
HUMAN NATURE BASED ON THE HOLY QUR'AN AND SUNNAH: INTERPRETATION OF THE FITRAH AND SELF IN ISLAM

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ABSTRACT

The study on the origins and existence of man has been the subject of investigation since ancient times. The objective of this paper is to discuss human nature from an Islamic perspective. In addition, the author has engaged in discussions about how man is perceived in both Western and Islamic psychologies. Islamic psychology is the psychology of spirituality specifically the psychology of Self (An-Nafs). The author has attempted to derive the meanings of fitrah from the Qur'an and Hadith as well as some of its elements like akhlaq (exemplary conduct) and ibadah (worship of Allah). Qualitative research designed was utilized using different literature materials and a content analysis model was used to analyze the data. Since the fitrah system includes several interconnected psychological components, including the Self (An-nafs), heart (qalb), intellect ('aql), and spirit (ruh) which have also been elucidated. In concluding the paper, the author has anchored the discussion as to why the study of human nature is important and how Islamic concepts might be useful for the future development of human nature.

Keywords: *Fitrah, Human Nature, An-Nafs, Qalb, Aql, Ruh.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial, the question of human nature has preoccupied social thinkers and philosophers. The claim of Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) which is also attributed to John Locke (1632–1704) that the human mind is a “blank slate” at birth has greatly influenced contemporary behaviorists and, in turn, marginalized the innate traits in human nature (Dhaouadi, 2008). However, there has been a growing number of psychologists, ethnologists, anthropologists, etc. who affirm the presence of human innate instincts which affect human intelligence, emotions, language, sexuality and religion. These instincts may also influence a person’s aptitude to be able to live in a society (Badcock, 2003; Dortier, 2003). This paper illustrates the importance of recognizing the fitrah (human nature) to enlighten people in order for them to live their lives properly in accordance with Allah's commands and His Messenger ﷺ. This paper brings to light the importance of the Islamic belief system.

Based on a secular thought, the Western psychology foundations have challenged religious and traditional values to grant absolute authority to human beings to decide their moral codes (Abdullah, 2011). Nature versus nurture is a long-standing debate in biology and society about the balance between two competing factors that determine fate. Valuable research has been generated from this debate in comparing human and animal behavior to confirm whether particular attributes are environmental or heredity in nature. In contrast, this debate is discussed in this paper guided by the evidence found in the Holy Quran and Sunnah employing reason from the revelation. The fact that human nature concept plays a

central and important part in the study and application of psychological theories and techniques, the acceptance of the Western discipline by Muslims as a whole is problematic; the Islamic concept of human nature is fundamentally different from that of western psychologists. Muslims may agree with the Western discipline's structure and applicability, but they are unable to accept its tenets, so to speak, because the Western conception of human nature, which was derived from humanist, socialist, and other secular systems, invariably points to ideas that are incompatible with Islam.

This paper evaluates the role of fitrah in humans in establishing good morals and finally present the Islamic outlook on the issue. It also reviews the responses of Muslim scholars with a textual analysis and inductive approach to analyze the prospects of enunciating an Islamic standpoint on the issue in a contemporary context. It is hoped that the concepts will eventually provide an understanding and clarification of the issue for both Muslim and non-Muslim communities in the modern-day world. The other purpose is to present the subject of human nature with a viewpoint in proposing a basis for an Islamic critique of Western psychologists' conception of human nature. Furthermore, to establish the basis for further study of the principal elements of human nature.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is a substantial philosophical difference between Western and Islamic concept on human nature. Hence the difference must be distinguished. This article compares the concept of human nature with the existing western theories found in this subject. While bringing into light the magnitude of

the differences, this article can help an individual fully comprehend the divine origin of humans and lead them to live a meaningful life as ordained by the Creator.

Watson (1913), the founder of behaviorism believed that human beings are entirely at the mercy of their environments which shape their behaviors and lives. Such a stand from a philosophical background of secular humanism disregarded the existence of religious or moral values in human nature. Such a theory would imply that there is no place for religious doctrine or a universal ethical consciousness since human actions and values are products of their environment, and every region of the world has its own distinct culture. Therefore, making moral judgments would be the exclusive duty of individuals living in this world rather than God, who administers rewards and punishments in the hereafter. In applying such a philosophy of secular humanism, a contemporary Muslim psychologist Malik Badri has implied that this would lead to people being free to do whatever they wish. This is such as killing an unborn child by abortion or any person whose life is depressed by acquired or inherited untreatable disease (Badri, 2018).

It is worth pointing out that extreme biologically-oriented psychiatrists view human behavior as being determined by their genes' properties (Cooper, 2014). This stand comes from the ramifications of Darwinism which view humans as animals who are propelled by their biology to adapt to new situations. In light of this, human behavior is influenced by the traits of their genetic makeup. There is no room for free will since the way these components combine to generate behavior has already been precisely coded. Thus, the biologicistic position supports the same philosophical and political tenets of secular humanism,

according to which genetic makeup may be manipulated to absolve individuals of their moral obligations.

In most religions, man's in-born quality is a means to guide and motivate him to improve moral values. Islam teaches that man is equipped with potential attributes like the ability to judge, decide, and recognize right from wrong by virtue of his very nature, knowledge, spiritual, moral, and physical aspects (Aziz, 2015). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has informed us that every child is born in a state of fitrah and that if we die, we are supposed to die on fitrah. His goal was to remind people of man's innate capacity to serve as Allah's servant and Khilafah on earth (Mutahhari et al., 2021).

According to conventional personality theories, the Self has a wide range of domains. Jung (1933) stated that the Self can reveal the origin of transpersonal knowledge as he believed that it is the central force guiding our development. Maslow (1954) was of the view that self-actualization was represented by the growth of an individual toward fulfilment of the highest needs in particular those for meaning in life while Baumeister & Exline (1999) saw it as the development of virtuous qualities. Additionally, according to Inayat (2005), Islam understands the self in terms of the heart (qalb), which denotes an individual's most profound spiritual insight. The heart is the conduit via which a person connects to God and realizes Divine oneness (Tawhid), the Islamic indivisible oneness concept of monotheism in Islam. The Qur'anic passage (Quran 16:2) that defines the spirit (ruh) as God's breath also describes how it shapes human nature and influences conduct (Haque, 2002; Abu-Raiya, 2012). Haque and Mohamed (2009) used the notion of fitrah (nature), which was described as the "innate and

natural tendency of man to believe in and worship God," as the foundation for their work in developing Islamic personality psychology from an Islamic perspective. They stated that "knowing oneself both inside and outside is the key to awareness of one's own" as an additional foundation for connecting with God. According to an earlier statement made by Mohamed (1998), "fitrah, along with divine revelation, permits mankind to acquire all levels of awareness, including the knowledge of Allah in a direct and instantaneous way" (p.97).

The concept of fitrah, which refers to the natural condition in which humans are formed by Allah (God), is one of the cornerstones of Islamic psychology and is seen as a crucial aspect in comprehending man's existence, conduct, and activities. Understanding the definition of fitrah, in accordance with Islamic teachings, serves as a guide to identifying the traits and characteristics of a true Muslim. The nature of humans has long been a topic of discussion and speculation. Do certain behaviors in people come naturally from their nature, while others only result from their environment's culture? Many of the positive qualities found in people, particularly moral qualities like compassion and empathy, are thought to develop spontaneously throughout time.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research uses a qualitative approach utilizing text study methods gathered from various sources such as books, periodicals, scripts, notes, histories and documents. A content analysis model was used to analyze the data. Following the sub-discussions, the data is analyzed, classified, and described after being collected. Data is processed by first examining completeness, validity, and relevance to the topic of discussion.

In line with the primary issue, classification and systematic data are then formulated. The Qur'anic verses are collected in relation to the topic of the fitrah concept which demonstrates their relevance to Islamic psychology. Efforts are also made to make this research analyze and evaluate existing literature by pointing to the expectations according to Western and Islamic thinkers on human nature. In order to demonstrate that religion has a powerful voice to help people understand the role of Islamic psychology in human development, a self-consciously comparative approach to psychology is adopted comparing Islamic perspective with Western views from sources that contain information related to human nature.

One of the methods used for the mass of data collected was to organize and reduce or reconfigure. This process was described as data reduction by Miles and Huberman (1994) and is one of the elements of qualitative data analysis. Not only must the data be condensed for manageability, but it must also be transformed so that it can be understood in terms of the issues being addressed. For the purposes of the project at hand, data reduction frequently necessitates decisions about which aspects of the assembled data should be emphasized, minimized, or completely ignored. This paper seeks to advance an Islamic understanding of Human Nature using Islamic sources.

The main body of the research is a review and content analysis of primarily the Qur'an verses, Prophetic sayings and Muslim scholars related to the research in order to build an Islamic viewpoint of the human being. This was then contrasted and compared with Western theories on human nature. In conclusion, the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of human

beings to be in accordance with the fitrah which they were created upon.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Islam's Perspective on Human Nature

The concept of human nature in Islam is all-encompassing and comprehensive. In Islam, man is at the pinnacle of all creation and is regarded as the best of Allah's creations. Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an that He created man in the most excellent and beautiful manner (The Quran, 95:4). This lofty rank and stature have further been elucidated in the following verse:

"We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation." (The Qur'an,17:70)

Being in a high position in Allah's sight does not warrant that one will remain there indefinitely. On the contrary, man will lose his privileged position when he exceeds the boundaries Allah has established, as stated in Surah Al-Tin verse 5. The option of whether to achieve honour or humiliation in Allah's sight is thus left up to man to decide (Quran 3:26).

Man was also conferred with the title of *Khalifah* (Allah's vicegerent) on earth (Quran, 2:30). It is for this reason that Allah granted man many favours including intelligence, freedom of action, authority, etc. which will enable him to carry out his duties towards his Lord. However, Al-Maududi (1992), explains in his commentary on the Holy Qur'an that despite being Allah's *Khalifah*, man is not the universe's ruler; rather, he is only

permitted to wield the delegated rights that Allah has granted him. He goes on to explain that there are two ways that man might utilize the office of vicegerency: either to misuse the power and authority for the propagation of evil and injustice or to use them for actions that are beneficial to mankind.

4.2 Human Nature's Original Goodness (*Fitrah*)

4.2.1 *The linguistic meaning of the word Fitrah*

According to etymology, the term *fitrah* is derived from the Arabic word *fa-ta-ra*, which denotes 'condition', shapes or circumstances in the form of noun. Ibnu Manzhur (1988) stated in *Lisan al-'Arab* that it means "division". It embodies the concept of *al-khilqah*, which refers to the creation of anything unique (Bagir, 2005). Fourteen verses in the Qur'an describing the creation of man, the sky, and the world include this meaning (al-Tahanawi,1997). Thus, the word *fitrah* has a range of meanings, but it further identifies the distinctive process of human creation, both the physical(*jism*), the psychic(*aql*), as well as the spiritual creation of the heart (*qalb*). Despite having different meanings, terminologically, these meanings are not contradictory rather, the variants complement each other. As mentioned earlier, the term *fitrah* appears in several places in the Qur'an, however, in this paper, we shall concentrate on just one verse in Surah Ar-Rum, verse 30.

4.2.2 *The Fitrah from the Hadith and its interpretation*

Abu Huraira reported, as mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 1292 and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 2658, that The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "No child is born but that he is upon natural instinct (*fitrah*). His parents make him a Jew, or a Christian, or a Magian. As an animal delivers a child with limbs intact, do you

detect any flaw?" Then, Abu Huraira recited the verse, "The nature of Allah upon which he has set people." (The Qur'an, 30:30).

This Hadith is a significant passage for comprehending the notion of human nature. Fitrah is the one word in this Hadith. In this context, it would refer to the initial nature or creation. Its literal meaning is "original" or "beginning." On this, all Muslim scholars concur. Regarding the nature of this first condition of creation, there are three basic views as stated below:

a) The Dualistic View of *Fitrah*

Sayyid Qutb is of the view that fitrah is a state of intrinsic goodness and intrinsic evil (Shepard, 1995). According to Sayyid Qutb, man has a predisposition for both good and evil, as well as for either adhering to or straying from divine guidance. Man is capable of recognizing both good and evil in everything he may come into contact with, and he is also capable of choosing to move in either direction. This potential within him, from which he chooses his course, is only awakened by external influences.

Sayyid Qutb supports his views based on his interpretation of the following verses:

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

(The Qur'an, 91:7-10)

In addition to the above verse, he further supplemented his interpretation by the two below verses:

"And We have shown him the two paths."

(The Qur'an, 90:10)

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

(The Qur'an, 73:3)

The dualistic interpretation of fitrah, therefore, holds the notion that man is born with two distinctive predispositions or equal forces, one for good and one for evil, but evil only manifests when a person consents their physical being to take control over their spiritual nature or their innate propensity for goodness.

b) The Neutral View of *Fitrah*

The foundation of the argument is the idea that a newborn baby's heart resembles a healthy newborn animal with all of its parts in place. Only after birth are the unmaimed bodies rendered maimed. Likewise, newborns are born with healthy hearts that are free of shirk or lack of Iman. Many of these hearts do not reach a state of disbelief or belief until they are fully developed. Since a newborn cannot understand anything, it is impossible for him to develop a sense of belief or disbelief. The following verse lends support to this claim:

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

(The Qur'an, 16:78)

Ibn Abd al Barr who supported this view interprets this verse to mean that he who does not know anything is not in a position

to have Iman (belief) or Kufr (disbelief) (Abd-Allah, 2013). He believed this to be the most reliable meaning of the word fitrah. He cited several verses from the Quran in support of this interpretation for example;

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

(The Qur'an, 74:38)

The verse above suggests to the concept of reward, retribution, and responsibility. This is only conceivable in a fully developed adult. As a result, fitrah cannot signify "Islam," because Islam and Iman include declaration with the mouth, belief with the heart, and acts with the limbs. These are not present in newborns.

c) The Positive View of *Fitrah*

Ibn Kathir, Abu Hurayrah, al Tabari, and many others support the notion that man is born with intrinsic goodness (Landau-Tasseron, 1998). Classical scholars tend to hold this position, and it is the one that is generally accepted. What is meant by intrinsic goodness has essentially two interpretations. Both of these interpretations of fitrah are acceptable. Islam is one understanding of what fitrah implies. In other words, every infant is born a Muslim with a predisposition to Islam.

Everybody would be a Muslim by nature if there were no environmental factors. The other widely held belief is that fitrah refers to one's preparation for Islam and that one is born with the intrinsic ability to acknowledge one's Creator and adhere to His Commandments. This interpretation of human nature's inherent goodness has the merit of being compatible with the

Qur'anic verse that states that God's creation remains unchanged.

Most scholars who believe that the term "fitrah" refers to Islam actually imply that the child is born prepared to adopt Islam. Fitrah is described by Imam al-Nawawi as the unconfirmed state of Iman (faith) up until the point at which the person consciously acknowledges his belief (Al-Nawawi, 2022).

According to other scholars like Douglass (2015) and Dhaouadi (2008), any mention of the inherent goodness of man should be seen to embrace both his biological essence and the entirety of him. The idea of fitrah takes into account both human psychology and biological peculiarities. He must satisfy these instincts in order to continue existing as a human. For example, the Islamic perspective on celibacy. Islam disapproves of celibacy because it goes against a person's fitrah, or natural tendency, and goes against his or her biological tendencies. Instead, Islam places significant emphasis on marriage as a method of fulfilling one's religion and a way for a man to satisfy his biological needs while still adhering to the Shariah (Islamic Law).

4.3 Western View on Human Nature

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who is the founding father of the psychoanalysis school of psychology considered human nature to be pessimistic and deterministic. According to him, a human being has two instincts; life instinct (Eros) and death instinct (Thanatos). His theory eventually turns out to be deterministic since it assumes that the human being is constantly controlled by his sexual and aggressive impulses, which come from the id.

John Locke's (1632–1704) theory of associationism is the source of the behaviourist school of psychology, which evolved concurrently with psychoanalysis. Among the prominent figures for this school of thought is Watson (1878-1958), who is of the opinion that a child's mind is a 'tabula rasa' waiting to be written by its own experiences, hence the claim that human beings do not have any innate knowledge. It thus regards human beings as mechanical objects which can be conditioned and programmed to undertake any task.

The humanistic school of thought is another prominent school of psychology that builds upon the philosophical ideas of existentialism and phenomenology. Humanist psychology opposed Freud's theory of human nature, which views people as sexually and aggressively charged animals that act irrationally and recklessly in the pursuit of their own selfish motives. Humanist psychology draws an optimistic and positive image of human beings as good by nature (Table 1).

Table 1. Concept of humans' existence on different schools of thought

School of Thought			
Psychoanalysis	Behaviorism	Humanism	Islam
To satisfy the instinctive desire and maintain balance.	To adapt to the environment and experience joy.	To fulfil hierarchical needs and perform self-actualization.	To fulfil multidimensional needs based on divine nature and worship Allah.

4.4 Islamic Psychology

According to the International Association of Islamic Psychology, Islamic psychology is a holistic understanding of the human being that is based on the knowledge of the soul from the Islamic texts (Quran and Sunnah) and the focus is on the heart as the centre of the Self rather than the mind in understating human nature and development (Reeyaz, 2022). The spiritual dimension, which emphasizes the significance of religion in people's lives, is the primary characteristic of Islamic psychology (Table 2). It is worth noting that Islamic Psychology begins with a belief in Allah's existence, the spiritual essence of humanity, and the teachings and guidance of Islamic scriptures, which give a complete and up-to-date approach to explaining human thoughts and behaviour. Modern Psychology, on the other hand, does not acknowledge Allah's link with man nor Allah's influence on man's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. It is not recognized or studied by any psychological theory or approach. The fundamental reason for this is that contemporary psychology ignores the soul and considers humans as physical entities and materialistic beings. They do not fully explain human nature. It is therefore clear that within the Islamic psychology domain, human nature is structured and comprehended through four primary elements: *qalb* or heart; *nafs* or ego-self; *rūḥ* or spirit and *aql* or the intellect. In several parts of the Qur'an, these terms which explain the human psyche can be found. As a result, the following Figure (Figure 1) clarifies these four elements distinct nature and qualities, as well as their relationship to one another in the human psyche.

Table 2. Spiritual dimensions of the soul

The Soul			
Nature of the soul	Structure of the soul	Stages of the soul	Development of the soul
Concept of <i>Fitrah</i> : <i>Fitrah</i> as internal compass	Integrated nature of the soul: <i>Nafs</i> (lower self) <i>Qalb</i> (heart) <i>Aql</i> (intellect) <i>Ruh</i> (spirit)	Fluctuations of the <i>nafs</i> : <i>Nafs al ammara bil su</i> <i>Nafs al lawwama</i> <i>Nafs al mutmainah</i>	Need for moral reform by: <i>Tazkiyat an nafs</i> <i>Jihad bin nafs</i> <i>Tahdhib al akhlaq</i>

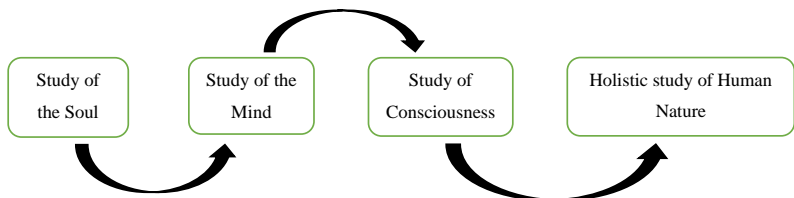


Figure 1. Holistic study of human nature in Islamic psychology

4.4.1 The Spirit or ar-Rūḥ

The term ar-ruh has several different interpretations in the Holy Qur'an. It can mean the life-giving entity, divine revelation, and as angel Jibreel (al-Rūh al-Amīn). It should be noted that the major focus of this paper's research on the term al-ruh is on its

meaning as the life-giving entity with its link to the human body rather than on its other numerous meanings. The term *ruh* means spirit, and it usually refers to the breath of life or the source of life. It comes from the root "raha," which also means to breathe in or out, to invigorate or revive, as well as to depart or to go away (Haeri, 1989). There are several Qur'anic verses mentioning this word, but we shall point to one which is vital to the discussion of *al-ruh* which is:

They ask you 'O Prophet' about the spirit. Say, "Its nature is known only to my Lord, and you 'O humanity' have been given but little knowledge."

(The Qur'an, 17:85)

In addition to being a life-giving entity, the *ruh* is also eternal, invisible, and has a transcendental origin. Additionally, it has the potential to be a hub for knowledge creation and storage, as well as a God-conscious entity in the human psyche. It is important to note that the *al-qalb* (heart), which serves as the locus for cognition, thought, and emotion is the only way its capacity for knowledge and God-consciousness may be operationalized.

4.4.2 The Heart (Al-Qalb)

It is important to distinguish the heart (*al-qalb*) referenced in the Holy Qur'an from the gross physical organ found in a person's bosom. According to Muslim scholars, the term "qalb" refers to the ethereal spiritual light inside the human heart's cone-shaped structure. The physical human heart might be considered as the point of contact between the physical body and the spiritual entity known as the *qalb* (Haq, 1992). Along with its other roles

as the seat of intellectual abilities, comprehension, affections, and emotions, the qalb serves as the evaluative decision maker in the human psyche, making it the centre or seat of personality.

When the human qalb is functioning properly, it can strengthen the traits of the human personality that promote consciousness and self-awareness. On the other hand, it loses the appropriate perceptual and cognitive abilities when it is dominated by the constant persuasive demands of the nafs ammrah (the nafs impelling towards evil / the evil self). As a result, man's awareness of God, as well as his ability for knowledge and good judgment, are clouded. The Arabic definition of the qalb (heart), as well as its characteristics and connections to the ruh and nafs, are additional aspects of the heart that need discussion in this context. The verb qalaba, which means to turn around or rotate, is the derivation of the Arabic noun qalb. It will have the predisposition to either follow the ruh or the nafs because of its unfixed, unstable, and moving nature.

4.4.3 *The Self (Al-Nafs)*

Many Muslim scholars believe that the boundary between the physical and spiritual selves of a person is created when the spirit, or al-ruh, interacts with the body. This boundary is known as the nafs (Amjad,1992). According to the Holy Qur'an, the nafs has three levels or dimensions. The three nufus (plural of nafs), as described in the Holy Qur'an, have the following names and traits:

a) *Al-Nafs al-Ammarah (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 do bestow His Mercy: but surely My Lord is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful”

(The Qur’an, 12:53)

b) 2. *Al-Nafs al-Lawwamah (the changing or blaming Nafs / the reproaching Self)*

“And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit; (Eschew Evil)” (The Qur’an, 75:2)

c) *Al-Nafs al-Mutma’innah (the nafs at peace / 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”

(The Qur’an, 89:27-30)

These three phases are the representation of the *nafs*' development, starting with the lowest rung (*nafs ammarah*) and progressing up to the highest level (*nafs mutma’innah*) (Figure 2). Al-Ghazali (1043–1111) explained that the downward dimension of the *Nafs* connects it with the world of matter through the body's sensory faculties, while the upward dimension connects it with the *ruh* in its uppermost limit (Ashraf,1991). One additional thing that has to be mentioned

about the human *Nafs* is that it exists in the body together with the *ruh* (spirit), but that man cannot feel it in the real sense during his childhood. However, its influence becomes more apparent during puberty and maturity, along with the physical maturation of the human body.

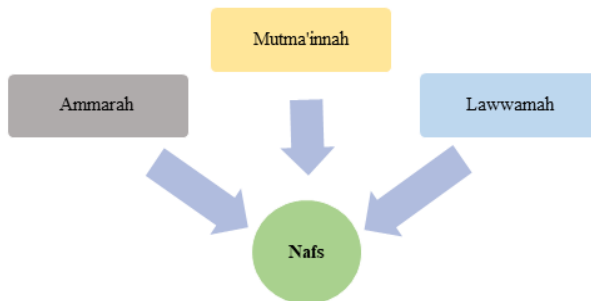


Figure 2. Three phases of nafs

4.4.4 The Intellect (Al-'Aql)

The term "intellect" in Arabic is "*aql*," which comes from the root "*aqala*," which also means "to be endowed with reason," "to be intelligent," "to comprehend," and "to understand." The human *nafs* or self', need the light of the '*aql*' in order to overcome or reject its lower nature. Along with repelling things that are damaging to the *nafs*, the '*aql*' also draws things that help the *nafs* grow in a healthy way. The true essence of '*aql*' is that it is a spiritual substance that enables the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*) to discern and discriminate between truth and untruth (Al-Attas,1991).

The aforementioned analysis also shows that the phrases "*al-ruh*," "*al-qalb*," "*an-nafs*," and "*al-'aql*" are all used synonymously in the Holy Qur'an and by Muslim scholars. *Al-ruh*, *al-nafs*, and *alqalb* can all refer to the same thing at different times, while *al-'aql* and *al-qalb* can also imply the same thing at other times. While the *ruh* (spirit) serves as the fundamental origin or entity for the emergence of the other entities of the human psyche, the *qalb* (heart) supersedes all other entities in terms of its functions and tendencies. In the human psyche, the *qalb*, which is the seat of individuality, knowledge, and intellectual faculties, attachments and emotions, plays a very important and dominant role (Abdul Razak, 2011).

4.5 Human behaviour

From an Islamic perspective, human behaviour development differs from what is found in Western psychology. As opposed to Freud's theory, Islam holds that behaviour does not simply result from the interaction of the id, ego, and super-ego. Instead, Islam views human behaviour development as a religious endeavour carried out by a person to bring out the best in him. Since all Muslims have the conviction that they will one day return to Allah S.W.T. and be held accountable for all their activities, they all endeavour to improve their good nature (*fitrah*) (Abdul Razak, 2011).

In contrast to Western psychology, Islamic psychology recognizes the existence of role models that all Muslims are supposed to emulate, especially during difficult times, for guidance and the development of positive behaviours. These role models are none other than the Prophets stated in the Noble Qur'an and Hadith, who have good character traits and

dispositions that are admirable. These two concepts—the fitrah and the Prophets' role as role models—serve as the centre of the Islamic conception of how human behaviour develops (Ramadan, 2007) (Figure 3).

Based on the Qur'an (35:32), the 13th-century Islamic scholar Ibn Taymiyyah categorized an individual's behaviour into three characteristics: (1) *dhalim li-nafsih* (the one who oppresses his nafs), (2) *muqtaṣid* (the one who moderates his good deeds), and (3) *sābiq bi-al-khayrāt* (the one who endeavours towards good deeds). He said that the other verses on this behavioural classification are broad and do not apply specifically to Muslims. Motivated behaviours, although depending on the outcome of actions, influence the relationship between the levels of *nafs* in Islam.

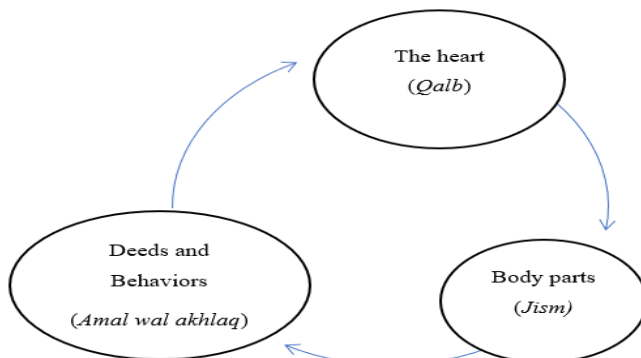


Figure 3. Human behaviour formation as explained by Al-Ghazali

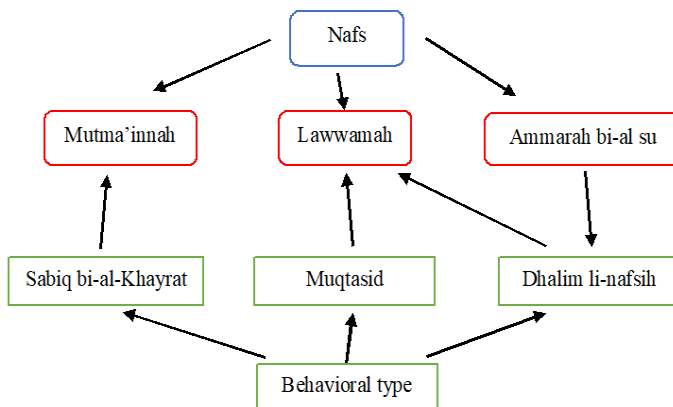


Figure 4. Ibn Taymiyah model of behavioural formation

4.6 Four Basic Inclinations of Human Nature

According to Al-Ghazali, a man is made up of four fundamental inclinations that are entirely distinct from one another but merge to create a single being (Haque, 2004) (Figure 5). According to Al-Ghazali, the core of a person's actions and attitudes are influenced by these four essential motivational factors. He claims that the human heart resembles a mirror that reflects all of these potent qualities. These are the core components of human nature and represent man's basic inclinations (Cheraghi, 2012). These four attributes are animalism/lust, predation/ anger, divine and satanic attributes.

Although each individual has all four of these inclinations, some of them are stronger than others based on that person's personal traits as well as the circumstances and period in which he lives. It is commonly accepted that no one before Freud

stressed the significance of either the direct or indirect influence that subconscious impulses have on man's emotions and thinking. (Schultz & Schultz, 2007). However, Al-Ghazali outlined how these inclinations might alter a person's behaviour and personal traits. Below is a brief explanation of the four inclinations as outlined by Al-Ghazali;

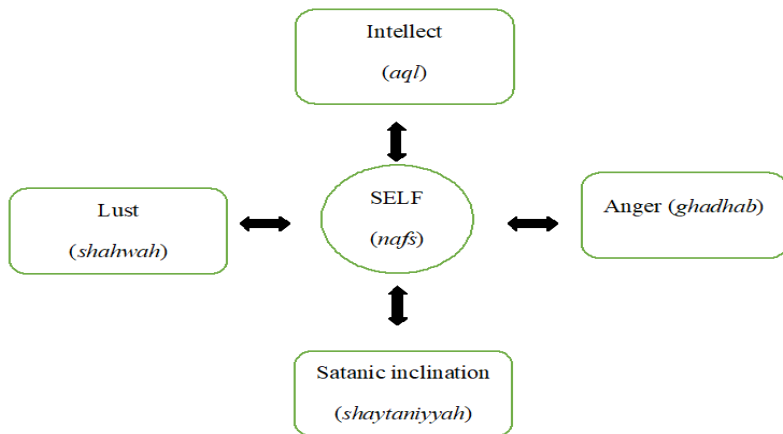


Figure 5. Four Inclinations of human nature according to Al-Ghazali

4.6.1 Inclination to Lust

The first of these qualities in a man's heart, according to Al-Ghazali, are *shahwa* (lust) and *ishtiyyaq* (appetite). It is the most primitive of powers since the ability to lust exists in all living things, not just humans. When desire is not restrained by the faculty of reason, it not only causes a person to engage in destructive behaviours and distressing occupations, but it also

influences other inclinations, bringing them under its control and dictating how they behave (Shah, 2015). Human beings, then, display an extreme tendency to food and sex, comparable to that of animals. Al-Ghazali states that an unrestrained inclination of lust drives a man to employ all of his energy only to gratify his biological needs and that it weakens man's ability to reason.

Al-Ghazali believes that when this powerful inclination is not checked by the faculty of reason, it oppresses the individual and weakens his self-control, forcing him to act in such a way that he seeks only to satisfy his own personal desires and preventing him from engaging in occupations that are truly beneficial to himself and his community. Korlaelci (2012), noted that when the powers of lust are totally done away with, the order in the world may break down and that *muamalat* (interactions and relations) between people may cease. A person can achieve states of contentment, peace of mind and soul, elegance, and material prudence (*qan'ah*) as well as moderation in his sexual life and strong self-discipline, according to when his faculty of reason regulates his lusts. Because lust is the most overwhelming and severe of all of man's powers (Korlaelci, 2012), it is more difficult to regulate and neutralize than the other impulses.

4.6.2 *Anger/Predation Inclination*

Al-Ghazali considers *ghadhab* (anger) as the second inclination present in human nature. According to him, a person might end up in dangerous situations if they are really angry. Anger, in particular, can cause feelings of animosity, vindictiveness, hatred, and behaviours such as aggression, argument,

despotism, and murder (Awang et al., 2014; Gianotti, 2011). When the strength of anger falls below normal, the owner becomes excessively thoughtless and cowardly (Cheraghi, 2012). Furthermore, anger can induce a person to engage in self-punishment and self-flagellation. Al-Ghazali asserts that when this power is under the balanced control of reason, the possessor of the rage will be just as calm, striving, protecting, and courageous as he is kind-tempered, patient, and compassionate (Shah, 2015). A person can reach the level of *takamul* (human perfection) by controlling his lust and anger, asserts al Ghazali. Furthermore, if these two inclinations are left unrestricted, they weaken a person spiritually.

4.6.3 Lordly Inclination

Lordly (*rabbaniyyah*) power is the third inclination that directly influences human behaviour. While both humans and animals have the powers of lust and anger, the power of lordliness distinguishes man from animals. The influence of lordliness makes a person refuses to be modest, act as though he is superior to everyone else, and believe that he is the most intelligent and skilled person (Korlaelci, 2012). As a result, self-love may become excessive, just as it can become so reduced that a person loses awareness of the significance of his own existence. When self-love is excessively present, it is referred to as arrogance (*takabbur*), and when it is excessively absent, it is thought that the possessor lacks confidence or has an inferiority complex (*dillah*). Those who lack this power are unaware of their own worth and continuously elevate others in an attempt to make others appreciate them. According to Al-Ghazali, the lordly inclination might accept its limitations from being disciplined by the faculty of reason. He goes on to say

that when this inclination is balanced, a person not only acts justly in giving others value and knowing his own value, but he is also prudent and thankful, capable of practicing empathy, and guides others by assisting them in attaining their distinguished human virtues and qualities (Gianotti, 2011). It is recognized that many scientifically proven personality disorders, such as narcissism, addiction, obsession, and the desire for attention, as well as emotions triggering behavioural disorders like an inferiority complex or striving for superiority, are rooted in this force of lordliness. People who believe they are superior, either individually or collectively, are the root of many communal and social conflicts, injustices, and oppression in our world. People who suffer from this sickness of the heart give themselves to sadness, pessimism, hopelessness, and suffering (Shah, 2015).

4.6.4 Satanic Inclination

The craftiness of man, in Al-Ghazali's opinion, is the final and fourth power that governs human behaviour. People are able to present reality as being different from what it actually is by using the satanic (*shaytaniyyah*) attribute (Umaruddin, 2003). When under the influence of this power, a person can persuade people around him to achieve his own goals. To achieve his aim, a person seeks ways to deceive others and use his reasoning skill for deceitful means (Gianotti, 2011). When this power joins with the other powers and departs from reason's sovereignty, a person fabricates information, poses as someone he is not, and deceives others in order to further his objectives (Derin, 2012). According to Al-Ghazali, this power's purpose is to fool and deceive people, calling it "devilry." He also said that a person behaving in accordance with his satanic inclination is the cause of disputes in society as well as thoughts and deeds that cause

spiritual illness. It is the responsibility of the faculty of reason to recognize and distinguish the devilish inclination's manipulations. When the faculty of reason disciplines the deceptive element of this power, what is left are practical knowledge, aptitude, the power to control events, and profound comprehension that may be used for the person's advantage (Umaruddin, 2003). However, Al-Ghazali asserts that without this ability, man is simply an idiot (*ahmaq*).

5. DISCUSSION

It is evident by examining the intellectual progress of the West over the past century or more that Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) concepts of man have had a significant influence on several academic fields, including psychology. Darwin's theory was that humans have inherited the instincts they possess from their ancestors, who belonged to the ape family. Comparing man with animals, Darwin believed that man does not possess any sort of nobility, superiority or spirituality. For this reason, the research of man's spiritual side is never regarded by Western mainstream psychology as being particularly pressing for the simple reason that the human spirit or soul is an invisible entity. They focus on the heart while studying human psychology within the context of the human mind and heart. Since spirit is immaterial in their eyes, it cannot be subjected to any sort of empirical study. On the other hand, this hidden aspect of human nature is an integral element of the fundamental concepts and beliefs held by Muslim scholars. This paper has presented using divine sources that for human civilization to achieve peace and remain psychologically balanced their behaviors should be in accordance to the *fitrah* which they are created upon.

6. CONCLUSION

A strong entity is created by the Self, mind, heart, and spirit when they are all connected by the *fitrah*. Additionally, it connects the spirit and soul. Man will be outside the scope of his Self, mind, heart, and spirit if he is detached from his *fitrah*. Thus Western concepts of human nature most probably will fail to produce people who are emotionally, morally and spiritually strong because these human qualities are not taken into consideration or emphasized in their concepts. In addition, these concepts lack the many exclusively human qualities like sympathy, generosity, empathy, etc. Despite its significance for the advancement of civilization and the fact that man is the main focus of the Qur'anic revelation since he is seen as Allah's vicegerent on earth, many Muslim scholars have long neglected the study of human nature. It is crucial to shaping human behaviour in accordance with his *fitrah* if we are to overcome the unjust in the world. If human civilization is to attain peace and psychological balance, it must act in accordance with the innate nature from which it was created. A significant amount of evidence from the Qur'an discusses the creation of human beings from a single soul with the same *fitrah*. The Islamic viewpoint emphasizes the necessity of development, change, and learning in the creation of human personality and behaviour in order to liberate mankind from tension, disorder, and disturbance. While psychology discusses the empirical elements of the human mind and behaviour, Islam addresses the normative aspects through rules, morality, and guidance, as well as the existential dimensions such as the soul, conscience, and society. Thus, Islam is scientifically factual, realistic, and pragmatic for human existence, and psychology appears to be a

divine blessing on how to best adhere to Allah. It is recommended that the school system should consider teaching what is strictly in the Quran. When people understand themselves, they will much more be able to relate to others.

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