

Anthropology: A New Scope

Theories on Human Nature

There are four theories on the reality of human nature:

1- Some intellectuals believe that they know man's nature quite well, and consider man a meritorious being. This theory may be categorized into two sub-theories:

a) Some believe man to be the most well developed being found in nature, the absolutely perfect creation.

There are some points of criticism to this theory: firstly, we do not have enough knowledge of nature to claim man to be its perfect being. Second, we must not confuse man's complex aspects and diverse talents with his being the most complete of all creatures.

a) Some other intellectuals believe that although human beings are great, meritorious creatures, they cannot be entitled as the most perfect in nature, for apart from a meager few, mankind is drowning in its selfishness and desires for pleasure.

2- Some intellectuals believe that man is cruel by nature. They see man as a selfish, inconsiderate being who thinks of nothing but his own benefit. As Nero once said, "If only all men had one neck, so I could kill them all with one single stroke!" Anastas, who taxed the air people breathed, is another example.

If we study the history of mankind, we will not come to accept this theory, for despite all of the animal-like conceited figures, there have also been men of great valor and glory.

3- Some believe that the fundamentals of human nature are still unknown to us, but we do know that man has shown on great many occasions his selfishness and desire for pleasure. Many human beings have considered themselves the end, and many others have assumed the role of being the means to the end. This theory suffers from two weaknesses: first, we cannot claim that we know nothing at all about

the fundamentals of man's nature. We are aware of some aspects of man. Some physiological, psychological and social aspects of human nature have been identified. We cannot deny the endeavors anthropologists have made. Secondly, although history has seen selfish vultures of human beings, it has also witnessed men of the highest human values.

4– Man is believed to have a great variety of potentials and talents, only some of which have been investigated or known. We can study the activation of man's potentials from two points of view:

- a) Activating the human potentials related to man's compulsory life.
- b) Man's attention and great eagerness for his own perfection. Some human beings have been successful in activating their potentials. These seekers of greatness and perfection have always saved human virtues from annihilation. According to this theory, man possesses both glorious, incredible virtues as well as evil and corruption.

The Human Nature in the Qur'an

Some verses of the Qur'an show some of man's psychological elements and positive and negative aspects, not the nature and identity of man. A few of such verses are:

خلق الانسان ضعيفا

“Man was created a weakling.”(4:28)

خلق الانسان من عجل

“Man was created of haste.” (21:37)

ان الانسان خلق هلوعا اذا مسه الشر جزوعا و اذا مسه الخير منوعا

“Surely man was created fretful; when evil visits him, impatient, when good visits him, grudging.” (70: 19–21)

It is impossible to take the true identity and nature of man into consideration using these verses. In fact, since man's degrees of elevation and degradation are truly infinite, he cannot be totally discovered. The potentials and talents mentioned by the Qur'an express not only man's identity, but some of the characteristics and qualities he can show. If the Qur'an did explain the elements of man's congeniality and nature, it would not need to mention some exceptional human beings or condemn others.

والعصر ان الانسان لفي خسر الا الذين امنوا و عملوا الصالحات

“By the afternoon! Surely man is in the way of loss, save those who believe and do righteous deeds.” (103: 1-3)

The Qur’anic verse mentioning that man has been created of haste does not imply the nature or identity of man either, for haste is a certain quality about how we move from a starting–point to a destination; it is not an external, independent fact about the movement that can be considered a part of human nature. Furthermore, the following verse cautions man for his haste, so if it were all or part of his innate nature, it would be impossible for him to give it up.

خلق الانسان من عجل ساريكم اياتى فلا تستعجلون

“Man was created of haste. Assuredly I shall show you My signs; so demand not that I make haste.” (21:37)

Human Characteristics

There are various anthropological theories. One theory, pertaining to materialists, believes that man is a harmonious machine that has achieved perfection and complexity through the laws of nature. According to this theory, human beings should be considered just like other creatures, for he has no identity different from them.

There are a great many differences between man and machines, the least of them being the element life. Man has a huge number of characteristics no machine can have. We have listed 232 human characteristics based on man's identity and relationships with others. However, some are so diverse themselves that the list can be actually considered to include 950 characteristics. Some of them are:

- 1) Man's ego, 2) Man's awareness of his ego, 3) Man's attitude, which shows the quality of his character, 4) Endeavoring for perfection, 5) Reinforcing his will, 6) Autolysis, 7) Macro mania, 8) Self-consciousness and self-alienation toward peers, 9) Self-ignorance and the possibility for self-discovery,
- 10) Self-loss, 11) Self-denial, 12) Conscious conscience, self-conscious conscience and unconscious conscience, 13) Moral conscience (with 50 different functions), 14) Pride and glory, 15) Desire for fame, 16) Self-defense, 17) Psychological complexes, 18) Internal emotions, feelings and anxieties (over 100 different types), 19) Introversion and extroversion,
- 20) Analytical and combination thought, 21) An existent called the heart, with over 100 functions, 22) Intellectualism and solidity of thought, 23) Hope, 24) Dissatisfaction of monotony, 25) Wishing, 26) Denial, 27) Sacrifice, 28) Seeking benefit over others, 29) Idealism, 30) Worship, etc.

Human Nature

The nature and temperament of man – his original creation, his fundamental existence – is one of the most important issues of anthropology. There is much debate whether man has a nature or not. There are three reasons upon which those against human nature deny its existence:

- 1– Man's psychological, instinctive, and mental forces and activities have been identified by various branches of science, and no sign of human nature has been discovered by any of them.
- 2– If there were human nature, the various aspects of human existence would not suffer so much change and upheaval.
- 3– The diversity and differences among the individual and social behavior of human beings, is in conflict with the existence of a commonality called human nature.

However, if the human nature is defined correctly, the three problems mentioned above will vanish. The definition of the human nature is:

The human nature – the natural disposition of the human heart – is the natural, orderly flow of the forces inside man. Therefore, there is a nature for each of man's instinctive, mental and psychological forces, which also forms its natural, logical flow.

According to the above definition, each of man's powers and potentials are included in man's nature. In other words, the orderly, logical flow of every power and potential of mankind is called its nature. Now we can present counterarguments for the three problems we posed above:

First, we cannot deny their claim that human nature is not included among man's psychological, mental and instinctive activities, for those who believe in human nature do not intend to prove a separate, psychological reality or a body part which may be denied; every power man possesses, in its natural, logical course of action, is a part of human nature.

The second problem – stating that the changes man undergoes conflict with human nature – does not seem correct if we take into consideration the survival of human aspects throughout all the changes mankind has seen. For instance, thought, one of man's aspects, does not undergo change during all the ups and downs of man's life. Only the raw material or subjects related to human thought are interpreted.

Thirdly, the third problem – defying human nature based on the differences existing between individual and collective thoughts and behaviors – also appears to be incorrect, for if we are to recognize human differences as the criterion, we should not recognize any other of the human aspects, either. For example, do people not differ in their ideas? Are humans not different in the emotions and reactions they show in response to motivations and conscientious activities? Must we defy thoughts, emotions and the conscience?

As we have already mentioned, the human nature consists of the logical, orderly flow of each of the human forces. Now, by means of comparing it with each of the human forces, we can come to a more accurate analysis of the human nature:

1- Thought: Thought includes activities done on known things in order to discover the unknown, or activities done on the means in order to achieve a goal. If human thought acts logically and omits or selects the means correctly to achieve his end, he has moved on the path of his intrinsic nature; however, if he falls astray from the correct way of thinking, and behaves illogically, we may say that his thought has deviated from human nature.

2- Will: If the human will chooses and activates the useful motives, his will arises from a healthy, sound human nature.

3- Emotions and Feelings: If man's emotional behavior is rational in response to the stimuli that arouse his feelings and emotions, and do not fall for imaginations, flashbacks or scattered thoughts, his feelings will have a healthy human nature; the slightest distortion in the normal flow of feelings and emotions will harm them.

4- Selfishness: If acting on the path of self-preservation and aiming for human development, selfishness is compatible with the true, original human nature. Yet, when it falls into hedonistic pleasures, it deviates from the real course of human nature, and becomes self-conceit.

5- Conscience: Conscience is one of man's greatest internal powers. If it acts legitimately, it will have a healthy human nature. For instance, if the human conscience proves him right and wrong, or makes righteous judgments and scorns and tortures man when he sins, it has moved on its rational path.

6- The Supreme Feeling of Responsibility: It can behave in two ways:

a) *The Supreme Feeling of Responsibility toward People:* In this case, man sympathizes for the joys and sorrows others feel, and considers love toward his fellow human beings superior to all other aspects of social life.

b) *The Supreme Feeling of Responsibility for Man's Own Self-development:* Man does not feel his existence in the universe is aimless; he is always in attempt to lead his existence to perfection.

Both forms of the supreme feeling of responsibility mentioned above can be in accordance with the human nature if man acts rationally.

All human beings generally have an original human nature, which is pure and has the potential to seek greatness and perfection. If man succeeds in protecting his pure nature from deviations, inculcations, and the pre-defined grounds of an unhealthy society, he can keep it pure and original. These verses from the Holy Qur'an imply the existence of the human nature:

فاقم وجهك للدين حنيفا فطرة الله التي فطر الناس عليها لا تبديل لخلق الله ذلك الدين القيم و لكن اكثر الناس لا يعلمون

“So set thy face to the religion, a man of pure faith – God's original upon which He originated mankind. There is no changing in God's creation. That is the right religion—but most people know it not.” (30:30)

صبغة الله و من احسن من الله صبغة

“Having faith in God, and submitting to God's will on the way to development and perfection is in fact being colored by God – and who can color [human lives] better than God?”(2: 138)

Man's Internal Potentials

There are potentials inside man that can be activated by external factors. Some intellectuals have claimed that there is no reality apart from what external factors create in man.

We disapprove this theory, for the external factors that influence man internally produce results different from themselves. Some behaviorists ignore man's potentials, although they do not clearly deny their existence.

Now we will present several reasons for the necessity of human potentials:

1– Denying Man's Internal Potentials Casts Doubt on All Identities Man Discovers about Realities: Every phenomenon has an identity which is definite and clear. For instance, we see something in the distance, and we are not sure whether it is a person or a rock; the object itself, however, has its own, definite identity, anyway. If man had no potentials inside him, his behaviors and actions should be indefinite – and this is impossible, for indefinite identity in the world outside is not observable.

Therefore, we either have to consider those potentials arising from general concepts inside human beings – which is wrong, for general concept are fictitious products of the human mind – or we have to consider them as part of man's inside: there are realities inside man that create certain behaviors and reaction when in contact with external factors.

2– The Phenomenon of Inventions, Discoveries and Innovations: If discoveries and inventions do not originate from man's internal potentials, they must arise from external factors; however, there is not similarity or association between external factors and the discoveries and inventions made by man.

The inventions and discoveries do not arise from the great deal of information man has about a subject. If external factors could lead to discoveries and inventions by themselves, anybody who had them would

become an inventor or a discoverer.

3– Different Behaviors – Political, Judicious, and Artistic: Some people have specific behaviors. Some seem to have a political kind of style, others a military, judicious, artistic or managerial behavior. The fact that people have different behaviors proves that they must have the potential needed for it. For example, if one has an artistic kind of behavior, he must have artistic potential, too.

4– The Activation of the “Self” that Manages Man's Life: As we have already mentioned, man's soul is abstract, and has been interpreted in various ways, like the “self” and the “ego.” The external factors that enter man's life cannot be regarded as parts of the existence of the “self,” for they are by no means comparable. The “self” is not a result of external factors; however, the accumulation of these factors inside human life can bring about the activation of the “self.”

In brief, if the 'self' potential did not exist inside the phenomenon of life, external factors – that cannot consciously save their own existence against any creature – could never create the 'self.'

5– Mental Activities: We arrange the pictures we get from the world outside in our mind. The mind regards some phenomenon as true and some others false. The mind's potentials help it carry out various tasks. If man did not possess the potential of wisdom, for instance, it could not use its wisdom in any task at all. Without the potential of moral conscience, man would never accept a series of “shoulds” and deny others. Likewise, if man did not have the potential to seek beauty, he would never enjoy watching beautiful things.

Interpreting Opposite Potentials

Man is a being capable of showing himself to have both the highest and greatest of moral ethics and the most vile and vulgar qualities. Now that he possesses two opposite kinds of qualities, can he be said to have internal opposite potentials and talents? Will the fact of having opposite potentials and talents contradict man's unity of personality and the inseparability of his soul?

There is no doubt that man has internal opposites. Man can be more degraded and filthier than animals, or higher than angels; no one doubts that. The point that calls for consideration is how to interpret these conflicting qualities. Man has a variety of potentials. He can become a judge, or maybe an artist. He has both the potential to be righteous, and to be selfish and victimize the right for his own desires.

Our interpretation for such opposite potentials is that man cannot activate conflicting potentials in the same circumstances – he cannot simultaneously be righteousness and selfishly cruel. He may be righteous at times, but under certain conditions become cruel. We may consider man's conflicting potentials from two points of view:

1– Positive, Opposite Potentials: An example is the potentials for crude emotions and purely intelligent ones. The former are not any principle or law other than their causes, whereas the latter cannot do

anything without obeying the law.

2- Potentials Implying Possibility and Power: Many qualities can arise in man, although he does not innately have them. In fact, the appearance of atrocious, vulgar qualities is the result of the disappearing or destruction of man's innate potentials; man has no innate negative quality of his own.

The former group mentioned above can be harmonized and organized in order to result in man's mental and spiritual development. For instance, if man's powers of thought and intelligence are enhanced, his crude emotions will become highly elevated ones.

The latter group, which are potential, cannot even flourish at the same time, let alone be harmonized. If man's potential for justice is activated, for example, at that moment he cannot be cruel and unfair. Thus, when a certain potential is activated, its opposite cannot possibly arise alongside it; if the conditions and circumstances change, however, the opposite may arise. Man must always beware of the opposites of good qualities arising within him.

In a word what God has blessed man with is purely positive, constructive potentials. Even the nature of the filthiest of man's instincts is useful and good. It is man who neutralizes his positive, constructive potentials, and abuses his instincts. The fact that man possesses various potentials does not conflict with the fact that his nature is abstract, either. The human nature has to be non-physical, and supernaturally united to be able to have different potentials. If man's nature were not supernatural, it would be impossible to interpret and justify the interference, overlapping and observable inseparability of his potentials.

The Identity of the “Self” (the “ Ego”)

All living beings have a “self.” That is how they can resist harmful factors. In plants, the “self” is limited, and they cannot defend it against everything. The resistance against harmful factors in plants is not vast.

In animals, the “self” is more apparent, for they tend to reach pleasure and avoid pain. Animals are able to fight natural, fatalistic laws much more than plants.

In the case of human beings, however, we see a “self” consisting of many units – cognition, intelligence, imagination, affirmation, hallucination, discovery, decision, free will, interest in beauty ...

Man possesses several “selves”:

1- A “self” the same as other living beings.

2- Wider selves like cognition, intelligence, imagination, thought and many others.

If psychological terminology does not allow us to call these phenomena 'selves,' we can express it in another way: the 'self' together with dozens of other highly significant means that have arisen in various

fields, and can reinforce and supervise human endeavor and activity units.”

3- Deep “selves:” Using his “self,” man can supervise and dominate his actions much better.

Considering the vastness of the human “self” and its tendency toward progress and perfection, we may categorize it via “width and length” categorization:

a) Wider selves: Having gone through the preliminary stages of development, man possesses a natural self. This natural self is the non-self-conscious aspect of the self, and develops as time goes by.

In fact, man acquires a “moral” self, possesses a 'scientific' self, gets a 'social' self, and has an exclusive 'divine' self.

b) “Length” selves: Since birth, man develops both from a physical, natural point of view, and the development and perfection of his “self.” As Jalal-addin Muhammad Molawi (Rumi) says:

از جمادی مُردم و نامی شدم وز نما مُردم ز حیوان سر زدم

مُردم از حیوانی و آدم شدم پس چه ترسم؟ کی ز مردنم شدم

حملة دیگر بمیرم از بشر تا بر آرم از ملایک بال و پر

وز ملک هم بایدم جستن ز جو کلّ شی هالک الّا وجهه

بار دیگر از ملک پران شوم آنچه آن در وهم ناید، آن شوم

پس عدم گُردم، عدم چون ارغنون گویدم کانا الیه راجعون

(Apparently, I stopped being like an animal; it seemed that sort of life died in me. But that death elevated me to higher states of human perfection. So why should I fear these successive deaths, for they are lifting me up toward development? These deaths made me even more alive. I was not losing anything; I was merely heading for a higher stage of life. After that, I was at the stage of humanity for a while. Now if I lose my human body and give myself to human death, angelic spirit will fill my soul, and fly me toward divinity. Soon, I will even surpass angels, and head for a hugely greater world. No point or state living beings move on the path of has stability or eternity, for everything is mortal, except His Divine Essence.

Then, I will even climb beyond being like angels, and reach a state reason and wisdom can never fathom; I will head for oblivion, which is the general rhythm of the universe conducted by God's Mighty Will, telling us that 'we will all return to God'.)

We can also present another classification for the self:

1- The Natural Self: This kind of self is common between man and animals. The natural self cannot step out of fatalistic circles, or supervise and dominate various affairs. At the level of the natural self, man acts in accordance with fatalistic factors and principles.

2- The Human Self: Having stepped out of the natural self, man finds his human self. Justice, love for other human beings and paying attention to other morals and virtues become significant. With this kind of "self," man can bring the natural self and its various activities under control. He is not totally free of fatalistic issues, however, for the natural self is combined with the human self, and plays a role in man's deeds.

3- The Human-divine Self: If man's soul and spirit are elevated, he can go beyond his normal human self, and reach a "human-divine" self. The spirit is released from all the chains trapping it, and finds divine freedom.

We may divide the identity of the self into two kinds:

a) The self with the identity of the natural self-conveys the management of purely natural life, which exists in all living beings, from animals to even just, spiritually elevated humans. Its only purpose is to inflate the self and dominate anything other than the self, considering everything else at the service of enhancing the inflation and dominance of the self. All good or evil are evaluated by selfish criteria.

This kind of self will tread on all moral virtues to get what it wants, burn down the whole world for a meager desire. It is totally "self-oriented." This is the self that has caused the natural and animal-like aspect of the history of mankind to continue, hindering the history of humanity. The qualities of the purely natural self are:

- It considers itself the leader, and obeys itself.
- It is morbidly selfish and arrogant.
- The natural self-fights anything that does not appeal to its desires.
- It worships itself.
- It has a tendency toward hedonism.
- It can mislead man from righteousness and justice.

- It denies all harmony and order in the universe.
- It considers wishes and favoritism prior to discipline and order.
- It regards itself as the end and others as the means.

b) The self with the identity of dynamic progress toward perfection: This form of self is always elevating; it never spins around itself. It does not lose its perfectionist, progressive identity, for it never falls into selfishness or arrogance. This kind of self never regards the purely natural self as the criterion for morals and virtues, for it knows too well that man's true rise to perfection is possible only outside the natural self, which merely aims to achieve pleasure and repel harm.

When man possesses a dynamic self, he will at least:

- always assess himself,
- take himself seriously, and
- care about himself.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment is higher than self-knowledge. Seldom do human beings attempt to assess themselves, and far fewer of them are able to do so. The reasons for its difficulty are:

- 1- Man should be aware of his own mental aspects and internal settings that affect his present and future.
- 2- He should know qualitatively and quantitatively about the power in him.
- 3- Know exactly what his relationship with the laws and principles that cause evolution and development is.

Self-assessment should not turn into absolute independence of character, for then it would become a sort of self-battle, leading to a war against others, too. By independence of character we mean that man may consider his own existence as being far superior to all values and morals. The only kind of independence that means is the independence of selfishness. Cultures can have great influence on how people assess themselves; some cultures totally ignore the issue of educating people how to assess themselves, which is absolutely essential – for even a short time.

Taking Oneself Seriously

When man takes himself seriously, he will neither deceive himself nor others. The following steps are

necessary if man is to take himself seriously:

- 1- He should know himself thoroughly, correctly assessing his internal potentials.
- 2- Having done that, he will feel the desire for the highest aim of life.
- 3- Serious attention to the highest aim of life makes man understand that he cannot achieve it without activating his potentials and powers.
- 4- Once man realizes that he cannot take his existence as a joke, he cannot submit to the laws of nature or even other people. He is dependent upon God's will, and that should be taken seriously.

No force can penetrate into the human ego, for God has built it like a forbidden area into which only man himself can find way. If he does not break the sacred security of his territory and tries not to deceive himself, no other being can enter it.

Good Intentions for the Self

Man cannot be well-intentioned about himself unless a) realities of good intentions and perfections are presented to him, and b) the self itself becomes important to man, too.

If the self is not important to man, he will never attempt to discover what is useful or harmful to him. The two factors mentioned above account for why many human beings are not well-intentioned about their own selves.

There are many factors that lead to the self being considered as worthless, the most important of which is the activation of the self without any free endeavor. As we know, man feels his ego arise in him after childhood, without having done any attempt to acquire it. It is the lack of attempt to acquire the self that makes man feel no importance in it, and do no study on its characteristics.

Education is of great significance in self-discovery. Unfortunately, societies that neglect the role of religion and moral ethics in various aspects of human life, do not feel enough respect and value for the life of human beings so as to acknowledge its existence, and consider its education as important. If the "self" were of importance to man today, millions of human lives would not be at the peril of tyrants' whimsical desires and wishes.

Self-alienation

Self-alienation involves the lack of the self, the absence of some of the elements of the ego which may be caused by several factors. Considering the evolutions of the self and its definite or indefinite state, we can list eight meanings for self-alienation. They can be categorized into two main groups:

1. Negative Self-alienation

Negative self-alienation includes the lack of the self or the absence of some of its elements that make man fail in his life. This form of self-alienation can be of six kinds:

1- Ignorance about the self: This kind of self-alienation has engulfed most of humanity today. Although prophets of God and great men of wisdom have preached man to discover themselves ever since the history of mankind began, their preaching has seldom been entirely fruitful. Self-knowledge is so important that an ideology is useless if it cannot make man discover himself and what is proper and appropriate to his life.

The point here is that with all the unknown and unsolved mysteries in man, how can the self-alienation caused by lack of knowledge of the domains of human life be eradicated? Considering the quality of "self-familiarity," the answer should be quite obvious, for it is one of the characteristics of human life that when it gains some extent of knowledge of its self, it can save itself from self-alienation only to that extent. Of course, if man has the capability to discover himself but does not do so, he will suffer from one of the most degraded forms of self-alienation.

2- Losing the self: In this kind of self-alienation, one sees one's self in another person. It is caused by two basic factors:

a) Extreme extroversion, where man thinks too highly of "other than himself," and is drowned in its attraction. Such an inadvertent tendency toward others can alienate man from himself. The only way to escape this kind of self-alienation is by paying attention to the fact that no advantage possessed by the "other than oneself" should make one lose one's "own self."

b) Sometimes it is the weakness and incapability of the "self" that cannot safeguard its independence. The feeling of humiliation may lead to such weakness and incompetence.

These two factors can make man feel that he exists actually outside himself – feel that his life exists in others.

3- Self-defiance: If one knows that cruelty to others actually means cruelty toward oneself, and that escaping duties is in fact escaping one's own self, and that lying can distort reality, but still does cruel deeds and tells lies, has in fact defied his own self. When man feels his internal tendency toward the philosophy and aim of life, but destroys it with his own desires and wishes, is he not defying himself? Denying the beginning and the end of creation is a sign of self-alienation.

4- Bargain-like self-alienation: This kind of self-alienation is based upon greed for benefit and advantage. Those who suffer from it consider themselves as merchandise that can be traded with others. They are ready to lose even themselves in return for a profit.

5- Living with an unreal self: This kind of self-alienation involves ignoring one's own elements of life. Man neglects his own potentials and lives with his unreal self. There are two kinds of unreal self:

a) The self that is full of desires, hopes and aims that pertain to selfishness. This is the unreal self that normal people deal with. Their self, in other words, is a mere set of baseless tendencies and wishes.

b) The self that copies and imitates the life of others. Many human beings live with the self of others, not their own. They imitate the behavior and thoughts of other people; their life is no more than a photograph of others' life.

6- Ignoring the power and advantages of the self: Man has a great many potentials, which are what make him superior to other living beings. Outstanding figures of history have been those who have succeeded in activating these potentials. This is the kind of self-alienation man will suffer from if he cannot manage his potentials and advantages. In fact, several factors make him escape his potentials, and become self-alienated. As Jalal-addin Muhammad Molawi says:

جمله عالم ز اختیار و هست خود می گریزند در سر سرمست خود

تا دمی از هوشیاری وارهند ننگ خمر و بنگ بر خود می نهند

می گریزند از خودی در بیخودی یا به مستی یا به شغل ای مهتدی

(People are running away from their own existence, their own free will... but where to? To stupefying infatuations that will take them far away from consciousness and awareness – if, even, momentarily. They turn to drugs and alcohol and submit to being dehumanized. With the occupation or infatuation they acquire, they are fleeing from self-consciousness toward unconsciousness, but they do not know that they will be pulled back into their natural, physical self by the chains of their desires and whims, for their escape was not upon God's command.)

If man loses supreme self-awareness, then conflicting and contradicting forms of awareness and destructive forms of freedom can bring about his intoxication and self-alienation.

2. Positive Self-alienation

Here, we refer to intelligible developments of the self. According to the end it may have, this kind of development may be of two forms:

a) Positive self-alienation with natural, normal orientation and destination: Man's life undergoes developments as time and his life pass. His advance in age also brings about evolutions in his

relationship with the universe. Another factor is more knowledge, which can change man's self. The new-formed self can in turn alienate man from his previous selves. By gaining knowledge, man acquires more new "selves." In many cases, the new self is caused by the natural, fatalistic flow of life; that self should be discarded, for developments in the self that are not caused by the freedom of human character have no value.

b) Self-alienation on the path to evolution: This form of self-alienation is caused by evolutions in man's internal existence. It differs from the former kind of self-alienation, however, in the fact that it happens at the individual's free will. The individual attempts to find a new self on the path to evolution. In fact, this form of self-alienation involves abandoning previous selves in order to achieve a developed, evolved self. Such a new self is impossible without making use of freedom.

When discussing this form of self, we must keep a few points in mind:

1- The factor of endeavor and adjusting the self on the path to evolution is far beyond passive, mortal selves. This basic factor may be considered as man's higher knowledge of supreme ideals.

This theory is quite useful in finding the grounds needed and the correct explanations about the means to pass on to evolutionary 'selves,' but it cannot provide the management factor that is able to correctly give the 'selves' and their means (the knowledge, experiences and gradual familiarity with ideals) evolutionary adjustment.

2- The origin of man's endeavor toward an evolved self lies in his spiritual aspect. In other words, we must admit that man has a spiritual aspect and that it is capable of guiding his selves on the path to evolution and perfection.

3- When the selves are guided onto the path to evolution, the previous ones are not eliminated, for not all of the previous elements and aspects are negative or imperfect enough to be deleted; they do contain elements necessary for the new selves, like correct ideals. Furthermore, some elements of the previous selves can provide the preliminary development and growth for the new ones.

4- A more evolved self means changes inside the self in order to achieve more independence and eliminate fatalistic states surrounded by the changes in nature and other human beings. Evolution in the self makes man's potentials and talents become activated, changes his internal conflicts into constructive ones, and increases the capacity of his existence.

5- The evolutions in the new self, along with use of freedom, eliminate the chains that trap man, granting him greater internal freedom.

6- The human self must take eternal prosperity into consideration if it intends to evolve, for as the eternal capital, the self cannot be exchanged for anything except eternal prosperity.

7- By achieving eternity, the self becomes immortal due to divine immortality. This does not mean,

however, that it moves to another world in which it becomes immortal; it does mean, either, that the self is totally demolished. We are referring to the elevating evolution of the self in this world – the expansion and development of the various aspects of human existence.

8– Along with any change or development the self undergoes, it finds new characteristics, too. If it achieves divine immortality, it will never think about gaining advantages or personal benefit, or competing against “other than the self.”

The Qualities of Existence Dependent upon the Self

If man's existence becomes dependent upon his self, he can save himself from negative self-alienation. In other words, the human self must be independent in selecting goals and means and what is proper for man's life. There are three points that should be kept in mind about existence dependent upon the self:

1– When man's existence is dependent upon the human self, it does not mean that it is abstractly isolated from natural and human factors; it should not be dependent upon what others do, like a musical instrument that needs to be played by others.

2– Dependency upon the self implies obeying the logical principles of life.

3– Self-dependent existence does not mean exploiting other human beings as one's tools. If man is free of negative self-alienation, he will never claim “I am the end, and the others are the means,” for that would take him to the inflation of his natural self, not the independence of his human self.

The steps needed to be taken in order to return to the self are:

a) First, man must become aware of the issue of life and its value and significance. Humans cannot regain their lost existence without proving the independence value of life.

b) Human laws must have origins far superior to the desires of natural life; likewise, the executors of the law must also have supernatural tendencies so that they can guide people toward an existence dependent on the self.

c) Education is quite significant in making the existence dependent upon the self-embrace reality. Education must devote all of its efforts and use all of its skills and appropriate expertise ever since man is born into trying to make him understand that he is for now merely a meager stream of existence originating from the foothills of history, genetics and the environment; quite soon, however, the immense power hidden in him will change him into an ocean so great that all the other streams, rivers and lakes will turn to him for help. In order to demonstrate to man this amazing development, it is necessary to introduce him to thousands of outstanding figures in history who have taken great steps toward changing man's goals and way of life.

d) Man must gain a clear understanding of independence and dependence; he should realize that total independence is impossible, and total dependence also leads to man's alienation.

Finding the Roots of Man's Weaknesses

In our analysis of human shortcomings, the following factors can be mentioned:

1- The dependence of human life upon realities outside it: Man's physical aspect depends on a series of internal and external factors that follow specific rules; these factors sometimes bring about shortcomings in man. In the spiritual aspect – concerning man's potentials and instincts – there are extremely delicate and sensitive relationships that may be distorted and disabled by other powerful factors. Thus, man possesses a series of physical and spiritual abilities and limitations he cannot escape. These limitations do not however, a) inhibit the order and harmony in his life, and b) man has no responsibility concerning his involuntary inabilities.

2- The shortcomings caused by emergent ignorance: Man never knows what kind of spiritual or mental state he will be in the next moment.

ای برادر عقل یک دم با خود آر دم به دم در تو خزان است و بهار

(Do thought and intuition inside Yourself, and you will find that various states and moods Keep arising in you. Indeed, springs and autumns rise and fall in us.)

Thus, as Jalal-addin Muhammad Molawi (Rumi) sees it, the human spiritual states – if not derogatory and vulgar – can be related to God.

Man may guess what his future spiritual state may be by means of comparisons and metaphors, but he can never have definite knowledge of it. This kind of shortcoming makes man moderate in his feelings of innate greed and ambition, and prevents him from rebellion. By reinforcing human thought and intelligence in the knowledge of facts, this can be overcome.

3- Voluntary shortcomings that originate from man himself: The two weaknesses mentioned above are not considered as imperfections in the creation of man, for they are involuntary and cannot be eliminated entirely; however, man suffers from a series of shortcomings that are brought about by actions he does at his own free will, and is responsible himself for overcoming them. Wars, atrocities, lies, and addictions are examples of shameful weaknesses that are caused by man himself, and only he is responsible for eliminating them.

There are three situations in which the powers and weaknesses of human beings reveal themselves:

1- Differences in potentials and talents and involuntary situations make people differ. A genius is quite

different from someone who has fairly little intelligence. The former can be regarded as powerful, and the latter as weak. When a person has literary talent and taste, he can be considered as stronger than the one who does not have it. Various talents for learning, intelligence, the power of guessing, and talent for economics, law and politics can categorize people into strong or weak. The variety and diversity in talents and characteristics is so great that some people may be strong in certain potentials and weak in other ones. In such cases, since each person has advantages that others do not possess, the members of the society must harmonize their different potentials and talents to serve everyone's development and perfection.

2- Sometimes the difference between the strong and the weak is used for progress toward intelligible life, and both the strong and the weak aim for the pinnacles of intelligible life. The diversity in the potentials, talents, emotions, desires, thoughts, cultures, physical situations and social environments is so great among people that the difference between the strong and the weak can never be totally eliminated; social life, instead, should be adjusted in a way that each individual, with all of his/her characteristics, can head toward intelligible life.

3- Sometimes the strong and the weak compete against each other. Their competitions can be divided into three groups:

a) Competition without conflict: The strong and the weak continue their lives without intersecting each other. They each go their own way, none taking action against the other.

b) Disturbing competition: This kind of rivalry may lead to the opponent's doom. We must say that all rivalries and competitions in the domain of purely natural life that are dominated by the self are of this second kind; the 'other than the self' is considered as worthless, and man tries to dominate anything to his advantage if he has the power to do so, and if he does not, he will take any measures needed to get it, burning in desire all the time. Like animals, their 'natural self' knows no boundaries, ever-inflating; even worse, they always believe that the whole universe owes them everything, and whenever they fail to achieve their desires, they think that the world has been cruelly atrocious to them, and they should seek their revenge.

c) Constructive competition: This kind of rivalry guides both sides toward perfection. Such rivalry is quite approvable, even reiterated. Many verses of the Qur'an emphasize the importance of competing with others in good deeds:

و لكل وجهة هو موليها فاستبقوا الخيرات

“And for every nation there is an end, a goal in life; so, what matters is to be ahead of others in good deeds.” (2: 147)

Those who do not take part in the competition of doing good, make themselves weak and incapable at

their own will.

In brief, in this kind of rivalry between humans, which is of the constructive kind, the two persons do not confront each other aiming to destroy one another; it is a serious attempt to do more good, to become more talented than the struggling men were before.

Conscience

Conscience is one of man's most significant aspects. There are two approaches to study the conscience: an internal study of oneself and others, and by means of anthropological studies.

The Definition of Conscience

There are two types of definitions for conscience:

1- Some are general definitions, which take an overall look at it, without presenting any specific cases; for example, conscience means awareness about the self or one's character.

2- Others are specific definitions, concerning the effects of conscience, for instance, facts like bring a compass of the character or supervisory role conscience.

A Scientific and Philosophical Study of Conscience

The conscience can be studied from two points of view. One viewpoint is based on the scientifically observable effects of the conscience, and the other explores its roots philosophically. Due to the following three factors, we are obliged to select the philosophical study:

- a) The conscience has no physical entity. No dimension of time or place can be specified for it.
- b) It has opposite aspects that can never be collected in any physical form. For instance, the conscience can both torture and be tortured.
- c) Internal freedom, one of the most original aspects of conscience, cannot be interpreted with any scientific principle.

The Criticism on the Originality of the Conscience

Several reasons have been posed against the existence of conscience. Let us criticize them:

1- The function of the conscience is not general: Some believe that if the conscience were universally original – in other words, if all human beings possessed it – why does it not show in all of them? Could anyone imagine someone like Genghis Khan having a conscience?

We must respond by saying that there are many instincts in humans about which people are highly diverse in possessing, using and fulfilling, such as the sexual instinct, emotions, curiosity and lots of others. Even the absence of some non-instinctive mental activities or a spiritual phenomenon cannot imply that an individual is basically devoid of it.

2- Differences in the functions of the conscience in human beings: Some say that if the conscience is to be original, why is there so much diversity among people in its functions? Various functions for the conscience cannot deny its existence, as the existence of brutally savage human beings cannot prove that there is no conscience; the furthest we can go is to say that conscience is a relative phenomenon, prone to variation in its intensity, which varies from one person to another. If people use their conscience in various intensities, it should lead to the conclusion that they do not have a conscience at all, as diversities people have in their usage of their mental powers cannot imply that they have no intelligence.

3- If the conscience is original, why is there so much debate and dispute over it among thinkers? We must counter argue by pointing out that thinkers are in debate and dispute over a great many things, and conscience is merely one of them. Do philosophers not disagree over matter and its identity? Is there absolute agreement over motion and time? If thinkers are in debate over issues like matter, motion and time, it does not deny them, as is the case about conscience.

4- The function of the conscience is not compatible with that of intelligence and reason: Some claim that the conscience does not function compatibly with intelligence and reason; the former is highly concerned about the good and evil of actions, whereas the latter is not at all. Moral conscience can identify gratitude and thankfulness, and intelligence can study it. There is no conflict between reason and conscience, despite the occasional differences seen between some principles of moral conscience and some schools of thought. For instance, moral conscience decrees that be fair and just, but hedonism believes that a person should enjoy himself, going after his desires. This is definitely not a conflict between the methods of moral conscience and those of intelligence and reason; it is a difference between the principles of moral conscience and the views in various schools of thought.

5- Is conscience created by the society? Some sociologists believe that conscience is an outcome of man's social life, and has no identity of its own. We must say that human societies are not capable of creating new phenomena in man; the most they can do is to give them a touch of color. Can the society make its members discover the unknown without thinking? Can a society make all of its members mathematicians? Can we have a society in which people's desires are controlled in such a way that everyone follows a moderate, balanced way of life?

Man is a being possessing a great many potentials, and high flexibility. Human societies can merely determine how the potentials are put to use. In brief, if this means that social and environmental laws and factors are generally influential in coloring the conscience, it is a highly proper point, confirmed by our scientific and sensory observations. It does not mean, however, that the conscience is totally a consequence of the society and environmental factors. We also admit that social and environmental

factors may affect the conscience, but it does not mean that the conscience is made by the society, even if it is done by an internal flexibility.

6– The conscience starts functioning from childhood: Freud believes that the conscience is based and founded by the dos and don'ts engraved in the human mind in childhood. Since a child obeys his/her parents, he believes, and the parents continually order him to do or not do certain things to protect him, a phenomenon called moral conscience is gradually formed in the child.

If commands and preventions can lead to moral conscience, the same thing should happen in animals, which is not true. Freud may argue that it is only man who can develop a conscience through intrigue and forbiddance, whereas we must accept that man has an internal characteristic that allows him to develop conscience when encountering certain motives.

7– There are no fixed principles concerning conscience: Some believe that it is impossible to set fixed principles for the conscience, for it is a personal, variable phenomenon. Our response is that each mental or spiritual phenomenon arising in man is accompanied with certain personal factors. Yet, all phenomena follow their own set of laws. When phenomena like recall, will, or decision-making arise in man, they are accompanied with the individual's certain characteristics – thus, it is characterized, and does not defy its orderly nature.

8– Moral conscience cannot be fixed, for man's moods and mental states vary: Since human mental states are always changing, moral conscience also undergoes continual change, and no fixed phenomenon can be associated with it. Some people are extremely conscientious in some cases, and at other times totally put their conscience aside. Thus, how could we ever consider moral conscience as being a fixed phenomenon? We must say that we should consider the difference between conscience – or any phenomenon – and an activity done under certain circumstances. Conscience itself is a fixed phenomenon, but its activities depend on a variety of factors. Do we use our intelligence and reason equally at all times? If we do not, does that defy its existence?

9– Conscience and man's tendency toward machinery: Some say that despite all the value and significance moral conscience has, there is no need to continue discussing it now that technology has begun to dominate man. Nowadays, man does not need an internal factor, or a built-in judge to distinguish good from bad. Our response is that having accepted the necessity of conscience for man's emancipation, we must take its advice in the technology-infatuated world we are living in. If people realize its significance, they will take fundamental steps toward its revival. Even now, people are still deeply moved when they learn about sacrificial actions made by other human beings.

The Importance of Conscience

As Bertrand Russell says, “Man has never needed his conscience as crucially as he does today.” That is how necessary conscience is. Let us also quote from Tolstoy: “Whoever claims that human life can be

managed merely by means of intelligence and reason has in fact defied the very possibility of life.”

Using the conscience can remove the diversities and differences between humans. The most important factor in harmonizing and uniting the people and classes of a society is the conscience. It is the strongest builder of justice. Conscience can prevent atrocities, oppression, and harness man's desire for fame. It can present man with ideals, which are vital if man is to bring his desires and wishes under control.

The Characteristics and Consequences of Conscience

The most important characteristics and consequences of conscience are:

- 1- Conscience is where memories are kept. If so memories about pleasant, shameful, embarrassing, good and bad events cannot be insignificant to man's character.
- 2- There are various levels for conscience.
- 3- Conscience and reason can be harmonious.
- 4- Conscience understands the basic principles that reason follows, such as: The whole is larger than its parts, reality exists, and man should act reasonably.
- 5- The functions of the conscience are also reflected on other human beings.
- 6- Man's character develops along with the development of his conscience.
- 7- Conscience is man's safest guide.
- 8- The conscience can become ugly and vulgar, a burden on man's existence.
- 9- The conscience can be tortured.
- 10- The conscience can suffer from great anxiety and worry.
- 11- The conscience can be held responsible.
- 12- The conscience can differentiate good from evil.
- 13- The conscience can supervise.
- 14- The conscience can suffer from upsets and fits.
- 15- The conscience can decree.
- 16- The conscience can find serenity.

- 17- The certainty of the conscience is much greater than that of reason and intelligence.
- 18- The conscience can set up trials.
- 19- The conscience can scold and reprimand.
- 20- The conscience is capable of judgment.
- 21- The conscience can be entrapped or freed.
- 22- The conscience executes the law.
- 23- The moderate conscience shows facts without manipulation.
- 24- The conscience reminds human beings about the necessity of sympathy.
- 25- The conscience is where man can privately confer with himself.
- 26- The conscience can speak with man's reason and intelligence.
- 27- The conscience can be deceived.
- 28- The conscience can be disabled.
- 29- The conscience can be put to the test.
- 30- The conscience can weaken and strengthen.
- 31- Man's internal freedom arises from his conscience.
- 32- The conscience reflects God's words.
- 33- The conscience feels that man's "self" is immortal.
- 34- The conscience has conflicting waves.
- 35- The conscience reminds man about the objectiveness of creation.

The Relationship between Recognizing Oneself and Recognizing God

The Holy Prophet of Islam has said,

من عرف نفسه فقد عرفه ربه

“Know yourself, and you will know your God.”

Let us study 20 significant points on the above hadith:

1– The human nature is abstract – it is not a physical entity. God is also far beyond materiality and all of its attributes.

2– God possesses true unity, and so does the human nature, which is in charge of man's internal and external components.

3– Although the human nature is related with the human body, it manages all of the body organs, natural instincts, forces and potentials.

4– The Almighty God, though connected to the universe, is far superior to space or time; the human nature is also superior to the human body organs in regard to time.

5– God is virtually united, but also has many innate characteristics that do not conflict with the divine unity.

6– God has created the universe out of complete nothingness; there was no sign or history of it before whatsoever – without any matter previously. The human nature does the same with its imaginations, analyses and discoveries.

7– God is aware of both the unchangeable and the variable; however, his awareness about the variable does not cause his knowledge to multiply. Likewise, knowledge created by pertinence to the variable does not lead to change.

8– God and the human nature are both doers equipped with free will. There are some differences, however, between divine and human free will.

9– God knows all generalities and details, and this knowledge of the details does not affect God's divine nature. The human nature, also capable of awareness about details, does not change by intuitive knowledge, either.

10– God is dominant over all components and events in the universe, and He dominates all components of the universe equally.

11– We can recognize the principle that God exists and has glory and beauty; however, we are unable to comprehend God's divine nature, for our tools of recognition do not have the capability to dominate the nature of divinity. In the same way, the sacred nature of man is not identifiable either; we can only identify man's principles of existence and his characteristics.

12– God has affection for all of His creations, especially mankind. This affection does not rise out of instinctive factors or seeking benefit. The human nature is also capable of being affectionate to man's

inventions and creations, and can develop his affection to be free of any motives of advantage-seeking or instinctive factors.

13- God loves beauty and perfection, and although He infinitely possesses beauty and greatness, He wants His creations to possess them too. Regardless of all social and cultural factors, the human nature also has a tendency for beauty and perfection; seeking beauty and perfection can be considered as some of the most important of man's nature.

14- Whatever God creates, God's divine nature remains unchanged; in other words, God's creations are not parts of a whole, which break away from it when created. Likewise, the human nature can create billions of ideas, imaginations, decisions and deeds, but none of them affect it.

15- The Almighty God is constantly active, and all of the changes and developments in the universe eventually refer to God's continual activity.

16- God created the universe without intending to gain any advantages. The human nature can also fulfill its duties without expecting any benefit in return. By purifying his soul, man can learn to do things for their own sake, not for a reward or escaping punishment.

17- We can never interpret the universe reasonably unless we accept God and the fact that the universe depends on God.

18- Since God has absolute knowledge and control over the universe, His patience is endless. The human nature has some of that patience, too.

19- By means of intuitive knowledge, God is aware of His nature and characteristics. The human nature is also capable of gaining such knowledge.

20- The universe cannot limit God – in other words, the creatures in the universe cannot occupy space or locations where God is absent. The human nature is also so dominant over the human body that nobody organ can never be limited or denied.

Man's Four Relationships

Four relationships can be associated with man:

1- Man-Himself: Man has self-consciousness, and is able to change and evolve himself. It is this self-consciousness that has led to various branches in psychology. If man were not aware about himself, he could never know about the psychological effects of others. There are a few laws that govern man's relationship with himself:

High awareness of the fact that man is a part of the objective universe: Man must increase his knowledge of all of his physical and spiritual aspects, and remove any dark points about his existence.

He should make the most of what he knows about himself. The fact that man's life is a part of the harmony of the universe is highly significant. If man reaches a level of awareness where he considers himself a part of the universe, he will find these qualities:

- He will not stupefy himself.
- He will avoid deceits that are destructive to his soul.
- Greed, boastfulness and arrogance will leave him.
- He will be able to use and enjoy beauties.
- Destructive rivalries and conflicts will be replaced by constructive competition.
- Man will achieve spiritual expansion.
- He will be able to assess means and ends correctly.
- He will interpret power accurately.
- Human societies will become a united family.
- Man will endeavor to spiritually develop and increase the knowledge of his fellow beings.

The necessity of accepting self-possession : Man must put sincerity into his relationship with his own self, and accept the truth.

Self-deceit is the worst way man can betray himself. If man does not accept reality, he will be betraying himself.

Maximum use of man's positive, constructive potentials: With self-awareness, man will never destroy his own positive potentials. He will not use his potentials in order to destroy other human beings; he will use them for his own spiritual development and serving others.

Affection toward others that arises out of human nature : Self-awareness makes people be kind to one another. By kindness here we mean affection rising out of sublimated emotions, not purely natural tendencies. By spiritual elevation, man sees himself in harmony with others in the universe, and thus begins to feel affection for them.

2- Man-The Society: Emile Durkheim has presented a rather extremist approach to man's relationship with the society. He believes that the human self is built by the society, and man has no independent identity regarding his social surroundings. In response, we must say that man possesses many potentials, and the society can merely develop or inhibit them.

Though the society is able to take charge of radical identities, it cannot determine the identities.

Preparing the grounds for man's physical and spiritual development – or hindrance – is the farthest the society can go. In other words, Man is born with a series of potentials, and many factors can influence them, one of which is the society and its various components. It can, however, trap man into fatalistic, unconscious factors guided by social management, which may prevent human beings from becoming self-alienated.

3– Man–The Universe: If man thinks he has been created as a worthless being for a certain period of time and thus has no relationship whatsoever with the universe, he has in fact begun to destroy himself. With regard to man's relationship with the universe, he has several responsibilities:

a) Man must discover the universe and the orderly harmony governing it: Man's approach to the universe must be both general and detailed. From the detailed point of view, man studies and discovers the universe by means of his senses and technical devices, whereas through his general point of view he can understand concepts and meanings.

b) Taking the rules of gravity in the universe seriously and making use of them: The universe includes many physical and spiritual laws that cannot be ignored. Cause and effect, and also actions and reactions are examples of such rules, which man should use.

c) The universe has a supernatural, divine aspect: The supernatural, divine aspect of the universe consists of its relationship with its creator. Understanding this aspect makes man's sense of duty and responsibility be aroused, and find a new, profound concept for life.

4– Man–God: Man can achieve perfection by means of his relationship with God. This is when man understands that God created him perfectly, so he should develop divine attributes in himself. If man realizes that divine perfection and greatness awaits him, he would never keep himself busy indulging with worldly affairs.

In his relationship with God, man must take God's dominance and control on him seriously, for if man feels that his whole existence is overwhelmed by God, he will never deviate from the path of righteousness.

Spiritual Moderation

Spiritual moderation involves a harmony among man's internal potentials and the factors that activate them. The better man's potentials do their orderly duties, the more moderate man will be. Since human potentials are interrelated, the balance of man's spiritual system is a sign of the moderation of each potential. Likewise, if each and every potential is well-balanced, the whole system is moderate, too.

Spiritual moderation can also be regarded as “mental well-being.” The higher man's mental well-being is, the better his spiritual moderation, too. By “mental,” however, we do not refer to only formal thoughts, but man's overall mental activities, including incoming feelings, imagination, associating meanings,

selecting the means and balancing the means and the end.

Spiritual moderation does not exist, or cannot be scientifically discovered. The reasons for this are:

1– The infinity of man's greed for gaining advantages, whether selfish or seeking perfection: Since man knows no boundaries in expanding his “self-love” or “supreme self,” there can be no true moderation for the free psyche. The endless quality of the self is due to man's supernatural aspect. The human character has two sides. On one hand he deals with what his senses reveal to him, and on the other hand he is concerned with the supernatural and moral values. The human self can infinitely advance on both sides, so we cannot imagine a real moderation between them; neither on the positive side, which pertains to the “supreme self,” nor the negative one, which involves the natural self.

2– Man's endless flexibility: Man can vary fatalistic factors and make optional selections due to his infinite flexibility. Proper education and training, for example, can bring about such a spiritual revolution in man that a criminal becomes a fair person, or vice versa. This proves that true moderation is not verifiable.

The Relativity of Spiritual Moderation

Man's spiritual moderation is a relative truth, for each human being has his/her own spiritual balance depending on his/her specific social, moral, legal, cultural and historical circumstances. The impurities in the spirit make it have relative balance. If the human self succeeds in harmonizing the flow of his internal potentials, there will be spiritual moderation in the domain of “how it is.”

The management of the “self” in this domain involves preserving the desired self – this is the main goal of the self in managing man's existence.

The self can aim for two kinds of self-preservation in the domain of the psyche:

a) Self-preservation based on fatalistic factors: Like animals, man lives only according to his natural instinct and tendencies in this state. In such people, spiritual moderation is merely the harmony between instincts and fatalistic factors. It is a pseudo-fatalistic product of the management of the self, and if the unconscious parts are put together as a machine, they would all function harmoniously.

b) Self-preservation based on the development of potentials: Some people to some extent put their potentials and powers to work. Influenced by geographical, cultural, legal, and political factors of their society, they cannot consider ideals any higher than their society offers for their “self,” so they make no attempt for its advance. They go after anything they consider useful – that is, what their social circumstances offers them.

If there are sophisticated figures in such social conditions that can make people realize that they can make better use of their potentials and forces, they will have a chance of being guided to the path of

perfection and greatness.

By elevating himself from the “how it is” to the domain of “how it should be,” man can have better spiritual moderation. Man is a being that possesses the basic factor for such a promotion; he has a built-in tendency towards the proper virtues he deserves.

There are two reasons that prove that man possesses a strong internal force that moves him from “how it is” to “how it should be:

a) The fact that many human beings throughout history have achieved extreme greatness and perfection: History shows us many prophets of God, men of wisdom and moralists that have harnessed selfishness and achieved the ultimate level man can advance to. Without such internal purification, Abraham could never have attempted to slay his own son.

b) The necessity of education and guidance: If the potential to enter the domain of “how it should be” didn't exist in man, education would never have existed; we clearly see, however, that education has had a profound effect on human beings.

The essential factor that evolves man from “how it is” to “how it should be” is his perfection-seeking, intense eagerness to expand his existence all across the whole universe and totally dominate it.

Any human being who enjoys mental well-being will be interested in such spiritual development.

The moderation man achieves through development and perfection is true moderation, and he will see every event and moment of the universe as new. As Jalal-addin Muhammad Molawi says:

تازه می گیر و کهن را می سپار که هر امسالت فزون است از سه پار

جان فشان ای آفتاب معنوی مر جهان کهنه را بنما نوی

ای جهان کهنه را تو جان نو از تن بی جان و دل افغان شنو

گرچه هر قرنی سخن نو آورد لیک گفت سالفان یاری کند

تا نزاید بخت تو فرزند نو خون نگرده شیر شیرین، خوش شنو

Don't let yourself get stuck in the past and the old; remember that your current year is worth more than

your last three years altogether. Endeavor to elevate your character the best you can, for your efforts will refine your inside of all the old precipitated in you from nature, and refresh your soul. When your soul is refreshed, the universe before you will also be fresh and new. When man thinks about God's divine state from the very depth of his conscience and devotes his whole ego to perceiving divinity, he will completely realize that each moment of his life will be new, and his soul will be fresh in its contact with God.

Though each century brings with itself new speech and new speakers, the past also promotes it by establishing the fundamentals of human culture. Your spiritual prosperity should present the results of original truths like newborn babies, which open their mouths and feed upon previous knowledge, thus evolving your spiritual life.

In fact, Jalal-addin Muhammad Molawi (Rumi) is inviting man to abandon this material world, and submit himself to divine changes.

Internal moderation in the domain of “as it should be” is not possible without considering the supreme aim of life and obeying moral values. If the human self is to develop and establish a correct relationship with the universe, it must be attracted by the ultimate aim of life and acquire the highest of human virtues.

In brief, taking into consideration the philosophy of creation and obeying divine values is absolutely crucial if spiritual moderation is to be achieved. Only then will man's internal potentials be in harmony with various factors, and result in his mental well-being and spiritual moderation.

Spiritual Expansion and Contraction

When expanding, the human spirit finds amazing qualities so amazing that one would think it has undergone complete change. Spiritual expansion cannot be defined logically, and only experiencing it can really let us understand it.

Spiritual expansion is accompanied by the feeling of absolute freedom. In other words, in such a state man feels that nothing can hold him back; he is in an unbelievably exciting state that no material emotions pertaining to nature or its aspects can fathom. When man's emotions are in harmony with his intelligence and logic, psychological expansion appears in its supreme state.

The Relativity of Spiritual Expansion

Human spiritual expansion can be regarded as relative from three points of view:

a) The Factors that Make It Happen: like physiological, mental, spiritual, personal, and many other factors.

b) The Fundamental Elements of Character: Since these elements vary in people, the expansion caused by encountering events varies in each person.

c) The Perfection and Imperfection of People's Characters: This is also a significant factor. The spiritual expansion each person feels is proportionate with that person's system of character. For example, those who are drowning in their "natural self" find an expansion when they achieve a higher position or more wealth in which they regard the whole universe as their servant. One who seeks knowledge, on the other hand, considers unsolved scientific issues as crucially vital and cannot achieve spiritual expansion without figuring the unsolved out.

The Basic Origin of Spiritual Expansion and Contraction

Spiritual expansion and contraction pertains to the goal man aims for in his life. Those who have no real aim in life experience expansions and contractions equal to the normal joys and sorrows of everyday life.

When man sets for himself a goal in life and tries to achieve it, he experiences spiritual contraction if he encounters an obstacle hindering his progress, and expansion when he successfully passes it. When one has a great end like saving the people of a society, the expansion brought about by achieving it will be an incredibly immense spiritual promotion for him. In general, whenever the human spirit moves on the path to perfection, passing any obstacle on his way will result in expansion.

Conscious and Unconscious Expansions and Contractions

Expansions and contractions can be divided into two groups:

a) Conscious, and

b) Unconscious.

Sometimes man is qualitatively and quantitatively aware of the expansions and contractions, and sometimes he does not know anything about his spiritual state.

Spiritual expansions and contractions can also be regarded as conscious or unconscious by considering their causes. In other words, sometimes man knows what causes such spiritual states, and sometimes he does not.

When man encounters obstacles hindering his path to achieving his goal in life, and fails to pass it, he will experience one of the following spiritual states:

1- He may undergo mental contraction due to doubt and anxiety about achieving his goal. If such people have powerful thoughts, they will thus develop a pessimistic ideology.

2- He may abandon all efforts to reach his goal, and become totally indifferent. All values would then

appear as worthless to him.

Those who have experienced progress toward perfection are able to withstand external setbacks, so they do not suffer from spiritual contractions when encountering obstacles.

The Expansion and Contraction of the Divine Conscience

Spiritual expansions and contractions can never penetrate into man's God-given conscience, for spiritual expansions and contractions are due to success and failure to achieve worldly advantages. The divine conscience is, however, far superior to these mediocre states. Many human beings, alas, are so drowned in material affairs that they disable their God-given conscience and waste their life on baseless expansions and contractions.

When the divine conscience is awoken in man, all normal expansions are replaced by supreme, divine expansions.

Having achieved divine expansion of conscience, man will undergo no more contractions, unless:

- 1- He feels a greater expansion which will make his current expansion seem meager.
- 2- Since man is in the natural world, he will always suffer from contractions in his worldly affairs until he reaches God. Divine expansions do make, however, man feel that these natural contractions are temporary and mortal.

The Consequences of Expansions and Contractions

Both expansions and contractions leave certain effects. Constant contractions depress the soul, but frequent expansions result in spiritual joy and freedom.

The Reasons Why Anthropology Has Failed

Throughout history, a great many intellectuals have attempted to study and explore man from various points of view – scientific, mystical, philosophical, moral and religious. Although the amount of research done is so great that it cannot be totally discarded as unsuccessful, many scholars admit that the human nature is by no means discovered or revealed to them. The factors influential in its failure are:

- 1- As we already know, all facts are interrelated, and not knowing one of them will cast darkness on others, too. Man is an extremely complex being, full of countless, unsolved aspects and potentials. It is the unsolved aspects of man that has prevented the complete exploration of his nature. Incorrect interpretations of intuitive knowledge (where the recognized is the same as the recognizer) and free will (the dominance and supervision of the self over the positive and negative poles of an action) are examples that prove man's unsuccessful endeavor to generalize the laws and principles of nature to his

own case.

2– On one hand, we have divine religions and men of wisdom and men of wisdom stating that man is a valuable being innately full of hidden potentials; on the other hand, the history of mankind shows that many human beings have not activated their potentials, and are thus devoid of a great deal of their deserved greatness. Such a contradiction has led these scientists to believe that there must some unknown X-factor in man that inhibits his development and progress.

This inability in man – that is, not all of his potentials being activated – cannot lead to the human nature remaining unsolved, for oppressing human potentials is not due to lack of knowledge about them, for man does not correctly put the little knowledge he already has about himself to use, either. Does man truly not know the fact that fighting righteousness is wrong, or does he know it and still does not stop doing it?!

3– Sometimes an incorrect point infiltrates the culture of a nation as a basic principle, which leads to incorrect interpretations of man. For instance, the culture of slavery so strongly penetrates into ancient India that even an intellectual like Aristotle accepts it and expresses ideas confirming its originality.

4– Analyzing and separating the human nature, which has become quite fashionable nowadays, has brought about great confusion in the humanities. Intellectuals who have studied one of man's aspects have become so obsessed with that one aspect that they have considered all of man's existence in it, thus imperfectly interpreting man. Despite its weaknesses, the analytical method does, however, have its advantages in studying and interpreting the nature of man it's incredible accuracy, whereas combination methods sometimes show superficial tendencies that prevents correct knowledge.

Expertise is definitely an essential part of scientific advance, but experts of the humanities have to beware not to allow their expertise to cause disastrous damage to human harmony and unity.

The disadvantages of the analytical method are:

First, it cuts off all relationships existent between realities. The fact that man's various aspects are interrelated is totally ignored; all human facts are studied separately from each other.

Secondly, it neglects the harmony in the human character; therefore when one aspect of man's nature appears to be significant to an intellectual, he – consciously or unconsciously – interprets man solely from that point of view.

Ever since studying man by means of the purely analytical method became popular, one essentially important principle was forgotten: comparing man with at least one product of the interaction of chemical elements which has characteristics different from the separate, individual elements, in particular chemical compounds that cannot be changed back to their components. By comparing the unity and harmony existing in life and the human character with the product of a chemical compound, we see that

it has both new qualities and is irreversible.

The third problem with the analytical method is that the thinker sometimes falls into the disastrous “There is nothing except this” state of mind. As some of them have claimed in interpretation of man:

- Man has a social aspect and nothing else.
- He is an absolutist, and nothing else.
- He is a hedonist, and nothing else.
- He is merely a sexual instinct and nothing else.
- Man is nothing but a wolf.
- He is an exploring animal, and nothing else.
- Man is no more than a selfish animal.
- He is an animal seeking freedom.
- Man is an ambitious animal greedy for power, and nothing else.
- Man is a bargaining animal, and nothing else.

Anthropology can only make logical progress when the “There is nothing else except this” viewpoint does not exist.

Since only one aspect of man is considered in the analytical method, sometimes man becomes obsessed with it, and puts all of his other aspects at its service. Furthermore, obsession toward one aspect makes man fall astray from science and research, and become intensely infatuated merely with the fascinating fame and influence of outstanding figures of science.

The Problems with Contemporary Psychology

1– Some western psychologists tend to interpret psychological issues by means of biological, physiological or purely natural bases. This prevents them from discovering the human soul.

2– Some psychologists are quite sensitive about accepting advanced human psychic faculties, and ignore them. As Freud admits, “It upsets me to bring up mystic and supernatural issues.”

3– One of the major faults with interpreting contemporary science is that it confines scientific thought to what experiments and observations provide. Some scientists have limited their analyses of the human psyche to what their observations provide them with. This is as devastatingly damaging as interpreting the world only by dividing it into the four elements. Taking into consideration the human soul and the

endless aspects, potentials and changes it has in various circumstances, there will be no point in limiting ourselves to experimental sciences. When interpreting issues concerning the human psyche, different scientific fields should be employed, as is the case in accounting for physical phenomena.

4- Nowadays, psychology ignores the various activities, characteristics and aspects of the human soul, or “heart.” Persian literature cites 427 different words deriving from the “heart,” like “heart-disturbed,” “heart-given,” “heartless,” and many others. The human “heart” and conscience are so important that when intelligence, wisdom and logic fail in discovering the secret underlying an issue, man refers to his heart and nature to prove that he is right.

5- In contemporary psychology, a certain range has been abstracted and described for the psyche; going beyond these limits is considered as being psychologically unbalanced. In this kind of psychology, there is no difference between a rigid, stagnant soul and one that is dynamic and tries not to see an event the same at two different moments.

For instance, why do some people become fascinated in themselves, why do some others have a dynamically progressive psyche, and try to avoid self-obsession, and save themselves from nihilism? There is no distinction between a stagnant soul and a dynamic one in this psychology; both are treated as equal.

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