

The spiritual dimension of man: An Islamic psycho-spiritual study

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Abstract: The discussion on the mind and body continues to be debated by philosophers and psychologists. Ever since the Renaissance, Western scholars have shifted their research on the man from a religious to a scientific one. They argued that spirituality cannot be scrutinized using science and scientific tools. Yet, they are not any closer to finding a comprehensive solution to many of man's psychological problems. In realizing that man's spiritual dimension is an area avoided by Western mainstream psychology, this study analyzes some aspects of the soul entity and its varied manifestations from an Islamic perspective. Through a review of related literature and documentary analysis, this study highlights the spiritual dimension of man as understood by Muslims scholars and psychologists.

Keywords: Spiritual dimension, man, Islam, psycho-spiritual development, soul.

Introduction

Studying the man has been the preoccupation of scholars in the West. They studied the differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. They focused on differences in particular personality characteristics, such as sociability or irritability and on understanding how the various parts of a person combine to form a whole. Avoiding man's spiritual dimension, they focused on factors that can be scrutinized using science and scientific tools. Abbas Hussein Ali (1995) provided a critique of Freudian psycho-analysis, Skinnerian behaviorism and Rogerian and Maslowvian humanism as follows:

As a medical doctor Freud was trained to focus more on the anatomical structure of the body and to believe in Darwinism more than in Judaism

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... and to construct the human body as a closed energy system that transforms energy into action (Ali, 1995: 53).

The behaviorists... studied only that which is outside human beings. Hence, by extrapolating from experiments conducted on animals, Skinner concluded that humans do function in an orderly fashion, just like robots or machine (Ali, 1995: 54).

To [the humanistic psychologists], we are extremely free and are required only to endow life with personal meaning. Humans have limitless capacity for growth and self-improvement; in a nutshell, man is his own god. Consequently, the aim of the humanist is to spend time and effort on explaining what a person is capable of doing, more than talking about what he/she is (Ali, 1995: 55).

Ghulam Muhammad Karim (1984) explains that:

Psychology originated from the Greek word “psyche” which was equated to the soul, and today is broadly defined as the study of behaviour. Modern views have deviated from older conceptions which are more in keeping with Islamic ones, to the latter views which are secular and materialistic, as they study man without a soul (Karim, 1984: 14).

He gives a historical overview of psychology with a brief account (1984: 3-7) of the main ideas of philosophers and psychologists like Plotinus (204-270 C.E), Maimonides (1135-1204), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225- 1274), Rene Descartes (1596-1650), Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Carl Jung (1875-1961), Alfred Adler (1870-1937) and others with regard to the human mind and body relationship. He emphasizes that in the field of psychotherapeutic practice, and also on the concept of the human consciousness, or personality-

Western perspectives are in fact archaic, and since Freud said God was a mere delusion, we are fortunate in being able to postulate a model, or theory of consciousness, which actually proves the existence of God, and shows how He plays a role in every individual, if we allowed Him to do so (Karim, 1984: 1-2).

This study argues that Islamic psychology is different and that the Islamic theory of personality is well worth understanding for the betterment of humanity. The study first reviews, albeit briefly, some of the literature on Islamic personality and

is followed by a discussion on various dimensions of personality from an Islamic perspective.

Reviewing Muslim literature

Muslim scholars have paid due attention to the internal and external characteristics of man. Imam al-Ghazali (1058-1111CE) produced many works on man's spirituality. In *Iḥyā' 'Ulūmuddīn* (n. d.), he explained the many dimensions of human life pertaining to physical and spiritual cleanliness, knowledge, worship, man-God relationship, man-to-man relationship, etc. He suggested ways through which man can change his behaviour to be a better person in order to attain spiritual happiness. He elaborates on the nature of the human soul and its psycho-spiritual development towards perfection. He attempted to diagnose the various types of spiritual diseases and prescribed remedies for many of the human spiritual and psychological illness. His research on human nature exceeds the limits of modern psychology in that he explored not merely the overt human behaviour but also the fact from where do these human actions and behaviour emanate in the human body (Langgulung, 1981).

In his discussion on human nature, Karim (1984) points out that Islamic psychology has been in existence for a long time but became a lost asset of the Muslim Ummah. He wrote:

Islamic psychology is a prime example of Muslim superiority in knowledge, which they have lost due to the political and economic exploitation by the colonialist powers with a consequent deterioration in education. For this reason, Muslims have not produced any leading scientists for the past two centuries. Yet the Muslim masters of the past have done much research into psychology, some of their findings having been plagiarized by the West, and many of their concepts antecede those of the West by centuries (Karim, 1984: 2).

Besides defending Islamic psychology as given by al-Ghazali, Karim discusses the Islamic theory of personality (1984: 16-24) and elucidates that the human consciousness according to the Islamic concept is made up of the *Nafs 'Ammārah*, *Nafs Lawwāmāh* and *Nafs Muṭmainnah*. These three *Anfus* (plural of *Nafs*) are not separate or distinct entities but rather confluent, interacting, and interpenetrating, coexistent phases of the soul (Karim 1984: 17). Karim also explains the meaning and nature of the *Qalb* and *al-Rūh* and their relationship with the *Nafs* in the human body.

Mohammad ‘Uthman Najati, in his *al-Qur’ān wa ‘Ilm al-Nafs* (1985) (*al-Qur’ān and Psychology*) and *Al-Ḥadith al-Nabawi wa ‘Ilm al-Nafs* (1979) (*The Prophetic Tradition and Psychology*), discusses the theories of learning, motivation, personality development, emotional development, and the like in the light of the Qur’ān and Sunnah (sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad [SAW]). Sadiq Hussain’s “Abstract Islamic Psychology” (1984) is similar to Najati’s and has a similar style of presenting information on the Islamic concept of human nature. He discusses, from the Qur’anic psychological viewpoints, the human memory, thinking, conjectures, desires, anxiety, depression, despair, sleep and dream, sex, psychopathy, pride, envy, etc. Hussain explains the terms used in the Qur’ān to describe the human spiritual dimension like *Al-Rūh*, *Qalb*, *Nafs*, *Fu’ad*, *Af’idah*, etc. He explains the existence and role of *Al-Rūh* (soul) in the human body as follows:

The existence of the Soul cannot be denied, though we may not understand its reality. The foetus in the womb of the mother is lifeless in the beginning, having no definite shape, but all of a sudden, it takes on a shape, and begins the journey of life with all its essential processes. It may be said without any fear of contradiction, that this is the only non-material essential that has been granted by Allah to mankind, and that mankind is totally unaware of its reality (Hussain, 1984: 23).

Another Muslim scholar, Athar S. Naqvi (1989), discusses human nature through the avenues of neuropsychology, neurophysiology, parapsychology, study of out-of-the-body experiences in near death situations, mysticism and also relies on the Qur’an and Hadith. With regard to the understanding of the human soul, Naqvi writes:

The Human Self consists of a trio, body, soul, and the *Qareen*. The latter being the conscious Denial Impulse that normally is covalently bonded to our soul but may separate as an independent entity during our states of sleep, hypnotism and finally the death and whose role is to produce negative perturbations in our thought generating process. This entity is also shown to be the basis of our subconscious (Naqvi, 1985: I-II).

In his article, Naqvi also clearly explains the function of the human soul and the various terms used in the Qur’an to describe it like *al-Rūh*, *al-Qalb*, *al-Ṣadr* and *al-Fu’ād*. According to him, these terms are used interchangeably to describe the nature of the human soul. In a paper, Alparslan Acikgenc (1992) discusses the

concept of human nature as stated in the Qur'ān and divides all human faculties into two broad categories: the "External Faculties" which includes among others the five senses of hearing, sight, touch, smell and taste; and the "Internal Faculties" which relates to all non-physical realities and they are of two kinds: rational or discursive that relates to the *'al-'Aql* (the intellect) and the other refers to the human emotion or otherwise known as the transcendental faculties which is represented by the *Qalb* (the heart). To Acikgenc, the spiritual dimension is what that separates humanity from the rest of other creations.

We may posit psychology as the science of human nature, and as such, since man's physical nature is also shared by all other animals, it must be that nature of him which distinguishes him from the rest of the animals that must be defined as his real nature. Bases on the Qur'anic rendition, we can infer that nature to be man's incorporeal being of aspect which comes fore as a spiritual existence (Achikgenc, 1992: 1).

Acikgenc explains that man's soul is naturally endowed with both good and bad (Qur'ān, 91: 7-10), by this man is put to trial in his conduct in this mundane life; man is created weak (Qur'an. 4, 28), he is hasty in his action (Qur'ān, 70, 19), he is ungrateful to his Lord (Qur'ān, 22, 66), he can easily fall into despair (Qur'ān, 30: 36), he is ignorant (Qur'ān, 23: 72), etc. (Achikgenc, 1992: 10-11).

The foregoing review has revealed the fact that Muslim scholars put equal emphasis on the physical and spiritual dimensions of man. They have access to a great deal of information concerning the human soul from the perspective of the Qur'ān, Al-Ḥadīth and Sufi writings which is not available in Western mainstream psychology. They have discussed the Islamic concepts which need further discussion and clarification.

The spiritual dimension of man

The Holy Qur'an deals with man's moral behaviour and religious obligations and also provides information on man's physical and biological nature. However, the core of the Qur'anic message to the whole of humanity deals with man's inner nature. Simply stated, the message of the Qur'an is that man is not simply a social and moral being but also a spiritual being (Ansari, 1992).

Western mainstream psychology did take note of the spiritual dimension of man but did not study it for the simple reason that the human spirit or soul is a thing unseen and since it is intangible, it cannot be subjected to any empirical

investigation. For Muslim scholars, this unseen dimension of human nature forms a part and parcel of their fundamental beliefs and principles. The Qur'ān states: "Who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them" (Qur'ān, 2: 3; Ali, 1989).

To believe in the existence of the human soul is one of the unseen things in Islam similar to other unseen things like believing in the life in the grave, the Day of Judgment, angels, heaven and hell, etc. According to the Islamic perspective on psychology, man has a dual nature; body (physical) and spirit/soul (spiritual). In Islamic psychology, the spiritual dimension of man is described by using different terms, such as *al-Rūh*, *al-Qalb*, *al-Nafs* and *al-'Aql*. In what follows, an attempt is made to elucidate their individual nature and characteristics as well as their relationship towards one another in the human psyche.

***Al-Rūh* (Spirit)**

The Qur'an has given several different meanings to the word *al-Rūh*: as a life-giving entity (Qur'ān, 22: 29; 32: 9; 21: 19), as the divine revelations (Qur'ān, 42: 52) and as the angel who brings the revelations to the Prophets (al-Qur'an, 16: 102; 26: 199). The word *al-Rūh* with all its different meanings has been stated in 25 places in the Qur'an (Langgulung, 1983, Abdullah, 1982). Scholars, however, emphasize its meaning as the life-giving entity relating to the human body. Thus, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri (1989) describes *al-Rūh* as follows:

The word *Rūh* means spirit, and what it generally implies is the breath of life, or the origin of life. It is derived from the root '*raha*', which means to animate or revive, to inhale or breathe, also to leave or to go away (46-47).

The Qur'ānic verses that are of vital importance to the discussion of *al-Rūh* are:

They ask thee concerning the Spirit (of inspiration). Say: "The Spirit (cometh) by command of my Lord: Of knowledge it is only a little is communicated to you, (O men!) (Qur'ān, 17: 85).

Also,

Behold! thy Lord said to the angels: I am about to create man, from sounding clay from mud moulded into shape; When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him (Qur'ān, 15: 28-29).

In giving her comment on Qur'ānic verse 36:85, Naumana Amjad (1992) is of the opinion that *al-Rūh* is an eternal, indivisible, non-corporeal and transcendental element that must have emanated from, or have been created by Allah the Almighty (Amjad, 1992: 44). Langgulong explains the body-spirit (*Jasad-Rūh*) relationship in terms of '*Ālamal-Amr* (the world of Command) and '*Ālam al-Khalq* (the world of Creation). He further elaborates that *al-Rūh* belongs to the "world of Command", and the body to the "world of Creation". With regards to the creation of *al-Rūh* compared to the body, Langgulong (1995a: 15) writes:

Its creation depends spontaneously on [the] exercise of Divine will or command without the need of preparation of any material, temporal or special ground. Because the creation of non-material beings in the world of Command happens immediately since they come into existence no sooner than God commands them to be.

Langgulong's view can be well justified in the light of verse 36: 82 which reads: "Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is, 'Be', and it is!". In contrast to *al-Rūh*, the human body and other material beings that belong to the world of Creation normally do not come into existence without any prior preparation or necessary circumstances readily available to accept them. One good example of this is the development of the sperm-drop into a foetus in the mother's womb till it receives the Spirit and later it comes out of the womb as a newborn baby.

From the two verses of 15: 28-29, it is clear that Allah (SWT) breathed into Adam His spirit (*Rūhī*) after his physical and biological creation was completed. Like in Adam, all human spirits proceed from Allah (SWT). Therefore, *al-Rūh* has a divine nature. Zafar Afaq Ansari (1992: 4) and a great number of other Muslim scholars think that even though Adam's origin was from clay which was lowly in the eyes of the angels, he was elevated from his humble origin when he became the recipient of Allah's Spirit and *al-Asmā'* (names/attributes) in him. Adam's honour manifested as a reality only after he received Allah's Spirit and later when Allah (SWT) asked the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam (al-Qur'an, 15: 29).

Another difference that exists between the body and spirit (*al-Rūh*), as highlighted by Langgulong, is that the body belongs to the world of Creation. As such, it is subject to motion, change, alteration and bound by time and space. But *al-Rūh* belongs to the world of Command and therefore it is free from time and space. Furthermore, *al-Rūh* does not perish with the death experienced by the

human body (Langgulong, 1995a: 16). Langgulong cites verse 2: 28- “How can ye reject faith in Allah?- seeing that ye were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return” - and argues that the life as mentioned in the above verse is only when *al-Rūh* is united with the body, and man is proclaimed dead when *al-Rūh* separates from the body. He further expresses the Islamic idea that during resurrection, *al-Rūh* will once again be reunited with the body (Langgulong, 1995a).

The *Rūh* besides being a life-giving entity is immortal, invisible and has a transcendental origin. It is also a potential place for generating and storing knowledge and it also has the potential for being a God-conscious entity in the human psyche. A point that needs to be mentioned here is that its potentials for knowledge and God-consciousness can only be operated through *al-Qalb* (heart) which provides the locus for cognition, thought and feelings (Ansari, 1992). Simply put, the *Rūh* is the divine spark of God in man that needs to be taken care of at all time. Remembrance of God, contemplation of God’s mighty works on the universe, performing religious rituals, etc. will keep the *Rūh* alive, while the absence of the aforesaid things can weaken it.

***Al-Qalb* (Heart)**

The word *al-Qalb* in the Qur’ān appears in 144 places (Langgulong, 1991). The heart (*al-Qalb*) mentioned in the Qur’an should not be mistaken for the gross physical organ that lies in the bosom of man. The *Qalb*, as explained by Muslim scholars, refers to the subtle spiritual light that is contained within the cone-shaped structure of the human heart. The physical human heart can be considered as the point of interaction between the body and the *Qalb* as a spiritual entity (Haq, 1992).

It is interesting and noteworthy to look into Zafar Afaq Ansari’s (1992: 6) view on the characteristics and functions of the *Qalb*. According to him, the *Qalb*:

represents the faculty or capacity of human personality which enables the person to know and understand the reality of things, make evaluative judgements, and sift the right from the wrong. The functions of the *Qalb* are described quite frequently in the Qur’an along with the sensory capacities of human beings, indicating that what the *Qalb* does is an extension and a superior function of what is being done at the lower level

by the sensory organs like eyes and ears. However, if the functions of the *Qalb* are blocked the sensory organs lose their utility.

The relationship of the *Qalb* with the sense organs or sense perceptions can be well explained given that these organs act as windows or gateways through which the transcendental *Qalb* gets information of the physical world. Data received by the *Qalb* will be processed by its inner illumination and later it will reveal their interrelationship and meaning to the self. Based on this meaning, the *Qalb* will form its own basis of judgement and decision. As such the *Qalb*, which forms as one of the components of man's inner dimension makes the evaluative judgement and arrives at a decision, while the brain and the nervous system function as instruments to implement it (Haq, 1992).

The *Qalb*'s role as the evaluative decision maker in the human psyche makes it the centre or seat of personality, alongside with its other roles as the seat of intellectual faculties, understanding, affections and emotions. The human *Qalb*, when properly functioning, can enhance the positive tendencies of human personality that leads to a state of constant awareness and self-understanding. On the contrary, when it becomes subdued by the continuous persuasive demands of the *Nafs Ammārah* (the *Nafs* impelling towards evil or the evil self) it loses the proper perceptual and cognitive functions. As a result of this, man's God-consciousness and his capacity for knowledge and sound judgement become clouded (Ansari, 1992; Ahmad, 1992).

As a consequence of the above state, man loses his honoured position of being God's best creation to a level equal to that of animals. This downfall of man is caused by the spiritual blindness of the *Qalb* that affects man's sensory organs, emotions, affections, cognition and personality. The following verse elucidates vividly the condition of a man whose *Qalb* is defeated by the onslaught of the *Nafs Ammārah*:

Many are the *Jinns* and men We have made for Hell: They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes, wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle-nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning) (Qur'ān, 7: 179).

Additional information on the *Qalb*'s vital and central role in producing a human being who has a sound personality, who is intellectually and spiritually strong, as well as morally, socially and emotionally good, has been candidly mentioned in

the following *Ḥadīth* which gives the idea that all human potentials and goodness can only emerge and materialize when the *Qalb* of an individual is in a good spiritual condition:

Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body; if it becomes good (reformed), the whole body becomes good, but if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart (Bukhari cited in Khan 1986, Vol. 1: 44).

Another aspect of the *Qalb* (heart) that deserves mentioning here is its meaning in Arabic and its nature and relationship with the *Rūh* and *Nafs*. In Arabic, the noun *Qalb* is derived from the root word *qalab* (verb) which means to turn around or to revolve (Haeri, 1989). It's unfixed, unstable and moving condition puts it in a situation whereby it will have an inclination or tendency either to follow the *Rūh* or the *Nafs*. During the time when the *Nafs Ammārah* becomes the dominant entity in the human psyche, the *Qalb* becomes weak and feeble and makes its descent to the lowest of the low level of the *Nafs* to join the *Nafs Ammārah*. At this stage, the *Qalb's* divine light fades away, causing it to lose its power of cognition. On the contrary, when the *Nafs Mutma'innah* becomes the dominant entity in the human psyche, then the *Qalb* will move towards the *Rūh*. At this stage, the *Qalb* becomes luminous and enjoys peace and tranquillity.

Al-Nafs (Soul/Self)

The word *Nafs* as mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān has several meanings. At many times, *Nafs* in the Holy Qur'ān explains mainly the biological activities of man more than his conscious or cognitive part. It is also a general term used in the Holy Qur'ān when referring to the whole of humanity. The word *Nafs* in the singular and *Anfus* and *Nufūs* in the plural forms have been mentioned time and again in the Holy Qur'ān at 376 places (Langgulung, 1986).

In describing the nature of the *Nafs*, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri says that it is indestructible, indivisible; its origin is from the realm of the unseen (non-time or pre-existence), lives in time and returns to non-time (beyond physical existence). Furthermore, he adds that the *Nafs* is an essence which is immortal and non-physical that provides the impetus of life for man's physical body. It can be easily influenced by the mind, will, intellect, heart and other cognitive processes (Haeri, 1989).

Additional information given by Naumana Amjad pertaining to the *Nafs*, reveals that a great multitude of Muslim scholars are of the opinion that when *al-*

Rūh (Spirit) comes in contact with the human body, it forms a borderline area that connects the physical part of a man with his spiritual nature, and that area is known to be the *Nafs*. No doubt, the *Nafs* is subtle; nevertheless, it contains forms (images, sensations, ideas, etc.); unlike the *Nafs*, the *Rūh* is formless (Amjad, 1992). The *Nafs* as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an has three levels or dimensions. The names and characteristics of the three *Nufūs* (plural of *Nafs*) that has been elucidated in the Holy Qur'an are:

1) *Al-Nafs al-Ammārah* (the *Nafs* impelling towards evil /the evil Self)

Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord does bestow His Mercy: but surely My Lord is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful (Qur'ān, 12: 53).

2) *Al-Nafs al-Lawwāmah* (the changing or blaming *Nafs*/the reproaching Self): “And I do call to witness the self- reproaching spirit (Eschew Evil)” (Qur'ān, 75: 2).

3) *Al-Nafs al-Mutma'innah* (the *Nafs* at peace/tranquiled *Nafs*/the content Self):

To the righteous soul will be said: O (thou) soul, In (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back thou to thy Lord - well pleased (thyself) and well-pleasing unto Him! Enter thou, then, among my Devotees! Yea, enter thou My Heaven (Qur'ān, 89: 27-30).

A vast majority of the Muslim scholars are of the opinion that the three dimensions of the *Nafs* may have their own independent names as though they are three separate entities but actually the three dimensions or stages are referring to the one and the same *Nafs*. Rightly understood, they describe the three developmental stages of the *Nafs*, starting from the lowest rung (*Nafs Ammārah*) and gradually progressing towards the highest rung (*Nafs Mutma'innah*). According to al-Ghazali, the upward dimension of the *Nafs* in its upper most limit links it with the *Rūh*, while its downward dimension links it with the world of matter through the sensory faculties of the body (Umaruddin, 2001).

One more fact that deserves mentioning here about the human *Nafs* is that it comes to exist in the human body together with the *Rūh* (spirit), but nevertheless, its existence, manifestation, and development cannot be felt in the real sense by a man during his childhood. But its presence can obviously be felt more during puberty and adulthood together with the physical development of the human body.

Actually, the *Nafs* is part and parcel of the human spirit (*al-Rūh*). As such, during human death, the *Nafs* which is immortal will depart from the body together with the spirit to exist in another dimension of life known as *‘Ālam al-Barzakh* (life after death) while waiting for *Yawm al-Qiyāmah* (day of resurrection) (Mohd Abbas, 1997).

Al-‘Aql (Intellect)

The word *al-‘Aql* in the form of a noun does not appear in any of the chapters of the Holy Qur’ān. But, as a verb, *‘aqala* with its other derivatives appear in over 49 places. Generally, these verses (i.e. Qur’ān, 2: 24 and 75; 8: 22; 67: 10) refer to the thinking capacity of man (Langgulung, 1986). The definition given by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri (1989: 51) to the word *al-‘Aql* is:

The Arabic word for intellect is *‘aql*, and is derived from the root *aqala*, which means to be endowed with reason, to possess intelligence, to comprehend, to understand. The intellect, in its highest sense, is a sublime power which receives the unveilings of pure light. In its lowest sense, it is the power of ordinary reasoning.

M. Hasan Askari and many other Muslim scholars have expressed their understanding of the human *‘Aql* by using terms *‘Aql Juz’i* for reason and *‘Aql Kulli* for intellect. They believe that *‘Aql Juz’i* or reason is the faculty of discursive and analytical thought, while *‘Aql Kulli* is the faculty of intuition (Amjad, 1992). Looking from a Sufi perspective, the *‘Aql* is lower in rank compared to the *Qalb* for the reason that it is only capable of conceiving knowledge that comes through man’s sense perceptions, namely; touch, taste, sight, smell, and hearing, whereas the *Qalb* has the capacity to receive the divine knowledge (*‘Ilm al-Ladunni*) inspired by Allah (Langgulung, 1995a & 1995b).

The other functions of the *‘Aql* as expressed by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri is that, in order for the human *Nafs* or Self to defeat or reject its lower nature, it needs the light of the *‘Aql* (Intellect). The *‘Aql*, besides being repulsive to what is harmful to the *Nafs* also attracts what is conducive to the healthy growth of the *Nafs* (Haeri, 1989). Apart from the preceding views on the human *‘Aql*, Al-Attas’ view on the *‘Aql* with regard to learning and knowledge is as follows:

The term *‘Aql* itself basically signifies a kind of ‘binding’ or ‘withholding’, so that in this respect *‘aql* signifies an innate property that

binds and withholds objects of knowledge by means of words. *'Aql* is synonymous with *Qalb* in the same way as *Qalb*, which is a spiritual organ of cognition called the 'heart' is synonymous with *'Aql*. The real nature of *'Aql* is that it is a spiritual substance by which the rational soul (*al-Nafsal-nātiqh*) recognizes and distinguishes truth from falsehood (al-Attas, 1991: 14).

From the foregoing definitions and ideas on the human *'Aql*, it can be assumed that the *Qalb*, as the seat of knowledge, uses the *'Aql* as an instrument to carry out certain duties; mainly in comprehending knowledge that comes through the sense perceptions, and at the same time it is involved in attaining knowledge at a higher level of intuition, enlightenment, inspiration, etc. *'Aql Juz'*, as mentioned earlier, can be referred to as reason or the power of reasoning which engages itself in acquiring knowledge through sensory organs. On the other hand, *'Aql Kulli* which has a higher function, as highlighted above, can be referred to as the *Qalb* itself.

The assumption put forward above is in line with the view of Al-Attas that "*Aql* is synonymous with *Qalb* in the same way as *Qalb*, which is a spiritual organ of cognition called the 'heart' is synonymous with *'Aql*." In short, it can be concluded that the three entities of the human psyche namely, the *Qalb*, *Nafs* and the *'Aql*, come into existence along with the infusion of the immortal *Rūh* into the mortal body of a man.

It is also clear that the *Rūh*, as the divine element in the human body, manifests itself in other psychic dimensions like the *Qalb*, *Nafs* and *'Aql*. The *Rūh* which comes from the *'Ālamal-Arwāh* (the realm of the spirits) with the command of Allah (the word of Command) will abide in the human body for a certain period of time until the body meets death. During the bodily death of a person, the immortal *Rūh* separates itself from the body of an individual to exist in another dimension of life known as *'Ālamal-Barzakh* (life after death). References to this can be deduced from the Qur'ān, 26: 88-89 and Qur'ān, 89: 27-30. In these references, the *Qalb* and the *Nafs* have been related to the life in the hereafter.

The above discussion also points to the fact that the Holy Qur'an, as well as the Muslim scholars, use the terms *al-Rūh*, *al-Qalb*, *al-Nafs* and *al-'Aql* interchangeably. At times, what they mean as *al-Rūh*, *al-Nafs* and *al-Qalb* are one and the same entity, while at other times the words *al-'Aql* and *al-Qalb* refer to the same entity. What has become clear through this analysis on the spiritual dimension of man is that, although the *Rūh* (spirit) forms the basic origin or entity

for the emergence of the other entities of the human psyche, yet in terms of its functions and tendencies it is the *Qalb* (heart) that supersedes all other entities. The *Qalb* plays a very dominant and central role in the human psyche as the seat of personality, knowledge and intellectual faculty, affections and emotions (Mohd Abbas, 1997).

Conclusion

This study has indicated that Western ideas of man are more concerned with his physical dimension. By laying too much emphasis on the physical and social dimensions of man, Western scholars have overlooked the important role played by man's spiritual dimension. The reason for this has its root in what happened during the European Dark Ages and the coming of the Age of Reason, Age of Analysis, Enlightenment and Renaissance. After the Dark Ages, the works of thinkers, philosophers and scientists diverted the attention of the masses from religion and religious doctrines to science and scientific investigations. As a result of this scientific revolution, the Western mind refuses to believe anything that is not approved by science. Moreover, the masses started to believe only in things that are physically observable and tangible. Conversely, they began to reject all that cannot be measured by scientific tools. As strong believers in Darwinism, Western scholars reduced man to no more than an intellectual beast.

Unlike their counterparts in the West, Muslim scholars and psychologists who believe in the existence of the human soul, emphasize greatly on the spiritual dimension of man. To them, the understanding of man will be incomplete without understanding the entity and nature of the human soul. Many Muslim scholars call to restore the spiritual dimension of man as a way to solve many issues related to man's psychological problems, mainly in the area of mental health. At the same time, Muslim scholars are aware that not all ideas developed and promoted by Western scholars and psychologists are against their religious beliefs. As such, they adopt, adapt and assimilate Western ideas and psychological tools that are useful in solving human problems. The qualifying reason that allows Muslim scholars to integrate ideas taken from others is that such scientific and innovative approach should be in harmony with their metaphysical framework (*'aqidah*) and the value system.

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