete identity between what we feel deep inside ourselves and our reasoned conclusions after a long and meaningful search.

So set your face towards a way of life as a monotheist. It is the nature originated by God in which He originated humanity. There is no substitution for the creation of God. That is the truth-loving way of life, but most of humanity knows not. (Q30:30)

So set your purpose for religion, as a *hanif*, as one inclining to it—in other words, devote your religion, you and whoever follows you, purely to God—a nature given by God, upon which He originated humanity. This nature is His way of life: in other words, adhere to it. There is no changing God's creation, His way of life. That is to say, do not change it by becoming idolaters. That is the upright way of life, the belief in God's Oneness.

Ones Who Believe

The emphasis in the Quran upon being us being ones who believes, ones who have "given something precious over to another who has demanded it," that is, a *muslim*, and submitting to God's will is clear in the following:

That is the Book—there is no doubt in it, a guidance for the ones who are God-conscious: Those who believe in the unseen and perform the formal prayer, and they spend out of what We provided them, and those who believe in what was caused to descend to you, and what was caused to descend before you, and they are certain of the world to come. Those are on a guidance from their Lord and those, they are the ones who prosper. (Q2:2-2:5)

Ones Who Submit (*muslim*)

Not only does God call our way of life "submission," but throughout the various Quranic verses that refer to "one who submits" (*muslim*), it becomes very clear that one who submits is one who "becomes" through an inner, personal struggle, a struggle whereby one experiences the moment when one first understood the full meaning of obedience to the Will of God with humility and re-experiences it daily through prayer. Once we attain maturity, we "become" a person who has left aside selfishness, pride in our human power and achievements, and we stand in humility before our Lord and Master.

Ones Who Are Servants of God

The servants of The Merciful are those who walk on the earth in meekness. When the ones who are ignorant addressed them, they said: Peace! Those who spend the night with their Lord as ones who prostrate themselves and are upright, and those who say: Our Lord! Turn You away the punishment of hell from us. Truly, its punishment will be continuous torment. (How evil a habitation and resting place. Those who, when they spent, neither exceed all bounds, nor are they tightfisted, but had been between that, a just stand: Those who call not to another god with God nor kill the soul which God forbade but rightfully, nor commit adultery. Whoever disregards and commits this will meet sinfulness. (Q25:63-25:68)

Ones who are servants of God, as described by the Quranic signs and followed by the blessed Prophet, have the moral qualities of forbearance, belief in the Day of Judgment, the giving of charity and alms without showing off or trying to impress others by doing so, avoiding associating partners with God, not killing any living being without right, fornication, the avoiding of idle talk or lying, being sensitive to the importance of the revelation and happiness and joy in the present world based on the expectation of the world to come.

c. God-consciousness (*taqwa*)

While we have examined the concept of God-consciousness previously in this Epilog, it is important to mention it again here as a positive cognitive moral trait.

Principles

God-consciousness results in developing a sense of humility. As seekers of morality, we recognize that there is a limit of our knowledge. We are sensitive to our being self-centered and egocentric as we know that this will only increase our self-deception. We are aware of bias and prejudice in our views. The basis of humility is to be able to avoid claiming to know more than we actually know.

The presence of humility implies a lack of arrogance, conceit or pretentiousness as well as implying that we have insight into the basis for our beliefs. We learn to know what evidence we have, how we came to believe something and what additional evidence we would need. This indicates that as Quranic seekers of morality we know what we know as well as what we do not know.

Action

We bring about humility by continually asking ourselves: How could I know whether or not this is true? To suspend judgment until we find out more about a situation does not make us uncomfortable.

Humility, therefore, is suspending judgment and having a consciousness of the limits of our knowledge, including a sensitivity to circumstances in which our native egocentrism is likely to function self-deceptively; sensitivity to bias, prejudice, and limitations of our viewpoint. Humility depends on recognizing that we should not claim more than we actually know. It does not imply spinelessness or submissiveness. It implies the lack of intellectual pretentiousness, boastfulness, or conceit, combined with insight into the logical foundations, or lack of such foundations of our beliefs.

Of the servants of God the most gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say:

'Peace'; those who spend the night in adoration of their Lord prostrating and standing; those who, when they spend, are not extravagant nor miserly, but hold a just balance between these two extremes; those who invoke not, with God, any other god, nor slay such life as God has made sacred, except for just cause, nor commit fornication; those who witness no falsehood, and, if they pass by futility, they pass by it with honorable avoidance; those who, when they are admonished with the signs of their Lord, do not show indifference to them like the deaf or the blind; and those who pray: Our Lord! give us the grace to lead the God-conscious.

In the Quranic context, humility is fostered through the concept of repentance. Though the human being is by nature after the pattern of God's nature

and, therefore, capable of approximating to the ideal embodied in the most beautiful names, yet being prone to different weaknesses he is often led to wrong his soul in spite of his best efforts to follow moral discipline.

d. Quranic Examples of Positive Cognitive Moral Traits
Ones Who Have Humility and Suspend Judgment

It had not been for a mortal that God should give him the Book and critical judgment and the prophethood and, again, he say to humanity: Be you servants of me instead of God! Rather, he would say: Be you masters, because you had been teaching the Book and because you had been studying it. (Q3:79)

As seekers, we have developed humility and we apply what we know. We would be following the way of the Prophets as shown in this sign. The presence of this sign prevents someone to claim the Godhead for himself as Pharaoh had done. We, instead, surrender our self to God.

Ones Who Question Assumptions

Those who ascribed partners with God will say: If God willed, neither would we have ascribed partners with God, nor our fathers, nor would we have forbidden anything. Thus, denied those who were before them until they experienced Our might. Say: Is there any knowledge with you that you bring out to us? You follow not but opinion and, then, you only guess. (Q6:148)

Those who refuse God's message are ones who follow assumptions, conjecture and opinion without examining or evaluating them. The assumption that is questioned here is the accusation made by those ungrateful for God's blessings, the same accusation made by Satan when he refused to bow down to Adam, namely, that it is the fault of God's Will that they ascribed partners with God (or, as in the case of Satan, it was God Who willed that Satan not bow down to Adam). The Quran asks the ungrateful: Is there any knowledge with you that you bring out to Us?

God's revelation clearly states not to associate partners with God, but the ungrateful refuse to believe and prefer, instead to make excuses for their behavior rather than admit to their error. This sign teaches seekers of morality to question and distinguish between that which is conjecture and opinion and that which is the truth.

Assumed you that We created you in amusement and that to Us you would not be returned? (Q23:115)

In this sign the Quran itself challenges assumptions. Do we assume that

God created us in order to amuse Himself (much as the ancient Greek concept of the gods) or that there was something else behind our creation? Or do we assume that all the favors and comfort that we enjoy means we have been successful in providing for ourselves without considering any grace from God? Or that it is all temporary and it is to God that we will return? This sign reminds us that critical thinkers examine and evaluate their assumptions as well.

Ones With Discernment, Criteria (*furqan*)

O those who believed! If you are God-conscious, He will assign you a Criterion between right and wrong and will absolve you of your evil deeds and will forgive you. God is Possessor of Sublime Grace. (Q8:29)

Some of the criteria that could be used to evaluate and clarify values are given in this sign.

6. Negative Cognitive Quranic Moral Traits

Ones Who Are Ungrateful

Then, who does greater wrong than one who lied against God and denied sincerity when it drew near him? Is there not in hell a place of lodging for the ones who are ungrateful? (Q39:32)

The sign asks two questions that are actually statements of facts. Using this method makes these two statements clearer and more emphatic.

Ones Who Disbelieve

Certainly, We diversified for humanity in this, the Quran, every kind of parable, but most of humanity refused all but disbelief. (Q17:89)

Rather than believe in the Prophet's message, ones who disbelieve place conditions that they require be met before they will believe. In spite of the diversity that God has created for humanity on earth, still most people refuse everything but to be ones who disbelieve.

Ones Who Are Hypocrites

This is when there is discord or a contradiction between our words and deeds. We pretend to believe, but our conscience is against it.

They took their oaths to themselves as a pretext. Then, they barred from the way of God. Truly, they, how evil is what they had been doing! (Q63:2)

That is because they believed and, again, disbelieved, so a seal was set on their consciousness so they understand not. (Q63:3)

When you see them, their physiques impress you. When they speak, you hear their saying. It is as if they had been propped up timber. They assume that every Cry is against them. They are the enemy so beware of them. God took the offensive. How they are misled! (Q63:4)

When it was said to them: Approach now. The Messenger of God asks forgiveness for you. They twist their heads and you saw them dissuading while they are ones who grow arrogant. (Q63:5)

Yet they are not ones who believe. They seek to trick God and those who believed while they deceive none but themselves, but they are not aware. In their consciousness is a sickness. Then, God increased them in sickness, and for them is a painful punishment because they had been lying against themselves. (Q2:8-2:10)

Such people are to be found among the elite of society who lack the moral courage to either openly accept the truth or clearly reject it. They are ever assuming the moral high ground, placing themselves above all others, deriding their understanding. We should, therefore, take these verses in their absolute sense, as being descriptive of hypocrites in all generations. They indeed address the human soul which is one in all societies.

Typically, the hypocrites claim belief in God and the Last Day when they in fact entertain no such belief. They simply do not possess the resolve to declare their true feelings and convictions.

They delude themselves into thinking that they are so clever and cunning as to be able to deceive the 'naive' believers, but God uncovers the truth about their actions. They are trying to deceive not only believers, but God Himself.

7. Positive Quranic Moral Trait of Justice

a. Being Fair and Just ('*adl*, right-minded, *rashad*)

Justice is a matter of free willpower acquired in order to win virtue and attain praise, then injustice—which is the opposite—must also be a matter of free willpower acquired in order to win vice and merit blame.

Justice is a divine attribute and the Quran emphasizes that we should adopt it as a moral ideal. God commands people to be just towards one another:

Say: My Lord commanded me to be just (Q7:29); truly, God commands justice and kindness and giving to one who is a possessor of kinship and He prohibits depravity and ones who are unlawful and insolent. He admonishes you so that perhaps you will recollect (Q16:90);

I was commanded to be just among you. (Q42:15)

In judging between person and person judge justly: *When you gave judgment between humanity, give judgment justly* (Q4:58) for He loves those who judge fairly.

All believers stand firmly for justice even if it goes against themselves, their parents, their relatives, without any distinction of rich and poor:

Be staunch in justice as witnesses to God even against yourselves or the ones who are your parents or the nearest of kin, whether you would be rich or poor. (Q4:135)

God's revelation itself is an embodiment of truth and justice: *Completed was the Word of your Lord in sincerity and justice.* (Q6:115)

It is revealed with the Balance of right and wrong so that people may stand forth for justice: We caused the Book to descend with them and the Balance so that humanity may uphold justice. (Q57:25)

The value of justice is absolute and morally binding and the believers are, therefore, warned that they should not let the hatred of some people lead them to transgress the limits of justice or make them depart from the ideal of justice, for justice is very near to piety:

Be staunch in justice as witnesses to God and let not that you detest a folk drive you into not dealing justly. Be just. That is nearer to God-consciousness. (Q5:8)

Justice demands that people should be true in word and deed: *They are the ones who remain steadfast and the ones who are sincere and the ones who are morally obligated and the ones who spend in the way of God and the ones who ask for forgiveness at the breaking of day* (Q3:17) faithfully observe the contracts which they have made and fulfil all obligations.

Principles

Developing into a fair and just person requires the willingness and consciousness of the need to entertain all viewpoints sympathetically and to assess them with the same moral traits, without reference to one's own feelings or vested interests, or the feelings or vested interests of one's friends, community, or nation. It implies adherence to moral traits without reference to one's own advantage or the advantage of one's group.

The fair and just Quranic seekers of morality work to improve their thinking whenever they can. They want things for themselves, but they aren't self-ish. They want to help other people. They want to help make the world better for everyone. They are willing to give things up to help others (when it makes

sense to). They don't always have the right answers, but they work to improve their thinking (and actions) over time.

Action

The best fair and just thinkers don't believe any and everything they hear or read. They use standards to decide what to believe. They use standards to keep their thinking on track.

b. Quranic Example of a Positive Moral Trait of Justice Ones Who Give Just Balance

We sent to Midian their brother Jethro (Shuayb). He said: O my folk! Worship God. You have no god other than He. Reduce not the measuring vessel and balance. Truly, I consider you as good. Truly, I fear for you the punishment of an Enclosing Day. (Q11:84)

O my folk! Live up to the measuring vessel and balance in equity. Diminish not of humanity their things. Do no mischief in and on the earth as ones who make corruption. (Q11:85) God's abiding wisdom is best for you if you had been ones who believe.

Jethro (Shuayb) tries to guide his people towards honesty and justice showing that God's law also governs business dealings. Midian lay between the Hijaz and Syria and they are known to have been a people who give short measure and weight. That is, they give people less than their value of goods. Due to their strategic geographical location, they are able to continue to short change people who had no other choice when traveling between north and south of the Arabian peninsula. In the dialogue between them, the people rebuffed both his points: Believing in God's Oneness and honesty, fair trading and transactions that are honorable.

8. Negative Quranic Moral Trait of Lacking Justice Ones Who Are Unjust

Who does greater wrong than he who devised a lie against God or denied His signs? Truly, the ones who are unjust will not prosper. (Q6:21)

Beginning as Quranic signs often do with a rhetorical question that confirms the injustice of devising lies against God or denying His signs, (Q6:21), refers to idol/ego worshipers as an injustice against the truth, against oneself and humanity in general. It is unjust to God's right to be worshipped alone without any associates or partners, against oneself in determining one's final end, and against humanity by establishing regimes and conditions that lead to its decline.

Endnote to Epilog: Synthesis: Section 1: Quranic Moral Psychology

1. See William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online.

Section 2: Diagnosis of Moral Imbalance

1. Cognitive Dissonance ▪
2. Pursuit of Passions ▪
3. Pursuit of Conjecture, Opinion ▪
4. Oppressive Dictatorship ▪
5. Irrationality ▪
6. Blind Imitation of Others ▪
7. Coercive Persuasion ▪
8. Ignorance, Sins and Vices ▪
9. Laziness ▪
10. Self-Deception ▪

Endnotes to Epilog: Synthesis: Module 17: Diagnosis of Moral Imbalance ▪

Epilog: Synthesis

Section 2: Diagnosis of Moral Imbalance

1. Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance is the feeling of discomfort that arises when we hold two (or more) conflicting thoughts/beliefs/convictions. It generally arises when our actions directly contradict our beliefs and it most certainly underlines the conflict we experience when reality opposes what we accept as true. Cognitive dissonance is a very powerful feeling because nobody likes to face a reality that directly contradicts their worldview, regardless of how 'objective' or 'rational' they claim to be.

The Quran tells us that cognitive dissonance is to halt between two opinions:

Again, We gave the Book as an inheritance to those whom We favored of Our servants. Then, of them are ones who are unjust to themselves and of them are ones who halt between two opinions and some of them are ones who take the lead with good deeds by permission of God. That is the greater grace. (Q35:32)

Truly, those who are ungrateful to God and His Messengers and they intend to separate and divide between God and His Messengers and they say: We believe in some and we disbelieve in others, they intend that they take themselves to a way between that. (Q4:150)

2. Pursuit of Passions

Pursuit of caprice (*hawa*) which may consist of love, hatred, pomposity and prejudice that confound impartiality and sound judgment:

Had you considered he who took to himself his own desire as his god and whom God caused to go astray out of a knowledge, sealed over his having the ability to hear and his heart and laid a blindfold on his sight? (Q45:23)

If you had followed their desires after what drew near you of the knowledge, there is not for you from God either a protector or a helper. (2:120)

Who is one who goes astray than whoever followed his own desires without guidance from God? ... (Q28:50)

Obey not him whose consciousness (qalb) We made neglectful of Our Remembrance and who followed his own desires and whose affair had been excess (Q18:28)

The choice is between two alternatives: passions (*hawa*) and guidance

(*huda*); the former renders unclear one's attempt to attain the latter.

We are endowed with reason and thus can have access to the reality of things. But our reason and judgment can be clouded by our ego and carnal desires. We may thus lose our ability for discernment (*furqan*) and can delude our self into thinking that we know and forget the stubborn and commanding nature of our ego. Against this, the Quran warns:¹

Had you considered him who took to himself his own desires as his god? Would you, then, be over him a trustee? Or assume you that most of them hear or are reasonable? They are not but as flocks. Nay! They are ones who go astray from a way. (Q25:43-25:44).

Animals serve the purpose for which they have been created. But those who have been created to worship God take their own ego as their master and worship themselves even though they have been given clear signs. This is where their 'hearing' and 'reasoning' comes to no avail. The Quran goes further and challenges those who claim to see and hear when in fact their conscience has been blinded:²

Among them are some who listen to you. So have you caused someone unwilling to hear, to hear if they had not been reasonable? And among them are some who look on you. So have you guided the unwilling to see if they had not been perceiving? Truly, God does not wrong humanity at all, but humanity does wrong itself. (Q10:42-10:44).

Certainly, We made numerous for hell many of the jinn and humankind. They have consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) with which they understand not. They have eyes with which they perceive not. They have ears with which they hear not. Those are like flocks. Nay! They are ones who go astray. Those, they are the ones who are heedless. (Q7:179).

This suggests that having sense organs is no guarantee to perceive the truth. Empirical knowledge by itself cannot reveal the truth of things. Our consciousness (*qalb*) and the sense organs must all be sound:³

Certainly, We established them firmly in what We established you firmly not and We made for them the ability to hear and sight and consciences (fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah). Yet having the ability to hear availed them not, nor their sight, nor their consciences at all since they had been negating the signs of God. Surrounded were they by what they had been ridiculing. (Q46:26).

The failure of seeing, hearing, etc., does not stem from a biological imperfection but from the closure of our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) and consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) to the truth. But a greater illness is the illusion that

we think we see things because we have eyes when in fact we do not see. The Quran insists that seeing as witnessing the truth requires a higher principle of intelligibility than bodily hearing and seeing:⁴

Truly, you will not cause the dead to hear nor will you cause to hear the unwilling to hear the calling to them when they turned as ones who draw back. Nor will you be one who guides the unwilling to see out of their fallacy. You will not cause to hear, but whoever believes in Our signs and so they are ones who submit to God. (Q27:80-27:81).

Having sound sensate organs is then not enough; they need to be guided by intelligence and wisdom.... Our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) must be uncorrupted and untainted in order to function properly. Thus our *nafs al-ammarah* must be disciplined by our mind (*sadr*), our *nafs al-mulhamah* or consciousness (*qalb*), our *nafs al-lawwamah* or our conscience (*fu'ad*) and our *nafs al-mutma'inah* or intellect, reason (*'aqf*). They do not function as separate souls but rather as aspects of the same soul that provide a cognitive and spiritual context for our experience of the truth.⁵

The Quran thus insists on the total soundness and integrity of our cognition in order for us to know, and advises us to 'travel on earth':

Journey they not through the earth? Have they not consciousness (qalb, nafs al-mulhamah) with which to be reasonable or ears with which to hear? Truly, it is not their sight that is in darkness, but their consciousness which is within their conscience (fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah) that is in darkness! (Q22:46)

3. Pursuit of Conjecture, Opinion

Pursuit of conjecture in the face of certitude:

Most of them follow nothing but opinion (zann). Truly, opinion avails them not against The Truth at all. Truly, God is Knowing of what they accomplish. (10:36)

Knowledge and truth stand in contradistinction to the pursuit of conjecture.

Follow up not of what there is not for you knowledge ('ilm) of it. Truly, having the ability to hear and sight and conscience (fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah), each of those will have been that which is asked. (17:36) Note that the text says one should not follow conjecture until it is established and elevated to the rank of knowledge. It does not say that one should avoid conjecture altogether.

In another place, conjecture occurs side by side with desires or that which they themselves desires.

They follow nothing but opinion (zann) and that for which their souls yearn (hawa). (53:23)

This is the kind of conjecture that is meant. Knowledge is established by sense-perception that often begins with a measure of speculation and doubt but which is affirmed by the light of reason and conviction. Some commentators maintain that the main context for this guideline is religion: Thus, it is said that one should not take speculative positions in matters of belief. As for scientific enquiry and pursuit of knowledge, conjecture is neither discouraged nor avoidable.

The ultimate purpose of this engagement is to attain the truth. Once the truth is attained, one should then commit oneself to it and observe it:

What else is there after The Truth but wandering astray. Where, then, turn you away? (Q10:32)

Reason cannot accept conjecture as truth. Whether we conduct a scientific research or investigate the grounds of religious belief, we need more than conjecture on which to build our truth-claims. The same principle applies to human relations and moral attitude:⁶

O those who believed! Avoid suspicion much. Truly, some suspicion is a sin. Spy not nor backbite some by some other. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his lifeless brother? You would have disliked it. Be God-conscious. (Q49:12).

That is, Truth, not conjecture must be the basis of justification for faith:

Say: Are there among your ascribed associates with God anyone who guides to The Truth? Say: God guides to The Truth. Has not He who guides to The Truth a better right to be followed than he who guides not unless he himself be guided? What is the matter with you? How you give judgment! Most of them follow nothing but opinion. Truly, opinion avails them not against The Truth at all. Truly, God is Knowing of what they accomplish. (Q10:35–10:36)

If you have obeyed most of who are on the earth, they will cause you to go astray from the way of God. They follow nothing but opinion and they only guess. (Q 6:116)

4. Oppressive Dictatorship

The Quran takes to task arrogant dictators and those who support them and follow them. Therefore, there should be no merit in the plea of those who say:

Our Lord! Truly, we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones. They caused us to go astray from the way. (Q33:66)

In a number of other places the text denounces the Pharaoh and Karun for their oppressive ways who misled their people in rejecting the guidance that was conveyed to them.

Pharaoh and his Council but they followed the command of Pharaoh. The command of Pharaoh was not well-intended. (Q11:96)

5. Irrationality

The Quran subscribes to a substantive view of rationality by asserting that not only our instruments and procedures but also our fundamental notions and concepts should be properly rational and conform to the reality of things. The substantive view of rationality follows from the intrinsic intelligibility of existence as God's creation. Every rational act on our part is an act of conforming to the principle of reason built into the nature of things. Whatever violates this principle lands us in the realm of the irrational.

According to the Quran, the creation of the universe by God is so reasonable and self-evident that reason, unhindered by irrational causes, immediately recognizes it. This grasping of the truth through intuition (*hads*) underlies much of our empirical and conceptual knowledge. Those who recognize the truth when they see it do in fact use their reason in the most proper way.⁷

6. Blind Imitation of Others (*Taqlid*)

The correct exercise of reason in Quranic understanding is tied to personal conviction as opposed to indiscriminate following of others, hallowed custom, and precedent. These must be judged in the light of reason and abandoned if found deviant and misleading: The misguided will say, as the Quran provides:⁸

Nay! We will follow whatever we discovered our fathers were following on it—even though their fathers had been not at all reasonable—nor are they truly guided. (Q2:170)

Enough is what we found our fathers upon. Even though their fathers had been knowing nothing nor are they truly guided? (Q5:104)

This was the response that Prophet Abraham and other great Prophets received from their detractors, but the text address them again and again that both you and your ancestors were clearly misguided.

Certainly, We gave Abraham his right judgment before. We had been ones who know of him when he said to his father and his folk: What are these im-

ages to which you be ones who give yourselves up to? They said: We found our fathers as ones who are worshippers of them. He said: Certainly, you and your fathers had been in a clear wandering astray. (Q21:51-21:54)

Forsake those who took to themselves their way of life as a pastime and as a diversion and whom this present life deluded. (Q6:70)

Is it that your formal prayer commands you that we leave what our fathers worship? (Q11:87)

Our only real knowledge of life is firsthand, inside ourselves. This means that true human selfhood cannot be the object of transmitted knowledge. It can only be known by direct, unmediated knowledge. We cannot know ourselves by reading about ourselves, carrying out controlled experiments, listening to what other people have said about us, or examining what we perceive of other people's selves. We can only know ourselves inside ourselves and without the intermediary of any instruments. These "instruments" include not simply scientific devices, but also the five senses, imagination, thought and [free will], all of which are tools of the self.⁹

7. Coercive Persuasion

Persuasion is when we use our conscience or inner critic (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*) to persuade our self to do good:

Those who were given the knowledge said: Woe to you! The reward for good deeds from God is better for whoever believed and did as ones in accord with morality. None will be in receipt of it, but the ones who remain steadfast. (Q28:80)

Coercive persuasion, however, is an obstacle to correct thinking. As soon as a person is a committed believer or follower, the group limits the person's choices, denigrates critical thinking, makes fun of doubts, and insists that any private distress is due to lack of belief in the group. Total conformity is demanded.

Pharaoh said: You believed in Him before I give permission to you? Truly, this is a plan you planned in the city that you drive out the people from it but you will know. (Q7:123)

8. Ignorance, Sins, and Vices

Ignorance, sins and vices of the mind are among the causes of bad dispositions, which in turn result in immoral actions. Ignorance is the root of unhappiness, particularly the kind of ignorance that has been ingrained. Ignorance and unhappiness are from Satan, but happiness and knowledge

(particularly knowledge that comes with proof) are from an angel. Ignorance and weakness of will are among the causes of fear and immoral behavior.¹⁰

9. Laziness

Laziness as a psychological factor rather than an immoral one is one of the obstacles that hinder good actions. Maybe this factor, more than others, is proper for justifying the virtuous person's wrong actions, because a virtuous person does not perform wrong easily. If a person knows which action is the right action and does not have any desire for doing the wrong one and is not forced to perform it, then, if he performed a bad action, it would be for psychological factors, such as laziness, depression, obsession, and desires.¹¹

10. Self-Deception

Self-deception is another cause of action, one that the agent imagines to be good but in reality is bad. This kind of deception sometimes occurs in regard to our intentions, such that good intentions seem bad and bad intentions seem good. Self-deception produces ignorance, which in turn results in bad action. Only someone who has gained practical and theoretical perfection can understand this kind of deception.¹²

Endnotes to Epilog: Synthesis: Section 2: Diagnosis of Moral Imbalance

- 1 See Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs."
<http://www.hashimkamali.com/index.php/publications/item/114-reading-the-signs-a-quranic-perspective-on-thinking>.
- 2 Ibrahim Kalin.
<http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 3 Ibrahim Kalin.
<http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 4 Ibrahim Kalin.
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- 7 Ibrahim Kalin.
<http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/reason-and-rationality-quran>.
- 8 Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs." Online.
- 9 Hashim Kamali, "Reading the Signs." Online.
- 10 Zahra Khazaei, "Mulla Sadra on Virtue and Action." Online, quoting Mulla Sadra 1366 Sh, 1:386.
- 11 Zahra Khazaei, "Mulla Sadra on Virtue and Action." Online.
- 12 Zahra Khazaei, "Mulla Sadra on Virtue and Action". Online, quoting Mulla Sadra 1360 Sh, 358-59.

Appendix: A Tentative List of Muslim "Psychologists" Up to the 20th Century

728 CE d. Hasan al-Basri

765 CE d. Jafar Sadiq

777 CE d. Ibrahim ibn Adham

810 CE d. Shaqiq of Balkh

815 CE d. Jabir ibn Hayyan

857 CE d. Harith Muhasibi

859 CE d. Dhu al-Nun Misri

870 CE d. Rabban al-Tabbari

873 CE d. al-Kindi

873 CE d. Hunayn ibn Ishaq, translator

884 CE d. Dawud Ibn Ali Zahirite Batinite

894 CE d. Ibn Abil Dunyi

900 CE Brethren of Purity

909 CE d. Junayd

910 CE d. al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi

925 CE d. Najab ud-din Unhammad

925 CE d. Muhammad ibn Zakariya Razi

931 CE d. Ibn Masarra

933 CE d. al-Tahawi

934 CE d. al-Balkhi

944 CE d. al-Maturidi

950 CE d. Abu Nasr Mohammad al-Farabi

965 CE d. Muhammad al-Hasan al-Niffari

974 CE d. Yahya ibn Adi

982 CE d. al-Majusi

988 CE d. Abu Bakr al-Sarraj

988 CE d. Abu Sulayman al-Sijistani

988 CE d. Early Sufis Kalabadhi

991 CE d. Abul Hasan al-Amiri

994 CE d. Majusi (Haly Abbas)

996 CE d. Abu Talib al-Makki

1013 CE d al-Zahrawi

1016 CE d. al-Naysaburi

1021 CE D. al-Sulami

1025 CE d. Abd al-Jabbar

1030 CE d. Ibn Miskawayh

1037 CE d. Ibn Sina (Avicenna)

1039 CE d. Ibn al-Haytham

1048 CE d. Biruni

1049 CE d. Abu Said Abul Khayr
 1058 CE d. Mawardi
1064 CE d. Ibn Hazm
 1074 CE d. Abd al-Karim ibn Hawazin Qushayri
1077 CE d. Ali Hujwiri
 1108 CE d. Raghib al-Isfahani
 1111 CE d. al-Ghazzali
 1123 CE d. Ahmad Ghazzali
1138 CE d. Ibn Bajjah (Avempace)
 1153 CE d. Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastani
 1162 CE d. Ibn Zuhr (Avenzoar)
1166 CE d. Abd al-Qadir Jilani
1184 CE d. Ibn Tufayl
1191 CE d. Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi Maqtul
1198 CE d. Ibn Rushd
1209 CE d. Fakhr al-Din Razi
1214 CE d. Afzal al-Din Kashani
 1235 CE d. Umar ibn Ali ibn al-Farid
1240 CE d. Ibn Arabi
 1256 CE d. Najm al-Din Razi
 1260 CE d. Nasir al-Din Abu al-Khair Abdullah ibn Umar al-Baidawi
1273 CE d. Jalal al-Din Rumi
1274 CE d. Nasir al-Din Tusi
1288 CE d. Ibn al-Nafis
 1320 CE d. Mahmud Shabistari
 1328 CE d. Ibn Taymiyah
1350 CE d. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya
1406 CE d. Ibn Khaldun
1414 CE d. Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jurjani
1428 CE d. Abd al-Karim al-Jili
 1492 CE d. Abd al-Rahman Jami
 1500 CE School of Isfahan
1501 CE d. Jalal al-Din Dawwani
 1598 CE d. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi
1640 CE d. Sadr al-Din Shirazi
1716 CE d. Muhammad Abu Dharr Naraq
 1762 CE d. Shah Wali Allah
 1795 CE d. Muhammad Mahdi Naraq
1878 CE d. Haji Mulla Hadi Sabziwari
1931 CE b. Syed Naqib al-Attas
1938 CE d. Muhammad Iqbal

Tentative List of Psychiatrists, Psychotherapists up to the Early 20th Century

870 CE d. Rabban al-Tabbari
925 CE d. Najab ud-din Unhammad
934 CE d. al-Balkhi
965 CE d. Muhammad al-Hasan al-Niffari
982 CE d. al-Majusi
996 CE d. Abu Talib al-Makki
1013 CE d al-Zahrawi
1016 CE d. al-Naysaburi
1021 CE D. al-Sulami
1030 CE d. Ibn Miskawayh
1037 CE d. Ibn Sina
1074 CE d. Abd al-Karim ibn Hawazin Qushayri
1077 CE d. Ali Hujwiri
1162 CE d. Ibn Zuhr (Avenzoar)
1234 CE d. Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi
1256 CE d. Najm al-Din Razi
1288 CE d. Ibn al-Nafis

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